

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

*Volume 15 Issue 37*  
*October 5, 2007*



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*Meet AU tutor Anne Nothof*

### ***No Honour***

*Technology reveals women's plight to the world*

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*Improving their Olympic time*

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# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

October 5, 2007 - Volume 15, Issue 37

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## THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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## A Real Difference

On September 28, the Alberta government announced it is investing \$30 million in Athabasca University's new Academic and Research Centre.

This is wonderful news. Construction on the new centre is scheduled to start next summer, and this funding will help AU provide capacity for as many as 15,000 more course registrations in distance learning each year, the equivalent of about 1,500 full-time students.

To some, this may appear to be just another news release; one more announcement lost in the sea of information that washes over them every day. The real story, though, is much more complex and far-reaching, and may have a profound effect on people who are not even aware of AU today, much less aware of last week's announcement.

Like it or not, we live in a knowledge-based economy. The focus is on information: knowing it, knowing where to find it, or knowing how to manipulate it. Even the trades have experienced a shift; apprentices still learn on the job, but there's a new focus on academics. Apprenticeship programs have a strong classroom component, and theory is just as important as practice. Gone (for the most part) are the days when a young high school grad could walk into a business and convince the boss to give them a shot, show them what they could do. The certificate (or degree) has become king. It's been said that the BA is the new high school diploma.

Life, though, has a funny way of sneaking up on people. Sometimes, there just isn't any money to go to school. Student loans can be hazardous to navigate; even a meagre income can disqualify someone from getting approved. Sometimes, high school grads have no idea what they want to do. Before many people know it, there are kids and jobs and mortgages. It isn't possible to abandon responsibilities and return to school. Without the education to earn a living wage, but without the time or resources to get that education, there's little hope of improving their lives. It's a cycle that can be impossible to break.

Which makes AU—and other reputable distance education programs—that much more important. It's not simply academic (no pun intended), a vague exercise in theories on delivery modes.

The ability to get a better education has a very real effect on people's lives, on their children's lives, and as a result on our society as a whole. Opportunities open up—real, tangible opportunities that may not have existed for them otherwise.

So while this funding announcement is good news, it's also so much more than a new building. It's a vote of confidence that recognizes quality programs are just as viable through distance education as through brick and mortar schools. Not better—just equal.

It's another 15,000 courses, another 15,000 opportunities for people who may have believed that a better education was an impossible dream.

And who knows? That someone may even be you.

## AU TUTOR BIO



### Anne Nothof

For AU tutor Anne Nothof, all the world truly is a stage. A tutor and academic with Athabasca for the past 25 years, Dr. Nothof is a specialist in the history of drama, and she has presented conference papers on theatre in such far-flung places as England, Russia, Israel, and Mexico, to name a few.

Although she first came to the university as an editor, theatre has always been her prime interest, and she explains that “it was my research specialty when I did my PhD.”

In her role as a professor with AU’s Centre for Language and Literature, she has developed many new courses that have reflected her own interests and also rounded out the centre’s offerings. Specifically, she’s developed courses in “some important areas that hadn’t been covered before,” such as post-colonial literature and women in literature, which she has also tutored.

Although teaching theatre via distance education has its challenges, Anne believes it also offers many benefits.

“The main advantage,” she explains, “is it enables so many people wherever they are to at least become acquainted with [theatre]; that they develop an interest in it and then they might pursue it by going into more theatre studies or going to more plays. It opens up the possibility for them of experiencing theatre. It also helps them to know what to look for or how to approach it or how to be more receptive to it so that the experience becomes richer for them, because they’re an informed audience then.”

Along with developing new courses, she enjoys the interaction with students.

“Whenever I develop a new course,” she says, “I always want to tutor them to make sure they’re working okay and also because I want to see how the students are responding to them. I’m always curious about that.”

She also enjoys the “cross-educational experience” of discussing theatre with students.

“I’m always asking students, particularly students in my drama courses,” Dr. Nothof says, “whether they go to theatre, what they’ve seen, what they enjoy, so I find out that way what’s happening in the rest of the country and sometimes out of the country. That’s what I enjoy about tutoring as much as anything, is the diversity of students and how I tend to get ones from around the world, so they tell me what’s happening in theatre where they are.”

