

St. Norbert College

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**Do you know how the college acquired the green neon grocery sign that hangs in the critique room in the Bush Arts Center?**

Anja Marshall '17

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## May 2016

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“Do you know how the college acquired the green neon grocery sign that hangs in the critique room in the Bush Arts Center?”

Anja Marshall '17

### Answer:

Dearest Anja,

Seeking help in answering your question, I was fortunate to be able to consult with a cherished friend and esteemed colleague on the art faculty, Brian Pirman. Brian graciously shared his memory of this most interesting and unusual acquisition.

About 13 years ago, Brian and his faculty colleague Bill Bohné were taking a stroll downtown on the west side of De Pere. Out of the corner of his eye, Bill spotted an old neon sign near an establishment that was cleaning house. Having a keen eye for art, he brought the piece to a fellow who had the skills to once again give life to the neon. This neon sign now proudly hangs alongside other eclectic pieces in the student critique room in the Bush Art Center, thanks to Bill's generosity.

The critique room was to prove a particularly fitting location for this piece when, last spring, the art discipline generously extended hospitality to Phil's convenience store. Phil's temporarily ran its operation from this room while the Campus Center underwent repairs; so once again, grocery items were



### 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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purveyed beneath its light.

Those who have strolled the streets near our lovely campus may be interested to know that the aging building that once displayed that very neon sign – situated quite near the quaint Luna coffee shop – was recently torn down.

Indeed, the campus environs were soon to lose another such aging establishment, or at least its former shell: It was just last month, dear readers, that we witnessed the demolition of our own old human resources building, formerly a family-owned grocery store. Though I am excited to watch as our beautiful new sports facility arises in its place, I find myself quite melancholy about the loss of this quaint old building – premises that never quite lost their corner-store charm.

Dear me, I now find myself quite taken up with thoughts of all that has passed. It must be all of two years now since our own dear colleague Bill Bohné passed away. His was a great loss, indeed, but he himself now has a fitting memorial in the art center: To honor his remarkable legacy, the college has chosen to name the sculpture studio and the wood shop in his honor. These changes, small though they may be, add to the layers of history that meet us at every turn as the generations pass through in their turn and as our campus becomes increasingly venerable.

*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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