

The summer of 2017 is history. Since the June issue of **Showcase** the museum has been a busy place. July 18th through 22nd the museum hosted Keweenaw Mineral Days, in collaboration with Keweenaw Gem and Gift, providing legal access to collecting native copper and associated minerals. We had 84 attendees from 11 different states and as far away as Georgia. Participants received free admission to the museum and on Thursday of the event week the museum held a special surplus mineral sale. The first weekend in August was Michigan Tech's alumni reunion and the museum had about 150 alumni visitors. On August 10th the museum had a record setting 354 visitors! There was no large tour group or otherwise special event to account for such high visitation, but the rainy weather on that day combined with peak tourism season probably contributed to the record visitation. This is the highest single day visitation since moving to our permanent home in 2011. I cannot remember any other day with such a high visitation since as far back as 2005 when the museum's home was on the main campus of Michigan Tech. This one-day record visitation is consistent with the museum seeing more visitors overall this summer as compared to last year. This summer's July and August visitation was up almost 11%. We welcome more visitors and hope it continues!

The museum often hosts groups of various types. Some of these groups simply visit the museum on their own, the same as our individual visitors do. Other groups request and receive a brief introduction to the museum. Teachers from elementary, middle, and high school usually direct their student's visit and have their own prepared activities. Most school groups are from the western Upper Peninsula, and less uncommonly the eastern Upper Peninsula. University level student groups come from farther distances. A few weeks ago a group of geology students from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, visited the museum. The museum provided them with simple metal detectors to make finding native copper easier when they visited a publicly accessible local rock pile. We also occasionally provide specific activities and I'll highlight a recent one we did for Michigan Tech's alumni weekend. We prepared a structured educational activity for families with 22 alumni adults and children whose ages ranged from 11 to 87 years old. Quelyn Bekkering, an undergraduate geology student, described how metal detectors use electromagnetism to detect metal objects hidden beneath the surface and that much more sophisticated equipment are used to map the subsurface in search of minerals. After being instructed on how to use the metal detectors the group went in search of native copper hidden in specially marked areas. The last part of the event was a challenge for all of the family groups...to find the "big prize," a larger native copper specimen hidden in a wooded area. Quelyn commented that "it was a great experience for me, as a student, to see younger kids learning some science and then their excitement in using that new found knowledge to find hidden copper treasure."

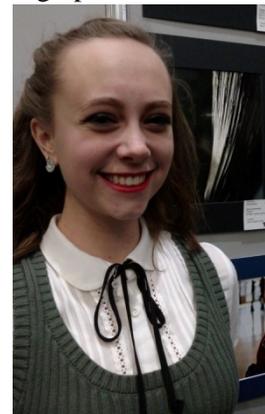


Metal detecting for native copper.



Hematite, Cliffs shaft,
Negaunee, MI (closeup view)
by Anna Chouinard

In the closing article of **Showcase** I'm especially pleased to tell you about an award winning student and her photo of one of our specimens. Anna Chouinard won a Silver Key award through the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program for her photograph of a hematite specimen. The award recognizes the creativity of students in grades 7 through 12 nationwide in regional competitions. Anna, an 8th grade student from the Metro Detroit area, was visiting the museum in July 2016 while in the area to see her grandparents who live in Eagle Harbor. According to her mother, Anna was walking around taking lots of pictures of the different minerals on display and later she decided to submit one of them for the competition. We encourage photography at the museum and Anna took advantage of this opportunity to capture a beautiful specimen. Congratulations, Anna.



Anna with her award winning
photo in the background.

Until next time, Ted Bornhorst, Executive Director