Of her own theatre-going experiences, she says that the Royal Court Theatre in London, England, is her favourite “because it does fairly recent productions of world plays.”

One stage that she has yet to visit is the Marionette Theatre in Prague, but she plans to remedy that soon. Her travels will take her to the Czech Republic, and the Marionette Theatre, she says, is “something that I’m looking forward to investigating.”

If you’d like to find out more about Professor Nothof, or some of AU’s courses and programs in theatre and literature, visit the Centre for Language and Literature’s [website](#).



She is kicked again and again and again. At one point, what looks like a concrete block is thrown on her. Whether this is the fatal blow or not is unclear. What is clear with frightening certainty is that the girl, 17-year-old Du'a Khalil Aswad, lies dead, murdered in cold blood by an angry mob; murdered because as a Yezidi girl she loved the wrong man, a Sunni Muslim. And the people of the village, among them her own family, killed her in the name of "honour."<sup>1</sup>

The four-minute video tells you none of this of course. It only documents the murder of a girl, like thousands of other girls, for whom it is too late. What motives the unknown poster had for putting it online may never be known. Optimists would like to think he did it to alert the world to the atrocities known as honour killings still being committed in Iraq and all over the world. The pessimist in me says he did it for an entirely different reason: to warn other Kurdish girls like Du'a that this is what happens when you step out of line.

What is unique about this case is that the frenzied crowd intent on killing Du'a was captured on the cellphones of the very people who are kicking, stomping, and ultimately killing her by crushing her head with a cinder block. What is so heart rending is that we get to see that Dua is alive and trying to protect her body as best she can from these men; men who probably watched her grow up and maybe grew up with her.<sup>2</sup>

Sadly, this is not an isolated case. A 25-year-old British Columbian beautician was kidnapped and taken to Punjab where she was murdered, again for loving the wrong man—in this case a poor auto rickshaw driver. In Kurdistan, a girl burns to death every day. In Pakistan, a woman was axed to death.

In Du'a's case, retaliation was swift: 23 Yezidi men were killed by Muslims and four of her assailants were arrested.<sup>3</sup> But there were an estimated one thousand in the crowd the day she was killed. One thousand people, some who were the assailants, some who egged the assailants on, and all who could have stopped the brutal onslaught but chose not to.

According to UN statistics, these cases are only scraping the surface. Du'a Khalil Aswad's murder is only one of the 5,000 honour killings that will be carried out this year.<sup>4</sup>

Five thousand is a large, daunting number. Instead, remember one: Du'a Khalil Aswad who died at 17 for loving the wrong man.

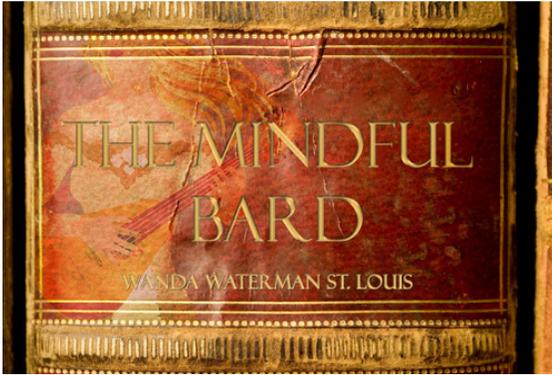
And while you remember her, ask what you can do to stop honour killings. Sites like the International Campaign Against Honour Killings and Amnesty International are great places to start.

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International. "Iraq: Amnesty International appalled by stoning to death of Yezidi girl and subsequent killings." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140272007?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

<sup>2</sup> *The Guardian*, 2007. "You can come upon women's bodies anywhere." Retrieved Oct. 4, 2007, from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,2082705,00.html>

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International. "Stop 'honour killings' in Iraq." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/svaw-060607-action-eng>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Population Fund. "'Honour' Killings." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/english/ch03.html>



## *Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World*

DVD: *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*

Release date: 2006

Director: Zhang Yimou. Written by Zhang Yimou, Zou Jingzhi, and Wang Bin

Takata, an elderly Japanese fisherman, launches himself on an odyssey of reunion. He is trying to win back the affections of his dying son Ken-ichi before it is too late.

