



**GREATER CHICAGO
INSULATOR CLUB
NEWSLETTER**
Rick Soller, Cub Reporter



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Saturday, April 6, 2019 Dupage Collectors Expo Show Report

This is the third version of this show report I've written. There will be a version in the Drip Points that comes out in June and a different version that comes out in the next All Insulators: Crown Jewels of the Wire. In this version, I'll tell you about all the things that cause me anxiety about hosting a show. These are in no particular order.

#1. I forgot something. Bob Stahr and I want everything to run smoothly so we try to anticipate the needs of collectors coming to the show. For example, last year, I brought extra table clothes and one dealer ended up needing them. Luckily, over the years we have created a list that seems to be a couple pages long now. A few of the items on the list include club membership forms, name badges, markers, tape, scissors, cash box, cash for the cash box, admissions log, free insulators, batteries, map of where everyone's table is located, a sign with the dealer's name on it for each table, signs to put out by the main intersections, extension cords, auction forms, ink stamp and pad, admission table sign, free insulator table sign, sample copies of the club newsletter, flyers promoting future shows, handcarts, and a camera.

#2. There isn't enough time. If an event is scheduled in the building on Friday, we can't get in as early as we would like and we certainly needed the time this year. Luckily we were able to get in before 11 a.m. for the 4 p.m. opening for dealers. The number of tables that Bob and I have at the show is fluid. If fewer dealers buy a table, we bring more stuff and add a couple tables like we did this year. Thus, between us we had 8 tables whereas last year it was 5.

Adding to the amount of time needed to set our own tables up was the need for time to set up lots for the dealer-only auction that evening. Earlier in the week we convinced the son of a deceased collector that selling the father's collection in an auction at the show would save appraisal fees and provide an immediate return at a good price given that buyers paid no commission and the seller only paid 10%. The size of the show provided a good assurance that the insulators would sell at a reasonable price. Richard Case brought four more tables of insulators for the auction to add to the four from the collection and the two tables of items from others. All of this took several hours to organize.

During the show, the two rooms filled with dealers made it difficult to check out everything on everyone's table as well as sell insulators off of my table. There was also a collector who came to the show with a mystifying wooden insulator that I checked out.

By the end of the show, I was still busy. I bought a table's worth of porcelain from Arlen Rienstra and the remains of Jason Townsend's three tables of insulators. I packed up two tables worth of insulators bought in the auction but left behind (I made \$20 on them at the Columbia City show auction!). I convinced Mike McLaughlin to buy a table of porcelain ponies from me. And I had to pack my tables of sales stock up.

#3. Will the show break even? It amazes me that Bob and I can host a huge show with over 85 dealers and barely break even. Last year, we made \$62 each for our efforts. At various points during the planning of this year's show we were predicting a loss of \$250 each but the late

addition of a fantastic collection to sell at auction resulted in us making over \$100 each. The main expense we have to deal with is the \$2800 show hall rental fee per day. Ironically if we have the show in a cheaper facility, it is also far from any population center and fewer dealers attend. That is why Columbia City with a dozen dealers is as financially “successful” as the show in Wheaton with seven times the number of dealers, i.e., the Wheaton show has 7 times the dealers but 7 times the cost.

If you estimate the age of dealers (especially the lightning rod dealers), you’ll understand why Bob and I have anxiety about breaking even in future years. There do not seem to be any young lightning rod dealers. Instead some dealers have health problems that limit their ability to set up their multiple tables. With insulator collectors, there are younger participants like Cole King, Greg Delia, and Josh Dondorf.

#4. Will something unpleasant happen at the show? Jim Crandall used to run the show but when Paul Rosenberger fell at the show and died shortly after that, a threatened lawsuit caused Jim to turn over the reins of the show to Jason Townsend. During the many years that Jason ran the show, I heard of a theft or two from dealers’ table. Several collectors did not like that insulators were tossed into a dumpster at the end of the show. For the last two years, Bob and I have only had to deal with minor unpleasantness such as asking nondealers to leave the show floor until the show was open to the public and finding out that, although cheaper, the Budgetel Hotel in nearby Glen Ellyn was noisy at night, had hard beds, and was not very clean.



