

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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“Walkerville” tent city grows in Wisconsin

By John Wojcik

Sara Lam spent Saturday night sleeping in a tent outside the Capitol here.

A lot of the other people camping out in “Walkerville” that night were surprised that she was there among them. Lam is 30 weeks pregnant.

“To me it was not even a question,” said Lam. “This (Gov. Walker’s) budget is going to negatively impact the health and wellness of thousands of Wisconsinites. One night outside was not an issue.”

On Saturday, June 4, as dusk slowly gave way to nightfall over this city, the first residents of Walkerville began to arrive, erecting their tents. Hundreds more, union workers and students among them, arrived as the evening and then the weekend wore on, bringing with them sleeping bags, more tents, pillows, children and even their dogs. They’ve started still another massive protest in the continuous chain of protests taking place here ever since the state’s Republican governor introduced a budget last February that cut social services and killed the collective bargaining rights of public workers. They say that they say will remain at the Capitol until the Walker budget is passed, not allowing the governor to sneak it through.

Like the workers who built “Hooverville” tent cities in the Depression of the 1920s, protestors are dramatizing their opposition to Republicans’ economic policies.



Each night the tent city residents are treated to music and entertainment provided by local performers and artists.

During the day Walkerville residents visit the small businesses that fill the downtown Madison area surrounding the Capitol, telling the store owners about why they protest. Some shops display signs in support and others help out with food and refreshments.

“We are fighting for working families, small businesses and better communities in Wisconsin,” said Peter Rickman, a University of Wisconsin-Madison law student and Teaching Assistants As-

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sociation member who spoke to the first groups as they arrived Saturday night.

“Since locking down the Capitol to the people of Wisconsin, GOP lawmakers are planning to pass

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their radical budget in the dead of night with no citizen participation,” said a statement from the Wisconsin AFL-CIO as the protest began. “Without witnesses they are gutting our schools, crippling our communities and eliminating programs for the poor and elderly. This action will continue indefinitely until the budget is passed.”

Marches and rallies are planned every day through at least June 11. On Sunday the theme was education, today it is public services. On Tuesday it will be health care, Wednesday higher education, Thursday democracy and corporate power, and on Friday and Saturday all the labor and community groups supporting the protest will converge in Madison under the theme of social and economic justice for all.

There was bright sunshine and a cloudless blue sky on Sunday, day two of Walkerville as the demonstrators focused on protesting cuts in education.

Lam, the pregnant woman who slept in Walkerville the first night, is a member of the Teaching Assistants Association at the University of Wisconsin. She works in the college’s Curriculum and Instruction Department and said Walker’s cuts

will severely damage her program by forcing it to lose some of its best faculty.

Teachers held an open mic on Sunday to discuss the impact of Walker’s budget on the schools. “Kids are the most important investment we can make,” said Kelly Sullivan, a high school teacher who arrived in Walkerville just after she attended the graduation ceremony at the Monona Grove High School where she teaches.

A Waukesha County elementary school teacher took the mic and said, “Gov. Walker and the state legislature need to prioritize funding for public education. Public schools are the basis of democracy.”

Helena White, a speech and language clinician at East High School, brought her two sons to Walkerville.

“We are here to raise our voice against this budget and tell Scott Walker that the people do not support his policies,” she said. “This budget will affect my teaching environment by increasing my case load to a point where each child is not getting the best education possible.”



John Wojcik is the People’s World Labor Editor.

Pollution: Pay attention before it’s too late

By PW Editorial Board

June 5 was World Environment Day, sponsored by the United Nations Environmental Program. Initiated in 1972, it coordinates actions around the world recognizing the importance of the environment and our care for it.

This is especially important this year. After a year of slower carbon dioxide emissions due to the worldwide economic downturn, 2010 saw greenhouse gas emissions increase, to the highest level ever, a 5 percent increase over 2009. This increase makes it ever more urgent as well as ever more difficult to reach the goal of limiting climate change to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. To be able to reach this goal, increases in greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade will have to be less than what they were over the past year. But that is highly unlikely since there is no enforceable, coordinated worldwide treaty to limit emissions.

On this day as well as year round, the world needs to attack the growing problem of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as other major environmental threats such as increasing water

stress and decreasing agricultural yields, before we make it impossible to stop, before we reach worldwide tipping points.

If the environment, especially in the Arctic, continues to heat rapidly (more rapidly than the rest of the world), permafrost will melt ever faster, releasing carbon dioxide and methane gases to such an extent that it overwhelms any possible improvement by human action. We are in great danger of approaching those tipping points soon, and every year that emissions escalate as they did over the past year will increase the difficulty and cost of mitigating and ameliorating the effects. More droughts, more floods, more extreme weather events, more vast wildfires will happen, to mention a few of the more dramatic consequences.

To make a change requires a change in the politics in the U.S., and requires a worldwide mass movement to focus the attention of governments, corporations and other industrial and agricultural enterprises on the changes needed to limit climate change.

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GOP: Stuck on stupid?

By Ryan C. Ebersole

Political candidates often make gaffes on the campaign trail. However, lately many Republicans have gone from making simple gaffes to saying things that are outright ridiculous.

Sarah Palin is a great place to start. In Boston, after visiting sights along the Freedom Trail, she said that Revere “warned, uh, the British that they weren’t going to be taking away our arms uh by ringing those bells and making sure as he’s riding his horse through town to send those warning shots and bells that we were going to be secure and we were going to be free and we were going to be armed.”

