

December 2021

# NEWSLETTER



**A. E. SEAMAN  
MINERAL MUSEUM**  
OF MICHIGAN TECH

## From the Director and Curator by John A. Jaszczak



During a recent meeting of the museum staff we took some time to think about why the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum exists, what we aspire to be, and how we want to go about our work. The museum's mission to educate people about minerals through our collections and exhibits traces all the way back to the State of Michigan's Enabling Act (#207) of 1861 seeking to establish the Michigan Mining School "at or near the village of Houghton." This act and the subsequently passed Enabling Legislation of 1885 called for the school's trustees/board "to provide for obtaining and establishing a complete collection of minerals of the Upper Peninsula, and properly classifying the same". With the establishment of the museum by Professor A. E. Seaman in 1902 and continuing with its subsequent curators, the university has carried out its responsibilities in this regard with excellence. This tradition of excellence was explicitly recognized in the State of Michigan House Concurrent Resolution no. 677, adopted by both the house and senate, which gave

the museum sole claim to the title, "The Mineralogical Museum of Michigan." In recognition of the museum's continuing educational mission, and in celebration of its centennial in 2002, the Michigan Tech Board of Trustees passed a resolution in October 2011 that "be it further resolved that the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum shall be a distinctive and permanent entity of Michigan Technological University for centuries to come." The museum is working hard to continue to advance its mission and support of the university through its collections, exhibits, lectures, research, and outreach programs. We believe the vitality, value and stature of the museum is linked both to the quality of its collection as well as to the integrity, passion, and creativity of its people. We are grateful to count you among the museum's friends and supporters, who partner with us in pursuit of continued excellence as we work together to share and discover the wonders of minerals. Thank you for your support and encouragement!

## Field Trip Curriculum-Development Project

This past summer the museum embarked on an exciting new project called "Minerals! A Gateway to a Love of Science," wherein we teamed up with a small group of educators to begin development of learning experiences for students to engage in before, during and after field trips to the museum. Two teachers, Erik Johnson from Hancock, MI and Cheryl Jacisin from Ironwood, MI, participated in a weeklong workshop at the museum in July both to explore the wide range of opportunities and ideas that may be possible, and to begin developing possible themes and activities.

The workshop was organized by museum staff, and guided by local experts in science curriculum development Emily Gochis, Director of the Western U.P. MiSTEM

Network, and Erika Vye, Geosciences Research Scientist at Michigan Tech's Great Lakes Research Center. Participants also benefitted from sessions led by Deb Olson on informal science education; Ed Laitila on connections to materials science; Ted Bornhorst on the rock & mineral cycle and on the museum's Phyllis & Jack Seaman Garden; and Tom Wright on the impact that geological context has not only on mining but on communities and their development. Tom also gave a highly informative surface and underground tour at the Quincy Mine. We are grateful to all of these educators for sharing their expertise and passion for enhancing learning among K-12 students. Each teacher was also given a set of rocks and minerals purposely selected to illustrate particular properties or features to be used in their classrooms. Next steps in the project include further refinements of the curriculum with a goal of piloting the activities with their students this coming spring with field trips to the museum. In the future we plan to revise, expand, and then share the curriculum with more teachers.

This project is made possible by the generous gifts of the Catherine J. Gaber Endowed Fund for Education in Mineralogy, the John and Phyllis Seaman Endowment, and the Elizabeth Bekkala Endowed Memorial Fund for the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum at Michigan Tech.



## Experience the Museum via Facebook by Julie Stark



We are excited to share that the museum now has a thriving Facebook page! Since March 2021 our page has gained 830 page likes and 965 followers. Our most popular post to date was a photo by our former curator Dr. George Robinson of an interesting specimen of cryptomelane from the Newport Mine in Ironwood, Michigan. The post reached over 27,000 people on Facebook and received 982 reactions, comments, and shares. Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/MineralMuseumofMTU](https://www.facebook.com/MineralMuseumofMTU) or by scanning the QR code here to see gorgeous mineral photos and stay informed about museum activities throughout the year.

# Happy Holidays from us to you!



## New Specimen Donations

The museum is grateful for some outstanding specimens that have been donated throughout the past year. Here is a sampling:



Polished thomsonite amygdale (4×4×3 cm), with excellent color and chatoyancy, in basalt from Manitou Island, Keweenaw Co., MI. Donated by Paul LaBonte.

Arborescent silver with twinned cubic crystals (4×2.5×1.5 cm) from the "South Silver Vein", Keweenaw Co., MI. Donated by Tom Rosemeyer.



Complex pyrite crystal (8-mm tall) on calcite & limestone matrix from C. E. Duff & Son Quarry, Huntsville, Logan Co., OH. Donated by John Medici.



Large specimen of hematite-included quartz on dolomite (30×18 cm) from Hogarth pit, Steep Rock Iron Mine, near Atikokan, Ontario, Canada. Donated by Mike Hedtke.



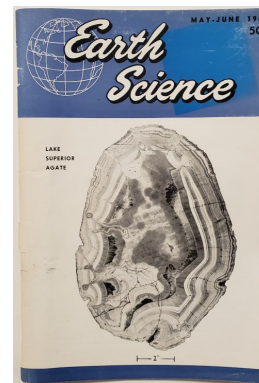
Sodalite syenite beach pebble (5×3×3 cm) fluorescing in ultraviolet light. From Manitou Island, Keweenaw Co., MI. Donated by Paul LaBonte.

## Red Carpet Minerals by Patrice Cobin



Polished half of the Lake Superior agate collected in 1964 by Florence Mihelcich in Keweenaw Co., MI.

In July of 1964, Florence Mihelcich found one of the largest-known Lake Superior agates in Keweenaw County, east of Fort Wilkins and south of Horseshoe Harbor, measuring 26.5×18×7 cm. Before being cut and polished, the agate weighed 17 pounds. Her find was featured on the front cover of the May-June, 1966 issue of *Earth Science* (Vol. 19, No. 3), with an accompanying description by Joseph P. Dobel. The museum was fortunate to be able to obtain this illustrated half of the remarkable agate from Paul Mihelcich in 2011 with funds from generous donors. You can see this specimen on display in the museum's Michigan Copper gallery.



Cover of *Earth Science* magazine, May-June 1966.

Giving to the museum is easy! Visit us at [museum.mtu.edu/support-us/giving](http://museum.mtu.edu/support-us/giving) or scan this QR code:





**Return Mailing Address:**

Patty Cobin  
A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum  
Michigan Tech  
1400 Townsend Drive  
Houghton, MI 49931

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**Please Mail To:**

Patty Cobin  
A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum  
Michigan Tech  
1400 Townsend Drive  
Houghton, MI 49931

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- Basic** Free admission for either or both individuals for a year.
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