

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Everyone else seems to be complaining about the snow and the cold and that they can hardly wait for Spring to arrive so they can leave their homes without freezing to death: Ain't so bad here in Sunny New Mexico! We drive to the mountains for skiing in 30 minutes or so, and we play golf if the ski areas are too crowded. Better yet, we can go out hunting for glass! In fact, several of us just returned from a five day trip southwest of here tracing old telegraph lines out in the desert. Bright

sun and 65° made the trip really enjoyable - especially compared to doing this mid-July! At any rate, by the time you read this, the overall weather for the country should be trending toward Spring and hopefully you thawed out Northerners ought to be able to get out and hunt soon too.

I received several letters this month and you can read them next. The bottom line seems to be that folks are just plain tired of all the negative controversy in the hobby and want to put it behind them. I'm

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movie and a large box of popcorn at the theater. I think the NIA does a great job at doing all of the above!

Are the insulators "Silica" questions fake? I dunno! I've not seen them and can't say one way or the other. The only way to answer that question is with further research, not name-calling or finger-pointing. We've seen enough of that during the Presidential campaigns, for crying out loud. Why bring it into our hobby?

And that's what insulator collecting is! It's a hobby, not a brouhaha! A hobby is supposed to be fun, whether it's collecting insulators, building model cars and planes, playing the piano or observing the night sky through a telescope. But all this nonsense over the past year is really taking all the fun out of this hobby. If it keeps up, not only will it be impossible to bring "new blood" into the hobby, but many current collectors will just drift away

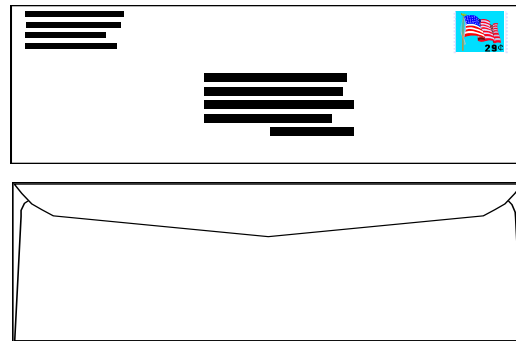
to other pursuits and insulator collecting will slowly disappear, just like the old multi-armed poles along the railroad tracks.

At this point, I think we should all bring out the dictionary and look up the word "hobby". Perhaps this action will remind all of us that insulator collecting is a hobby and that we can make it fun again.

Happy collecting!

Sincerely,

Jim Barton, NIA #3902



February 8, 1997

Dear Editor,

In a letter to ICON a few weeks ago, Mark Lauckner observed that something like 40 dedicated people 'bring' the hobby to the other 1800 of us. That sounded a little shrill to me at first, but the more I think about it, I think he's just about right. I've asked my share of lame questions in various E-mails to the ICON list and it seems like I always get a prompt and courteous answer from one of these dedicated people. These people write the books, publish the periodicals, sponsor

the shows, serve as NIA officers, and take most of the heat when we don't like the quality of all the free work we're getting out of them. When the NIA or its leaders call upon the other 1800 of us to get more involved in our hobby, many of us without a lot of insulator knowledge ask "what can I do? I'll never have the insulator expertise some of these people have!" Well, there are probably many answers to what we can do, but I'll suggest the easiest one: Support the people who are doing the work. Subscribe to the magazines, buy the books, and 'talk up' the hobby to new collectors and share information with

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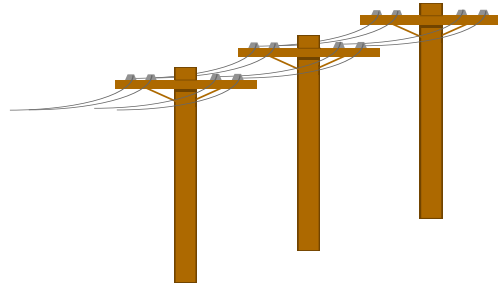
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others who show an interest in insulators. When you are at a show, make it a point to personally thank these people for their hard work. If they have a sales table and you are buying, buy what you can from them.

