



625 Andover Park West, Suite 111
Tukwila, WA 98188
1-866-992-3892

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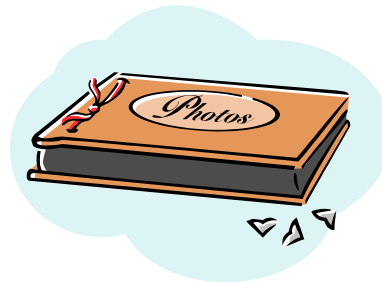
Don't miss the upcoming "Personal Legacy" interactive workshop!

As announced in last month's flyer, our retiree chapter is sponsoring a free interactive workshop on **How to Save, Show, and Share Your Personal Legacy** on **October 21**, from **12:30 to 2:30 p.m.** at **625 Andover Park W.** in **Tukwila**.

Participation is limited to 25, so RSVP early to **Merrilee Miron** via email (mmiron@aftwa.org) or telephone (206-432-8083 or 800-992-3892).

Led by **Jeannine Florance**, a personal historian and photo organizer, the workshop will include these topics:

- Step Away from the Panic Button: *How to inventory your visual keepsakes such as photos and memorabilia.*
- Who Cares and What do They Want? And What do I Want?: *Popular ways to safely archive and share your visual legacy.*
- Will My Retirement Budget Cope with an Archiving Project?: *Ways to preserve at a minimal cost versus going all out, and in anticipation of technology changes.*
 - Yipes, There Seems to be a Lot to Do! : *Tips for getting underway while reminiscing and having fun.*
 - Buyer BE...WARE!: *Services that don't ship projects overseas and suggested equipment for "do-it-yourselfers."*



What's Inside

Rachael Levine on Initiatives 591 & 594 * Mary Hale: Bait & Switch in the Legislature * Kristin Elia's Path to Victory * J.B. Hanna on Not Voting in the 4th Congressional District * Social Security & the "Guardians of Privilege" * Big Win for Everett CC Counselors * Voices from Yakima on Trigger Warnings: Linda Clein Brown, Duane Reed, & Sid Smith * Ross Rieder on the Roosevelts * Al Brisbois on Apology & Forgiveness in Tacoma * Roger Carlstrom: The Myth of *E Pluribus Unum*

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Roger Carlstrom, Editor

Merrilee Miron, AFTWA Staff Liaison

The workshop looks terrific. Don't miss it!



Let us hear from you!

The *Newsletter* now has an email address – retireenews@aftwa.org – and that means you can let us know what's on your mind.

What do you think of the *Newsletter*? Do you like what we're doing? What topics would you like to see us address that we haven't so far? Should we





talk more about retirement than we do, or less? Do our opinion pieces square with your thinking, or have you wished that you could protest? Now's your chance!

What's your response to this issue of the *Newsletter*? For example, do you think that the legislature should be allowed to pull off the "bait and switch" with TRS1 and PRS1 COLAs that **Mary Hale** describes on pages 3-4? Do you think someone like **J.B. Hanna** (page 5) should just go ahead and vote even if he finds it "distasteful" (to understate his perspective)? Do you share **John Burbank's** optimism (pages 5-6) about the long-term wellbeing of Social Security? Do our "Voices from Yakima" (pages 7-8) have it about right on "trigger warnings" in the classroom, or should a strong case be made for those warnings? (Would you like to make that case?) Come to think of it, especially as we advance in our retirement and grow more distant from the workplace, should we even care about what goes on in a classroom? Should we care that Local 1873 successfully defended the jobs of counselors at Everett Community College (page 6)? Just how much "solidarity" should we have with those in education who now perform the jobs we once performed? Was an apology from the Tacoma School Board to **Jim Gaylord** forty years after he was fired sufficient (pages 9-10), given the harm he suffered? Do you share the pessimism of the *Newsletter* editor (pages 10-11) about the future of the U.S. of A.?

Please consider sending a "letter to the editor," or submitting an article of your own. *Inundate* us with your thoughts, gripes, well wishes – whatever. Help us make the newsletter a lively endeavor, help us *continue* to make this (we hope that's the case) a lively endeavor!

