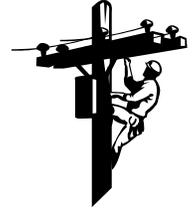




# Drip Points



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION

drippoints@nia.org

http://www.nia.org



**In this issue of *Drip Points*:**

*Available via e-mail*

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- ◆ A letter to the Editor ... *Doug & "Pinky" Selby*
- ◆ From the President ... *Dudley Ellis*
- ◆ From the First Past President ... *Tom Katonak*
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- ◆ From the Awards and Recognition Chair ... *Lou Hall*
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- ◆ From the Nominations Chair... *Jacqueline Linscott Barnes*
- ◆ From the Membership Director ... *Donald Briel*
- ◆ From the Promotions Chair .... *Bob Merzoian*
- ◆ NIA Logo Items for sale ... *Carolyn Berry*
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**A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**



Well, this will be my last *Drip Points* newsletter as your Information Director. Starting at the Friday evening NIA general membership meeting, I will take over as your next NIA president. I will try to live up to your expectations, but I know they are set pretty high af-

ter the job Dudley has done these past two years, and Tom Katonak before him. Fortunately, I will have both of these folks still on the board to help me along. We will be gaining a new Central Region VP as well at that time, Ross Baird will step up to help out in that position when Ed Peters steps down. I would like to thank Ed for all he has done for the NIA and our hobby.

I recently received a very nice letter from Doug and "Pinky" Selby thanking me for my service to the NIA as Information Director. The letter was very nice, and a first of it's kind, that I had received. In addition to thanking me, they also included a poem Ode to the Telephone Pole (see page 7) written by a retired Los Angeles Police Detective that they had met early

this year. I asked, and received permission, to reprint the letter and the poem. These follow my column. One reason they listed for writing the letter was my last photo. I have changed a bit in the past year as many of you may have noticed.

A year ago this past March 8th, I had Bariatric Surgery for weight reduction. This was not a decision I entered into lightly, but after 40 years of being over weight and after 20 years of trying to do something about it, I finally found a solution. Ed and Connie Peters also did the same thing about six or eight months before I did and were a significant part of my inspiration.

There is one thing for certain, you will lose weight after Bariatric Sur-















2006

AUSTIN, TEXAS

37<sup>th</sup> NIA Annual Show and Convention

July 7 – 9, 2006

■120 sales tables – 28 Displays  
Raffles – Appraisals – Silent Auction - Seminars  
■11,000 sq ft show hall

### 2006 Show Itinerary

Thursday, July 6<sup>th</sup>

*Dealer Unloading & Exhibitor Set-up*

Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>

*"NIA Members Only Day"*

*NIA General Membership Meeting*

*Sunset "Bat Watching" Riverboat Cruise*

Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup>

*General Admission (\$3, kids under 12 free)*

*Awards Dinner Banquet*

Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>

*General Admission*

Dear Collectors and Friends:

We are very pleased and honored to be your show hosts for the 37<sup>th</sup> National. This will be the first show ever in the Central Texas area. We are very pleased with the assistance the Lone Star Insulator Club members have offered. We are working diligently to ensure you have a great national. Response has been excellent in the first two months of sales. We have 20 sales tables, and only 6 exhibit spaces remaining. Table availability will be filled from a waiting list on a first come, first serve basis, once tables are sold out.

**We hope you will consider joining us at the 37<sup>th</sup> show!**

Respectfully, Your 2006 Show Co-Hosts,  
Bob, Carolyn, Jack & Jim

**Hotel information:** We will be holding this event at the Doubletree Hotel Austin. The hotel offers many amenities to make your convention stay a pleasant one. Easy access to major highways, many restaurants and attractions. You can reserve your rooms now!!

**To make your hotel reservations, call the Doubletree @ (800) 347-0330 or online @ [www.doubletreeaustin.com](http://www.doubletreeaustin.com) with convention code "NIA" for the National Insulator Association blocked room rate.**

For additional details please contact one of your show hosts, or go online to the following website location:  
<http://www.nia.org/shows/national>

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**Jack Roach** – NIA # 4156 - (512) 847-7302 - [jackroach@email.msn.com](mailto:jackroach@email.msn.com)  
**Jim Bates** – NIA # 3287 - (512) 259-0376 - [batesjimjr@aol.com](mailto:batesjimjr@aol.com)

**FROM THE MUSEUM  
COMMITTEE and Historian**



The Future of the Insulator Hobby  
By Rick Soller

The best book on general collecting I've read in the past 20 years is Harry L. Rinker's 2005 book "How to Think Like a Collector." One of the most notable parts is his page 70 list of six indicators that indicate the decline of a particular collectible. In the following paragraphs, I discuss each of these plus add a few.

