



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



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### **Auctions at Insulator Shows and Swap Meets**

Auctions at swap meets and shows in the Chicago area have spread over the years. I ran the first one at the Racine, Wisconsin swap meet about 10 years ago. A few years later, I started auctioning insulators at the January "Beat the Winter Blahs" Crown Point, Indiana swap meet. One auction was held at the Yorkville, Illinois show a few years ago and, most recently, I was able to run an auction at the Columbia City, Indiana show. For at least four years, there has been an auction at the Tama, Iowa show. I took the idea to shows and swap meets hosted by the North Western Insulator Club and they have had frequent auctions for the last several years with a variety of people serving as the auctioneer (sometimes me).

With all these auctions, perhaps it is time to do an analysis of them. The first point I would make about them is that one person can take an idea and get it going so that it takes on a life of its own. Second, auctions can be great ways to generate income to pay for the cost of hosting a show, e.g., the food and show hall rental. Third, auctions can be a great way for collectors to move large quantities of insulators. Fourth, auctions can be a great way for collectors to acquire a large quantity of insulators to build their collection. Common insulators may not be brought to a show or swap meet unless an auction is held although some people may bring insulators for a free table. Finally, auctions can be a way to get a realistic idea of what a piece is worth.

A comparison between two recent auctions shows some of the analysis that can be made. The auction at the recent Tama, Iowa show generated nearly two-and-a-half times the amount of sales as the Columbia City, Indiana auction (\$1536 vs. \$630) and had almost twice as many lots (102 vs. 58). Several explanations are possible for this difference. First, there was not an auction previously at the Columbia City show while it was the third time an auction was held in Tama. Three years ago at the Tama show, the auction consisted of 50 lots and brought in \$642 which is very close to Columbia City's first auction. Second, the show host provided 38 of the lots (about one-third of them) which sold for \$811 which was nearly half of the amount sold in the auction. As a very minor third reason, there was a couple that walked in with a small collection, most that was sold in the auction, although it constituted only 2 lots sold for \$1 each. There were not any walk-in insulators at the Columbia City show that were included in the auction. On the other hand, the amount in the Tama auction might have been more had I not sold \$50 worth of wood pins to someone before the auction started and a big JD stacking substation insulator that was sold for \$20. There were 5 dealers who put insulators in the Columbia City auction while there were 11 contributors to the Tama auction. Twelve bidders won lots at Columbia City while 19 won lots at Tama.

Other questions to ask about auctions exist. Do they increase or decrease the interest in a show? Do they take away from sales by dealers? Do they impose too much on the activities of a show? Are there too many items in the auctions?

## **Tama, Iowa Show/Swap Meet Report Saturday, June 3, 2017**

The 20th Annual Hawkeye State Insulator Swap Meet was held on Saturday, June 3, 2017 at the Tama Civic Center. Dealer set-up started at 7 a.m., which was early for me, with the doors opening from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. for the general public. There was no cost to set up and lunch was provided to those in attendance so it is an inexpensive way to find out what it is like to be a dealer.

The facility is also great unlike the previous location that could sometimes offer challenges. Seasoned collectors will remember when the show/swap meet was held at a park under the roof of one of the picnic shelters. Dealers arrived extremely early in the morning (pre-6:00 a.m.?) to get one of the better picnic tables to display wares. Cars were backed right up to the shelter to facilitate unloading and provide a place to sit if you had a tailgate. If it rained, you might have opted for a table in the center or else you would have to deal with the rain from the wall-less building. Rain the night before would create little ponds around the building. One year it was unseasonably cold and I still remember huddling under a blanket I happened to have in my truck.

In any case, the current facility offers all a dealer could ask for. The restroom is clean, there is easy entry into the building, and there are huge windows offering natural light. The location is simple to find, the view out the windows is of frequent passing trains, and it is climate controlled.

For the last couple years, an auction has been held to help pay for the facility. Sellers pay 10% of the selling price to the club which goes to the show host to help pay for food and the facility. This year there were 12 dealers who added items to the auction, generating sales of \$1536, and commissions of \$154. This amount plus donations from attendees for lunch went a long way toward paying the expenses of the show. Results from the auction are shown below.

Dave Shaw opened his home to collectors on Friday late in the afternoon. Collectors gathered there to see his collection and as a departing point before heading to the nearby casino for the buffet dinner. There is always something to see in his collection. He has a great display of insulators with large bubbles and junk as well as a range of colorful and rare pieces. In between viewing, cheese and crackers were offered along with friendly conversation and a chance to look over a bunch of electrical catalogs that Dave picked up recently at an auction. I don't know if I can list all the people that crowded around the table but they included Riley Armstrong, Dennis & Jeanne Weber, Russ & Marge Frank, Boone Jeffers, and Bill Snell. By the time everyone got to the buffet at the casino, others added to the group included Arlen Rienstra, Gene Hawkins, Kim Borgman, Ross, Tom & Chris Murphy and a few others.

