

From the Director by Ted Bornhorst

In order to more efficiently communicate with our supporters and friends, the museum is looking to increase its communications through digital media. Though we will continue to send paper at least once a year, beginning after the release of this newsletter, we will email one page of museum news to those whose email addresses we have on file on a more regular schedule. Please email mcramer@mtu.edu to get on the digital list; we do not share contact information.

Over a year ago, I began the process to have the museum's web site modernized and revised. This project was put in the queue and has now made it to the top of the list. With a little luck by spring of next year we will have a new web site. I'm happy to report that the museum is soon to reestablish online sales. For those of you who have visited our existing web site, you have likely clicked on the "Museum Online Gift Shop." For a year or two we sold minerals, but now the site is practically dormant. The new Museum Store will be much more customer friendly, and be able to accept credit cards. We are looking forward to once again actively offering minerals, books, and other items for sale.

I hope you will become a museum member or renew your museum membership. Your generous support helps make the museum a better venue for our visitors, improves our world-class collections, and helps support us promoting the museum far and wide. I would be grateful if you would consider a year-end gift to the museum, also.

Surprises from Merelani, Tanzania by John Jaszczak, Adjunct Curator

Back in late December 2007 to early January 2008 a discovery was made of bright green diopside crystals perched on outstanding crystals of graphite from the famous tanzanite gem mines near the village of Merelani in northern Tanzania. At the 2009 Tucson gem and mineral show, then-curator George Robinson was able to acquire an excellent sample of diopside with graphite from Fine Minerals International for the museum's collection. You can read more about this remarkable occurrence as well as additional research done by adjunct curator John Jaszczak and colleagues in a series of three articles that appeared in the March-April 2013 issue of *Rocks and Minerals* magazine.



Diopside crystals on graphite crystals from the 800-ft level, Karo Pit, Merelani Hills, Tanzania. The specimen is 6.5 x 6.5 cm. The largest crystal is 1.8 cm tall. A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum specimen (ex Fine Minerals International).

The Merelani gem mines, famous since 1967 for the unique purple-blue gem variety of zoisite (tanzanite) that occurs there, held even more mineralogical surprises, however. While keeping a sharp eye out for interesting specimens for the museum, museum supporter Bill Shelton noted an unusually large and translucent red crystal of wurtzite from Merelani available at the 2013 Tucson gem and mineral show. Dr. Robinson was able to acquire this excellent specimen for the museum's collection, and subsequently also acquired a large, lustrous group of Merelani pyrite crystals. The wurtzites from Merelani are now recognized as some of the largest and finest wurtzite crystals from anywhere in the world, and some have even been cut into attractive gemstones. Some of world's finest crystals of the rare



Wurtzite crystal (back lit); 5.5 x 4.3 x 2.2 cm spotted by Bill Shelton. A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum collection (ex Cal Graeber, ex Simon Harrison). John A. Jaszczak photograph.

manganese sulfide, alabandite, have now also been coming from Merelani, and associate curator Chris Stefano recently acquired a fine black octahedral crystal for the museum's collection. An article on the "Spectacular Sulfides from the Merelani Tanzanite Deposit, Lelatema Mountains, Manyara Region, Tanzania," by John Jaszczak with collaborators Simon Harrison, Mike Rumsey, Mike Keim, and Mike Wise, appears in the September-October 2014 issue of *The Mineralogical Record*. Don't miss it!

New Acquisition for Collection by Chris Stefano, Associate Curator

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum is pleased to announce the acquisition of a huge 24.5 cm (almost 10 inches) tall crystal of red tourmaline from the Malkhan pegmatite fields of eastern Russia. It is among the largest four or five tourmalines found in this lesser known locality for fine tourmalines. The piece has very little damage for a crystal of its size, and the rich color is also rare in such a large specimen. The quality is as good as or better than what can be expected from tourmalines found in better known localities such as California, Brazil, Madagascar or Afghanistan. The specimen comes as a generous gift from museum patron Bill Shelton, who is known for his love of fine Russian minerals. Bill states “The acquisition of this specimen is a major coup for the museum. In terms of red tourmalines, it is truly a significant piece”. This specimen is a true crowd pleaser; it will enhance the beauty of the exhibits in the museum. This acquisition demonstrates what great things we can do with the help of our friends!



Tourmaline is 24.5 cm tall.
Chris Stefano photo

Welcoming the New Museum Manager by Ted Bornhorst, Director

I am pleased to welcome Drew Cramer to the museum as the Museum Manager. Drew holds a B.S. in geology and outdoor education from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. He is in the final stage of completing his M.S. in geology from the University of Montana in Missoula. Over time Drew will become responsible for many museum activities. With his geology background Drew will be able to do routine identification of minerals for the general public and answer geologic questions and conduct museum orientations for school and tour groups. He will manage all aspects of the museum’s gift shop, including managing the inventory and being the principal buyer. As well, he will care for the museum’s soon to become active online museum store. Drew will play an active and increasing role in special events held by the museum, especially Keweenaw Mineral Days. And much more.

If you are visiting the museum, please do introduce yourself to Drew. I’m sure you will find his enthusiasm for minerals and geology is addictive and it will be difficult to just say “hello.”

Membership Levels, Fees, Perks, and Privileges

- Basic Level-\$25 unlimited free admission, receive digital newsletter, option of having your name recognized on museum website
- Crystal Level-\$100 family membership, extends above privileges to immediate family members
- Copper Level-\$200 all Crystal Level privileges plus right to have name on a specially designated “Copper Level” case in the museum for at least one year ask in the gift shop for additional privileges
- Silver Level-\$500 all Copper Level privileges plus right to have name on a specially designated “Copper or Silver Level” case in the museum for at least one year ask in the gift shop for additional privileges
- Gold Level-\$1000 all Silver Level privileges plus right to have name on a specially designated “Copper, Silver, or Gold Level” case in the museum. at least one year ask in the gift shop for additional privileges
- Tax-Deductible Donation _____

Name(s) _____
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