



**GREATER CHICAGO
INSULATOR CLUB
NEWSLETTER**
Rick Soller, Editor



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Tama, Iowa Swap Meet Report

It was great to get back to normal and attend the June 5, 2021 insulator show at the Tama Civic Center hosted by Dave Shaw. The event featured free tables for dealers in a well-lighted facility. Food was provided too with a request for a donation by those partaking of the ample amounts of deliciousness.

It was clearly the early part of summer at the show. The weather was clear before and after the show and the temperature danced around 90 degrees during the show. The show hall was air conditioned, but dealer set-up resulted in the doors being open so much that it was muggy in the room and didn't cool down until later in the show. Luckily, for those needing respite, the adjoining part of the building wasn't affected by the comings and goings of the crowds so offered some cooling comfort.

After months of eating at home, it was delightful to experience something different on my plate. The lunch servers began with a bun that could be topped with sloppy joe or loose meat. Following this, lunch-goers had several cold pasta salads to pick from. Baked beans, warming in a steamer, were next offered to the hungry. On a table after the counter of culinary delights were chips and drinks. No one left hungry.

The auction had fewer lots than usual, had few bidders, finished quickly, but sales were brisk. Rick Soller, who usually had multiple lots, was unsuccessful in buying a collection he hoped to get on the way so did not have anything for the auction. On the other hand, Steve had a good-sized collection that he sold in the auction on his behalf and on behalf of a widow of a collector.

There were 54 lots in the auction. Almost of all of them were lots with multiple insulators in them so the number of insulators sold was probably approaching 1000. Despite the small number of lots, the auction took up the entire area of the platform at the far end of the room.

Twenty-two collectors signed up for a bidder number but only 8 people were successful in winning a lot and not many more than that bid. Mark Grimek and Jim Schuller fought over many of the lots, especially near the end of the auction.

The auction started at 10 a.m. and was finished by 10:48 a.m. This equaled about 1 minute per lot. A few pauses were worked into the sale as new items were added to the table after sold items were cleared off. Thanks to Sean Green for helping restock the tables. Russ Frank did a great job of keeping pace with the auction and recording all the information about the "hammer" price and the bidder numbers.

Lot	Seller	Description	Price	Buyer
1	Mike McLaughlin	Climbing belt	\$25	Tom Murphy
2	Dave Shaw	Crate of porcelain	\$20	Sean Green
3	Dave Shaw	Spool brackets	\$21	Deb Booker
4	Dave Shaw	1930 Lapp multipart	\$6	Riley Armstrong

5	Dave Shaw	Box of porcelain	\$4	Justin Perault
6	Dave Shaw	Crate of porcelain	\$7	Sean Green
7	Dave Shaw	Case transposition brackets (2)	\$12	Deb Booker
8	Dave Shaw	Box porcelain	\$1	Riley Armstrong
9	Dave Shaw	Box of porcelain	\$14	Mark Grimek
10	Dave Shaw	Box of glass + Box of porcelain	\$1	Justin Perault
11	Dave Shaw	Radio strains	\$34	Riley Armstrong
12	Dave Shaw	Commemorative	\$11	Justin Perault
13	Dave Shaw	Flat of Canadian CD 102s glass	\$14	Jim Schuller
14	Dave Shaw	Flat of Canadian glass	\$40	Jim Schuller
15	Dave Shaw	Porcelain (4)	\$11	Riley Armstrong
16	Dave Shaw	CD 154 green and aqua 2-tone	\$30	Mark Grimek
17	Riley Armstrong	5 glass insulators	\$1	Mark Grimek
18	Riley Armstrong	Climbing belt	\$12	Tom Murphy
19	Riley Armstrong	4 multiparts	\$1	Mark Grimek
20	Riley Armstrong	2 boxes of porcelain	Free	Mark Grimek
21	Riley Armstrong	Display case	\$1	Tom Murphy
22	Dave Shaw	Suspension	\$1	Deb Booker
23	Dennis Seltrecht	Cross Beams (2)	\$5	Riley Armstrong
24	Dennis Seltrecht	Braces, pins, + side pins	\$18	Sean Green
25	Dennis Seltrecht	3 porcelain insulators with pins	\$1	Rick Soller
26	Tom Murphy	Buck of insulators \$1 each x 4	\$4	Mark Grimek
27	Widow	Box of glass	\$15	Jim Schuller
28	Widow	Box of glass	\$28	Jim Schuller
29	Widow	Box of glass	\$50	Rick Soller
30	Widow	Box of glass	\$14	Mark Grimek
31	Widow	Box of glass	\$46	Mark Grimek
32	Widow	Box of glass + tie wires	\$14	Patrick Moylan
33	Widow	Box of glass	\$1	Mark Grimek
34	Widow	Box of glass	\$45	Jim Schuller
35	Widow	5 porcelain multiparts	\$20	Riley Armstrong
36	Steve	Box of glass	\$1	Mark Grimek
37	Steve	Box of glass	\$55	Jim Schuller
38	Steve	Box porcelain spools	\$1	Riley Armstrong
39	Steve	Box of glass	\$52	Jim Schuller
40	Steve	2 boxes of glass	\$1	Mark Grimek
41	Steve	Box of glass	\$10	Jim Schuller
42	Steve	Box of glass	\$22	Mark Grimek
43	Steve	Box of glass	\$24	Jim Schuller
44	Steve	Box of glass	\$35	Mark Grimek
45	Steve	Porcelain spools	\$1	Riley Armstrong
46	Steve	Box of glass	\$70	Jim Schuller
47	Steve	Box of glass	\$65	Mark Grimek
48	Steve	Box of glass	\$45	Mark Grimek
49	Steve	Box of glass	\$14	Mark Grimek

