

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

**I**sn't it great? Summer is here and insulators are in season once again! I've already heard a bunch of great collecting stories. Also, Summer means that the National Show is almost upon us. If you haven't made all your arrangements yet (or, heaven forbid, haven't decided whether you're going or not!), now is the time. This National is shaping up to one of the best ever: And, it will be a rare opportunity to see many of the choice pieces from some of the great Eastern collections.

This *Drip Points* issue covers some really interesting topics. As many of you know, there has been an ever increasing use of computers in the hobby to aid the collector. Data base manager software is now "friendly" enough that anyone can list and track their collection. And

spreadsheets are now commonly used to keep track of purchases, sales and trades. Perhaps the most significant new computer application is the use of the INTERNET to communicate with other collectors: Be sure to read Bill Meier's great article on the INTERNET. Also in this issue, Elton Gish provides the update on the controversial CD 133.4 "Tennessee Bullets".

I was dissappointed not to receive any letters to the Editor during the past three months. (Guess I'm not controversial enough! Maybe I need to add some political commentary or something!) Anyway, the Drip Points is a good forum to bring up topics of interest to the entire association, so send me your cards and letters (or send on the INTERNET to "tomk164440@aol.com")

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Before heading off into the “good stuff”, let me say that I am looking forward to seeing you at the shows this summer. If I haven’t yet met you personally, come up and introduce yourself. Let me know your ideas for a better NIA newsletter!

**Tom Katonak**

NIA NIA

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**G**REETINGS,

This time of the year only means one thing to most insulator collectors. Getting out of the winter doldrums and searching for those jewels from the wires. Whether you’re digging for them or checking out flea markets, you never know when you will come across a desired piece.

As the 1995 National approaches, I look forward to meeting as many members as possible. If you get a chance, stop by my table: If I’m not there, I’m sure my wife Donna will be (you know insulator collectors - always looking!) I’d like to hear from you, the collector as to what the NIA can do for you. Remember, the membership is who we serve and I need your input for direction into the future.

Sincerely, and Good Collecting,

In this issue of Drip Points, Elton Gish, our Ethics Chairperson, has the write-up concerning the “Tennessee Bullets.” Many people were interviewed and we are stating the facts as best we can. One additional job has yet to be done and that will be a site inspection: This will be accomplished in the early part of June. Look for a wrap-up in the Fall issue of

**Stephen E. Bobb, NIA #827  
President**

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MEET THE NEW

Drip Points. I hope this will satisfy concerned parties.

HISTORIAN AT THE

NATIONAL

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A change has been made as to the Historian Chairperson. With the

resignation of Chris Hedges, I have appointed longtime collector Jim Garrity as the new NIA Historian. You can reach him at RR #1, Box 173, Paxinos, PA 17860-9745.

## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Just a few short lines from your Executive Director. The copies of the show bids have been mailed to the Board. We should all know the exciting news at the National Convention in July. The show season is off to a good start if the Chesapeake Bay Show and the Yankee Polecat Enfield shows are an indicator. This should be a good year for both collectors and dealers.

**Claude Wambold, NIA #1717**  
**Executive director**

### FROM THE EASTERN REGION

**T**he plea from your editor this time was to really give this article my "best shot" and to make it a "good one". Anyway, it's easy to write a typical "boiler plate" article, but since this is my last article as Eastern VP, it seemed fair game to not only give you some of the necessary boiler plate stuff but to openly share some of my reflections after 28 years in the hobby and four years on the Board. After all, I lose my forum after this!

#### THE BOILER PLATE:

##### Recent Shows:

- The Chesapeake Bay Insulator Club Show: I could not be there, but word was that it was one of their best ever. Plenty of dealers, activity all day and some neat stuff changing hands.
- Yankee Polecat Show: A full complement of dealers, but a last minute fill. Quality of merchandise felt to be down, but pretty good buying and trading activity from still a very respectable crowd. Best walk-in was a specimen of a never-before-seen piece from the Brookfield dump brought in by Dave Sztramski of NJ. Great find!

