

Cover story

Love's Telegram

Should there be any doubt as to the accuracy of this telegram

it can be
y b

SENDER

on receipt of
10 KISSES

HANDED IN AT

Lovers Lane

P M RECEIVED AT

A M

To My Valentine

Welcome to a collection of wonderful love stories that happened at NMU, submitted by alumni. While it's not unusual to find a lifetime partner during the college years, we find it interesting that around 15 percent of NMU alumni are married to fellow alumni (that's approximately 9,000 of you over the years)—and there are probably more we don't know about. If you've recently gotten married (even to a non-alum), let us know via the Keep In Touch section of www.nmu.edu/alumni. Happy Valentine's Day!

Brian and I transferred to NMU from UW-Marinette and seriously started dating in the fall of 2002. About a year later, one afternoon Brian was walking me to class when he handed me a container of chicken nuggets he had bought at the Wildcat Den. He knew I hadn't had time for lunch, and I was extremely hungry. As I ate, I noticed him watching me closely, so I decided to offer him one. When I reached in to pull out a nugget, I found a ring box! He knelt down and proposed, in front of the library on Tracy Street! Well, of course I said yes, and we are now entering our fourth year of a very happy marriage.

—Kandace Larsen BS '05



I was walking up the path from my dorm, Halverson, to the main campus area one day when I saw a young lady who could not move because an elephant was standing on her foot.

It turns out that the circus was to perform in the Hedgcock Field-house that evening and the elephant was chained in the field outside. The ground was very damp and the elephant was standing on the young lady's foot so she could not move, but was not hurt. I pushed the elephant back and her foot was freed.

That was in 1967 and the young lady and I were married in 1970, and are still married to this day.

—Jim Miller '70 BS and Pat (Dickson) Miller '69 BS



My whole experience at NMU was a love story.

Within a month of moving to Marquette from Grand Rapids in the summer of 2005 I met my now wife on what we called "the dog beach," while reading *Robinson Crusoe*. Her friends' two dogs (Binky and Blaze) ran up to my dog (Sydney) and I was invited to a party in the woods. While we didn't exchange phone numbers on the beach or at the party, we searched for each other for over a month until she met me again at a party after I worked a late night at Vango's. I did not let her slip away that time and made sure to give her a ride home and snag her phone number. The following three years were amazing as we had numerous romantic moments at "Little Presque," "Hidden Beach," "Top of the World" and other local gems. We both graduated, moved to Pennsylvania, married, and reminisce about our times in Northern Michigan.

—Michael J. Conway BS '05 and
Elizabeth Portelli Conway BS '02, MPA '05



On September 5, 1977, I saw a beautiful girl sitting in the lounge between the cafeteria and bookstore in the Student Center. I sat down next to her and offered her a butterscotch Lifesaver (hokey, but effective).

We're celebrating our 29th wedding anniversary this year.
Best candy I ever bought.

—Ralph Wahlstrom '78 BA, '81 MA

It happened in the basement of Hunt Hall... I was there for my blues harp accompaniment and a few guitar licks to help my friends, Stan and Jeff, also known as "Para-dux" (or was it "Pair-o-ducks?"—never knew). Stan on drums, Jeff on guitar, sometimes they'd switch, and sometimes they'd let me sit in and riff a little myself. There was this girl... of course, always, and she used to walk by, stop and listen to us rehearse sometimes for our whole hour or so... Who was she? For a few weeks, each of us in the group assumed it was a friend or future girlfriend of someone else in the band... nothing was said. Finally, as her interest and beauty and long hair and yes, her eyes, had finally captured my heart, I had to know. After all, she might have just been someone's sister... So I asked, "Who was that girl?" and none of us knew. Never saw her anywhere else on campus, and when our time was up using the basement, none of us ever saw her again. A mystery, whoever you are, please contact me through the Alumni Association... —Mike Greer '76 BA



I met my husband because of a "Rider Wanted" message posted on the bulletin board (not the electric kind!). We both lived in Payne Hall. I was going downstate to visit a boyfriend and he was going to a wedding. I was looking for a rider to share expenses.

