

## The University of Manitoba (War)Gaming Club: a history

I contacted Jonathan Penner, one of the founders of the club and he shared the following:

"Well, there was a group of guys who got together regularly before 1979 to play games, booking a room in the University Centre for the purpose. I joined that group not long after starting my studies at U of M in 1979. It would have been a year or so later that I convinced some of the others that we should apply to UMSU for recognition as a bona fide group. That got us an office space and even, IIRC, some funding. Laurence Gillespie was a big part of that, and Doug Stich designed the club logo. We bought some games and set up a bit of a lending library, and kept up the tradition of regularly booking rooms to get together and play games. Wingames grew out of that, as did at least a couple of rounds of "K\*A\*O\*S" (Killing As an Organized Sport),

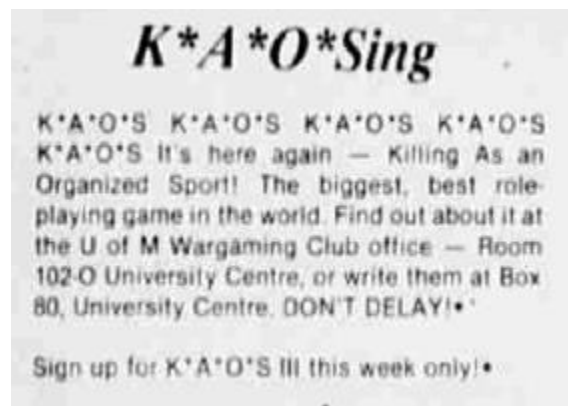
which was sweeping US campuses at that time.

Players I remember from the early days, in addition to Laurence, Doug, and you include Doug Shewfelt, Craig Russell, Darryl Adam, Jeff Neufeld, Arne Grimstrup, Tim Allen, Gordon Frances, Shurjeel Choudhri (and later his brother Omer), Neil Wyrchowny, Grant Morgan, Tim Lambert, and Martin Carter. I believe my buddy Jim Suderman came by occasionally as well, and Dick Jackson (who lives here in Victoria now) joined as a result of KAOS."

A copy of the [constitution](#) of the club came into my hands recently (April 2022) as did an early [blurb](#) describing the club. My best guess is that these both date to early 1980 or late 1979.



Figure 1 Photo of one of the lending library cards and pocket. Photo courtesy of Jon Penner.



### Killing As an Organized Sport

I have very vague memories of KAOS, or [Assassin](#) as it may be better known. It was fairly controversial and this third round may have been it for the game at the U of M.

As appeared in [The Manitoban September 21, 1981 p. 7](#)

Sometime between 1984 and 1985 the decision was made to drop the word war from the club's name.

## The Club Executive

Here's a partial list of the club executive over the years. It's based on surviving material. The year represents the school year of course, September to August perhaps?. Entries with ?? are possible executives.

Year	President	Vice-president	Secretary	Treasurer
1979-80	Jon Penner			
1980-81	Jon Penner			
1981-82	Doug Stich	Craig Russell?	Grant Morgan??	Jon Penner??
1982-83	Jon Penner			
1983-84	Randy Campbell			
1984-85		Arne Grimstrup		Darryl Adam
1985-86				
1986-87	Oliver Bernuetz	Ron Gregory	Arne Grimstrup (up to October 15 resigned and replaced by Daryl Atkinson)	Darryl Adam
1987-88				
1988		George Falconer		

The journal for the club from 1986-87 survives and has some interesting info in it like a list of the [executive](#) and a list of the [events](#) from win-games VII ("Worst yet. Made money").

1986 was also the year the club was robbed. The thief or thieves got our petty cash and a bunch of ancient miniatures. I remember talking to the police.

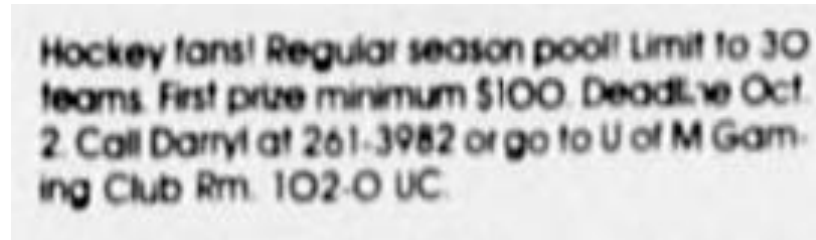
## Membership

Two member lists have survived, one from March 1980 and the other from 1987-87. While I don't want to offend anyone by associating them with wargaming I thought I could certainly share some statistics.

