

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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We Are Living In a Nanny State

I don't know who first coined the term "nanny state," but I sure felt like I was living in one this week.

The cold spell we had did not deserve the news media coverage it got, nor did it justify the reactions of state and local officials. I can see shutting down preschools and grade schools to protect little children from frostbite (or worse). But I can't see all the other precautions and restrictions imposed.

In Stanley prison, every time the wind chill gets too low, we are not allowed to attend outside rec or sit in the courtyard. This past week, the administration went even further and shut down all activities in the prison. We were confined to our living units from Monday morning until noon Tuesday - apparently to protect us. From what? The furthest we have to walk outside is about 300 yards. We go from heated building to heated building.

It is like we are all in kindergarten again and need a responsible adult to decide when we can go outside. Give me a break. I'll be 60 years old next week and I'm sure I know how to take care of myself by now. I assume that the people making these decisions for us believe they are doing the right thing. But I don't think they are. And it's not just in prison that officials are acting like nannies, it is going on throughout our society.

We are creating a nation of sissies (pardon my old-fashioned terminology). No wonder so many of our armed forces personnel commit suicide or suffer from PTSD. They were lollycoddled and protected their entire lives as they grew up. Then, when it's time to stand up and do what needs to be done, they crumble. It's not their fault. They were conditioned to be weak and protected by the way they were raised. Very few people are strong enough to overcome decades of instilled powerlessness.

(Harlan Richards/page two/January 8, 2014)

We are living in a fascist nanny state. That may seem like an oxymoron but it makes perfect sense. Citizens are conditioned to be powerless and weak. They then need a strong police force to protect them from the "bad guys." Citizens become reliant on the authorities to keep them safe - from bad weather, criminals and anything else that may upset their placid, safe lives. I'm sure these people don't see themselves as sheep. They no doubt think that are being sensible and prudent by deferring to the authorities.

We need challenges in our lives. We need to be on our own to face dangers. It is only by being forged in the fires of adversity that we can realize our true potential as human beings. We need to be responsible for our own well-being.

Why do we have so much obesity in our country? I believe it is because people don't feel they have to take care of themselves. It's not their fault they are fat. Society didn't stop them from overeating and didn't force them to exercise. They don't need to be physically fit because the police will keep them safe from criminals. And when a natural disaster occurs, some government agency will be there to rescue them.

We need a nation of self-reliant, capable people who can do what needs to be done when it needs doing. We all need to be heroes starring in our own action flick. Only in that way will our nation remain strong enough to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Disclaimer: This blog is based solely on my opinion. I have no data to back up any of this.