Takata hopes that if he can perform an apt heroic deed his son's heart will soften toward him and their relationship will begin anew. This heroic deed, he believes, is to finish the film his son was working on in China's Yunnan province, the final scene of which was to show a singer named Li performing the mask opera *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*.

Li, however, has since been imprisoned, and it is no easy matter getting into the prison to film him. Takata patiently persists, and the Chinese not only acquiesce, they are moved by the sheer beauty of his purpose.

But at the prison Li is unable to sing, dissolving in a release of pent-up, affective flooding that is not for the squeamish viewer. He confesses that he is overcome by a longing to see the illegitimate son whom he has never met. Takata agrees to go and get Li's son and bring him for a visit so that Li can sing *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* for Takata's camera.

Takata finds the son, Yang Yang, who is under the somewhat overprotective care of an entire bustling village. While taking Yang Yang to see his father, the tractor that pulls the cart they are riding in breaks down and the boy runs away. Takata pursues him through a magnificent and highly symbolic maze of rock in the Yunnan's Stone Forest. Finding the boy, Takata waits with him until they are rescued. Yang Yang is delighted to be allowed to blow Takata's boat whistle to summon the rescuers.

It is worthwhile to examine the differences between Japanese and Chinese culture as the film's director, Zhang Yimou, presents them, differences that carry the film's message.

The Japanese are dressed in as many variations of neutral-coloured L.L. Bean woolens and tweeds as my New England relatives. They are the solitaires, the island dwellers (both literally and figuratively) longing intensely for a profound communion with others and all but helpless to initiate connection (make note of Takata's response to Li's emotional breakdown).

The Chinese villagers, in contrast, live in intense and continual community, but do not respect individuality, as seen when the village chief, at Takata's insistence, asks Yang Yang if he wants to visit his father. When the young Yang Yang, weeping, defiantly asserts that he will not visit his father, the chief scolds the boy, telling him he must obey his elders.

When Takata finally takes leave of Yang Yang, the boy races after the departing car, fiercely blowing the boat whistle. The whistle is screaming what the boy can't: *I am here! Find me, Father! Find me!*

It is only in the final words of Ken-ichi that we learn of the sense of desolation behind his rejection of his father: "I could not face the distance between us." Clearly this was Yang Yang's reason as well.

This is a story about the longing for community that wells up within the solitary soul. It is also about the indomitable solitude of the self within community.

Paul Tillich, in *The Eternal Now*, writes that man ". . . is not only alone; he also knows that he is alone. Aware of what he is, he asks the question of his aloneness. He asks why he is alone, and how he can triumph over his being alone. For this aloneness he cannot endure. Neither can he escape it."

*The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard's criteria, please drop a line to [bard@voicemagazine.org](mailto:bard@voicemagazine.org). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.*

## CLICK ON THIS - Taster's Choice

Lonita Fraser

It's harvest time and Thanksgiving and Halloween approach, so thoughts of many a soul turn to bringing in the crops and raking in the sugar on the 31st.

The latter may just be a treat, an extra, but the basic truth of the matter is that if we don't eat, we don't live. Food might be a horrid habit, but like sleeping and breathing, we are compelled to do it. Mind you, starvation aside, there are some lines I personally would never cross food-wise.

### Weird Foods From Around the World

One man's treat is another man's trash. It's a lesson in how what seems normal to us is by no means as normal to anyone else. Bear this in mind the next time someone you know spouts off about some cultures and their eating of dog.

### Strange Food From Around the World

A simple list of things in other countries that might, to you, sound a bit odd.

### WildRecipes

Adventurous I may be, but there are things on this page I couldn't put in my mouth even if I was starving to death. Please view with caution; this page may not be suitable for anyone with a weak stomach.

### Weird Food

Coffee-flavoured chewing gum and burger-flavoured chips? Much as I like all four of these items (okay, I don't like gum, but let's pretend for just a moment), I do not think I would want them in any way combined. Reminds me of the time they made bird's nest ice cream on *Iron Chef America*. Eww.

