

From the Director and Curator by John A. Jaszczak



A collection of great minerals and a team of great people are two critical factors that a great mineral museum needs in order to have the vitality that makes tourists, collectors, and scientists alike, want to visit (especially re-visit) and benefit from the resources the museum is privileged to curate and share. The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum has a long history of having both! As we enter this holiday season and reflect on the past year, I am thankful to have the opportunity to serve the mission of the museum as its new Director and Curator. I am also thankful to be a part of a tremendous nearly 120-year-long legacy passed on from former curators, including Arthur E. Seaman, Wyllys A. Seaman, Kiril Spiroff, and Jean Kemp, whom I did not have the honor of knowing, to Stan Dyl, George Robinson, Chris Stefano, and Ted Bornhorst, whom I do have the pleasure of knowing and calling my friends. I fell in love with the museum when I first saw it in

the EERC building in 1991, and remember the sense of awe that I felt, despite, or perhaps because of, my being a mineral collector since childhood. It has been a wonderful experience to see the same sense of surprise and awe among the many visitors, from children to adults, that I have watched or interacted with at the museum since becoming Director and Curator. We can all be thankful for the museum's many generous benefactors, past and present, whose financial support and donations of mineral specimens are critical to building the reputation of the museum. I am also grateful to our current team: Associate Museum Manager Patty Cobin, Sales Assistants Julie Stark, Janice Fraki and student workers Kai, Shivanshi, Elena, Makala and Austin, who help keep the museum open and looking fantastic. Finally, thanks to all of you for your continued interest and support of the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum - it is indeed a great place.

Donation of Magnificent Calumet and Hecla Conglomerate

The first donation of specimens that the museum received after it reopened on July 1, 2020 were two magnificent copper-rich slabs of Calumet and Hecla Conglomerate. As described by their donor, Michigan Tech alumnus Tom Rosemeyer (Geology, class of 1966), "The slabs weigh 54 and 102 pounds and represent ore from the Keweenaw's largest and richest native copper deposit, in the world's largest native copper district." The pieces were cut from large chunks of the ore that were recovered in May 2019 from the poor-rock pile of the South Hecla shaft of the Calumet and Hecla Conglomerate mine located in Calumet, Michigan. Both slabs are now on display in the museum's Keweenaw Gallery, mounted on maple supports custom-made by Pat Reagan.

We have been the fortunate recipients of other wonderful donations as well, which we hope to showcase in the future.

Red Carpet Specimens - by Patrice Cobin

The digital catalogue of all the museum's specimens includes a wide variety of pertinent information, including when a particular specimen is included in a

published article or book. In an effort to both highlight the museum's collection and our collaboration with outside individuals and institutions, we've created this new section, *Red Carpet Specimens*, in which we will highlight some of the museum's published specimens - old and new.

Several excellent articles have been published in 2020 that feature specimens from the museum's collection. In the November/December issue of *Rocks & Minerals*, authors John C. Medici and R. Peter Richards thoroughly delve into what makes the Suever Quarry unique in their article "Fluorite and Other Minerals from the Suever Quarry, Delphos, Van Wert County, Ohio". Particularly noteworthy are the remarkable fluorites displaying a variety of morphologies, including rare sheaths of elongate crystals. A photograph by John Jaszczak of a fluorite specimen from Medici's collection was featured on the cover, and 21 other photos by Jaszczak are included in the article. One of the museum's specimens, donated to the museum by Lance Hampel in 2007, is illustrated in the article (see image at right).

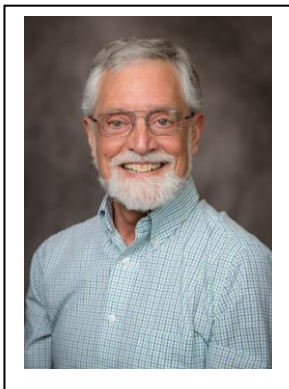


Tom Rosemeyer standing next to a magnificent 104-pound slab of copper-rich Calumet and Hecla Conglomerate he donated.



