

# *Northern* HORIZONS

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS  
OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Fall 2009



**Innovators**

# Northern HORIZONS

Fall 2009 ■ Vol. 99, No. 1

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*Northern Horizons*, the magazine for alumni and friends of Northern Michigan University, is published three times a year (winter, summer and fall) by the Communications and Marketing Office and the Alumni Association of Northern Michigan University.

Funding is provided by Northern Michigan University, NMU Alumni Association members, alumni and friends. Subscriptions are available at \$15 per year, \$7.50 for NMU retirees. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the NMU Alumni Association.

Letters Policy: Unless noted as "not for publication," communications to the editor are considered for publication. Letters will be printed as space permits and may be edited for space and clarity. Please limit your comments to *Northern Horizons* magazine or to topics mentioned in the magazine. Mail to: Editor, *Northern Horizons*, Northern Michigan University, 1401 Presque Isle Ave., Marquette, MI 49855; fax: 906-227-2722; or e-mail: horizons@nmu.edu.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Northern Horizons*, Communications and Marketing, Northern Michigan University, 1401 Presque Isle Avenue, Marquette, Michigan 49855. Third-class postage paid at Midland, Michigan 48642.



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# Letters

**Great to read the music** news in *Horizons*! The times at Northern were the best. It gave me a great start on my teaching career and was always a place for fond memories. It was a sad day to hear about Mr. Stephenson and read about Mr. Danziger.

It is always great to hear from classmates and talk about NMU! When my wife and I moved to Marquette she wondered where I was taking her—then three years later she cried when we left. Great people, great place, great music department, great area. Thanks, Northern.

—Dennis Ormsbee '72 BME

**First of all**, I appreciate the article that was in the summer issue of the *Horizons* magazine regarding the Excels. I do, however, feel that some of the members were slighted in regards to their association with NMU.

The Excels basically came to prominence on the NMU campus. All of the members, with the exception of one, were students who went on to graduate from NMU. They were **Steve Contardi '67**, **Terry Quirk '68**, **Ken Forrest '68** and myself. Carl Holm, who is now the director of housing at NMU, was attending Michigan Tech at the time. When Carl left the group we added **Howard Ylinen '00** and **Ed Rodgers '69 BS** from Marquette, and they were also NMU students. Four of us were also members of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity (myself, Terry, Steve and Ken), so you can see NMU played a big part in our lives.

... We were also in essence, ambassadors for NMU. We always played for incoming freshmen at Kaye auditorium every fall and when on the road, no matter what the state, we were always referred to as students of NMU.

—Clark Sullivan '68 BS

**Note:** We regret also not including the NMU graduate reference for **Robert LaLonde '96 BFA**, who was mentioned in our "Moonlighting Musicians" article as a member of the Flying Martini Brothers and NMU Art and Design faculty. Our apologies and thanks to Rob for his dedication to Northern, music and art.

