

# Northern HORIZONS

WINTER 2003

THE MAGAZINE FOR NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



# Northern HORIZONS

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Last night, the temperature in Marquette reached a record low of 22 below zero. The night before last was balmy in comparison—only 15 below—but that didn't seem to bother a group of NMU students who gathered between Payne and Halverson Halls for a game of broomball.

Now I've lived here long enough that it didn't really surprise me to learn that many of these students were running around Payne/Halverson field in shirt sleeves. Heck, just the other day I saw a man who was jogging wearing shorts and a t-shirt and another man shoveling snow, who was wearing, well, less than that. But when someone from a substantially warmer climate asked me how on earth someone could run around in sub-zero temperatures without full Arctic gear, let alone live here during the winter, I didn't even pause before saying, "Things are just different up here."

I have to admit that part of me was just looking for a quick, easy reply, but it got me thinking about how living in the Upper Peninsula and working at NMU has changed my own perceptions of college students and college student life.

About six years ago, I interviewed an NMU faculty member for a profile and asked her what motivated her to stay at Northern. Without hesitation she said it was the students. She said that most students who come to study here are different. Heartier. Driven. Of course there are motivated, driven college students all over this country, but what sets NMU students apart, I think, is the environment.

Things *are* different up here. The temperatures are a little colder, the snow banks are a little taller, and the winters last a little longer. And the people who live here or come to live here, either as students, faculty, or in other professional capacities, can't help but be affected by the environment. NMU students graduate and go on to live their lives, but in many ways, regardless of where they go, this place stays with them.

The stories in this issue reflect that. Some of the people you'll read about inside have followed an unexpected or unpredictable path. Some have followed a predictable path that has taken them in an unexpected direction. But they all share a singular, driven, entrepreneurial spirit—the same kind of spirit that faculty member described to me all those years ago. The stories in this issue, I believe, embody the essence of what it means to be an NMU student and an NMU alum. Enjoy.

—KW

## Correction

On page 5 of the fall 2002 issue of *Horizons*, we incorrectly listed Mark Curtis under the College of Professional Studies. Mark is the dean of the College of Technology and Applied Sciences. —KW



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Living in a one-room cabin with no electricity, no running water, and 60 dogs in the middle of Alaska isn't what most people would call an ideal living situation. But **Therese (Greene) Bartlett '91 BS** wouldn't have it any other way.

### 10 Two men and a truck

In high school, **Brig '86 BS** and **Jon '88 BS Sorber** were like most of their peers, holding part-time jobs to earn extra spending money. The brothers probably never imagined that their home-grown high school business would evolve into a multi-million dollar company.

### 13 Harvesting the entrepreneurial spirit

Political science professor Bill Ball has spent four of last five summers in Thailand teaching classes and studying how governments in the region are working to help migrant workers pull themselves out of poverty through training and incentives for starting small-scale industrial operations.

#### ON THE COVER

Peter and **Therese (Greene) Bartlett** leading their team of sled dogs at the 2002 Idita-rider, a fundraiser that allows fans to bid on the opportunity to ride with a musher for the first 11 miles of the race. The man riding on the Bartlett's sled paid \$800 for the experience. Photo by Steven Nowers.