A view of the Administration Building and the Quadrangle from the balcony of the Centre Block of Taché Hall.
CHAPTER NINE
The Grunge Ninties 1990 - 1999

To former students whose time in Residence dates back to, say, the 1960s, the 1990s scene would have comprised some interesting changes. Relaxation of rules over the years had led to better living conditions, as recounted in previous chapters. Interestingly, beds, mattresses, and mattress covers still came with the territory, but personal bedding now had to be brought in by the students themselves—this change had gone into effect in 1989-90.

Residence Life in the 1990s

Upgrades in the wiring and electrical capacity permitted the use of popcorn poppers, microwaves (for reasons of fire safety, hot plates were disallowed), small refrigerators (these could be rented at the Residence for $80/year), word processors, televisions, and VCRs. The latter two could be borrowed from RSAC sources on a per-day basis.

There existed an in-house video system that hooked into a Residence movie channel and two satellite TV channels that were available in many Taché rooms and in the various lounges—all unheard of in days of yore.

Recreational amenities had been augmented by a Universal Gym Weight Room that was now located off the West Gymnasium.

Communitas and the Nice Guy Clause

According to wikipedia.org, communitas is “an intense community spirit, the feeling of great social equality, solidarity, and togetherness.” Community is “a group of people having common ties or interests and living in the same locality or district and subject to the same laws” (Gage Canadian Dictionary, 1982).

From its very inception, the population of Taché Hall was a community, as repeatedly acknowledged previously, and the 1990s expression of this truism was spelled out in the Speechly/Taché Residence Handbooks of that decade. Promulgated therein was a set of “Community Standards Guidelines” that amounted to a local charter of social justice and human rights.
This manifesto was prefaced by a declaration that was known as the “Nice Guy Clause” which read: “While living in the Speechly/Taché Residence, I shall endeavour to be as decent a human being as is possible.” How was this ideal to be achieved? The following were highly recommended:

- Don’t be a jerk;
- Don’t violate Quiet Hours;
- Don’t display sexist, racist, or homophobic door posters;
- Be sensitive to the religious and ethical values of others;
- Commit yourself to tolerance, compromise, and cooperation.

The basic rights that a Resident could expect to enjoy were thus based on mutual respect and the recognition of individual rights—all the things they should have learned while growing up at home and going to church. Consequently, fundamental standards of community behaviour were monitored by each and every member of the community, although final disciplinary decisions were officially made by the Director of Housing & Student Life. Violations of any of the standards were subject to review by the Community Standards Advisory Board (CSAB), a student advisory group that reported to the Director. The CSAB, the successor to the Residence Disciplinary Board, acted in accordance with the policies set forth within the University of Manitoba Discipline By-Law.

The CSAB, then, consisted of Resident students whose mandate was to propose acceptable standards of behaviour for the Residence community, to mediate disputes between individuals and groups, and to recommend to the Director of Housing & Student Life any sanctions or conditions to be imposed on offenders. Long gone were the days when a decision to levy a $5 fine was referred out-of-house to the University’s Comptroller!

The “Other”

In the spirit of sentiments such as those expressed in the foregoing, it had long been made explicit in the House rules that racism would not be tolerated in Residence. However, the multicultural mix of university campuses in general and dorms in particular pretty well guaranteed that incidents of overt racism would occur, and this was borne out in a five-month, campus-wide study conducted at the beginning of the 1990s.

At that time, a letter on federal government stationery had been making the rounds on campus containing derogatory references to the garb of blacks, Asians, Aboriginals, and Sikhs. The University’s response was the formation of a President’s advisory committee on human rights that would recommend policy for dealing with the problem.

In the winter of 1989-90, African and East Indian students had protested against racial slurs posted on their room doors in Taché Hall. The Residence Administration had ordered the removal of offensive material from students’ doors and, in one case, on their own initiative had removed one such poster themselves. This “controlling” behaviour on the part of the Administration was roundly condemned by freedom-of-expression advocates in the Rez.

In the spring of 1991, the Residence committed itself to a redoubling of efforts through orientation, floor programs, and in-house international events to make all students feel welcome.
Surveys: The Only Way to Know for Sure

Surveys conducted in the early 1990s by Housing & Student Life brought to light important information concerning Resident students’ opinions about their lot.

A 1990 Student Orientation study allowed first-year undergraduates to assess various aspects of their academic and social integration at university. These measures (collected approximately six months after the start of the term) suggested that living in the Speechly/Taché Residence and attending the Residence Orientation was positively associated with measures of academic and social integration.

Distributed by mail in February, surveys were targeted to three student groups:
• first year undergraduates living in Speechly/Taché Residence who had attended the 1989 Residence Orientation;
• first year Residence undergraduates who did not attend the 1989 Residence Orientation;
• and a random sample of first year students living off-campus.

Students attending Residence Orientation received a survey measuring reactions to the Orientation, while students in the other two groups received a form that allowed them to assess how potentially useful an orientation would have been for them. Both forms also contained common items designed to assess adjustment to university life, satisfaction with experiences at the University, academic goal commitment, institutional commitment, adjustment difficulties, and self-efficacy measures of academic success.

Designed to facilitate student adjustment to Residence living and university life, the Residence Orientations typically include programming sessions on Residence Life, campus tours, awareness sessions on services available, time and stress management, health and lifestyle, and communication and relationship skills. Some highlights of student reactions to the Orientation were that large majorities of students attending a Residence Orientation reported that the Orientation helped them meet people and make new friends; that it helped them feel more comfortable at university; and that they would recommend Orientation to other students. But living in Residence (independent of attending or not attending Orientation) was associated with better first-year adjustment compared to that of students living off-campus.

Results from a 1992 survey of undergraduates showed that students living in a university residence hall expressed significantly more satisfaction with “feeling like you’re part of the University Community” compared to students living at

Of the 722 surveys distributed, 503 were completed and returned for an overall response rate of 69.6 percent.
• The final sample size for Residence students attending Orientation was 145 (a return rate of 69.7 percent);
• 160 completed surveys were received from Residence students not attending the Orientation (a return rate of 74.8 percent);
• and 198 surveys were obtained from the random sample of first year students living off-campus (a return rate of 66.0 percent).

Compared to students living off-campus, students in Speechly/Taché indicated greater agreement that since coming to the U of M they have developed close and personally satisfying friendships with other students. (Source: Student Affairs: Research Report. Volume 2, Number 3, November 1990).
home with their parents and those living in off-campus housing. Several additional differences were associated with student living arrangements:

- **Friendships with other students.** Compared to students living at home or in off-campus housing, students living in a University Residence hall expressed substantially more satisfaction with the number of new friendships they have formed with other Residents.

- **Personal social development.** Students living in Residence also expressed more satisfaction with their personal social development while at the University than did students living at home or in off-campus housing.