- Deland FL Bottle & Insulator Show: Word was that we had a good turnout of insulator people with reports of great sales to some ho-hummers. This show seems to be gaining in attendance by insulator people.

##### Upcoming Shows:

- June 24: Backyard show at Claude Wambold's. A notable if the weather cooperates.
- July 14, 15, 16; National show at Marlborough, MA. If you do not attend this one you are truly guilty of self-deprivation. A lot of hard work by capable people is making this one a real zinger.

#### THE REFLECTIONS: (hopefully embellished one-liners)

- There are a lot of great fun-loving dedicated people in our hobby. It sure isn't the promise of great riches that keeps most of us in the hobby for years!!
- There is more than enough to go around for most everyone who wants to collect insulators. Just look at the variety, color and range of prices at shows, on lists, and in the ads.

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- Competition for many of these pieces can be both a positive and a negative. It can be a real motivator or it can be destructive and unhealthy. Unfortunately I see a sense of greed and somewhat irrational activity on the part of some that is more transparent than they think. I was a spectator to perhaps the ultimate lately when the telephone conversation I was having with another collector over a very rare piece was subject to an "emergency" break-in by another collector. Upon follow-up, it seems that the breaker-iner was concerned that the conversation was with *Mr. X* over the piece and that he would lose out. Come on, folks, let's knock off any of that.

- The NIA, particularly Elton Gish, has really done a very fine job in dealing with ethics problems when individual efforts fail. We all need to be supportive of the NIA position on fakes & repros and take a pro-active position on this issue. On the other hand, there are some issues where I feel the NIA should not have responded as requested. We need to avoid being judge, jury and executioner where the issue is more than one of providing background vs. taking a stand on whether certain items are authentic or not.

- There are a couple of turkeys out there who have been pulling off or attempting to pull off some scams. We all deplore this, but never underestimate the quality and extent of the individual communications network within the hobby as a deterrent to this type of conduct.

- Nitpickers: Like any hobby, we have our share of them. I think it is important to not only consider the source of this

nitpicking, but to take the time to ask some questions and make your own informed decisions.

- Hobby Recognition: We have gained a lot in this and in the public relations arenas, but in spite of the gains, I still hear and receive comments and questions that show an amazing lack of recognition of our hobby as a large and well organized group. I strongly encourage everyone, on an individual basis, to obtain and disseminate information about our hobby and the periodicals and publications that are available.

- Prices: We have had a rather meteoric rise in the values of rare and quality insulators. This is good in the sense that it indicates a maturing of the hobby and provides an incentive for hobbyists to acquire the better items. There is a flip side to this also. Insulators are merely a commodity and subject to the principle of supply and demand as well as economic fluctuations, so nothing is ever a sure thing. We've had some down times in the hobby also. The price rises may scare some of the newer collectors. We need to set the record straight on this every chance we get that this is not a rich person's hobby and some excellent collections can be amassed without tremendous outlays of money.

- The Shows: We are fortunate to have a large number of them. They are always great, and indeed, the lifeblood of the hobby. BUT, we need to give them our fullest support. It is a fact that the supply of willing show hosts and affordable facilities is less than optimal. Many times we have received only one bid for a

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particular show. This has been a disappointment to me as I have sometimes felt that the bid was not quite the caliber I would have liked or not in a location that I thought was best for the hobby. BUT, being a show host is no picnic and our show hosts do their best and work hard.

- Dealer Drop out & Quality: There is a growing concern that perhaps the quality of merchandise at shows is not as it used to be. This may be a sign of a growing number of collectors vying for a limited and finite number of choice pieces. It may also be a sign of the newer collectors feeling a need to start at a higher plane than they did 25 years ago. It can also be a sign of what I have seen in the bottle hobby: the emergence of auctions which attract much quality merchandise. I want to tread lightly here as I am not knocking the auctions. They are a viable way of merchandising any form of antique or collectible, serve a very useful purpose to many and are here to stay. The fact is though, they do attract a good deal of merchandise that might otherwise be at the shows. I can only encourage attendees at a show to consider paying the same for an item as they would be willing to pay at an auction as a continuing incentive to the dealers who support the shows.

