

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The strange season of mixed joy and sorrow is once again upon us. Joy is the upcoming holiday period where we gather with our friends and family to celebrate Christmas and the coming of the New Year- and sorrow because the weather is too inclement to go out and look for insulators 'till the spring thaw! (On the other hand, if the weather stays like it has been so far here in sunny New Mexico, we'll be able

to hunt insulators all winter in short -sleeves and cut-offs!)

Each year in this issue, I remind everyone that it's quite appropriate to send insulators or go-withs to your favorite newsletter editor as a token of the Holiday spirit! In past years, this annual plea has had minimal payoff...but hey - hope springs eternal, and I'm told that it pays to advertise! (I love OVGs and WGMs!) And speaking of Christmas gifts, if you really get on

it, you can order NIA logo items for your friends and still get them in time for the gift ceremony: See Carolyn Berry's note later on.

The NIA brings you a great issue this time...packed with outstanding articles. There are the results from last summer's survey for you to ponder, and a report from our President about the insulator holdings of the Smithsonian Institution. Also included, you will

(Continued on page 2)

A DAY AT THE SMITHSONIAN

By Kevin Lawless and Doug MacGillvary

We recently had the good fortune to spend a day at the Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Kevin had made an appointment, prior to our leaving for the Williamsburg, Virginia National, with Nance Briscoe, the Specialist in charge of the Museum's technology exhibits, including the insulators. That meeting was set for the morning of Monday, August 3.

Neither of us had a clear idea of what we would get to see and whom we would meet. But Nance was a most gracious hostess and, after a brief meeting to get acquainted with one another and discuss our various goals for the day, along with some concerns with some aspects of our hobby and with the collection itself, Nance took us on a private tour of the entire collection of insulators. The collection is housed in a locked and caged storage room. The majority of the insulators in the collection, of course, are pretty common. There are also quite a few, however, that knocked our socks off. Among the outstanding pieces in the collection are:

- ◆ several wood-covered Wades, one with the original pin
- ◆ CD 731 Tillotson in dark sapphire-cobalt blue
- ◆ several Pond's
- ◆ CD 158 Boston Bottle Works in aqua
- ◆ the only two known examples of what are presently identified as U-978 (but, as these are threaded, need renumbering!)
- ◆ large glass block in ice aqua
- ◆ two Yandell's patents
- ◆ CD 140.6 'blob' in cobalt blue... in factory mint condition!
- ◆ four cobalt blue EC&M's
- ◆ CD 154 Whitall Tatum No. 1 in red amber
- ◆ a MINT House insulator
- ◆ CD 737 No Name in aqua

We photographed several of the most interesting pieces and left the rest of the day for researching in the museum's archives of telegraphy documents, as well as some of the histories of the insulators in the collection. We learned that most of the rare pieces in the museum were donated between the years 1894 and 1913, as each piece is inventoried with a museum inventory number and documentation as to who donated the piece, when and, wherever possible, location where the insulator was used, are included.

On the second floor of the museum is an exhibit called 'Hands On History', where many technological marvels of the past are exhibited, some with 'hands-on' educational interfaces. Displayed in this room, along with bicycles and telegraphs, is a makeshift pole with eight insulators. This exhibit is staffed by volunteers and is geared toward the younger audience. It was not open to the public when we were given the opportunity to view it and, as I recall, is only open nine hours per week due to lack of funds and staff.

Nance's job duties required her time, but we spent the rest of our day in the library reading original copies of *The Telegrapher* and other 19th Century publications.