1. Has the average age of people in the hobby exceeded 55? The hobby hasn't hit this threshold yet.
2. Have prices been stable for 10 or more years? Related to this is the frequency by which price guides are issued. An examination of Milholland and McDougalds price guides show prices are still going up.
3. Has coverage in general price guides decreased by half or have insulators been placed in a more general category? Kovel's Antique and Collectible Price Guide has consistently featured insulators in its guide and the amount of coverage has been stable.
4. Have collector clubs disbanded and not been heard from? Numerous insulator clubs have folded over the years: Eastern Insulator Club, Capital District Insulator Club (merged into Capi-

tal Region Antique Bottle and Insulator Club or CRAB Inc.), Ohio Valley Insulator Club, and Wisconsin Insulator Club. There also used to be an insulator club around St. Louis, Missouri and I believe one in California that no longer exists. Clubs with minimal activity (e.g., no newsletter, no meetings, no turnover in officers, or few swap meets) include the Missouri Valley Insulator Club, and the National Trails Insulator Club. On the other hand, clubs that have sprung up since the mid-1990s include the Greater Chicago Insulator Club, the North Western Insulator Club, the Dixie Jewels Insulator Club, the Western Reserve Insulator Club, GLASS, the Grand Canyon State Insulator Club, the Prairie State Insulator Club, and the Jefferson State Insulator Club.

**Interestingly enough, there has been a big increase in the number of auctions for insulators.**

5. Do insulators no longer regularly appear for auction or in the booths of dealers at antiques shows? Interestingly enough, there has been a big increase in the number of auctions for insulators. For a long time, Ray Klingensmith offered the only auction catalog of insulators (except for a 1988 catalog by Duane Davenport). In 1995, Dwayne Anthony ran his first insulator auction. From 1998-2002, Ross Baird ran four catalog auctions. Most recently, Mike Green started running a catalog. On the Internet, eBay offers a steady stream of about a thousand insulators. More than that are listed on www.insulators.com. Web sites like the insulator store and Grampa Mac's Emporium carry additional offerings.

6. Is a museum the only place to see examples of insulators? No.

I will add a few other indicators to the list.

7. Is more or less being published about insulators? Consider, for a moment, the number of insulator publications that no longer exist. These include Cross Arms Magazine, Rainbow Riders, Old Familiar Strains, and Canadian Insulator Collector. In addition, Old Bottle

Magazine which had a column on insulators for a while is no longer published. Antique Glass

and Bottle Collector once had occasional articles on insulators but does not now. The first twelve issues of Canadian Bottle and Stoneware Collector contained an article on insulators but none can be found in later issues. Recently, Power Line Explorer Journal has had trouble getting submissions.

8. Are price guides issued frequently? Currently, the McDougalds publish a new price guide about every 4 years. The same cannot be said for other sectors of the hobby. Only one price guide has ever been issued for foreign glass insulators and none for foreign porcelain insulators. The last porcelain pintype price guide came out in 1995 and the last price guide on multi-parts came out in 1990. A recent value guide on a Compact Disk contains relative values on radio strains. Some information on composition insulators can be found in the 1975 book by Gerald Brown while no price guides exist for suspensions, wall tubes, aerial spacers, fuse cut-outs, lightning rod insulators, or porcelain spools.

