

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

**T**his issue of *Drip Points* begins Volume 25 - and my fifth year as your editor. (Can you believe holding a job for four years without getting fired in this day and age?) I have to tell you that I've sure enjoyed working with the many board members and a great many NIA members at large! What a great bunch of people!

As we start the new fiscal year, things continue on the upswing. There are more members supporting this hobby than ever before (see Joe Beres' membership notes); we just had one of the greatest

National Shows ever; your NIA is coming to grips with the fake and altered insulator issues; new insulator clubs are springing up and we continue to add young people into the hobby.

Recognizing the ever-increasing connectivity of collectors on the Internet, you'll note a small change to the newsletter header: There are two INET addresses of importance. First, if you want to send something to your editor - comments, suggestions, letters - just address it to "drippoints@insulators.com". I'll read it within a few hours no matter where I am in the world! The second

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address, "<http://www.insulators.com/nia>", takes you to the new NIA Web pages. Yep, thanks to Bill Meier, the NIA now has it's very own presence on the World Wide Web! Here you will find the "NIA information clearinghouse". Tune in and see what's there. By the way, I'm not forgetting that over half of us in the NIA are not connected to the Internet: That's why we still do business as usual - newsletters, phone calls, magazines, etc. But the trend continues toward the electronic medium and this has been a tremendous asset in sharing information and getting the "insulator word" out to the world. So even though you're not on the net, your kids and grandkids will be!

On a different note, I'd like to extend my personal congratulations to Bob Stahr on becoming the elected Central Region Vice

President. I'm betting he's the youngest board member - by a wide margin!

Lots of good stuff in this issue. Of particular interest, Rick Baldwin gives a run-down on where we've been and where we're going; I've highlighted the award winners at the Chicago National; John McDougald presents a rundown on the new Research and Authentication Committee activities; and Dwayne Anthony discusses the finer points of how not to buy phony insulators. So read and enjoy!

And finally, don't miss the "last hurrah of 1997" - the NIA Western Regional Show in Albuquerque, September 27th and 28th! (Yet another great reason to be the editor: Free advertising!)

**Tom Katonak**

NIA NIA

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

- If you know someone who should be an NIA member, encourage them to send a check to Joe Beres so they can help out themselves and the hobby! .
- MOVING?? Please send your new address to Joe Beres: Don't risk missing your copy of the *Drip Points!*
- Earthquake insurance is now available for you California collectors (see note in this issue and flyer on back cover)
- Don't miss the Eastern and Western Regional shows - end of September (see flyers this issue)
- Check out the NIA on the World Wide Web: Tune in to "[http://](http://www.insulators.com/nia)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 28th NIA Convention is now history, and Rick Soller, Bob Stahr and the members of the Greater Chicago Insulator Club can walk proud for a job well done! I was especially impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by several GCIC members with respect to their eagerness to help in whatever capacity was needed. Our annual conventions are a time for camaraderie and fellowship, and this atmosphere certainly prevailed throughout the weekend. It was good to see several members in attendance who are currently facing some serious health problems, and our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families!

The facilities in Rosemont were great, and it was a real treat to have a large show held in an overly spacious room with plenty of aisle space and open area behind the dealer's tables. I do not think that the walk-in crowd was as good as anticipated for this highly-populated area; perhaps the brutal hot and humid weather was a factor. There were many good pieces available on dealer's tables, and it was good to see that such quality pieces are returning to the "show" format for offering items for sale. I believe that at a show such as this, supported by a large number of dealers, competition can be stimulated, and some decreases in escalating sticker prices can be realized. Following the show, the McDougalds opened their doors and extended their Midwestern hospitality to all who could attend. Besides the opportunity to view their impressive collection, guests were treated to a behind-the-scenes look at how *Crown Jewels of the Wire* materializes.

Next year's National, which will be hosted by Jim Frustieri and Mark Becher, will be

held from July 31st to August 2nd in Williamsburg, VA. This is a great historic and family vacation area, so start planning on attending another great show!