Part of the attraction for me and for Russ & Marge Frank is the opportunity to head to the show early and antique along the way for a couple days. Before leaving, I called Russ to find out what way he was traveling so we didn't cover the same ground. I ended up heading north to Wisconsin before heading west along some of the state routes just over the border. Russ and Marge took a more direct route straight west. I visited several antique stores in various towns (Lake Geneva and Monroe are two that come to mind) but found very little: a purple side tab lightning rod insulator slit in half, a couple lightning rods, and a battery jar. Russ had better luck finding a few insulators at a good price.

There was a good crowd most of the day at the show. I sold several porcelain pieces from a collection I recently bought. Included in my sales was a U-407 Locke Jumbo, a Lapp "bridge" insulator, a powder blue Locke Unipart that looked like a multipart, and a lightning rod.

Lot	Seller	Description	Price	Buyer
1	Tom Murphy	Box of glass insulators	\$1	Andy
2	Tom Murphy	Beehives, pony, 151, 143, 145	\$2	Andy
3	Tom Murphy	Multiparts	\$5	Sean Duffy
4	Tom Murphy	5 multiparts	\$5	Sean Duffy
5	Tom Murphy	Power tolls	\$1	Andy
6	Tom Murphy	Box of porcelain	\$2	Andy
7	Tom Murphy	Hubbard Crate and multiparts	\$4	Greg Delia
8	Tom Murphy	Porcelain and Glass guy strains	\$3	Tom Nugent
9	Rick Soller	2 Wood replicas of early insulators	\$1	Greg Delia
10	Rick Soller	Model train RR signs	\$16	Wayne Alexander
11	Rick Soller	Surge protectors and ringer box	\$17	Greg Delia
12	Rick Soller	Box of transpositions	\$1	Greg Delia
13	Rick Soller	Box of ponies	\$5	Andy
14	Rick Soller	Box of porcelain	\$1	Sean Duffy
15	Rick Soller	2 boxes of Hemi 40s & Brookfields	\$1	Andy
16	Rick Soller	Colored Porcelain (Blue)	\$14	Tom Nugent
17	Rick Soller	Colored porcelain (blue and white)	\$9	John Hall
18	Rick Soller	Box of glass	\$1	Andy
19	Rick Soller	Box of power pieces	\$2	John Hall
20	Rick Soller	Box of beehives	\$1	Tom Nugent
21	Rick Soller	JD Unipart	\$1	Sean Duffy
22	Rick Soller	Box of clear insulators	\$2	Tom Nugent
23	Rick Soller	NEGM, W/T, Pyrex	\$2	Greg Delia
24	Greg Delia	Josyln Matches	\$8	Rick Soller
25	Brian Rieker	Hemi – 19, amber	\$55	John Brink
26	Brian Rieker	Hemi – 19, choice of ambers	\$30	John Brink
27	Brian Rieker	Hemi – 19, choice of ambers	\$25	Dennis Weber
28	Brian Rieker	Hemi – 19, choice of ambers	\$21	Greg Delia
29	Russ Frank	Hemi-9s with side pins	\$8	Greg Delia
30	Russ Frank	Hemi – D512, amber	\$7	Tom Nugent
31	Dennis Weber	Large, framed picture of women on phone	\$7	John Hall
32	Wayne Alexander	Sign	\$10	Arlen Rienstra
33	Rick Soller	Crate of hardware: Tramp brackets	\$11	Riley Armstrong
34	Rick Soller	Crate of Hemi-40s, 11	\$1	Andy
35	Rick Soller	Crate of porcelain wire holders	\$5	Riley Armstrong
36	Greg Delia	3 green suspensions	\$4	Sean Duffy
37	Greg Delia	Meter	\$26	Sean Duffy
38	Rick Soller	Suspension	\$4	Wayne Alexander
39	Rick Soller	Bucket of porcelain	\$9	Deb Booker
40	Boone Jeffers	Amber Hemingray	\$95	Tracy Holt