- **Overall University experience.** Ratings of “overall university experience at the U of M” were associated with student living arrangements. Students living in off-campus housing rated their overall experience more highly than students living at home with their parents. There was also a near-significant tendency for students living in Residence to give higher ratings than students living at home with their parents.

- **Adjustment difficulty.** Students living in a university residence hall had significantly lower adjustments difficulty scores compared to both students living at home with their parents and also students living in off-campus housing.

### Rooms To Let

It would appear that double rooms were a bit of a hard sell in the early 1990s, and so a plan was devised to make such lodgings a bit more attractive to prospective customers. A contest was put in place whereby anyone who applied and registered for a double room would be eligible to win a $1,000 prize that would be put towards his/her tuition. For current Residents who were perhaps unsure if they would be returning, there was the free room-and-board lottery.

In mid-April of 1992 an announcement went to 1991-92 Residents, inviting them to fill out a Returning Resident Application form for 1992-93. The form had to be submitted, along with a cheque, by May 1, 1992. The draw would be made during the first week of classes in September, and the winner would get free room and board for the entire academic year.

### Smokin’ and Cookin’

Back in 1914, smokers were called upon to register as such and were allowed to indulge themselves only in a designated smoking room. All that went by the board in the decades that followed, but by the mid-1990s, a **Clean Indoor Air Policy** was in place that prohibited smoking in any University building except in a number of specially-designated smoking areas. In Taché Hall, these were the 2nd West and 2nd East Lounges and the Centre Block. Smoking was permitted in dormitory rooms.

Cooking in the dormitory rooms was still disallowed, but kitchen areas were set aside for use when regular food service was unavailable (i.e., during holiday periods) or for special occasions. Summer students could avail themselves of a summer kitchen located off the Oak Room, and the small refrigerators could be rented on a monthly basis.

In 1992 (May 4 – August 21), single accommodation was available to both students and non-students in Taché West, but no meals. For those who wished to cook their own meals and were content to bring their own cooking...
Kitchen areas were set aside for use when regular food service was unavailable, like during the Holiday Break in December. Kraft Dinner, anyone?

Special Interest Floors

Research had shown that particular groups of students benefit from the opportunity to live and study in communities of like-minded individuals (“birds of a feather flock together”). It might be a function of the focal demands of a particular academic discipline, or it might just be the nature of a specific lifestyle choice; but some individuals find that their residence experience is enhanced by the opportunity to form a constituency within a larger residence community. Furthermore, we have noted on several occasions above the never-ending problem of noise in Taché Hall, the Quiet Hours rule notwithstanding. Perhaps in response to this chronic defect in residence living, the 1990s witnessed the evolution of several “special interest” floors, or “houses,” whereby the wheat could be separated from the chaff. Thus, in addition to the—as the brochure described it—“traditional undergraduate experience,” there were now blocks of rooms in Speechly/Taché and University College Residence in which students with the same backgrounds, interests, or academic programs shared a given floor that catered to the particular needs of specific student groups.

The first to be created, in 1992, was International/Graduate House, located on the 4th Floor of West Taché. It was unique among campus residence choices at the time: programming, a cross-cultural community, single rooms, a more quiet environment, opportunities for interaction between graduate, Canadian, and international students, and the same fees as others paid in the Speechly/Taché complex combined to distinguish it from the sometimes hurly-burly...
distractions of the “traditional undergraduate experience” (a rather genteel manner of putting it). And the amenities enjoyed by the hoi polloi—gymnasia, lounges with fireplaces, and all the other Student Life programs to be had—were available as well. Also available was a “Very Quiet Co-Ed” option that in fact had actually been in existence since at least 1987.

To this was added “Scholars’ House” (8th and 9th Speechly) in the 1994-95 academic year. This was restricted to undergraduates who had demonstrated superior academic performance (freshmen with a high school average of 80 percent or higher, or returning students with a sessional grade point average of 3.0 or higher).

Scholars’ House offered a quiet, co-ed hall for the exclusive use of the most serious students. By the year 1996-97, International/Graduate House was divided in two, now forming discrete entities. Graduate House (301-320 West; 4th West Taché), with its quiet setting, private study facilities and Student Life programming designed for the specific needs of graduate students, was reserved for mature individuals or those who already held undergraduate degrees.

Before the decade was out, two other “reserves” were set up. A floor of creative student designers attracted by the Old World charm of historic Taché Hall (says the brochure) and large, spacious rooms, became a reality for Architecture and Interior Design types (321-338 West Taché). The “Engineering/Sciences” precincts (300A-317 East Taché), tailored to those who sought specialized academic support programs and the University’s computer network, became home to Engineers and Science aficionados. The “special interest” floors idea proved its worth in the long run—in 2006 Taché Hall still had Architecture, Engineering, and International floors, and Speechly retained its Scholars’ floor.

New Stuff

In the fall of 1993, the Speechly/Taché complex stepped boldly into the future as the first Residences on campus to boast an in-house micro-computer centre. Located on 4th East, it featured 15 work stations connected to the University network system.

Less Oh-Wow, but important in their own right, were the security devices fitted to the windows of 1st Floor Taché.

The Perspective

By the 1990s, The Perspective newsletter/magazine was a well-established institution within the Speechly/Taché complex. It had long been a service for the students of Residence, providing them with information...
about Residence, a place for them to voice their opinions, and a means of relieving some of the stresses that built up from day-to-day that socials, sporting events, and copious amounts of alcohol could not always relieve.

In 1994, The Perspective Editor rendered a year-end report that was highly informative, not only of the care and feeding of said publication, but also of the organization and structure needed to put it out. Certain facets of contemporary Residence culture were disclosed as well. The report was written with the newly-elected Perspective Editor in mind; it was intended to describe and explain certain aspects of the job, and to provide suggestions that would hopefully make the work a little easier right from the get-go. It was divided into several subsections dealing with Perspective representatives, meetings, censorship, the printer, and advertising.

A formal outline of the Editor’s duties was to be found in the RSAC Constitution. One of the stated functions was to put out six (6) issues of the publication during one’s term as Editor. Said terms ran from March to the following February.

The 1993-94 incumbent had produced only five issues during his term, and he recommended that the Constitution be amended to specify five issues rather than six because:

- there really wasn’t enough time to put out six issues without crowding at least two of them close together;
- the Editor, being a student, had two sets of final exams during his/her term that had obvious ramifications for the amount of time that could be spent on The Perspective; and
- the RSAC was, in 1994 at least, financially challenged and one less issue meant one less expense for the RSAC.

The new Editor was free to set publication deadlines as s/he saw fit. In a way, the most important issue was the first (March) one: the new Editor would have just taken over, and his/her predecessor would still be around to help out with any problems. This available advice would give the newbie some idea as to what to expect for the new term so that things could run smoothly when s/he was on his/her own.