**Rick Soller, NIA # 2958  
Museum Committee Chair**





## NIA logo Items

	<p>Collector Hat / Lapel Pin (1" X 1.25")</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four color, etched enamel on 20-gauge metal with nickel plating Clear epoxy finish! Hard steel post back.</li> <li>• \$5.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Hanes Beefy-T Quality Shirts Gray with screenprinted logo or Ash Gray, Green, Cardinal Red with Embroidered Logo</p>	<p><u>*Screenprinted only- \$10 – 2X / gray – logo on front and back!</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sizes available in embroidered styles</li> <li>• Seafoam Green, Cardinal Red, Ash Gray</li> <li>• (M, L, XL, 2X) - \$20/\$22</li> <li>• * Some available with pockets (Call for details)</li> </ul>
	<p>Quality Golf Shirts* - embroidered logo (detail link) * call for shirt styles and colors available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sizes available; M, L, XL, 2X in stock</li> <li>• \$38.00</li> <li>• 2X and above add additional \$3.00</li> <li>• Pockets add additional \$3.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Quality Blue Denim long or short sleeve shirt (with embroidered logo over pocket)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$32.00 for (S, M, L, XL)</li> <li>• \$35.00 for (2X, 3X)</li> </ul>
	<p>Sweatshirts (over head style)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ash Gray, heavy-weight, 50/50 cotton blend; Screen printed (Large logo on back as well) S, M only - \$8.00.... GREAT FOR KIDS!!</li> <li>• Embroidered (Front logo only) – Ash Gray or Cardinal Red M, L, XL - \$25.00 2X / 3X = \$30.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Hooded Sweatshirt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy weight, Ash Gray, Embroidered front logo with zipper front, ribbed cuffs, drawstring hood with rivets , front warmer pocket</li> <li>• M, L, XL = \$35.00</li> <li>• 2X, 3X = \$40.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Caps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stone/Navy, Denim, Khaki/Green with embroidered logo; self-fabric adjustment strap</li> <li>• \$16.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Mugs - Glass or Ceramic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee mug with 4-color logo on both sides!</li> <li>• \$7.00</li> <li>• 13oz. glass mug with etched logo!</li> <li>• \$7.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Patches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light blue with embroidered 5-color logo (3 1/2" x 2 3/4")</li> <li>• \$4.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Decals (Inside Window)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light blue with 4-color logo (2 1/2" x 2")</li> <li>• Inside window application</li> <li>• \$1.00</li> </ul>
	<p>Engraved Name Badges &amp; Bars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$12.00 (Note: You must be an NIA member to order a name badge)</li> <li>• Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery</li> <li>• Local Club Bars( ie. LSIC, WRIC) Include rings to attach to badge</li> </ul>
	<p>"Koozie"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foam beverage holder; "insulator" with NIA logo</li> <li>• Screen-printed in metallic silver on both sides</li> <li>• Choice of: Red, Hunter Green, or Royal Blue</li> </ul>





**From the Treasurer**

**Jack Roach, NIA #4156 Treasurer**

**2005 - 2006 FINANCIAL REPORT  
NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION**

**NINE MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31, 2006**

Beginning Balance-General Fund 7/1/04	<b>JULY 1, 2005</b>	12413
Museum Exploratory Committee		972
Authentication/Ethics Account		2297

Revenues

Donations		
Membership Dues	5852	
Miscellaneous Income	518	
Product Sales	2563	
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>8933</b>

General Fund Expenses

Advertising	53	
Bank Charges, Taxes Fees and Ins.	750	
Marketing Products	3100	
Misc. Postage	1237	
Misc. Printing	667	
Misc. Supplies	849	
Misc. Professional Services		
Crown Jewels Rebates	486	
Drip Points Printing	2022	
Drip Points Postage	823	
Show Advertising Subsidy	716	
Show Awards		
Stationery Supplies		
Telephone		
Special Projects	394	
Educational Disp Postage	140	
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>11237</b>

Closing Balance, General Fund	10109
Museum Exploratory Committee Expenditures	
Museum Exploratory Committee Balance	972
Authentication/Ethics Account Expenditures	
Authentication/Ethics Account Balance	2297
Total Balance on Hand June 30, 2005	13378

2006 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION

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# THE EIC ECHO

The Official Newsletter of the *Enchantment Insulator Club*  
Acting Editors: Tom/Dorothy Jones (505) 876-4011, Hootowl@cia-g.com  
P.O. Box 110, Prewitt, NM 87045

Volume 7, Issue 1

Feb 20, 2003

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S MACHINE

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fortunately I composed most of this before the Columbia disaster on Saturday...otherwise I doubt I could have focused on my objective. Our astronauts realize and accept the huge risk they take in their endeavors, yet soar aloft anyway, and will continue their missions in the future...as their brave predecessors have in this and previous decades. We will find the root cause of this tragedy and continue our exploration of space.