This isn’t the first time (or likely, the last) that Palin has been (extremely) factually inaccurate. Back in January, Palin attacked President Obama’s State of the Union address, taking issue with Obama’s use of the phrase “Sputnik moment,” and went on a tirade, calling it “one of those WTF moments,” stating that Sputnik, launched by the USSR in 1957, caused the USSR to go massively into debt and collapse, and inquiring as to why Obama would want to follow that path. It would be nice to know where she took sixth grade history.

Michelle Bachmann, R-Minn., has a few historical inaccuracies of her own. While visiting New Hampshire in March, Bachmann remarked that it was the state “where the shot was heard around the world in Lexington and Concord,” ignoring the fact that those skirmishes took place in Massachusetts.

Among other things, Bachmann has said there is no scientific backing to claim that carbon monoxide is a harmful gas, the message of “Lion King” is that gays can do things better because it happened to be written by a gay man, and hundreds of Nobel-Prize-winning scientists believe in



intelligent design.

The fact that these two Republican politicians have such fervent tea party support isn’t that surprising. At one tea party rally, two-thirds said they believed that their taxes had been increased, even though taxes were lowered under Obama’s stimulus program.

Add this to the list of things Rick Santorum has said about lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender people and Muslims, the claim by Congressman Joe Barton, R-Texas, that CO₂ cannot be regulated because “you can’t regulate God,” and the Republican-controlled Texas Board of Education allowing Master’s degrees to be granted in “creation science.”

Among the GOP base, many of these characters have, at least, a moderate level of support. This may be related to a study concluding that Fox News viewers are the most misinformed news viewers. Watching the channel, a GOP mouthpiece, made viewers more likely to believe false statements.

Overall, it seems the GOP has embraced some of its most uninformed politicians as they gather to try to retake the White House in 2012.

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People's World holds annual banquet in NYC

By Gabe Falsetta

Local People's World readers and contributors held the yearly Better World Awards banquet, focusing on the fight for public education.

The assault by the Bloomberg administration on teachers, coupled with state budget cuts pushed by Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo, prompted the organizing committee to pick the education theme, as well as the choice to honor educators for, in the words of one committee member, "all the good work they do, work that is always challenging and at times may seem daunting."

Pioneering civil rights activist Dorothy Burnham was warmly received with a standing ovation after she received her award. At 96 years old, the program was not long enough to mention all her life's work, which began in the 1930s with the American Student Union and continued in the 1940s with the Southern Negro Youth Congress in Birmingham. She has long been active in women's and peace organizations, and is currently she is president of the Louis E. Burnham Awards Fund.

State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, another of the honorees, stayed to talk with Dorothy, and State Sen. Bill Perkins came to show his appreciation and respect for his colleague, Sen. Montgomery, who fought a hedge fund-backed opponent over the issue of public education in the recent election.

City Council Member Letitia James sent a tribute to the People's World. She praised the work of the World in making New York - and beyond - a better place in many ways. And she praised her "mentor" Velmanette Montgomery.

Awards were also given to Bronx Parent Association leader Michael Arney and Bob Greenberg, co-chair of the United Federation of Teacher's Social and Economic Justice Committee.

Victoria de Ollanta Humala se consolida en Perú

Por Prensa Latina

Ollanta Humala consolida hoy su posición de virtual presidente electo de Perú, con nuevos cómputos oficiales, reconocimiento general y felicitaciones de países latinoamericanos.

Un nuevo reporte de la Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales (ONPE) señala que el líder del bloque progresista Gana Perú tiene 51,34 por ciento de los votos, frente a 48,76 por ciento de la conservadora Keiko Fujimori, sobre 89,16 por ciento de las actas electorales.

El informe indica que Humala acumula siete millones 182 mil 788 votos, frente a seis millones 807 mil 933 de su oponente, cifras que amplían la diferencia respecto a las iniciales dadas anoche por el citado organismo.

El margen de más de 374 mil votos es imposible de remontar en lo que resta del conteo, indicó el director del Instituto de Opinión Pública de la Universidad Católica y exjefe de la Onpe, Fernando Tuesta.

Las actas faltantes, dijeron fuentes de ese organismo, corresponden a zonas rurales apartadas, donde Gana Perú tiene hegemonía.

Entretanto, la oficina de prensa de Humala confirmó que el virtual mandatario electo ha recibido felicitaciones de los presidentes de Bolivia, Evo Morales; Chile, Sebastián Piñera, y México, Felipe Calderón.

Todos los medios de prensa, fuerzas políticas y organizaciones empresariales reconocieron igualmente la victoria del exoficial del ejército y el

virtual segundo vicepresidente, Omar Chehade, pidió al presidente saliente, Alan García, su colaboración para una transferencia ordenada del gobierno.

Humala proclamó anoche su victoria en un acto de masas celebratorio y ratificó su compromiso con su programa de reformas para un crecimiento con equidad y descartó medidas macroeconómicas traumáticas, a tiempo de anunciar un gobierno de unidad y concertación nacional.

Entretanto, medios de prensa, empresarios y políticos conservadores intentan presentar el resultado como un empate que obliga a Humala a entenderse con el fujimorismo.

Chehade dijo que Humala hará un gobierno que buscará entendimientos con todas las fuerzas políticas democráticas y organizaciones sociales pero señaló que el partido fujimorista Fuerza 2011 está excluida por ser este un proyecto totalitario y corrupto, salvo que cambie.



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