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Ask the Abbot

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Have you ever heard of any ghosts in the Pennings Activity Center?

Colin Waas '19

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April 2016

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“Have you ever heard of any ghosts in the Pennings Activity Center? My friends and I hear odd noises and feel like we are being watched in there all the time.”

Colin Waas '19

Answer:

Dearest Colin,

I thank you for writing me with this fascinating inquiry. Although I take much pride in having answers to all of my readers' questions, I must confess that I found it necessary to consult with the experts from our hardworking facilities management crew on such an intriguing topic.

First, might I suggest to my readers, should a similar happening occur to them, that we are wise to remember the assurance of our own St. Augustine, the author of our order's beloved Rule. This wise and holy man tells us that, although some may occasionally believe they have seen a semblance of the body of someone who has died, the experience is akin only to dreaming of a living friend; one who is not aware of the dream, but nonetheless appears in it as an image.

After discussing your query with my dear friend Mike Van Drisse, manager of maintenance services, I've learned that rumors of such commotion in the Pennings Activity Center (PAC), and other older campus buildings, have neither been



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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confirmed nor denied. One must remember that these aging buildings are often heated by boilers, and the pipes that run through the building carry steam and change pressure as they warm and cool, leading to quite the array of unexpected clamors.

Allow me to indulge in a bit of the building's history. It was built in the year 1923 as Nicolet High School for the West De Pere School District. In 1959, the Norbertine order purchased the building, and Abbot Pennings High School was born. For the next 30 years, some 9,000 young men were educated by Norbertine priests, various nuns and other lay faculty. The high school closed in 1990 when it consolidated with Green Bay's St. Joseph Academy and Prémontré High School to become Notre Dame de la Baie Academy of Green Bay.

Since that time, I'm humbled to say, the building has continued to bear my name as the Pennings Activity Center. It has been home to a multitude of college offices, particularly those in transition as our lovely campus has grown. In fact, the building is to serve as temporary home to our athletics department during the renovation of the Schuldes Sports Center.

Perhaps, my dear Colin, to alleviate any concerns over the phenomena you reference, a blessing upon the building might be warranted.

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

100 Grant Street
De Pere, WI 54115
920-337-3181
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