Spring is coming...no doubt to any of us who witnessed & enjoyed today's howling southwest winds across this part of the country! Not much of a winter occurred in New Mexico AGAIN this year and there is little snow-pack in our mountains. This forebodes dry rivers, forest fires, and wildlife (i.e. bears, cougars, and others) wandering populated areas for food later this year. The situation is likely no different in Arizona, Utah, and southern Colorado. So for those of you out in the boonies looking for the elusive jewels or whatever, let's be careful with the flames, stogies, barbecues, et cetera!

We're planning the next EIC-TRIC tailgater for May 17, and the top venue is now Canon City, Colorado. Exact details are still in planning. This is a little further than usual for NM/AZ members, but the site will be fantastic, with many other attractions, such as a rail trip through the Royal Gorge that crosses under the famous bridge 1,000 feet above the river (keep an eye out for colored Denvers here!). We're negotiating a group deal with the railroad and will let you know of progress.

The Yuma, AZ Tailgater is coming up on February 22nd, so consider going to this event; many California & Arizona-based collectors are also planning to participate. I don't know if I'll be there as I just took delivery of a new 4x4 truck & this will put the hurt on my finances for awhile. Anyway, Tom Katonak – who has been to all the Yuma TGs says this is a great event!

We're still planning on a field trip to the vicinity of Ft Craig in the mid-March timeframe, and we'll be discussing this at the next EIC meeting. As reported last issue, Ft Craig is located along the Rio Grande near the south end of Bosque del Apache, and the old fort-to-fort tele-

graph line passed here or nearby. We may find something interesting, and intend to get the bottle folks involved also.

The next EIC meeting will be held at the residence of Tom & Lynda Katonak on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, beginning at 11 AM. The address is 1024 Camino de Lucia, Corrales, NM, phone (505) 898-5592. See the maps for directions. Bring your extras for sale & trade, plus anything else you may have for show & tell.

Also, a big THANK YOU to Valerie Meyers & Tom K. for contributing an article to this issue of EIC ECHO.

Thanks & hope to see you all at The Katonak's on March 1st!

Mike Gay



Mike, the Prez, and other members contemplating some sales/trades at the last EIC meeting held at Jim Garcia's house.



Join over 1000 collectors worldwide!

[www.insulators.com](http://www.insulators.com)

Email: [info@insulators.com](mailto:info@insulators.com)

## EARLY COMMUNICATIONS IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST

By Tom Katonak

Previous articles in the *EIC ECHO* have dealt with the telegraph and with the telephone, but we've yet to have a piece that ties all the associated history together. I attempt to do just this in this note.

First, why do we care about the early communication systems in New Mexico and Arizona? Well, aside from the fact that we live here, there is also the added attraction that the electronic communication systems used insulators as one of the primary elements. Ahhhh... insulators, you say? Now I am interested!

OK, so what communication systems are we dealing with here? Back in the 1850s, we had to rely on the US Mail. This was really ponderous! And, unlike Wyoming, we didn't have the Pony Express to speed the mail up. Fortunately, by the 1860s, New Mexico entered the telegraph age, and now what used to take days previously could be accomplished in a matter of minutes. And by the turn of the century, New Mexicans began to enjoy communication via the spoken word, i.e. the telephone, as well. Since the USPD (back in "the old days", the Post Office was an actual department of the Federal Government) didn't give a hoot about insulators, we will ignore them in the following discussion.

Today, we will explore a little of the history of the telegraph, the telephone and the heliograph and their impact on the States of New Mexico and Arizona.

First, let's investigate the telegraph. We all know that Samuel F. B. Morse developed this electromagnetic device in 1844. By the early 1850s, the telegraph was in widespread use over much of eastern United States. In the mid-'50s, the first trans-continental telegraph line was stretched from St. Louis to Kansas City, to Omaha, and on to California, bringing service to San Francisco in 1861.

Denver finally got connected in 1863, but only because its residents shelled out \$35,000 from their own pockets to bring wire from the main line, which had by-passed the town well to the north. (I think that even as I write this, charter club member Bill Ashcraft is detailing some of the early history of the telegraph lines in Wyoming.)

