

The Greater Chicago Insulator Club Newsletter

December 2002

Vol. 11, No. 1

New Old Editor Replaces Old New Editor

Paul Rosenberger stepped up and took over the excitement as editor at the beginning of the year when **Rick Soller** relinquished the post. Some people speculated that Rick was working on an intensive but eventually unsuccessful campaign to win the bid to take over the Crown Jewels. The newsletter has no comment from **Carol McDougald** as to whether he even submitted a bid.

Others claimed that after 9 years, the content of the newsletter was getting as stale as a chicken coop insulator and that President **Bob Stahr** had delivered an ultimatum: retire gracefully or be fired. The President has not issued any press release on this...yet.

Whatever the reason, Rick has returned to editing the newsletter since Paul Rosenberger has taken a temporary job on the East Coast.

In a sworn statement, Rick swore he had nothing to do with Paul's move. He also cursed out that, if no one sent in newsletter material, he would continue with his previous editorial policy of writing about anything he wanted, especially about his own personal insulator travels. He said he would continue to (expletive deleted) write in any (expletive deleted) bizarre, twisted way he (expletive deleted) wanted if there wasn't anything else to fill the space.

We thank Paul for taking over during the year and, I guess, look forward to what Rick might write.

Guest Column by D.R. "Rip" Point

(Editor's Note: We are happy to have D.R. "Rip" Point as a guest columnist this issue. Rip normally writes for the Northwestern Region Insulator Club that is based in Minneapolis, MN but has agreed to occasionally answer questions from our members in our newsletter).

Dear D.R.:

I notice that a lot of people collect the "popular" insulators like the CD 102s, CD 109s, CD 112s, 154s, and CD 162s while I prefer collecting plain-Jane CD 152s. What should I do?

Signed,

Wondering What I Should Do

Dear Do,

First, you should realize that your problem is not unique. It is perhaps everyone else that is suffering from competitive fever while you value insulators for their intrinsic worth. In fact, you can take comfort in the fact that when your "friends" say they'll buy your insulators for "a buck at your estate sale" that you'll have the last laugh because they'll be paying too much.

More importantly, however, you need to learn about marketing. This can occur in several ways. When talking to other collectors, refer to your specialty in grand terms. For example, you might call them the "Guru of Glass." After a while, people will start believing the CD 152 is the Guru of Glass because

language determines reality rather than reality determining how we describe things with our language.

Another way to market your specialty is to enlist friends to provide you with all kinds of trivial detail. You could ask them to weigh their CD 152s, count the number of drip points, or measure how out of round they are. It doesn't matter. Your goal is to get them to study your specialty more. This will eventually lead them to purchase ones that are even slightly different in the hopes that you'll buy it. When you don't they'll be stuck with it and soon will be on their way to specializing in 152s too. Remember, two of anything is a collection so you've just got to get them to reach that point. At this point you should anonymously list your 152s on eBay, ICON, or in the CJ and hope your friends buy them at exorbitant prices so you can start collecting the popular CDs.

I also encourage you to do a display, preferably at a national show. Pick a category for your show that no one else has entered. If you contact the show host before the show, you can find out what categories have no competition. Often you can pick from several categories like "Threaded Glass," "General," "Specialty," "Color," or "Junior." Your goal is to win an award to add prestige to collecting your specialty. A picture in the Crown Jewels only adds to the prestige and if you can get a color spread, you've hit the jackpot.

The efforts of Jim Sinsley of Idaho serve as an excellent case study. Jim specializes in CD 147s, now known

as "Sinsley Spirals." Early on, Jim sent out notices to collectors to document the location of periods on the CD 147s as well as the dome numbers on the tops of the pieces. To keep the insulator in the minds of collectors, he posted occasional updates. Jim then used this awareness of the CD 147 and his new found expertise on the subject to expand his specialty to other spiral top insulators, making him the first person people thought of when they came across a rare spiral groove like the Barclay's Patent or the CD 110???

Other people are also following Jim's lead. There is a collector compiling the letter codes on the CD 128 Pyrex insulator. There are also people documenting shop numbers on the CD 145 Brookfields.

If you want to stay a purist, I suggest you follow the lead of Gary Kline who conducted an excellent study of the already popular CD 162 to determine which embossing styles were produced in which colors.

It's not, as Harry Truman says, that you "can't take the heat" so should get out of the popular insulator "kitchen" but instead it's that you need to get others to respect your specialty and that takes marketing. I hope you get the point--the "Rip" Point—because you've just been ripped.

Signed,

D.R. "Rip" Point

Ebay Feedback Ratings

Many collectors now buy and sell insulators (and other items) on eBay. Doing so results in other buyers and sellers leaving feedback about them. What does this feedback say about people? Let's look at three club members and find out. For this analysis, I looked at the feedback of **Bob Stahr**, **Richard Case**, and **Arlen Rienstra** (primarily because I knew their eBay handle).

Most people would look at the overall rating number given by eBay and not look at anything else. This number is determined by giving one point for a positive feedback and subtracting one point for a negative feedback. Feedback from a person is counted only once. Using this criteria, eBay has awarded the following scores:

- Arlen = 124
- Bob = 158
- Richard = 580

Using these numbers, you can clearly see Richard is the "better" person. Arlen and Bob are slackers who aren't buying enough stuff.

But wait! The numbers don't reveal the underlying calculation. Maybe Arlen has had 124 positive transactions with no negative ones while Richard has had 1000 positive transactions and 420 negative ones. That would be a valid concern if it were the case but it's that's not the case here.

Oh! What if Arlen and Bob's feedback was sensational and Richard's was mediocre. That's a good point. Unfortunately, virtually all the people leaving feedback make it glowing. How glowing you wonder? As a teacher, I was struck by the number of people who gave some variation of an "A" grade to Bob, Richard, and Arlen. In fact, almost all of them went so far as to give an A-plus or more (as many as 21 more). Chart #1 shows how many pluses each person earned. To make the comparison fair, these numbers were based on all of the feedback Arlen and Bob received (124 for Arlen and 158 for Bob) and the 150 most recent comments left for Richard.

As you can see from the chart, Bob is most frequently given only a lowly A+ and has never been given anything above an A+++++ while Arlen is most frequently given an A+++ and has earned as much as an A+++++. Still, Richard is even better with his typical A+++++ and earning as much as an incredible A+++++ (that's 21 plus signs!). Even without going into the statistical calculations, it is clear Richard excels.

There is some contradicting data, however. Both Bob and Arlen have received a five star rating while Richard has not. Arlen's feedback is also noteworthy for its inclusion of a "2 thumbs up" designation that the other two have never received. Where Bob seems to excel is in receiving extra letters. He has been given an incredible TEN (10!) AAA+++ as you can see in Chart #3. He has also received a mind-boggling AAAAA+++++ (22 plus signs added to 5 "A's"). Richard's was perhaps the two AAAAAA+++++ (8 plus signs added to 8 "A's").

So while Richard has been garnering plus signs, Bob has been scooping up A's. Where does that leave Arlen? I'll let you decide.

Next issue:

- Who does **Carol McDougald** leave the best feedback for?
- Why does **Randy Wesner** seem to be selling a car piece by piece on eBay?