The year 1993-94 saw the Freshie Handbook and the second issue of The Perspective come out together for the first time. This was a convenient arrangement because the RSAC Secretary (who was responsible for the Handbook) and the newsletter Editor could work together over the summer getting the combined issue ready for when the freshmen arrived in September. This seemed to work out quite well for 1993-94 and its continuation was recommended. It was suggested that the third issue come out in mid-October, the fourth (Christmas/exam edition) in late November, and the fifth in early to mid-February of the new calendar year (i.e., just before the new RSAC took over).

It was in the areas of The Perspective representatives and meetings that the organizational demands of putting out the newsletter became most apparent. There was one rep elected for every RA in the Speechly/Taché complex. The rep was chosen by each floor, usually by the second week in September.

The reps were responsible for attending all Perspective meetings (by proxy, if necessary), putting up posters on their respective floors/halls, helping with the layout of the newsletter (including typing if they could be cajoled into doing it), picking up the printed copies of the newsletter from the Editor to distribute to their respective floors/halls, making sure they got the exact number that they needed (one per person, not one per room, so that they did not end up with too few or too many), and being nice to the Editor and calling him/her by any nickname that s/he desired, such as “Master,” or “Boss,” or … “Pookie.”

The Editor set up the Perspective meetings whenever it was important to have them. The Churchill Room was a good place to have meetings as long as it did not conflict with the
RSAC meetings. The first meeting in September was a good opportunity to let the new reps know exactly what The Perspective was all about and what kinds of submissions they should be encouraging from their floor members. Taking back-issues as “exhibits” to the first meeting gave the reps some idea of what they might aim for.

Other than that, the meetings could be used to let the reps know upcoming deadlines, what to put on posters, discuss previous issues (what people liked, what they didn't), and suggestions to improve the quality of the newsletter. The reps could also be asked to do various assignments for each issue such as horoscopes, crossword puzzles, or feature articles that pertained to Residence or that at least would be of interest to the Residence population.

Censorship was pretty much at the discretion of the Editor. A basic philosophy was to stay away from anything sexist, racist, or homophobic, and printing phone numbers was ill-advised unless it was absolutely clear whose number it was and that they knew that their number was going to be printed. Either the RSAC President or the VP Services would also look over the newsletter before it went to the printshop, and they had the ultimate say in what got censored. Controversy stimulated interest, and one did not want to play it too safe by printing a boring magazine that got thumbed through and was immediately forgotten. On the other hand, there were obvious deficits in printing a magazine that got someone kicked out of Rez, or the University, or the country!

The UMSU Printshop was a very convenient option for cranking out The Perspective. A good off-campus alternative was Derksen Printers in Steinbach, certainly in terms of price. The Manitoban was also printed through Derksens, and it was expedient to have both The Perspective’s camera-ready artwork and that of The Manitoban picked up together at The Toban office. Derksens then printed up the newsletter and had it dropped off right at the Speechly/Taché Office two days later. Otherwise, drop-off and pick-up times could be arranged directly with the printer independently of The Manitoban’s schedule.

Content-wise, photographs were eschewed because they could be expensive. The printers could reproduce both colour and B&W photos, but they cost around $10 each to get a photo to actually look like one and not just a photocopy. Photographs definitely added to the look of the end-product and made it more readable and interesting; the trick was not to get too carried away. The only exception to this was the Freshie Handbook that pretty well had to have mug shots of the RAs, the SRAs, the HRs, and all of the members of the RSAC.

Fundraising for The Perspective was always a good idea, since a productive enterprise can never have too much money. A formal letter to give to businesses, and simply talking to people and letting them know what The Perspective was about and who read it, were effective ways of gaining advertising dollars. Both on- and off-campus businesses were solicited, and pizza joints especially were usually willing to advertise in Residence since the Resbians gave them so much business! The average cost of producing 600 copies of a 32-page issue was about $600, and five full-page ads would cover half of the printing cost.

Recreational Diversions

The fall and winter programming that followed the commencement of the school year included some new things: a “Rez Wars Paintball Clash” between Speechly/Taché and University College Residence, and movie nights at the new Cinema 8 venue at the nearby Southwood Mall.

The ever-popular socials and beer bashes were still on, as were the Raft Race, 24-hour Sports Marathon, barbecues in the back yard, in-house sports events, floor suppers, Variety Night, Casino Night, inter-floor events, and a “Safe Spring Break”
program, geared to ensuring survival from the annual mid-winter interlude for those planning to travel. Sex-Ed seminars (especially for the frosh) were on the agenda, too.

For a rather curious happening, called the “Stick-'Em-to-the-Wall” competition, we unfortunately do not have a thorough description—at least not for the Speechly/Taché version of it—that began back in 1993-94. However, background historical research tells us that such events were fundraisers that comprised binding a human being to a wall using strips of duct tape. Presumably, a strip of tape would cost a certain amount of money. How long the stickee was left stuck to the wall could vary, and what may have happened (if anything) to the vulnerable individual while in the stuck position is equally nebulous.

Other diversions that elude understanding if you weren't there included a trip to the DarkZone Lazertag Arena, the mysterious horizontal bungee event, and a movie night/sleepover in the “haunted” Auditorium. Maybe better not to ask.

OK, OK, what do you do with
(a) a scene from *Gone With The Wind*,
(b) in a small town in Saskatchewan,
(c) a yellow rain slicker, and
(d) a chocolate cake?

Improvise, that’s what! And in December 1995, the Residence students staged their own improv in Pembina Hall, complete with cash bar (natch). Floors entered teams of two or three people, with a round-robin playoff to ultimately determine the Res Improv Team of the Century (or at least of 1995).

For the more intellectually inclined, plans were afoot for an academic support program with special study groups, tutorial sessions, study skills workshops, and essay-writing seminars. The RAs would continue to offer programs that appealed to small groups (e.g., trips to the opera or theatre). Then, when the young scholars went home for Christmas, people they had known all their lives would point at them and wonder, “Gee, who is that emotionally-sound, well-adjusted, self-assured, intellectual giant? How can I be like him/her?”

Ever mindful of the need to disabuse the public’s “animal house” stereotype of the residence lifestyle, and to carry them out just because it was the right thing to do, the RSAC continued to sponsor charitable events like the Big Sister/Big Brother fundraiser in cooperation with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and radio station 92 Citi FM, and the volunteer-driven Child Find—an organization that aided families in the search for missing children.

Resident students participated in the White Ribbon campaign—a campus week-long program...
aimed at heightening awareness about violence against women. This included a memorial service in University Centre for the victims of the 1989 Montreal Massacre, wherein Resident students were encouraged to show their respect by tying their ribbons to a snow fence that stood in front of Taché Hall.

