On Being Accepting, Forgiving and Fun:
Spotlight on Arts Educator
Michele Apriña Leavy
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Dear residents of Montclair and Piedmont Pines,

Raised in Oakland, the daughter of an Argentinian mother and Bronx-born dad, your fascinating neighbor Michele Apriña Leavy has been an actress and arts educator for decades. When the pandemic hit, all stage productions were cancelled, even if in mid rehearsal, and you can imagine how disappointing that is for a performer.

To keep up with her teaching schedule, she finds herself “pivoting and innovating” to meet her goals. That Zoom thing has actually worked well for her, she says, though she admits it can be exhausting for students. We hope you’ll enjoy reading about this vivacious and inspiring talent and how she copes with current challenges.

We’re all itching to travel, aren’t we? This month Ginny Prior dives into the wellness scene at the 102-year-old art deco hotel, Mount View Hotel & Spa in Calistoga, and Carole Terwilliger Meyers gives us the lowdown on a protected space so nearby, you might have overlooked it: the Palo Alto Duck Pond, “one of the Bay Area’s best spots to see ducks, birds and the occasional swan,” in addition to unusual migratory birds.

As always, thanks to our sponsors and especially to our Expert Advisors who enrich us with new advice each month. Ruth Stroup of Ruth Stroup Insurance explains why local earthquake insurance rates are rising, Lynell Bevels tells us about mortgage broker Mason-McDuffie’s expansion plans, and the folks at Uscanuy Contractors are back with the fourth episode of their in-law unit building story.

What would we do without good heat and ventilation these days? Rahsaan Whitney at Hassler Heating and Air Conditioning informs us about elements to consider before installing a new heat-pump system.

Looking around Montclair, we are so gratified to see increased business as usual and look forward to the opportunity to dine out safely as the weather warms up.

Wishing you joy, great health and time to smell the roses, near and far.

Cathy and Lisa

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Most of us have experienced being hurt or hurting others with words. Words are one of the most robust sets of tools we have. Think of words as a child’s set of building blocks: Positive words build the blocks higher and higher while negative words can dismantle the pile. We’ve all had the experience of someone saying just one negative comment to us and, as a result, wiping out most of the self-esteem we’ve worked so hard to build. On the other hand, one positive word can act as a self-esteem booster and can even act as a source of inspiration.

Powerful words carelessly or maliciously used can also hurt very deeply. The words that we say to ourselves have the same effect on us. We call that “self-talk,” and it, too, can tear us apart or keep us whole. The critical voice within is destructive, while the positive, encouraging voice within is constructive and paints our outlook and attitudes each day of our life. Our words and actions must match our intentions or goals in communicating with others.

In their book, Success Built to Last, the authors wrote that “highly accomplished people use language as an instinctive or intuitive way – and it’s focused on what they’re trying to accomplish. Human beings use words to ‘get things done’ or ‘mess things up’.” That’s why it is so essential for us to pay attention to how we treat ourselves with all the chatter in our heads. We don’t have to let that chatter hijack our desires if we learn to focus on our words and see how they affect our effectiveness.

Here are a few tips for changing patterns of thought that aren’t producing the kind of results you’d like:

• Take inventory of your thought pattern and attitude first thing in the morning or at night before you fall asleep.
• Be conscious of the type of words you use in conversations. Are they negative or positive? Are they critical or complimentary?
• Is the chatter in your head conducive to peace of mind, being healthy, living stress-free, loving yourself and others?
• Avoid failure by developing a new way of thinking that will be easy to sustain: Small changes can make a big difference over time.
• Think about the reward for positive thinking and behavior.

“The state of your life is nothing more than a reflection of your state of mind.” – Wayne W. Dyer
Well, we have been unable to keep up with all of our commitments given that the kids are Zooming with home school. Alison also made the decision to go back to a full-time job in EV manufacturing, as it is her passion and with the downturn in construction, it seemed like a good time for her to chase her passion as Robert could be home more to help the kids. Nonetheless, we continue to move forward on our ADU – and no, it’s not done! When we left the story last time, we had decided on the green roof layers with roofer, had a plan for sprinklers, walls were open, but framing and electrical and rough plumbing were finished, we had also applied and were waiting on permits for sprinklers and deck, stucco was also mostly finished, two layers done. This was in September 2020.

So here is where we have arrived in the last six months:

1. Stucco is done. We ended up having to do an extra layer since we didn’t like the original color. We wanted a gray and it looked more like a mud – the issue of looking at a wee swatch in a catalogue vs out in the real world.

