

FROM THE EDITOR



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I write this just as the hurricane season has come into full swing here on the East Coast. Watching the weather on the news, I wish I had a nickel for every time I've heard a forecaster or emergency preparedness official wrap up their report by saying, "Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst."

All kidding aside, I'm sure this advice is so often repeated because it sums things up so well: it is fine to be optimistic, as long as you know where to seek shelter, if necessary, and have on hand the supplies you might need if the stores are closed and the power goes out.

Not long ago, I was reading an opinion piece on the subject of "safe spaces" at today's colleges and universities. It was surprising to learn such spaces have nothing to do with providing shelter from storms. Instead, they are places where students can go

to shield themselves from upsetting or uncomfortable viewpoints being presented on the campus.

Judy Shulevitz, *New York Times* contributing op-ed writer, noted in her piece, *In College and Hiding From Scary Ideas*, that in response to a debate about campus sexual assault organized by a student group at Brown University, the school had created a "safe space" that, as the author notes, "was intended to give people who might find comments from the debate 'troubling' or 'triggering,' a place to recuperate. The room was equipped with cookies, coloring books, bubbles, Play-Doh, calming music, pillows, blankets and a video of frolicking puppies, as well as student and staff members trained to deal with trauma."

"Safe spaces," Ms. Shulevitz writes, "are an expression of the conviction, increasingly prevalent among college

students, that their schools should keep them from being 'bombarded' by discomfiting or distressing viewpoints."

I'm not here to disparage anyone, but I find it unfortunate that some students are demanding for themselves a level of protective coddling that is at odds with a robust and rigorous learning experience, certainly one appropriate for young adults. Aren't we in college to be challenged by new ideas and different philosophies, not to hide from them?

Ms. Shulevitz sums it up well when she writes, "People ought to go to college to sharpen their wits and broaden their field of vision. Shield them from unfamiliar ideas, and they'll never learn the discipline of seeing the world as other people see it. They'll be unprepared for the social and intellectual headwinds that will hit them as soon as they step off the

campuses whose climates they have so carefully controlled."

In the great outdoors, only Mother Nature is in charge of climate control; the rest is up to us. The natural world is a great learning center, a place where young hunters quickly learn that the higher up you go, the colder and steeper it gets. But at the end of the hunt, whether successful or not, those youngsters come home standing just a bit taller and walking with a more confident step.

So here's to the young men and women who have belly crawled through the snow to get in for a closer shot or headed into the high country with a pack on their back and rifle in hand—I'm betting their definition of a "safe space" is a spike camp, with a good cooking fire and a small tent, pitched under a star-filled sky.

Hope to see you down the trail. ■

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