Well that's all the noise I plan on making today. Now that I've done all this yacking I've got to go write a check for my new subscription to *Canadian Insulator Collector*!

Happy Hunting!

Paul Alleeson, NIA #6138



February 11, 1997

To the Editor,

I am becoming a bit confused, as well as embarrassed to the turn of events in the Insulator hobby. First, let me explain. While I try to be supportive of my husband, which with his position can be rather exhausting at times, I am not and never will be a thoroughly devoted member of his hobby. However, I have shared the hobby with other individuals and was surprised when a friend of mine asked me to purchase the Insulator Books and get a *Crown Jewels* subscription for his father who has collected insulators for years. Since he received his first issue of *Crown Jewels* in December, all he has witnessed and read about is the issue of fake, altered, and unethical dealings in regards to insulators and individuals in the hobby. All this man wanted was information on the hobby and reading for his enjoyment to learn about whatever jewels he may possess. What has happened to this hobby?

No matter what hobby an individual

pursues, there will always be those who are out to profit on unsuspecting souls, merchandise that is suspect due to unknown origins, and outright fake reproductions peddled as the real thing. No one has the power to stop this from happening. Yes we can educate, but what is currently taking place has got to end. The hobby is becoming divided. Sides are being taken, and such nonsense should not even exist or be tolerated. The majority are in this hobby for their personal enjoyment and the love for the glass or porcelain treasures they collect. Politics have no place in organizations such as the National Insulator Association or any other club such as ours.

I am not stating that measures do not need to be taken to protect unethical practices. We need to monitor those that are suspect, but we need to also get the hobby back to what it is, a hobby. What message are we sending to those individuals just starting out and discovering insulators? Open an issue of the *Crown Jewels* and read the letters,

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multiple tasks, often concurrently. The "pool" concept affords the availability of necessary expertise, it distributes the work load so as not to put an excessive burden of time and energy on a few people **and** it serves as a mechanism for getting many "new faces" from within the membership ranks involved in making important positive contributions to the hobby!

In the task area of supporting scientific research to assess the applicability and reliability of potential analytical methods for determining the approximate "age" of glass insulators, progress is being made, but at a slower pace than desired. Our premise, which is based on previously published research results, is that appropriate studies of the surface weathering characteristics of glass insulators may have the potential of meeting our objectives, but this will have to be determined by extensive research. In order to assess how much credibility can be placed on any conclusions based on such examinations, which is a primary objective, the influence of many variables has to be determined, a data base has to be established and many technical issues have to be addressed! This necessitates time, resources and commitment on the part of the investigator.

To date, one investigator at the Pennsylvania State University has performed some preliminary examinations of several insulator specimens for us. Distinct differences in weathering characteristics have been observed, but the significance of this has yet to be

determined and many more specimens need to be examined. I have recently composed and sent to the investigator for review and discussion a document identifying our desired goals and objectives for this type of scientific investigation, programmatic issues and a multitude of technical issues and concerns that I have. By the next issue, I hope to have been able to solidify the program with Penn State and be able update you on what the overall scope, expectations and tentative schedule will be.

Three other important task areas have been identified for the R&A Committee to address initially. First, the corroboration of newly issued and proposed insulator classification assignments will be instituted in order to be sure that an assignment is consistent with the methodology/ philosophy of the creator of the particular classification system in question. This will be accomplished by means of a collective assessment from task team members who are knowledgeable in the specific area being addressed. There is no intention here for the NIA to make assignments nor to dictate or control assignees. Second, a team will assess existing and establish new guidelines, as deemed necessary, for the NIA's approval of the production and marketing of commemorative insulators. Third, criteria for justification to deem a specimen as "questionable" will be formulated, and protocol to institute committee action on such a specimen will be established.

To update you on the fraudulent sales

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SURFACE WEATHERING
CHARACTERISTICS MAY
HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF
MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES



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find fellow collectors and members of the Missouri Valley Insulator Club having a get together! Both Dennis & Jeanne Weber and Chris Hedges were over at Paul's having a good time. I'm sure they were planning the next get together at the Alma Insulator Show.