In 1866, several enterprising Denverites formed the United States & Mexico Telegraph Company and laid plans to build a line across Colorado and New Mexico and down into Chihuahua Mexico. During the first winter of this endeavor, they got the wire as far south as

Trinidad Colorado. Once into northeast New Mexico, the poles followed the route of the old Santa Fe Trail and the line got to Santa Fe in July of 1868. Noted historian and newspaper columnist Marc Simmons reported in the *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August in 1991 that:

"The wire was strung into Santa Fe along the main road entering from the southeast – the Santa Fe Trail. But such was the novelty of long-distance wire that local townfolk called the thoroughfare "Telegraph Street" for a number of years afterward".

In 1873, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to build a military telegraph line from San Diego into Arizona as an aid in conducting war against the Apaches. The work started at San Diego on August 23, 1873, and reached Tucson in just a little over three months. The line was carried eastward from Yuma through Phoenix and Tucson to Fort Bowie, not far from the New Mexico border.

In 1875, Lt. Frederick Phelps, with a troop of 30 soldiers and five mule wagons loaded with coils of wire began stringing the military line south down the Rio Grande Valley toward Fort Craig. After reaching Fort Craig, the line continued through Forts McRae, Selden, Cummings, and Bayard, and linked up with the Arizona sections at Fort Bowie. Albuquerque sent its first telegraphic message through this network to San Francisco on Feb 12 1876.

While the telegraph system was primarily for military purposes, civilian messages were accepted. This policy was a great boon to the commercial interests of the territory. Goods could be ordered from wholesale houses in San Francisco much faster than by stagecoach. Also, the rates charged by the military were much lower than those charged by commercial telegraph companies. Some companies, in order to insure privacy, employed their own codes for their business messages.

By the time the Southern Pacific Railroad (and the associated Western Union commercial telegraph) reached Yuma in 1877, there were about one thousand miles of line in operation in Arizona. When commercial telegraph service became available as part of the rapidly expanding railroads, the military lines were abandoned. For example, we note that when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines joined at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869, all the telegraph traffic shifted to this transcontinental corridor. Similarly, when the AT&SF came through New Mexico in 1879 and 1880, we have documented evidence that the telegraph traffic reverted to the parallel Western Union lines virtually immediately.

And this was also the case with the Southern Pacific Railroad on its route through southern Arizona. By 1882, there were only 532 miles of the Arizona military system still in use. So in just a few years, all telegraph communication was commercial. Through the research of a number of dedicated historians, we now know the types of insulators used along all these early telegraph lines...and untold numbers of these artifacts remain buried in the shifting sands of the region.

While telegraph networks were a marvel indeed, this was only the beginning of sophisticated electronic communications – and it wasn't long before voice connectivity took center stage. At the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, Alexander Graham Bell showed off his new invention: The telephone.

The first telephone lines in New Mexico were installed by private individuals who connected their homes and business or outlying camps on vast ranches with this new invention. The first telephone company with an exchange was launched at Las Vegas in 1881 and was headed by Miguel Otero Sr. and several partners associated with the huge mercantile company in the same city. The next year, Otero expanded the service to some thirty-plus local subscribers. 1883 saw the first local phone service in El Paso, and by 1894, Santa Fe had local phone service as well.

I believe it was in 1904 that the Colorado Telephone and Telegraph Company ran the first long-line open wire service from Denver down to Las Vegas, New Mexico. As reported by the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, this long distance line was extended to Santa Fe and Albuquerque by the fall of 1905. By 1910 or so, all the major long-lines were in place throughout New Mexico and one may still see vestiges of these lines, a few poles scattered here-and-there, even today. An interesting aspect of the early New Mexico lines was that virtually all the insulators used on the lines were products of the now famous Denver companies operating out of the Valverde Glass Works – R. Good, Western Flint Glass Company, and the Western Glass Manufacturing Company.

Let me conclude this article with a brief note about a seldom-discussed communication system, the heliograph. Even though there are no insulators associated with this system, it is still a fascinating chapter in the annals of Desert Southwest communications.

The heliograph was a device that, by the use of mirrors, could direct a beam of rays from the sun in any desired direction. By interrupting the beam with a shutter, messages could be sent with the device, using the dots and dashes of the Morse code.