### Deep End Dining

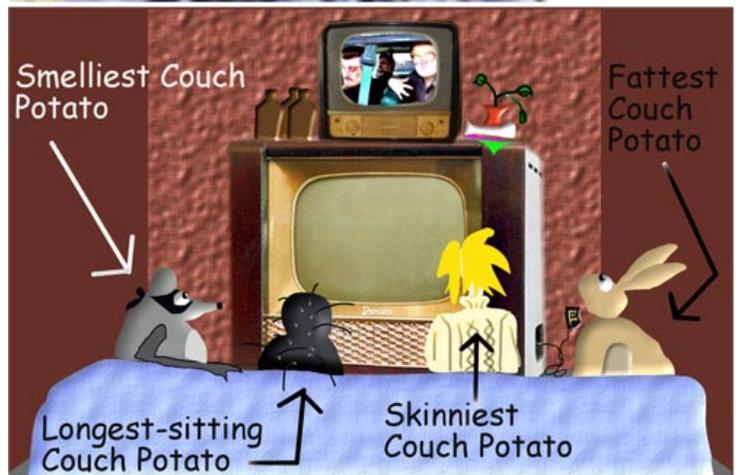
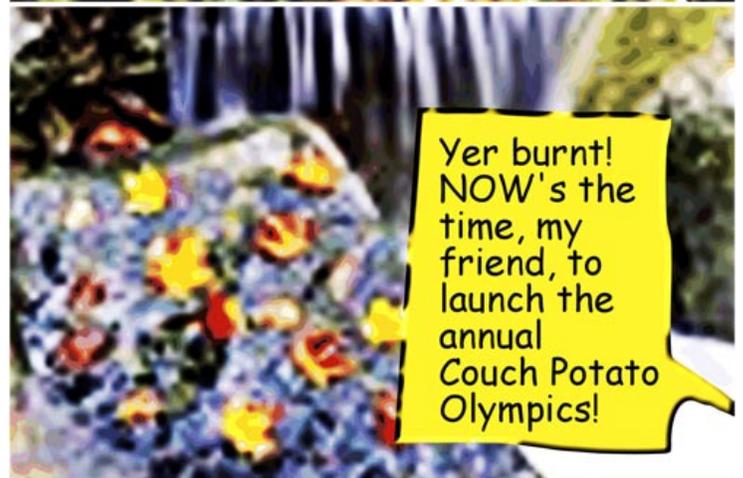
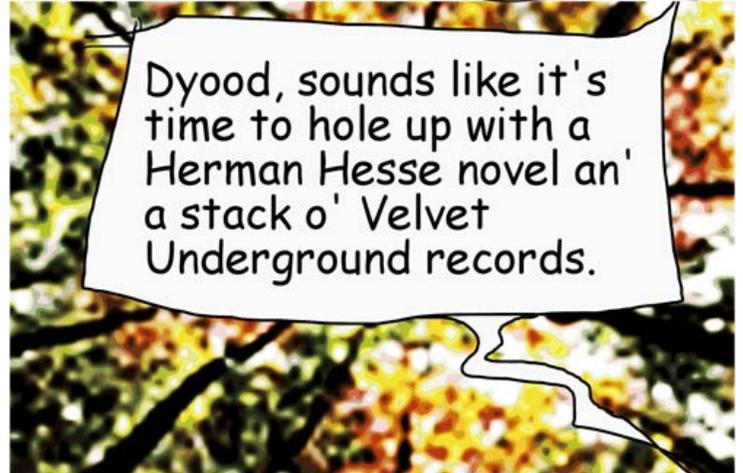
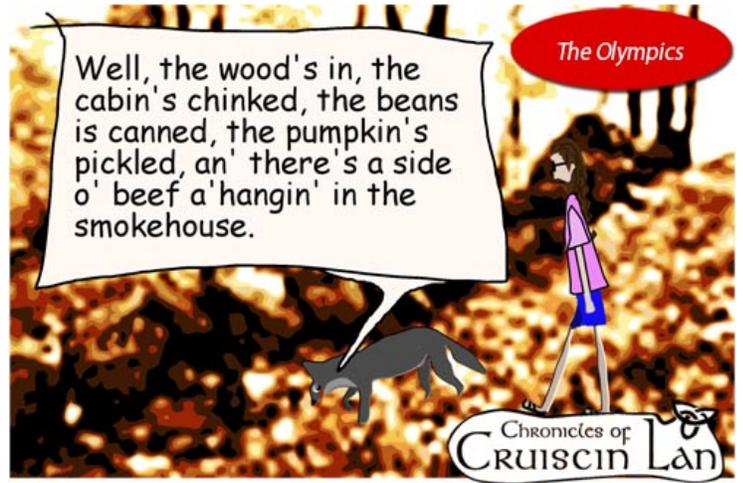
A website dedicated to the gastronomically odd.