- The NIA inner Workings:

1. You should be thankful for this organization and what it does for the hobby. Please appreciate the sincere efforts of those who are elected or appointed. Hey, this must not be a bunch of glamour jobs or the Nominations Chairman would be deluged with candidates each year. Generally it takes

a lot of lobbying to even get one candidate.

2. I am not convinced that enough is asked of the Regional VPs. I would have welcomed a lot more input than I got and encouraged such. BUT - be patient; like all organizations, we may seem to be a bit plodding at times (remember, we are geographically dispersed), and either may not know the answer or there may not be a satisfactory one. Our goals should be to strive for improvement, not perfection. I personally feel that the NIA has made great gains in the last few years.

3. One of my biggest disappointments in my time on the Board has been the caliber of items we deal with at the annual Board meeting. I have felt a lack of fulfillment when the meeting breaks up and we have spent too much time (my value system) dealing with housekeeping and maintenance items at perhaps the expense of longer range planning and goals. I will continue to contend that for the Board to deal with higher order items in a meaningful way we need more than an annual exchange of ideas (other than written).

4. Have I been responsive? I think I have tried. My responses are guided by my value systems and sense of importance or perceived need for something to happen or not happen. Being responsive does not always imply agreement. Please keep this in mind for my successor.

Thank you for the opportunity to be on the Board and for your support.

**Dick Bowman; NIA #597  
Eastern Region Vice-President**

## FROM THE CENTRAL REGION

**I**t's hard to believe that almost a year has gone by since I've taken office, and that another great National is just around the corner! I'm sure that the Central Region will be well-represented, as the show hosts have put a lot of effort into the planning and scope of the show in order to make it an enjoyable experience for the entire family. There's certainly a lot to see and do in the Boston/New England area at that time of year. I'm hoping that this year's National will serve as a "spark" to ignite some more proactive participation from the NIA's membership ranks and to serve as a forum for sounding out and discussing constructive new ideas for bettering our hobby and our organization! We need to get more members involved and to have the programmatic direction for them to get involved in.

I want to sincerely thank the GREATER CHICAGO INSULATOR CLUB and the LONE STAR INSULATOR CLUB for keeping me abreast of activities in their areas by way of their monthly newsletters. The *Lone Star Lines* reports that the recent Metroplex Insulator Shows have been very successful with great sales, crowds and fabulous displays. Gary Kline has recently written some great articles for the *Greater Chicago Insulator Club Newsletter*, and the GCIC was to have sponsored a hunt along the Illinois (Wheaton) Prairie Bike Path, which was a former trolley line, at the end of April.

I also wish to thank Gary Kline for conveying his thoughts to me on a subject that we all need to be concerned about and that we all need to focus some of our individual energies towards - the rekindling of the fires of enthusiasm

towards our hobby that exists within our members and also taking the initiative to welcome beginning collectors into the hobby and to offer them encouragement, as well as bonds of friendship! Every new collector will welcome the opportunity to meet others in their area who "speak the same language", and it should be up to us to initiate the communication, let them know about local clubs and other collectors in the area, answer their questions and offer them support as they are trying to get acclimated. Gary has taken it upon himself to initiate contact with new collectors within the western Wisconsin and surrounding areas, and he's made some new friends in the process.

Don't forget to check out the upcoming shows in your area, and I'll be looking forward to seeing you at the National!

**Rick Baldwin, NIA #336  
Central Region Vice President**

## FROM THE WESTERN REGION

**W**ell, Summertime is coming up fast and there are really lots of good shows to see!

On June 17 and 18, the Triple Ridge Insulator Club will have another outstanding show in Denver! Check it out! For info, call Mike Bliss at (303) 225-0800.

July 14 through 16 will see the Yankee Polecats host the NIA National in New England. This is the first time a National has been held there and you can bet it will be something exceptional. Call Steve Jones at (203) 623-3349 for more information.

August 5 will have the Nor-Cal Insulator club host their 11th Annual Show in Auburn, CA. Call Pat Patocka, (916) 663-

3681, for more data.