Tom & Mary Nugent with signs and telephone tools

Despite all the anxieties that come with hosting any shows, there are perks. First, I enjoy setting up the auction since I get to handle almost all of the pieces and can start to formulate my bidding strategy. Second, I would not get to meet people with the same interest unless shows were held. One surprise visitor at this show was Dave Franz who spent an hour with me while I was packing up telling me about what has been going on in his life over the last few years. His dyed shirt and long hair were one clue. I also had pleasant interactions with Linda Connell who brought delicious cookies, with Terry Kornberg who talked me out of a CD 151, and many others. Third, I get a preferred space and earlier set-up time as the host so am able to watch everyone else set up. Below are a few pictures from the fun.



Gene Hawkins watching Dave Ramp inspect auction lots. Dave Shaw is standing behind Dave. Kim Borman and Richard Case are in the background. Rick Soller in the black shirt.



One of Rod Krupka's tables

Columbia City, Indiana Show Report

May 3 and 4, 2019 saw a dedicated group of dealers enjoy the slow pace of the Columbia City, Indiana show. The show offers wonderful hospitality, a fun show & tell activity, a club auction, and plenty of friends.

One unique activity that occurs at the show is show and tell. This occurred after everyone had their fill of a variety of different pizzas. I had a few slices of pepperoni but decided to be adventurous and also tried the ham & pineapple, and the chicken parmesan. I was pretty hungry so enjoyed it all and washed it down with some root beer. The next day, the leftovers were in the refrigerator so several dealers also had pizza for lunch.

During the show and tell fun, six collectors showed prized insulators. Up first was Mike McLaughlin. Mike claimed he probably had the most expensive piece brought for the event and hid it in a large box until he finally pulled it out after he threw the gauntlet down regarding the value of his piece. Upon pulling the piece out, he revealed a gutter top insulator with a porcelain top and a glass bottom. Both pieces had a large number of patent dates on them. Mike indicated that he bought the piece years ago for a mere \$150. Today the price of such pieces is around ten times that amount or more.

Rick Soller then pulled two Electrose insulators out. The first was found buried in a Toronto, Canada landfill and ended up in Rick's hands in a trade for a peacock NATCO CD 151. As far as Rick knew, it's only one known. The second piece had a smooth brown finish as if it was never put in service. It was an eBay purchase from a lady who bought it at a church bazaar.

Mike Davis brought two pieces purchased at the recent St. Louis bottle show. The first was a CD 162 H.G.Co. in a peacock blue color with a smooth base. He says he bought it near the end of the show so was surprised that it was still for sale given that there were bottle dealers who knew insulators at the show. The second piece was a CD 104 B in a dark yellow green. This piece came out of Rockford. Mike noted that a couple others came from nearby Bellville, Illinois so Richard Case's report of a CD 104 used in Rockford now has a few other examples reported used in the area.

Gene Hawkins brought a CD 104 with a mold repair on one side and the arcing New England Tel & Tel on the other side of the skirt. The mold repair consisted of a large oval with a small circle in the center. A second CD 104 had a similar blot out but a recent find on the east coast of a CD 104 with the embossing engraved backwards explains the blot out as an attempt to correct this mistake. A close inspection of the blot out identifies some parts of the lettering of the backwards engraving that was not completely removed.

Gene brought a third piece that can trace its provenance back to the Park Forest show hosted by Mark & Elaine Corriera. At that show, a family showed up thinking the show was a garage sale. After looking around, Paul and Jeannette Hoste struck up a conversation with the man and he indicated that he had an insulator but didn't see one like it at the show. He said the insulator had fingers. After some paging through the price guide, it was determined the insulator was a CD 181 Pluto. The Hostes indicated the insulator was valuable and they were interested in buying it. The family left but returned later near the end of the show. Not trusting a check, the Hostes quickly tried to ask if anyone knew where the nearest ATM was. After learning about the urgency, several club members gave the Hostes cash they had on hand and a deal was consummated. The Hostes later send checks to reimburse the four or five collectors who willingly gave them cash. (In what other hobby would something like that happen?). When the Hostes divorced, Mark & Elaine bought the piece and eventually they sold it to Gene Hawkins. Plutos were used at the 1893 World's Columbian Expo held in Chicago so it made sense that one might show up in Chicago. The family indicated that that they bought it for \$2 after talking the seller down from \$3. Dave Ramp also reported that he got two of them once long ago.