It seems that the Northwestern Insulator Club (NWIC) has been having some great times too. They also held a general membership meeting and swap on January 31st. Good times were had by all and lots of trading occurred. Plan on attending their first time ever April show.

Hopefully, you will get this in time to remind you of Ross Baird's show in Garland, TX. I have always heard of good items walking in and good trading and sales occurring at this show.

The Wheaton, IL Collectors Jubilee show will be another good one. Jim Crandall always puts on a great show with insulator and lightning rod ball collectors having approximately an equal number of tables. The sales are always good and attendance for a Friday/Saturday show is incredible.

The TCI (Telephone Collectors International) show is going to have a group of insulator collectors setting up for the first time at one of their shows. Thanks go to Alan Stastny for setting this

up and promoting the hobby in the Ohio/Kentucky area. Don't forget his spring show in June.

The Central Region is really warming up for the NIA National in Chicago. We have approximately 130 tables sold at the time of this writing. Make your plans now! Show packets are available from me. Just give me a call or drop a note in the mail.

This year the Central Region will be electing a new officer for the position of Central Region Vice President. I believe I have one more

THE CENTRAL REGION
WILL BE ELECTING A
NEW VICE PRESIDENT

report to write before voting occurs. I have enjoyed serving you and look forward to either passing the position on or serving you in the next term. Please look at the nominations section in this newsletter for further information. I urge you all to vote for the person who can best represent you. See you at the shows!

[Late breaking news: The Autumn London, OH show is a go! It is being held in early November at the fairgrounds again. Further details will be forthcoming.]

**Bob Stahr, NIA #4186
Central Region Vice President**

FROM THE WESTERN REGION

While this article is for the Spring issue of *Drip Points*, it doesn't feel like spring here at all! In fact it snowed last night here in Denver and we can look forward to a couple more months of the same stuff. I'll probably be wishing for cooler weather though in Chicago come July!

There are several shows scheduled in the Colorado area in the upcoming months. The Triple Ridge Insulator Club (after a six month hiatus) is getting back together again and putting on some shows. One is the annual Trinidad Tailgater which is to be held May 17 at the Trinidad State Park.

DON'T MISS THE
TRINIDAD TAILGATER
ON MAY 17TH!

This has got to be one of the best scenic areas for a show (unless you consider the show certain people put on at the beach in Cayucos, California). The clubs from New Mexico and Colorado have hosted this show for several years and although it's a small get-together, we always have a good time. It's not uncommon for people from Texas, Kansas, and California to attend. As an added bonus, Bill Ashcraft puts on his famous BBQ!

Another show in the works is the annual TRIC get-together in June. This time, we are planning a show separate from the

bottle people and although the location isn't quite known yet, the time will be June 27-28th. The last show that we held separate from the bottle people was the summer of 1995 and it was quite a success. We hope to repeat that success this time. The club is also talking about bidding to host the NIA Western Regional in 1998.

There are a lot of shows coming up in the next few months and some are new - like Alma, Kansas on April 12th hosted by the Missouri Valley Insulator Club and a brand new one April 26th hosted by the newly formed Northwestern Region Insulator Club in Bloomington, Minnesota. I know people have said this before, but if you're close by, try planning to attend. It really helps the clubs and the hobby - not to mention having a fun time in the process!

On the topic of altered insulators and the ongoing story in that area, it's been quiet. Hopefully we've seen the last of vicious letters and accusations and counter-accusations. I don't know anything new on the topic of testing and can only continue to have people write in or list their concerns. A few have, but very few - so if you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to drop me a line. I'll be happy to listen.

Matt Poage, NIA #3757
Western Region Vice President

FROM THE NOMINATIONS CHAIR

The winter has gone by fast here in Georgia. Our digging weather is quickly coming to an end. It's a matter of weeks before the snakes crawl out, the black berries thicken, and the kudzu vines encompass all. The National will be here before you know it.