**VOTE YES on I-594
VOTE NO on I-591
By Rachael Levine**



Ed. note: Initiative 591 and Initiative 594 are competing measures that will both appear on the November ballot for Washington State. Initiative 591, according to the Secretary of State's office, "would prohibit government agencies from requiring

*background checks on firearm recipients unless a uniform national standard is required." Initiative 594, on the other hand, "would require universal background checks on gun purchases." Voters may vote on both measures, on only one, or on neither. According to AFT Washington Political Organizer **Kristin Elia**, it's conceivable that both measures could pass, in which case they would be submitted to the court system for resolution of the conflict, if possible.*

*As you can see here, Rachael Levine emphatically urges us to vote on **both** issues.*

Washington State citizens have not been hesitant to pass legislation for the greater good when we have had to wait for action at the national level. Now is another of those times in regard to what we can do in preventing and reducing outcomes of gun violence in all our communities in this state.

In seeking truth as educators, we think of ourselves as rational beings. In November, we will want to know if voting "Yes" on I-594 and "No" on I-591 might possibly make a difference in lessening firearm accessibility to felons.

I-594 would require that any person buying a gun in Washington from any source (with a few
(continued on page 3)



(continued from page 2)

exceptions) submit to a criminal background check before the purchase is made. Right now, about 40% of guns purchased in our state are bought at gun shows, on line or in private sales, where no criminal background check is required.

According to information from Grandmothers Against Gun Violence (<http://www.grandmothersagainstgunviolence.org>), in the 16 states that now require background checks, here is part of what has been the reported outcome:

- 38% fewer women are shot to death by their intimate partner
- 49% fewer firearm-suicides occur
- 17% fewer firearm-aggravated-assaults happen
- 39% fewer law enforcement officers are shot to death by handguns
- 64% fewer guns originally sold in-state were later recovered at crime scenes

I-591, on the other hand, would PROHIBIT Washington State from requiring background checks on all gun sales unless there is a uniform national standard.

Many of us, members of our families, and friends, are responsible owners of firearms, especially in the rural areas of our state. However, preventing the loss of human life and making all our communities safer is certainly worth the effort to keep felons from buying guns.

I emphatically urge you to protect our children, our neighbors and ourselves: **Vote YES on I-594**, and **vote NO on I-591**. We must *guarantee* the background checks provided by the former initiative, and we must *defeat* the restriction that would be imposed by the latter.

The legislature gets to "bait & switch"

By Mary Hale, Chapter Liaison with AFTWA-COPE



In a classic "bait and switch," TRS1 (Teachers Retirement System 1) and PERS1 (Public Employees Retirement System 1) pensioners have been robbed of COLA increases. Many of our

retirees, as well as our retirees' spouses, are in these plans.

In late September 2014 (and after two lower court rulings that these two retirement plans were entitled to COLA increases), the Washington State Supreme Court ruled that they were not. The court based its decision on what appears to be little-noticed and rather obscure legislation that allowed the State Legislature to deny COLAs to these two pension plans. This legislative action occurred **after** a COLA adjustment was created in 1995 to unify the various state pension plans by repealing other cost-of-living adjustments. After the September court decision, some legislators acknowledged that the legislative language to provide opportunities to deny COLA's was in "small print." (Reported in The Seattle Times, Sept. 27.) A commitment made; a commitment violated. Bait and switch!

Approximately 36,000 TRS1 and 3,000 PERS1 pensioners (or surviving spouses) are, without question, very negatively impacted by the State Supreme Court's decision. Without COLA increases, the "livability" for those in these old plans (closed to new enrollees in 1977) will, of course, continue in the downward spiral that

(continued on page 4)



A Union of Professionals

(continued from page 3)

began in 2011 when the legislature first denied them COLA increases.

Bernal Baca, our AFT Washington lobbyist, is a member of the Public Employees for Pension Responsibility (PEPR) labor coalition, which recently met to discuss and address the COLA issue. According to Bernal, "PEPR decided to ask the Select Committee on Pension Policy on the purchasing power and actuarial for PERS1 and TRS1. This data will be useful in deciding next steps as we address the Legislature." PEPR will stay on top of this issue, and Bernal will report to our chapter when he has more information.

Meanwhile, please contact your state legislators to urge them to support legislation in the next session to restore COLAs to TRS1 and PERS1 pensioners.

Committee on Political Education (COPE) in Brief. COPE met in early September to recommend additional post-primary election endorsements and campaign contributions to the AFT Washington Executive Board. In early October be sure to watch for a list of endorsed candidates in the upcoming AFT Washington **Spotlight**, or, as **Kristin Elia** indicates next door, you can click on the link she has provided in her P.S., or you can go to the AFT Washington Website and search for "Our Endorsements for the 2014 General Election."



