

# No Virginia, there was not wide-spread election fraud

It was something I really did not want to talk about. Most polls show that a majority of Americans do not want to look back at, and quite frankly I would consider myself in that group.

Because looking back at it may be seen as giving those who believe in conspiracies a voice - it may seem like we are validating the lies.

But last Monday, while I stood there in the listening session with State Senator Howard Marklein and Rep. Travis Tranel, about half of the people who spoke alleged, implied, or outright said there was fraud during the 2020 election. I felt compelled to say something - to refute each thing said. I don't know how many people these individuals represent, but I know that a lie that does not get responded to, one that is to let stand, is one that slowly becomes the truth - to many, and when that happens, democracy dies.

And since our representatives, who were responsive on real issues, decided either not to respond, or help to keep it going, then I guess I need to say something.

Because when I am standing there, and I hear a person I know, a person that I respect sit in that audience, ask why Andrea Palm came to Wisconsin in January 2019 to become Secretary-designate for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, basically implying that she was here to take rights away during the COVID pandemic a year later, and continuing to do something nefarious in Washington at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, I know we really are at the edge of a cliff when it comes to this republic.

"If the people do not trust the results of the elections, we are going to have some major problems moving forward," Tranel said during the listening session. Well people will not trust those results when people in the know, people in a position of authority, like Tranel that day, do not respond when a lie is said to them directly, at their own public meeting.

So I am going to try and respond to each falsehood stated last week. Now I know, for many of those who want to believe the election was stolen, I will just get chucked in the 'fake news' camp, so you can easily ignore. But these are the facts, easily proven, and if we ignore facts, what is the point?

Brad Swim made several accusations that are easily disproved, including the idea that there are more people registered to vote than live in Wisconsin.

"It is clear with the thousands on the voter rolls, over seven million in a state of approximately five million, how could this be tolerated?" Swim asked.

Currently, the population of the State of Wisconsin is 5.89 million. In November 2020, there were 3,684,726 active registered voters on state voter rolls.

This idea is a flip on a falsehood that was spread immediately after the 2020 election - that there were more ballots than people registered. With that falsehood, people took the number of people registered on Jan. 1, 2020, instead of the updated number with all of the people who registered during the year, up to the election. There had been 3,297,352 votes cast for president in 2020.

Swim also took issue with how the voter rolls are maintained, feeling that they are not.

In October 2021, the State Elections Board removed 205,435 names from the rolls for either believed to have moved, or deemed inactive for greater than four years.

"I say let's tear down the corruption, and build back better with transparent procedures," Swim said of wanting to completely purge the current voter roll lists.

The reason many push this idea is they hope that many of those people lawfully registered will not take the time to re-register if taken off the rolls. It is difficult for us to see, but if you are a voter in an urban setting, you may have to navigate long lines before you get up to vote, only to find you have to re-register, so we are putting roadblocks in the way of people exercising their rights.

Swim next turned to the voting machines in the county. "There was no choice whether we take those machines," Swim said of the new touchscreen machines that will be utilized for the spring general elections.

Those machines, built by Dominion Systems, were purchased by the Grant County Board of Supervisors in January 2020 to replace machines that were installed in 2006 and were considered reaching the end of life.

Central to several falsehoods about the elections, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson told the Grant County Republican Party in April 2021 "I would caution people to think there was some big conspiracy" when talking about allegations that the voting systems swung the election.

Swim wondered out loud during the meeting, stating that local municipalities need to check to see if their numbers are correctly reported to the county, and the

county reports it correctly to the state.

They do - this is done during the Board of Canvass meetings held after each election in every county of the state, where any potential problem is checked and caught before the official numbers are recorded.

The state also holds audits of random municipal wards after each election to review the results from the election versus the audit, which includes recounts, to see if there are any anomalies between the tabulated numbers and the ballots.

A truck driver only identified by his first name of Todd, claimed that the voter rolls are showing people that are 125 years old.

"Is there anyone in here that knows anyone that is 125 years old?" Todd asked.

Prior to 2005, communities with less than 5,000 residents were not required to have voter registration rolls, while larger communities handled their own. After the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 was passed, as an answer to differing rules across the country were highlighted in the close 2000 presidential election, states were required to create voter registration databases.

Those larger community databases were entered into the state's new system. Some of those municipal databases did not have a birthdate attached to the voter, so placeholder dates were added.

Those placeholder dates? Jan. 1, 1900.

There are still 3,700 records that have that default birthdate, and 120,000 which have a default registration date of Jan. 1, 1918.

Todd also took issue with absentee ballots and drop boxes. Voting absentee himself, he noted his ballot has his ID attached to it.

"These drop boxes don't have any ID for the people who dropped them off. They could have brought 1,000 ballots from Dubuque, drop them in these drop boxes, and not know where they came from," Todd said.