At the General NIA Membership Meeting, John McDougald was introduced as the chairperson of the Research & Authentication Committee, and I presented an overview of committee objectives, makeup and methodology and the status of activities that have been initiated. Presently, the R&A Committee has twenty NIA members within its membership "pool", and it has activities underway in four major task areas. In the task area of "Technical and Scientific Studies," progress in our research project to investigate glass "weathering" has been impeded by the principal investigator's lack of resources, and we are assessing several alternative technical approaches in the event that this

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THE RESEARCH PROJECT ON  
ALTERED GLASS INSULATOR  
TECHNICAL  
COLORS IS CONTINUING

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situation persists. The research project on altered glass insulator colors is continuing, and its database is being expanded. With regards to this activity, it was suggested at the General Membership Meeting that an updateable exhibit be fashioned for "permanent" viewing at the annual NIA conventions, and this suggestion was very well-received and is being implemented.

Several other significant activities are also underway in other R&A Committee task areas. A task team is formulating criteria for justification to deem an example as "questionable" and to establish the protocol for instituting action on such an example. Another task team is involved in establishing protocol for the procedures

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some more input from you as well. We are targeting the mailing for early 1998, so any ideas you have should be forwarded to Matt or me this Fall.

I have also been appointed to the Research and Authentication Committee because of my extensive knowledge about Hemingray and my continued research into "not previously known insulator manufacturers". This committee will begin working on the various problems with fakes and altered insulators very soon. Notwithstanding the NIA efforts in this area, the best way to protect yourself is to be ever cautious about what you purchase. If it looks suspicious and has a questionable past, then don't buy it! By not buying the fakes, we will put a stop to their production or alteration. And incidentally, the fake issue is nothing new to the hobby: Many of them have been around for over 25 years! For more information, I suggest obtaining Mike

Guthrie's excellent book on Fake, Altered and Repaired Insulators.

The schedule for shows is still busy for this Fall. The National Trails/Telephone Collectors International show in Erlanger, KY will be the first one I'll be attending after the National. By the time you read this, it will be over already, but I think this show has promise of becoming bigger with the population of the greater Cincinnati area. I'll let you know of future plans for this show. The 6th Annual Lone Star Club show and sale will be held Sept. 6th in Houston, TX and the 21st Huron Valley show will be held on Oct. 5th in Ann Arbor, MI. The last Central Region show this year will be the ever-popular show in London, OH. on Nov. 8 and 9. This is the 27th annual for the London show (talk about history)! There is a new Holiday Inn Express in London, but I still wouldn't hesitate to make your reservations now!

THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT  
YOURSELF IS TO BE EVER CAUTIOUS  
ABOUT WHAT YOU PURCHASE

NIA NIA

**FROM THE WESTERN REGION**

Having just returned from the 28th National show in Chicago, I thought I'd include my two cent's worth.

The only drawback that I could see was the weather--I don't believe I have ever experienced a more muggy, humid day than Saturday the 26th. Some people stated it was 114° with the humidity, but whatever it was, it wasn't fit for man or beast! It was much more comfortable inside where there was air conditioning and plenty of insulators!

From most accounts of the people that I spoke with, all seemed to have a very nice show. There was so much to see as far as glass was concerned--everything

from Jumbo's to a fascinating display of threadless porcelain containing things I'd only seen in old pictures of CJ. Lightning rod balls and foreign glass, great displays and good buys on low-dollar general glass were the order of the day. That was good to see since I quit Denver glass and returned to general glass collecting a month or so ago and it was nice to go around and not have to worry about getting another Denver insulator and splitting hairs with the color!