Andy Wadysz brought what he thought was an unlisted CD 134 purple Brookfield. Upon closer inspection by others, however, Andy was brought back to reality when it was pointed out that the piece had an inner skirt and was really a CD 162. Still, it was a beautiful piece to see.

The lack of space precludes a full listing of all that was sold in the auction (that will be in a future issue) and all the great pieces that changed hands but here are a few highlights. Eight dealers provided 79 lots of insulators for the auction with 15 bidders fighting over who wanted each lot more. The auction resulted in \$378.50 in sales with 10% of that amount going to the club. Thanks go out to Russ Frank for 5-1/2 pages of notes about who bought what from whom and to Marge Frank for keeping a running tab of what each bidder bought.

Rest in Peace Judy Christensen

I am very sad to learn that Judy Christensen passed away May 15, 2019. Judy and her husband of 52 years, Les, were fixtures at shows throughout the area including the Crown Point swap meet, the Mid-Ohio show in Springfield, the Columbia City show, and the Strongsville, Ohio swap meet. She was a delight to talk to and full of life when you saw her. Her obituary can be found at:

<https://www.oguinnfh.com/obituaries/Judith-Ann--Christensen?obId=4405263>

Upcoming Shows

Tama, Iowa

Saturday, June 1, 2019

The 22nd Annual Hawkeye State Insulator Swap Meet is scheduled for Saturday, June 1st at the Tama Civic Center from 8:00 AM-3:00 PM. The Civic Center is located at 305 Siegel St. in downtown Tama, Iowa. Those attending can plan on setting up at 7:00 AM. There is no cost to set up at this event and lunch will be provided for those attending. This annual event tends to draw dealers from Iowa and surrounding states and is a very relaxed atmosphere enjoyed by all. We are again looking forward to hosting you and provide some good Midwest hospitality in the Hawkeye State. For additional information and table reservation, please contact DAVE SHAW at (641) 484-5463 or e-mail at dashaw@mchsi.com

A candidate for the U.S. presidency recently announced he would be at the event. At about 10:30 the candidate promised to engage in a dialogue with collectors over economic matters. We expect the press will be there in large numbers ☺

Orlando, Florida

Friday – Sunday, June 14-16, 2019

The National Insulator Association's 50th Annual Show and Convention will be held June 14-16, 2019 in the Convention Center at the Doubletree by Hilton Orlando at Sea World, 10100 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32821. In June 2018, show information is available on the NIA web site. Plan to be a part of "Celebrating 50 Years of Meets/Shows". The show hosts are CLAY BLEDSOE, GRAHAM BARNES, and JACQUELINE LINSCOTT-BARNES. For more info call 321-480-1800 or email: bluebellwt@aol.com.

Ottawa, Illinois

Saturday, September 14, 2018

The Greater Chicago Insulator Club's annual fall swap meet will return for the second time to the home of Tom and Mary Nugent although one week later than in previous years. Their home located at 1999 N. Columbus St., Ottawa, IL 61350. Bring a table if you can. Free lunch. Club auction with Rick Soller taking bids. For more information or to RSVP, contact Tom at (815) 434-5157 or tnugent@ivnet.com.

Although the address is listed as 1999 Columbus Street, attendees need to turn on Alexis Street to get to this address. You cannot see the house from Columbus Street and you have to travel to the end of Alexis Street to get to the address of the swap meet. Coming from I-80, Alexis Street is one mile south on Columbus Street/U.S. 30 and is the first right turn after Reynolds Manor Dr. You will be going west when you make the turn. Tom will have signs up to make it easier to find his domicile.

2019 Price Guide Deal

I now have the latest price guide from Don Briel available for sale! If you would like one, I will have them at the Tama, Iowa swap meet at a discounted price (\$45 rather than \$49). If you can't make the swap meet, you can order one by sending a check for \$45 to Rick Soller, 4086 Blackstone Ave., Gurnee, IL 60031 or you can use PayPal and send \$45 (friends and family no fee) to com574@clillinois.edu .