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A "volunteer staff" member is defined as a person who has had three articles, photographs, or pieces of art of reasonable length and/or substance published in three different issues of the current publishing year of the Manitoban. Any individual who qualifies must be voted in by a majority vote at a Manitoban staff meeting. Elected representatives and non-students may be excluded from becoming voting volunteer staff members in accordance with the Manitoban Constitution.

The Manitoban is the official student newspaper of the University of Manitoba. It is published monthly during the summer and each week during the academic year by the Manitoban Newspaper Publications Corporation.

The Manitoban is an independent and democratic student organization, open to participation from all students. It exists to serve its readers as students and citizens.

The newspaper's primary mandate is to report fairly and objectively on issues and events of importance and interest to the students of the University of Manitoba, to provide an open forum for the free expression and exchange of opinions and ideas, and to stimulate meaningful debate on issues that affect or would otherwise be of interest to the student body and/or society in general. The Manitoban serves as a training ground for students interested in any aspect of journalism.

Students and other interested parties are invited to contribute to any section of the newspaper. Please contact the appropriate editor for submission guidelines. The Manitoban reserves the right to edit all submissions and will not publish any material deemed by its editorial board to be discriminatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or libellous. Opinions expressed in letters and articles are solely those of the authors.

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Yearly subscriptions to the Manitoban are available for \$40.

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Printed by Prolific Web Printers
Winnipeg, MB

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #589160

The Manitoban is a member of the Canadian University Press.



PHOTO: Stacey Abramson

Empty buildings and fat wallets

Neglected historic venues in Winnipeg

Stacey Abramson, Staff

Warehouses turned into condos, shopping strips, and large windowed skyscrapers — if you go to almost any major city in Canada, you will see a similar layout. Buildings that were constructed and had their heyday at the turn of the century (and sometimes earlier) have either been torn down, or converted into some sort of structure that doesn't maintain any of the architectural or aesthetic beauty that it once had.

People often comment when they come to Winnipeg for the first time about how amazing it is that we still have so many older buildings intact. This year Winnipeg will see a bright shining multi-million dollar MTS Centre put into the centre of the city. But in the area surrounding the structure, there are buildings and theatres that have been neglected for years. These buildings, such as the Metropolitan Theatre, sit still, while new buildings are put up all over the downtown area. Each one of these buildings has a rich and vibrant history and an equally impressive interior. But it is not only downtown Winnipeg that sees the neglect of beautiful spaces — the University of Manitoba has a few of its own that could use some serious love and care.

I had only heard about Taché Hall auditorium from my mom, who during her years at the U of M had seen bands such as KISS, T-Rex, and all of the Winnipeg bands that were big at the time, such as Crawford and Peter Dobo. Being a serious live music lover, I always wanted to see what the venue looked like. This summer I had the chance to take a look at the auditorium. Set up much like the legendary Minneapolis club First Avenue, Taché Hall Auditorium was more amazing than I imagined it would be. With an arched stage much like that of Pantages, a wrap-around balcony and a hardwood main floor that could fit 500 people comfortably, the auditorium is too good to be true.

It's hard to believe that such a huge venue is sitting unused and dust-filled in the university when space has always been an issue on campus. Student groups and organizations are constantly battling the lack of space for functions at the university. So why has Taché auditorium been forgotten?

Asbestos removal occurred early in 2004, and the last actual event in the auditorium took place only three or four years ago. Money and time appear to be the only factors preventing the auditorium from being renovated back to its original

splendour. After seeing the size and potential of the auditorium, I couldn't help but wonder why this space does not appear to be a major funding priority for the university.

Winnipeg does not have any adequate medium-sized venues. When acts come through town, they do not want to be put in a venue that is either too big or small for them.

Burton Cummings Theatre is much too large for certain acts that draw a fair number of people — for example, two years ago Wilco moved their show to Le Rendezvous (recently closed) after poor ticket sales relative to the size of the theatre. Taché Hall auditorium is the perfect size for all kinds of events around the city and university.

It is crucial to preserve campus history at the U of M. Similarly, with so much money in the city being put into sterile architecture like the MTS Centre, it's a shame that businesses wouldn't try to invest in projects that would beautify and enrich the downtown area.

It's important to keep fighting for growth and development in the city and at the university, but why this isn't done with history in mind is beyond me. It's quite sad to imagine what places such as Taché Hall auditorium looked like when they were being funded and used. If time and money were put into Taché Hall auditorium, it would be sure to benefit not only the university, but also the cultural scene in Winnipeg in general.

Are you interested in volunteering at the Manitoban?

Do you have any ideas, compliments or complaints for the staff?

Or would you just like to find out more about your student paper?

Here's your chance:

Open Volunteer and Staff Meetings,
every Thursday at 2:30 in room 105 University Centre