We became good friends and when my long-distance romance fizzled, Bryan was there to pick up the pieces. We studied at the library together, worked out together at the gym and hiked up Sugar Loaf. We have been married almost 30 years and still tell people about how special NMU is for us.

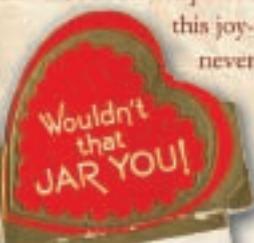
—Nyla Lawrence McCoy '79 BS
and Bryan McCoy '80 BS



John and I married in 1969. We lived in the original married housing while completing our degrees. I graduated in January 1971 and John graduated in June of that year. What we would not know until over 35 years later was that our son's future mother-in-law, Mary Lynn Anderson, was also graduating that same day.

Our son Joe met his future wife Katie while they were students at MSU. It turned out that Katie was from Marquette and both of her parents had also attended NMU. Joe and Katie were married in June 2006. It was during this joy-filled weekend that we found out John and Lynn had graduated together. We would never have thought during our years at NMU that in the future love would give us another tie to NMU.

—Diana '71 BS and John Fair, Jr. '71 BS



Ron Takalo
'66 BA,
'74 MA,
'87 EDS

Carol
Takalo
'67 BS



BUT I'M SURE
IN SOME
JAM
OVER YOU

A mutual friend told my then unknown partner that if we were introduced that I would be her future husband. We were introduced, in 1964, dated and then married in 1967! We now have three children, one of whom, Renee, graduated from NMU in 2000 with a nursing degree.

My wife, Maria, and I met at NMU where we were hallmates in Concert House of Van Antwerp Hall in the fall of 1996. Though we loved to visit Wetmore Landing and the shore behind Sugar Loaf as well as Hog Back and Marquette Mountain's scenic lookout there is still one spot that stands out above the rest: Presque Isle.

We would visit the scenic area every time we left campus. We would ride our bikes or drive there nearly every day. We loved watching the freighters dock and either deliver coal or get loaded with iron ore, going to the break wall to see the waves crashing, stopping at Black Rocks to possibly see some cliff divers, and if it was evening, watching the sun set on the west side.

On August 3, 2001 we were married at the new pavilion on the west side of Presque Isle. We still visit every day during our vacations what to us epitomizes Marquette—the beautiful, tranquil and scenic Presque Isle. Now new and special memories continue to be created when we visit with our young sons.

—Jeff '99 BS and Maria '01 BS Yacks

Post Card

Douglas and I loved to go walking. In fact, we only had one "real date" before we got married at the supper club in Marquette. Instead, we would go walking. College students that we were, it often ended up being late at night. We would walk past the hockey arena, hit the beach, walk out to and around Presque Isle. Time and again, on clear nights that fall when we were getting to know each other, we saw the northern lights. We weren't quite sure what they were at first, but finally figured it out. At the time we named our relationship, who we were together, "aurora," which means "beautiful dawn." We said that if we ever got married and had a girl, we would name her Aurora.

Lo and behold, the next summer we did get married and 5 years later we had a daughter. Aurora is now 11 years old and she is beautiful! We live in Alaska, and everyone up here knows what "aurora" is. By the way, my husband wanted her middle name to be Borealis, but I put down my foot. Our daughter's name takes us back to the beginning of our relationship, and Marquette, each time we think about it.

—Michelle '93 BS and Douglas '93 BS Wachowski



Andrea Jerabek and Colleen O'Reilly were roommates, and all three of us were PR majors and shared a class together (Mass Communication Law with Dr. Ganzert). Andrea knew this guy, Brian, through friends and thought Colleen would be a great match with him. I just so happened to be dating one of Brian's rugby teammates at the time and knew he was available.

