



**GREATER CHICAGO
INSULATOR CLUB
NEWSLETTER**

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April Fools Issue a Success!

A few members of the club reported being taken in by the previous April fools issue. All of them, however, eventually realized all the stories were fake. It has been a few years since an April Fools issue was mailed since it takes a while to think of these outlandish stories so it may be a few more years before another one comes out.

Even without an April Fools issue, there are many other examples of hijinks in our club and in the hobby. At the Wheaton show, for example, **Gene Hawkins** showed **Rick Soller** two CD 154 Hemingrays in shades of dark blue (teal?) and told Rick to take them outside in the sun because the contrast between them was even more pronounced in the sun. After checking them out, Rick decided to switch one of them with a piece from the free table to see if Gene would notice. It was a nice try but Gene immediately caught on.

Near the end of the show, insulators from the free table started showing up on the sales table of several dealers. Once again Gene Hawkins noticed the addition of the misplaced piece on his table and promptly moved it to another table. We heard of several of dealers taking home an extra piece or two, perhaps unknowingly.

Wheaton Show Report

The Collector's Expo show held at the Dupage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, Illinois on Saturday, April 10, 2021 will go down in history as one of the more memorable shows. A large number of dealers from multiple states, a record walk-in crowd, an enormous after-hours auction, and persistent parking hassles are some of the issues marking the show as one that will be talked about for many years to come.

Show hosts **Bob Stahr** and **Rick Soller** learned shortly before the show that the county health department would be administering Covid-19 vaccinations on Saturday of the show. Previously the health department was only doing this during the week. As a result, the gate in front of the building was closed on Friday during dealer set-up and was only open until 8 a.m. on Saturday. Parking was permitted in about 8 spots behind the building in what was labeled as handicapped parking and briefly to unload on the side of the building in handicapped parking for people getting a vaccination. Otherwise, dealers had to move their vehicle to a grassy area down the hill behind the building where the Covid shots were administered. Some dealers found parking on the street was much closer, but these spots filled quickly. Those parked on the side of the building were sternly warned on Saturday to move their vehicle or it would be towed!

Adding to the parking frustration was getting to the show. Attendees had to come in from the entrance farthest from the building and wind around the back part of the fairgrounds. Many ended up in a long line of cars destined for the lot nearest the show hall where people were parking to get a shot in the arm. Every car was stopped to insure the person had an appointment which mystified people heading to the show. I received one text indicating they were stuck in such a line and asking for help!



A mother and daughter pair of collectors.



Tina Rienstra with one of the insulators from her sales table.

Confusion about the existence of the show was also prevalent. The county had cancelled the county fair around this time and that news may have confused potential attendees into thinking all events at the fairgrounds were cancelled. While Bob and Rick were handling various emergencies at the show hall, collectors were texting, emailing, and phoning to find out if the show was still occurring. Rick confesses that he did not get a chance to answer one email sent Friday morning until 12 hours later. Rick's wife, Nedra, took several calls at their home to let people know the show was still on.

Usually about 50 people attend the show as walk-ins. This year there were slightly over 100 paid admissions. Part of the explanation for the extra attendees was that the Kalamazoo, Michigan bottle show was cancelled so several bottle collectors came to Wheaton instead. The Western Reserve Insulator Club cancelled the Pennsylvania show that they usually have at this time too. A few weeks earlier, a show in Missouri was cancelled. All this led to pent-up interest in getting to a show and Wheaton became the place to be.

With increased attendance, numerous dealers reported record sales. Sales of items spanned from \$1 insulators to purchases of items for several hundred. Several participants in the auction reported flipping their purchases for a nice profit.

The auction had 24 registered bidders and 11 sellers. The highlights of the auction came from the collection of Dennis Stewart who was thinning out his collection. Colored porcelain characterized several lots and saw good prices. Three lots of 1871 bullets saw strong competitive bidding with one lot of 6 bullets reaching a hammer price of \$160 and another of 8 bullets fetching \$95. Two U-966 "Niagara" insulators also went home with new owners with one selling for \$105 and the second for \$70.

