

DRIP POINTS



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NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION
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... start planning early!!

"MESSAGES"

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear NIA members and friends,

Boy, how time flies when you're having fun! By the time you read this I hope to have visited with many of you at the Bakersfield, CA, Albany, NY, and London, OH shows to spread the good word about the insulator collecting hobby.

In this issue, I feel compelled to address an issue which has been the subject of much discussion recently and is of concern to all collectors. That issue is the rising cost of insulators. Many collectors have approached me about the escalating costs of the more desirable insulator specimens and their concerns about what it will ultimately mean to the health of the hobby. Several have suggested to me that the NIA should try to somehow stabilize the price of insulators by creating and maintaining consistency in valuation. This, of course, would benefit us all by keeping the pieces we want affordable. Unfortunately, any attempt to control such a market would create nothing but chaos and could never be effective.

We must face facts and they reveal that our hobby is an inseparable part of the American economic system of supply and demand. The greater demand presently seen in the hobby coupled with a limited supply can result in nothing less than higher prices. The only way that prices will drop is when buyers quit buying or significant numbers of new pieces are discovered, neither of which is likely to happen in the near future.

In studying the dynamics of the hobby one must look at two distinct trends we have seen in the last twenty years. The first wave of collectors included many linemen and others who had access to many insulators which were free for the taking as the great period of line removal took place. Trading was commonplace. Many collectors did not have a lot of dollars invested in their collections as a result and many were trying to assemble complete sets of manufacturers, CD's, colors, etc. As the free

and inexpensive supplies dried up the second period began to develop. That group is the newer (last 7-8 years) collector who has disposable income and is after choice items consisting mostly of good color and rarity. Most dealers will sing the same tune ... everyone wants color and rarity while the aqua and more common items remain on a sales table. This really disrupts the process of buying and selling collections by dealers since they are unable to sell common insulators but still must pay for them in order to conclude purchase from the collection seller. So where/how is the dealer going to recover his investment??? From the better pieces, it is that simple. Until more interest develops in the common to semi-common pieces, the competition will remain for the better items and prices will continue to rise.

So what?, you ask. What does all this mean? First, the nature of these concerns is admittedly greater than can be controlled by the NIA or any other group. Second, recognizing the first point, the best course of action in a high demand market is to increase the supply!!! By so doing prices may drop or, at the very least, more people will get what they want, either of which is quite desirable. So, how do we do this? It's the age old entrepreneurial principle of "SHAKING THE BUSHES"! Or, put another way, E-F-F-O-R-T.

In the past year I have seen incredible collections with fabulous insulators in the possession of people who never heard of the NIA, Crown Jewels, shows, etc. How do you find these people and get all of these new items into circulation? The methods are endless but start with contacting retired linemen, running ads in the local newspaper, placing your business card in antique stores, going to antique shows and spreading your card around, etc., etc. The time has never been better to make locating collections and insulators more rewarding from both financial and collecting perspectives. My friends, there area

thousands of insulators out there in garages and barns just waiting for you... let's all get out looking and maybe we can impact the price problem in more ways than one.

Good hunting and share your success stories with us all!

Mike Guthrie

• **FROM THE WESTERN REGION VICE-PRESIDENT**

Happy Holidays!

One year's time for collecting insulators and attending shows is about over, and another year's has yet to begin, so this is a good time to sit back and just think about your insulators, the friendships and pleasures they have brought, and the adventures that are yet to come. While all of our interests are basically INSULATORS, each of us has his or her own memories of the past and map for the future.

We here in the West are fortunate to not only have access to the insulators of the world, but have our own very special collectable CEW, Cal Electric Works, W.G.M., W.F.G., California, Maydwell, McLaughlin, Seilers, Pluto, the Big Mouth, milk glass, et. Most of you have some of these in your collections, and I am sure there are dozens of stories about the acquisition of these treasures that you can tell. Maybe you found yours at the foot of an old pole, or maybe, like that fellow who lives in Madera, CA, you found a green E.C. & M. for \$ 5.00 in an old Nevada mining town antique shop! The fun of the hobby is savoring the good times, so why don't you share some of YOUR tales with the rest of us. Write down your story and send it to me, or tell me about it the next time you see me. Start thinking and enjoy the experience all over again, and let us enjoy it too.

