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HERALD E-MAIL POLICY

I welcome comments from readers, whether complimentary or critical, about stories in the Cheyenne Herald. I especially appreciate storyline tips and leads from readers.

But with the ever-increasing popularity of this advocacy journal and the ever-growing number of readers with unresolved issues involving public officials, I don't pay any attention to unidentified e-mails.

And if there is nothing on the "Subject" line of an e-mail, it could get deleted without being opened.

We're at a point now where anonymous tips usually cannot be pursued. So, if you have something to share, tell us who you are. Your identity will not be compromised but lacking time to follow-up on all good tips, those with personal contact possible take priority.

If a reader wants to "nail" me with an anonymous diatribe about something or other, it's not a good use of their time. I am just apt to delete the message without reading it if I don't know who wrote it. Critics should have as much courage as they expect from the ones they criticize.

Schools continue overreaching

It seems that everyday brings another story of a school imposing some draconian rule or punishment for acts that are common for children, friends and students.

The latest in this long litany of excesses on the part of schools and school boards is the installation of a semaphore system in a school cafeteria. Green evidently means the students can converse without fear of punishment. Yellow means they are moving toward detention and/or loss of recess. Red means the noise has reached a decibel level that will lead to waterboarding or worse.

Loss of recesses? Not severe enough. Bring on the slab - let's do this waterboarding thing and get it over with.

This is just the latest example of adults taking away - or least wanting to take away childhood.

If that semaphore system works, I'd like to suggest Texas Roadhouse consider their installation. Perhaps then the din in their fine food establishments could be brought down to a level wherein people across the booth from each other could carry on a conversation without yelling.

What would happen in Texas Roadhouse if the noise persisted? I guess waterboarding would be in order there, too. We're on a roll - waterboard 'em all.

A week earlier, stories were circulated that school districts suspended students for "hugging." Hugging. Not clinching with a boyfriend or girlfriend but hugging a friend. In one case, as a show of tepid affection as the weekend was ahead. In the other, a hug of condolences for a death in the family. A hug for a grieving friend.

Can you imagine that? Two days suspension for hugging a friend who had just lost a family member?

What the hell has happened in public schools?

Before you snicker and say, "Oh, those Eastern schools. They are just so weird." remember that similar over-the-top rules have affected young children in Cheyenne and in Colorado Springs.

We have a school here where an uncontrolled principal imposed a "no running"

rule on her playground. Obviously, principals need the same oversight as the children. But when one's husband is a member of the school board, that is unlikely to occur.

The other day, I drove past a local school and saw two children - probably second or third graders, one boy and one girl - running across the playground.

I was torn!

Should I stop and make a citizen's arrest? Could I live with that picture in my mind - that I had allowed two young children, doing nothing more than having fun, flaunt an activity banned elsewhere in LCSD1?

In Colorado, a school banned the game of "tag." Presumably, the kids down there can still run across the playground at recess, they just can't touch each other and holler "You're It!" Thank god for adults eliminating these deadly games our children would otherwise engage in.

These same school playgrounds might have the most deadly of playground equipment - such as "teeter-totters" and Jungle Jims - on bare surfaces or concrete (not 16" of bedding) but at least a child won't fall while running and scrape a hand or knee. They can strangle themselves on corners of a climbing apparatus or fly off the swing onto concrete or injure themselves or others in any number of ways but they are not going to run.

"Billy, just what do you think you're doing? You know Nurse Ratched does not allow running on her playground."

"I have a soccer game after school and I'm running so I can get faster and try to keep up with the boys and girls from other elementary schools in Cheyenne who are allowed to run on their playgrounds."

"To the office, young man. You wait until the Nurse gets done with you. You won't see daylight again until next summer."

Now that school principals know waterboarding is not torture - but simply an inconvenience - you'll see the sale of those incline benches skyrocket.

The toughest thing for an adult to accept is that children are not short adults. Let them enjoy their childhood, for God's sake. Back off the control issues.

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