41	Dennis Seltrecht	Whisky Amber Hemi-19	\$20	Darryl Lawrence
42	Wayne Alexander	Hemi-19, green amber	\$55	John Brinks
43	Dave Shaw	Carnival sombrero suspension	\$12	Greg Delia
44	Dave Shaw	Pyrex Carnival 441	\$42	Deb Booker
45	Tracy Holt	Bucket of 42s, greens, hemi blue, clear	\$5	Andy
46	Tracy Holt	Japanese Suspension: 2 @ \$2	\$4	Darryl Wagner
47	Dave Shaw	Commemoratives (7 of them)	\$29	John Hall
48	Dave Shaw	4 transpositions	\$31	Riley Armstrong
49	Dave Shaw	Box of 8 beehives	\$8	Andy
50	Dave Shaw	Box of 102s, smalls, B's, 15 total	\$6	Andy
51	Dave Shaw	Box of ponies	\$5	Andy
52	Dave Shaw	Box of foreign glass (Aussie)	\$65	Sean Duffy
53	Dave Shaw	Box of 16 ponies	\$3	Maeve
54	Dave Shaw	Box with E14B Opal, 121s, 122s	\$24	Tom Nugent
55	Dave Shaw	Box of Beehives, green, steel blue, lt blue	\$8	Tom Murphy
56	Dave Shaw	Box of exchanges, 12	\$22	Gene Hawkins
57	Dave Shaw	126.3's, 7	\$8	Darryl Lawrence
58	Dave Shaw	Box of 121s, 42s, 122's	\$22	Blaine
59	Dave Shaw	Brookfields 126, 126.3, 9 of them	\$18	Sean Duffy
60	Steve	V-porcelain large Unipart	\$35	Dick Bales
61	Steve	Multipart	\$2	John Hall
62	Steve	Pittsburgh Multipart	\$14	Rick Soller
63	Steve	Pittsburg multipart	\$19	Rick Soller
64	Steve	Porcelain with pin 13 x \$2	\$26	Sean Duffy
65	Steve	Tranposition brackets	\$1	Greg Delia
		LUNCH BREAK @ 11:30 a.m.		
66	Rick Soller	Tub of insulators bought in parking lot	\$1	Andy
67	Rick Soller	4 boxes of porcelain	\$1	Andy
68	Rick Soller	Box of tolls	\$10	Chuck M.
69	Steve	Box of Hemi-9s – Pony's	\$5	Andy
70	Steve	6 beehives	\$1	Andy
71	Steve	Porcelain fuse box	\$3	Tom Nugent
72	Dave Shaw	Crate of spools	\$1	Greg Delia
73	Dave Shaw	Box of 160s	\$29	Andy
74	Dave Shaw	Box of 15 glass insulators	\$17	Andy
75	Dave Shaw	Box of 15 glass insulators	\$15	Tom Nugent
76	Dave Shaw	Box of 8" bolts	\$1	Greg Delia
77	Dave Shaw	Pyrex	\$13	Tracy
78	Dave Shaw	Pyrex	\$21	Tracy
79	Dave Shaw	Pyrex	\$34	Arlen Rienstra
80	Dave Shaw	Pyrex	\$50	Riley Armstrong
81	Dave Shaw	Box of 15 porcelain insulators	\$21	Sean Duffy
82	Dave Shaw	Box of 16 glass insulators	\$10	Tom Nugent
83	Dave Shaw	CD 281 Hemi blues	\$22	Tom Murphy

84	Dave Shaw	Box of glass, 151s, 152s, 210s	\$12	Tom Nugent
85	Dave Shaw	Box of porcelain	\$42	Sean Duffy
86	Dave Shaw	Box of porcelain	\$50	Bill Snell
87	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$18	Greg Delia
88	Dave Shaw	Box of porcelain	\$48	Sean Duffy
89	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$6	Andy
90	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$7	Andy
91	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$50	Pat M.
92	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$26	Greg Delia
93	Dave Shaw	Box of glass	\$14	Gordie
94	Dave Shaw	Suspensions, porcelain	\$1	Sean Duffy
95	Tom Murphy	Lynchburgs, Hemi, Brookfield bucket	\$5	Andy
96	Tom Murphy	Bucket-145s, glass & porcelain spools, keg	\$1	Andy
97	Tom Murphy	Bucket of porcelain	\$14	Greg Delia
98	Tom Murphy	Bucket 164, 162, 154, 122	\$12	Andy
99	Tom Murphy	Bucket of glass and porcelain	\$27	Sean Duffy
100	Rick Soller	Green shirt with REC patch and Willy Wirehand patch	\$4	Sean Duffy
101	Rick Soller	Box of porcelain	\$10	Riley Armstrong
102	Rick Soller	Box of glass	\$17	Andy
		TOTAL	\$1536	



### New Identification System!

I recently purchased the insulator on the left which got me wondering how to describe it. That is when I came up with this trademarked system.

As an example, I am calling this insulator a Brookfield CD 101 [090]R0706F7540. The "R" means there is a rock in the insulator. The next two digits indicate how wide the rock is in sixteenths of an inch units followed by two digits for how tall the rock is in sixteenths of an inch units. In this case, the rock is 7/16" wide x 6/16" tall. The "F" means the rock is in the front half of the insulator verses the back ("B"). "75" refers to the number of degrees from the left mold line that the rock is located. "40" refers to the number of sixteenths of an inch the bottom of the rock is from the base, i.e., the rock is 40/16" from the base or 2.5 inches. Simple right!

If there was a nail, the letter "N" would replace the "R" and if it was an air bubble, "A" would be used. Two objects in an insulator might look like this: CD101 [090]R0706F7540N0116B3035. You could also add information like NM or SB for near mint and smooth base.

## **Upcoming Shows**

### **Colorado Springs, Colorado**

**Friday, July 21, 2017 to Sunday, July 23, 2017**

The 2017 National Insulator Show will be held in Colorado Springs, CO July 21 - 23. For dealer tables and show information contact: DAN GAURON 719-492-0181; MIKE GREEN 303-549-5028 OR DAVID BARON 303-888-8071. Or visit the website at:

[www.nianational2017.com](http://www.nianational2017.com)

### **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

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