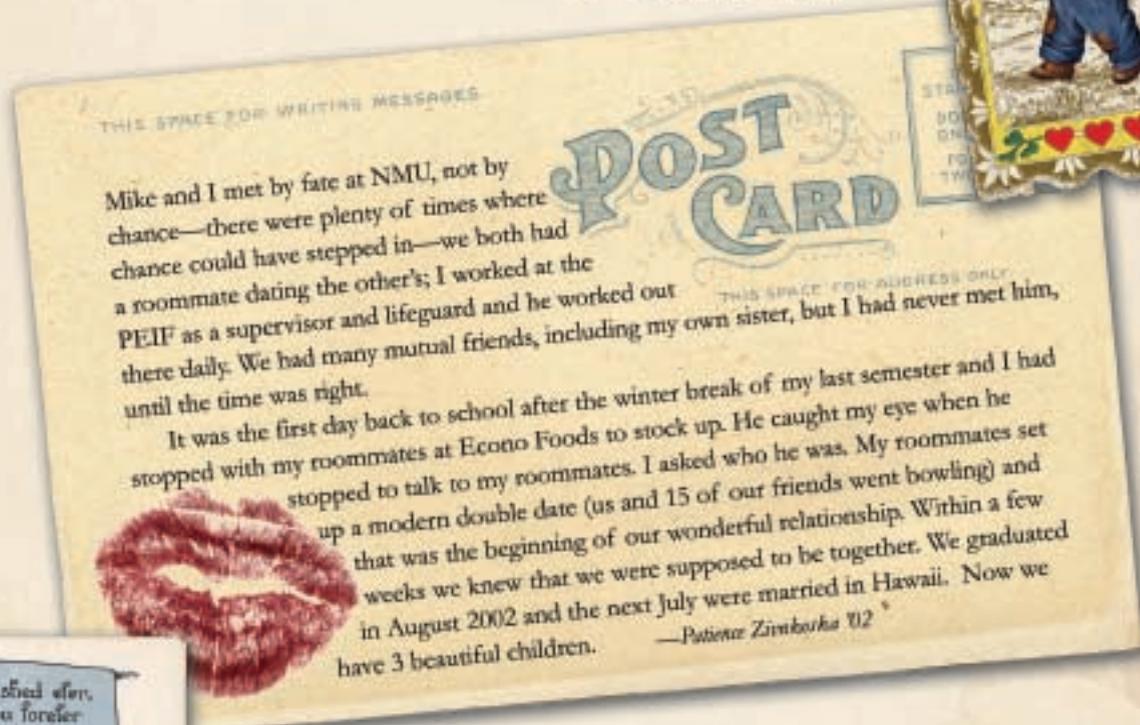
It took some scheming, but Andrea managed to convince Colleen to attend the rugby team's annual snow game—something she had zero interest in—and teamed up with me on site to set things in motion. We froze, but were lucky enough to introduce Colleen to Brian after the game. This is where I accidentally told Brian that Colleen's name was "Corrine." (I think I was more nervous than the two of them!)

As any surprisingly successful matchmakers would be, Andrea and I are pleased to announce that Colleen and Brian were recently engaged and are planning their September 2009 wedding. We matchmakers are both bridesmaids in the wedding!

So, what does it take to find love on NMU's campus?

- 1 roommate
- 1 communications class
- 1 club sport
- + 1 snowy day in February
- = Love 4 Life

—Kim Stobb '06 BS
and Andrea Jerabek '06 BS



I had first seen Brian Schlientz in one of my classes and was always impressed by his jacket and tie (especially since I often stumbled in out of the cold wearing warm sweatpants and a sweatshirt). One night in November 1993, during my senior year, I went to Vango's with my sister and some of her friends. Brian was there with a couple of his friends, and they invited me to join them at their table. We instantly "clicked" and dated through the winter and spring. In May 1994, Brian asked me to be his wife. I accepted and we planned a wedding for March.

Unfortunately, Brian was diagnosed with brain cancer in August. He died of the disease on the day that we had planned to be married. I am sorry to have lost Brian to this tragic illness but will never forget the wonderful times that I had with him at Northern. He touched my life in a special way and he will never be forgotten.

