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What happened to the Coffeehouse, and what stands in its place today?

Anna Marie Abell Olson '76

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May 2018

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

I saw some great music acts at an old house on campus called the Coffeehouse. What happened to the Coffeehouse, and what stands in its place today?

Anne Marie Abell Olson '76

Answer:

My dear Anne Marie,

Ah yes, the Coffeehouse! My heavens, your inquiry takes me right down memory lane. This venerable establishment, an old grey house opposite Mary Minahan McCormick Hall, stood at 103 Reid St. It was used for various musical acts during the 1970s. As I recall, my friend Gary Pietrucha '73 served as the first elected director of the St. Norbert Coffeehouse. Mr. Pietrucha did a fine job of collaborating with other area colleges in bringing in national entertainment for our students to enjoy.

It was a sad day indeed when the building was eventually pronounced structurally unsound and unfit for college use. But all dark clouds have a silver lining and it was some comfort to see the building serve in its final days as a training structure for the De Pere Fire Department. Fires were lit in the most remote areas of the house, and the firefighters would be challenged to find the locations. Eventually the fire department torched the entire house for training purposes; dear me, what a blaze! The year would have been 1977.



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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However, although the, ahem, *venue* expired, the Coffeehouse name was retained as one of the nine committees that made up the College Activities Board (CAB). The CAB fell under the auspices of our Student Life department and had both faculty and staff moderators. The board planned, promoted and sponsored Coffeehouse performances after 1977.

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

St. Norbert College

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