

# What? NO! Seriously?

Thirty-six out-of-the-box facts, details, and yarns you don't know about Northeastern

**N**ortheastern has made a lot of headlines lately—in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, for the university's internationalization efforts; in the *Boston Globe*, for a surge in applications; and in *Bloomberg Businessweek*, for co-op leadership. But sometimes the best bits of information never make the news.

Like any rich landscape of history, transformation, and ideas, Northeastern holds an endless capacity to surprise.

You'll see. Just dive into this countdown of myths revealed, behind-the-scenes looks at inventions and breakthroughs, and quirky tidbits about people and places you thought you knew, and get ready to learn a thing or two.



## HUSKY INGENUITY



### FRENCH SIGN

American Sign Language (ASL) is actually derived from Old French Sign Language.

So maybe it's not that surprising that Distinguished Professor Harlan Lane founded Northeastern's nationally renowned ASL program. Lane became interested in Deaf culture while teaching in Paris in the 1970s; three decades later, he was named commandeur in the French Ordre des Palmes Académiques for his research on the Deaf world. President Aoun is also a member of the elite order.

### MOST FAMOUS INVENTION YOU NEVER HEARD OF

The Gorlov helical turbine, brain-child of Northeastern engineering professor emeritus Alexander Gorlov, won the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Thomas A. Edison Patent Award and was named one of *Popular Science's* top 100 innovations of 2001. Now, Gorlov is a finalist for the 2011 European Inventor Award. So what *is* a helical turbine? Basically, it's a way to provide less expensive, more environmentally friendly hydro technology.



### THIS ITEM DOES NOT EXCEED 140 CHARACTERS

Wellesley (Mass.) High School grad Isaac "Biz" Stone was an NU undergrad for a year, studying English. He went on to cofound Twitter! OMG!!

### THE NOMINATION GOES TO . . .

Courtney Hunt, nominated for a 2009 Academy Award for best original screenplay for her critically acclaimed film *Frozen River*. Hunt, L'89, also directed the film, and husband Donald Harwood, L'81, executive-produced it. (*Frozen River* star Melissa Leo earned a nomination for best actress, too. This February, Leo took home the best supporting actress Oscar, for her performance in *The Fighter*.)



### SOUND THE OPENING BELL

John Cullinane, BA'59, H'99, created the first software company ever listed on the New York Stock Exchange. The Cullinane Corporation, producer of a popular database-management system, made its exchange debut in April 1982. The firm was also the first software company to reach a billion-dollar valuation—and the first to run a Super Bowl commercial.

|        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 29.76  | 74870  |
| 18.84  | 75212  |
| 18.95  | 81925  |
| 18.21  | 22081  |
| 6.42   | 49.23万 |
| 18.55  | 10.64万 |
| 27.60  | 22661  |
| 33.71  | 10158  |
| 62.60  | 15652  |
| 6.51   | 16070  |
| 22.90  | 48476  |
| 121.65 | 9373   |
| 77.41  | 9840   |
| 1.42   | 12.73万 |
| 20.41  | 28973  |





## HUSKY INGENUITY

### FRESH INK

Putting nanotechnology to work is more than science fiction at Northeastern. One example: Associate pharmaceutical-sciences professor Heather Clark is developing temporary tattoos for diabetes patients that include nanosensors, which make the tattoos glow when glucose levels drop.

### OPEN DOORS

In his 2010 acceptance letter to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, President Aoun writes of being transfixed as a boy by the Ali Baba story, so much so that he tried to create his own door-opening word. Eventually, he explains in the letter, he discovered the true key to opening doors: "I know that 'education' is the secret word, and I have been deeply gratified to devote my life to this noble purpose."



### THAT'S TERRENCE WITH AN "E"

... for Terrence Masson, founder of Northeastern's creative industries program. He also created the animation tool for the popular (and admittedly controversial) Comedy Central satire *South Park*. In gratitude, show creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker named a character after Masson: Terrance (with an "a") of the Canadian comedy duo Terrance and Phillip, whose TV show is frequently watched by main characters Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny.



### TWENTY-FOUR

Yup. That's how few hours it took computer science and music technology combined-major Robby Grodin to help develop an app for watches that translates movement into music you can play on a computer. The all-nighter happened at Boston Music Hack Day, one of a series of music-technology innovation events held around the world.