All ballots that would be tabulated in an election have to be connected to a registered voter. In order to receive a ballot, a person must make a request either to the local clerk, or through the statewide website, and in most cases, has to submit a copy of their ID. Their address and a witness has to be listed on the return envelope, which is reviewed before it is opened and tabulated on election day.

It is truly sad that in America in 2022, we have so many people believing such falsehoods, who are so outraged that they go to rallies, speak out at meetings, and let their anger fester, but will not take the time to simply look and see that we already have so many mechanisms in place to stop people from cheating in our elections. We bake in having representatives of both major parties involved in the basic things like poll workers simply so each side can verify.

I can understand why so many may believe in them, as we have elected officials implying they are true. We have people like a sheriff on the east side of the state implying a conspiracy of nursing home workers shifting the election. We have voter rolls that can be checked, and rechecked. That is how individuals caught a smattering of people across the state who have improperly used a mailing address, and not their home address, to register to vote.

What those people did was wrong, and is a mistake, but I ask you, what should be the punishment of the crime? No one is claiming they were not valid citizens, who didn't have the right to vote, just that they filled out the paperwork incorrectly.

Does this mean they should be charged with felonies, losing their right to vote? Over a mistake? A fine, yes, some community service, of course, but prison time and eliminating their voice?

I find it ironic that two of the people who were charged with felonies want the election investigated because they believe their was fraud.

Just like Sister Howard, I am concerned that we are not only going to reduce people's ability to vote, we are going to be active in not giving them a chance. I am very concerned that our legislature, in the guise of election security, will install items like electronic handwriting recognition to reject absentee ballots. I am concerned about this because people's handwriting does change over time (just look at Richard Nixon's while he was president). In states like New Jersey that do this, reports have shown people have had their ballots rejected, and were never informed.

Just wiping out votes. The laws in Wisconsin are about making sure voters' voices are heard, and this is simply not democratic. Is this what we want, 'gotcha' laws to take away your vote?

I really hope it does not come to this.

DAVID TIMMERMAN - EDITOR

# Story of Decorah Peak reveals rich history

*Back Home by Chris Hardie*

History and geology sometimes come together to tell fascinating stories, such as the rocky outcrop just outside of Galesville known as Decorah Peak.

Standing 1,161 feet above sea level, Decorah Peak is located between Queen Bluff to the southwest and Decorah Mound to the northeast. Geologically speaking, Decorah Peak is an example of Cambrian Lone Rock Formation and is made of sedimentary rock formed some 500 million years ago. As the name suggests, the rocks jut out of the hillside.

I drive by Decorah Peak and other rock formations when traveling to La Crosse. They are much more prominent this time of year without the green foliage from the tree line that can sometimes cover the rocks in the summer.

I have never climbed to the top of Decorah Peak, although there is a short trail that takes you there. Apparently, a little agility is required to climb through the rock crevice that takes you to the top.

The rock is named after One-Eyed Decorah, a Native American chief who was also called Wajexetega or Big Canoe. Decorah was chief of a village the Ho-Chunk tribe had on the Black River about 1.5 miles from the rock formation.

The story is — based on historical accounts and tradition — the Chippewa attacked Decorah's village and he was wounded in the attack. He hid in a cave in the peak and at nightfall made his way down the Black River to another Ho-Chunk settlement. He returned the next day with more soldiers, surprised the celebrating Chippewa and routed them.

According to the 1917 book "History of Trempealeau County," Antoine Grignon, a French trader and interpreter who talked to Decorah, said, "the battle must have been fought

shortly after the War of 1812, and was a bloody encounter, raging furiously all of one day and well into the evening, when the defeated warriors of Decorah fled from the darkening scent of conflict, leaving their dead strewn upon the field."

Decorah was born near Portage in about 1772 and lost his right eye when he was young. His name Big Canoe came when a French party asked a party of Ho-Chunk for assistance in fighting the British. Decorah and four companions boarded a British ship and the troops surrendered.

Decorah was part of two significant War of 1812 engagements fighting on the side of the British. He was part of the British capture of Fort Mackinac in 1812 and was one of about 650 men that were part of British Colonel William McKay's attack against Americans in a battle at Prairie du Chien in 1814. He was a signer of the Prairie du Chien treaty in 1825.

Decorah also was a part of the Black Hawk War in 1832. His brother Waukon Decorah had a daughter who was killed by Sauk and Meskwaki raiders in 1829. When the Black Hawk War erupted in 1832, Waukon Decorah was eager to avenge his daughter's death and was able to persuade his brother One-Eyed Decorah and others from Prairie La Crosse to join in, even though some Ho-Chunks were sympathetic to Black Hawk's efforts to resist American expansion.

