

St. Norbert College

## Digital Commons @ St. Norbert College

---

Ask the Abbot

Alumni Relations

---

3-2020

**We think of you as such an unfailing source of wisdom on the life and history of your beloved college. Dear Abbot, is it possible that you have ever found yourself in error?**

Nick Meisner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.snc.edu/asktheabbot>

---



## Alumni

- [Events & Reunions](#)
- [Behind the Arch](#)
- [Benefits and Services](#)
- [Get Involved](#)
- [Give to SNC](#)
- [Alumni Awards](#)
- [Knight Lights](#)
- [Alumni-Owned Businesses Network](#)
- [Alumni Board](#)
- [Student Alumni Ambassadors](#)
- [Staff](#)

## March 2020

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings:

We think of you as such an unfailing source of wisdom on the life and history of your beloved college. Dear Abbot, is it possible that you have ever found yourself in error?

Nick Meisner (Communications)

### Answer:

Dear Nick,

What an amusing query! I must say, I'm quite pleased to put my hundred-plus years of experience on this beautiful campus to good use when I put quill to parchment and give my most thoughtful responses to questions posed by our ever-so-curious students and alumni. But, as I'm certain you can imagine, a hundred-plus-year-old mind sometimes misremembers.

Case in point: **My response** to February's query from Katy Verheyden '21, who asked:

"Recently I worked as the scenic designer and technical director on the production of 'Tuck Everlasting.' It's my third year in Knight Theatre, and every time we put together a production I wonder about the history of musicals on campus. Abbot, do you happen to know what musical was the first hosted at St. Norbert College?"

Katy's question filled me with delight as I searched the archives of my mind and landed on "Little Mary Sunshine," a 1962 performance. Magnificently, in response to my answer I received correspondence from some of our dear readers who



### 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.

[Submit Your Question](#)

shared their own recollections of our musical-theatre history. To my chagrin, some (with agile minds and well-equipped memories) refuted my information, noting that there may have been earlier musicals on campus. You see, dear Nick: I was so overtaken by the memory of “Little Mary Sunshine” that I may have missed previous theatrical endeavors on our grounds.

Perhaps the best way forward in this mishap is to combine our many perspectives and memories. (I’m told doing so could be considered “crowdsourcing” our answer, whatever that may mean.) To that end, I shall share with you some of the responses I received from our most eidetic readers.

Jim Lahiff ’58 asked: “How could you have forgotten that ‘Finian’s Rainbow,’ a musical, preceded ‘Little Mary Sunshine’ by four years? It was the first musical held in the brand-new theatre.”

Peter Giovannini ’88 shared: “My Dear Abbot, I read with interest your recounting of the first musical performed at St. Norbert. It was a wonderful story, to be sure. But there is also a love story attached to that production. It seems that Chief Brown Bear was quite smitten with one of the production crew, Ms. Kathleen Kerrigan ’62. That began a romance that lasted until her death in 1998 and produced three future Green Knights. Those musicals hold a special place in our hearts!”

I’d be simply delighted to hear your thoughtful analysis and response to the questions posed above. “I’ve been told that you may **“click” these words** to respond and put “Musical Response” in the question line. Additionally, you may “watch” for this public posting on “social media” and respond with “#asktheabbot.” (I’ve never heard such rubbish, but I’m one to do as I’m told in these matters.)

*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

100 Grant Street  
De Pere, WI 54115

Contact Us

Careers

News

Events

Undergraduate

Graduate

920-337-3181  
Map & Directions

[Library](#)

[Box Office](#)

[Schneider School of  
Business & Economics](#)

[© 2021 St. Norbert College](#) | [Nondiscrimination Policy](#) | [Land Acknowledgement](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Site Accessibility](#) | [Title IX](#)

