



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



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### **Meeting Minutes**

A brief club meeting was held Saturday, November 4, 2017 at the Springfield, Ohio Mid-Ohio show. All officers were present: Bob Stahr (President), Arlen Rienstra (Treasurer), and Rick Soller (Secretary). Numerous other club members were there.

Arlen indicated he wished to step down as treasurer. A motion was made by Bob to accept his resignation, seconded by Rick. Motion passed unanimously.

Nominations were sought from the membership. Arlen nominated Russ Frank. Russ Frank accepted the nomination. No other nominations were offered. A vote was taken and Russ was unanimously elected as the new treasurer.

Having no other business, a motion was made by Rick to adjourn and seconded by Bob. Motion unanimously passed.

### **Springfield, Ohio 47<sup>th</sup> Mid-Ohio Insulator Show Report**

Several weeks before the show, club member Dave Ramp drove all the way from northeastern Indiana to Missouri to attend an auction that featured insulators. He managed to pick up quite a few good ones that he had at the show. These included a CD 134 in a near clear color as well as colorful CD 162 signals. In talking to him, he indicated the auction was of items from the estate of a lineman. A man at the auction related to him that aqua CD 162s were used leading into a transformer to mark higher voltage sections of a line and cobalt CD 162s were used leading from the transformer to indicate that the voltage had been stepped down. I had never heard of this use before so it was an interesting new piece of trivia about the use of these popular insulators. It took a day and a half before I made it to Dave's table so, unfortunately, I was unable to see all the good stuff.

One of the most talked about aspects of this year's show was the auction. Over the past several years, a "small" auction was held allowing what usually seemed like the sales stock of a dealer to be liquidated. Once in a while an individual piece was included in the auction that belonged in a catalog but that was the exception. Instead, most pieces were what would typically be found on a dealer's table: 7up green CD 162 signals, purple CD 102 ponies, carnival CD 233, 234, & 235 Pyrex insulators, etc.

This year, Andy Polivka used the auction at the show to sell the inventory from the insulatorstore.com. The online store was closed over a year ago and he had the inventory stored but no longer wanted to pay the storage costs. The inventory was offered to several dealers (Jim Frustieri and Rick Soller, among others), but the size of the inventory, the asking price, and shipping difficulties negated a deal. Andy called me recently to try again and I suggested he contact Curt Boster, the host of the Springfield show, and sell it in the auction.

The amount of insulators was nearly overwhelming. I understood that there were 400 boxes of insulators brought in a rented truck. At 16 insulators per box (some boxes were only

partially filled but some had 25 or 36 cells), this added up to at least 6400 insulators! On Thursday night, volunteers were asked to help unload the truck and spread the boxes across tables and bleachers in the horse barn connected to the show hall. The picture below shows a large portion of the insulators for sale. I estimate that the boxes were spread over 100 yards of tables and bleacher seats.



The controversy over the auction took many forms and morphed into other concerns as the auction proceeded. Well before the show, there was a great deal of discussion on ICON about whether the auction would siphon money from the pockets of collectors who would otherwise buy insulators from dealers who had paid for one or more sales tables, especially those dealers with insulators for sale that were similar to those sold in the auction.

On Friday, the day of the auction, there was not enough time to evaluate all the boxes. Some people were trying to move insulators from one box to another but there were some monitors to prevent that (thanks Marge Frank). I didn't realize that the best lots were at one side of the row, where in numbered boxes, and would be auctioned first. Luckily, that is where I spent most of my time. Nevertheless, despite Marge's efforts and that of others, the boxes were moved around, causing confusion for the auctioneers who had pre-written the box numbers and descriptions on their tally slips.

During the auction, there was not much room to move around. The metal fence separating the horse ring from the audience served to cramp collectors into a narrow aisle. Once the auction got underway, tables were removed to provide more room at the ends but it was difficult to move insulators purchased so far past the crowd buying the current lot.

Part way through the auction, I learned of another potential issue. I was told that a skunk had been spotted at the far end of the arena. I hoped that the skunk would keep its distance from the noisy crowd but decided to avoid looking at insulators on the end of the row.

The auctioneer had trouble identifying insulators in the box since he was not a collector. Curt was on hand to help but was not always close enough to see what was in the boxes. Andy Polivka was also there watching the action and became frustrated at one point because all the boxes were marked with their contents and all the auctioneer had to do was find the side of the box with the writing and read the description off to the crowd.