As far as displays go, it was indeed great. Ken Pollard's collection of Blue Bells and commemorative bells was so nice that for one brief moment I wanted to quit insulators and collect bells exclusively! He won a couple of awards for that fine

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display. Another display by Roger Lucas included a huge assortment of glass from the Hemingray dump. It was nicely catalogued and quite informative--as were all the displays. Paul Plunkett had an outrageous display of threadless and I enjoyed his handout on his display. The best part -- all the glass in the display was neatly catalogued on the color handout, showing where and when the insulators were used. Now why didn't I think of that one when I was displaying Denver glass? There were plenty of other great displays, but I'll let someone else go over all of them.

Most prices seemed reasonable on the sales tables but it depended on what you were after. I was discouraged to see cobalt and amber 162's with some damage selling for what a mint one would've cost when I was doing general glass a few years back. There were some questionable pieces out there as well. I was also seeing a few suspect

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DEALERS WERE ASKED TO  
REMOVE QUESTIONABLE  
PIECES FROM THEIR TABLES

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colors in some designs--some were marked and others weren't. In several cases, dealers were asked to remove questionable pieces from their tables. Rick Baldwin will undoubtedly fill all of you in on what the NIA has done with the subject of suspect glass and I believe they have made some substantial progress in this area. Naturally it won't satisfy everybody, but isn't that the case with almost everything?

The banquet went off pretty well with the exception of some spoons and other silverware which mysteriously found their way to the floor whenever a certain party would get up from their table. This story goes back to the Long Beach show and it's along one so I won't fill you in on all the details here. The location was announced and most of you all know by

now that Williamsburg, Virginia, is the site of the 29th National show. One plug for my area of the country, Denver will be host to the 1998 Western Regional so mark your calendars and try to make plans to attend!

Speaking of shows in the Western Region, there's a few coming up that I need to remind you about. The August Auburn and Portland shows are history at this point, but the 31st Annual Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club Show in Arcadia, CA is coming up on September 20th, and the 27th Annual Bakersfield Extravaganza will take place on the 1st and 2nd of November. The 30th Tulare CA Bottle and Insulator Show is scheduled for November 7th and 8th and on December 6th, The 49er Historical Bottle Association hosts their 20th Annual Show and Sale. Last but not least - and this is the **BIG ONE!** - I hope to see you all at the **NIA Western Regional Show in Albuquerque, NM on September 27th and 28th.** The WR is being hosted by the Enchantment Insulator Club (their Tenth Annual Show!) and promises to be one of the best shows of 1997! New Mexico in September is always a great time, and lots of folks plan vacations around this popular show. The famous New Mexico State Fair is the week before the show and the International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta starts the weekend after the Western Regional. For more information, call Tom Katonak at (505) 898-5592.

As you read in the Central Region report, Bob Stahr and I will be doing a questionnaire in the upcoming months and I would appreciate your comments on things you would like to see added or deleted from the questionnaire sent out some time ago. Please feel free to Email or call me and let me know what you think and please take a few minutes to fill out the form when it comes with *Drip Points*.

Until next time.....





## NIA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MINUTES

Minutes of the 25th NIA General Meeting, Chicago, IL,  
Friday, July 25, 1997

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Rick Baldwin. 102 members were in attendance

1. Committee members were introduced by Rick Baldwin.
2. Some comments about the activities of the show were made. Rick Baldwin extended the thanks of the NIA to the show hosts.
3. A motion to approve the minutes of the last general meeting was made by Rick Soller, and seconded by Bob Adams. Passed by voice vote.
4. Treasurer's Report by Mike Guthrie:
  - \$1874 was received over the year in contributions
  - The NIA has \$12,309 in the budget
  - Less money was spent last year because some major projects were not implemented
5. Highlights of last year were given by Rick Baldwin.
  - A record number of NIA members (1350) was projected by the end of the Show
  - The Long Beach National was a success
  - 1998 show bids were of high quality
  - Insulator web page activity is increasing
  - There is a significant amount of new blood in the NIA
    - 39% of officers have less than 3 years of NIA organizational experience.