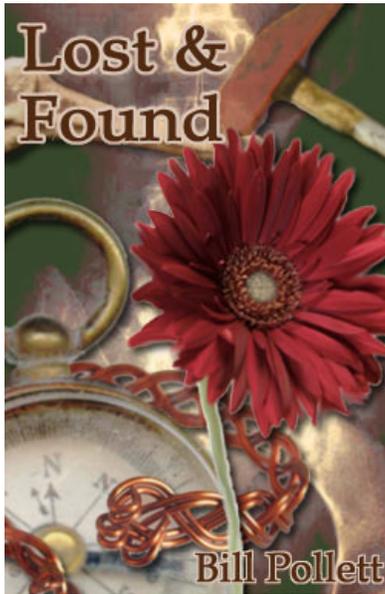
### Weird Meat

I know people eat chocolate-covered crickets and all that, but . . . okay, I'll say just this one word, because I think it'll be enough for what's on the front of this site right now: larvae. I'm sure there's something else, but I got an eyeful of that and just had to turn away.

# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis





## Befriending the Enemy

It's a night in late summer. We're gathered around the barbecue in the back yard of my friend's cabin on the Sunshine Coast. There are maybe a half dozen of us, drinking beer and eating grilled oysters. There's this American guy from Idaho—checked shirt, baseball cap, one of those foghorn voices you can hear from miles away. He's plump, maybe in his mid-fifties, owns a chain of repair garages. Turns out he's a Bush supporter, with a big-time grudge against trade unions and the "liberal media." He's smoking a miniature cigar that smells like it's been dipped in bat guano. He's the kind of guy to whom any true-blooded, progressive-minded, socialist-leaning bloke like myself could very easily take an intense dislike.

Problem is, he's an utterly charming and apparently decent man. Turns out he's spent a lot of his weekends over the past few years helping to set up a community garden for disadvantaged senior citizens. He's been married to the same woman for 26 years, and he talks about her with affection and

respect.

When he's not aggressively ranting about politics, the stories he tells about his travels through India, his dysfunctional family, the fortunes he has made and lost over the years, are interesting and filled with a subtle, self-deprecating humour. Near the end of the night, I see him in the living room, surrounded by four or five young kids, my daughter included, who are watching him perform some pretty well-done magic tricks. Their faces are alive with laughter and delight.

Contrast this to another evening, some months earlier. I'm sitting in an Irish pub in downtown Vancouver in the company of two friends and a third man I know slightly, a writer whose work I have admired for years. I have more than one volume of his work sitting on my bookshelf at home. When I read his words on the page, they seem to me to be illuminated with grace and beauty and wisdom.

Problem is, I find myself thinking that, in person, he's a tedious windbag—self-aggrandizing and almost completely humourless. I have this insane urge to pour his glass of single malt Scotch down the back of his shirt.

Our opinions of, and relationships with, others should be much simpler and more clear-cut. The people who don't share our views and values should be obvious buffoons, objects of clear ridicule. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work that way. Time and again, we find that relationships are frustratingly complex, challenging our pat, easily formed assumptions and prejudices. Which, come to think of it, may not be such a bad thing after all.

## Nightwish - *Dark Passion Play*



Release date: September 26, 2007

Label: Nuclear Blast/Roadrunner Records

Tracks: 13

Rating: 10

This Finnish new-metal band has succeeded in creating an overwhelmingly operatic experience with their sixth studio release, *Dark Passion Play*.

Thanks to the collaboration between the five existing Nightwish members and the London Session Orchestra, this entire record plays like a night at some strange, fantastic opera. Entirely spooky during most of the tracks, this band has written a set of songs that work cumulatively to play with your head a little; first with a bit of trash metal, then a bit of '80s glam rock, then the sweet, soft, and endearing composition that is "Eva."

Because the tone never fully changes, the album moves from extreme to extreme while never letting the listener feel that the songs don't work together, despite a differing focus.

