



From the Executive Director Ted Bornhorst

We are quickly approaching the New Year and once again it is time for my annual *Newsletter*. The mission of the museum is to “*educate people about minerals through our collections and exhibits*”. “*Our collections*” include Michigan Tech’s mineral collection, synonymous with the A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum’s collection, and the University of Michigan’s mineral collection. Our educational exhibits here in Houghton and elsewhere are built on the foundation of these collections. In past issues of the *Newsletter* I’ve focused on how generous donations of minerals from people like you enhance the depth, breadth, and quality of Michigan Tech’s mineral collection. In addition to donations of minerals, your financial support of the museum is essential. Your past support of the museum is valued and helps us strive towards our mission, vision, and goals. Please consider a donation if you haven’t done so this year. We have updated our membership categories and perks on the enclosed mail back form.

Rather than focus on Michigan Tech’s mineral collection, this issue of the *Newsletter* will focus on the University of Michigan mineral collection.

In past issues of **Showcase**, I’ve told you about the University of Michigan’s mineral collection which is housed, managed, and co-owned by Michigan Tech under a 2015 legal agreement called the Michigan Mineral Alliance. Importantly, this part of our foundation is not static. Just as the museum actively manages its collection under Michigan Tech’s collection management policy and procedures, the museum manages the University of Michigan’ collection under the legal agreement which we philosophically supplement with Michigan Tech’s policy and procedures. The University of Michigan can add specimens to their collection under the agreement upon mutual consent. The museum also has the right to trade all but a few of the University of Michigan specimens. Specimens acquired from such a trade become part of the University of Michigan collection and are co-owned by Michigan Tech and the University of Michigan. Inferior and redundant specimens can be deaccessioned and sold with proceeds distributed to both Michigan Tech and the University of Michigan.



One of the two exhibit cases focused on the Michigan Mineral Alliance. The outstanding Bisbee azurite, bottom center, is one of nature’s masterpieces and a favorite of visitors.

The University of Michigan’s mineral collection has strengthened the foundational holdings and thus our exhibits. The museum has full rights for exhibition of the University of Michigan specimens. We currently have two exhibit cases in the museum’s Thomas D. Shaffner Exhibit Hall that feature some truly outstanding University of Michigan specimens. There are also other exhibits within the museum that strategically contain a combination of the University of Michigan and Michigan Tech specimens. The number of the University of Michigan specimens on exhibit here in Houghton is gradually increasing. We also exhibit the University of Michigan specimens along with Michigan Tech specimens at regional and national mineral shows, as well as several satellite exhibits across the state of Michigan. When on exhibit, the University of Michigan specimens are labeled as being part of the Michigan Mineral Alliance with a special label that includes a pairing of Michigan Tech and the University of Michigan official logos.



Recent addition on collecting gemstones and populated with both Michigan Tech and University of Michigan Mineral specimens.





Since the initiation of the Michigan Mineral Alliance, the museum maintains a satellite exhibit on the University of Michigan’s campus in the CC Little Building near the main office of the Department Earth and Environmental Sciences. Our current exhibit focuses on minerals used in cellphones.

I am pleased to report a new cooperative exhibit between the museum and the University of Michigan. An extensively upgraded and updated U-M Museum of Natural History officially opened on the U-M campus in Ann Arbor within the new Biological Science Building in November 2019. The U-M Museum has several exhibits focused on the topic of the dynamic Earth, which encompasses how the Earth formed, changes over time and, of course, rocks and minerals.

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum worked closely with U-M museum staff to thematically design a significant mineral display. We then selected specimens from the Michigan Tech and the University of Michigan mineral collections to populate the proposed display. Professional exhibit designers contracted by U-M molded our proposed educational content and specimens into five ceiling high glass exhibit cases. The end result is attractive and inviting.



The mineral display has a prominent position near the elevator and is adjacent to the main offices, a well-traveled space. In the months before the official opening, the U-M museum staff reported that the mineral display had already attracted many visitors who spent notable time viewing the display.

The thematic content is organized by exhibit case. The progression of content is laid out to be generally viewed from left to right with the exception of the center case, which is designed and positioned to draw visitors attention to the overall display. It is titled “*Nature’s Masterpieces*” which is thematically similar to the “*Beauty of Minerals*” gallery here in Houghton. Both at U-M and Michigan Tech, larger attractive specimens are used to highlight the natural artistic beauty of minerals.

View of mineral display towards elevator with offices behind the display.



Minerals of Michigan

While the exhibit cases are laid out by content they can be appreciated in any order. From left to right, the cases are titled “*Studying Minerals*”, “*What is a Mineral?*”, “*Nature’s Masterpieces*”, “*Minerals of Michigan*”, and “*Minerals and You*”. The last case focuses on the use of minerals. The “*Nature’s Masterpieces*” exhibit is see through while the others are masked. The back side of the masked exhibits, facing the waiting area of the offices, is populated with a variety of mineral specimens.



Nature’s Masterpieces

The new display is specially noted on the U-M museum’s website under exhibit information (*Larsen Family Mineral Display*): “*Highlighting the alliance between the U-M Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences and the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum at Michigan Tech University, this case features their shared research, as well as striking mineral specimens you don’t see just every day.*”



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE A. E. SEAMAN MINERAL MUSEUM

www.museum.mtu.edu





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Please Mail To:

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