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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 local 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 were 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.

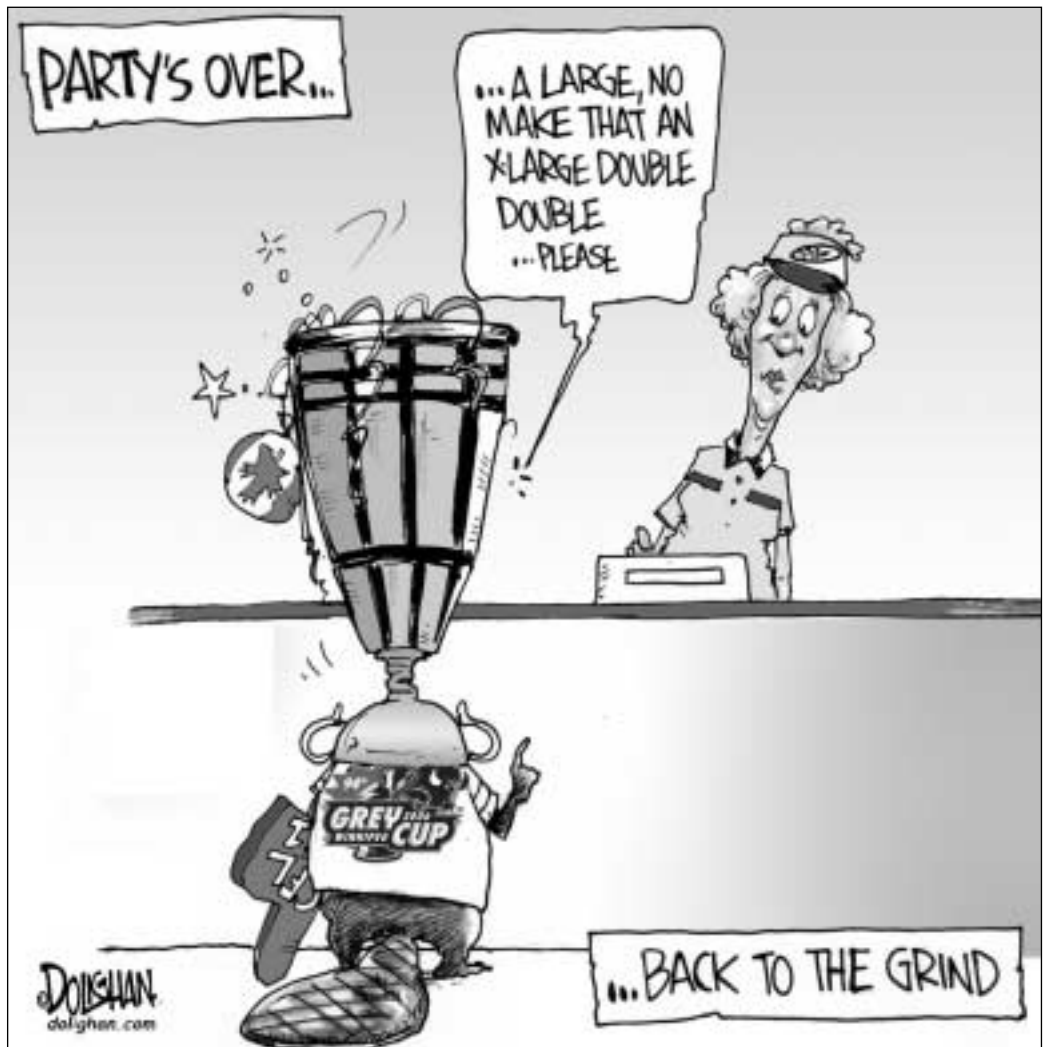
But these types of hazing rituals may involve shaving cream in a lunchbox or perhaps toothpaste in one's hair – certainly not physically hurting anyone.

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.



LETTERS

No-voting fine? Not in my lifetime

To the editor:

Re: Editorial, Nov. 9, "Is it time here for a no voting fine."

Is it time here for the no-voting fine?

That is outrageous. I will answer your question. The answer, however, like the rest of us you know. I do not see your name on the article. Obviously you are upset at who won.

During the January federal election campaign, we wanted the Liberals out, some of us happen to like the qualities Stephen Harper portrays and we were sick of the conduct and what the Liberals did with our money. They went too far. We were going to make sure they got out. So we went and voted.

During this election, I was and many others were upset at the OlyWest situation and not

just the situation but the behaviour of Sam Katz. We did not bother going to vote because he had no opposition. I did not want to vote in any of the other three. None of them were mayoral candidates. I am not going to put them down, however I had no confidence.

As much as I did not like Sam Katz, I knew he would get in because there was no other alternative. However, I could not convince myself to vote for him. I did not like what he did. I still felt better with him getting in rather than the others. If the others got in or not would not make much difference. I knew Dan Vandal would get in. I knew those who stood against the OlyWest would get in.

I am happy. If I had voted, it would not have made any difference. Who you are I do not

know. The fact that people did not vote should tell you what the score is. That in itself speaks volumes.

Your idea is crappy to say the least. That is like taking away our freedom. Don't worry, I always vote but there was no sense this time. Try enforcing that no-voting fine and we will be there to make sure that does not happen. What a money grab. Isn't it bad enough that the City is charging such large fines for speeding. It is because they bought those stupid cameras and they are not paying for themselves.

How we pay for the stupidity of others.

Reynalde Adams
 Winnipeg