The incorporation of the London Session Orchestra into the record was perhaps one of the greatest decisions the band has made when it comes to recording. This is an idea that's been continued from their previous record, *Once*, which in its time marked a stylistic evolution for the band, who have been recording since their 1997 release of *Angels Fall First*.

The fact that *Dark Passion Play* has kept the fundamental style of Nightwish's last recording means that the band is happy in the transitions made since the late 1990s and feels comfortable in this particular vein of musical production.

In a sense, this album sounds like Olivia Newton-John has taken on the role of a sweet yet seductive vampire on a Broadway stage. The sweet vocals of Anette Olzon bring the music to a different level than it might otherwise have reached; her voice is every bit as versatile as the musicians she works with, so that the transition between dark and almost frightening hard operatic rock and solos, accompanied in turn by piano and flute, is imperceptible.

This album reminds of those times when as a young kid I went to sleep listening to cassette tapes of *The Phantom of the Opera*, except that *Dark Passion Play* caters to a more advanced, eclectic musical palette.

What more can I say? It's essentially flawless, and even if you aren't particularly turned on by the thought of a hard rock opera, you can't help but be impressed with the execution of this album. It's an undeniable 10.

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### An open letter to Joy Romero, Chair of AU Governing Council.

Dear Ms. Romero;

On behalf of the students of Athabasca University, we are excited and encouraged by what Dr. Frits Pannekoek has called the “second greatest milestone” in the history of Athabasca University. The approval of \$30 million toward AU’s new administrative and research center, as announced today by Minister of Advanced Education and Technology Doug Horner, is a tremendous step toward ensuring that

AU will remain one of Canada’s finest educational institutions.

This funding demonstrates Alberta’s strong commitment to Alberta’s students, and the students of Athabasca University. Athabasca University also demonstrates this commitment through its focus on increasing affordability, accessibility, and quality of education for our members. Recent limits imposed on annual tuition increases are an important first step toward ensuring affordability. Today’s funding announcement will further address accessibility issues for AU students.

In early 2007, AUSU presented the government and AUGC with a document detailing our *Vision for a Skilled Alberta*. It is clear that our concerns have been heard and that steps are being taken to ensure that students’ views are incorporated into revisions to our education system and university services. We are encouraged that we have reached this milestone to improve the main campus of our university and ensure that AU has sufficient staff to address growing student needs.

We now look forward to learning how AUGC and Athabasca University will use these funds to enhance the quality of AU’s offerings and we request a communication from AUGC to our members explaining how this new funding will enhance student services.

We continue to look forward to reaching future milestones that will ensure that AU can address the urgent need for enhanced learning and virtual communication technologies, more courses and programs, and research opportunities for students.

AUSU



## At Home: Canada Revenue Agency obtains list of sellers from EBay

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has won the right to obtain information from EBay Canada concerning those EBay members who have managed to make a living from their online businesses.

After a legal battle based on a very weak criticism of the collection of this information, it was agreed that the CRA could obtain the names, usernames, addresses, and contact details for any high sellers on the website.

EBay Canada's lawyers argued that this information was stored in California and as such could not be easily gathered, but in fact, all arms of EBay are quite centralized and such a request presented no real difficulty to the company.<sup>1</sup>

This investigation will first look at big sellers from 2004 and 2005, and it is the intention of the CRA to determine whether or not successful EBay sellers have been reporting this income

on their tax returns. While any home-based business (known as cottage industry) is allowed to make a certain low level of money without claiming it as income on their tax forms, anything over the \$1,000 per month mark has been cited by the CRA as constituting a substantial income, meaning that thousands of Canadians could be subject to tax reviews in the coming years.

This investigation will very possibly mark the beginning of a new trend in tax collection agencies around the world. In one report by the *New York Times*, the newspaper points out the irony that while Canadians using EBay had been concerned that their information, stored in the United States, might be viewed by American government bodies, it is now being viewed by the Canadian government.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the ripple effects may be in other parts of the world, the CRA will be hard at work processing details of high-income EBay sellers. So if you have been making money via the online super seller, then you might need to brace yourself for an audit.

