



**GREATER CHICAGO  
INSULATOR CLUB  
NEWSLETTER**  
Rick Soller, Intern



Volume 29, Number 3  
March 2021

---

**Big Acquisitions!**

Riley Armstrong recently made one of the biggest acquisitions I've ever seen. The picture below shows two huge radio tower strains with their metal casings. I believe they are currently upside down. The design of these took advantage of the fact that porcelain is stronger in compression, so the porcelain was attached in a way that resulted in these compression forces. The design of these insulators also includes a concave curve to the base which further strengthened the insulator. There is a LAPP ink stamp marking on them. Riley had them weighed and each one topped out at 700 pounds. It is 38 inches tall. The top base is 18 inches wide and the cast iron is 2 inches thick with four bolt holes. The bottom base is 26 inches wide with three large holes in the side. At \$50 each, they seem like a bargain to me although I don't have a tractor loader like Riley used to get these out of his pickup so I don't know how I would be able to get them.



## Show Update #1: April 10 Wheaton Show

A new tradition at the Wheaton show is a Friday night, dealers only auction. Two years, a fantastic collection of glass was auctioned off as well as individual items and multiple lots brought by various dealers.

This year, another collection has been rounded up and will be offered with no reserve at the Friday night event. Starting about 6 p.m., a collection containing some quality porcelain insulators as well as some popular glass pieces will be on the auction block. The porcelain includes 3-skirt Thomas multipart, U-966 Thomas Niagara-style insulators, and colored porcelain (teal Ohio Brass, blues, yellows, tans, etc.). Glass includes about 2 dozen 1871 dated insulators, a wide range of different CDs in clear, and a few better pieces. Go withs include signs, and Ohio Brass catalogs.

Greg Delia was not able to bring insulators and go-withs for the auction to the Crown Point, Indiana show so he is bringing a large load for the Wheaton auction. Greg typically finds brackets and insulators as part of his job as a lineman, so all kinds of surprises are often included.

Both Rick Soller and Bob Stahr have confirmed that they have saved up lighting rod balls and rods from collections purchased over the last two years that will also be available at the auction. Both also plan to bring insulators for the auction.

Lots more should be available at the show. To date, 70 dealer tables have been reserved and the show will span two buildings like it did two years ago. Some new dealers are planning to attend the show and, with several eastern shows cancelled, collectors from as far away as New York are attending and setting up.

Below are some pictures of a few items that will be in the auction:



## Show Update #2: Columbia City, Indiana

Since the last newsletter, the Columbia City, Indiana show has popped up on the listing at [insulators.info](http://insulators.info). Gene Hawkins indicates that the show will have the usual fun which includes a Friday early evening show-and-tell session, and an auction on Saturday at about 10 a.m. In the past, there was also a city-wide yard sale, but, unfortunately, it will be a week earlier this year.

Friday night pizza will probably not be offered this year due to Covid-19 issues. The show on Friday will wrap up at 5 p.m. and the show-and-tell will start promptly so people will have time to go out and eat afterwards.

The show is sizing up to be bigger than in previous years. Many of the shows put on by the Western Reserve Insulator Club in Ohio have been cancelled or moved to the summer so there is likely to be much pent-up demand to get to a show and this will be the closest one.

## Rubber Insulators

Few references contain information on rubber insulators. Gerald Brown's book on nonglass/nonporcelain insulators is probably the lone exception, however, this was published many years ago and is out of print. Even then, there was only surface coverage of the various markings on rubber insulators

There are several reasons for the lack of interest in rubber insulators:

1. Limited number of styles. Continental Rubber Works catalog four styles of rubber insulators: The R-3, R-4, R-5 and RC-1. An unmarked, unattributed slot-topped rubber insulator can also be commonly found. Some early hard rubber pin-type insulators made around 1861 exist and rubber was used in making several styles of hooks. This brings the number of styles to around a dozen
2. Boring colors. It is no wonder that glass insulators are so popular with their range of colors that can be backlit. Rubber insulators, on the other hand, are exclusively black.
3. Excessive supply. Continental Rubber Works made 50,000 rubber insulators per year in the 1970s with production probably extending back to the early 1940s. Since these are more recent insulators, they tend to be the ones still on the poles when they the poles came down rather than being the ones that were carted away to the landfill years ago as some newer style replaced them. **The exception** to this is the earlier hard rubber and hook styles which are rare.

There are two groups of patents that are relevant to rubber insulators:

- Patents by Nelson and Charles Goodyear on the process of making rubber. These include patents #3,461, #3,462, #3,633, #4,005, #4,099, #8,075

issued May 6, 1851 and #25,111. The May 6, 1851 date has been found on a hard rubber hat style insulator.

- Patents assigned to The Western Union Telegraph Company under which Continental Rubber manufactured their insulators. These patents include #2,218,497 issued October 15, 1940, #2,304,483 issued December 8, 1942, and #3,061,667 issued October 30, 1962.

The chart on the next page provides detail on the subject. The chart was developed from examining over 50 specimens of the R-4 style of insulator primarily made by Continental Rubber Works. These insulators came from a variety of sources including a California collection, and lines in Canada, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The column to the farthest left represents the marking on what is assumed to be the crown of the front of the insulator. If the embossing took two lines, the content of the first line is separated from the marking on the second line by a slash (/). The embossings listed here are in what I would guess is their chronological order of production.