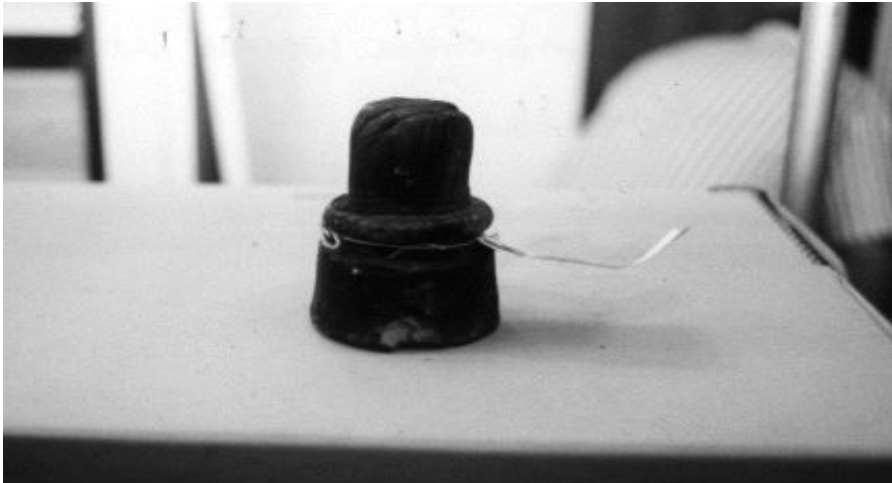
We were elated to have the opportunity to spend a day at the Museum of American History. We learned about the museum's collection, where it originated from, the problems with keeping a massive undertaking as the museum afloat with very limited funding and manpower, the dedication of staff like Nance Briscoe. Our next trip to our Nation's capital will assuredly bring us back to the Museum of American History!



Doug MacGillvary and Nance Briscoe at the Smithsonian

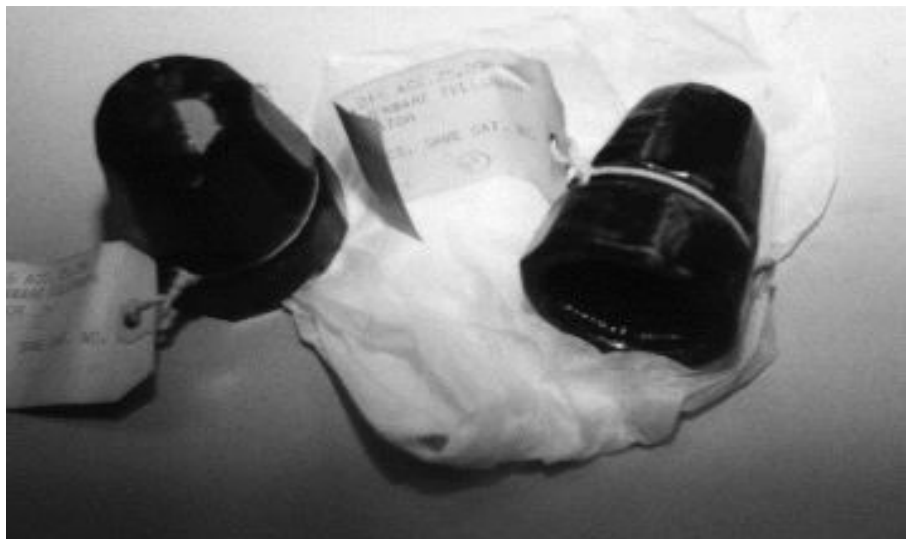


The House Patent Insulator



Handmade Threadless Wooden Hat

**12 Sided Threaded
Porcelain U-198s**



FROM THE HISTORIAN

Hi folks,

Another summer and the National has come and gone and Christmas is near at hand--how time flies! By the time you read this, we should have completed the transfer of the archives to me, which has been a rather frustrating thing to accomplish due to my constant travels. It is now time to move on with the task at hand. Examining, sorting and cataloging the archives, a task of near Biblical proportions, will take some time due to years of neglect. However, it is my goal to make a real difference in the way the archives are organized and managed and make significant improvements and additions to better the documentation of our hobby. I not only want to document the development of our hobby and the NIA, but to make the archives a major research source for information on insulators and their manufacture. To this end, I need some assistance. I will form a sub-

