

GREATER CHICAGO INSULATOR CLUB NEWSLETTER

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NEW CLUB FORMS

The Greater Chicago Insulator Club was formed this year as a result of discussions with several collectors in the region. We wanted to enhance our local network of trading and dealing insulators and thought that there were enough active collectors in the area to form a club.

One problem that now exists is the lack of area shows. The Carol Stream show is held in April and the Columbia City show is held in May. There were no other "local" shows until Milwaukee in August.

Many people cannot travel long distances to go to an insulator show. We were hoping that with a local club we might be able to have a few more local shows or swap meets for those people who were unable to attend the others. Our hopes are coming true, we have a local get-together planned!

The first meeting/swap meet will be this October 25th at John and Carol McDougald's home from noon to 6:00 p.m. Bring a dish (salad or dessert). Meat and beverage will be provided. We think this will be a pretty good start. Please try to make it there. Let's make this a good beginning for our club.

We want this club to be very active in the hobby. We hope that we can become a clearinghouse for information about Chicago area insulators. For example, we would like to write a few articles on area transmission, distribution and communication lines and the insulators used on them. Chicago was the major center for this activity and there is a good deal of articles to be written. We would also like to sponsor local shows and give out awards. We would ultimately like to sponsor an NIA regional show and possibly a National. We have great expectations that this can be done within a few years. ----Bob Stahr

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Joining the Greater Chicago Insulator Club (GCIC)

Dues for the club are set at \$10 a year. This will go toward the publication of a newsletter, postage, and a few swap meets. We hope to publish the newsletter once every two months.

Send dues payable to Bob Cook,
1320 Ridge Road, Homewood, IL 60430.

Send articles or stories to Rick
Soller, 34273 Homestead Road, Gurnee,
IL 60031.

Please spread the word.

Display Tips

by Rick Soller

An effective way of deciding how to display insulators is to think of the display as an argument--what are you trying to prove by arranging the insulators in this way. There are a couple reasons why this approach is effective in gaining attention, as some examples and explanation should show, as well as several ways this principle can be applied.

At the Cedar Rapids, Iowa national in 1991, one displayer argued that porcelain was colorful just like glass and offered proof in the form of a great variety of cobalt, mustard yellow, green, and other colored insulators. A display that I would not consider very argumentative (and I don't have any particular one in mind) would be one which presented a number of threadless insulators under the title of "Threadless."

I hope the difference between these two examples can be seen.

In the first case, the display adds value to the hobby. Other collectors can look for additional confirming or denying examples.

The arguments can become more creative too. Perhaps some collector would like to argue that insulators look like other things.

Here would be an opportunity to present the insulator with the thing it looked like. Individual insulators could be paired with a Mickey Mouse doll, a Roman helmet, or pilgrim hat. Combinations of insulators might take on the appearance of an insul-bug that I believe Paul Ickes created for one show. Another argument could be, "Despite numerous attempts, nothing worked like a tie wire." For this display, the collector could arrange all the insulators that tried to substitute for a tie wire like the Harloe insulator or the Twig's patent. Or a collector could argue that relationships between companies could be identified by the molds that were sold by one company to another.

The arrangement of identical insulators made by different companies but with one having the engraving blotted out would support this argument.

Displaying insulators in this way doesn't have to be limited to shows. Why not try out different arguments with your collection at home and report the results? If nothing else, it gives your collection a bit of freshness because you've moved around. Perhaps dealers might find brisker sales if they could suggest to buyers why they should buy a set of insulators rather than a single one. I know I bought a set of Australian insulators because I saw the theme in the way they were being sold.

If you have an argument you would like to share, please send it in. Perhaps you've already tested it or maybe you would like to know if others can provide proof.

FOREIGN PATENTS

Since United States patents on insulators have been very thoroughly researched by Jack Tod, how easy would it be to do the same with foreign patents? Some investigation into the issue revealed a number of stumbling blocks.

First, for some countries like Canada, the patent record is nearly identical to the U.S. gazette. Inventors merely filed the same application in both countries. Differences may exist if a controversy over a claim was treated unequally in the two countries.

A second difficulty is that the classification system used in other countries is not the same as that used in the United States. Thus, extra work is required to go from country to country. Naturally language becomes a problem at this point.

For those who do not speak a foreign language, romance languages like French, Spanish, and Italian use insulator-related words that are spelled similar enough to the English equivalent to find what you want. Figure 1 gives some examples.