—Kristi (Snary) Basb '94

Post Card



In the late summer of 1971 my girlfriend, Judy Pfaffenbach, came back to the NMU campus early for marching band practice. Practices were very rigorous and went from dawn to dusk—either at the music building or at the practice fields by the Armory. Tim Lautzenheiser (Mr. L.) drove the band hard in all their rehearsals every day, so much so that I did not get to have any time with my girlfriend. Thinking I would be smart, I composed a short note to Mr. L. explaining how his practices were affecting my love life and asking him to give up a Saturday rehearsal. I only signed the note "Jim."

At the next large band rehearsal, Mr. L. announced to the group that he wanted to know what girl had a boyfriend named Jim in town. Judy volunteered. Mr. L. proceeded to read my note aloud over the practice field loudspeakers to a chorus of catcalls and comments by band members.

She was embarrassed and I sure got to hear about it. (Our recollection was practice was cancelled but Judy was too worn out to celebrate). Judy and I have been married 30+ years. She still creates outstanding music.

—Jim Hartwig '72 BS
and Judy Pfaffenbach Hartwig '72 BME

In the fall of 1985 I met my future husband via telephone when he called my roommate and I ended up talking to him. It was his birthday and he was depressed, so I decided to write him a letter (he was attending U of M). He wrote back, I responded, and a correspondence was begun.

Remember the days of waiting anxiously for the mail to be placed in the little metal-doored boxes down in the lobby?

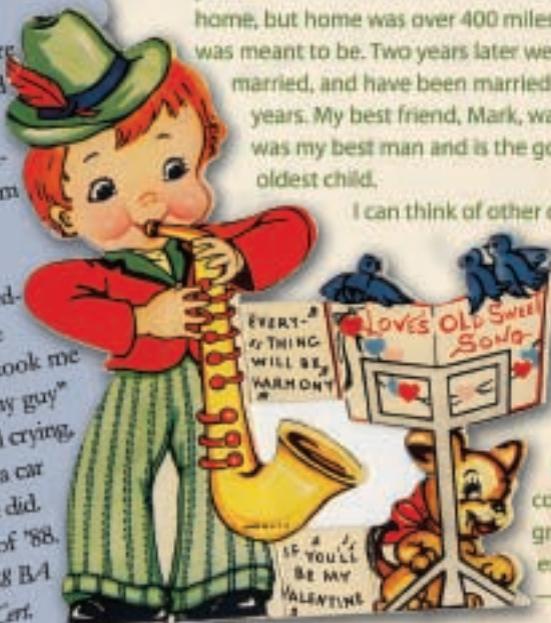
We wrote for over a year before we met in person, and by that time we were good friends. Thus began a long-distance relationship that required begging rides to Ann Arbor whenever possible (the Ride Board in the UC), or him finding rides to Marquette. On Homecoming weekend I was standing in formation during marching band rehearsal when I saw this weird-looking guy standing down at the end of the 40-yard line. He kept smiling at me, and it took me a few minutes to realize that he was "my guy" sporting a full beard! I screamed and started crying, but I didn't break formation! He had rented a car to surprise me for the weekend, and he sure did. We went on to get married in the summer of '88.

—Jane (Mattila) Lynch '88 BA
and Philip Lynch '90 Cert.

It was my great pleasure to be part of the Pride of the North marching band from 1974-77. Ben Miller was the director at the time, and one of the first things I heard was "you'll find the love of your life and your best friend if you stay in this band." For me it was true. The love of my life, Kathy, didn't appear until my last year in band. She was "in love" with the guy back home, but home was over 400 miles away. Anyway, it was meant to be. Two years later we were married, and have been married for almost 30 years. My best friend, Mark, was in band too. He was my best man and is the godfather of my oldest child.

I can think of other couples who got together after they met in band and were married. The same seemed to apply to the Arts Chorus at that time. I can think of five couples in that small group of 30 who ended up married!