Cubic fluorite crystals with dodecahedral modifications. Photo by John Jaszczak.

Kudos to Ted Bornhorst - by John A. Jaszczak



After serving 40 years on the faculty of the Department of Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences and seventeen years serving in the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum in various roles including Director, Executive Director, and Interim Curator, Dr. Ted Bornhorst retired from Michigan Tech on June 30, 2020 as Professor Emeritus. The tremendous impact of Ted's contributions to the museum would be difficult to overestimate, as they include many stellar achievements. The top of my list would include the planning, design, organization, and execution of building our current museum facility on Sharon Avenue, and moving the entire collection, done in collaboration with former curator Dr. George Robinson. Also very high on my list would be his successful initiative to create the *Michigan Mineral Alliance*, a unique partnership with the University of Michigan that brought the University of Michigan's mineral collection to the Michigan Tech Campus under the care of and in joint ownership with the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum.

It is most unfortunate that we could not celebrate his retirement with an in-person gathering as we had hoped. A virtual celebration was held on November 19, 2020, by the Michigan Museums Association to recognize some of his most recent accomplishments at the museum with a *Colleague Champion* award. In mid-March, just four months before his retirement, the emerging COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of the museum, along with much of the rest of the university. In anticipation of the quickly approaching tourist season, Ted developed a detailed plan for safely reopening the museum as soon as possible. His plans were accepted by the university, thus permitting the museum to reopen on July 1, about 1.5 months earlier than originally anticipated. Visitation was strong throughout the summer and into the fall, and many visitors could be heard commenting in the galleries and gift shop about how pleased they were to be able to visit the museum. At the same time, he also carefully planned a seamless transition of leadership for me in my new role as Director and Curator, which I started on July first. To the delight of all the participants, Ted also organized and executed a scaled-back, but very successful, Keweenaw Mineral Days collecting event in mid-July.



Ted Bornhorst overseeing the excavation of a poor rock pile in preparation for Keweenaw Mineral Days 2020.

The Museum During Coronavirus

Like everywhere else in the world, the museum's experience during the past 8 months has been unprecedented due to the coronavirus (COVID-19). However, it is worth noting that 'unprecedented' should only refer to current living memory, as the museum was 16 years old during the pandemic of 1918. Unfortunately, no known record exists documenting what the museum did during that time.

As a result of COVID-19, the first impacts for the museum meant closing to the public followed quickly by all staff directed to work remotely by the end of March. All staff worked remotely until early May when Michigan Tech furloughed employees, including all but Executive Director and Curator Ted Bornhorst. In June, the museum gained approval to reopen on July 1st. All furloughed staff were back on July 1st and were soon joined by two new graduate-student hires.

The safety-first plan included the following measures: face coverings for all visitors and staff, reduced visitor capacity, scheduled cleanings throughout the day of high-touch points, free adult- and kid-sized masks, and using, the very high-tech (hahaha), 3-inch wooden dowels to make our interactive exhibits touchless. Most of our visitors thanked us for both being open and for the measures we took to make sure everyone was as safe as possible. While visitation has been down slightly compared to 2019, it turned out to be the perfect level for us, since any more would have resulted in significant wait times or guests being turned away due to the museum being at capacity.


While we cannot predict exactly how the next months of this pandemic will go, we know our staff is up to the challenge of keeping the museum's doors open and all our visitors safe.

Museum Promotions

The museum has been fortunate to have been sought out this summer by various media outlets for video and other promotions, and several more are in production. You can find the following video promotions by searching for the "A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum" along with the following titles in your favorite search engine or on YouTube:

- [PBS Under the Radar - Travel Safely in Pure Michigan](#) with Tom Daldin and Dave Lorenz.
- [Experience the Keweenaw](#) - Keweenaw Convention & Visitors Bureau by 2nd Sandbar Productions

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
from the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum



www.museum.mtu.edu