

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DON'T UPSET ME, PLEASE!

By Stephen L. Bakke  May 23, 2014



Here's what provoked me:

"Trigger Warnings" is a new term for me. There seems to be a current fad for Americans, particularly "sensitive students," to desire "heads up" warnings regarding content which they feel may offend or upset them. This concept is one of the dubious tools being employed in our over-the-top politically correct educational institutions and news organizations. It's a sad development because it stands in contradiction to the intent of our constitutional right to express ourselves freely. I found some absurd examples that I felt symbolized this phenomenon.

Here's my response:

Don't Upset Me, Please!

I've learned a new term. "Trigger warnings" provide an alert that material about to be read, heard or observed might be upsetting to some. It often relates to educational materials but can apply to movies, books and entertainment.

In "Opinion Exchange" on May 20 there were two articles that dealt with modern "sensitivities." One dealt with a plan to bring a camel on campus to "lighten the mood" during finals week. It was met with student objection on the basis of animal cruelty, animal disrespect, possible racial or religious motivation and (get this) it would "promote a negative carbon footprint"! **Did a "trigger warning" alert the campus?**

Another article dealt directly with "trigger warnings" and the goal of creating a "safe place" for students. It critically pointed out that, unfortunately, "safe places" can keep students from the opportunity of thinking and expressing themselves freely. The writer, Debra Saunders, concludes that in academia, it's no longer "safe to think for yourself." In fact, she writes that it seems **"we cannot handle free speech."**

In 2008 I came across an example of a "trigger warning" before I knew what to call it. A reprint of the U.S. Constitution and the Articles of Confederation by Wilder Publications had a "trigger warning" (*partial quote only!*): ***"This book is a product of its time and does not reflect the same values as it would if it were written today"***

You can't make this stuff up! How did we come to this?

