

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Amazingly enough, I've managed to get through my first year as Information Director - and with only minor scrapes and bruises! I feel like I'm starting to get the process down, and thanks to the help and understanding of the many contributors to *Drip Points*, the publishing business is getting easier.

One of the things that has really helped is that so many of you make your contributions electronically. At first, I received many of the inputs on a computer disk, but recently, more and more of the documents come in over the INTERNET - an indication that the "information superhighway" is becoming evermore a reality. One item to note is that I have not been able to break the code for translating Wordperfect 6 for

Windows into something useful. Microsoft tells me they are working on the converter, but it's not done yet. So, to make my life easier, if you compose in WP 6, save the file as an earlier version (e.g., WP 5) and send it in this format I've had no problems with the multitude of other file types you send me.

This issue of *Drip Points* is packed with features, ladies and gentlemen - so read it from cover to cover. Perhaps the high point is the first information release of **insulator insurance** for NIA members. This is a breakthrough that has been in the works for a long time, and has finally come to fruition thanks to the tireless efforts of our President, Dwayne Anthony. Also in this issue, we bring you the official NIA position on fake and altered items in hopes that this problem can be laid to

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(Ed note: Bobby Younger's 13 page letter was edited due to space limitations, but a number of his illustrations are used throughout this issue)

Dear NIA,

When I last wrote, I think my insulator total was 300; now it's 549. I finally got a non-US insulator, a CD 154 Dominion-42 in very light honey amber for \$4.50. I also got a Whittall Tatum #14 baby signal in the same color at the same antique store. I've gotten so many new ones that I had to make a small pamphlet....I took a walk...to where there hadn't been any insulators for a long time, (but this time there was) a pole that was snapped in two and not connected to wires, with 8 crossarms loaded with insulators. No big deal---NOT!!! (After several trips by this area, a run-in with biting dogs, police reports to fill out) ... I asked a Santa Fe worker about the insulators. He said to go ahead and take them. The pole came from Burlingame KS and had been hit by a car.

I have a lot of hunting to do in my county, approximately 30 miles of RR track, lots of abandoned telephone lines and in-use telephone lines, plus antique shops. I'd like to start an insulator club in my area. It would be called the Santa Fe Trail Insulator Club, although I don't know where to start. I've started to put up flyers that say I'm looking for insulators, jars and lightning rod balls ... I got a few replies.

When are you going to have a show in Topeka? I can't go to anywhere else. How do you (collectors) do it? Every issue of Drip Points has new finds in it. Me finding a threadless in Kansas is like trying to find a needle in a haystack. (Is that possible?) If so, where should I look?

(Bobby's letter details several successful hunts and some very nice finds, but he says "85% of my collection is Hemingray. Most is modern." He also details the following well thought-out list:)

Bobby Younger's Insulator Hunting Kit

1. Potato fork (Ol' Faithful)
2. Hand shovel
3. Heavy rope (for pulling down side mounts)
4. Small first aid kit
5. Wire cutters
6. Gloves
7. Pliers
8. Long handled cutting tool (to whack weeds)
9. Reference Books (optional)
10. Drinks (water, pop or juice)
11. Snacks
12. Boots (optional, for working in high or scratchy weeds)

Sincerely,
Bobby Younger, age 16,

PS. Happy collecting.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this final message in the capacity of NIA president, it is difficult to conceive that my two year term will conclude at the 1994 National in Houston. There is definite truth in the old adage: "Time sure flies when you're having fun!"

As promised in the last issue of *Drip Points*, the long awaited *full coverage insurance plan* created especially for insulator collections is now available! This is a benefit offered exclusively to NIA members only. Keep in mind that this is an NIA sponsored program--all inquiries and policy requests must be made directly with the insurance company.

A very low, competitive rate of \$5 per \$1,000 valuation for an annual policy makes the option of insuring your collection much more practical and easily affordable. Don't assume your current homeowner's or renter's insurance company will cover your collection, unless you have secured such a provision in writing. A large number of companies recently surveyed offered very limited coverage or no coverage at all. After considerable research, your NIA Board found this carrier to offer an impressive plan with excellent loss coverage.