Boosters and Boostettes

By the 1990s, post-regular-session programming had long been a going concern at the U of M. During these warm-season interludes, the Residences were not only domiciles for the attendees but the in-house facilities also served as venues for some of the programming itself. A notable initiative during this decade was called “Boost,” an orientation program established for high school graduates who were planning on entering the University in the fall. The basic idea was to help soon-to-be freshmen get their university careers off to a good start by learning skills that would help them succeed, meet future classmates, find their way around, and eliminate some of the strangeness typically associated with first year on campus.

Each Boost function ran over a day and a half and included an Ice-Breaker whereby the participants could get to know each other, and sessions on decision-making and problem-solving, university registration by telephone, note-taking and study skills (including exam preparation and time management), and organizing one’s life. Most of these sessions took place in Club Condo. A tour of the campus, and usually a sample lecture by a real live professor in the Tier or Isbister Building, rounded off the instructional schedule.

In 1995, the RSAC issued Volume I of a newsletter titled News & Views. In it, we are informed that a program similar to Boost was available to all new Resbians (in fact it had been as far back as 1988). Titled “New Resident Orientation,” it was available for a $75 fee to all incoming novices to Residence Life and was tailor-made to help them get settled before classes started. It afforded the opportunity to move in a bit early, meet other Resident students (including...
one’s RA), have a tour of the place and attend a program designed to prepare them for some of the personal and academic challenges that awaited them during the upcoming year. Included were sessions on decision-making, problem-solving, study skills, and residence-living. On the social side, there was the crowd-pleasing riverboat cruise and other recreational delights.

“Point” People

By the beginning of the 1990s, the demand for accommodation in the Speechly/Taché complex was outstripping the number of rooms available. Each year, hundreds of first-year students had to be turned down. At the same time, it had to be explained to an increasing number of current students why the system was unable to accommodate all of those who wished to return.

In order to balance the needs of applicants with the stated mission of the Residence, the Residence Admissions Committee devised a formula. The 40 percent of the space in Residence reserved for returning students would be allocated on the basis of points. The number of points assigned to an applicant was the total of:

- Current GPA
- Years in Residence: 3 points after 1 year, 2 points after 2 years, 1 point after 3 years, 0 points after 4 or more years
- Contribution to Residence: 5, 3, 1, or 0 points for contributing to the quality of life of Speechly/Taché

The declining-years-in-Residence scoring was intended to work in conjunction with the Contribution scale to ensure that those who contributed to Residence living and sense of community were eligible to return, while at the same time discouraging those who viewed Residence more as a self-serving convenience.

Let’s take a moment and review the Contribution criteria, because they spell out the values and ideals deemed desirable for a Residence lifestyle. They also define the types of people who have characterized the Residence population (not counting the *bona fide* malefactors) that existed over the years, based on experience.

- The **0-Point person** may not have been involved in any activities that resulted in disciplinary action, but such a person did not really respect the regulations of Residence or the facility itself, and may have attended Residence functions but was not a positive contributor (e.g., left garbage in the hall or lounge, broke Quiet Hours, or violated the open liquor rule, etc). Generally, 0 Point people were a conspicuous annoyance.
- The **1-Point person** was a less-than-average contributor. This person enjoyed living in Residence for the convenience and friendships it offered and was generally cooperative and respected the rights of others, in addition to holding a respect for the building and facilities. S/he was a responsible person who observed the rules and regulations of Residence, and occasionally participated in social and recreational events. Although the 1 Point person didn’t really cause any problems, s/he did not contribute much to Residence and you probably would not have noticed if s/he was gone for a while.
- The **3-point Person** was an above-average Resident and fitted the description of the 1 Point person, but was somewhat more involved in Residence or campus life. This individual might have been helpful to the floor or the Resident Assistant in various ways (helping to plan and organize events, assisting people with homework, directing others to the proper resources, etc). On occasion, s/he may have also been involved in the planning of Residence-wide activities and events. This was a really nice person to have around!
- The **5-point Person** was a superior contributor to Residence life and fitted the criteria of the 1 and 3 Point person, but stood out because of extensive involvement within the Residence or University community. Examples of 5 Point person were one who may have been a member of the student government, or who was involved in a planning committee of some sort, or who set a superior example for others to follow. S/he was the kind of person one would be proud to take home to meet the folks.
The academic year 1996-97 saw the introduction of a short-lived newsletter called *Residence Review*. The intention was to keep the students informed about issues of security, recent noteworthy developments in Rez, and programming of upcoming events that affected Residents as the year progressed. Prominent were reminders about deadlines and routines that had to be attended to from month-to-month, and at year’s end when people were leaving. For those planning to return for the next academic year, special arrangements had to be made prior to departure and these were promulgated as well.

Three years later, the coverage and content of the newsletter was expanded to include University College Residence as well. It would appear that this publication evolved into a successor called *Reside*.

**The Flood of the Century**

In 1997, the Red River Valley experienced the Flood of the Century. As floodwaters breached riverbanks and rushed toward their homes, thousands of people needed to be evacuated. As the flood became imminent in late April, it was apparent that space would be required in the Residences on campus for flood evacuees and their families.

Consequently, rooms were prepared quickly as soon as students left, and remaining students were asked to return home right after their academic commitments were over. In early May, after exams and the Residence move-out, almost 700 flood evacuees checked into residences on campus, Speechly/Taché included.

Garth Wannan, the Director of Housing & Student Life at the time, was also an evacuee from LaSalle, MB and lived in Taché Hall during the flood. Through his efforts, the Department published a daily newsletter to inform the visiting evacuees about available facilities and important events, like movie nights, concerts, counselling services, etc. Family pets were allowed with the understanding that owners would act responsibly with controlling and cleaning up after their animals.

Fortunately, Winnipeg proper did not flood that year as it had in 1950. This was due to the Floodway surrounding the city. Manitobans are grateful to the vision and foresight of Charles Dufferin Roblin, the Manitoba Premier who spearheaded the project—now fondly called “Duff’s Ditch.”

After the flood, thank-you cards decorated the offices of Housing & Student Life, and one grateful St. Norbert evacuee wrote:

*Thank you a million times over. You’ve made our stay during the flood so comfortable. We sure picked the best staff and place in Winnipeg to stay.*

**More Fun and Frolic … and Culture Too**

Off-campus venues to which Residence students could repair for some cultural stimulus included the Winnipeg Symphony and the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre. The “Rez Night at the Symphony” included a cash bar. Transportation was provided to “Mardi Jazz” at the Centre Culturel, and admission was free. If there was a particularly good film showing at a downtown cinema, people could attend as a group along with their very own RA tour guide. The Assiniboine Zoo, the Royal
Winnipeg Ballet, the *Festival du Voyageur*, and the Manitoba Theatre Centre were other off-campus venues where specially-organized groups of Residence students went to help make their experiential world a happy place.

A five-day “Coldest-Day-of-the-Year” Festival had been inaugurated in the spring term of 1994, and this program carried through during the latter half of the decade. Snow soccer, snow football, a snow sculpture contest, a scavenger hunt, and wind-up activities combined to take the bite out of the Winnipeg February.