Invented by British army officer Henry Mance in 1865, the US Army began experimenting with the heliograph at Fort Myer, Virginia in 1877. Other experiments were subsequently carried out in Montana, Oregon and Arizona. Now the telegraph required a fixed installation of poles and wire that was subject to interruption by storms or unfriendly Indians; but the heliograph was simple and very mobile. On the other hand, it could not be used at night or during bad weather. Intermediate stations were required, as the flash could not be read at distances much over forty miles (although under especially fine conditions, communication was accomplished up to 100 miles). And in dangerous country, extra guards had to be provided for the two operators at each station.

When General Nelson A. Miles succeeded General George Crook in command of the Department of Arizona and New Mexico in 1886, he requested the best instruments and operators that could be provided. A heliograph network would provide a faster means of communication with troops in the field than the usual combination of telegraph and mounted courier. In addition, the stations could observe and report any movements in a large area.

By August 1886, an extensive network had been set up. The Arizona Division was comprised of 14 stations manned by 65 soldiers. The New Mexico Division had 13 stations manned by 29 men (and another 9 ancillary stations). The major heliograph installations in New Mexico were located at the forts Stanton, McRae, Cummings and Bayard. This communication network proved instrumental in the intense war with the Apaches. Following the surrender of Geronimo in early September 1886, the major part of the system was dismantled. However, it was still used to a lesser extent until replaced by the telephone in the early 1900s.

Well, there we have the brief look at the development of the early communication systems in the Desert Southwest. The next step is to pull out the old maps and determine just exactly where to look for the long-buried insulators that made the telegraph and telephone networks viable.



Talkin' insulators... yeah, sure.



Mike's "ox-blood" is as close to red as they ever get !!



Checking out the backyard goodies.



Tom K selecting his chicken parts from the assortment of goodies that Jim provided at the

**EDITOR'S NOTES:** *Tom/Dorothy Jones*

Another year gone by !! Unbelievable !! But what a year... our first "National", our first issue as Editors of ECHO, our first full year of "retirement" and most importantly, our first grandDAUGHTER ! We have a grandson that we love dearly but this is the first girl child in two generations. After years and years of rotten little boys, a little charmer that melts her Grandpa's heart.

People have waxed eloquent over the Columbia mishap so we'll leave that subject where it belongs, within each person's heart.

The last EIC meeting was successful in both subject and object. The subject being the meeting proper and the object being Jim's fantastic Bar-b-que sauce !! Plenty of food and afterwards an ample supply of glass for Xmas presents. Yes, Dorothy got her traditional addition to her collection. This year -an amber Mexican with extra-long drips.



D's newest addition – thx Mike !



Jim's backyard stash.

The next meeting, March 1st at T&L Ks should be another winner. In fact, Tom said that everyone who attends will get to select any insulator from his collection..... And take a picture of it !



Meeting ? Meeting ?  
I thought we were here to eat lunch !

## THE CARLSBAD LINEMAN

By Valerie Meyers

I have known Jim Wynn for many years. He is an old man that has been a top horseman and cowboy locally. I knew that as a young man in the '50's he worked as a cowboy for the huge Matador and LA ranches. I never thought of him in connection with insulators until someone mentioned that Jim was a retired lineman and so I asked if he would talk to me about that. It was a most interesting interview and I learned about a whole new chapter of Jim Wynn's life.

In 1956 Jim Wynn started working for SPS here in Carlsbad, New Mexico. He would retire 40 years later in 1996 after having done some of SPS's most exciting and dangerous work.

For the first three months he read meters and then started on a line crew. It took four years of apprentice work to become a journeyman lineman. He worked only the power lines--never the telephone lines. Common voltages for these lines were 69,000 and 115,000 volts and they were usually worked "hot". They would only kill the power for things like changing out a transformer.

Jim remembers back in 1965 when the phone company here in Carlsbad got their first bucket truck. Before that all work was done by climbing the poles. Jim said that often they spent 8 hours a day up on the poles and only came down to eat lunch. Calluses would form on the hips of the men where the harness came around and connected to the D rings. Another thing that has passed out of use now is the "hotstick". In the accompanying picture, you can see Jim and his crew working a 75-foot pole with the hotsticks back in 1961. Jim is the top man in the photo. Jim showed me these long poles with metal attachments on the ends that served as 'hands' for the crews as they worked on the hot wires. Men that were skilled with these sticks could do almost anything with them that the human hand could do. Jim has a very old hotstick made of wood, but the ones he used were mostly made of fiberglass.

