

# Northern HORIZONS

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS  
OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Winter 2009



Love and Romance  
at NMU

# Northern HORIZONS

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## letters

I was unaware of this magazine until I saw a copy of it sitting in my dorm lobby. As an NMU student, it's good to see what great successes our alumni are achieving once they get into the "Real World," and how they can see the current Wildcats continue such strong traditions of Northern Pride while starting new ones of our own for the Green and Gold.

On the back of the current issue, Bill Hetrick commented about the NMU connections, and I couldn't agree more. I know it was a great feeling when I met a 2003 graduate at a 5K race in Chicago and to hear my girlfriend say how she competed against John Hersey High School in a swim meet, the same school coached by two alumni from the '70s.

The connection between current students and alumni is often a missed opportunity for the betterment of our beloved university. However, publications like this help bridge that gap and are very much appreciated and needed.

—*Brice Burge*  
*junior, public relations*

## editor's note

We thought a little light-hearted reminiscing about dating and finding love at Northern might provide some welcome levity in contrast to the heavy issues facing our world these days.

Not that the topic of love itself is without conflict and change—that seems inherent to its being. But it's clear that the concept, and practice, is still alive and well. On campus today couples stroll holding (gloved) hands, pass "love notes" via instant messages and enjoy a date in many of the same locations that NMU students have for over 100 years.

There's support on campus for all facets of love and sexuality, with ongoing discussions and workshops on respectful dating behavior; a counseling center for dealing with those really bad breakups; an organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students; a day of wearing red to show acceptance of all persuasions; and for those disgusted by love, last year there was even an anti-Valentine's Day party hosted by WUPX.

A huge thanks to the alumni who wrote in to share your love stories. As a matter of fact, we received so many submissions, on both love and music, as we had asked you for, that we decided to devote this issue to romance and love, and an entire one in the near future to music.

By the way, I also wanted to share a little update from our last issue, which dealt with the many ways our students, faculty and staff are involved in service to the community and beyond. In the beyond category, The Peace Corps Regional Office reported that there are approximately nine NMU graduates currently serving in the Peace Corps, which is an increase from last year's five Peace Corps volunteers. Since 1961, when the agency was formed, approximately 155 NMU alumni have served in the Corps.

Be sure to catch our articles in this issue on the generous gift from Gloria and Bill Jackson that will allow more NMU students to explore the world, and on NMU receiving the Carnegie Classification for community service. We know our university community, often led by the example of our alumni, share Andrew Carnegie's belief that "No man can become rich without himself enriching others."

—*Rebecca Tavernini*



*For all makes and models  
of NMU Alumni*



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**Northern Horizons**

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Making connections—including romantic ones—is a common part of a student's collegiate experience. Staying connected to one's alma mater, too, can be beneficial long after graduation. Just ask Gil Ziegler and Patti (Parkila) Jensen. Their romance started at Northern, but not while either was a student. They didn't attend Northern at the same time, and although they briefly met at a mutual friend's wedding, it wasn't until 30-some years after that—at the 1999 NMU Centennial Reunion—when the two would truly connect.

Gil remembers seeing “a beautiful blonde across the room” talking to then President Judi Bailey at the reunion's picnic. As a trustee on NMU's governing board, he felt obligated “to say hello to the president,” he says with a mischievous grin when retelling the story. But when he reached Dr. Bailey, the woman was gone. Less than an hour later, a colleague said to Gil, “There's someone I want you to meet.” That blonde someone turned out to be Patti, with whom Gil ended up spending much of the remaining weekend.

“I was totally charmed by him,” says Patti. The two have been a couple ever since. “Life with Gil is an adventure. I've learned to drive his 46-foot motor coach, been introduced to quail hunting and exposed more deeply to politics than ever before,” says Patti. “He has a great sense of humor and he always makes me laugh. And I absolutely adore spending time with his seven grandchildren.”



**Gil Ziegler '60 BS and Patti Jensen '65 BS**

They also enjoy their frequent trips back to NMU, which they make numerous times each year for NMU Board meetings. They especially enjoy meeting Northern students. The couple strongly advocates staying connected with NMU. In fact, Gil became the Alumni Association's first lifetime member in 1983. “The Alumni Association supports not only alumni programs, but also students and university initiatives,” says Gil. The couple encourages alumni to attend NMU alumni events in their area or come back to visit campus.

Says Patti, “You just never know who you'll meet!”

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

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