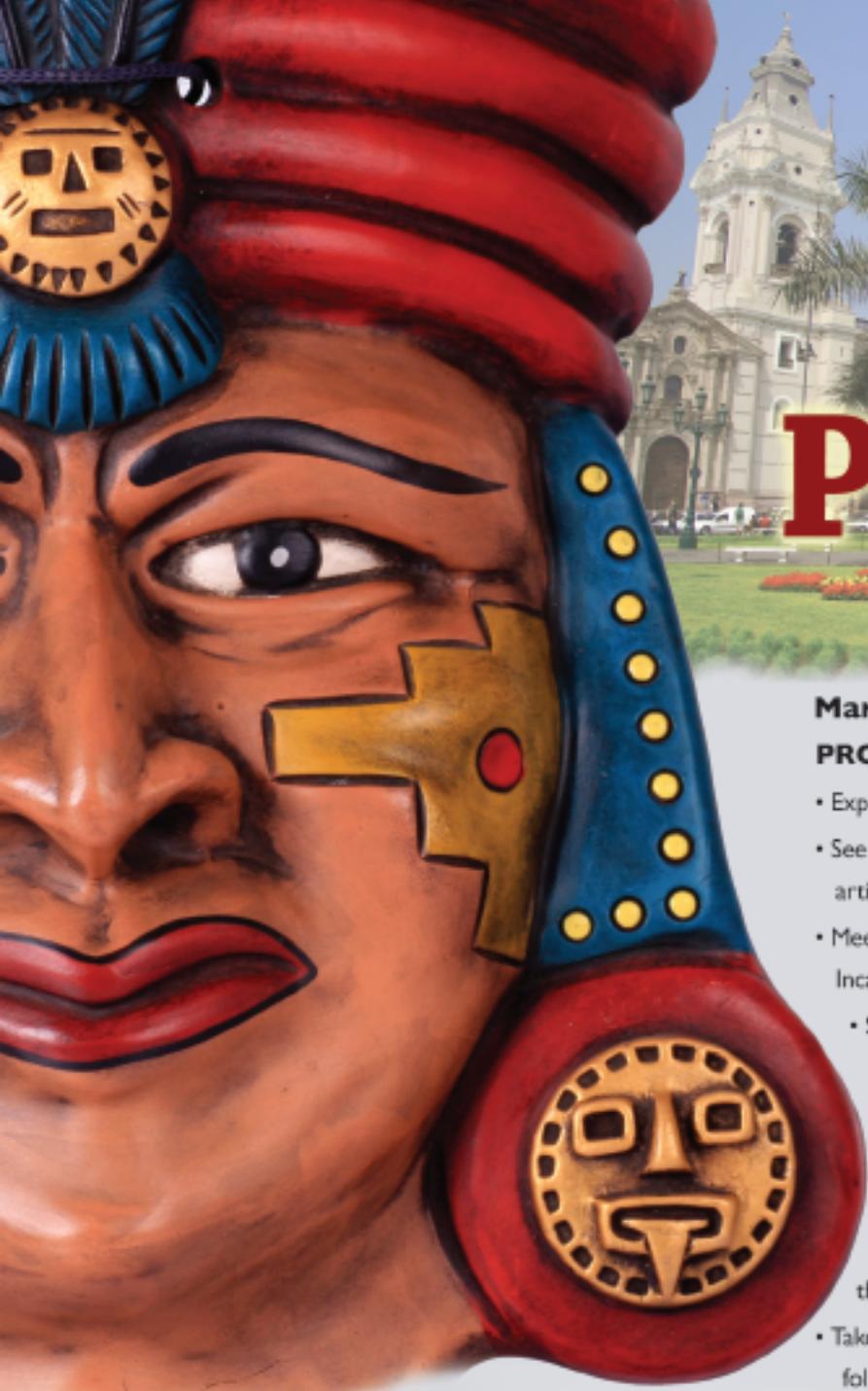
## Editor's note

**Happy 110th Birthday, NMU!** As we move into the future, we are not only fueled by the past, but by the mysteries and challenges that lie ahead. It has been said that creativity and innovation will be what define this era. As NMU President Les Wong said in his fall convocation address: "The status quo is being challenged on a number of fronts and we must use the time ahead to become much more clear about who we are, what are our core functions and what kinds of decisions will be needed to attain a new identity without sacrificing the quality of our current work with students.... Let's give ourselves the freedom to put everything on the table for reconsideration." That's just the philosophy that has driven many of our alumni, including those featured here, to see old things in new, surprising ways, turn obstacle into opportunity and invent a future we can only begin to imagine.

—Rebecca Tavernini



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**Curt Tucker '82 AT, '08 BS**  
**Longtime member of the Alumni Association**  
**and holder of three U.S. patents**

My degrees from NMU have equipped me with skills for a lifetime. I've come from reading about manufacturing and engineering to designing safety equipment for NASA and NASCAR.

I still rely on the foundation I acquired at Northern. All my mentors from the Mechanical Engineering Department have guided me throughout my career. I hope to follow in their footsteps and help NMU students find success.

NMU's strong leadership—from the professors to the president—inspired me to do great things. The innovations of not only my department, but also others at Northern, gave me the power to believe in myself and my ideas.

From chatting about life experiences with John X. Jamrich to making lifelong memories with my late brother Colin, I often reminisce about my time at NMU.

Northern not only gave me a world-class education, but also ignited my desire and will to succeed. Being a member of the Alumni Association has allowed me to give back to the place that gave me the tools to excel in my career and is a way for me to stay connected to the university and former classmates.

## Of course I'm a member. Are You?

**Consider joining the NMU Alumni Association today.**  
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