In the winter issue of *Drip Points*, I solicited candidates for the Central Region Vice President and asked for resumes to be printed in the spring issue. Two responses for your review and consideration are printed below. If anyone else is interested in throwing their hat in the ring, please contact me by April 1,

1997 so that I will have time to get your name on the ballot.

Ballots will be mailed in late April or early May to those in the Central Region who are NIA members in good standing. If you have not paid your 1997 dues, please renew quickly.

Remember, I'll be announcing the new Central Region Vice President in the NIA business meeting at the Chicago National. See you there!

Dudley Ellis, NIA #5085
Nominations Chairman



To NIA Members Of The Central Region

My name is Jimmy Burns, and I am running for the Central Vice Presidential position of the NIA. I live in Conroe, Texas with my wife Vicky and sons James and Christopher. I am a past President of the Lone Star Insulator Club and currently serve as the Woodward Award Chairman. I have been a host of the 1994 NIA National Show and also a host of the 1996 Central Regional. I am annually one of the LSIC local show hosts every year. I collect color porcelain insulators and enjoy the research aspect of the hobby. My writings are regularly featured in *Rainbow Riders Trading Post*. My credentials for leadership are very solid.

Unfortunately in the NIA solid credentials mean nothing. Anyone who is out of favor with the leadership clique of the NIA is not given an opportunity to serve within the organization. There is a desperate need for an outsider on the NIA board. I believe that I can be that outsider and serve well. Please vote for me when you receive your ballot. I will serve all members of the NIA.

Jimmy Burns, NIA #4032

To the Central Region:

I'm Bob Stahr and I am a candidate for Central Region Vice President. Many of you may be familiar with me, but some of you only know me by my name so I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am 24 years old and live in Northwestern Indiana very near Chicago. I am currently working full time and am attending night/Saturday classes at Purdue University Calumet. I hold an Associates degree in Architectural Technology from Purdue and am working on my Bachelors in Construction Technology.

I casually collected insulators in the mid 1980s and seriously started in 1987. In 1988, I subscribed to Crown Jewels and became a member of the NIA. Over the years, my collecting interests have become more defined. As some of you know, this has evolved into my specialty of Hemingray insulators and related products.

During 1991 and 1992, I became heavily involved in insulator related research. Mainly due to the encouragement of Elton Gish, I searched the library of Iowa State University and a few others for historic articles and advertising related to insulators. Many items from my research can be seen in Elton's Fred Locke book, Marilyn Albers' foreign glass book, my column in *Crown Jewels*, *Rainbow Riders*, *Canadian Insulator Collector*, and *Old Familiar Strains*.

Some of you in the upper Midwest may also remember that I have put on insulator displays at several shows. These include the London, OH insulator show and various fruit jar and bottle shows. One reason I set up at these non-insulator shows is to educate the general public about our hobby. I usually display Hemingray insulators and Hemingray made fruit jars and bottles at these shows to show people how closely related our hobbies are. In fact, I have had a number of requests from people attending the shows for information on the hobby and I am sure that some of these people are collecting now.

I believe the backbone of many hobbies, including insulators, is in communication and friendships with other collectors. With this in mind, in 1992 I founded and became President of the Greater Chicago Insulator Club. I felt that there was a need to get Chicago-area collectors into a local organization in which we could socialize and form new friendships. With the formation of this club I have seen its membership grow to roughly 70 members and am proud to say I had a hand in helping organize the hobby here in the midwest.

For the last two years, the Greater Chicago Insulator Club has been involved in hosting a local Autumn show in conjunction with the First Chicago Bottle Club. During one of these shows, Rick Soller and I decided it was time to give something back to the hobby in the form of hosting a National. We submitted a

successful bid and the 28th National Insulator show is scheduled for July 25-27 of this year.

