

GREATER CHICAGO INSULATOR CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Display Tips

A few years ago, I salvaged a greeting card display stand from the dumpster of a Hallmark store. The stand was still in the box and I thought for sure I could sell it for a few dollars.

I was even lucky enough to find a company that bought and sold used store fixtures. Yes, they would buy it but not for more than \$5. I decided to keep it and turn it into an insulator display. What resulted was a nice display with some unique features.

A drawing of the finished product is given in figure 1. The first task I had to do was to remove the steel sleeves that held the cards and replace them with two-by-fours. This was pretty easy to do. The steel sleeves were held in place with u-nails so a crowbar and 10 minutes of work was all that was needed. Once the two-by-fours were cut, screws in the side of the card stand secured them at various heights. Now came the hard part.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Display Tips	1-2
You Know You're a Novice Collector When . . .	2
The Chicago-Lockport Transmission Line	3
Ohio Brass Advertisement	4
Area Insulators	5
Cartoons	2,5
General Information	6
Great Debates	6

I wanted to drill holes in the two-by-fours so I could drop pins in them. I've had cats in the past and worried that they would knock insulators off the shelf.

I also just read about earthquakes in California and felt concern about some similar vibration in my area dumping my treasures to the ground. With insulators secured to pins, pins held in holes in two-by-fours, and the two-by-fours secured to a stand with a broad base, I felt confident that they would not fall victim to any of the disasters I foresaw.

The major task was drilling holes. I had plenty of the 1.5" wood pins that I had salvaged from a nearby line so I decided to drill holes of this size. The placement of the two-by-fours meant that I would be drilling across the long diagonal of the wood--nearly 4.5 inches.

Figure 1

The first problem I had was that the wood badly splintered when I reached the other side of the wood. I solved this by clamping another board on the back of the two-by-four. This ended the splintering problem but meant that I had to drill through more wood.

(Continued on page 2)

Display Tips - continued

The second problem was the amount of work this project required. My drill overheated from the effort very quickly and I feared many times that it had burned out. Holding it was not possible at times because it was too hot. It took at least a month to finish the drilling and then only after deciding to drill half-inch holes and use smaller diameter, steel pins.

Now I've got a display that holds 60 insulators. The pins can be removed to examine the insulator more closely or they can be unscrewed but they can't fall off by themselves. There are two drawers at the bottom for storage, and a shelf above the drawers good for holding a couple multiparts.

Next newsletter: shelves on wheels.

You Know That You're a Novice Collector When . . .

...you drive from Wisconsin to Fresno, CA with two 80 pound substation pieces in a Honda Accord thinking they will be desirable pieces to buy or trade because they are so hard to find.

...you BUY an aqua Hemingray 42 (and think the price was a bargain).

...you decide, despite what everyone else says, to collect every kind of insulator.

...you wonder what a sea D (seedy? see Dee?) is. Or is it just that everyone is interested in their financial future?

...you finally meet someone else who also collects insulators.

...your significant other buys you an insulator and it's one you've never seen before.

...you're one of the first people to sit down at the banquet at the Nationals when the emcee is talking about attendance at previous nationals.

...you can't believe there is actually a club with that many collectors, that there are shows somewhere almost every week, and that the Crown Jewels hasn't run out of things to print.

...you still have lots of room for every insulator you've ever found.

...it was easy to find friends to help you move your insulator collection.

...no one has ever come over to your house to see your insulator collection.

...you find lots of good stuff on lines already walked by dozens of other collectors (but you don't care).

THE CHICAGO-LOCKPORT LINE

by Rick Soller

For most of the 1980s, I lived near Chicago and traveled through it frequently to visit my parents in Ohio. I attended graduate school in DeKalb at Northern Illinois University from 1980 to 1982 and taught at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh from 1982 to 1987.

On one of these trips, traffic became stopped on I-294 on a bridge that crossed the Chicago Sanitary canal. That's when I noticed one of the distinctive steel towers of the Lockport-Chicago line.

The 60 foot tower barely reached the top of the bridge and, even then, trees partly hid it. Nevertheless, I could see that the wires were removed and that a few insulators remained on what I guessed was a very old transmission line. I still had 7 hours to drive so I didn't stop that day. In fact, I didn't stop several more times when I was passing through on a trip, yet I now felt anticipation every time I drove by this area as I planned when I would finally feel, as Sherlock Holmes did, that, "The hunt is on!"

The day I decided to search the line occurred on a whim. I was taking a trip to Ohio and had left much earlier in the day than usual. When I reached the area of the line, it only took a moment's reflection to take the next exit and work my way back through the tangle of angled streets.

I finally found a nice place to stop near a restaurant that I think was off of Archer Avenue. I walked a couple blocks from there, crossed some railroad tracks and soon spied my first tower. There was a nice

access road right along the canal that made hunting easy.

Some towers still had suspension insulators hanging from them but one still had an interesting multipart on it. The towers were strong and easy to climb so I did.

At the top, within view of I-294, I found an incredible and unusual two-part porcelain insulator. I labeled it "the baldy" because the top was rounded and unfired. There was about a one inch band of sand around it too. About a year later I figured out that I had actually found the bottom two parts of an insulator that had the top broken off. Oh well, it was exciting at a time when ignorance was bliss.