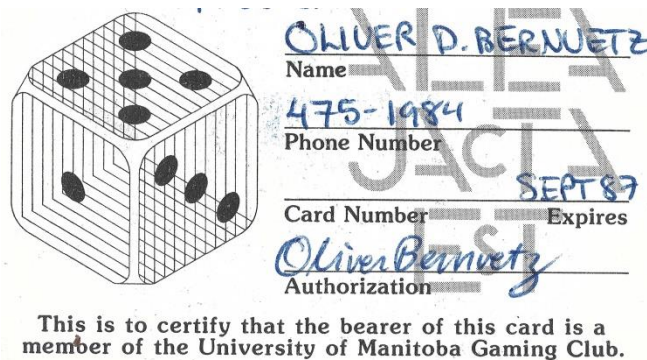
	As of March 1, 1980	1986-87
Total Members	29	42 (44)#
Male	29	41 (43)
Female	0	1*
Students	Probably all of them. Four list college dorms as residences.	38 (40)
On both lists.	NA	4
	As of March 1, 1980	1986-87

\* There are two Kellys listed who may or may not have been female.

# Oddly despite being president at the time and definitely being a student I'm not listed as a member. Probably because I wrote the list. The vice-president isn't on the list either. The numbers in the brackets include the president and vice-president.



It wasn't just board games, miniatures and card games. From [The Manitoban September 24, 1987 p. 2.](#)



This is my membership card designed I believe by Ron Gregory, who was serving as the vice-president at the time. I think the Latin motto, Alea jacta est, or the "die is cast" was my idea.

## The End

For years the University of Manitoba Students Union (UMSU) had had a serious space problem. Too many student groups and not enough office space. For a few years they had been running advertisements in The Manitoban like the one on the following page from [The Manitoban March 03, 1986 p. 6.](#)

Note that the Gaming Club, as it was now known did not share office space. This was because no one wanted to share space with us. We were far too noisy and numerous. Originally we did have a roommate but I can't recall who it might have been. The prospect of noisy people playing cards all the time may have put people off.

Sometime after the 9<sup>th</sup> win-games convention and before November of 1988 the U of M Gaming Club and two other student groups lost their office space. They all appealed to UMSU and all three lost their appeals. An editorial (p. 5) and a letter to the editor (p. 6 & 7) followed in The Manitoban. 1988 was the end of the club.

## ANY COMMENTS?

THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE COMMISSION'S SPACE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE ANNUALLY ALLOCATES OFFICES TO STUDENT GROUPS. THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY OPINIONS REGARDING THE VALUE OF SERVICES OFFERED BY THE FOLLOWING GROUPS ALLOCATED OFFICES THIS ACADEMIC YEAR:

U OF M YOUNG LIBERAL ASSOCIATION	102-L
U OF M FINANCE ORGANIZATION	102-L
U OF M MARKETING ASSOCIATION	102-L
MANITOBA STUDENT MOVEMENT	102-M
U OF M DEBATING ASSOCIATION	102-M
CAMPUS NEW DEMOCRATS	102-M
UKRAINIAN STUDENTS' LITERARY CIRCLE	102-N
UKRAINIAN STUDENTS' CLUB	102-N
U OF M GAMING CLUB	102-O
U OF NAVIGATORS CLUB	102-P
WINNIPEG CHINESE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	102-P
MUSLIM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION	102-P
STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT	102-Q
INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	102-Q
MALAYSIAN SINGAPOREAN OVERSEAS STUDENT FELLOWSHIP	102-Q
PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE YOUTH FEDERATION	102-R
AIIESEC	102-R
U of M PEACE COMMITTEE	102-R
WOMYN'S CENTRE	102-S

ANY OPINIONS, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND SHOULD BE FORWARDED BY MARCH 17/86 TO:



**SPACE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE  
UNIVERSITY CENTRE COMMISSION  
101 UNIVERSITY CENTRE**

... *We're here to serve you.*



# UMSU VS the students

By Brian Bohunicky

*"It looked like UMSU against the students."*

**T**hat is exactly what it looked like. When the UMSU Council rejected the appeals of three student groups who had had their office space taken away, UMSU cast itself in the role of the schoolyard bully. The three groups did not play precisely by the Students' Union's rules, so the bully took its spiteful revenge. That is what it looked like.

UMSU has had a serious problem with office space for a long time. There is a shortage of room for its own activities and for the ever-growing number of independent student groups. This is not the first time the problem has been a source of controversy. But in this case, a very difficult problem was handled very poorly.