The path to victory in November

*Ed. note: The following is a reprint of an email that was recently sent out by AFT Washington State Political Organizer **Kristin Elia**.*

This campaign season one theme stands out: elections matter. **Less than 100 votes can make the difference in close races like the ones we'll see in November.** The path to victory is steep and education is on the line.

That's why AFT Washington is working to mobilize our membership to elect leaders who reflect our values of quality education, strong communities, and an economy that supports working families. **But we can only win with the support of members like you.** Every vote will count and we need volunteers reaching out to voters in order to put our candidates over the top.

[Will you help us reach our goal of 100 AFT Washington volunteers this fall?](#)

This November, we have the chance to shape our legislature into one that will work with us to advance our shared priorities. **We need real leadership** - not masked "bipartisanship" - to fully fund basic education, reinvest in higher education, and bolster working families.

AFT Washington is ready!

But we need you. [With so much at stake, I'm asking you to volunteer with us this fall and make a real difference in our plan to win.](#)

Together, we can turn out voters to elect pro-education and labor champions who share our vision for a better Washington.

In solidarity,
Kristin Elia
State Political Organizer

P.S. You can see a [list of our endorsed candidates](#) and learn more about our endorsement process on our website.



The fruits of the top-two primary election in the 4th congressional district

Whadda you mean, "Vote"? By J.B. Hanna



Ed. Note: Over the summer, J.B. Hanna received an email containing a "Please Vote" appeal from Kristin Elia comparable to the one that appears above. Here, in slightly edited form, is his reply:

Dear Ms. Elia,

I will certainly return my ballot, although some "choices" will not be marked. As I live in the 4th Congressional District (8th Legislative District, Kennewick, WA), my choices range from terrible to "you've got to be kidding." When it comes to voting for the Republican of my choice, "I would prefer not."

In the 4th District, I have heard some say that "at least Mr. Newhouse is better than Mr. Didier," but that seems his only asset. Or, some have said, "One should vote for Mr. Didier, as he's so terrible that he'll get replaced after one term." To the latter I reply, "dream on."

Although this area has the highest percentage of folks with advanced degrees in Washington, it continues to be an ugly red stain on an otherwise perfectly good blue state. Which leads me to conclude that higher education and intelligence, while individually desirable, are no predictor of benevolence, lack of greed, general evil, or even common sense. I'd be interested in hearing your voting suggestions.
Be well.

J.B. Hanna taught at Yakima Valley Community College from 1968 until he retired in 1995. During that

time he was very active in the Yakima Valley College Federation of Teachers and in the Washington [State] Federation of Teachers, where he served as treasurer and vice president for COPE and in other capacities. He now lives in Kennewick.

Don't believe what the "guardians of privilege" say about Social Security!

Susan Levy, our chapter vice president and representative of both the chapter and AFT Washington to the **Social Security Works Washington Coalition**, has recommended that we read a July 30, 2014, online article by **John Burbank** of the Economic Opportunity Institute.



In the article, [Increase wages to protect Social Security Trust Fund](#), Burbank, notes that the trustees of Social Security had in the last week of July "reported that our FICA contributions plus interest, net of all benefits paid out, have increased the Social Security Trust Fund by \$32 billion." He also says that the trustees had "also forecast that Social Security benefits are completely sustainable for the next two decades."

This would come as bad news to those "guardians of privilege" who would dismantle Social Security benefits now on the false premise that finances for the program are crumbling.

He tells us that the present drawdown of the trust fund was deliberately designed by the likes of Alan Greenspan to account for the impact that would result when baby boomers retired. Thus,

(continued on page 6)



(continued from page 5)

“when the trust fund is drawn down, it won’t result in the demise of Social Security.”

In recognition that productivity increases now accrue “more and more solely to corporations” instead of to workers or some balance between the two, Burbank argues that “a simple way to increase contributions . . . [and] insure sustainability of benefits and actually increase those benefits” is to “[i]ncrease the minimum wage, and have all wages reflect increases in productivity.” He offers strong support for this contention.

To read the article, click on its title above or go to the Economic Opportunity Institute and search for it there.

