



FROM DAWN 'TIL DUSK Members of the Muslim Students' Association are asking students to go hungry for a cause.

MSA wants students to think fast

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News Writer

During the month of October, The Muslim Students' Association and the University of Alberta Campus Food Bank are asking students, faculty and alumni to go hungry for one day so someone else doesn't have to.

The Ramadan Fast-a-thon is a not-for-profit event that takes place not only at the U of A, but across North America during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. During this event, followers of Islam abstain from food, drink, sex, drugs and smoking from dawn until sunset everyday for a lunar month. The fast-a-thon encourages non-Muslims to do the same for one day; Wednesday, 18 October.

"What the MSA is really trying to do with this particular event is to help remedy a social situation; namely that many students on campus don't have enough food and are in very regrettable conditions considering the fact

that we have a lot of wealth in this country," MSA President Zacharia al Khatib said.

To get involved, students sign their name at a Fast-a-thon booth in SUB and pledge their word to abstain from that essential cup of coffee or a mid-afternoon chocolate-chip cookie until the sun sets at 6:37pm.

The MSA has contacted local Muslim businesses and asked them to pledge money on behalf of the fasters to give to those in need. Al Khatib explained that this charitable event fit well with the month of Ramadan, as one of the pillars of the Islam faith is social commitment.

Furthermore, members of the MSA will personally fund and organize a grand feast to celebrate willpower, self-control and faith the night of the Fast-a-thon. Volunteering fasters are invited to come at no cost.

"We want to try to do something good for the community and at the same time to raise awareness of Islam

on campus. Islam's not something foreign, or geared at uprooting the social order or destroying things; rather, it's a peaceful and very positive religion," Khatib said.

Madeline Bachmann, the U of A's Campus Food Bank executive manager, is also optimistic about the event.

"Last year they [the MSA] raised over \$4500 and that's a significant donation. I'm very excited about matching that number...even half that number would be great, but exceeding that would be fantastic," she said.

For the first time, all proceeds raised on the participants' behalf will go directly to the U of A Campus Food Bank. For those uninterested in fasting yet keen on being involved, the Campus Food Bank will gladly accept money or perishable food items at the event to aid in their food hampers.

In previous years, the funds raised had been donated to the Edmonton Food Bank.

New oil and gas extraction methods danger to Albertan water: Donahue

WATER • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The Energy and Utility Board has projected a goal of almost tripling oil sands production in the next 10 years by 2015, going from 1.1 million barrels per day to almost 3 million barrels per day," Donahue said. "Well, that means 2-4 barrels of water for every barrel of oil, and they are sucking it out of the Athabasca River."

He explained that on top of conventional extraction Alberta is also developing unconventional resources such as coal bed methane (CBM) and natural gas-in-coal (NGC). These differ from traditional extraction in that the natural gas is trapped in coal formations underground. Ground water must first be pumped out in order to depressurize the coal and release the natural gas. For the energy industry, natural gas represents a cleaner alternative because it requires less refining than conventional methods to turn into a final product.

But for Donahue, unconventional drilling presents a serious threat to water ecology. Aside from water consumption, Donahue fears that drilling wells through sensitive may lead to ground-water contamination.

"You get a landscape that is de-gassing. There [will be] gas in ground water, in people's basements, everywhere. The intensity of wells on the surface is much greater. So there's a lot more interference than what's going on at the surface," he said.

But the problem doesn't rest solely with industry. Donahue assigns much responsibility to the provincial and federal governments. Both consult with community members, Aboriginal leaders and advisory groups prior to approving new projects.

"Ultimately, it's going to hit us at some point. So I'd say [that the solution lies in] more responsible and transparent government, one that acknowledges the serious nature of the risks that climate change represents."

**WILLIAM DONAHUE,
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCHER**

But Donahue believes that governments, even with consultations, have not sufficiently enforced conservation legislation, such as the Federal Fisheries Act that protects habitat populations in the Athabasca River delta.

Donahue explained that Aboriginal communities in Fort Chipewyan,

for instance, rely on the Athabasca delta for trapping, fishing and other needs.

"They're seeing changes such as declines in duck and muskrat populations, and in fish," he said.

Alberta has signed apportioning agreements with Saskatchewan and Montana, which guarantee a fixed percentage of water will flow out of the province and into the neighbouring areas. As Alberta's economy continues to grow, Donahue fears that communities downstream will receive decreasing volumes of water overall.

"Water quality becomes a problem then because we use the rivers to take away all our sewage," Donahue explained. "So whoever is downstream has to have more expensive water treatments."

In the end, any cross-border conflict will require the federal government to take action. This doesn't sit well with Donahue, who questioned the provincial government's focus on drinking water issues rather than inborn pollutants.

"Ultimately, it's going to hit us at some point. So I'd say [that the solution lies in] more responsible and transparent government, one that acknowledges the serious nature of the risks that climate change represents. It's the most important issue globally, nationally and provincially," Donahue said.

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