—Erik Bergh '79 BME



Hot Dating Spots:

Remember the nervous anticipation of a first date? Or the trepidation of a blind date? The disasters? The rough starts? The instant successes?

Maybe it was a casual group thing at the bowling alley in the basement of the University Center. Or a fancy, dress-up moment at the Northwoods Supper Club or The Crow's Nest. Or was it a rendezvous for the mystery drink special at 10 O'Clock Charlie's? Pizza after the hockey game at the Pizzarena? If you go back even further, you no doubt shared a slow dance at The Minnie Club. Then there are always those special nooks in the library where an impromptu date may have taken place, immortalizing the Lydia Olson Learning Resources Center as one of the most romantic places on earth.

For NMU students now and in the past, though, the best date spots are of the more natural variety: a hike up a mountain, hanging out at the beach. In a recent poll of alumni and current students, here are the winning choices for the top spots (listed in order of popularity), and a few memories of moments shared there.

THEN

Presque Isle Park
Sugarloaf
Casa Calabria
Hogsback
Black Rocks
Wetmore's Landing
The Portside
The Alibi (one respondent noted "just kidding")
The break walls
Vango's
The Shamrock
The Vierling
Echo Lake
Ice Cream at Jilbert's

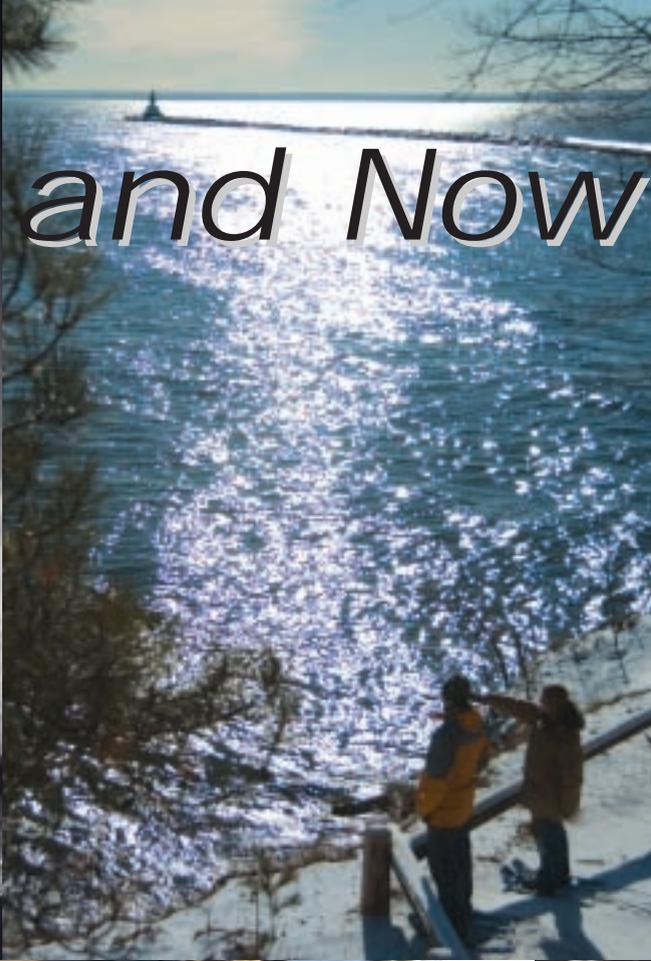
Photos from NMU yearbooks, Archives and Communications and Marketing

NOW

Sugarloaf
Hogsback
Sunset Point
"Hidden Beach" on
County Road 550
Starbucks (in the LRC)
The Sky Bar at the
Landmark Inn