## CAMPUS COSMOLOGY

### PUB LORE

Punter's Pub was named for sports information director Jack Grinold's dog, Punter. Back in Grinold's bachelor days, friends dubbed his apartment "Punter's Place," because the dog ruled the roost. The drinking establishment adopted the name in homage. (Eventually, "Place" morphed into "Pub," for clearer marketing.)

*Punter's Pub*

### TUNNEL VISION

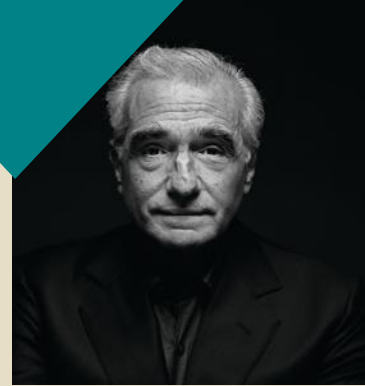
Turns out there's a reason why the campus-wide network of underground tunnels stops short at Forsyth Street. Beneath Forsyth lie storm sewers called the Stony Brook Channels, which carry stormwater into the Charles River. And these pipes are massive—more than 10 feet high and 20 feet across. Any tunnel built underneath them would have to go very, very deep—too deep, engineers decided.

### PAVE PARADISE, PUT UP A PARKING LOT?

Nope—Northeastern does it the other way around. The campus once dismissed as a sea of asphalt now boasts no fewer than 1,836 trees, and routinely wins major landscape-design awards.

### CANDY COLORS ARE THE NEW GREEN

The Adirondack chairs found around campus are made from recycled plastic bottles. The color permeates the chairs, which means they never have to be repainted; any wear and tear just gets sanded down.



### IF YOU BUILD IT . . .

In 2008, Martin Scorsese filmed scenes for *Shutter Island* at Northeastern's Marine Science Center, adding a digitally constructed lighthouse for extra visual appeal. Now a \$1.8 million National Science Foundation grant is letting the Marine Science Center do some real rebuilding, to facilitate its cutting-edge research in robotic explosives-detection and coastal-fisheries imaging technology.

### NOT THE KIND OF MORGUE HE WAS EXPECTING

In the newspaper business, the "morgue" is the file where old clippings and stories are stored. But assistant journalism professor Dan Kennedy, LA'79, remembers something close to the real thing, right on campus. His first journalism classes were held in the now-demolished Greenleaf Building, where years earlier Tufts University medical students used to study cadavers. Kennedy says you could still see the ramp on which the bodies were wheeled in and smell formaldehyde as you walked the halls, long after the building became Northeastern property.



## AT HOME IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Since 1993, forty-one Northeastern students have completed internships or co-ops—in communications and other areas—at the White House.

### ... AND THE LEGISLATURE

In November 2006, when he was a sophomore, political science major Jeff Fontas, AS'10, became one of the nation's two youngest state representatives after his election to the New Hampshire legislature—fulfilling his two-year term while on back-to-back co-ops. Fontas made extensive use of social media for his election effort—months before the Obama presidential campaign had the same idea.



## DESTINATION EDUCATION

Northeastern received the most applications for fall 2011 of any private U.S. university: 43,183 for 2,800 slots, nearly three times the 2001 figure.

### FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE GLOBE

More than 13 percent of undergrads and a whopping 26 percent of graduate students hail from countries other than the United States, according to 2010–2011 data.

## EMISSION CONTROL

A mere 11 percent of students, faculty, and staff drive to campus. The rest walk, bike, or take public transportation—a 38 percent reduction in drive-alone commutes since 1998.



## THE SOUL OF NORTHEASTERN



## HUSKIES ON EVERY CONTINENT. AND WE MEAN EVERY.

More than 1,400 undergraduates engaged in global experiential learning last year. Early in 2010, the university's marketing team created an ad with the tagline "Antarctica—the only continent where you won't find a Northeastern University student . . . yet." The ad never ran. Just before it was scheduled to print, word came down that biochemistry major Corey Allard was leaving for a six-month research co-op . . . at Palmer Station, in Antarctica.

### WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR NAME

On the first Thursday of each month, alumni and friends gather at "Dr. Bob's Bar" in the Alumni Center. Recently named in honor of Robert S. Shillman, E'68, H'00, for his generosity and incomparable joie de vivre, the space includes a plaque that reflects Shillman's approach to life: "Work hard. Play hard. Move fast."