Column two contains the embossing of what is assumed to be the crown of the back of the insulator. Again, if the marking took two lines, the start of the second line is indicated by the slash. . Note that the third back embossing is an error marking (extra 2 in the patent number).

The third column indicates the marking, if any, on the dome or top of the insulator. Since most of these insulators are marked with "R-4," the nickname for these is made clear.

Column four contains mold number trivia. These mold numbers appear on the crown between the front and back embossing. Each mold numbers for a particular embossing is listed on a separate line. Note that some mold numbers contain unusual spacing (like "8 1 B") while others contain periods in odd places (like ".5-C/3"). Slashes are not part of the embossing but indicate that the embossing occurred on two lines. When mold information occurs on both sides of the insulator, mold numbers on the right are listed first followed by a double slash (//) followed by mold numbers on the left as one looks at the front of the insulator.

<b>Front embossing</b>	<b>Back embossing</b>	<b>Dome</b>	<b>Mold #s.</b>
[no embossing]		R*4	
CONTINENTAL RUBBER WORKS / ERIE, PA. USA	PATENT PENDING	R*4	
	PATENT PENDING	R*4	2 1-C, 2 2-G, 8 2-C 10 2-C 14 2-C
	PATS 2218497 / 2304483	.	.
	PATS 2218497 / 2304483	R*4	1-B, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B, 6-B, 7-B, 1 9-B, 2 1-B, 8 1 B, 9 1-B, 10 0-B, 10 1-B, 10 9-B, 12 9-B 14 1-B, 15 9-B, 16 9-B .5-C/3
	PATS. 2218497 / 22304483	94*80	5-A 1-B 0-C
	PAT. 3061667	R*4	2-D 4 .3-C
		94*80	3 .5-C
CONTINENTAL/ RUBBER WORKS U.S.A.	W.U.TEL.CO. / PAT. PEND.	R*4	32/0-C
	W.U.TEL.CO. / PAT PENDING	R*4	18/10-B 19/2-B 28/2-C 30/2-C 29//.0-C
	W.U.TEL.CO. / PAT. 2,218,497	R*4	1-A, 6-A , 1-B, 2-B, 4-B, 6-B, 7B, 8-B, 9-B 23/3-D, 24/1-B, 25/0-B 28/3-D
		BS*4	5-A
	W.U.TEL.CO. / PAT. 3061667	R*4	8-0 B-31 17/6D 18/5-D 19/3-C 26/3-D 28/5D 32/3-D
HECHO EN MEXICO (crown arc)	M	.	.

## Upcoming Shows

### **Saturday, April 10, 2021**

#### **Wheaton, Illinois**

The DuPage Collectors Expo will be held Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton, Illinois. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Items for sale & trade include insulators, lightning rod items & weathervanes, telephone & telegraph items, bottles, jars, etc. For information, contact Bob Stahr at [bob@heminggray.com](mailto:bob@heminggray.com) (630) 793-5345 or Rick Soller at [com574@clcollinois.edu](mailto:com574@clcollinois.edu) (847) 782-8602.

### **Friday, April 30 & Saturday, May 1, 2021**

#### **Columbia City, Indiana**

Free Admission, Free appraisals, Free air too! at the annual Columbia City, Indiana Insulator, Fruit Jar, Bottle & Collectibles show to be held at the Whitley County 4H Center, 581 Squawbuck Road, Columbia City, IN on April 30<sup>th</sup> - May 1<sup>st</sup>. Plenty of parking, RVs welcome (no hookups) Friday dealer setup 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, Public 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Pizza 5:00 PM, BRING SOMETHING FOR THE SHOW & TELL at 5:30 PM, Saturday Dealer setup 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM, Public 8:00 AM until the last dealer leaves. First dealer table \$28, 2/\$48, 3/\$60, 4/\$75, 5/\$80, 6/\$85. For discounts on local hotels or for more info email Gene Hawkins at: [gene.hawkins@mchsi.com](mailto:gene.hawkins@mchsi.com) or call (574) 377-0171.

### **Saturday, May 22, 2021**

#### **Bovey, Minnesota**

The North Western Insulator Club Spring Sale and Swap Meet will be in northern Minnesota at the home of Rick and Mary Augustyn, 34879 Scenic Hwy, Bovey, Minnesota 55709. Hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Rick and Mary have plenty of room to spread out so we can follow COVID precautions and catch up with old and new friends. Please bring your own tables and chairs and we will be outdoors but will have protection from any spring showers. Please RSVP to Rick and Mary at [augies9ers@gmail.com](mailto:augies9ers@gmail.com) or 952-240-3960. We'll see you in May! [Editor's note: Bovey, MN is located, it is 202 miles north of Minneapolis (3 hours and 23 minutes).]

### **Saturday, June 5, 2021**

#### **Tama, Iowa**

The 23rd Hawkeye State Insulator Swap Meet will be held on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Tama Civic Center from 8:00 AM-3:00 PM. The Civic Center is located at 305 Siegel St. in downtown Tama, IA. Dealers planning on attending can start setting up at 7:00 AM. The event is at no cost to those attending and lunch will be provided close to noon.. There will be an auction scheduled with part of the proceeds going to support this and future events. Donations towards this event are welcome. We look forward to hosting you and provide some Hawkeye hospitality here in the Midwest. For any additional information and table reservation, please feel free to contact DAVE SHAW at (641) 484-5463 or e-mail at [dashaw@mchsi.com](mailto:dashaw@mchsi.com).