Then and Now



I remember one night the guy I was hanging out with suggested we ride our bikes down to the ore docks and just sit and watch the coal be loaded on them. At first I thought, "O.K., I can't see this being very entertaining," but I went along for the ride. It was a beautiful clear night with millions of stars in the sky. As soon as we got to the park we put down our bikes, sat on the beach and watched and listened to the sound of the ore docks and the water splashing on the break wall. I remember just millions of stars in the sky. It looked like a field of diamonds above us. The moon was shiny and bright reflecting on the lake and it was breathtaking. We wrote our names in the sand and just sat and talked to each other for a couple hours, just getting to know each other better. I would say it ended up to be very romantic and a very peaceful evening together. So this is for sure a very beautiful date spot that is priceless. —Shannon Duffy '01



The Heart of Northern

Strolling past “The Heart of Northern” outside of Jamrich Hall, most students probably don’t realize it’s one of the oldest legacies on campus, and was once considered Romance Central.

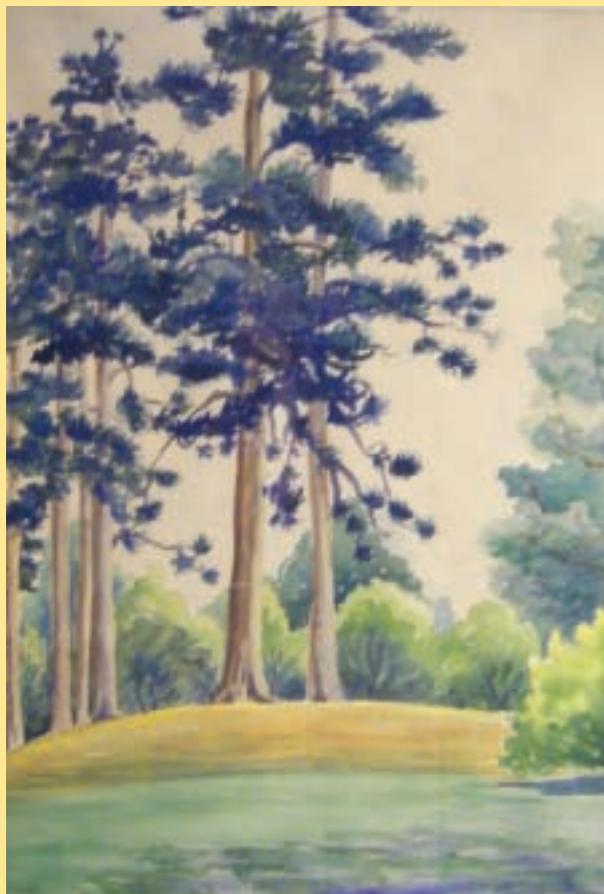
But many alumni will fondly recall the heart—in another time and another place. Today’s heart, which in warmer months is shaped out of a large mound of grass, ringed with yellow flowering bushes and sporting a marigold “N” in its center, was recreated in 1996 for Northern’s centennial in 1999.

Its original location was in front of the old Longyear Hall, near today’s Cohodas Hall, on the Presque Isle Avenue side. It was a heart-shaped berm, about three feet high and around 20 by 40 feet in size. The shape was apparently what remained after the ground had been lowered due to construction and landscaping of Longyear. It first appears in photos around 1907. And though its origin may have been unintentional, the Heart came to symbolize “the heart of knowledge, education and scholarship” at Northern.

In order for female students to be considered official coeds, they had to be kissed on the Heart.

The Heart was the site for May festivals, band concerts, speeches and even studying. Also known as “the King and Queen Knob,” it was a popular place for crownings and inaugurations of club presidents and members. Shaded by pines, it was a romantic spot for first kisses, pinnings, engagements and weddings. According to university historian Russ Magnaghi, in order for female students to be considered official coeds, they had to be kissed on the Heart.

Chuck Westen ’58 BS, ’66 MA, who lived across the street from the Heart, remembers a lot of activity taking place there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. “The area was used by fraternity members and others who brought their girls there to be pinned and the men from the fraternity serenaded their girls there. Guys also pinned and kissed their girls here as well,” he recalls. “Back in the late 1940s it might be four to five dates might pass before you kissed your girl. However, when you took your girl to



This painting of the Heart of Northern was created by Ida Richards while she was an undergraduate at Northern Teachers College. It is housed at the NMU Archives.

the Heart and she went, this was the all clear that you could kiss her.” Westen pinned a girl there himself.

