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MGC's Newest Partner-

A Winning Proposition for the Area

No, I'm not a prognosticator. I can't tell you which games to bet on. But it really doesn't matter what the Pit Spitters' record turns out to be, their owners and management have already proved they are nothing but winners for our local area.



In addition to playing host to the MGC's annual Clean UP Green Up event, the Pit Spitters have made a commitment to sustainability in their new location. Management is currently working with American Waste to implement comprehensive recycling plans, and to reduce their carbon footprint. They have already committed to using paper drinking straws at all their concession stands, which will help keep plastic out of not only landfills, but water too. And along with the new paper will come improved food offerings and quality, so everyone will benefit from their conscientious attitude.

So, let's all welcome the new "green" team to our back yard, and wish them a great winning season to match that great winning attitude!

CHARITABLE RECYCLING?

Just a quick shout out for First Congregational Church on Old Mission Peninsula for its 4th Annual Great Giveaway. This event, which was held Wednesday May 22nd offered an opportunity to local folks to donate old but useful household items, furniture, some electronics, garden tools, etc. so that they may be given away to needy people who can make better use of them. It's a charitable example of re-use, recycle and re-purpose in action. Stay tuned for their next giveaway!



Welcome aboard

The Consortium welcomes Jan Stone, Nathan Burns, David Schaffer and Will Nichols to the board. If you are a like-minded individual who wishes to see local area residents and businesses living more sustainably, reach out to us and tell us why you'd like to serve.



Reach out to our board by email at board@MGOnline.org.



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SIP: SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE

There is a new certification now, available for Wineries – and one local winery has now become the very first such in our area to have completed their rigorous program.

SIP – Sustainability in Practice – Certification evolved from a set of programs dedicated to sustainability developed by a California group, The Vineyard Team in 1994. They pioneered an innovative and award-winning Positive Points System which helped educate and guide growers to adopt practices that would protect both humans and natural resources. First used by California Vineyards and other agricultural industries to develop self-assessments, it soon began receiving national recognition by government and environmental groups. By 2002 the program had begun to shift from one of self-assessment to third-party certification that would be measurable and verifiable and by 2008 a rigorous set of Standards had been developed and the Vineyard Program piloted. But because sustainable winemaking does not end with the vineyard, the next eight years were spent developing similar standards for winemaking and the certification program for wineries was launched in 2016. It took many years to develop these standards in part because they had to be reviewed independently by over fifty environmental, regulatory and

academic representatives, but the program, which found almost immediate favor among California winemakers, has now gained national attention.



And now, our very first local winery – Waterfire Vineyard in Kewadin – has become the first vineyard in Michigan, indeed the first vineyard outside California, to be certified by this program, one of the most rigorous in the country. Congratulations to Waterfire are in order. In order to achieve this, they not only had to follow organic and biological growing practices, they also have to follow an assortment of additional requirements, including water and air conservation, energy efficiency, soil and fruit quality, social responsibility, community relations and more.

Perhaps a celebration of that achievement with one of their wines would be in order...





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PFAS CONTAMINATION

Michigan's Biggest Environmental Crisis in Decades.

Perhaps the Record Eagle article in September of last year announcing the presence of PFAS in 12 Blair Township wells was the first you heard of PFAS – per and polyfluoroalkyl substances – but it won't be the last you hear. These once common, man-made chemicals are now thought to contaminate more than 11,000 sites in Michigan of which Blair's wells may be the least significant. This does not trivialize the problem in Blair. The plume of PFAS that affected these wells was attributed to a massive tire fire that burned for 23 days in 1995/96 and displaced over 100 families then, due to its noxious smoke. And that plume is likely to grow. But many of the 11,000 suspected sites show much more serious contamination.

There are literally thousands of chemicals which fall under the PFAS umbrella, many of them little-understood. But the ones with which regulators are familiar and frequently cited, PFOS & PFOA (perfluorooctanesulfonate and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) have been linked to numerous ailments, including cancer; conditions affecting the liver, thyroid and pancreas; ulcerative colitis; cholesterol issues; hormone and immune system issues; pre-eclampsia in pregnant women, and negative effects on growth,

learning and behavior in infants and children.

What complicates the situation is the fact that these chemicals are practically ubiquitous. They repel grease and water, so they could be used for a host of processes and consumer products, from wrapping paper for hamburgers to microwave popcorn bags, from nonstick cookware to carpet and upholstery stain guards, from waterproofing shoes and clothes to use in chrome plating industries and even dental floss. They are even used in aviation hydraulic fluids and, yes, fire-fighting foam – the very thing to which the toxic plume in Blair township has been attributed.

But the very qualities that made these chemicals so useful, also make them virtually impossible to break down in nature. PFAS can now be found in the blood of almost 99% of the population here in America and has even been found in polar bears in the Arctic Circle. And, once there, the body cannot eliminate it quickly. It has been found that, even if all exposure is removed, the body still retains fifty percent of the toxin after a period of five years.

It's a problem; a problem not only for Blair, but for at least another 11,000 sites, and that makes Michigan a new poster-child for PFAS pollution, and along with Colorado, New York, Pennsylvania and North Carolina, one of the most heavily polluted states in the Union.