September 9 - 10 will see the 1995 Western Regional held in Visalia, CA, another new show location! This is show you should make. For additional info, call Dwayne Anthony at (909) 888-6417.

Last, but not least, don't forget the Eighth Annual Enchantment Insulator Club show in Albuquerque, NM. Tom Katonak, (505) 898-5592, can give you additional information.

Hope you all can make these shows. There's gonna be lots of good times and good glass!

**Grant M Salzman**  
**Western Region Vice President**

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DON'T MISS THE  
EIGHTH ANNUAL EIC  
SHOW IN ALBUQUERQUE !

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you additional

### **...DRIP NOTES**

- Don't forget: NIA-sponsored insulator insurance is available for your collection. (See the ad near the end of this issue.)
- Last issue before the National Show in Marlborough, MA: Don't miss this one!
- Wait 'till you see the spectacular insulator images on the World Wide Web! (See Bill Meier's INTERNET article in this issue.)
- Jill Meier, Product Marketing Chairperson, will have all the NIA items at the National (or order ahead using the enclosed form.)
- MOVING?? Please send your new address to Joe Beres: Don't risk missing your copy of the *Drip Points*!

## REPORT: CD 133.4 "TENNESSEE BULLETS"

by Elton Gish,  
NIA Ethics Chairman

The authenticity of the CD 133.4 "Tennessee Bullets" has been in doubt by many collectors since the colorful insulators first appeared at the 1990 Eastern Regional Show in Kulpsville, PA and later at the 1991 Cedar Rapids National Show. The unusual exotic colors and near pristine condition suggested that the authenticity of the insulators might be questionable. To exacerbate the situation, no information about how and where these insulators were found was ever published by those involved in either the discovery or distribution of the bullets. One of the individuals had intended to report the discovery, but he never did. The lack of an open flow of information contributed to the rumors that the bullets were probably fake.

On September 16, 1994 Keith Roloson, President of the Dixie Jewels Insulator Club, submitted an official request to the NIA asking for an investigation into the authenticity of the bullets. Four insulator clubs signed the request petition. NIA President, Steve Bobb, appointed a committee to investigate the matter. The committee was composed of Steve Bobb, Elton Gish (NIA Ethics Chairman), and John McDougald (past NIA Ethics Chairman). The committee met on September 25, 1994 at the 1994 NIA Eastern Regional in Kulpsville, PA with Kevin Lawless and Doug MacGillvary, who own many of the bullets that were found in this fairly recent discovery. Several fragments and whole specimens were examined at that meeting. Other interviews were made later with all of the principal parties involved. Two other collectors who have seen several of the

bullets and are knowledgeable in old glass insulators were also interviewed. Below is a presentation of the facts uncovered in this investigation with conclusions following.

The bullets were found in Virginia -- not in Tennessee as is generally assumed. In 1989 Dave Justice and Bob Alexander made several trips to a remote area in Virginia along the right-of-way of an old railroad line which ran a distance of 70 miles. The initial discovery was made when Dave and Bob were checking out a trout stream and the nearby railroad line. The first piece of glass that they found was cobalt blue. Bob made approximately 15 trips looking for insulators and searched an 8-10 mile section of the line. Bob took Mike Bruner on one trip, and Mike found a whole purple bullet and some old bottles. The bullet was partially buried about 1-1/2" in the soil. The area where the bullets were found is desolate with little access other than logging roads. The terrain is pine covered, rocky with minimal soil described as red clay, and a lot of pine needles covered the ground which would have reduced the chance that insulators would have been completely buried. Many pieces of insulators were found (of various colors), and the whole insulators were found in several areas.

Doug MacGillvary made several trips to the location and found pieces of insulators similar to the whole bullets. On one trip, he searched for three days and found only one piece. He found several pieces of insulators above a railroad tunnel, but most were found away from the right-of-way.