“This was a time when kissing was very limited, and this was the place where you could get kissed,” added Magnaghi. “It was a sort of neutral ground.”

According to collegiate folklorists, such spots which attract couples are common, but this spot is unique because it attracted not only couples, but groups of people.

After World War II, as campus expansion moved towards the west, interest in the Heart languished and in many cases people began to forget about it. Westen speculated that “serenading waned with the [Korean War] vets. Many of them were married and thus had no need of the Heart.”

*O Heart of the Campus,
With affection you're bound
In memory of gatherings
Which centered three round.
Thy life-throbs so tender—
May they ever prolong
The musical echoes
Of laughter and song.*

—J.C.

Poem and drawing from the Northern Normal News, August 3, 1926.



The final coup de grace to the Heart came during the summer of 1963, when two-thirds of the Heart was demolished during parking lot expansion. A 1965 letter to the editor of *Northern News* lamented, “Northern Michigan University has no heart! It was devoured by a parking lot.”

Thirty some years later, Magnaghi suggested reconstructing the heart outside of the University Center in honor of the centennial celebration. Art and Design professor Diane Kordich and student Joe Rom proposed a more elaborate recreation,

near the carillon towers. And a controversy was born over design and funding. It seems only fitting that the two figures at the center of the heart controversy—Magnaghi and Kordich—are married. In the end, President Vandament and Kordich agreed on constructing Magnaghi’s more economical model, but on the

north side of Jamrich, right off the academic mall. Between the fall of 1996 and July 1997, earth was piled and shaped, the lawn seed sown and the privet hedge planted. Vandament said, “I hope it takes off, but it will probably be the object of humor for a while.”

Now it’s a vibrant splash of color at mid-campus from spring to fall.

While the small bit remaining of the original heart is mainly used as an impromptu bike jump, NMU alumni don’t necessarily need solid ground to call up the flights of fancy and fluttering heartbeats that once took place there. Whether the transplanted heart takes root with new generations of students is yet to be seen—or maybe secrets are already swirling in its environs.



The Heart today, near Jamrich Hall. A plaque commemorates the original Heart located near the former Longyear and Kaye halls.

Thanks to Russ Magnaghi’s book A Sense of Time, NMU and Central U.P. Archives and The North Wind for information in this article. ■



Pink Geraniums

I remember the first time
I saw them, in December,
pink geraniums in her office window,
hot pink, the only color against
limestone, snow, and gray clouds.

The flowers grew all winter,
shameless of their opulent blooms,
their large, circular leaves,
the way they filled the window,
as if to say "Take me, take me,
I'm yours."

In those long stretches at 10 below,
I would take the short cut from the library,
time my treks with her office hours,
stop at her open door,
throw a "Hello, how goes?"
and bow like an old coot
from the Old West.

In my Ford pickup, I took her to Scheu's Café,
to chamber concerts, auctions in
Council Grove, Emporia, where
Flint Hills swell and dip, where
farmers and their wives unload
Bavarian crystal, Lunt silver, antique
Steinways and head south.

In spring, when purple crocuses
pushed up from the snow, I took her
to my wheat farm, threw
a table cloth on the barn floor.
Her shivering under me, straw
mingled in her black hair, I kissed her
full on the lips, smelled her woman,
smelled tractor grease, the earth, and gave
her my mother's double row of diamonds.

Today, her long dead, and me 90
among white sheets in my hospital bed,
I seek pink geraniums, hot pink, the only
color against limestone, snow, and clouds.

—*Beverly Matherne*

Matherne is an English professor at NMU. This poem won the Hackney Literary Award for Poetry in a national competition in 1994 and was published in Uncommonplace: An Anthology of Contemporary Louisiana Poets, Louisiana State University Press.