Initially, the show hosts expected about 5 tables of auction offerings. By the time, dealers had finished adding lots, twice the expected amount was for sale. Greg Delia, in particular, brought a large number of items acquired from his work as a lineman including pole tags, various types of hardware, signs, lightning arresters, and construction standard books.



The picture to the left shows the extensive array of items for sale. Thanks to Richard Case for the picture.

On a personal note, wearing a mask while conducting the auction seemed to wear me out. Three-fourths of the way through, I had to sit down and drink some water because I felt faint. A few sips of water, however, and I felt much better although I finished most of the remaining auction items sitting down on the stage. Remember to stay hydrated at shows!

Peotone Estate Sale Disappointment

A posting on one of the auction notice sites included the following picture:



Advertised as “Nobil’s Peotone Vintage Pole Barn O’Plenty Estate Sale,” to be held April 15-17, 2021 in Peotone, Illinois, the cobalt blue CD 151 was unmistakable. The color plus the row of drip points on the inner skirt clearly marked the piece. There was also a nice green signal in the box. Curtis Erickson first brought this to my attention in a text. Since he was too far away to attend, he thought of me. Shortly after this, I saw the listing in one of the many notices I get in my email.

The condition of the CD 151 looked pretty good and a mint peacock blue one would be worth around \$1500. Curtis had called the auctioneer and he said the insulators would sell for \$20 each although when I called, he said the company does not give out prices before the sale.

Being first in line was the key to getting this incredible steal. I thought about arriving at 2 am but decided to go even earlier so I left in the afternoon the day before the sale and was in the area by 5:30 pm. I checked into a nearby motel and decided to scout out the location. It was out in the country on a gravel road, and I drove passed it once before realizing my mistake and doubling back. As I slowed down near the place, I noticed a van parked in one of the driveways. I had passed by it a few feet before I saw there was someone in it ,so I backed up and pulled next to it. The driver was already in line and was keeping a list. I was number 9 on the list.

The driver and a friend of his were taking shifts so they could be first in line. I questioned him about his interests (toys) and shared mine. The next morning, I arrived 2 hours before the 9 am opening and talked to others that were waiting. Luckily, no one was interested in the insulators.

Finally, 9 am came and the people running the estate sale were nice enough to indicate which building had the items of interest for people. The insulators were in the second barn. My turn to head there came quickly and I was the first person to head there but two other people after me started a foot race and my ankle hurt too much to beat them to the door. Still, I was the first person to the box of insulators. NO CD 151! NO GREEN SIGNAL! Arrgg!

I asked the cashier where they were (perhaps a special cabinet?), but she was ignorant. The person running the sale came in at that time and claimed that the seller had put those in the estate sale "by accident." I left in frustration.

I do not believe the insulators were there by accident. First, the other insulators in the sale were junk: chipped CD 145 H.G. Co.'s in aqua, a clear CD 154 Hemingray, aqua CD 121s, and aqua CD 152 Hemingray-40s or Brookfields. If the owner was a collector, where were the insulators that were more than stuff you could find on a free table? Second, the runner of the estate sale must have known those insulators were worth much more. I posted something on ICON and several people indicated they had contacted the estate sale company. No doubt this tipped off the person that there was substantial value in those insulators. Perhaps he "bought" the insulators and will do some research and sell them for closer to the real value at a later time.

The seller supposedly was from Wisconsin. I can't think of anyone in Wisconsin that would be selling such a small box of insulators and still own such expensive ones. All the collectors I know who might own one would have been selling a lot more insulators and would sell them via a club auction, on Facebook, or Craigslist. And why would someone from Wisconsin sell stuff at a rural estate sale south of Chicago?

I usually don't let situations like this frustrate me, but I spent 24 hours of my life involved with this, spent money for a night in a motel, and got a chance at nothing. I left a factual but negative review on Yelp for the estate sale company, and also posted a negative review on the company's Facebook page. No response to the Facebook posting after 1 month.

Columbia City Show Report

I did not attend the Columbia City, Indiana Insulator, Fruit Jar, Bottle & Collectibles show held on Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1, 2021 in the Whitley County 4H Center, but I did garner some hearsay information. The show was well promoted on Facebook and elsewhere so expectations were high for the show.