50	Steve	Box of glass + 7 train cars	\$17	Rick Soller
51	Steve	Box of glass	\$70	Jim Schuller
52	Steve	Box of glass	\$5	Jim Schuller
53	Tom Murphy	Wooden box	\$1	Riley Armstrong
54	Dennis Seltrecht	Cross beam	\$1	Riley Armstrong

The Hunt for an Insulator Collection to Buy

By Rick Soller

When the June 5, 2021 Tama show was approaching, I felt it was time to reach out to a couple leads I had on collections. I typically have a lot of free time before the show so can leave several days before it if necessary and go far out of my way before taking a direct route to Tama. For this trip, I actually had three leads.

The first possibility was the Robert Morawitz collection in Fort Madison, Iowa, about 2.5 hours from Tama. Robert passed away on September 30, 2000 and knew of his upcoming death so put out the word that his collection would be for sale so I kept in contact with his son and let him know I was interested. I received pictures of a few of the items in the collection early on and provided feedback about the value of what I saw. One item, in particular, that interested me was a desk calendar advertising the Cutter Tree Insulator, Oswego, Ill. I originally saw this piece decades ago at one of the Dupage County fairgrounds show. It was actually the only thing in the collection that interested me but it was enough for me to want to go after the collection.



I arranged to see the collection on Friday, June 3 at 1 p.m. and was sent more pictures of the collection. Seeing the pictures made me realize I might not be able to get all the insulators in my truck so I asked Bob Stahr if he would like to tag along with his vehicle to help me. Bob also went through the pictures and we both came up with an estimate of the value of the collection that was about the same.



There were lots of unknowns in boxes, but a few pieces stood out. There were several cobalt CD 162s, an amber bushing, a confederate egg, Mickey Mouse insulators, colored porcelain, wall tubes, electrical catalogs, and carnival insulators. Once I arrived at the house, I also learned about strings of suspensions, substation posts, ugly brown multiparts, and lots of common glass. Some streetlight hoods were also part of the deal.

I also learned some bad news about the collection. Three days before I was scheduled to leave for Fort Madison, I got this email:

I have one other person coming looking at the collection on Friday. Who ever comes first and is interested in buying the collection will provide a sealed bid then after the second person has looked bids will be open and sold to highest bidder for all. Hope that doesn't deter you from considering. Mom wanted it to be fair to the two Bob had talked with and not have it open to multiple bidders.

This was frustrating because I knew Bob and I would be driving 5 hours out of our way, and we might not end up with the collection. When I arrived at Fort Madison, I learned that the other bidder was Jason Townsend, but I also learned that there was actually a third bidder from East Des Moines (Martinez?) who had already seen the collection and left a bid.

Additional bad news came when I asked about the one piece I was most interested in – the Cutter Tree Insulator desk calendar. Tim Gobble, the son, indicated that the father said the calendar was very rare (so true!) so he was keeping it. This, to me, was another example of non-collectors equating rarity with value and keeping something because of perceived value vs. real

interest. I made a very generous offer for the piece, hoping I could change his mind, but to no avail.

