



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



Volume 25, Number 6  
August 2017

---

### **Colorado Springs, Colorado National Show Report**

All kinds of memorable events occurred at this year's National Insulator Association National Show, Sale, and Convention held in lovely Colorado Springs, Colorado. The show was held from Friday, July 21, 2017 until Sunday, July 23, 2017 but many attendees extended this window with travel or extra touring of the area. Thanks to Dan Gauron, Mike Green, and David Baron for a great show.

**Travel Tales.** Traveling proved to be the biggest challenge related to the show. I minimized to one paper box what I would sell and display at the show and was thankful that Russ and Marge Frank could drive that box to the show for me. Heavy rains initially delayed my 11 a.m. Thursday morning flight until 1 p.m. but the delay was eventually scaled back to noon. I'm glad I kept an eye on the flight so I didn't get to O'Hare four hours early or too late. Fortunately, the rest of the flight was perfect as I had a direct flight to the Colorado Springs airport and already knew how to call for a free shuttle ride from the hotel. It was nice that the COS airport was so small that I didn't have to figure out how to escape a maze like I would at O'Hare. On the return trip, heavy rain in Chicago resulted in my Sunday afternoon return plane ride getting delayed by an hour, causing the plan to sit on the tarmac for an hour. The only bonus was seeing Chicago right at sundown as the plane neared landing. The plane flew out over Lake Michigan and then doubled back to O'Hare so the lights of Wrigley Field were especially noticeable on the descent.

At least one other flyer did not have the same experience as I did. Gene Hawkins drove to the airport and parked in long-term parking to take a flight to Denver and then a connecting flight to COS. However, the return trip between COS and Denver was cancelled and Monday afternoon found Gene sitting in the hotel lobby wondering what to do. The next flight out of COS that would work would be in two days. If he could get to Denver, he could catch a flight that evening. The hotel shuttle doesn't go that far so he was exploring options when Marge and Russ Frank came along and learned of his plight and volunteered to take him to the Denver airport. It's good to have friends!

Those driving to the show typically took at least two days to get there, stopping at various places along the way. Russ and Marge enjoyed antiquing across the country as did others. Returning home, several attendees took different routes to maximize the antiquing experience and to see new vistas. Arlen and Tina Rienstra took a back roads southern route on their return, for example. Several club members reported very high temperatures outside on the return trip but thankfully, I heard no reports of breaking down in the middle of nowhere amidst the heat.

**The Sales Table Situation.** At the show, the club was fully represented. Club members staffing sales tables included Arlen & Tina Rienstra, Bob Stahr (sharing half a table), Rick Soller (sharing the other half of a table), Dave & Josephine Ramp, Gene Hawkins, Jason Townsend, Riley Armstrong, and Les & Judy Christensen (note the correct spelling of their last name as it

was incorrect on name badges, their table sign, and in the directory). Darryl Wagner joined the club at the show and also had a sales table. Club members were spread throughout the show with some groupings: Arlen & Tina were next to Russ & Marge while Bob & Rick were next to Les & Judy.

Sales were especially strong at the show. Usually at big shows like the Springfield, Mid-Ohio show, I sell very little despite having a full table. I always feel that there is so much available at that show that collectors spend their money on the rare pieces instead of the less rare insulators on my table. Colorado Springs was an exception to this experience. I only brought 15 insulators and 3 shirts to sell but sold most of the sales stock I brought, racking up sales of almost \$2,000. This was one of the best shows I've ever had. Part of my success was heavy discounting on day 2 and day 3 of the show so I could afford a rare CD 240 purple "Pomona" insulator that I've always wanted for my collection. I even managed to buy a few low dollar, oddball insulators (2 lightning rod insulators and some radio strains) that I thought were underpriced and double my money on them at the show.

Everyone else I heard from also reported strong sales. Russ Frank said he was only selling miniatures on the first day but other insulators started moving on the second day. Arlen Rienstra found that marking K.C.G.W. insulators with a sticker on the top indicating such markedly improved his sales of those. In fact, after he recounted this to me, shortly afterwards, I collector was at my table looking for K.C.G.W. insulators and I immediately walked him over to Arlen's so he could make a sale. Dave Ramp got some early advice that a multipart he had on his table was underpriced so he raised the price and found a buyer during the show. Les Christensen even did some trading at the show in which he added a CD 101 with a large rock to his collection in exchange for an ugly gray porcelain dry process transposition (thanks Les!).

**Attendee Attendance.** There were a few other club members in attendance who did not have a sales tables. Richard Case had his grandson, Cameron, at the show. I also ran into April Cook at one point during the show. Otherwise, there were plenty of other people filling the hall.

**Raffle Results and Auction Action.** The show featured several silent auctions of both donated items and items attendees included in the periodical auctions for a percentage of the final price. Most of the auctions occurred so quickly, I didn't have time to view and bid on them. On the last day of the show, I added some insulators to one of the auctions and managed to sell them but for much less than hoped. On the other hand, I picked up a jar for the opening price so perhaps I broke even.