I didn't salvage "baldy" on my first trip, however. The pin was rusted on and nothing I could do could get it off. I was also reluctant to hang upside down 50 feet in the air in order to take the pin off. So I managed to remove and lower a string of three suspension insulators and proceeded to Ohio.

In Ohio, I thought a lot about how to leverage the insulator off. Finally I found a way in the local K-Mart. I bought an oil filter wrench with a flexible plastic loop. I even added some plastic to the loop in case the insulator was rounder than I remembered.

On my return trip, I stopped again. This time I had my new tool. It worked great.

I liberated "baldy" and removed another string of suspensions.

I also found some of the pieces that went to the top of the multipart and found some shattered blue J-D suspensions on the ground. Great fun!

Insulators Found in the Chicago Region

[This month's report comes from Ray Heim of Wonderlake, IL]

Here's a list of insulators and the lines they have been found on in Northern Illinois/Southern Wisconsin.

First, I have found CD 164's H.G. CO. PETTICOAT smooth base in off clear. These were found on the E.J. & E. Railroad running north and south along Rt. 59 under Rt. 72 near or should I say East of Dundee, IL. I found several of these a few years ago.

I found baskets full of CD 219 WHITALL TATUM 512U's in dark amber blackglass along Rt. 12 east and west of Richmond, IL.

Not a bad find seeing that I sell these for \$4 each and found so many.

I found CD 145 H.G. CO. PETTICOAT's in the clearest I have ever seen on the C. & N.W. lines between Sharon and Clinton, WI. I only got about five of these. Others were broken or taken.

I found some great lime green CD 145 dome embossed BROOKFIELD's with the 1870 date on the C.M. St. P. & P. between New Lebanon and Kingston, IL along with many CD 145 H.G. CO. PETTICOAT's in light blues and greens. This line was rich with these.

I also found many CD 152 BROOKFIELD's in different shades of green. These were on the I.C. line west of Plato Center, IL along with some aqua CD 151's.

I know for a fact some of the CD 164 HEMINGRAY No 20's in olive green came out of Woodstock, IL. (I know of one in service to date on power lines.) These insulators are scarce. When was the last time

you saw one for sale?

I personally did not find any of these but it is known that some of the CD 151 NATCO H.G. CO. PETTICOAT's in peacock blue came off of the C.B. & Q. line which ran west of Aurora near Hinckley, IL along west on Rt. 30. Someone got these way before I did. You can still find pieces of broken ones there which is exciting but sad.

And last, but not least, a great find by Paul Rosenberger from Elgin, IL. Paul and his son Paul Jr. found a string of CD 145 H.G. CO. PETTICOAT's in sapphire blue. This goes back a few years but what a find! These are \$450+ now if you can even find them.

You never know what's out there.

They were found on the C. & N.W. line southeast of Gilberts, IL.

I hope this will help and be of some interest to the members of the club. --Ray

Great Debates

There are a number of great debates raging or simmering in the insulator hobby. Some of them come from outside the hobby and some come from within. This column will identify and explore the great debates about insulators by presenting two sides to the controversy. If you would like to issue a rebuttal, suggest a topic, or participate in your own debate, please feel welcome.

There are several topics that will be addressed in future issues. These include (1) Are insulators worthy of collecting?, (2) Should insulators be cleaned?, (3) Porcelain vs. glass--which is better to collect?, (4) The case for trading vs. buying/selling insulators, (5) Are methods used to find insulators unethical? (6) Is it better for a one-of-a-kind insulator to be in a museum or in the hands of a private collector? (7) Do we need any more insulator publications (such as Crown Jewels)?, (8) Is there a better way to classify insulators than the Consolidated Design system, (9) Is there a better way to classify insulators than the U-numbering system, (10) Is there a better way to classify insulators than the M-numbering system. (11) Should pins be removed from foreign insulators? (12) Should metal caps be removed from suspension insulators?

New Members

Allen E, GCIC #20

GENERAL INFORMATION

Membership in the Greater Chicago Insulator Club is \$10 per year and includes one year's subscription to the newsletter. Members may advertise free in the newsletter (small ads only). In addition, the club is involved in local get-togethers and swap meets.

Membership dues should be made payable to Bob Cook and sent to:

Bob Cook
GCIC Treasurer
1320 Ridge Road
Homewood, IL 60430

All newsletter material should be sent communicated to the Secretary:

Rick Soller
34273 Homestead Road
Gurnee, IL 60031
(708) 855-9136

All other correspondence should be directed to the President:

Robert Stahr
9489 W. Oakridge Dr.
St. John, IN 46373

NOTICE: Don't forget the Carol Stream, Illinois show on April 2-3. It's at the Holiday Inn at the intersection of North Avenue (Route 64) and Gary Avenue. The show is open from noon to 6 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

For Sale: U-1633 sim, 2.25 x 3.25, white, green stamp of E over C in diamond, .25" chip on cable groove, \$20. U-2281, white, green stamp of VA PORTUGAL, mint, \$25. U-2281, white, green stamp of COIMBRA PORTUGAL around S.P, 1" petticoat crack from ding, \$20. U-2257, cream, green/brown stamp like #1, 2-.25" chips, \$18.

Rick Soller.