Have the happiest of holidays! and Hoping to hear from you soon,

Shirley

• **FROM THE CENTRAL REGION VICE-PRESIDENT**

The First Annual Swap Meet of the Lone Star Insulator Club was held October 1, 1988 at Independence Park in Pearland Texas. Several nice pieces found new homes, including a beautiful peacock CD 151 N.A.T.Co. This is the beginning of bigger and better shows in the future.

I am looking for more bids for the 1990 Central Region. There are already several candidates interested. Remember, the deadline to apply is March 31, 1989. Hosting an insulator show can be a rewarding and profitable undertaking as I experienced co-hosting the National in Houston.

Each of us knows someone who collects insulators but is not a member of the N.I.A. How about giving that special person a membership for a Christmas gift.

Happy Collecting,

John Hall

• **FROM THE EASTERN REGION VICE-PRESIDENT**

Dear Fellow Collectors,

I hope that everyone is planning for a super nice holiday season. I realize that the hobby generally slows down at this time of the year, but before you know it we'll be having some spring shows. The following story was written some time ago, but I am sure that you will enjoy reading it as much as I have. All collectors are encouraged to contribute stories and information to share with all of us. Thanks to David for submitting the following report.

Jeff McCurty

"ADVENTURES"

SPECIAL STORY by DAVID WIECEK NIA #3225

... Insulator special airs on cable TV!

The following relates an experience I had promoting our hobby. I hope this will encourage others to become more active in the hobby with respect to promoting it. It can be mutually beneficial for both the collector and the general public who know little about the hobby but are very eager to find out more. This is my story:

One night in the middle of July of 1986, I came home to discover a phone message from a man who claimed to be the host of a cable television show. The next day I returned the call quite excited. Roy, the host of Hobbyland, said that he was impressed with an article I had written in an antiques newspaper. I had recalled that in May of that same year, Joel Sater's *Antique and Auction News* had run an article I had written about insulator collecting. In the article, I recounted some of my more memorable experiences and briefly discussed the history of the development of insulators. Roy said that he too had an interest in insulators. He indicated to me that he was once a lineman and had discarded many insulators but kept ones he felt were unusual. He told me that the show explored a new hobby each week. With this format, both he and the viewers could get the chance to learn more about different hobbies. It was his opinion that hobbies brought people together to share their interest and enthusiasm. We made arrangements for an afternoon in early August. I told him that the only way to really appreciate the hobby of glass insulator collecting was for me to bring along a display to show viewers just how pretty, different and interesting glass insulators could be.

When I arrived at the studio on a hot August afternoon, Roy came out of the studio distressed and informed me that he had accidentally scheduled our videotaping for a day when the studio was unavailable. Here I was with a trunk load of old glass with no television debut! We did reschedule but I must admit that I was a little hesitant. Traveling anywhere with

old fragile glass is risky business and I thought that perhaps I was being a little too enthusiastic. However, when I thought about the potential audience I might reach and how good a place New Jersey was for finding insulators, I decided to return a second time.

I gave Roy an idea of what I wished to discuss. He decided that we couldn't possibly cover all of the information in a half an hour show. So for the first time in the show's history, he opted for a two-parter. I had brought with me some index cards with an outline of what I was going to talk about so that the interview would go smoothly. What I didn't realize after I was all set up was that this was going to be a one shot deal. There was going to be no second takes for rehearsal whatsoever. We had to get this right and get it right the first time. At this point I had become a little nervous. I had 3 cameras staring at me and a monitor at the front of the stage showing me what I was doing on camera.

