



Museum Notes: Following the MMGM on Social Media

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Following the MMGM on Social Media

- ▶ With museums shutdown during the pandemic, how did they fulfill their educational mission?
- ▶ We asked the Maine Mineral & Gem Museum; here's their response.

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Figure 1. A friendly lesson about tourmaline. Jeff Scovil photo.

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The Maine Mineral & Gem Museum (MMGM) opened to the public on 12 December 2019 after many years of planning and development. It goes without saying that closing the doors on 16 March 2020, just a few days after our three-month anniversary, was not at all what we were expecting. Like so many other institutions, COVID-19 shifted our focus from welcoming visitors in person to providing a virtual museum experience for our constituents staying home.

Quickly after the initial shock of closing subsided, the MMGM team gathered (on Zoom) to discuss how to fill the gap in mineral education and identify innovative ways the museum could still play a vital role in the new paradigm of distance learning. We created MMGM@Home, an online portal providing engaging resources for students, parents, and educators to supplement at-home curricula during school closures.

In addition to MMGM's @Home site, each week we have utilized social media platforms to post online quizzes and games such as Bingo to identify rocks,

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minerals, and local flora and fauna. We added a science series called "Syd the Science Kid" (a local third-grader) highlighting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) experiments that could be done from home with regular household items. An interactive virtual tour of the meteorite gallery was created allowing visitors to see highlights of the exhibit including the largest piece of the Moon on Earth, the largest piece of the asteroid Vesta, and specimens from the planet Mars. We uploaded digital content one would see during a visit to MMGM including a series of short films titled *Lucky Finds* that highlights some of Maine's most interesting gem discoveries throughout the state's history.

Recognizing the critical role museums play in society, MMGM, like so many museums, had to rely on other creative methods to reach our audiences to fulfill our missions. New tools were added to our toolboxes to maximize our reach. These additional resources are available for us to carry into the future now that we have reopened. For the present, follow us on social media and visit our website (<https://mainemineralmuseum.org>). □

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Some MMGM Screenshots for At-Home Learning

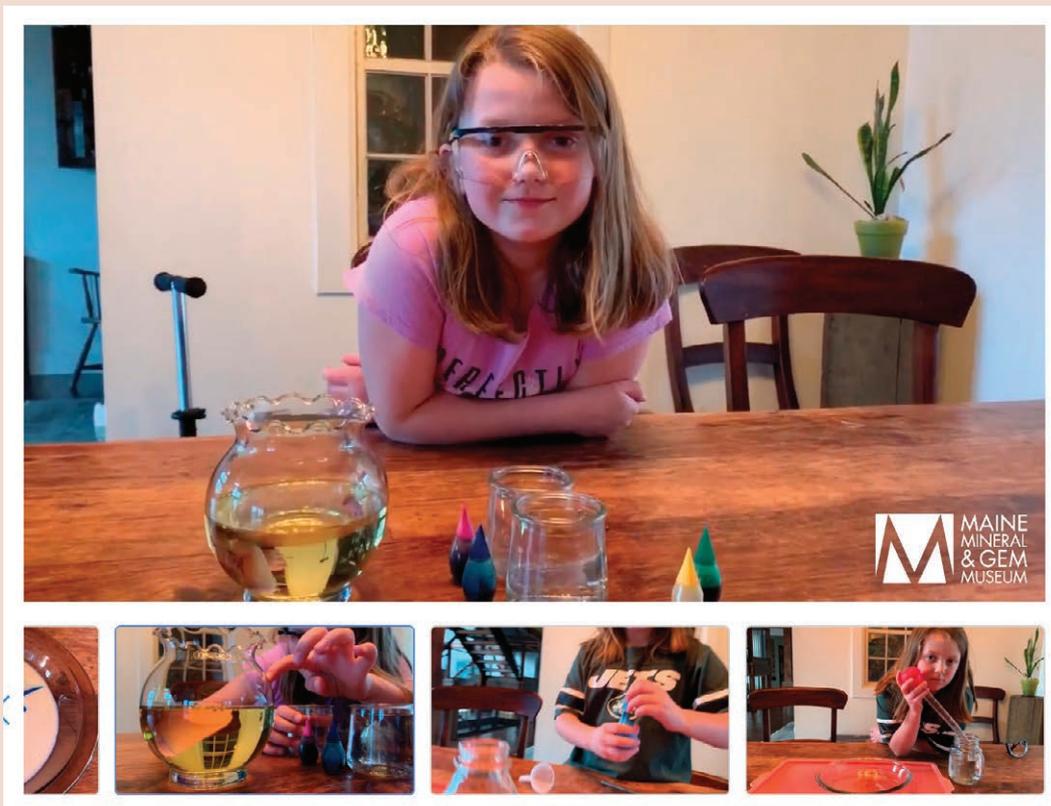
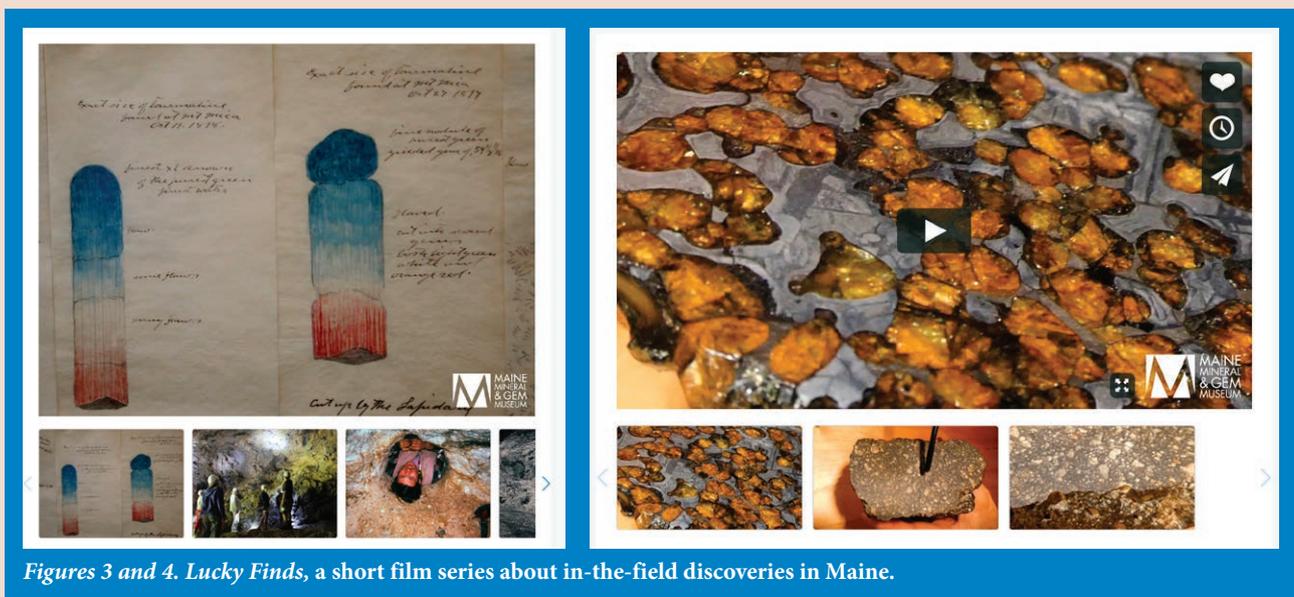


Figure 2. “Syd the Science Kid,” with student-to-student science experiments.

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Figures 3 and 4. Lucky Finds, a short film series about in-the-field discoveries in Maine.

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