There were also numerous raffles during the show. Club member grandson Cameron Case was frequently asked to draw winning raffle winners. At least one club member, Arlen Rienstra, was a raffle winner but I don't know if others were. Unfortunately, I do know that no club member won the "instant collection" grand prize.

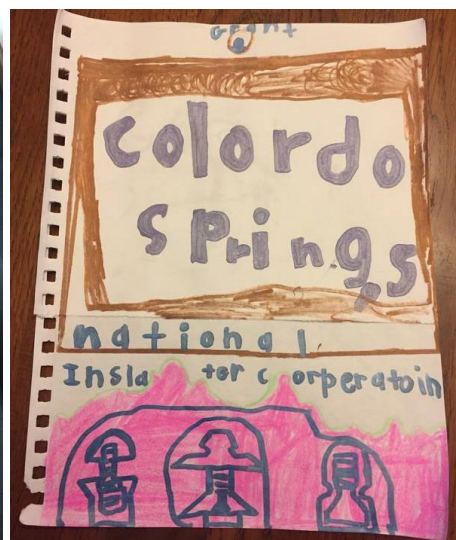
**Display Details.** Several club members also created displays for the show. Arlen had a professionally crafted display of Square-D insulators and a very informative handout on the history of the company. A picture of Arlen's display is on page 5. Cameron Case's display won a display award from the National Insulator Association. Richard Case showed off Mickey Mouse insulators in his display. Rick Soller's display of "Patches and Pins" highlighted club patches and insulator company employee pins. Overall, there were 28 competitive displays, several taking up multiple tables. There were also two noncompetitive displays: a seldom seen display and one of insulators with junk. Club member Riley Armstrong contributed a CD 203.2 Armstrong to the seldom seen display. One unique feature of this insulator was that it had the rubber ring with it, a feature just recently listed in the price guide by Don Briel.

A special honor was bestowed upon one of our club members who was asked to judge the displays. The NIA prefers not to have the judge named so disgruntled displayers don't harass or pressure the judge so I will honor that policy (although I disagree with it). Club member Gene Hawkins ran the tabulation of results for display awards.

The show also had an art contest which served as a type of display activity. Dave Ramp entered a piece created by Robert Winkler consisting of a diorama with a tree and a metal lattice for an overhead interurban line. A picture of the artwork is shown on the left below.



**The Banquet Blowout.** During one of the longest banquets on record (4 hours!), all kinds of interesting things occurred. I think all the club members were in attendance. Beautiful display awards were presented to all displayers. These consisted of a CD 121 purple W.G.M.Co. on a wooden side pin mounted to a board with the show logo (see below on the left for examples). The Lon Holy memorial Award for outstanding enthusiasm and support of the hobby was given to Cameron Case. Cameron also received an NIA "Best of Category" award in the kids category. Bob Stahr presented the GCIC award for "Best Exhibit Using Power Insulators" to Justin Martin for his display of various Cochran insulators. The award consisted of original artwork of a CD 288 Mershon insulator. The black and white drawing was created by Steve Kella and is shown above on the right. The picture below on the right was the first piece commissioned by the club from noted artist Grant Stahr but his parents decided otherwise.



Several joke awards were presented at the banquet. Rick Soller was presented with an extra long NIA badge with numerous made-up abilities such as fighter pilot and NASA scientist. A picture of him and Mike Green is shown below on the left. Tina Rienstra received a “Hot Chick Award” from the show hosts consisting of a stuffed plush bird, shown below on the right.



I was disappointed that some of the banquet traditions were not followed and there were a few glitches in the presentation of awards. Several of the displayers were not initially acknowledged but this was quickly remedied. When the 2018 National show was announced, the emcee noted that besides Mike Bliss, only Jackie Linscott has hosted three nationals. Bob Stahr and I just gave knowing glances at this point since he hosted the 1997 Chicago, the 2015 Yorkville, and the 2016 Muncie show and I hosted the 1997 Chicago, 2000 Bloomington, and 2016 Muncie show. Usually everyone in the banquet hall is asked to stand and only asked to sit as the count reaches the number of nationals they have attended. Lately this ends with Jack Riesselman being the last person standing. This was skipped with guests attending the 1971 Colorado Springs national being asked to stand instead. Here is when I learned how long Dave Ramp has been in the hobby.

Kudos to Jason Townsend for underwriting the cost of the show awards. There were so many I am sure that was a sizeable donation. Bill and Kat Rohde should also be thanked for refunding the cost of the banquet to all attendees. As banquet guests left the hall at 10:08 p.m., they were each presented with an envelope containing the cash equivalent of the cost of their banquet ticket. Several people donated the amount to the scholarship fund.

Dinner was delicious as usual although I have completely forgotten what was served except for the apple cobbler for dessert.

The view from the banquet hall was also exceptional. Large windows filled the front wall allowing a view of the nearby mountains. Rain during the banquet provided an interesting show by Mother Nature.