Essentially, part one of the show focused on what insulators were and where they were used. I brought with me a few examples of interesting patents and pretty colors. I discussed the development of threaded insulators, drip points, double petticoats and cable tops. I also explained how purple insulators became purple and how carnival glass was made. I even brought along a mammoth Pyrex 441 to show viewers just how large insulators could be. I am sure Jeff McCurdy can appreciate my fondness for the corning line of insulators. Part one went so quickly. Instead of running out of things to say, we had to cut it short because the half hour had expired. In the closing segment, Roy announced that I would be returning next week with my collection to tell viewers even more about glass insulators. What I didn't realize is that the audience would be thinking that I had returned a week later wearing the same clothes. Roy had, of course, thought ahead and prepared himself by bringing a second change. I was hoping that those who did return the following week wouldn't remember what I was wearing and if they did...???

In part two of the show, I told Roy about my collection and pointed out some unusual patents like the corkscrew and the

two piece transposition. I also displayed many different colors and shapes. I had brought with me a "Mickey Mouse" to give to Roy to show my appreciation for being invited on his show. To my surprise, he reached into a box and pulled out an olive green CD 145 American beehive for me. It was a memorable, spontaneous moment. He concluded the show with a quote from my Joel Sater article where I stated that I hadn't met a collector that I didn't like and that it was because of the people that I had remained involved in the hobby. Later, while I was packing up, I discovered that the only other insulators in Roy's box were Whitall Tatum No. 1's and Hemingray 42's. If only I could be so lucky in the lottery.

After packing up, we said our goodbyes. The producer had agreed to send me a copy of the show after it had aired. I received the copy in late October and was quite pleased with the final product. Others have told me that I did a pretty good job. I felt good knowing that I had in some way helped promote the hobby. Admittedly, the phone hasn't exactly rung off the hook with people calling me up about these funny brown colored Bostons or Americans. I still haven't heard from MGM either and I am beginning to doubt if I ever will. I have, however, received a few phone calls to do lectures for bottle clubs and other small collectable organizations. Even after a year and a half, I recently got an invitation to do a presentation this February. I guess the show has gone into re-runs??? I plan to continue these presentations when possible as well as continue writing. I have found it to be an exciting learning experience plus it gives me the opportunity to meet new collectors on a personal level and perhaps make some new friends along the way.

I encourage those who are able and willing to try and promote the hobby by writing some of their experiences for Crown Jewels, Drip Points or perhaps a local newspaper. You never know what could come along your way or the people you might meet.

• **FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

As I am writing this article, it is a most beautiful autumn day here in Thunder Bay. Unfortunately, most of us will be well into winter as we read this.

Do you recall me asking you in a previous "Drip Points" to make a point this year, of going to at least one insulator show, and also contacting a fellow insulator collector in your area? If you did then you know how rewarding the experience(s) can be. I presume you all have gone through the October "C.J." directory for collectors in your area. Please make a point of contacting some of the newcomers and help them get going in the hobby. I am sure it will be appreciated by them and certainly will be a benefit for all insulator collectors.

While on vacation in northern Minnesota this past summer, I had the opportunity to get together with Larry Furo and see his insulator collection. And what a collection it was with many CD's and variants that I had not seen before, and what can I say about that CD 160.7 in medium amber! It is absolutely beautiful.

In approximately six months time, the N.I.A. will be announcing the regional and national show sites for 1990. Note that the national is due back in the Western Region. Now is the time to seriously consider putting in a bid. Maybe you were thinking about hosting a show last year, but things didn't quite work out. Come on - do it this year. The insulator hobby needs you and needs you now. Drop me a line and lets talk about it.