Rezorama was still a going concern, but its format was noticeably different from what it was in earlier years: still a five-day event celebrating the many different cultures represented by the Resbians, its venue now focused on Pembina Hall. A “Where Are You From” map and a flag display were visible during mealtimes, which themselves featured ethnic foods—e.g., Ukrainian, Mexican, English, Italian, and Chinese.

Club Condo was the setting for movies (*Canadian Bacon*, *Monty Python's Quest for the Holy Grail*, *Braveheart*, *Rumble in the Bronx*) that had a more-or-less cultural/historical theme. The fifth and final day—at least of the 1998 rendition of Rezorama—was marked by cultural and religious booths in Pembina Hall during supper hours, and attendance by those interested at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s performance of *Giselle*.

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The Grunge Ninties 1990 – 1999

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The Residents are intent on their game of “tug-a-war,” and this side is determined to win.

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The Gang’s All Here

On April 1, 1998, the University College Residence became part of the Housing & Student Life family. It provided additional accommodation for 245 students, and although the Residence was farther away from the Speechly/Taché complex, UC students soon began to fit into the Residence Life programming that was available.

In the meantime, Taché Hall furniture wasn’t so new anymore, but Speechly furniture was being recovered and carpet (which did not lend itself to regular water fights) was being laid in the lounges.
The Games

In the summer of 1999, an event came to pass that had an enormous impact on the Residence: athletes from 41 countries competed at the Pan American Games in Winnipeg from July 23 to August 8, with individuals from 26 of those countries housed at the U of M “Athletes Village.” A portion of the Athletes Village included Taché Hall, Mary Speechly Hall, University College Residence, St. Andrew’s College, and St. John’s College.

From the early stages of the bid process the Residences were involved with the Games:
- numerous tours were arranged for Pan Am and sports officials who wished to inspect the facilities prior to the Games being awarded;
- sample rooms were specially outfitted to demonstrate how they would appear during the event;
- and the Residences assisted with the production of videos and other promotional material related to winning the bid.

Once the Games were secured, the Residences worked closely with Pan Am staff to develop detailed standards of accommodation, to determine precisely how many individuals could be accommodated, and to identify areas requiring renovation or upgrade. Renovation plans were initiated approximately three years before the start of the Games with major work beginning about 18 months later. Projects included replacing flooring (both carpet and tile), complete repainting of all buildings, replacing furniture in lounges, upgrades to plumbing, replacing beds and making improvements to washrooms. Approximately $1.7 million was spent upgrading the facilities, with $1 million contributed by Pan Am.

The legacy of the financial contributions from the Pan American Society to upgrade the U of M Residences was one that benefitted students in the years to follow.

Residences which normally housed approximately 950 students were re-configured to accommodate approximately 3,500 athletes, coaches, and officials. In general, single rooms became doubles, and doubles became quads.

Which teams stayed in Taché Hall?
- Antigua – 3rd East
- Columbia – 1st East
- Costa Rica – 2nd East
- Ecuador – 4th East
- Peru – 4th East
- USA – all floors
- Uruguay – 3rd East
- Virgin Islands – 4th West

The Canadian team is being welcomed by Brian MacPherson, Deputy Mayor. The Canadians did not stay in Taché, but rather in University College Residence.

During the games, a long fence was secured around the Athletes Village and all accredited staff, faculty, and students had to enter the Athletes Village showing their accreditation badges. A total of 2,200 volunteers, campus-wide, worked together to make the athletes’ experience a memorable one.

The USA Pan Am team was housed in Taché Hall and because they were such a large group, their stay involved the entire building while they were there.
Your Basic Candy Cane, and Other Goodies

The Residence charitable events continued apace during the 1990s, with, for example, the “Bed Race for AIDS” and a “Candy-O-Grams” event for the benefit of Child and Family Services raising $142 and $233.31, respectively in 1999. A candy-o-gram was a candy cane with a Christmas message (e.g., “Merry Christmas” or “Here is a candy cane,” etc.) attached to it and sent to a friend or someone on one’s floor. There was a booth in Pembina Hall where one could fill out a message card that would then be delivered with a candy cane to an individual of choice.

Canadian Buddies

A program that was long in coming was the “Canadian Buddies” system that commenced in the fall of 1999. Canadian Resident students were matched with foreign students so that cultural exchange could take place between the buddies. The benefits were mutual, especially for the international students living in a new country. In the inaugural set-up, 54 Canadians were matched with 72 international students.

Monty’s March

As far back as the early 1990s, the Residence students would gather during Freshie Orientation Week to make the trek to the Montcalm Hotel on Pembina Highway. This hotel was the closest watering hole at the time, and the older Resbians felt they owed it to the frosh to lead the way to a good time. Once University College Residence joined the Speechly/Taché family, they, too, were included in Monty’s March.

■ The map that the Residents used to walk from Speechly/Taché to the closest pub on Pembina Hwy—the Montcalm Hotel, or Monty’s. University College Residence also did the Monty’s March.

■ Freshie Month calendar at University College Residence. Notice the Monty’s March on September 14th.

■ And away they go ... off to Monty’s for a few suds!
The Auditorium balcony. The oak balustrade has been covered and painted white to match the large pillars. The wonderful detail at the ceiling is still very evident.
Memories of the 1990s

Memorable Events of the Year (1990)

At the beginning of this decade, one was not oblivious to the Internet. I can still remember the novelty factor of this new means of entertainment and having gross-out contests with my friends to see who could find the most disgusting images on the web (some things never change). Here are some memories of Taché Hall and those who called it home for a few years of their early adulthood.

- The “gross” gifts left for the men of 3rd & Long.
- Colour Night with [BC].
- A friendly hello & one hell of a goodbye to the Lord Selkirk.
- Tucker moves in, Tucker moves out, Tucker moves in. …
- Torch finally gets off RSAC.
- Parties on 4th East.
- Farm animals on the Far Side (other than [W] & [B]).
- Awesome trip to the Agassiz Alps (nice wipe-out by the Baron).
- Hot-pot sh*t-showers.
- Shaker pukes in the 1st East water fountain.
- The “East Sucks” banner hanging from the windows, shown to all of campus.
- Floor hockey party in Bubba’s room.
- [DT] gets tubbed by girls.
- The fiery romance between [B] & [S] gets extinguished (on her neck).
- Nothing happened in Speechly, AGAIN!
- The city police being called to Speechly/Taché for quite an array of complaints.

What were the “gross” gifts left for the men of 3rd & Long? These gals look like they’re up to no good!

The rivalry between East and West takes on major dimensions.
Publicity (1990)

Publicity can be a many splendored thing. It has the notorious ability to either make or break. For a time back in 1990 the corridors of our Residence were echoing with voices of discontent after the Winnipeg Free Press had printed an article on October 28, 1990, titled “Scared Co-ed Wants Residence Animal Act Halted.” In light of that publicity, our Rez got a pretty rough ride, and no one in the ’hood was amused, myself included. Speechly/Taché quickly became a hotbed concerning sexual harassment. Other media flocked to our Residence like flies to honey in an effort to investigate allegations surrounding this issue.