committee for the purpose of gathering information from the "field." I would like a volunteer to head up the sub-committee. I need someone who has a strong interest in the preservation of the history of our hobby and insulator history. This person would preferably be very active and well established in the hobby. Email access, while certainly a plus, is not mandatory. I would like for the sub-committee head to set up his sub-committee, which should consist of one person from each insulator club or other hobby members at-large, to insure that club information and bulletins are gathered and preserved in the archives. The committee would also be charged with gathering information and anecdotes of historical interest from individuals involved in the hobby. I really don't expect that the sub-committee lead will require a tremendous amount of time, only dedication and consistency. If you would like to tackle this role, please contact me. I really need your help.

In other news, I have formed an alliance with Bob Berry's Promotion and Education Committee. Bob and I are now members of each other's committee. We have done this to facilitate cooperative efforts between the committees to enhance the close tie between educational and archival/library material.

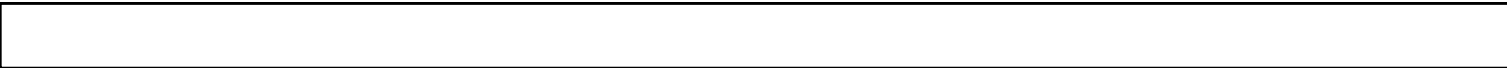
In the next issue of *Drip Points*, I will issue a report on the content and state of the NIA Library and Archives.

**Bob Willis, NIA #6158
Historian**

...DRIP NOTES

- NIA Logo items available for Christmas! (See Product Marketing note)
- You haven't paid your '99 dues? Send the form in this newsletter (along with your check) to Joe Beres, Membership Chairman
- Do you have your insulator collection insured? NIA sponsored insurance is available
- Dwayne Anthony's display of altered insulators is available for your show: Contact Dwayne at (909) 862-9279 (or blobtop126@aol.com)
- Bill Meier reports there are now over 600 subscribers on the ICON!
- Want to play a bigger part in the NIA? Volunteers are always needed. Write to

Kevin



NIA SURVEY (PAGE 1)

NIA SURVEY (PAGE 2)

1998 NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION MEMBER STATUS

AS OF 9-30-1998

TOTAL NIA NUMBERS USED	6734	
NIA NUMBERS NOT ASSIGNED	21	
NIA NUMBERS DOUBLE ISSUED	61	
NEW MEMBERS FOR 1998	290	
	ACTIVE	INACTIVE (not paid)
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MEMBERS	1550	4973
CHARTER	125	703
LIFETIME	32	11 (deceased)
CLUBS	6	7
NON U.S.MEMBERS	35	66
26 YEAR MEMBERS	39	0
25 YEAR MEMBERS (SILVER)	27	0
24 YEAR MEMBERS	15	7
23 YEAR MEMBERS	17	1
22 YEAR MEMBERS	19	2
21 YEAR MEMBERS	18	4
20 YEAR MEMBERS	17	5
19 YEAR MEMBERS	27	6
18 YEAR MEMBERS	16	7
17 YEAR MEMBERS	22	10
16 YEAR MEMBERS	28	16
15 YEAR MEMBERS	40	10
14 YEAR MEMBERS	38	15
13 YEAR MEMBERS	33	25
12 YEAR MEMBERS	31	26
11 YEAR MEMBERS	52	42
10 YEAR MEMBERS	43	49
9 YEAR MEMBERS	52	70
8 YEAR MEMBERS	57	76
7 YEAR MEMBERS	68	126
6 YEAR MEMBERS	66	145
5 YEAR MEMBERS	101	238
4 YEAR MEMBERS	129	341
3 YEAR MEMBERS	130	509
2 YEAR MEMBERS	175	978
1 YEAR MEMBERS	290	2265
MISC.		
DECEASED MEMBERS (KNOWN)		125
DOGS (NIA NUMBER ISSUED, BUT NOT VALID)		4
MEMBERS ALREADY PAID FOR 1999		158

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.