

How time flies! Back at the beginning of the summer I planned to send out another issue of **Showcase** highlighting activities from this past spring and two new exterior information signs. Then the delivery of the signs was delayed until mid-July. Yes, really. That ends my excuse for not writing this sooner. In this issue, I've chosen a few upgrades to our exterior exhibits as examples of how we strive to continually improve the visitor experience.

Many minerals on exhibit at the museum come from mines. As you likely know, the museum is closely linked with a copper mine. After construction of the museum's present and permanent home was well underway, two uncapped mine shafts on the Mabbs Vein were discovered directly under what would become the west wall of the museum. The shafts were capped, and are invisible to our visitors. As a result of telling numerous visitors about the saga of the Mabbs Vein, it became obvious that providing an information sign was desirable. Now a new 2 by 3 ft information sign, printed in fiberglass using state-of-the-art advanced technology to be durable while still providing high quality graphics, sits adjacent to the museum's entrance. The sign describes the rediscovery, capping, and geology of the Mabb's Vein. From the day it was installed, the sign has been read by many visitors to the museum, and their comments to gift shop staff have been very positive. For those not able to visit in person, the Mabbs Vein is more fully described in a downloadable article on the museum's website (<https://www.museum.mtu.edu/museum>).



The 19-ton Lake Copper was moved to the museum in 2015 (see **Showcase** Issue 5) and is on exhibit in the Copper Pavilion funded by John and Jane Matz. The legal paper sized (8.5 by 14 inch) sign did not provide sufficient information for such a significant and popular exhibit. Our visitors are now better served by a similar style 2 by 3 ft sign for the Lake Copper. The sign includes a description of the discovery and extraction, with underwater pictures of the recovery from the bottomlands of Lake Superior, and an explanation of the geologic setting including two geologic location maps. It has been well received by visitors and virtually every visitor I see entering the Copper Pavilion reads the sign. An article providing more information about the Lake Copper is available online (https://www.museum.mtu.edu/museum/copper-pavilion/lake_copper).



In the previous **Showcase** (Issue 17), I described the acquisition of a float copper specimen found near Chassell and donated by Val Vaughan-Drong and Karen Brown in memory of their late parents Harry and Aili Vaughan. Since then, a steel stand has been fabricated to hold the float copper. I then prepared an explanation of float copper that was printed and applied to an aluminum composite panel which was mounted on the stand. The float copper is now the center piece of the Phyllis and John Seaman Garden.



We use visitor input to help guide museum improvements for items as simple as a neon open sign installed last winter, to the new signage and exhibits described here. We appreciate your feedback which helps us make the museum a better place for future visitors. Because of your support we continue to be the premier mineral museum of the Great Lake region as well as the official mineral museum of Michigan. Thank You!

Until next time, Ted Bornhorst, Executive Director and Interim Curator