<sup>1</sup> CBC News, 2007. "EBay sellers could face Canadian tax scrutiny." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/money/story/2007/09/27/ebay.html>

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, 2007. "Canadian court opens up EBay data to tax agency." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/01/technology/01ebay.html?ex=1191902400&en=14b6a07b08699495&ei=5040&partner=MOREOVERNEWS>

## In Foreign News: U.S. seeks support for an Iranian strike

U.S. President George W. Bush has caused a bit of international panic by stating that more and more of the fighting in Iraq is directly due to the influence and munitions supplies of Iranian Shia forces.<sup>1</sup>

It has been the President's opinion for some time that a strike on Iran would solve many of the problems found in Iraqi military missions; however, critics can be found across the globe who feel that this is yet another excuse to exert American force on the Middle East to convert it to democracy and open up closed business and trading ties.

Specifically, the President says that because of Iranian Shia support for Shia insurgents within Iraq, his government has little choice other than to confront Tehran in conjunction with Baghdad.

In essence, it seems that Iran is about to be punished because a proportion of its Shia citizens have banded together with a proportion of Iraq's Shia, all of whom are bent on the destruction of U.S. forces within the latter country.

More worrying for anti-war protesters worldwide is that, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australia, Great Britain, and Israel have reportedly engaged in talks with the U.S. concerning an Iranian strike.<sup>2</sup>

While the Israeli government is unsurprisingly the most enthusiastic to get into Iran, a great deal of support has come from the recently appointed British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

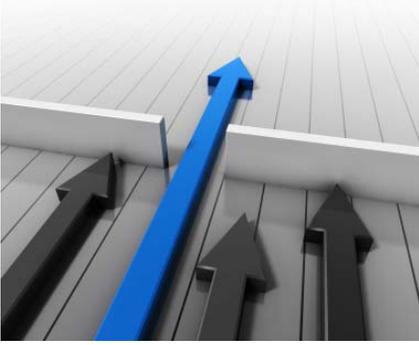
No dates have been set nor have any specific details been drawn up; however, it seems that a military strike that has been brewing for several years now may actually come to pass.

So much for pulling the troops out of Iraq; I don't think anti-war protesters will be happy to know that American, British, and Australian forces have been painstakingly reduced in Iraq merely to be sent over to Iran. But that's just a guess.

<sup>1</sup> *The New Yorker*, 2007. "Shifting targets." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/10/08/071008fa\\_fact\\_hersh](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/10/08/071008fa_fact_hersh)

<sup>2</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2007. "US garners support for strike on Iran." Retrieved October 4, 2007, from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/us-garners-support-for-strike-on-iran/2007/10/01/1191091029426.html>

## EDUCATION NEWS



### Student unions question CFS membership

Five members expected to attempt defederation this year

Angela Wilson, CUP Atlantic Bureau Chief

WOLFVILLE (CUP) -- The membership of the Canadian Federation of Students may drop significantly in the next year. Three students' unions have initiated the defederation process and several others are examining their options.

CFS National Chairperson Amanda Aziz has confirmed that her office has received requests for membership referendums from three student societies at British Columbia universities: Simon Fraser, Kwantlen, and the University of Victoria's Graduate Association.

Concordia University's Graduate Students' Union and Cape Breton University's students' union are also expected to file petitions this year.

The student societies who have initiated the process of defederation share similar concerns about their relationship to the CFS, including a lack of lobbying success, expensive services and internal dysfunction.

Cape Breton University Student Union (CBUSU) joined the CFS in 2001 but has since become dissatisfied with their membership.

Ian Lindsey, the union's president, said that the CFS does not represent about 80% of Nova Scotia students. At the provincial level, he said, "CFS does not have a voice in Nova Scotia."

Lindsey also critiqued national services and lobby movements.

"Although the Day of Action is a significant event, it is only one day out of 365. Outside of this, we don't see CFS winning any battles."

Lindsey also said that many of the services offered through CFS membership can be supplied by individual unions at a lower cost to students, including student handbooks and health insurance policies.

"We researched alternatives and found that, in most cases, we can provide the services on our own, and cheaper," said Lindsey.

Derrick Harder, President of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), which was among the first to file petition for defederation, expressed similar discontent with the quality and cost of services offered by CFS, although his complaints focus more on internal politics and organizational dysfunction.