If committees are included, the figure rises to 45%

  - Several ethics issues have been handled over the year
  - The membership survey has been tabulated
  - A Research and Authentication Committee has been created. A strategy and methodology document has been produced and 19 participants are on the committee
  - The video project has been refocused
  - Preparations are underway for the 29th National plus the CY98 Regionals
6. Dudley Ellis announced that in the election for Central Region Vice-President, Bob Stahr won the election and will be serving for the next 3 years. Next year, the Eastern Region VP and the President's position will become vacant.
7. Jim Frustieri reminded people of this year's Eastern Regional in Kulpsville on September 27-28, 1997. Contracts were still available. A double room is \$64.
8. Tom Katonak spoke about this year's Western Region Show on Sept. 27-28, 1997. This will be the 10th EIC show. The facility, the National Guard armory, is much bigger

than previous year's locations, so there will be ample space for all dealers and attendees.

9. Jim Frustieri and Mark Becher spoke about the Williamsburg, VA National on July 31-Aug. 2, 1998. Room rates will be \$74 per night.

10. The Western Region show, hosted by the Triple Ridge Insulator Club, will be June 5-6, 1998. There will be RV parking and a great banquet.

11. The Central Region show in Garland, TX, hosted by the Lone Star Insulator Club, will be the 3rd weekend of March.

12. Bill Meier spoke about the Internet, pointing out the strong growth of collectors on-line.

- People can buy & sell insulators and discuss issues on the Internet
- The web promotes new clubs and has lots of information available about insulators
- The video project will now be retargeted toward Internet use

13. Tom Katonak reported on the Drip Points.

- He encouraged cards and letters
- Nov. 1 is the deadline for the December issue
- Feb. 1 is the deadline for the March issue
- May 1 is the deadline for the June issue
- Aug. 1 is the deadline for the Sept. issue

14. Rick Baldwin reviewed details of the Research and Authentication committee including its mission, objectives, membership, and deliverables. John McDougald was introduced as the chair of the committee. Some areas the R&A committee will address include:

- Technical and Scientific studies on altering insulators
- The investigation of questionable insulators
- The corroboration of classification assignments
- The endorsements of commemoratives
- A Research & Authentication scrapbook

15. John McDougald indicated that no easy answers exist to the problem of fake insulators. At the National Show, the standard applied is whether an insulator is "highly questionable." If an insulator is "highly questionable", dealers will be put on notice. Several were already and, in all cases, the insulator was removed from the sales table.

16. Dave Wilson asked for examples of "highly questionable" insulators. The reply was that some are irradiated, some are new colors, and some new shapes; however the committee did not plan to issue a list because some pieces are closely linked to a specific individual and, in addition, it is quite possible that some of the questionable

pieces could be authenticated

17. Grant Salzman commented that the R&A Committee was doing a lot and asked if Lightning Rod Balls were included. The answer was yes.

18. Len Linscott asked if parking lot sales were considered. The focus of the committee is on the show sales but the committee would investigate any sales in the parking lot.

19. Len also asked if anyone has identified the places that make the fakes? The response was that the problem would be easier to solve if we could.

20. Dwayne Anthony pointed out that much of what the R&A committee does is education.

21. Jackie Linscott asked, "Why doesn't the NIA have a standard display of fakes and pay for circulating the display to shows?"

22. James Doty inquired about joining with other groups to mount a combined effort.

23. A question was asked about whether dealers could be labeled as someone who sells questionable insulators. Related to this, someone asked whether legal authorities have been consulted. Could the NIA be sued for hurting a dealer's sales without proof that an insulator was fake?

- NIA bylaws specify that dealers cannot offer questionable insulators and since all dealers agree to abide by the bylaws, proof that the insulator was fake is not necessary.

24. Nominations are being accepted for Bylaw Chair since John McDougald, the former chair, is now serving as chair of the R&A committee.