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About 27-30 bullets were found. The approximate numbers by color are: 10-13 teal; 10-13 cobalt blue; 2-3 purple; one aqua; and two clear. One of the clear bullets has millions of bubbles with a large flake chip that appears quite old. It has some unusual mold lines as do the colored ones. Insulator imperfections indicate that more than one mold was used. Most of the bullets were found by Dave Justice and Bob Alexander and traded to Mike Bruner. One teal colored bullet was purchased by a well-known collector/dealer from an antique dealer in West Virginia. All of the glass pieces studied by the committee looked aged but not etched or very dull. Kevin Lawless took the pieces to Corning and had them tested. The expensive test was inconclusive. The bullets show no signs of blemishes, stains, soot, rub marks, or wire-groove scratches from a tie-wire. One person interviewed noted that none of the threads had chips which might be expected on glass of that age.

Conclusions:

1. More than one person found whole insulators and pieces during the more than 15 trips made to the location over a 2-3 year period.
2. Since the insulators are not marked, the manufacturer cannot be determined.
3. Insulator imperfections indicate that more than one mold was used.
4. The insulators show no normal signs of wear in either the wire groove or threads.
5. The insulators were not found in just one or two areas, and the location was remote.
6. About 27-30 whole insulators

were found in five colors: teal, cobalt blue, purple, aqua, and clear.

7. The flake chip on one insulator, and the glass pieces, appear to be aged.

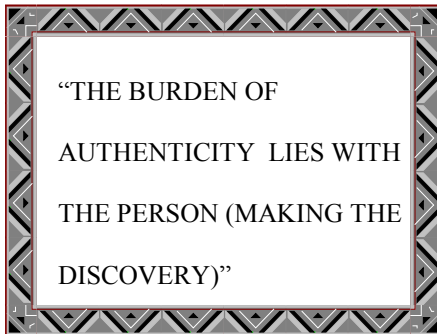
8. The principal parties in the discovery of the bullets did not substantially profit by their efforts.

After reviewing all of the evidence and testimony, we were not able to determine with certainty that the bullets are authentic. However, it seems unlikely that threaded insulators would have been made with this good quality, produced by hand from small quantities of exotic colored glass, and then scattered along a 10-mile stretch of remote right-of-way for several people to find during more than 15 trips. An investigation into the authenticity of several other old and rare insulators in our hobby may end with similar inconclusive evidence.

The NIA hopes that the hobby, knowing the facts at hand, will now be able to make a more educated decision if they choose to pursue one the CD 133.4 bullets for their collection.

Recommendations:

1. Whenever anyone discovers a new insulator, or cache of insulators, it would be advantageous to the hobby that the individual (s) publish the facts of the "find" as soon as possible to prevent the spread of rumors. The exact location need not be revealed until the individual(s) completes his search for more insulators.
2. The burden of authenticity lies with the person who discovers the insulator. Research into the history of the area (railroads, buildings, companies, persons, towns, etc.) helps to validate the discovery.



I'm sure all of you, in some context, have heard the words "The Internet", or "The Information Super Highway", or something similar, right? Sure! But, what does that have to do with insulators?

In the past several Drip Points, you may have seen mention of "send an e-mail message..." to Keith Roloson (from Georgia) with your e-mail address. What does all that mean? Well, "e-mail" just stands for "electronic mail", and that, combined with the Internet as your "post-man" allows 20 million people to send "e-mail" to anyone they want. Any where, any time, any place. Even before 10:30 am!

Keith has been keeping a list of all insulator collectors who have an Internet mail address and have contacted him. And, he makes that list available to other insulator people on the Internet. At the moment, the list contains 32 people. People on this list have mailed out want lists, sales lists, trade lists, club insulator newsletters, and other general topics about insulators.

You may not think you have access to Internet mail, but if you have access to a computer network at work, or any of the dial-up "on-line" services such as CompuServe, or America Online, you probably have access to Internet mail. I'll mention how you can find out later.

Then, along came Don Lundell out in California. He too had started a list of insulator collectors. But his list was different. Just by sending mail to an automated mail list server, you could

"join" the mailing list, and by sending mail to a specific e-mail address, this server would re-send your mail to everyone on the mailing list automatically. His list also contains 32 people, but it contains 12 people not on Keith's list and Keith's list contains 12 people not on Don's list! So, really 44 insulator collectors are "on line" with the insulator mailing lists. I have been working with both of them to try and merge these lists! E-mail can be useful, but you can't really call it exciting...