College counselors in Everett win big

On September 13, 2014, *HeraldNet* reported online that the **Everett Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1873**, and the community college had settled a dispute after four years of legal wrangling. The local sought to protect four college counselors whose jobs had been taken away by the college. According to the article, “The college spent about \$300,000 in back pay, benefits and interest to four college counselors who lost their jobs in 2010. The college also offered the counselors their jobs back, and two have accepted.” The article quotes the local’s attorney, **Jon Rosen**, as saying that the settlement is “a really good win for working people.”

(Long-time union activists now retired will remember that Jon Rosen has been representing locals of AFT Washington effectively for seemingly 60 or 70 years!)

To see the article, “EVCC, teachers union settle legal dispute,” click [here](#), or go to the *HeraldNet* website and search for it there.

Voices from Yakima

“Trigger Warnings”—not about the horse Roy Rogers rode in on!

Ed. Note: From time to time, I have been known to seek email responses from friends to some article or idea I have come across. That happened when I read **Rebecca Mead’s** “Literature and Life” Comment in the June 9, 2014, *New Yorker’s* Talk of the Town.

Mead discusses “trigger warnings,” which, she says, *The New York Times* described as “preemptive alerts issued by a professor or an institution at the request of students, indicating that material presented in class might be sufficiently graphic to spark symptoms of post-traumatic-stress disorder.” She says that the “call from students for trigger warnings was spreading on campuses such as Oberlin, where a proposal was drafted that would advise professors to ‘be aware of racism, classicism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, ableism, and other issues of privilege and oppression’ in devising their syllabi; and Rutgers, where a student argued in the campus newspaper that trigger warnings would contribute to preserving the classroom as a ‘safe place’ for students.” At the end of the piece, Mead sees a difficult balance to be struck between enlarging the reader’s experience and comprehension” in a classroom as literature gives “expression through art to difficult and discomfiting ideas” on the one hand and, on the other hand, the concerns of students who might hope that the classroom be a secure place “when the outside world constantly proves itself pervasively hostile, as well as, on occasion, horrifically violent.”

My own reaction to the concept when I first heard about it was to give thanks that I no longer teach. Subsequently, I saw the idea as an open invitation for administrators or faculty

(continued on page 7)



(continued from page 6)

committees, or both, to interfere with and perhaps dictate the contents of a course. Later, I wondered if I should give a "trigger warning" to a close friend to whom I had recommended a book that I had not yet finished reading and that I thought might cause her distress. I concluded that there's a difference between personal warnings to a friend and warnings that I might (not) give to students, given that my relationship with them would be impersonal.

My quest for email responses to Mead's piece resulted in three notes from friends, all of whom reside in Yakima. **Linda Clein Brown** is a retired high school English teacher who taught for the majority of her 42-year career at A.C. Davis High School in Yakima, from which she retired in 2007. **Duane Reed** is a long time community college instructor of English who has been teaching at Yakima Valley Community College for fourteen years. **Sid Smith** is a former long-time colleague of mine in the English Department at YVCC who retired in 2000.

Linda Clein Brown



As soon as I saw the article I realized I had read it and, quite frankly, I think it's ridiculous. The whole point of literature is to "trigger" responses from readers so they can come to terms with the issues raised in the story. I think this could be carried to a level of absurdity. Of course it would be painful to

confront the subject of rape in a story if you were still trying to come to terms with a rape that had recently occurred, but isn't the whole point for stories to ignite new insights into issues? To help us come to terms with things that upset us? To

face the unthinkable?

According to the new warning system, I don't think I could have taught class. In every class there would have been someone who had been racially mistreated (good-bye Huck Finn) or someone who had failed in school (good-bye *Catcher in the Rye*) or someone who had lost a sibling (good-bye *Catcher in the Rye*) or someone whose brother had been to war (*Going After Cacciato* or *Farewell to Arms* or. . .) The list goes on.

Warning students so they can avoid reality is wrong-headed. Fiction is what helps us come to terms with truth and where we can be safe discussing some of the unspeakable subjects that occur in our society. I just finished reading the memoir of Ann Seibol about her being raped as a freshman at Syracuse University. She came to terms with the horrors of it by seeking out her attacker and bringing him to justice. And, she was shocked to learn that her approach was in the minority. Most victims of rape put their heads down and feel ashamed rather than angry. She confronted the fear and beat it.

Duane Reed



Thanks Roger. The article in the link is similar in content to others I have read. My knee-jerk reaction to the issue is "Bullshit." My thoughtful and critical reaction is "BULL-SHIT"!!