25. Grant Salzman asked about the ethical issues handled in the prior year. The NIA pursued the case of someone who used a different name and solicited money for insulators but never sent the insulators. The person returned the money and has not done it since.

Motion to adjourn made by Jackie Linscott, second by Phoebe Adams.

- Adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

**Rick Soller, NIA #2958**  
**Executive Director**

## RESEARCH AND AUTHENTICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

**A**t the 1997 NIA Board Meeting at the Chicago National, I was appointed as the chairman of the Research and Authentication Committee for the NIA. This followed membership action at the 1996 Annual meeting, where the NIA membership approved the formation of a standing committee called the Research and Authentication Committee to deal with a number of issues that face our hobby. Rick Baldwin had served as the ex-officio chairman of the committee for the first year of its existence, and he oversaw activities in four major areas:

(1) Technical and scientific studies - Some work has been done with Penn State University and with a testing laboratory in Canada to develop a methodology for determining the age of glass. Several different techniques have been employed, but to date, no satisfactory test has been identified. Work continues in this area, and Rick Baldwin will continue to chair this subcommittee activity. This is a very complex area, and we may never have a fully satisfactory answer using scientific methods. However, there is enough potential for us to continue to pursue this activity. Thus far, we have been able to have these tests run at no cost. The committee will recommend judicious use of NIA funds if deemed appropriate.

(2) Investigation of "questionable" insulators in the marketplace - Tom Katonak chairs this subcommittee. The intent of this activity is to provide NIA

members with information about insulators and related items that are offered for sale or trade that are of questionable status. This may cover the areas of reproductions made to look like real insulators, insulators that have been altered in some way (e.g. color), and fakes. The activities of this subcommittee are closely linked with the scientific

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THE MEMBERSHIP APPROVED THE RESEARCH AND AUTHENTICATION COMMITTEE A YEAR AGO

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activities above, but Tom's subcommittee will be involved in other activities as well. For instance, in response to General Show Floor Rule #3,

which states that "highly questionable" insulators must be permanently marked, Tom's subcommittee contacted several dealers at the National convention and requested the removal of a number of items that did not pass the "highly questionable" test. All of the dealers cooperated in full. It is the intent of this subcommittee to have representatives at each of the NIA sponsored shows to help inform NIA members of questionable items.

(3) Corroboration of Classification Assignments - This subcommittee has been formed to provide assistance to the existing assignors of CD-, U-, M- and other classification systems that are used in our hobby. In addition, they will provide oversight to any activities which provide classifications for new insulator collecting areas, such as radio strains, lightning rod insulators, etc. Bill Meier chairs this subcommittee, and he is in the process of developing the procedures to be followed by this committee.

(4) Endorsement of Reproductions and

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## FROM THE SECOND PAST PRESIDENT

Summer has arrived with a vengeance! I sit here at my desk on this August day in Highland, California, and the temperature outside reads 111 degrees! Those that attended the 1997 NIA National Convention can also attest to Mother Nature's ability to turn up the heat. Fortunately, the show was held in a well air conditioned hall, giving those of us requiring our full fix of insulator euphoria no reason to wander out into the steamy outdoors. What a great show it was! Congratulations to Rick Soller, Bob Stahr and The Greater Chicago Insulator Club for a job well done.

### The ongoing Altered Insulators

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THE ALTERED INSULATORS AWARE-  
NESS PROJECT IS ADVANCING

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Awareness Project is steadily advancing. Several specimens of color altered insulators were displayed for public viewing on my sales table at the Chicago National. Those that stopped by and chatted with me expressed an obvious amazement upon their realization that so many beautiful colors can be artificially generated by specific radiation sources. These collectors walked away with a broader knowledge and perception of what is possible, especially when a color looks "too good to be true".

