



Katie Porter of Sterling Heights has her dream, too. And as a six-year Barbie doll collector, that dream includes owning more and more Barbie dolls. Barbie's clothes and accessories are just as important as having the right Barbie.



Melissa Windham of Livonia made the clothes worn by the Elizabeth Taylor doll that fetched \$1800 at auction for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The Elizabeth Taylor doll is a converted Barbie doll made by former Detroit Mike Alexander.

## Barbie doll convention makes dreams come true

By Joanne Mallisowski  
staff writer

**N**INE-YEAR-OLD Catherine Bergmann hated the first Barbie doll she had. She just didn't like the look of it. But she found some she likes. Now she has more than 200 Barbie dolls.

I think they look really pretty and they're fun to play with," said the fourth grader.

But her mom, Nora, a Barbie fan and collector herself, says don't let her daughter's age fool you. "Of the two of us, she's the authority. She has a good eye."

That good eye comes in handy when buying and selling Barbie dolls. Yep, there's more to collecting the famed doll than you might imagine. Just ask any of the collectors gathered at the Troy Hilton March 3 for the Great Lakes Chapter of the Barbie Doll Collector Club's second annual Barbie Grants A Wish. The club collected \$12,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Collectors, buyers, sellers and the curious spent hours digging through displays looking for just the right pair

of shoes, sunglasses or dresses that would make their dolls complete — and worth more money.

THAT'S NOT to mention the thousands of Barbie dolls — and her sister Skipper and friends Midge and Ken — that filled the room. Price tags ranged from a \$5 for a Barbie to dolls worth thousands of dollars.

"I've seen some of them go for \$4,000," said Jennie Reno of Redford, who has collected 50 Barbie dolls in the last two years. I had them when I was a little girl. I'm sorry I got rid of them."

Donna Giulio of Rochester was one of those little girls who never got rid of her Barbie dolls. And as an adult she never really gave any thought to them. That is until her friend, Jan Carlson from Jackson, told her just what she was sitting in her basement.

"I've got the early ones," said Giulio, who plans to buy a book to determine how much her Barbies are worth.

"She'll be hooked," Carlson said, digging through a box for Barbie doll accessories.

All these little pieces make them worth a whole lot more money," Carlson continued. Now, I'm looking for pieces that were in the vacuum cleaner."

Barbie dolls by Mattel Toys first came out in 1959. At first, Barbie dolls came as blondes, redheads and brunettes. Over the years, however, that's changed. Today, new Barbie dolls only come as brunettes.

They're trendy now, because they found that little girls prefer to play with a blonde doll," said Warren, resident Susan Manos, co-founder of the nine-year-old Great Lakes Chapter.

OVER THE YEARS, Manos said, Mattel also discovered that little girls like to comb a doll's hair. So today's Barbie has more hair just for that purpose.

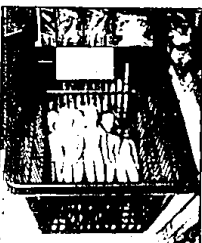
Born in the late 1950s, Barbie has kept up with modern women. She followed their fashions and hairstyles and changed from ingenue to career woman from the

late 1960s to a businesswoman. But never, never did Barbie have a career as a single mother. Single moms never will.

Many of the collectors found it difficult to say which is the best of Barbie. But it is the Bergmann four-year-old who better understands Barbie dolls. "There's a lot of things that make them special. There's a vintage about her."

It's not that she's popular or that girls love her. It's that she's a doll. It's the redheads and brunettes that are worth money because they are rare, said Manos. As a collector, a better collector.

Alexander once a year converts a Barbie doll into a doll of a well-known personality. Last year the doll he made Marilyn Monroe. This year, the doll he auctioned for \$1,800 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation — was the Barbie image of Elizabeth Taylor.



Some of the Barbie dolls at the Great Lakes Chapter of the Barbie Doll Collector Club were being sold for only \$5. But there were others that went for hundreds, some for thousands of dollars. Complete Barbies with wrist tag and accessories are worth more.



Poor Ken. He's never quite as famous or popular as his friend Barbie. And word among collectors is that he will never be Barbie's husband. But Ken has his own following among doll collectors. And at one time, his makers, Mattel Toys, allowed him to talk and bend his knees.

## Bus drivers' pact ratified

By Conny Hana  
staff writer

A local three-year contract between the Farmington school bus drivers and the board of education was approved last week, negating the need for state arbitration.

The district and the Farmington Education Association, an affiliate of the Michigan Education Association that represents some 20 drivers, had spent nearly a year at the bargaining table and were preparing to go to arbitration last fall. That became unnecessary when an agreement was reached.

Throughout negotiations, the drivers continued working under a contract extension. Union membership ratified the contract Feb. 14, and the school board approved it Tuesday.

Employee relations director Sue Zuravick called the settlement a reasonable compromise beneficial to both, and past FTA president and driver Murphy Ayres said she "approved my co-workers' bargain."

The new pay calls for a one-cent retroactive pay raise of 6.5 per-

"I think it's a fair and equitable settlement."

Myra Zuravick  
Farmington Education Association

cent effective July 1, 1990, and "merit" clauses in the second and third years of the contract. That will automatically give bus drivers percentage wage increases equal to what will be negotiated for teachers and other school employees this year.

The 6.5 percent increase equals what other bargaining units got in their contracts for 1990-91, Zuravick said. The 6.5 percent increase is basically what the school district offered drivers last August, at that time it was proposed as a two-year agreement and the FTA rejected it.

We were prepared for fact-finding," Zuravick said. "In pre-hearing discussions, we were able to reach a settlement."

With the raise, a beginning bus driver earns \$10.97 per hour and a top-level driver \$12.61 per hour. An adjustment in the new contract also

gives drivers an additional 10 to 15 cents per hour in the second and third years to bring their wages in line with what school truck drivers receive, Zuravick said.

A no-strike/no-lockout clause for medical insurance is also in the new contract.

During bargaining for the two-year contract that expired last June, negotiations took about 1 1/2 years and required fact-finding intervention.

THE FARMINGTON school district also faces negotiations with other bargaining units this year.

Three other MEA union affiliates have contracts that expire this year. The teachers union, the Farmington Education Association, has a contract expiring in August, while the Farmington Education Support Personnel, which represents secretaries and paraprofessionals, and Farmington CMC, which represents custodial maintenance and cafeteria employees, both have contracts that expire in June.

Also up for negotiation is a contract for school principals and administrators, who are represented by a professional association.

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