There are about ninety recognized student groups, and about sixty of these applied for office space that can accommodate only thirteen groups. That's a problem. It seems that three groups which have had offices for years - the **Womyn's Centre**, the **Campus New Democrats** and the **Gaming Club** - did not provide UMSU's student group committee with relevant documentation promptly or completely enough to satisfy the rules.

It also seems that UMSU was a little lazy about communicating with the groups about the deficiencies in their applications. So the decision-makers on the committee had to ask themselves whether they should follow the letter of the rules (despite the defects in how they were carried out) and

kick out the three groups, replacing them with others who were on the waiting list and had played by the rules. The other option was to bend the rules and allow three student groups, who had occupied offices for years, to keep their space.

Some would argue that bending the rules would only penalize other groups on the waiting list. Of course, this is a serious concern. But by refusing to be flexible, UMSU only presents itself as an insensitive, bureaucratic machine.

The committee chose to give the three groups the boot, and when they appealed to the Council, the groups' pleas were rejected resoundingly. Rules are rules. Council discussed the rules at great length. But it seems no one seriously posed the question, 'will U of M students be well served by the removal of the New Democrats, the Gamers and the womyn's groups from their offices?' If that question were given more weight, these groups might still have office space.

UMSU has a worrisome image problem, and episodes like the one at last Wednesday's Council meeting only make the negative image more real.

Instead of narrowly serving its own interests and never looking beyond its own rules, our union should show a little more sensitivity. It exists to serve students. Sometimes UMSU forgets that there are more students out there than the ones who hold seats on its Council. □



## Fishmeal

**T**hat wicked John Turner was at it again on the weekend, spreading lies and fear-mongering about the

[The Manitoban November 14, 1988 p. 4.](#)

## Good for goose, not gander

Dear *Manitoban*:

I am writing with regard to the appallingly narrow-minded and inflexible manner in which the UMSU Executive and UMSU Council handled the recent expulsion of three student groups from their office space. As a former Director of Student Services for UMSU (1983-85) and President of the Gaming Club for three years prior to that, I can honestly say that I have never seen legitimate student groups treated with such contempt.

I find it astonishing that Karen Taraska and the "Student Group Promotion and Affairs" Committee can claim to have acted in a responsible and fair manner in this case.

They suggest that to have acted otherwise than they have would have been "unfair" to other student groups: in what manner? In what way were the student groups in question - all well-established groups with long records of responsible behaviour - thwarting the wishes of UMSU Council?

It seems that the great crime of the Gamers, the New Democrats, and the Womyn's Centre was to

have expected a little more discretion.

UMSU is nothing if it loses touch with the real concerns and aspirations of its members, the student of the U of M. In acting hastily and arbitrarily, and with a complete absence of flexibility, UMSU is in very great danger of doing exactly that with regard to its allocation of office space.

I might point out a letter in the very issue of the *Manitoban* in which this story was reported, from Stu Smith, the Chair of the UMSU Finance and Personnel Committee. Mr. Smith points out in his letter that UMSU Councillors are "students just like yourselves who...have devoted a large commitment of time to UMSU out of a hectic University schedule."

The same, Mr. Smith, is true of the people running the student groups on campus: if little slips are excusable by

## THE FREE TRADE





fail to furnish, before an arbitrary date, a full list of their membership. Did this somehow make it possible for UMSU to pretend that they were not legitimate student groups?

The Gamers Club - with which I am the most familiar - has been a formally recognized student group since 1979, and has occupied their present office space for most of the time since then. The Club has sponsored an annual convention since 1980 and has been one of the most frequent users of University Centre room space. Membership has always been not only numerically significant, but motivated and enthusiastic.

By what trick of logic can UMSU claim that the infraction of a minor rule - a technicality - in the guidelines governing student groups constitutes sufficient grounds for stripping such a group of its status and depriving it of its badly needed office space?

I have been speaking only of the U of M Gaming Club here, but I am confident that the Campus New Democrats and the Womyn's Centre have histories at least as distinguished as theirs. It is particularly surprising that UMSU would choose the middle of a heated election campaign to eject a campus political group from its office space. One would



people managing a student group with a budget of hundreds of thousands of dollars and numerous employees, how much more excusable are they by those trying to look after much smaller groups with infinitely fewer resources at their disposal? A little understanding and compassion is in order here, not a ruthless, dictatorial adherence to minor rules.

Jonathan Penner  
UMSU Director of Student Services  
1983-85  
President, U of M Gaming Club, 1979-81, 1982-83

### Boychuk's allegation false?

Dear Manitoban:

I would very much like to clarify the allegations made by Mike Boychuk, Senior Stick for Arts, in the November