The altered samples at the Chicago national were from the larger display that was exhibited at the Long Beach national last year. Due to the size and fragility of the Long Beach display, it could not be transported to Chicago. This will soon

change! The display is currently being dismantled and will be placed into a more compact and rigid format. When this display is completed, it will be available for transportation to all major NIA shows, allowing collectors across the country first hand viewing. In addition, a portion of Mike Guthrie's famous "Fake and Altered" exhibit will be incorporated into the project to create one mega-educational traveling exhibition! Other methods of educating collectors on this same topic are currently "in the works" and will be announced soon. If you have any specimens with fake or altered dispositions that you would like to donate to the cause, please contact either Mike or me.

New revelations are constantly occurring. Example: As I am writing this report a call is received regarding a reverse process test on a suspect irradiated insulator. The insulator in question: CD 121 WFG Denver toll in a dark royal purple. This specimen was acquired in an old time collection and has been accepted as an authentic color by many collectors for years. The reverse process proved the specimen to be in all actuality, a light lavender that had been exposed to a radiation source many years ago. This is only one example of the many discoveries that are being documented as a result of this project.

Several recent reports have been received from collectors across the country that a "collector" in Florida has made several attempts to market insulators in highly questionable colors. In most instances, previously educated collectors are easily identifying these controversial colors and returning them.

Again, if it's "too good to be true" don't take a chance without doing your homework first. If you're not certain about

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the authenticity of a color, call one of the many specialists in the hobby for their advice and expertise.

Let's create an example: You're a fairly new collector and you just received a deep purple CD 257 Hemingray "Mickey Mouse" in the mail with a price tag of \$100. Your heart starts pumping as you place it next to your electric blue mouse and it looks great! You've never seen this color before in this CD, but the guy that sent it to you has been "in and out of the hobby for years". Wait! Don't let your excitement get the best of you! A simple call to one of the many knowledgeable Hemingray specialists for an evaluation may save you imminent heartache. In this case, the reply to your inquiry will undoubtedly be one of caution. By the way, you may wonder, is it actually possible to artificially alter a CD 257 to deep purple? Answer: Highly possible!

What about purchasing an altered insulator, priced reasonably, as a

conversation piece or because it looks neat in your collection? Don't do it! This only creates a continued market for an unscrupulous person who is profiting from an unethical activity. Even if the suspect insulator is priced at, let's say ten dollars, it could actually be an altered aqua previously worth fifty cents. Multiply the markup for profit by 100 sales and you can quickly see the feasibility of the act! OK, so you just can't resist the temptation: Then please permanently mark the insulator to identify it as an altered specimen. This will assure that the insulator will never be passed on as authentic once it leaves your possession.

It is hopeful that with constant education, awareness and unity within our hobby, the market for fake and altered insulators will diminish. As we wade through the growing- pains of this great hobby of ours, it is important that we not become discouraged by the unethical acts of the few, but focus on the scores of true friendships we have made and the unending pleasures of being collectors of

NIA NIA

## A NOTE FROM PRODUCT MARKETING

**O**ur NIA logo items sold at the National like...well, like insulators! Good thing, too, cuz after all the stuff Bill and I bought at the show we didn't have room left in the car to bring it all back! Apologies to those of you who were short shirted, but guessing in advance what to bring is tough, and I can only judge by what we've sold previously. We have some of everything here at the house, so send in your order now!

You're probably tired of hearing this, but it's never too early to order your holiday gifts. If I wait until the next issue of *Drip Points* comes out, it will be a little on the late side to start nagging, er, reminding

you. If **you** choose to wait until December gets closer before taking advantage of this opportunity to give special holiday gifts, you may forget about me until it's too late! Also, name badges may take a long time to come back from the engraver. Please see the order form included in this issue for ordering information.

ITS NEVER TOO EARLY  
TO ORDER YOUR GIFTS!

I hope you all have a fun and productive fall show season!