Traditionally, one of the unique features of the event is show and tell on Friday evening. Arlen Rienstra talked about interurbans and railroad tokens when it was his turn to share. Gene Hawkins showed off his CD 102 ponies. Lee Brewer, new to the area, showed irradiated insulators and pointed out that they look black if you look up through the bottom of the skirt. Ken Richardson told about his Australian insulators. Dave Ramp also took a turn.

Rumor has it that on Saturday around 10 am, Mike McLaughlin served as auctioneer for about 20 or fewer bidders. Sellers included Mike, Gene Hawkins, Russ Frank, Dave Ramp, and Kirk Miller. The club netted \$32 from the sale of \$320 worth of auction lots. Large lots ended up being sold since some lots consisted of common insulators, so lots were combined. The number of bidders dwindled down to 4-5 hard-core buyers after a couple tables but all the lots were sold.

A good crown made it to the show. Sources indicate dealers included Mike McLaughlin, Gene Hawkins, Tina & Arlen Rienstra, Dave Shaw, Russ Frank, Mark Gilmore, Dave Ramp, and a dealer selling fruit jars. Others who made it to the show (and whom may have had tables) included Jennifer Alley-fisher, Justin Stoudt, Larry Carlson and Alan Stockton. There was also a Tennessee collector and a local collector at the show.

A bit of a scare occurred before the show. Russ Frank drove by the fairgrounds and saw that there would be covid testing in the same building as the show, according to the story I heard from unnamed sources. Gene Hawkins sprung into action and found out that the testing would be at a distant part of the building and attendees would enter through a separate entrance. By the end of the day, any fears were laid to rest as only 2 people were tested on Wednesday before the show and no one all day on Friday.

Russ Frank traveled to the show on Thursday and extensively hunted for insulators in antique stores. Unfortunately, the hunt through 3 malls resulted in no additions to his collection or sales stock.

As a final note, the show hosts managed to cover their expenses, attendees enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and plans are to hold the show again next year.

Upcoming Shows

Saturday, May 22, 2021

Bovey, Minnesota

The North Western Insulator Club Spring Sale and Swap Meet will be in northern Minnesota at the home of Rick and Mary Augustyn, 34879 Scenic Hwy, Bovey, Minnesota 55709. Hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Rick and Mary have plenty of room to spread out so we can follow COVID precautions and catch up with old and new friends. Please bring your own tables and chairs and we will be outdoors but will have protection from any spring showers. Please RSVP to Rick and Mary at augies9ers@gmail.com or 952-240-3960. We'll see you in May! [Editor's note: Bovey, MN is located, it is 202 miles north of Minneapolis (3.5 hours).]

Saturday, June 5, 2021

Tama, Iowa

The 23rd Hawkeye State Insulator Swap Meet will be held on Saturday, June 5th at the Tama Civic Center from 8:00 AM-3:00 PM. The Civic Center is located at 305 Siegel St. in downtown Tama, IA. Dealers planning on attending can start setting up at 7:00 AM. The event is at no cost to those attending and lunch will be provided close to noon.. There will be an auction scheduled with part of the proceeds going to support this and future events. Donations towards this event are welcome. We look forward to hosting you and provide some Hawkeye hospitality here in the Midwest. For any additional information and table reservation, please feel free to contact DAVE SHAW at (641) 484-5463 or e-mail at dashaw@mchsi.com.

Friday – Sunday, July 2-4, 2021

Farmington, New Mexico

The National Insulator Association's 52nd Annual Show and Convention will be held in Farmington, New Mexico, at the San Juan County Fairgrounds McGee Park Convention Center, located at #41 CR 5568, Farmington, NM 87401. There will be plenty of dealer table space and exhibitor space plus a multitude of things to do in the area. The headquarters hotel is the Farmington Courtyard by Marriott. Complete show information including dealer, exhibitor and banquet reservation forms plus hotel reservation directions are now available online at www.NIA2021.com or www.NIA.org Your Show Host is TOMMY BOLACK, (505) 325-4275 or (505) 325-7873. Contact Show Planning Committee Chairman: LOU HALL, (559) 284-4211, louhall@pacbell.net.