This seems yet another example of the demise of one being expected to take personal responsibility for one's safety, comfort, happiness, etc. Due to the unreasonable beliefs of many individuals in our society that they are "owed" protection and shelter from anything that might be unpleasant, academia is being tasked with being a "safe haven" rather than an arena where many ideas (many unpleasant) can be

(continued on page 8)



(continued from page 7)

explored and examined. A former history colleague expressed it best when he said "perhaps I should have a trigger warning in my US history syllabus that what you learn might be upsetting to your dearly held misconceptions about our 'great' country."

I have dealt with students who have been abused, raped, suffered through family murder-suicides, subjected to the horrors of combat, experienced racism, suffered from traumatic illness, and other potentially exacerbated situations, and I have never felt it necessary to be concerned that the content of my class or texts required any particular special treatment. But then again, I once urged a student who wrote about her child's crib death to be more descriptive in her account of finding the baby dead. All in all, I think this all a further example of people evading responsibility on both the student's and the instructor's part. It is also a further chilling attempt in the desire among some to limit our academic freedom.

Sid Smith



I think the end of this 3 March *New Republic* article, "Trigger Happy," by Jenny Jarvie, sums up my views nicely.

Trigger warnings are presented as a gesture of empathy, but the irony is they lead only to more solipsism, an over-preoccupation with one's own feelings – much to the detriment of society as a whole. Structuring public life around the most fragile personal sensitivities will only restrict all of our horizons. Engaging with ideas involves risk, and slapping warnings on them only undermines the principle of intellectual exploration.

We cannot anticipate every potential trigger – the world, like the Internet, is too large and unwieldy. But even if we could, why would we want to? Bending the world to accommodate our personal frailties does not help us overcome them.

Can you say "infantilization"?

Some thoughts on the Roosevelts By Ross Rieder, President



My wife and I recently spent several evenings watching the **Ken Burns** PBS-documentary on Eleanor, Franklin, and Teddy Roosevelt.

I appreciated every minute of the documentary, especially hearing the words of kindness toward humanity, which reminded me of a book I recently read.

S. L. Stoner is a lawyer for transit workers in the Portland Metro area for her day job, and an author of what I call labor detective mysteries for her night job. Her fourth and most recent novel, *Black Drop*, involves Teddy Roosevelt. It takes place in 1903 when TR is on a major train tour of the American West, including a stop in Portland, Oregon. Here, as TR moves by train from the SW towards Portland, our detective, Sage (short for Sagacity) Adair is beginning to investigate to find out who is taking sexual advantage of homeless young boys in a hotel in Portland. Soon Sage is also informed that there is a plot amongst some corporate types to do harm to President TR when he gets to Portland.

Each chapter but the last is introduced by a wise and progressive quote from TR.

(continued on page 9)



A Union of Professionals

(continued from page 8)

Here are some examples:

Of all forms of tyranny, the least attractive and the most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth, the tyranny of plutocracy (the wealthy class that controls the government).

There is not a man of us who does not at times need a helping hand to be stretched out to him, and then shame upon him who will not stretch out the helping hand to his brother.

In our modern industrial system the union is just as necessary as the corporation, and in the field of industrialization it is often an absolute necessity that there should be collective bargaining.

If you want to know how it comes out – both for the young boys being molested and for the safety of President TR – or to get a copy of the book, reach me at 206-406-2604.

As for Teddy’s cousins, Eleanor and FDR, the documentary showed that she was a long-term, deeply committed do-gooder, and he was capable of doing good things in legislation that is helping millions of people yet. Though he may have made WWII too profitable for arms manufacturers, though he waited a little too long before recognizing what Hitler was doing to his Jewish citizens, FDR did see us through.

Finally I’m considering making a contribution to KCTS so I can see the entire program.

Apology and forgiveness in Tacoma

By Al Brisbois



Jim & Al

A surprising apology was given on Sunday, July 13, to **Jim Gaylord** at a program sponsored by Oasis, an LGBT organization, in the Stadium

High School’s auditorium. **Kurt Miller**, Chairperson of the Tacoma School Board, had called Jim and asked how he would feel about an apology from the board for what the current board members considered an injustice perpetrated by their predecessors, decades ago. Jim replied, “It would feel really, really good; I’d appreciate it.”