Following the 1996 NIA election, I was appointed to take over the remaining term of Central Region Vice President. I have always been a strong supporter of the NIA and am very happy with the direction it's taking on the serious fake and altered insulator problem. I think the best thing that the NIA can do is educate the membership on the problem and I have been trying to do this as best as I can. I would like to see the display by Dwayne Anthony at the Long Beach National on fake and altered insulators brought to more shows in our region. I'm sure some of you have encountered the irradiated fruit jars and bottles that have been appearing in our area, but many of you have not. I think the NIA needs to use Dwayne's display as part of educating the membership on these insulators and I would like this to be one of my agenda items.

Another important agenda I would like to be involved in is interpreting the questionnaire of the membership sent out by Rick Baldwin last year. Glancing at the survey, it seems that there is a problem with member renewal and concerns about the future of the hobby. I think an in-depth study of the survey is necessary and I would like to use this data to address your concerns and introduce new ideas.

Finally, the life of the NIA is dependent upon young new members. I would like to see a separate listing of all junior members in the annual directory. This could be used as an easy way to find each other and share collecting interests. I joined the NIA when I was 15, and was overwhelmed by the variety and prices of the insulators that I saw at my first show. The NIA needs to encourage these younger collectors by showing them that a very interesting collection can be put together relatively inexpensively. I would be willing to act as a sponsor to young collectors and encourage their involvement with the hobby.

I am a dedicated and energetic person who will work for the good of the hobby. I want to help educate, unify, and strengthen the hobby through positive and constructive change. Please consider voting for me for the Central Region Vice President. Thanks.

Bob Stahr, NIA #4186

1997 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION MEMBER STATUS

AS OF 2-12-97

TOTAL NIA NUMBERS USED	6258
NIA NUMBERS NOT ASSIGNED	21
NIA NUMBERS DOUBLE ISSUED	62
NEW MEMBERS FOR 1996	83

	ACTIVE	INACTIVE (not paid)
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MEMBERS	1087	4973
CHARTER	103	783
LIFETIME	33	10 (DEC.)
JUNIOR	20	19
CLUBS	3	9
NON U.S.MEMBERS	30	49
25 YEAR MEMBERS (SILVER)	37	0
24 YEAR MEMBERS	31	7
23 YEAR MEMBERS	15	1
22 YEAR MEMBERS	12	2
21 YEAR MEMBERS	20	9
20 YEAR MEMBERS	18	4
19 YEAR MEMBERS	14	7
18 YEAR MEMBERS	25	9
17 YEAR MEMBERS	16	13
16 YEAR MEMBERS	18	15
15 YEAR MEMBERS	28	13
14 YEAR MEMBERS	33	20
13 YEAR MEMBERS	28	30
12 YEAR MEMBERS	31	35
11 YEAR MEMBERS	22	49
10 YEAR MEMBERS	44	57
9 YEAR MEMBERS	40	78
8 YEAR MEMBERS	49	78
7 YEAR MEMBERS	47	118
6 YEAR MEMBERS	45	171
5 YEAR MEMBERS	72	236
4 YEAR MEMBERS	95	343
3 YEAR MEMBERS	139	501
2 YEAR MEMBERS	125	956
1 YEAR MEMBERS	83	2221

MISC.

DECEASED MEMBERS (KNOWN)	111
DOGS (NIA NUMBER ISSUED, BUT NOT VALID)	4
MEMBERS ALREADY PAID FOR 1998	70

NOTES:

NIA NUMBERS THAT WERE NOT ASSIGNED ARE DEAD NUMBERS.
(NEVER TO BE USED)
NIA NUMBERS THAT WERE DOUBLE ISSUED. THE MEMBER WAS GIVEN
THEIR ORIGINAL NUMBER AND THE SECOND OR THIRD NUMBER BECAME
A DEAD NUMBER.