For further information and a policy application, please make direct contact with John P. Slade & Son Insurance Agency, Inc. at the address listed elsewhere in this issue of *Drip Points*. One note for Californians: At this writing, due to the recent major earthquake in

Southern California, a temporary moratorium is in effect excluding earthquake coverage from new policies. Interestingly enough, this does not effect coverage for losses due to fire caused by an earthquake! All other U.S. States and Canada are exempt from the moratorium. Inquire for updates.

After an extensive review of the current problem involving for the most part, lightning rod ball reproductions, the NIA Board of Directors--with the assistance of the various NIA Committee Chairpersons and valuable input from the General Membership--recently issued an official NIA position paper on fakes and reproductions. Much more NIA follow-up work will continue. This could include research directed toward documenting and identifying all known and/or suspected

fake, altered, and reproduced insulators. As always, we appreciate your continued input on this matter.

The NIA National and Regional Shows for this year are fast approaching. In fact, you may be already packing for the Houston National when you read this! All current predictions point to a strong showing of both buyers and dealers at all three shows. Don't read about all the fun after the fact...be a part of it!

While at the National in Houston, be sure to make plans to attend the NIA General Business Meeting held on the evening of NIA Day (Friday). Included in the meeting will be the introduction of your new NIA President and Central V.P., and the announcement of the locations for the

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attend my final meeting as a member of the Board in my capacity of second past president. **As I** reflect on the last eight years of active participation on the NIA Board and in the insulator hobby I have reached several conclusions I believe are worthy of mention.

1. The people I have met and worked with in the hobby are some of my dearest friends and finest people I ever had or will have the occasion to know.

2. The experiences of sharing the hobby, whether by cross-country trip, buying/selling collections, talking on the phone, research, writing stories, telling stories, listening to stories, making up stories (just kidding), collaborating with others on projects, writing letters, helping new collectors, etc., etc., etc., are the fondest of my entire life.

3. After engaging the hobby to the point of addiction (20-30 hours per week for many years) I have now been able to put it into perspective and balance with the rest of my life, namely my God and my wife (they are not the same, in case some were wondering!) Despite the reduction of my collection from a peak of 9,500+ pieces to now just under 1,300, I can honestly say I am now enjoying the hobby as much as ever.

4. The NIA is a viable and essential body for maintaining the hobby despite all recent political rhetoric to the contrary. I challenge the detractors to spend eight years serving the hobby on the Board and then check their perceptions against the realities. It is easy to bash something in which one has no investment of time, energy, or sweat. I feel that unless you've walked in the shoes of a Board member, one is unqualified to evaluate the quality

of the journey.

As we look forward to a new president and changes in the Board of Directors we should reflect on and modify President Kennedy's speech by thinking more about what we can do for our hobby than what it can do for us. Let's support those who have chosen to speak by their actions and sacrifices. In my experience there have been many such heroes who have gone unnoticed outside of the internal workings of the NIA, without whom we would have no hobby worth sharing.

For those who have supported and shared the hobby with me the last eight exciting and rewarding years, from the bottom of my heart, THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!

Mike Guthrie

FROM THE EASTERN REGION VICE - PRESIDENT

For you folks who haven't had to experience the misery of the snow & garbage of this winter, you cannot imagine the relief of looking at green out the window.

Even more importantly, the shows have started and you don't have to worry about getting stranded in a snowstorm on the way there or back. The St. Petersburg FL Bottle show continues to be a rapidly improving show for insulator collectors and is one you should think about getting to. The Chesapeake Bay Insulator Club (Baltimore) held their show the first weekend in March. This was a fun show with not a lot of dealers, but plenty of good stuff for all. Attendance was good all day and those of us who set up there

were rewarded. Although the exact circumstances of the deal are not known, a gorgeous 735.6 Big Blue with a bunch of milk and a couple of big goobers sort of ambled in and was quickly liberated. The bottle show the next day produced a couple of nice pieces, but nothing to write home about. The Yankee Polecat Show was held on March 27 and was the usual show stopper. The crowd was heavy all day and a large number of pieces changed hands. The cheapy tables thinned out fast, but there were some choice pieces that changed hands also. Some of these were a CD 316 Brookfield, a 110.6 with some skirt repair, a 701.1 egg (a walk in), an Elliott Hat, a VNM 151 NATCO in good peacock, a 701.6 Confederate egg, a 110.5 New Eng Tel (straight embossing) and a 109 Chicago pony. One of the real sleepers may have been a CD 287 No. 135 with very faint Locke embossing. Say what?