Apologize for what? On the cold Friday night of November 21, 1972 (42 years ago), at 10 o’clock, the vice principal of Wilson High School showed up on Jim’s doorstep and asked him bluntly if he were a homosexual. He boldly admitted he was, and then was handed a letter from the school board stating that his termination was immediate.

Jim told Mr. Miller and another board member, **Seth Kirby** (a former student of mine): “Because I always taught my students about civil liberties and equality before the law, I had to practice what I had taught all of those years. The impact of doing the right thing cannot be underestimated.”

He went on to say he wanted it clear that people shouldn’t have to hide things away about who they are. He emphasized, “It’s ironic that I had to give up my right of privacy to protect my privacy and that of other teachers.”

At the time, I was president of the Tacoma Federation of Teachers, Local 461, to which Jim belonged, and I told Mr. Miller and Mr. Kirby that we filed a lawsuit on his behalf. “We carried the lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court,” I said, “but that body refused to hear it, inadvertently backing the Tacoma School Board’s nefarious firing.” I told them further that “We knew we had one hell of a fight on our hands and that we had a moral responsibility to sue on Jim’s behalf. It’s been over 40 years since this horrific injustice. I can’t help but believe we were in the forefront

(continued on page 10)



A Union of Professionals

(continued from page 9)

of effecting change, and for that I am proud of the warrior mentality of the teachers back then, and their unyielding duty to fight such a lack of justice.”

Finally, I said, “this is an unprecedentedly surprising action that is attempting to rectify an inequality and bring about a resolution of a painful experience to an excellent teacher. We salute the Tacoma School Board, and Chairperson Miller’s foresight in moving to effect healing. Mr. Gaylord’s experience is representative of deep and painful experiences that many like him have had.”

Al Brisbois was president of the Washington Federation of Teachers for ten years, from 1975 to 1985, when he was elected Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, a position he held until 1993.

E pluribus unum—little more than a myth?

By Roger Carlstrom, Editor



Like many of you, I have despaired over the state of our politics, the dysfunction, the disarray, the sense that it surely couldn’t have been this bad in the past, the sense that things will get even worse.

With such thoughts, I came to Colin Woodard’s 2011 book, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*. What’s happening now is nothing new in the history of our country. We call for “national unity,” and we don’t get it – we’ve never had it:

Such calls for unity overlook a glaring historical fact: Americans have been deeply divided since the days of Jamestown and Plymouth. The original North American colonies were settled by people from distinct regions of the British Isles, and from France, the Netherlands, and Spain, each with their own religious, political, and ethnographic characteristics.

These cultural differences, Woodard says, are still with us.

The United States, he says, “is a federation comprised of the whole or part of eleven regional nations, some of which truly do not see eye to eye with one another. These nations respect neither state nor international boundaries, bleeding over the U.S. frontiers with Canada and Mexico as readily as they divide California, Texas, Illinois, or Pennsylvania.”

As for the future, there’s little hope that national “unity” will come about:

The majority of Yankees, New Netherlanders, and Left Coasters simply aren’t going to accept living in an evangelical Christian theocracy with weak or nonexistent social, labor, or environmental protections, public school systems, and checks on corporate power in politics. Most Deep Southerners will resist paying higher taxes to underwrite the creation of a public health insurance system; a universal network of well-resourced, unionized, and avowedly secular public schools; tuition-free public universities where science – not the King James Bible – guides inquiry; taxpayer-subsidized public transportation, high-speed railroad networks, and renewable energy projects; or vigorous regulatory bodies to ensure compliance with strict financial, food safety, environmental, and campaign finance laws.

(continued on page 11)



A Union of Professionals

(continued from page 10)

He can see several scenarios where within the next 100 years, the United States might reconstitute itself in response to conflicts that arise and continue to arise between the eleven nations of North America. If the U.S. is to continue "in something like its current form," Americans had better "respect the fundamental tenets of our unlikely nation."

If you read Woodard's book, you'll find little hope that such can be the case.



The Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America (Listed in their order of "founding")

- First Nation
- El Norte
- New France
- Tidewater
- Yankeedom
- New Netherland
- The Deep South
- The Midlands
- Greater Appalachia
- The Left Coast
- The Far West

Note: It is most helpful to view the map of the eleven cultures. If you don't have the book but would like to view the map, try Amazon.com, enter the book title, and then click on "Look Inside."



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AFT Washington
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625 Andover Park W.
Suite 111
Tukwila, WA 98188

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