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Ask the Abbot

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Where were the science classrooms before JMS was built?

Tim Berto '07

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June 2013

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Where were the science classrooms before JMS was built?

Tim Berto '07

Answer:

My dearest Tim,

Oh the history behind science at our beloved St. Norbert College! Thank you for providing me this opportunity to reflect back on the topic.

Prior to the completion of Dr. John R. Minahan Science Hall in 1967, the science program was housed in a World War II surplus building that was moved onto campus in 1947. Some of my older alumni readers refer to this building as the Quonset hut.



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

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It was common for colleges to add such buildings to their campuses. With the end of the war, the military no longer needed these buildings. Meanwhile, colleges such as St. Norbert suddenly required more space for classrooms, offices and labs because of an enrollment boom fed by returning members of the armed forces making use of the newly passed G.I. Bill.

It was a timely solution that served the good of all. In fact, I reflect that the gift of our new Gehl-Mulva Science Center might be regarded in somewhat similar light. As I enjoy following the construction, on what I am told is our **webcam**, I see that we are indeed fortunate to be able to update our science facilities whilst, in the spirit of *communio*, also providing a home for the Medical College of Wisconsin's Green Bay campus.

Now, to return to the past. The Quonset hut was immediately east of the heating plant on campus. The heating plant was built in 1917, and held a one-room chemistry laboratory at the north end until 1930, when the lab moved to the first floor of Main Hall.



Tim, I so appreciate your question and the opportunity to discuss with you St. Norbert's long and continuing tradition of growing, adapting to the times and meeting the needs of our students.

Responses to "Ask the Abbot" questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, O.Praem., who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.

St. Norbert College

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