FINANCIAL STUFF GOES ON THIS PAGE

1996-1997 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@axp.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: nsl8rguy@aol.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**
1066 SCENIC DR., SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92408
(909) 888-6417
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: jillmeier@aol.com

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

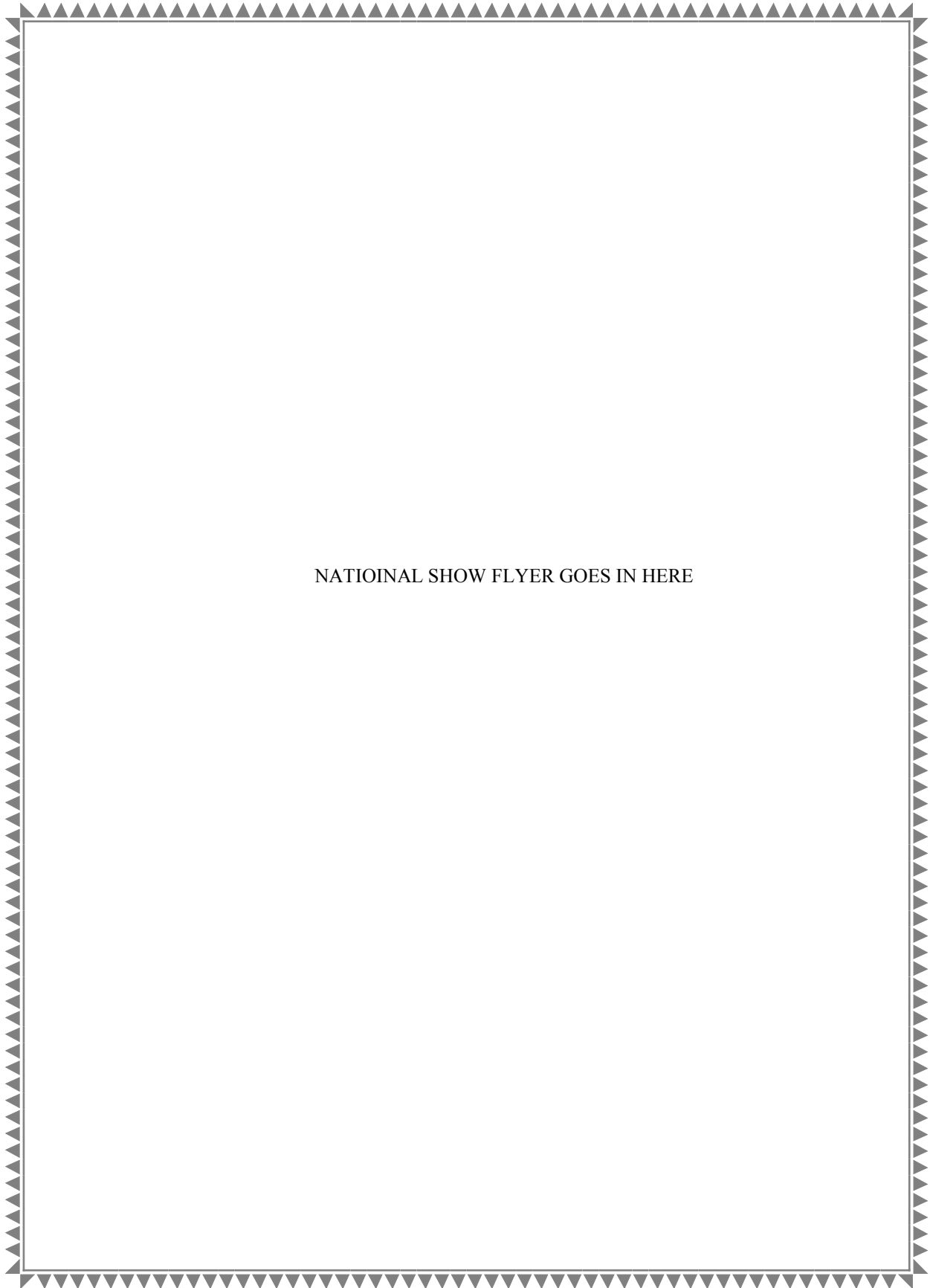
DUDLEY ELLIS, NIA #5085, **NOMINATIONS**
131 PLANTATION WAY, STOCKBRIDGE, GA 30281
(770) 957-9928
EMAIL: pony102@aol.com

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, **BY-LAWS**
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



NATIOINAL SHOW FLYER GOES IN HERE