The next step: **The WEB!** In a quote from PC Magazine (April 11, 1995, p. 37) they say

"The Internet may be hot, but the World-Wide Web - the Internet's collection of thousands of informative, graphical, multimedia-ready, hyperlinked sites - is even hotter."

Well, Don has also set up a small Web page about insulators. When I first saw it, I knew the potential, and within a week, I designed a number of additional pages and Don incorporated them. These pages contain information about books, magazines, and the NIA, as well as several dozen color photographs of insulators from an aqua Seilers to an amber Hemingray No 8.

But what makes the Web *exciting*? I'll use the work Don and I did as just a small introduction. First, this information is not just text, but it can contain full color pictures, and sound. So, instead of just

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reading about McDougald's Volume I & II or Rainbow Riders Trading Post, we also show you the cover of each. Instead of describing shapes of insulators, you can see them in full color. Second, Web text is "hyperlinked". Without getting into

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FORTY-FOUR INSULATOR  
COLLECTORS ARE NOW  
"ON-LINE" !

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technical details, this simply means you can "jump" from one subject to another, just by clicking your mouse on the "hot

spot" (normally an underlined word). So, for example, if a sentence reads "The insulator hobby is growing, and it has a nation-wide association called the NIA" you think "Hmm.. what is the NIA?" All you do is click on that underlined word, and you are now reading about the National Insulator Association! Or, although this isn't fully implemented yet, you could click on a spot on an insulator and it would identify the part. Or you could click on a spot on a US map, and it would tell you insulator clubs and shows near that area, and your regional vice-president!

Many people with access to the Internet also have access to the Web via a "Web Browser". I understand users of on-line services such as Delphi and Prodigy have access already, and America Online and CompuServe will have access soon. If you think you have access, but don't

know exactly what to do, contact your system administrator!

I plan to provide more information about "Computers and Insulators" in future articles; both how the NIA might expand their use of them, and how you at home with your PC might use them. Also, look out: By the next *DP*, I will have the experience of co-hosting a National under my belt (yes, the first New England National ever held - you will be able to tell me if it was a great one!), and be appointed Eastern Regional Vice-President with my platform to increase the use and awareness of computers in the hobby. For those of you who can access the Internet and the Web, let me leave you with a few addresses.

To sign up on the insulator list, simply send e-mail to **majordomo@resilience.com** and include in the body of the message (not in the subject line!) the words **subscribe insulators** and you will get a reply back with more information.

Check out the Insulator Web pages at URL **<http://www.resilience.com/insulators>** or for a personal note to me, send e-mail to **meier@amber8.enet.dec.com** and I'll reply.

Special thanks go to Keith Roloson and Don Lundell for their efforts in giving insulator collectors a presence on the Internet!

**1994-95 FINANCIAL REPORT  
NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION  
THIRD QUARTER ENDING 3/31/95**

<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>1/1/95</b>	9237.61
<b>Revenues Education &amp; Promotion Account</b>		1556.00

Donations	0.00	
Interest	0.00	
Membership Dues	3045.00	
Miscellaneous Income	1.00	
Product Sales	248.50	
	<b>Total Revenues:</b>	3294.50

**Expenses**

Advertising	40.00	
Bank Charges/Taxes	65.59	
Marketing Products	29.40	
Misc. Postage	387.36	
Misc. Printing	1.35	
Misc. Supplies	0.00	
Misc. Professional Services	0.00	
Crown Jewels Rebates	62.50	
Drip Points Printing	525.89	
Drip Points Postage	160.60	
Show Advertising Subsidy	0.00	
Show Awards	0.00	
Stationery Supplies	32.38	
Telephone	25.16	
Special Projects	86.80	
Education/Promotion	0.00	
	<b>Total Expenses:</b>	1417.03

<b>Closing Balance, General Fund:</b>		11115.08
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<b>Education &amp; Promotion Fund Balance</b>		1556.00
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<b>Total Balance on Hand</b>		12671.08
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1994-1995 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION

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