He never worked much with glass insulators; mostly he worked with porcelain. He can look at a power line and tell how much voltage it's carrying at a glance by the type of porcelain on it. His only contact with glass insulators was to take down some of the old glass lines from time-to-time. Some of the most unusual insulators he remembers were old porcelain insulators in the shape of a donut that were made in two pieces and held to-

gether with wire. These were on a line that they took down that carried power into Soldier Springs up in the Guadalupe Mountains.

The last three years before he retired Jim was on the "barehand" crew. Only three men in the state of New Mexico did "barehand" and there were two crews that he knew of in west Texas. In the early 80's the Lubbock crew had a fatal accident. After that, SPS had a barehand school that was required for anyone doing that type of work. Whenever they needed him, Jim took time off his regular work to teach this barehand school.



“Hot Stick” crew in 1961—Jim is the uppermost person.

Barehand involved working the high voltage lines (up to 230,000 volts) literally with your bare hands. You were not grounded and so could work on the lines with the same impunity that a bird can sit on them. However, if you became grounded it meant instant death. The men worked in buckets that had a stainless steel liner and they worked barefoot or with carbon soled shoes standing on a metal grid and never used gloves of any kind. They worked in teams of two men in two buckets joined by a copper wire. This kind of work had to be done in

absolutely dry conditions--there was a siren on the boom of the bucket truck that warned of any moisture and they stopped immediately if it went off. Obviously, lightning anywhere in the area also contraindicated this kind of work.

Jim never got "burnt" in all those years. The only time he was ever injured involved a time he was going hand-over-hand on a guy wire between two poles. He was weighted down with all his lineman equipment and his gloves began rolling and slipping and he fell 30 feet onto rocky ground breaking both heels when he landed. In forty years that is an amazing record. However, working with high voltage lines still does not make him an expert at all things electrical. His wife laughed and told me that if Jim had to do some of the wiring around the house he would be lost.

So I have a new perspective on an old friend. "Lineman" means a great deal more to me than it did yesterday!



Valerie and Linda checking out the goodies. for Xmas gifts?

**WHAZJT ?????**

Any Guesses on what the following items might be, please email Tom Jones at [hootowl@cia-g.com](mailto:hootowl@cia-g.com)

Patricia Brown discovered the following item in a dig last year.



I found the next item in a little shop in Indiana.



**NOTICE:**

Due to the dunning of dues over the next duodecimo, all dues are due ! Whether you're a Duke in your Duchy or a dubious dude , do your duty and don't be a dufus—remit your ducats before doomsday, to our treasurer:

Tom Katonak  
1024 Camino de Lucia  
Corrales NM 87048

**Ramblings of a Go-With.**

Tom Jones

With apologies to What's-his-name....

You may be an *Insulector* if :

You think a CD Player is another *Insulector*.

The eye color on your driver's license is Hem-ingray blue.

You're invited to church to see the ICONs and you look for a computer.

You look for flea bites and spider webs.

Your **two** children don't realize that you have a **three bedroom** house.

You don't picture Disneyland when someone says "Mickey Mouse".

You know *Crown Jewels* aren't worn.

Buying presents is more a matter of money than thought.

You don't think honey when someone says "beehive".

(If you understood ALL of the above..... GET HELP !!)



## FIELD TRIP ON MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup> !

We've been talking about this upcoming field trip now for several months, so here are a few more details to wet your appetite!

In an article elsewhere in this newsletter, I outline a bit of the history of the fort-to-fort military telegraph in New Mexico. We note that this 1870s telegraph line ran from Fort Union up in northeast NM near Watrous, through Santa Fe and Albuquerque and down to Ft. Craig near what is now Bosque del Apache. Continuing south, the line ran through Ft. McRae and on to Ft. Selden, near Radium Springs in southern NM.

