

Halloween IN DOLL FORM

Dana Burton recounts the fun of her Halloween-in-July event by MDL, an online organization she runs.

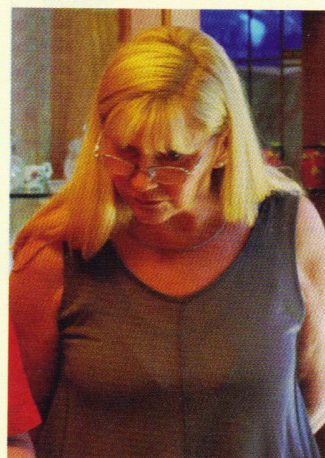
MDL stands for *mini-dollLIST.com*. Our common interest is dolls, but the friendship, caring, and helpful attitude distinguishes us from many other lists. Our motto is to enable anyone from anywhere with any budget the ability to create dolls.

We have been online for over twelve years and offer many RAK (Random Acts of Kindness) programs, which give people from any country around the world a care box

to create dolls! Our members contribute material, trims, and funds, which get sent out to RAK members monthly. Our website serves as a focal point for all the projects and contests we have each month. For instance, we are also hosting a Dancing with the Skeletons Halloween contest with Carolyn Brown as the head judge.

Sharing talents

A year ago when I was teaching in Europe, I realized how fortunate I was to be in the company of Belgium's Helena (Dolls in Miniature), and Frances (Nathalie Gireaud—fimo artist extraordinaire!). As owner of the MDL, I thought of how I could share the



Top: A sculpture by Nathalie.

Above: Helena listens intently to a question as she teaches her class.

Left: A witchy outfit by Helena.



talents of both these European artists with my ladies back in the states ... and voila! The MDL houseparty was born. We had a sign up in January, a hostess in NY (Fran Schwartz) and in Quebec, Canada (Louise Belair). Then a set of twenty ladies signed up for classes and the big weekend.



Above: Nathalie teaching a class.

Nathalie presented a beautiful fimo Halloween Table and Helena showed the ladies how to create a Bette Midler witch.

Helena has been creating porcelain dolls for years, and has traveled extensively in Europe teaching classes. She also sculpts (larger dolls) and sews beautiful costumes! She selected the three witches

(Bette Midler movie) because the girls actually watched it by Fran's house! What a fun night that was! Wine, women, and a witch movie!

Nathalie is a published fimo cake/food artist who lives in Marseilles France. She is a school teacher by day— and a wicked fimo artist

Below left: A table of pumpkins and other Halloween goodies created by the talented Nathalie.

and miniaturist by night. She has three children and a beautiful home that hosts (south of France) miniature meetings and my teaching class in October.



Halloween dolls

We went with the Halloween Theme because of the fun and magic that could be involved! Also, if you are a beginner dollmaker and you do character dolls, it doesn't quite matter if they are



Above: The class listens attentively.

Below: One of the Bette dolls in the process of creation during class.

perfect or not. Witches are suppose to be “ahhh” character dolls!

One of the coolest students was eleven-year-old Jade (granddaughter of Karin Foster). She kept up with



the adults and actually kept everyone motivated by how much she wanted to work! It seems like the younger generations aren't getting interested in miniatures, so we were so pleased to have a new influence of enthusiasm!

We have held two minidoll conventions (both in Las Vegas) previously with teachers from around the world, but with the economy difficult, our goal was to bring both European teachers to the states and Canada to share their knowledge.

Everyone left happy with a fun-filled weekend! AM

Special thanks goes out to Sam Schwartz for the photos of the event.

A haunted house

“One of my favorite rides at Disneyland is the Haunted Mansion,” says Angela Schiavone. “A few years back, I found a great website, www.haunteddimensions.raykeim.com. Ray Keim has designed and provided free paper patterns to recreate some of Disney’s most beloved and creepy places. His work is wonderful!”

Angela then landscaped the scene with a juniper bush (the tree) and felt (for grass). She and photographer James Hannibal had extra fun with the photos, giving them a dark and mysterious look and even tracing the route of the Haunted Mansion route with a red laser. To see those photos and to learn more about Angela’s mansion, see our blog at <http://ashdown.typepad.com/miniatures> or scan this code with a smartphone.