That expansion intensified with the forced removal of the tribe. Treaties signed in 1832 and 1837 called for moving the Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin to northeastern Iowa. They were moved again in 1848 and 1855 to Minnesota, but Decorah and his followers came back to Wisconsin.

Grignon visited Decorah for the last time in the summer of 1863 while he was camped outside of Galesville,

according to the 1917 history book.

"He was an old man then," said Grignon, "his long hair was thin and streaked with gray, and he was nearly blind. But his body was well preserved, and his well-developed muscular form showed what a powerful man he had been. In height, he was a little taller than the average Indian, but he was stocky and solid in build. He was discouraged with the outlook for his people, and said that he had not been dealt with fairly by the government."

Decorah died near Tunnel City between Sparta and Tomah in August 1864.

"In the dingy, smoky wigwam among a few of his loyal band, the old chief departed for the "happy hunting ground," leaving behind the cringing form of poverty that had cursed his old age, and dimmed the glory of his sunset," the 1917 history book says. "He, who once held sway over his flourishing village, and counted a territory as his domain, larger than Trempealeau County, fell asleep, the feeble ruler of a single tepee, its very dirt and rags not his own."

But the Decorah family continues. Among Decorah's descendants were Princess Marie Nounka, after which the present-day Lake Marinuka in Galesville was named. Decorah Prairie is the name given to the fertile land below Decorah's Peak and Decorah Cemetery stands in the middle of the prairie. Decorah and Waukon in Iowa are named after the Decorah family and it remains a common Ho-Chunk name.

So there's a lot more to the story than just a rock point. I think I need to take a trip up the path this year to visit Decorah Peak in person.

*Chris Hardie spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and publisher. He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and won dozens of state and national journalism awards. He is a former president of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association. Contact him at chardie1963@gmail.com.*



# Company 'speed dates' will match major firms, emerging businesses

**MADISON** — If you've ever gone on a "speed date," and even if you haven't, you probably get the concept: A short meeting in which both parties exchange a bit of information about one another and break the ice, with the goal of moving to the next level... or simply moving on with no regrets.

That's the concept behind the ninth Wisconsin Tech Summit, which will be held in-person March 14 in Green Bay's iconic Lambeau Field.

More on the corporate speed date format to follow, but your first question may be: "Why Lambeau Field?"

Lambeau is symbolic of the partnership between the Green Bay Packers, Microsoft, TiletownTech and other community leaders to build a stronger economy in northeast Wisconsin. The Packers see value in engaging in the state's larger economy; Microsoft has research, education and broadband interests in Wisconsin (and a company president, Brad Smith, who hails from Appleton); and TiletownTech is a Green Bay accelerator focused on high-growth startups.

So, it's a natural fit for Lambeau to be where some of Wisconsin's biggest corporate names and a mix of emerging companies, mostly in tech sectors, will gather to talk about kindling a relationship.

On the "major firm" side of the aisle on March 14 will be 3M, Advocate Aurora Research Institute, American Family Insurance, Exact Sciences, Findorff, J.P. Morgan,

**INSIDE WISCONSIN**

BY TOM STILL

Johnson Controls, Kimberly Clark, Kwik Trip, Marshfield Clinic Health Systems, OEM Fabricators, Oshkosh Corp., Rockwell Automation, Schreiber Foods, Shive-Hattery, Sub-Zero Group and TiletownTech. Some may be headquartered elsewhere, but they all have a Wisconsin presence.

Emerging companies can apply through the Wisconsin Technology Council website to meet with representatives of those companies — and perhaps other firms to be announced soon.

How does the Tech Summit work? Imagine scores of 15-minute "speed dates" between major companies and emerging companies, spread over the day. Many emerging companies wind up with dance cards that include multiple major firms.

The goal is to find areas of common interest — research and development, supply chain, sales channels, even investment or acquisition. In short, it's about investigating potential strategic partnerships.

The meetings are purposely short to give the major companies a taste of what the emerging companies can offer, and to schedule as many meetings as possible for

all concerned. Sometimes there's a match; sometimes not.

Major companies only meet with emerging companies they choose to engage with, which means the summit is much less of a random meet-up than a calculated process based on what the young companies may offer in technology or other services.

Over time, according to Tech Council surveys, good things often happen after the young companies leave the meeting room. About 40 percent of those sessions result in some sort of interaction later. Some follow-ups have produced strategic partnerships or simply targeted contacts with others who can provide advice.

How do young companies take part? They visit [wistechsummit.com](http://wistechsummit.com) to learn more, register and to fill out a short application form. Any fees can be refunded if an emerging firm is not selected.

For young companies, success is not exclusively about raising angel and venture capital. It's about making the right business connections.

Large and small companies often travel in different "orbits," even if they're in the same business sectors, and they rarely collide except by chance. The Wisconsin Tech Summit's speed-dating format aims to help some of those orbits to cross — and the state's business development stars to better align.

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