A number of us have spent many days searching for remnants of the old line over the past three decades – and a few nice threadless glass pieces have been recovered. (I'll chronicle the history at the upcoming meeting)

Thanks to early surveyor and mapmaker George M. Wheeler, we have some outstanding records of the precise location of the telegraph line through this territory. However, for much of the distance, e.g. from Socorro north to the Rio Grande Pueblos north of Albuquerque, all traces of the line have been lost due to the intense farming and urbanization that has taken place in the Rio Grande valley over the past 125 years. On the other hand, there are vast sections of this tract that have seen little disturbance over time, and only nature itself has

erased the evidence of the telegraph.

The focus of the upcoming field trip on March 15<sup>th</sup> will be the section from just north of Ft. Craig to just north of Ft. Selden. Of some interest is the news that due to the sinking levels of Elephant Butte Lake (now the lowest it's been in 30 years!), Ft. McRae has "emerged" out of the water! I plan to scout this section prior to the next EIC meeting to hone in on the area(s) we will concentrate on. So plan on getting the details of the trip at the next meeting.

The general plan will be to rendezvous at a point in south central NM – Socorro possibly – about 9:00am on Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. We will then caravan by car to the search area to the south. It is a possibility that we will continue the search on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> – particularly if we find something exciting. You'll need to be prepared for some desert hiking, as we'll likely be out in the "boonies" for several hours. You'll need food...and lots of water.

If anyone would like to accompany Duane Davenport and I on our exploratory trip the last week in February, give me a call.

One noteworthy item: The forts mentioned above are National Sites of one sort or another, so there can be no collecting of artifacts (that means insulators!) at these locations. But it is fair game to look for clues at these locations.

-Tom Katonak

**If you haven't already done so, please pay this year's dues to Treasurer Tom K. !!**

## **EIC "HOT SHEET"**

**Deals that are hotter than Green Chili Ice Cream!**

### **FOR SALE:**

I have a number of fine **insulators from the Ukraine and Mexico** for sale, including some magnificent colored pieces. This is primo stuff! You won't find these pieces anywhere else – including eBay!

### **WANTED:**

Any strange variant of **MEXICAN** or **OVG insulators**. Strange colors, misshapes or anything else unusual.

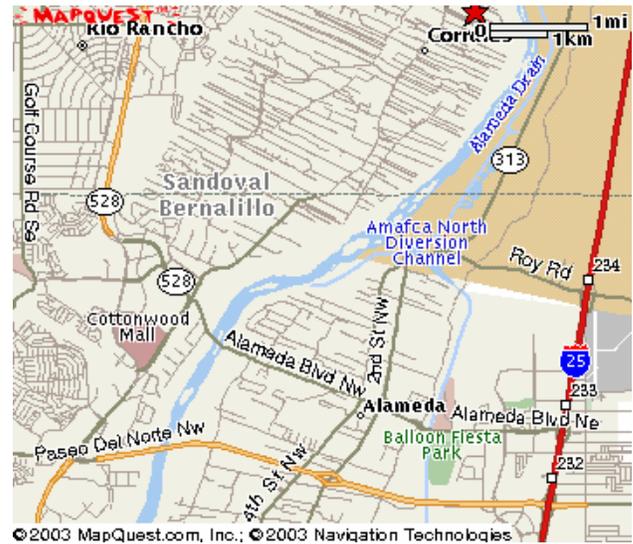
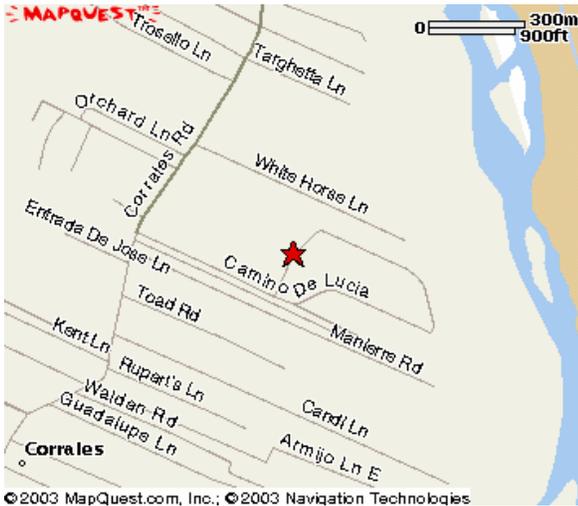
Tom Katonak, (505) 898-5592,  
Email: "tkatonak@Comcast.net"



## Enchantment Insulator Club

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Prewitt, NM 87045

TO



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