In retrospect, the female student who had voiced her grievances could not be condemned—she was well within her rights to air her complaints. As in any case, however, there were two sides to the issue, and thanks to freedom of speech, expression, and the press, a number of Resbians did make their positions known on TV or by writing letters to the editor in the Winnipeg Free Press and The Manitoban. Personally, I felt that the newspaper article was a gross misrepresentation of our Residence, and even though a more balanced follow-up article was published shortly afterwards, it was the first one that left the deepest impression.

I had higher expectations of the Free Press than what was printed. For one thing, the sensational headline carried a vague meaning. What exactly was the journalist trying to get across by his use of the term “animal act”? That was the sort of thing I’d have expected when looking at the tabloid rack at the supermarket. Who’s to say whether the Free Press would have carried a follow-up article had it not been for ticked off Residents in Speechly/Taché expressing outrage at the negative media coverage?

When the general public got wind of such “information,” Residents as a whole were immediately cast into the same mold. Sad to say, that’s how human nature works. One student wrote to the Letters to the Editor section of the Winnipeg Free Press expressing her dismay at the slur this put on the image of all Resident students, and she, personally, was going to graduate as a teacher that spring and this could hurt her job prospects.

Unfortunately the damage had been done and the image probably persisted. It brought to mind the “soup can” analogy: no matter how much of the label you tear off, there’s always some little piece of paper or glue left on the can.

Storming the Lege (1990)

At the time, I looked on it as a party. It was unique because it was productive; unlike a Rez social, something good had been gained for U of M students. The event in question was the 1990 FIGHT UNDER-FUNDING rally at the Manitoba Legislature.

Upon hearing about the rally, I thought that it sounded interesting. UMSU said we were under-funded. Going to the rally would give me a chance to hear the government’s side of the story. But I only wanted to go if some of my hall mates would go too. Five of us (18 percent of our entire hall) ended up going to the Oak Room to assemble with other Rez people. From there, it was on to the Administration Building to join up with the out-of-Rez crowd. As it turned out, Res was the U of M student representation. A few speeches at the Admin steps and it was time to board the buses.

A slight hold-up was getting everyone edgy. A guy went to the front of the bus and said we would be leaving in three and a half minutes. Not three minutes. Not four. Three and a half. Sure enough three and a half
minutes later, the buses left. Once at the U of W campus, we unloaded from our buses to join the mass of students who had collected scant yards from Portage Avenue. The already-arrived students from U of Brandon, U of Winnipeg and St. Boniface College dwarfed the U of M (mostly Rez) contingent.

A poor effort by our University! A few chants were recited and off we went—down Portage Avenue, halting traffic, making noise, and generally gaining attention. Taking a right at Memorial, we headed south towards the Legislature, chanting the whole way.

At the Lege we continued shouting different chants, including “FIL-MON” and our favourite “What do we want—When do we need it.” Then the speeches: Len Derkach spoke first, but it was hard to understand him with all the booing and jeering that went on. When Dave Chomiak, the NDP’s Education critic spoke, he attacked the government, saying an education was a right, not a privilege. The Liberal speaker was hilarious and certainly not as tyrannical as the socialist NDP rep was. But before the Liberal spokesman could finish, all hell broke loose. What had started as a few people muttering “Storm the Lege” had turned into loud cries. Everyone looked at each other, and as soon as we had enough confidence in ourselves as a group, all it took was one signal. Then we stormed the Lege.

It was the emotional high-point of the rally. People were going nuts. No thinking involved, just reaction. Once through the doors, we scrambled up the stairs of the main centre block. The security men in the reception area just stood back and watched. Students filled the second and third floor balconies of the centre block. The acoustics were incredible and increased the decibel level of the students. Then after 10 minutes everyone assembled in the main stairwell area for a sit-in. The sit-in was a one-hour-plus smorgasbord of speakers, chanting, and good old-fashioned protesting. Around 3:30 pm the student Presidents came out from Filmon’s office.

In the end, we left with a hollow feeling. The power we felt and transmitted to the higher level of our democratically governing body had not given us the definite feedback we wanted. All Filmon had “promised” was a later meeting. No definite date, just “later.” Most felt it was not a good place to start from. But looking back, the good things I immediately think of are: cutting class, meeting Elijah (“If you guys don’t have the balls to stand up to the government, I will”) Harper, and having a good time. We may not have gotten even our most minimal demand, but the exercise certainly wasn’t a waste of time. We got across a voice—something to remind our leaders that there were people out there. The rally was certainly no Timisoara or Tiananmen, but it was the same basic idea: we had something to say, we were going to say it, and we did.

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The Bee-Line Mentality, or, Keep Off the Grass
(1990)

First, the general theory: The “bee-line mentality” is a human phenomenon that has never evolved out of our complex minds. It doesn’t fit in very well with our cosmopolitan society because, on account of it, we violate laws and by-laws every day to save a couple of seconds transiting from A to B. It serves us well when selecting highway routes to get us over great distances without going hundreds of kilometres out of our way; however, people still employ it unnecessarily when crossing a street without going to the nearest crosswalk. A certain number of beelineers are killed every year as they are struck down by surprised motorists.

And now, the specific: The Quad wasn’t in any way part of the Taché property, but it was eminently conspicuous to those of us who lived in the building. It formed the spacious northern approaches to the place, and was the setting for many freshie rites de passage and numerous outdoor recreational and
The Quad formed the spacious northern approaches to Taché Hall and was the setting for many freshie rites de passage and numerous outdoor recreational and entertainment activities for Resident students down through the years.

The well-being of the Quad had long been an ongoing concern. Ugly discoloured criss-crossing streaks were created in winter by people walking on it and creating trails in the underlying turf. By spring it was a mess again. The bee-liners were saving themselves 10 to 15 seconds by walking across, instead of around, “our” lawn.

So at the beginning of the 1990 school year, the grass was untainted and fresh following the recent renewal project, but it wasn’t even there for two weeks before there was a fence around it. Without knowing the reason, we felt disappointed and outraged after seeing a new lawn put in, only to have it fenced off and out of reach. Many of us felt like we were being treated like a community of vandals.

The Administration never wanted to keep the students off the Quad; they just wanted the grass to have a chance to flourish. So they decided that during the winter months, the maintenance crew would put up a snow fence around the Quad, forcing the students to walk around it on the provided sidewalks. Once the snow had melted and the grass had a chance to establish itself, the snow fence was removed and was ready for the students to use in the summer and into the fall for events like beer fests, orientation, touch football, catch, etc.

