

As I begin writing this issue of **Showcase**, it's snowing outside! This was a month ago, and then, many of us who live here year round were overly optimistic we would have an early Spring, but the beginning of Spring was not early. Later this week high temperatures in the mid-40s says Spring is still in progress on its more usual path. There are analogs in the coming and progress of Spring to my "travels" with the museum web site. There are normal ups and downs of forward progress, but my hope was that a transformation would have been finished long ago and in fact I began writing this too soon also, before final debugging prior to the website going live. Nevertheless, I am pleased to announce that the museum's web site has finally undergone a complete transformation!!

Please do visit the new web site www.museum.mtu.edu

The museum's first collection of information accessible through the World Wide Web went public about 20 years ago, in the mid-1990s. John Jaszczak, adjunct curator, designed, programmed, and filled the museum's first web site with content. These early efforts by John were recognized when the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum's web site was chosen "best of the bunch" in a review of mineralogical museum web sites by Alan Goldstein in "Minerals and the World Wide Web, Part 1" in Mineral News, February 1998. By 2005, the museum's website was undergoing complete update and redesign. Emil Groth, retired web expert here at Michigan Tech, and I worked together on the overall layout, content, and functionality. The museum's revised and modernized web site was operational in 2006. Only a few years later, by late 2009, it was clear that the web site needed another update so Emil and I began once again to revise it. He designed and programmed a new home page and we were on the verge of moving forward when in 2010.....moving the museum from main campus to its permanent home here on Sharon Avenue quickly became our dominant focus. The museum's web site was put in the university's update queue and in the November 2014 Newsletter I reported that it "has now made it to the top of the list," an optimistic hope for an early "spring" for the museum web site. Regardless of the path, I'm convinced it is in fact better that the transformation has occurred now rather than before as it is fully compatible for the latest technology, tablets and smart phones.

The transformation of the museum's web site is the culmination of efforts spearheaded by University Marketing and Communications with Gail Sweeting, digital content manager, as the key person. Monte Consulting provided critical input to the design of the web site and did the actual web programming. I prepared the content and will manage content on the transformed web site. The most significant lesson that I learned from managing the old web site is to be careful to "promise" web content that can be feasibly maintained. Far too much content was "promised" in the previous web site, and some pages were never completed. In the new web site, at the outset all of the pages have content! The web site transformation makes it easier for potential visitors to learn about the museum and find the information they need for visiting. At the same time, there is basic information for those wishing to support the museum through their generosity or simply learn more about the museum, our collection, and our activities. I hope you like it.

In the last issue of **Showcase** back in January, I reported the museum was about to head off to exhibit in Tucson. Besides the exhibit, we network with people, purchase gift shop inventory, and seek outstanding specimens to fill gaps in our collection. I'm pleased to tell you that Chris Stefano, associate curator, found a high quality museum worthy specimen of crocoite at the Tucson show. The museum purchased this specimen from donations of members of the museum, like some of you.

We here at the museum have been busy. In the issues to follow you will be hearing about some of the noteworthy activities that support our goal of continually improving the educational content and public experience of museum exhibits.

Until then, best wishes,
Ted Bornhorst, Executive Director



Crocoite, Adelaide Mine, Tasmania, Australia. A superb group of short, radiating crystals with nearly ideal orange-red color. Donor: members of the museum. Specimen 18 cm long. Photo by C. Stefano.