

As the daily temperatures here in the Keweenaw slowly inch upward, the blanket of snow is beginning to melt and spring is near. For the museum, spring marks the practical beginning of our visitation year, which peaks in July and August when the area is awash in tourists. I'm pleased to report that museum visitation has steadily increased over the past 4 years and the number of visitors in 2017 was the most since moving to our Sharon Avenue home in 2011. Regardless, we continue to look at ways to increase our visitation and these are some of our efforts. About 5,500 bifold museum brochures are distributed by the Michigan Department of Transportation to the State of Michigan Welcome Centers. The Welcome Center on the north side of Mackinac Bridge is particularly notable as we must restock it several times during the summer. Our brochures are on the main counter near the museum's satellite exhibit and we are grateful that the staff at the center promotes us to the center's 470,000 visitors. Locally, we routinely stock our brochures at motels and other businesses. Our visitation benefits from being a National Park Heritage Site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. As the "Gem of Michigan Tech" prospective students and their families visit us as do guests of Michigan Tech faculty and staff. We also know word-of-mouth is an important way to get new visitors. This year we are experimenting with advertising using a much broader media. The museum will have an ad in USA TODAY's Go Escape to the Great Lakes regional travel guide that will be published in May. The USA Today guide will reach millions of travelers, especially throughout the Midwest.



"Classic Keweenaw Copper and Calcite Crystals"
2018 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show best museum exhibit.

Our local visitation is supplemented by the satellite exhibits and exhibits at regional and national mineral shows that exposes many tens of thousands of people to the museum. We routinely have a presence at the largest and most prestigious mineral show in the world, the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show held annually in February. Last year, 2017, the museum was highlighted at the show by having one of our specimens as the featured mineral on the show poster. This year the museum was recognized for the best museum exhibit at the show. Specimens were paired with antique wooden models of ideal crystal forms. The museum's exhibit was awarded the Betty & Clayton Memorial Trophy from among the multiple museum exhibits from around the world awarded. The museum's award-winning exhibit was collaboratively designed by Chris Stefano, associate curator, John Jaszczak, professor of physics and adjunct curator, and myself. Jaszczak and I installed the exhibit.

Through the efforts of John Jaszczak, the museum had an even greater presence at the show. John designed and installed a second exhibit titled "Merelaniite: 2016 Mineral of the Year." John was a principal author in the naming of merelaniite in 2016, which subsequently was selected as Mineral of the Year by the International Mineralogical Association. John also gave two presentations at the Mineralogical Symposium on Crystals and Crystal Forms sponsored by Friends of Mineralogy, Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, and the Mineralogical Society of America. John's presentations were titled "Sphalerite and wurtzite polytypism and morphology" and "Breaking the law: Exceptions to the classical laws of crystallography."



In closing this issue of **Showcase**, I'm seeking your help to encourage qualified candidates to apply for the museum's open museum manager staff position. Applicants must have a Bachelor's or Master's degree and have sufficient knowledge of minerals and geology to be a key staff member of the museum. The manager is responsible for day-to-day operation of the museum's public space and gift shop. They are the general public interface. See the detailed position description at: www.jobs.mtu.edu/postings/6591. Questions can be sent to me at tjb@mtu.edu. Michigan Tech is an Equal Opportunity Employer which includes protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.

Until next time, Ted Bornhorst, Executive Director