Upcoming shows in the Eastern region that may not be history by the time you read this are the CDIC show in Gang Mills NY on May 22 and the Eastern Regional in Kulpville, PA on Sept. 24 & 25. The Regional will again be held on the same weekend as the Renninger's extravaganza, so get there early & hit both. Of course there is the National in Houston (not eastern region, but a must).

More plaudits to the Dixie Jewels Insulator Club. Guys like Keith Roloson & Jim Overstreet seem to really making things tick. Accolades to Joanne Overstreet for being a good sort and letting the club adopt the premises as an unofficial clubhouse.

Insulator collecting, although a ton of fun, seems to be injurious to your health. Most of you are aware that Kevin Lawless

has had his share of problems this winter, but appears to be on the mend and approaching a shadow of his former self. Say hello to "pucker pants" Lawless in Houston and wish him well. Doug Williams is recovering from a back operation which apparently went quite well. Hope to see you in Houston also, Dougie.

I have had a lot of response, both written and verbal concerning the subject of fakes & reproductions and the need for some NIA position and plan of action on such. ALL replies were pro such action and in general deplored the idea of any deception through fakes & repros in the hobby. Obviously, ideas on exactly how this should be managed varied quite a bit. Without stealing thunder from Dwayne Anthony, I feel safe in saying that something stronger and in writing will be forthcoming imminently. This whole subject is not always crystal clear with each issue, complaint or whatever so what transpires each time will undoubtedly require good judgement, diplomacy and considerations of not only what seems right, but what seems fair at the time. Progress will be made, but it will also require the good intentions, understanding & cooperation of all of us to make it work well.

See you in Houston; BE THERE and
good collecting.

Dick Bowman; NIA #597
Eastern Region Vice-President

**FROM THE CENTRAL REGION
VICE PRESIDENT**

The Insulator collecting hobby is alive and well in the NIA Central Region! I'm proud to say that we now have six active insulator clubs, with some involved in sponsoring major NIA and local annual shows or swap meets, and/or exchanging newsletters with other clubs around the country. I firmly believe that the strength of clubs reflect the health of the hobby. Our membership lists include collectors within our own area as well as support members from states other than our own. As a result, we are all learning better ways to serve this wonderful hobby of ours. (Clubs in the Western and Eastern Regions continue to set a good example for us.) Thanks and congratulations go out to the members of these clubs in the Central Region for all their hard work and dedication:

Greater Chicago Insulator Club, Northern

Illinois & Indiana, Wisconsin

Huron Valley Bottle & Insulator Club,

Michigan

O.K. Insulator Club, Oklahoma

Missouri Insulator club, Kansas, Iowa &

Missouri

National Trail Insulator Club, Ohio

Lone Star Insulator Club, Texas

The time may come when we shall have to call ourselves the International Insulator Association! Correspondence and trading with insulator collectors in other lands has been picking up at a fast rate, and foreign travel has taken on a new significance, now that so many interesting pieces have been brought back from "over there", "down there" or "down under". At the 1994 Houston Silver Anniversary National Show in July, don't be surprised to see collectors Warren and Faye Foster from Australia and Marco Schmitz-LeHanne of Germany roaming the aisles! That's right, they're flying over for the National! Is that great news or what?