Happy Collecting,  
**Jill Meier, NIA #4323**  
**Chair, Product Marketing**







FINANCIAL REPORT GOES HERE





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1997-1998 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

RICK BALDWIN, NIA #336, **PRESIDENT**  
1931 THORPE CIRCLE, BRUNSWICK, OH 44212  
(330) 225-3576

RICK SOLLER, NIA # 2958, **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
34273 HOMESTEAD ROAD, GURNEE, IL 60031-4206  
(708) 855-9136  
EMAIL: com574@clc.cc.il.us

BILL MEIER, NIA #4322, **EASTERN REGION VP**  
103 CANTERBURY COURT, CARLISLE, MA 01741-1860  
(508) 369-0208  
EMAIL: meier@ultranet.com

BOB STAHR, NIA #4186, **CENTRAL REGION VP**  
11728 LEONARDO DRIVE, SAINT JOHN, IN 46373-9448  
(219) 365-4171  
EMAIL: stahrrb@xpc.calumet.purdue.edu

MATT POAGE, NIA #3757, **WESTERN REGION VP**  
9044 VANCE STREET, #310, WESTMINSTER, CO 80021  
(303) 456-8230  
EMAIL: wfgpoage@aol.com

MIKE GUTHRIE, NIA #3297, **TREASURER**  
1209 W. MENLO, FRESNO, CA 93711-1477  
(209) 435-6127  
EMAIL: mgg17@cvip.fresno.com

TOM KATONAK, NIA #3567, **INFORMATION DIRECTOR**  
1024 CAMINO de LUCIA, CORRALES, NM 87048  
(505) 898-5592  
EMAIL: tomk164440@aol.com

JOE BERES, NIA #563, **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**  
1315 OLD MILL PATH, BROADVIEW HEIGHTS, OH 44147  
(216) 526-3478  
EMAIL: jjjb@aol.com

STEPHEN BOBB, NIA #827, **FIRST PAST PRESIDENT**  
610 NORTHAMPTON ROAD, NORRISTOWN, PA 19403  
(610) 539-6533

DWAYNE ANTHONY, NIA #3619, **SECOND PAST PRESIDENT**  
28390 SAFFRON AVE, HIGHLAND, CA 92346-6051  
(909) 862-9279  
EMAIL: blobtop126@aol.com

1996-1997 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPEOPLE**

JILL MEIER, NIA #4323, **PRODUCT MARKETING**  
103 CANTERBURY COURT, CARLISLE, MA 01741-1860  
(508) 369-0208  
EMAIL: jillm@ultranet.com

PATTI NORTON, NIA #5151, **SHOW STANDARDS**  
234 N. 5TH STREET, PORT HUENEME, CA 93041-3004  
(805) 488-7445  
EMAIL: rrt@ix.netcom.com

DUDLEY ELLIS, NIA #5085, **NOMINATIONS**  
131 PLANTATION WAY, STOCKBRIDGE, GA 30281  
(770) 957-9928  
EMAIL: pony102@aol.com

ELTON GISH, NIA #41, **ETHICS**  
PO BOX 1317, BUNA, TX 77612  
(409) 994-5662  
EMAIL: gishen@sat.net

JIM GARRITY, NIA #44, **HISTORIAN**  
RR #1, BOX 173, PAXINOS, PA 17860-9745  
(717) 672-9326  
EMAIL: jgarrity@aol.com

JOHN McDOUGALD, NIA #689, (Acting) **BY-LAWS**  
5N941 RAVINE DR., ST. CHARLES, IL 60175  
(630) 513-1544  
EMAIL: cpamcd@aol.com

JOHN McDOUGALD, NIA #689, **RESEARCH & AUTHENTICATION**  
5N941 RAVINE DR., ST. CHARLES, IL 60175  
(630) 513-1544  
EMAIL: cpamcd@aol.com

DAVID WIECEK, NIA #3225, **PROMOTION & EDUCATION**  
KAREN WIECEK, NIA #4672  
63 REINMAN ROAD, WARREN, NJ 07059-5736  
(908) 754-0909  
EMAIL: dwiecek@lucent.com



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