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Hazing rituals need to be monitored

It is a fine line that separates hazing rituals from being either a team-building experience or an obscene act.

A Capital Region school division recently discovered that line and was forced to take immediate action to ensure that it never happens again.

Four students from College Beliveau in St. Boniface were recently suspended for six weeks and could face being expelled for allegedly paddling Grade 9 students in a hazing ritual.

These students were taken to an empty field in Windsor Park, where they were paddled by four older students.

Items used to paddle included a hockey goalie's stick and skateboard.

This is not the first time paddling new students has taken place in Winnipeg schools, students were suspended for hazing at Dakota Collegiate in 2005 and back in 1998, students at three high schools were also suspended for hazing.

In a message on the Louis Riel School Division's web site, Supt. Terry Borys likened the hazing to bullying, saying that "a student who bullies deliberately hurts another student's feelings or body."

The strong reaction by the division is to be commended but to say all hazing should be avoided at all costs is shortsighted.

Hazing, when done in a manner that does not include physically hurting someone's body, can be an important team-building experience.

Many institutions, either educational or sports-related, continue hazing rituals because they are seen as school tradition or a rite of passage.

It is an icebreaker for different groups of people to get to know each other.

It can lead to interesting stories whereby those previously hazed can share their own experiences with those recently hazed.

This builds bonds and creates fond memories.

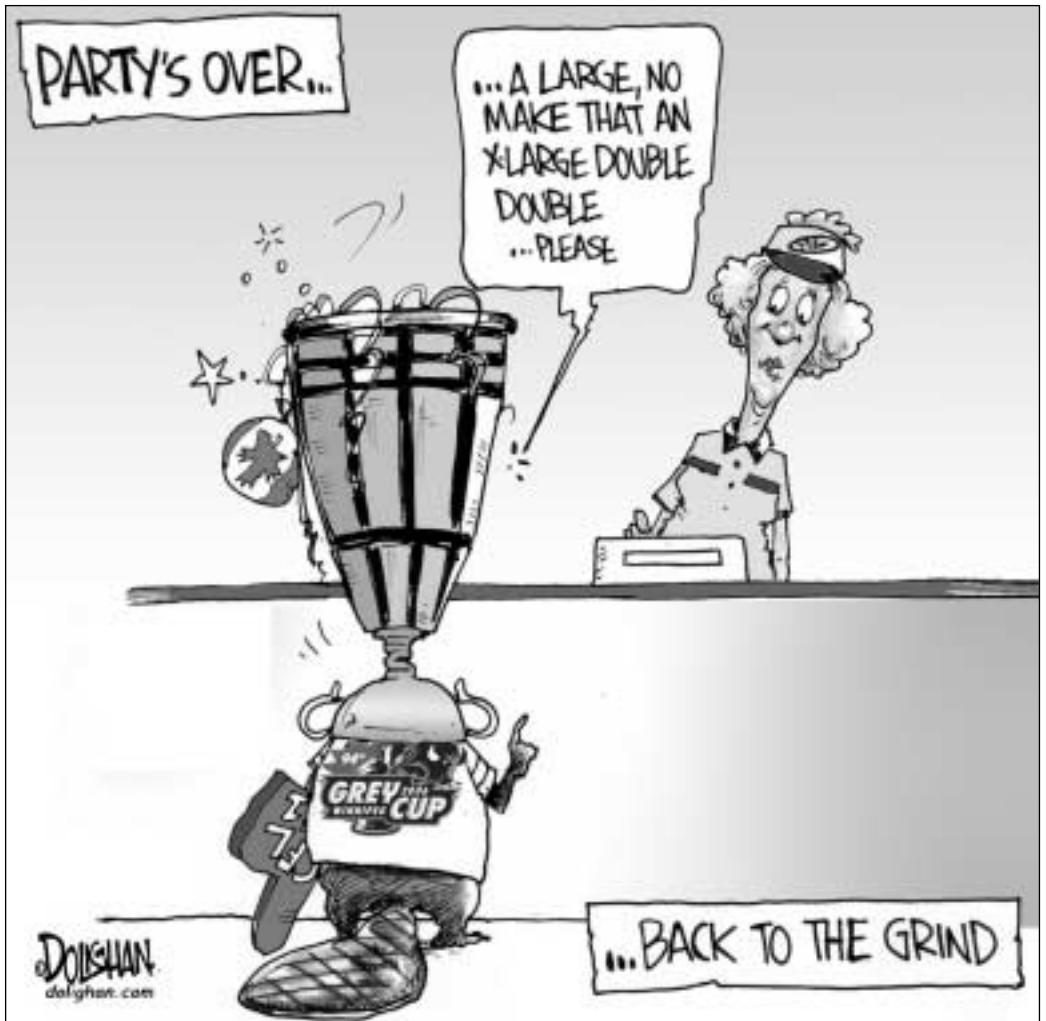
But these types of hazing rituals may involve shaving cream in a lunchbox or perhaps toothpaste in one's hair – certainly not physically hurting anyone.

In this team-building capacity, hazing could flourish but school divisions must step in and create clear rules and guidelines about what is

and is not allowed.

And parents should be allowed to have a say as to whether or not they want to allow their children to participate.

This would ensure traditions can continue, but they can be traditions that students, teachers, parents and communities can be proud of.



Well that didn't work – Iran got the bomb too



Timothy Friesen
On the flip side

This just in from the files of "Well That Didn't Work" – the Iranians are now the next on the list to get the bomb.

And after crying wolf in Iraq, the global villagers are now a little less than keen to help the Americans do anything about it.

The announcement comes on the heels of North Korea's first successful nuclear test, and only a few years after Pakistan and India's tandem bomb testing of their own.

It's becoming clear that the rich world's policy of keeping massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons to themselves, while telling poor countries that they will be labelled rogue nations if they try to build their own, is a little flawed.

Go figure.

I know I'm a little prone to jonesing for what the Jones' got, especially when what they got could blow me off the face of the planet and there really isn't much I could do in response.

Perhaps a more reasonable solution would be to ban the bomb entirely, once and for all.

That way, nuclear inspectors would be free to roam every corner of the globe looking for nuclear ne'er-do-wells.

Countries charged with harbouring nuclear ambitions could no longer hide behind the veiled grievance that other nations have one, so why shouldn't they have one too.

Of course, the big problem here is that there is always the problem that someone could still develop a nuclear bomb on the sly and hold the world hostage. Fortunately this isn't exactly a big problem for us here in Winnipeg.

Glorious Dictator – "If I don't receive \$100

billion in a Swiss bank account by midnight, I will destroy that cold, buggy prairie city in the middle of your country."

Dead air.

Negotiator – "I'm sorry, was that it? I missed my daughter's hockey finals for that?"

But since the Cold War is over, and the whole idea of nation versus nation nuclear war has become little more than a bad nightmare, this appears to be the only good reason to still hold onto nuclear technology.

It's all a little too much out of a bad James Bond novel.

In other words, we all still live on the brink of nuclear war every day, while nuclear nutbars around the globe continue to scramble to develop nuclear weapons of their own, all because we've all watched a little too much 007.

Imagine that.