## THE SOUL OF NORTHEASTERN

### AN INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI NETWORK

Hong Kong and Singapore alumni chapters have joined chapters in Turkey, France, Greece, and the United Kingdom; there's a pan-Arab group as well. The university's international-alumni network now extends to 150 countries.

### AND A SOCIAL NETWORK!

Students on international co-op are using social-networking tools to seek advice from and make connections with alumni overseas. Take senior Sunkyung Park, a Presidential Global Scholar majoring in international business, who's doing a marketing co-op in Mexico at the hotel W Mexico City. Through LinkedIn, Park contacted Chris Hermes, MBA'96, a local alum who's a Latin America marketing guru. He's now helping her land a post-graduation marketing job in Mexico.

### ALL THAT JAZZ

Judith Tick, the Matthews Distinguished University Professor of Music, is writing a biography of "First Lady of Song" Ella Fitzgerald, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. And she's uncovering some interesting items connected to Fitzgerald. For example, it's known that Fitzgerald suffered from diabetes-related sight loss as she got older. But the depth of the jazz great's challenge recently came to life when Tick made two archive discoveries: song lyrics printed in oversize type; and the singer's own eyeglasses, "with lenses the size of paperweights," says Tick.



### A LEAP IN FUNDING

Not one to rest on its laurels, the university is projecting \$90 million in research funding this year, having jumped from \$40 million in 2006 to \$82 million in 2010.

### MORE LEAPS!

Northeastern fundraising has doubled over the past three years, with a 50 percent increase in the number of million-dollar gifts.

### LONG BEFORE "GOOGLE" WAS A VERB

Founded in 1982, the College of Computer and Information Science—now the world leader in network-science research and a federally funded center of excellence—was the first U.S. college devoted entirely to the study of computer science.



### PRIZE-WINNING NEWS

Journalism chair Stephen Burgard was a member of the *Los Angeles Times* staff that won a 1995 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the previous year's Northridge earthquake. And Distinguished Professor of Journalism Walter V. Robinson, LA'74, headed the *Boston Globe* investigative news team that earned a 2003 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the Catholic Church abuse scandal.

### PAYING IT FORWARD

Professor Robinson collected his very first investigative-reporting award as a junior on co-op at the *Globe*, for pieces he wrote about police misconduct. Today, students in his Investigative Reporting seminars report and write stories that often end up on page one of the *Globe*.



## SPORTS BUZZ

### IN MEETINGS, HE KEEPS HIS EYE ON THE BALL

The members of the Northeastern Corporation have their fair share of awards and recognitions. But only one has been named a Gold Glove and a Silver Slugger: former Huskies baseball standout Carlos Peña, now first baseman for the Chicago Cubs. Peña was selected as a Silver Slugger in 2007, got his Gold Glove in 2008, and made it to the All-Star team in 2009.

#### HEY! OVER HERE!

The Cy Young statue in front of Churchill Hall doesn't mark the spot of the pitching mound at the Huntington Avenue Baseball Grounds. It actually stands in what would have been short centerfield in the old ballpark. Also, the way the statue is situated, Cy is pitching toward third base.



#### THIS PROPOSAL WAS LOCAL

Tip O'Neill Jr., H'82, longtime Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, proposed to his future wife, Mildred "Millie" Miller, at Matthews Arena. The couple, who tied the knot on June 17, 1941, were married until Tip's death in 1994. Son Kip says he doesn't know why his parents were at Matthews that fateful day, but it was likely for some sporting event—after all, Tip and Millie spent the first night of their honeymoon at a Joe Louis championship bout.

### GOOOOAL!

#### GAMESMAN IN CHIEF

Unexpected but true: In his off-hours, President Aoun demonstrates mad tabletop skillz. That's right, he's an avid foosball player, driving the ball home with a flick of his wrist.

#### TRAINING GROUND FOR THE GREATEST

Muhammad Ali trained for his 1965 rematch against Sonny Liston—the bout that led to the iconic photograph of Ali taunting his flattened foe—at Matthews Arena, in a gym where the Makris Varsity Club Room now stands. Matthews—called Boston Arena until the university renamed the building in 1982—is the site of the oldest artificial ice rink in the country.



#### GIRL POWER

The Northeastern women's hockey squad has captured more Beanpot titles than any other school: fourteen times in the thirty-three-year history of the women's tournament.