The Balcony Bear (1992)

Many events from my school days came to mind. Some I can repeat and others well, maybe not! I was in the Faculty of Education from 1991–1993 and was fortunate enough to live at University College Residence on the fifth floor. They were the best two years of my Life!

One very cold night, the fifth floor gang decided to play a prank on neighbouring Taché Hall. What could we take that they would really miss? Definitely, taking their large snow sculpture of a polar bear would cause a stir. All that was required was a hacksaw, and someone had one (go figure!). Before we knew it, the polar bear was in two large pieces coming up the elevator of University College Residence and was reassembled on the fifth floor balcony.

A photo of the “balcony bear” made the cover of The Manitoban, but the culprits have yet to be named.

Residence Life was never boring!

Christmas Cheer Board Fundraisers (1993)

Back in the fall of 1993, we put on a couple of events to raise money for the Christmas Cheer Board. The first was an eating contest sponsored by Burger King. The idea was to get 10 teams (we ended up with eight) of five players each. There was an entry cost of $5 per team. Each team member had to eat one entire Whopper and drain one drink before the next person on the team would be allowed to start. The fastest team to finish all the food was the winner. The contest went well, and we
managed to sell left-over Whoppers and drinks for a dollar each. Prizes were given to the first- and second-place teams, which were Keg certificates donated by the Assistant Director of Housing & Student Life.

The day after the eating contest we put on an “aerobathon.” This project didn’t work out as well as we had hoped. The idea was to have three hours of aerobics led by three different instructors, with 15 minutes in between each hour. Instead, because of cancellations by instructors, we managed to get only two of them for just two hours. They were from private fitness businesses. In addition, participation turnout (12 to 15 individuals) was less than expected. Prizes were purchased rather than solicited because Casino Night was soliciting at the same time. Juices and oranges were donated by Pembina Hall, and T-shirts provided by the RSAC went to the instructors and to the person who had the most money in pledges.

One Man’s Opinion (1993)

I recall a time when I was sitting in a friend’s room, discussing the duties and job description of a Resident Assistant. An RA himself, he pulled out a list of the people on his floor with an Office memo attached. He was being called upon to go over this list, check off the names of people whom he didn’t think should be allowed back into Rez, and return it to the Office. He went on to explain that the Office had decided that the best way to tone down Rez was to get rid of the “troublemakers,” and the best way to get rid of them was to ask a panel of people to veto any potentially troublemaking returnees.

The directive was ambiguous. What was, and was not, a troublemaker? Was s/he someone who’d ever stolen a dish from Pembina Hall? Anyone who’d been overly intoxicated? Was the intent to convert Residence into a nice, quiet monastery? It was all well and good to keep the serious troublemakers out—the people who caused property damage and other sorts of malicious misdemeanors. Those were serious violations and I don’t think anybody who called the place home for eight months would have lost any sleep over getting rid of people who were destroying it. I’m talking about the people who just liked to have a good, possibly slightly rambunctious time, during study breaks.

The people who were drawing this kind of attention had requested a high social-interaction area to live in. Everybody else in that area had requested the same thing. Anyone they could possibly be disturbing had accepted the fact that there would be a high level of social interaction in their part of Residence. Anybody who was going overboard in their social interaction probably wasn’t getting much schoolwork done and weren’t likely to be invited back by their faculty anyway.

The persons expected to carry out the listing of troublemakers, the RAs, were given sole power of recommendation for their respective floors. They would recommend, then the Office would consider, and then action would or would not be taken. The RAs were chosen for being responsible, intelligent people capable of making decisions. But they weren’t perfect, and they were just as susceptible to personal grudges, bad moods, and making mistakes as the rest of us. Any number of intangible factors could have affected a decision at any given time; I, too, had been a Resident
Assistant, and I would have been very hesitant to trust myself with that kind of responsibility; it was other people’s lives we were playing with.

So the policy was crappy, but I took it for granted that our responsible RAs would realize that and ignore the Office’s request for him to identify who didn’t get to come back in our hall.

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**Stories from the Crypt (1993)**

Once had to wait in the Taché Residence Auditorium before an exam. It seemed like an innocent enough place, but Taché myth had it that a student committed suicide from the balcony up above. Having heard that one, the Auditorium never seemed the same to me again. Apparently in the early days of the University, a young student, distraught over a lost love, hanged himself before the regular morning prayers. And the story goes that his spirit has never rested: the ghost continued to haunt the Auditorium and, not surprisingly, some very strange things have happened to students who have dared to taunt the troubled spectre.

This, or a variation on it, is the most commonly-known campus ghost story. Another version, if not a separate story altogether, has a soldier haunting the Auditorium. Taché Hall housed soldiers during training for World War II, and while the superior officers would surely have known if a trainee suicide had taken place, it’s also quite likely that the military would have covered up such an egregious event. Anyway, let’s imagine a young man reluctantly on his way to war. He realizes that if he goes, his fiancée will leave him; she can’t handle the stress of wondering whether he will live or die. But he can’t live without her, so he kills himself. Perhaps his fiancée was on her way to the camp to tell her beloved that she has changed her mind [Editor’s note: her access to this heavily-restricted military facility would have been highly unlikely]. But alas it’s too late and of course his spirit has not rested since.

One way to get contact with the dead is to have a séance, and apparently Taché had its fair share of them. A former student and Residence member told me of a time when he and some friends held a late-night séance. Nothing happened during the séance itself, but afterwards a daring couple managed to climb their way up to the dome. Apparently when they leaned to look outside the window a hand came out of nowhere and grabbed the woman’s arm. Spooky!

But here is an even more bone-chilling tale. Chris Rutkowski, writer of *Manitoba Mysteries* and a local ghost-guru, told us of a group of Taché students during the mid-1970s who were playing with a Ouija board. During the game, a knife fell out of the cupboards, landed on the floor and started spinning around on its own accord, eventually stopping to point at one of the group. The next day the fellow died in an accident. Coincidence?

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**Scandalous Behaviour (1995)**

In January of 1995, a bus trip to Scandals Fun Club was organized for the Rez guys by a member of West House Committee. Transportation was provided by Scandals for an afternoon of “female entertainment.” The event was poorly attended and no money was paid by West House in support of it, but I was incensed. I didn’t presume to make a moral comment about the strippers; the women who worked at Scandals had the right to do as they pleased, and it was not my place to judge them or their actions. I also couldn’t argue with the guys’ choice to visit the club for “an afternoon of female entertainment.”

However, as a female Resident of a co-ed House, I did have every right to criticize any elected official who promoted events that were exclusive and segregating. Promoting a “guys only” event without any consideration for the women students was unacceptable. We represented one-third of the population of West House and the numbers were rising every year. The men could no longer ignore that we existed.