The SFSS is the biggest member students' union in British Columbia, contributing approximately \$400,000 annually to the organization.

"The CFS is not an organization that takes criticism well," said Harder. "They seem to go into lock-down easily or, more specifically, groupthink."

He said that he is concerned about the apparent top-down approach to running the organization. He also accused the CFS of influencing student union elections, arguing that the CFS assists candidates who are considered pro-CFS.

Aziz flatly denied the idea, noting that she is “not sure where that rumour started from. The idea of us being involved with elections is totally false.”

In addition to these issues, Harder expresses concern over the amount of money that the CFS and its provincial chapters are willing to spend on litigation. The CFS is currently involved with legal action against Acadia University over an attempt to defederate, and acted as a defendant with the University of Saskatchewan when they were brought to court over an attempt to join the CFS.

In Saskatchewan, a former president sued the University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union for allegedly not following proper referendum procedures when they voted to join the CFS in 2005. Throughout these proceedings, the CFS assumed intervener status as a defendant with the students' union.

At Acadia University in Nova Scotia, the CFS has accused the students’ union of not following proper procedures, in accordance with CFS by-laws, when they voted to leave the CFS.

Aziz defended the CFS’s involvement in these proceedings, saying that neither situation has cost the CFS much in lawyer or court fees.

“Since we only participated through intervener status in Saskatchewan, and, at Acadia, the process has mostly just been letter-writing back and forth, with nothing going to court yet, there has been very little money spent in these two proceedings thus far.”

Aziz, however, said that it is the first time that she has been made aware of many of the concerns about cost and quality of services voiced by student societies.

“If a student society has found a way to improve services, I would hope that they would bring that forward to the CFS so that we can continue to improve services for all students. The idea of us offering services is that it is an economy of scale—when we do it in bulk, it allows us to improve services, for example, by using recycled paper,” she said.

“The CFS is what the membership decides to make it,” she continued. “There are ways of bringing concerns forward and influencing the policies of the union.”

Further, in response to concerns expressed with the effectiveness of lobbying, Aziz emphasized that its strength is in its numbers.

“Putting our issues forward as a united front is how we will get things done. There is a record of victories when we work together and send a united message,” she said, noting that tuition freezes in several provinces are a sign that the message is being heard, including Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

While several students’ unions have opted to begin the process of leaving the federation, though, many student societies have expressed frustration over the defederation process. They claim that it is designed to make it more difficult to leave CFS.

Lindsey notes that former CBUSU presidents had been in favour of leaving CFS, but did not follow through because they were discouraged by it.

The process of de-federating from the CFS involves a petition calling for a referendum that no fewer than 10 per cent of the student body must sign. Once the referendum has been called, the Federation’s national executive must receive six months’ advance notice of a vote, including exact dates and times of the vote.

Two weeks of campaigning must precede the actual referendum on de-federation and quorum for the vote is five per cent of the student body.

Following a successful vote to de-federate, an application for withdrawal must be filed with head office. Then, within three months, the national executive of the federation examine all the documents to make sure the appropriate bylaws have been followed and make a recommendation to the voting members of the federation regarding the application to withdraw.

At opening plenary of the next general meeting, the members of the federation vote on whether or not to accept the application.

Although Aziz said that a referendum result would only be overturned at a General Meeting if it were illegitimate, it remains unclear whether or not the General Meeting has the power to overturn a referendum result for any other reason.

Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and Kwantlen University College are all planning to hold their referendums in March 2008.

The results of these referendums and the possibility of similar actions at Concordia and Cape Breton University have the potential to significantly alter the representation of the CFS across the country.

Aziz, however, remains optimistic and hopes that the member institutions will come together.

“Our membership is not static. From our perspective, it is really important that, no matter how difficult it sometimes is, we remain united. We hope that students will see the benefits of being united with other students and the benefits we have in working together cooperatively.”

Rumours surfaced in Sept. that the students' union at Ryerson University was also seeking to defederate. But according to Nora Loreto, Ryerson's students' union president, a motion to that effect served to the union's Board on Sept. 27 was defeated.

The CFS was formed in 1981 to provide students with a united voice for lobbying, both provincially and nationally. Over one-half million students from more than 80 university and college student societies across Canada belong to the CFS.

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## THE VOICE

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