Of course, perhaps the worst news was that I was not the winning bidder. I was at least happy that Jason was the winning bidder. Perhaps I'll have a chance to pick up a couple pieces out of the collection that interested me but are not of interest to him.

After the announcement, Bob went off to get gas and I made a call to a second prospect. While I was waiting for Bob to return, I helped load a few boxes into Jason's pickup, but Bob and I soon departed. It was probably around 2 p.m. when we left. I talked to Jason later that day and he managed to load his truck and make the 4-hour drive home by 8 p.m.

A couple hours away, we visited a collector that was willing to let us look through his sales stock. Unfortunately, most of the insulators were damaged, not what I collected, or not very scarce. We did enjoy seeing the insulators in his collection. Wow! That's all I'll say. An \$8 purchase by me and a single insulator buy by Bob, and we left after looking through a couple hundred insulators.

When I planned the trip, I expected to buy a huge collection (3,000+ pieces) so I did not bring along anything else. As a result, I had nothing for my sales table. So, after lunch, I decided to leave the show early and take a round-about trip to pick up a collection in Baraboo, Wisconsin. I thought there was a 7up CD 162 and a green CD 164 in the collection but neither turned out to be high-priced versions of the CD. They were Lynchburgs instead. There was a CD 259 Oakman, a CD 257, and a beautiful U-256A Triangle-M with iron bluing in the collection plus some other low value pieces so I thought I would only break even on the collection. I did a little better than that when I found a piece that I think will get assigned a new U-number.



(Above) More insulators in the Robert Morawitz collection.

The Hunt for an Insulator Collection to Buy: Part 2

Perhaps there is karma. With only limited success during my trip to Iowa, the next day, I was rewarded by finally connecting with a Craigslist seller about two scarce porcelain insulators. I left shortly after getting a reply to my email that I could be in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in 2 hours. I made great time, got the insulators, and posted the find on Facebook. I immediately got two generous offers that more than paid for the time and expense I put it to retrieve them.

Upcoming Shows

Friday – Sunday, July 2-4, 2021

Farmington, New Mexico

The National Insulator Association's 52nd Annual Show and Convention will be held in Farmington, New Mexico, at the San Juan County Fairgrounds McGee Park Convention Center, located at #41 CR 5568, Farmington, NM 87401. There will be plenty of dealer table space and exhibitor space plus a multitude of things to do in the area. The headquarters hotel is the Farmington Courtyard by Marriott. Complete show information including dealer, exhibitor and banquet reservation forms plus hotel reservation directions are now available online at www.NIA2021.com or www.NIA.org Your Show Host is TOMMY BOLACK, (505) 325-4275 or (505) 325-7873. Contact Show Planning Committee Chairman: LOU HALL, (559) 284-4211, louhall@pacbell.net.

Classified Ads (free for members)

Light box for sale. This box sits flat on a table and has full spectrum bulbs. The dimensions are 3.5" tall x 51.5" wide x 31" deep. This would sit nicely on a table. Asking \$50. Contact Greg North at 630-762-0072. Pick-up in St. Charles, Illinois. Note: I am also looking for 16 cell dividers for a single box.

Insulator books for sale. \$5 each or all 6 for \$25 plus postage. Contact Rick Soller, 4086 Blackstone Ave., Gurnee, IL 60031, (847) 782-8602, Com574@clcillinois.edu.

Rare Insulators with Prices by Frances M. Terrill published in 1970, Book 1 of 6.

Scarce Insulators Priced by Frances M. Terrill published in 1970, Book 2 of 6.

Hemingray Insulators Priced by Frances M. Terrill published in 1971, Book 3 of 6.

Embossing Errors by Frances M. Terrill published in 1971, Book 4 of 6.

Choice Insulators Priced by Frances M. Terrill published in 1972, Book 5 of 6.

Porcelain Insulators Photographed & Priced by Frances M. Terrill 1972 Book 6 of 6.

Frances Terrill edited "Insulator Bylines" in the Old Bottle Magazine for years and received information from across the continent on insulators. Even though these books are 50 years old, they contain material of interest to collectors such as nicknames for insulators (some no longer used in the hobby), mysterious references (some insulators are referred to as having S.C.D.P.s or Sharp Curved Drip Points), names of collectors who gifted Frances with an insulator (possible indicator of where the insulator came from), location information, and one of the few sources mentioning "oddities" like lightning rod insulators (e.g., the "Young" LRI), ram's horns, suspensions, and radio strains. The books are approximately 5-1/2" x 8-1/2" in dimension.