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*A bus trip to Scandals Fun Club was organized for the Rez guys. However, a female Resident criticized any elected official who promoted a “guys only” event.*
Placing posters in the men’s washrooms “to rez guys” and providing transportation to the club implied that the event was run by West House and that it was not simply a casual afternoon for a group of friends. This event was supposedly just a bunch of buddies going to the bar; yet a group of Residents were provided with free transportation by Scandals. As I saw it, an elected official had used his position for personal advantage; I was dubious that a business like Scandals would provide this kind of service for just anyone. When the club manager was contacted he said that this service was rare and was usually only given in certain cases, such as trips from Residence. That indicated to me that someone in authority was responsible for the trip.

By the time I had made Taché Hall my home, student self-government and co-ed residence were firmly established on the premises. For all that, there was still plenty of room for improvement.

Kick-Ass (1996)

By the mid-1990s, everything good about Taché was “kick-ass.” That was the operative word. There were kick-ass beer bashes, kick-ass sports programs, and kick-ass snacks in Condo. We had a kick-ass RSAC, kick-ass RAs, kick-ass trips to the Monty, and a kick-ass bar manager. Second Floor East was totally kick-ass. Some things were not kick-ass—the food in Pembina Hall, for example.

We had a kick-ass magazine called **The Perspective**, and everything in it was 100 percent kick-ass. Here’s an excerpt from my treasured 1995-96 souvenir **Frosh Handbook** edition:

**Dear Frosh, if you can read this letter, you are missing the whole concept of Frosh Month. Right now you should be looking for a honey (male, female, or whatever) preferably with a car and NOT from your floor. If you are not doing this, it should be because you are passed out or so hung [over] from the night or nights before that you can’t even move or speak. But this is no excuse to stop drinking. There is only one reason to stop drinking … no money (but that’s what mommy and daddy are for!).

NEWSFLASH! Rez nights will be regular. Trips to Scandals [strip joint] will be regular. Rez socials will be regular. Sports tournaments will be regular. 7th Floor [Speechly] pre-parties will be regular. To see [“Bob” and “Rob”] drunk at all of these will be regular.**

It was indeed a kick-ass life style.

For all we knew, we might even have been attending a kick-ass university, but the record is generally silent on that score.

Start of a Hobby! (1996)

In 1996, I was living on campus at the University of Manitoba in Taché Hall. I was stranded like a few other students during reading week (spring break) because I couldn’t afford to go anywhere. As luck would have it, I got my income tax rebate two weeks after reading week was over and wanted to do something fun for some friends. I got the idea in my head from somewhere and wanted to follow through with it. I went to a nearby florist and purchased three-dozen red roses. Thirty were to be wrapped individually each with a card “From your secret admirer!” The other six were wrapped in pairs for specific friends, “From your secret admirer!” And then another dozen roses for the ladies in the mailroom with a note explaining what was to be done. I asked them to put them in random mailboxes, but to give some to guys to throw people off the scent!
It worked out amazingly well and the reactions were awesome. The first young woman to walk into Pembina Hall (cafeteria) was normally a very quiet and shy gal. She walked in with her tray in one hand and flower in the other and yelled out, “I HAVE A SECRET ADMIRER!” The place went silent for a few seconds. When a second girl walks in and does the same, the sudden silence was followed by a buzz of questions about what was going on. It was the same for each of the next few girls that walked into the room. When Jeff, a friend who got one, came in and yelled, “I HAVE A SECRET ADMIRER!” the room exploded with questions like, “What’s going on, nine girls have a secret admirer and now a guy?” “Who’s doing this?” “What’s going on?” It was all really cool. A friend who got two roses was sitting at my table, but she hadn’t opened her package until some students from around us coaxed her into it. Her eyes lit up as she opened her package and with an ear-to-ear smile said, “My secret admirer gave me two roses!” and then the flurry of questions went crazy. ...

It was the best-kept secret for all of two months until one day Jen, one of the girls who got two roses, came up and kissed me on the cheek and said, “Thank you my secret admirer!” My playing dumb didn’t work. She said, “My aunt owns the flower shop you bought them at!” I told her I was going there to get my tip back, as I told the florist it was a bribe for her not to say anything! I didn’t, but it was a pretty cool thing nonetheless!

After that, off and on I would go and buy flowers and give them to random strangers. The last few years it has been something I do more and more and in the last year it has become a weekly thing.

[Editor’s note: This story is on the Internet, but we just couldn’t pass it up (http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/pdf/Start-of-a-hobby.pdf)].

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The Ups and Downs of Condo (1997)

Club Condo provided many services to us Residence students beyond being just a canteen. It was home to Movie Nights, Hall Nights, the Sports Marathon, Rez Olympics, and other Residence events. The University and the Residence Administration used Club Condo space and equipment for Boost sessions and other Housing & Student Life activities. Condo was still open for a period of time in the summers to accommodate the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and other groups residing in Speechly/Taché; it was an important feature because these visiting groups counted on its being open for their use. It was an important money-maker for the Residence and the University.

During the 1990s, Condo was facing financial challenges. There was a noticeable decrease in numbers of in-house patrons, and the main reason for this wasn’t hard to fathom; TVs had been installed in every lounge throughout the Residence complex and people weren’t going down to Condo every time they wanted to watch a show. This had resulted in a decrease in sales and profit. Expenses in recent years had been higher than usual: a large cooler needed repair, the Lounge was painted, and the purchase of a new TV all made demands on the bottom line.

Even though Condo wasn’t seeing as many students each night as in the past, it didn’t mean that it wasn’t of value to the Residents of Speechly/Taché. It was important that the equipment be kept in good shape by replacing things one at a time. Club Condo provided enjoyment for all Residents and was an important feature of Speechly/Taché.

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Raft Race Adieu (1998)

In September 1998, the RSAC decided to cancel that year’s Red River Raft Race. There had been a change in management at the Winnipeg Harbour Master Office. The former management did not require small events such as the Red River Raft Race to obtain the legal permit that was required to hold any kind of race or regatta on the Red River. The new management had decided that for safety reasons any event to be held on the river had to be properly certified by obtaining a permit.

In order to receive a permit for an event such as the Red River Raft Race, RSAC would be required to obtain $250,000 in liability insurance, as well as having the event plan passed by the Canadian Coast Guard and ratified by the Federal Minister of Transport. Without a permit certified by the proper authorities, anyone hosting a race or regatta on the river would be in violation of current laws governing the use of the waterway for such events. The violation would include a court appearance and a fine set by the Crown.

When RSAC received notice of this information, we didn’t have enough time to get a permit for our race, as it usually took six to eight months. Nor did the RSAC have the means of acquiring the required liability insurance. Council also noted that each year there was less interest in this event, and 1998 was no exception; by the entry deadline only two teams had shown interest in entering rafts in the race. It was decided that in place of the raft race the Sports Committee would host a “build your own toboggan race” sometime in the New Year.

Although popular in the early 1990s, the Raft Races were cancelled in September 1998 due to permit issues and lack of interest on the part of Residents.