My feeling is that the auction did not diminish show sales. Personally, I brought more money, anticipating that I could cheaply add to my sales stock. Knowing that the insulators on my table may be competing with the type of insulators in the auction, I purposely brought different sales stock than I normally would which included odd electrical meters, porcelain insulators, lineman's tools, composition pieces, and radio strains. I sold well at the show and bought more from dealers than I have in the past. I did better at this show than at any previous Mid-Ohio show.

Many collectors picked up some great bargains during the auction. I bought over 50 mint purple Canadian ponies for about \$10 each. Steve Mattson bought a box lot for a few dollars that included a CD 133 City Fire Alarm insulator in it worth \$175-200 in very mint condition. There was a little damage to it but it was still worth much more than the \$5 he paid for it which explains the big smile on his face in the picture below of him holding his prize.





I stayed to the end because I wanted to learn how long the auction might last and to see who the die-hard dealer/collectors were. Around 9:30 p.m. I learned that the contract for the facility required all activities to be over by 10:00 p.m. meaning the auction had to finish by then. As a result, toward the end, eight foot rows of boxes were being auctioned with the bid representing what the bidder would pay per box. I had a couple boxes picked out at the end and Walt Baumgardt let me know of another box he was interested in but, during the last 30 minutes of the auction, someone had moved boxes of interest to them to a different row and I ended up not bidding because I could see the boxes I was after had been moved and I couldn't find them quickly enough. Bill Rosato seemed to be buying most of the lots at this point.

I asked Curt how much this part of the auction brought in and he let me know it all went for about \$15,000. I don't remember what Andy was originally asking for the collection but I think it was more than this. I hope he wasn't too disappointed.

Michele Kotlarsky was going to do a display of pink insulators so I brought a few of mine including a pink plastic piece, a pinkish porcelain spool, and a very light pink porcelain piece I bought last year at the Crown Point, Indiana swap meet auction. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to do the display after all but Shaun took photographs of my pieces so they may show up in a future issue of Drip Points.

Arlen Rienstra brought his display of Square-D insulators and company history that is always a delight to see. The display included a handout that I added to the NIA archives. Richard Case brought a CD 252 caked with cement deposits that was found in an Ottawa, Illinois cement plant. The insulator was so heavily covered with the deposits that it was impossible to tell what was underneath it. Next to it was a CD 252 in its pristine shape. Richard also had a display providing details on how to clean insulators. I created a display of insulator-related company catalogs that showed pictures of linemen or utility poles.





## **Upcoming Shows**

### **Strongsville, Ohio**

**Saturday, January 20, 2018**

The Western Reserve Insulator Club's 19th Annual Winterfest / Swap Meet & Club Meeting will be held Saturday, January 20th at the Spyglass Hill Recreation Center, 13201 Compass Point Drive, Strongsville, Ohio 44136. Dealer setup: 9:00 a.m.; show hours: 10:00 to 3:00. Club meeting and lunch from 12:00 to 1:30. There are no admission or table charges, but space is limited so please contact us ahead of time if you plan to set up! Info: JOHN HOVANEK 216-392-3622 OR EMAIL: [jrhovanec@ymail.com](mailto:jrhovanec@ymail.com)

### **Crown Point, Indiana**

**Saturday, January 27, 2018**

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual "Beat the Winter Blahs" insulator swap meet is Saturday, January 27. Note: There is a new location that is bigger and better than ever! This is the 1st year at Lake County Fair, 889 S. Court St., Crown Point, Indiana (SE entrance) The meeting is in the 4H Building which is spacious, well lighted and warm. Tables supplied at \$10 each, lunch provided. Bring insulators or related collectibles to show and tell, sell or trade. All are welcome to experience Hoosier hospitality, plenty of space, GCIC auction, business meeting and a great new larger location. Doors open 8am – 2pm. Hosted by Arlen and Tina Rienstra and the Greater Chicago Insulator Club. Located easily from I80/94 and I65. RSVP [ariens@att.net](mailto:ariens@att.net) or (219) 226-4975.

The original location cannot be booked until about 2 months before the show but was found to be unavailable for this year's swap meet. Arlen searched the area and found an even better location as a result. Although it is more expensive to rent, the club is picking up the extra cost. As of the writing of this newsletter, the location was still incorrectly listed in a few places but Russ Frank has posted the correct information on several Facebook insulator pages as well as sending a notice to ICON.

### **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@clcillinois.edu](mailto:Com574@clcillinois.edu), (847) 782-8602.

Numerous tables have already been sold. Advertisements have been placed in the Crown Jewels, and on Facebook. Flyers were passed out at the Mid-Ohio show and the show will be listed in the Drip Points, and in various bottle magazines too. Bottle collectors have been contacted about setting up at the show as well as Lightning Rod item collectors so a large number and variety of dealers are expected.