

Action

your bike on 29 April, you will be helping Dawn Farm to keep its services accessible to those who cannot pay for detoxification services, transitional housing, residential treatment and community outreach programs. Attendees will receive a Ride for Recovery t-shirt, a tour of the farm and a celebration with hot food in the afternoon. For more information call (734) 485-8725. dawnfarm.org/events/ride-for-recovery.

3 MAY

CALGARY – ALBERTA SUSTAINABLE BUILDING SYMPOSIUM

Calgary BMO Centre, Stampede Park, 20 Roundup Way, T2G 2W1. 7.30am-6pm. \$495-\$625.

Calling all building owners, architects, planners, builders, green suppliers, and building policy-makers! Come and celebrate The Alberta Sustainable Building Symposium's 15th year by exploring the theme 'The business of green: what's in it for me?' Featuring exhibits and opportunities for networking, the symposium will explore how green buildings contribute to the business of operating, designing and planning buildings more effectively. Keynote speakers will include Eric Corey Freed, a recognized 'organic' architect and published author of GreenSense for the Home. To learn more, call Sandra Golightly at (403) 244-8971. abs2012.ca

10 MAY

VANCOUVER – RAINBOW REFUGEE COMMITTEE

Qmunity, 1170 Bute St, V6E 1N4. 7.30pm. Free.

The Rainbow Refugee Committee (RRC) supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals who are in Canada and would like support and information about claiming refugee status. RRC also provides information via email for LGTB people globally. Meetings in Vancouver occur the second Thursday and fourth Wednesday of each month. For more information, email info@rainbowrefugee.ca. rainbowrefugee.ca

10-11 MAY

CHICAGO – CIVIC REFLECTION FACILITATION TRAINING WORKSHOP

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, 325 N Wells, 60654. \$250 (includes workshop materials and meals).

Are you interested in strengthening civic engagement,

dialogue across differences? If so, then you may be interested in learning how to facilitate civic reflection discussions. Using thought-provoking readings from literature, philosophy and history, civic reflection discussions inspire important questions about civic life, exploring the underlying values at play in our world. Continuing professional development credits are available for Illinois teachers. Register online. civicreflection.org/training/

12 MAY

MARKHAM, ON – NATIVE PLANT SALE

Markham Civic Centre, L3R 8G5. 10am-3pm.

Come check out the North American Native Plant Society's annual sale. There will be trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges, wildflowers and ferns available – all from ethical growers. Unsure about which plants to buy? Fear not! There will be experts at hand to help you find the perfect plant for your garden! To see the plant list and place advanced orders, visit the website or call (416) 631-4438. nanps.org

13 MAY

RICHMOND, BC – REMOVE SCOTCH BROOM AT IONA BEACH

3211 Grant McConachie Way, V7B-0A4. 9.50am-1pm.

Join fellow community members in protecting and enhancing Iona Beach's biodiversity by removing Scotch Broom. The perennial shrub is native to Europe and was planted in British Columbia in the late 19th century. Since then, it outcompetes with native species for available light, nutrients and moisture. Meet fellow environment enthusiasts at the parking lot in Iona. For a map of the meeting location and to co-ordinate carpooling, visit meetup.com/The-Lower-Mainland-Green-Team/events/44746252/ or contact Lyda at lowermainlandgreentime@gmail.com

13-19 MAY

MONTREAL – DEGROWTH IN THE AMERICAS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Concordia University, McGill University, Université de Montréal, UQAM & HEC. \$100-\$390.

The Montreal International Conference on Degrowth in the Americas will explore the needs and hopes of the Americas for a more equitable, post-growth world. Challenging the failed



Shahla Khan Salter, Chair of MPV Canada, speaks at an Ottawa rally demanding the release of Saeed Malekapour.

North American Muslims back free expression

Do you remember what you posted online last month – or last week? Most of us don't keep tabs on what we publish on Facebook or Twitter – social media is so entrenched in modern life that it often seems banal. But things are different in Saudi Arabia or Iran. Post even the slightest controversial opinion and you may face a death sentence.

That's what happened to Saeed Malekapour – a Canadian permanent resident and Iranian software engineer who faces execution in Iran for creating software alleged to have been used on pornographic sites.

Hamza Kashgari could face a similar fate. The 23-year-old, Saudi Arabian blogger is accused of apostasy for tweeting unpopular views about the Prophet Muhammad and criticizing female apartheid in his home country. Hamid Ghassemi Shall and Hossein Derakhshan – residents of both Canada and Iran – face similar charges. And the list goes on.

Now Muslims living in the US and Canada are beginning to speak out against this repression. 'Muslims for Progressive Values' (MPV) believes that Islamic societies should protect freedom of expression while supporting equality, diversity, separation of religious and state authorities, and universal human rights.

According to MPV Canada Chair, Shahla Khan Salter, 'freedom of conscience is not only essential to all human societies but also integral to the Qur'anic view of humanity.' MPV's Ottawa chapter has rallied in front of the Saudi Arabian and Iranian consulates, calling for the release of Kashgari and Malekapour. The group is also encouraging Canadians to write to their MPs and to spread public awareness of the detentions.

In 2010, MPV's efforts helped release Canadian Nazia Quazi from Saudi Arabia where she had been detained against her will by her father. The country's male guardianship system requires every woman, no matter what age, to have a male (brother, father, husband or son) decide whether she can travel or work or go to school.

Whether or not the campaign to release Kashgari and Malekapour is successful, Khan Salter says MPV will continue to fight for its principles.

'We are giving our community an opportunity to engage with a 1,400-year-old tradition of Islam that upholds compassion and mercy foremost,' she stresses. 'If Islam loses her mercy, she will no longer be Islam. There is no Islam where there is no mercy.'

to address how to avert ecological collapse while enhancing social justice. The conference will bring together a diversity of social actors, and will feature a degrowth fair, cultural events and tours of regional social movements. To volunteer as a translator for the conference, or to register, visit the website. montreal.degrowth.org.

15-17 MAY WINNIPEG – VISION QUEST CONFERENCE

Winnipeg Convention Centre, 375 York Avenue, R3C 3J3. \$236-393.

Vision Quest brings together innovators, entrepreneurs and business leaders to discuss and promote Aboriginal business, community and economic development. The annual

development, while developing best business practices to synergize community and individual development. The conference will feature networking opportunities, a gala banquet with renowned entertainment, interactive workshops and motivational keynote speeches. Past presenters, entertainers and workshop leaders have included actor Adam Beach, entrepreneur/author Calvin Darrell Helin and Stanley Cup winner Theoren Fleury. For more information, call 1-800-557-8242 or visit the website. vqconference.com.

Campaign news and listings by