



John Jaszczak

My last communication with you seems like so long ago yet it was early March when I announced that John Jaszczak would succeed me as Director and Curator of the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum of Michigan Tech. Since then news and events have changed at a rapid clip as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. I recently read that it is difficult to make sense of this global change when “looking through a kaleidoscope rather than a telescope.” While the museum leadership will be changing, the view will remain clear, easy to interpret, steady, and conscientious as the museum continues to strive towards providing even greater service to Michigan Tech and the peoples of the State of Michigan, Great Lakes region and beyond. In this issue of **Showcase** my aim is to introduce you to John and highlight some of his many accomplishments.

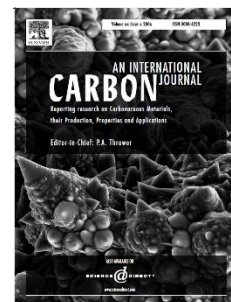
John became interested in minerals at the young age of 8 years old. His fascination with museums came early when he visited the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, where he purchased his first mineral specimens. By age 11, he joined the Parma Lapidary Club where there was an active junior group, and soon after he entered his first formal exhibit at the Cuyahoga County Gem and Mineral Show in Berea, Ohio. John’s interest in minerals continued during both his undergraduate studies in physics at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio and graduate studies at the Ohio State University. During his graduate studies he developed an award-winning exhibit on crystal symmetry that was exhibited at several regional mineral shows. It was during this time that he first became aware of the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum, and met then-curator Stan Dyl at the Cincinnati Mineral Show where he was exhibiting. John graduated with a Ph.D. in physics in 1989. While his doctoral research was in physics, the topic of his research was clearly mineralogical; the title was “Facets and Roughening in Crystals and Quasicrystals.” John became an Assistant Professor in the Michigan Tech physics department in 1991. His physics research has been focused on computational studies of materials properties.

At Michigan Tech, John’s accomplishments are far too many to fully review here. He was successively promoted to the rank of full Professor of Physics, served as Associate Dean for undergraduate education in the College of Sciences and Arts for three years, and from July 2018 to now has been the interim Chair of the Department of Chemistry. He has been recognized for outstanding teaching in 2010, 2012, and 2019. During his first full year at Michigan Tech John began his formal active involvement at the Museum when he was appointed Adjunct Curator. For a short time in 2013, he was interim curator. John was recognized in 2007 with the Michigan Tech Distinguished Faculty Award especially for his service to the Museum.



Growth spiral on natural graphite

John’s collection of minerals is focused on graphite and diamond, interesting crystal forms, and the minerals from the Merelani Hills in Tanzania. His first mineral specific publication was in the *Mineralogical Record* in 1991 on graphite. His scanning electron microscope image (with then-curator George Robinson) of the discovery of natural graphite cones appeared on the cover of all issues of the international journal Carbon from 2004 to 2005. John has also published articles in *Rocks & Minerals*, *American Mineralogist*, *Lithographie*, and *Minerals*. In 2016, he led the team who characterized and named the new mineral merelaniite which was later named the 2016 Mineral of the Year by the International Mineralogical Association. John was further recognized in 2016 when the new mineral jaszczakite was named after him. He is currently part of a team naming another new mineral from Merelani, richardsite. In addition to his keen interest in technical aspects of minerals, John is an accomplished mineral photographer with numerous photographs published as contributions to articles as well as journal covers.



For over 50 years John has loved minerals. Not only does he have a strong technical background, especially in the area of crystallography, he also appreciates the natural beauty of minerals as evidenced by the high quality of his mineral photographs. John and I have worked closely together since my joining the museum staff 17 years ago. He recently helped me with the creation and approval of the University level policy 1.04 – Mineral Collection Management and subsequently on collection management procedures. He cares deeply about responsible and ethical management of this public resource. John has been and is to this day my trusted advisor on all matters museum. John is highly qualified to assume responsibilities of Director and Curator of the Museum. I’m pleased to be able to pass the gavel on to him on July 1, 2020.

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