The very best to all of you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Eric Halpin, # 2768

• **FROM THE 1st PAST PRESIDENT**

"HOBBY CLUBS AND THEIR SUPPORT"

I recently was part of both the birth and demise of one "National Card Collectors Club", or NCCC. It was billed as the first national organization for baseball card collectors, which I also collect. It was, in fact, not that hobby's first national organization, and none, including NCCC, have survived for long. NCCC croaked after about six months. The founder claimed to have lost some \$45,000 in that time. I found that quite difficult to believe, but that has no bearing on the fact that a national club for that VERY healthy hobby has *NEVER* been able to survive.

Are there precedents for other such national club failures? Probably (especially when a small hobby stagnates and dies), but certainly not for such a large hobby. The coin and stamp hobbies have long had professional organizations (ANA and APS), rigidly structured and effectively administered, which have provided strong support for their respective hobbies and there are a great many successful local clubs as well. The bottle hobby has a confederation of local clubs. The Federation of Historical Bottle Clubs solicits "at-large" memberships (read: individuals), but the Federation has its own unique style of administration, and the local clubs are probably stronger "politically" than their counterparts in any other single hobby.

The NIA is in good shape, both administratively and financially, especially considering the size of our hobby, and I cannot foresee the NIA meeting the same fate as NCCC, yet we continue to share some of the same problems as local clubs of all types. Do some of these "quotations" sound familiar to you?

"We can't find anyone willing to take the job of ..." "I don't have the time to put into a volunteer group because of (choose all that apply) a) golf b) work c) Cub Scouts d) cowardice e) (fill in your own excuse) "I paid dues once, and I never got anything free except a card and a renewal form. What does that club do for me?" "I don't have to talk to my friends about our club. They know it's around and if they want to join, they will." "But I didn't even get notified that my

dues/subscription ran out!" (THIS ONE'S ALL OURS!) "The National won't be in my region for another year, so I won't renew until then."

You get the picture. The point is that there is NO perfect picture. No matter how much anyone (including corporation management, politicians, civic leaders, etc.) talks about how much they may or may not do for the body as a whole, the bottom line is that the body must agree on certain goals and then the administration must be dedicated enough and talented enough to carry them through.

In the case of the NIA (and local clubs), there are always constant concerns, including the balancing of income and expenditures, the maintenance (and, hopefully, improvement) of membership, and the projection, whether real or imagined, that the organization is achieving its stated goals. In the specific case of local clubs, those goals usually amount to regular newsletters or bulletins, an annual show and meetings or get-togethers. In the case of the NIA, that is the basic scope, only on a grander scale, since we have far more members (past and present), which we attempt to keep aware of, and also since we try to offer more and more services to our members, as finances and specific talents allow.

I would like this article to be considered as informational. There are many collectors in this hobby who have never been NIA members, let alone considered offering their talents to the group. To all of the non-NIA members in the hobby, we *DO* really need your support, and to the members who have some specific talents (writing, strength in accounting, computer skills, advertising or marketing backgrounds, to name a few), you would be doing our hobby a great service by lending your time and talents (part-time, of course!) to the NIA sometime in the future.

Good collecting,

Kevin F. Lawless NIA #1679

• **FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**
MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS:

- 4181 NIA numbers assigned
- 926 active members - 603 maintaining voting rights
- 4 clubs supporting the NIA
- 12 junior members ... and we're proud of them!

The NIA is your club and a way of building and supporting the hobby of collecting insulators. Help me recruit new members and spark some life back into our inactive members. It's you, the members, that keep this hobby alive.

Have a nice winter... and good collecting,

John deSousa

• **LETTER OF THANKS**

The following letter was sent to the NIA:

Dear Fellow NIA Members,

We want to thank you for the Life Memberships you awarded us at the National Convention in Houston this year. We were sorry that we could not be there, but President Mike Guthrie made a super presentation at our Nor-Cal Insulator Club Show in Auburn on August 6th.

We are truly honored and are ever grateful for the many fine friendships that this hobby has brought us over the years.

We are looking forward to many more years of collecting and enjoying insulators, and we hope we run into all of you along the way. Thank you again.

Sincerely and with our love,

Pat and Shirley Patocka