*SEE THE
WILDFLOWER
QUILT ON THE INSIDE
COVER*

The Lone Star Insulator Club is sponsoring this special NIA National and we extend an invitation to all insulator collectors everywhere, hoping

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FROM THE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

(Space Saved for Lawless Input)

(Space Saved For Ross Huth Financial Report)

...DRIP NOTES

- Don't forget to make your hotel reservations for the National if you haven't done so already!
- Attention Central Region: Ballots for your Vice President have to be postmarked by the 10th of June: Send back to Ron Norton.
- See the Insulator Insurance Flyer in this issue!
- If you want to order personalized NIA logo stuff and pick it up at the National, call Jill Meier **immediately!**

**1994
NATIONAL INSULATOR ASSOCIATION
MEMBER STATUS
AS OF 5-1-1994**

TOTAL NIA NUMBERS USED	5536	
NIA NUMBERS NOT ASSIGNED	23	
NIA NUMBERS DOUBLE ISSUED	56	
	ACTIVE	INACTIVE
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
-- MEMBERS	947	4589
CHARTER	124	762
LIFETIME	32	7(DEC.)
JUNIOR	10	9
CLUBS	3	8
NON U.S. MEMBERS	33	21
21 YEAR MEMBERS	68	0
20 YEAR MEMBERS	28	2
19 YEAR MEMBERS	17	7
18 YEAR MEMBERS	21	8
17 YEAR MEMBERS	25	13
16 YEAR MEMBERS	25	12
15 YEAR MEMBERS	26	9
14 YEAR MEMBERS	22	17
13 YEAR MEMBERS	17	29
12 YEAR MEMBERS	38	32
11 YEAR MEMBERS	33	44
10 YEAR MEMBERS	33	55
9 YEAR MEMBERS	39	69
8 YEAR MEMBERS	28	76
7 YEAR MEMBERS	50	137
6 YEAR MEMBERS	37	141
5 YEAR MEMBERS	62	224
4 YEAR MEMBERS	73	322
3 YEAR MEMBERS	67	456
2 YEAR MEMBERS	118	885
1 YEAR MEMBERS	120	1968
	<u>MISC.</u>	
DECEASED MEMBERS		75
DOGS		3

An NIA Position on Fakes and Reproductions

(Issued April 1994)

It has become apparent from a multitude of letters, articles, conversations at shows and telephone calls, that there is a great deal of concern over the increasing number of fake, reproduction, or altered lightning rod balls, insulators, and related items that are appearing at shows. It is also apparent that there are strong negative feelings about such items and that the membership of the NIA, rightly so, wants the NIA to take action on this problem.

Fakes, reproductions and altered items have been on the scene for years. There are many collectors who choose to purchase these often attractive items. We are not criticizing those who choose to acquire such items as this is a free country, but our concern is how such items are represented or misrepresented. The NIA Board of Directors feels that merely having a tag, paper sticker, or removable label identifying an item as not original shows good intent by the seller, but is not enough. Our concern lies with those who choose not to identify these items, or the "secondary" market where a purchaser has the option of removing the tag or label and allowing these items to be purchased without full knowledge of what they really are. It is highly discouraging to any collector, especially new ones, to pay money for an item only to find out later they have been "duped". It is our intent to provide a worry free environment for buyers by requesting sellers to abide by a few simple rules involving good ethical values.

With the above in mind, the NIA Board of Directors has amended Paragraph #3 of the NIA General Show Floor Rules to read:

3. Fakes, alterations, reproductions, and/or highly questionable insulators or related items may only be brought onto the show premises if they are PERMANENTLY MARKED or embossed so as to indicate their lack of authenticity. It shall be the show host's responsibility to strictly enforce this rule and the decision of the show host shall be final.

As points of further clarification or explanation the Board offers the following:

1. It is not intended that items in question have to literally be marked "fake" or the equivalent. A permanent marking with the date of manufacture, initials of an individual, or even a name may be sufficient. The goal is that whatever marking is used will cause the prospective purchaser to easily recognize that an item is a reproduction or fake, or cause them to question its authenticity.
2. We are asking that hosts of NIA sanctioned shows (and hopefully all insulator shows whether sanctioned or not) note the rules on repro or fake items in their contracts in addition to attaching a copy of the NIA General Show Floor Rules.
3. We are asking that show hosts monitor the tables during the set-up and conduct of

(National Flyer goes here)

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