**Notable Notes.** Despite the show being hosted by the Triple Ridge Insulator Club, several members of the GCIC provided assistance too. Tina Rienstra helped work the admissions table and Rick Soller conducted a Thursday night seminar on Ralph D. Mershon.

**Scenic Sights.** There was plenty to do at the show and attendees seemed to take advantage of numerous of them. Bob and Grant Stahr took a harrowing car ride to the top of Pikes Peak. Other club members took the cog railroad to the top. Many took a trip to the Garden of the Gods. I'm sure there were other sights visited. Many unique food venues were also visited. Several of us, for example, enjoyed an outing to a barbeque place.

**Fantastic Finds.** About three decades ago, I displayed information about R.D. Mershon in the Quonset hut at the London Mid-Ohio show. At the time, I never expected to own a CD 244 purple “Pomona,” an insulator used on the Telluride, Colorado line during corona experiments by R.D. Mershon. On the second day of the show, Wayne Duzynski, who attended my seminar at the show, let me know there was one for sale on Dwayne Anthony’s table. I immediately leaped over my table, ran to Dwayne’s, and made a deal to buy it. I spent many hours during the rest of the show thinking about how to pack it to get it home safely. Wayne took the picture below on the left of me with it. Arlen’s display is on the right.



**Hotel Hospitality.** My initial impression of the hotel was positive since the hotel shuttle I received from the airport was prompt and friendly although I was put on hold for over 5 minutes before I was able to ask for a ride. When I tried to check into my room, however, my impression changed. A trainee trying to check me in found every credit card I offered did not work despite them working that morning at O’Hare (and after, I later found). Rather than getting help, she required that I pay my entire bill in cash. I wasn’t happy to lose some of my spending cash. The long, maze-like trip to my room added to my gloom. Eventually the positive experience of the show and no more bad hotel experiences dispelled most of the clouds.

**Host Hospitality.** On Thursday and Friday, there was a hospitality suite open after the show hall closed. Pizza, drinks, and chips were available and many collectors came and went. I enjoyed time talking to a variety of collectors during the Thursday hours. Even after the show was over, collectors were shown hospitality by the hosts. Dan and Wendy Gaaron had numerous people over to their house on the next day, providing drinks and hor d’oerves as well as a chance to see Dan’s collection. Based on the pictures I saw, Arlen & Tina, Marge & Russ, and Gene made it to the gathering.

**Next Nationals.** In 2018, the national will be back in Kansas City with the 2019 national planned for Orlando, Florida. The Kansas City national will be hosted by Darryl and Margaret Wagner and take place at the KCI Expo Center. The 2019 national will be hosted by Jacqueline Linscott.

## Upcoming Shows

### Racine, Wisconsin

**Saturday, September 9, 2017**

Circle the date for another great swap meet hosted by Randy Wesner held at 434 Blaine Avenue, Racine, Wisconsin. A club auction will be held. Free food will be provided. A few tables will be available for dealers but bring one or several if you can. Please RSVP to Randy so he knows how much food to make. You can reach him at (262) 633-0756 or email him at [RandysDodge@gmail.com](mailto:RandysDodge@gmail.com)

### Richfield, Ohio

**Saturday, September 23, 2017**

The Western Reserve Insulator Club's 7th Annual 'Oktoberfest' Insulator Show at the Masonic Hall, 3750 Grant Street, Richfield, OH 44286 (near the southeast corner of Routes 303 & 176), 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free Admission. 8-foot Dealer Tables \$20. Dealer Setup 9-10 a.m., Bratwurst and root beer available for lunch. Contact JOHN HOVANEK 216-392-3622 or visit [www.InsulatorCollectorsOfAmerica.com](http://www.InsulatorCollectorsOfAmerica.com) for more details.

### Springfield, Ohio

**Friday, November 3 to Sunday, November 5, 2017**

The 47th Mid-Ohio Insulator Show will be held November 3-5 at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Springfield, Ohio. Show hours are Friday 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Saturday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Sunday from 9:00 AM to closing. Info: CURT BOSTER email: [cboster530@att.net](mailto:cboster530@att.net) or 614-301-5125 or LOIS BLAIR 740-852-3148. Additional info at: [www.insulators.info/shows/springfield](http://www.insulators.info/shows/springfield)

### Wheaton, Illinois

**Saturday, April 7, 2018**

DuPage Collectable Expo held at the DuPage County Fairgrounds. Tables are \$40 for the first and \$35 for the second and subsequent table. \$10 if you want electricity. Contact Bob Stahr at 360 S. Kenilworth Ave., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137, (630) 793-5345, [Bob@Hemingray.com](mailto:Bob@Hemingray.com) or Rick Soller at 4086 Blackstone Ave., Gurnee, IL 60031, [Com574@clcollinois.edu](mailto:Com574@clcollinois.edu), (847) 782-8602.



That's all for now. See you at the next show!