Figure 1
Foreign words for "insulator"

Language	Word
French	Isolateur
Italian	Isolatore
Spanish	Aislador
German	Isolatoren
Chinese	

Access to foreign patents poses a third problem. There are computer data bases of patents but these do not go back beyond 1968. Thus the search must be conducted manually. Copies of the patents are located in only a few places in the U.S. so they must be ordered through the Scientific and Technical Information Center (STIC) or a commercial service. Adding to the problem, holdings often do not date back to the age of threadless insulators. The list of holdings for the STIC illustrates this as shown in figure 2. This list is particularly disheartening since it is part of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Figure 2
Holdings of the STIC

Country	Start	Country	Start
Australia	1904	Austria	1899
Belgium	1950	Brazil	1974
Bulgaria	1970	Canada	1948
China	1985	Denmark	1913
Egypt	1951	France	1791
India	1912	Ireland	1925
Italy	1925	Japan	1880
Poland	1924	Sweden	1958
U.K.	1600	USSR	1924
W.Germany	1877		

Because of the access and language problems, costs of obtaining foreign patents are expensive. Search services start their estimates at \$350. Copies of the patents range from \$7.75 to \$10 or more each. If there are as many foreign patents as there are U.S. patents, the copies alone could cost several thousand dollars.

Uncatalogued Insulators

Just as there are many insulators in foreign countries that have not been assigned a CD, U, or M number, there are many types of insulators that don't even have a classification system or have one that has not been updated in a while.

Charting some of this uncharted territory can be an exciting challenge for collectors who missed the early years of the hobby or who want to recapture the thrill of new finds.

Glass and porcelain pin-type insulators have been well charted even though new finds continue to emerge. Currently, thanks to Elton Gish's efforts, multiparts seem to be the area that are experiencing a renaissance. What will be next?

There are several types of insulators that seem to be waiting in the wings for something to move them into the mainstream of collecting.

First, there are radio strain insulators. There is a lot of potential in these. They are small so displaying them requires less space than, say, a collection of multiparts. Also they come in a variety of colors which always increases their value.

Larger strain insulators are a second possibility. There are perhaps more of these than radio strains and, unlike radio strains, they can be found in the same places as regular insulators.

There are a few collectors of suspension insulators. It is hard to collect these because of the weight of the insulators and because specimens must be found along high voltage lines. However, it seems unlikely that

this type of insulator will be phased out of current use. Thus, there will continue to be new pieces to collect.

Many years ago, Gerald Brown wrote a book about nonglass, nonporcelain insulators. There is a wealth of information in the several editions he produced but, after his death, this work has not been updated.

A type of insulator that is of more recent manufacturer is the midspan spacer or aerial spacer. These come in porcelain, and plastic and come in a variety of innovative shapes. Here's an opportunity to get involved with a type of insulator in which the inventors and companies are still around.

An important area that needs some cataloging and which is related to all these types of insulators deals with go-withs. For example, one display at the National showed the variety of pins that could be collected.

Certainly there are many areas that need to be explored. A few people have added single, hundred pound substation pieces to their collections. Others have added fuse cut-outs and lightning arrestors to their list of interests. The new polymers and commemoratives are two more types that have been added to shelves.

The point is that there is plenty of room for the hobby to expand, there are lots of places to look for undiscovered pieces, and there are many ways to enjoy the hobby without needing lots of money or time.

The old advertisements on this page were a result of research at two college libraries. Most of the ads were found at the college I attend: Iowa State University. Those appearing on this page were found at Purdue University. I found them during a research trip there this summer. These ads were relatively easy to find and, in a later article, I will tell you how you can find advertisements like these and some great articles on insulators too.--Bob Stahr

GCIC Members

Scott, GCIC #10

James, GCIC #9

Bob, GCIC #2

Walter, GCIC #4

Arlen, GCIC #7

James, GCIC #5

Rick , GCIC #3

David, GCIC #8

Bob, GCIC #1

Ray, GCIC #6

Advertisements

Collector of Hemingray and better porcelain items is looking for insulators and go-withs (catalogs, advertising, give-aways, | etc.) Also looking for old issues of Crown Jewels (1969 and 1970) and any Cross Arms magazines. Robert Stahr, Helser 4865 Haber, Ames, IA 50012-0002, (515) 296-5719.

WANTED: Aereal Spacers/Midspan Spacers. If you have one or several, I would like to talk to you to find out what's out there and write an article on them. They look like this:

NOTE: FREE 35 WORD AD FOR MEMBERS. FOR LONGER ADS, CONTACT RICK SOLLER.

Give me a call or drop me a line. Rick Soller, 34273 Homestead Rd., Gurnee, IL 60030. (708) 855-9136.

NOTICE: Don't miss the gathering at John and Carol McDougald's house on October 25th.