2. We installed the two garage doors. We love them but we don’t love all the hardware inside that is needed to make them work. Our nice wood beams are cluttered with metal work. Robert was able to shorten the rails slightly to make them look a bit better.

3. Kitchen cabinets, sink and counters have been installed, as well as an oven hood.

4. Floors have been polished several times; we loved the look – cracks and marks give it some character. We had put Styrofoam insulation under the floors and we have walked barefoot several times, and we can say that they are pretty warm. We will adorn with carpets when we move in.

5. Bathroom is mostly done. Drawers still need to be built and installed; we had a custom vanity made because we only had 48” but wanted two sinks. The shower is done, heated towel racks in and backlit mirror installed. And Robert decided on a deluxe toilet with all the bells and whistles.

6. Walls are closed up and painted. Baseboards installed and painted.

7. We finally got the deck permit; 11 months in the city! Ridiculous. We were promised several times that it was “coming next week.” A very frustrating process. We literally had to wait for about four months with very little progress.

8. We also finally received our sprinkler permit. We subsequently passed inspection. Of course, the sprinkler sub-contractor submitted the permit, so wouldn’t you expect it to pass easily? That still took five months.

9. We’ve started on the retaining wall and footings for the deck. We would love to finish this soon but with Robert taking on a number of projects, we will see how quickly his team can finish. It’s always a balance (last week it rained, which put a project on hold and to keep our guys working, we had them do some work at our ADU).

10. Robert has also been looking for the right wood siding to match our decking; we’ve decided to go with a harder wood (Ipe) for our decking. We think it will last longer.

11. All inspections complete with the city.

So, we are imminently ready to call it finished. What’s still to do? The deck, some indoor door hardware, bathroom drawers, kitchen backsplash (delayed several times) and faucet, appliance installation and wood siding (decorative) in a small section outside driveway. Then, we decorate and furnish!

We hope you enjoy reading about our journey. What we hoped to finish in six months has taken more than a year: materials delays and permit delays were our biggest challenge. But, as they say, one always needs to roll with the punches!

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The power of positive thinking and new thinking have kept Montclair arts educator Michele Apriña Leavy strong and productive during this challenging year. After a lifetime of collaboration in theater as a working actress and acting teacher, she finds herself “pivoting and innovating” to accomplish her current teaching goals.

“Since the pandemic, much of the arts and entertainment industry has been shut down,” she said. “Many of us lost work. Just as the shelter in place started, local companies began halting productions that were already in performance, or in rehearsal, or about to start rehearsals. A production I was scheduled to appear in last April with the San Francisco Playhouse was completely cancelled.”

Friends who work on Broadway in New York are still unemployed. “Hollywood has only recently begun limited production, according to a Los Angeles casting director friend of mine,” she said.

Teaching via Zoom

“During the pandemic, I have looked for new ways to do things,” said Michele. “I am a bit irreverent, and I like to have fun. I teach synchronous classes, meaning that classes are taught live with students actively participating, not recorded and viewed later.” Whenever possible, she brings guests into the Zoom classroom. On one occasion she brought a casting director from Los Angeles into her Zoom class to share tips and strategies for auditioning remotely in this current climate.

Her classes are relatively small, with 20 students. “When we are on Zoom the camera is on. My students are engaged. They are also exhausted: they are on Zoom more than I am.”
Resident Feature

Longtime Arts Educator

“For the past 20 years, I’ve been a lecturer at UC Davis in the Department of Theater and Dance, as well as a professional theater practitioner. As an actor, I’ve worked with local regional theaters such as the American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, and the California Shakespeare Theater, as well as small professional companies around the Bay Area, and also with companies in New York and Los Angeles. As a choreographer and movement director, my work has been seen locally in places like the Altarena Playhouse, Bay Area Children’s Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Sonoma Valley Shakespeare Festival, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, and farther afield with Theater 167 in New York City.

“As an arts educator, I continue teaching for UC Davis and have taught throughout the Bay Area for institutions like the American Conservatory Theater’s Young Conservatory, Berkeley Rep School of Theater, and Cañada College, having recently directed their fall 2019 department production. In 2020, much to my delight and complete surprise, I was recognized by the UC Davis Division of Professional and Continuing Education with an Outstanding Service Award for my work with their Global Study Program. I teach a special course which gives international students, for whom English is a second language, an opportunity to learn presentation, communication and collaboration skills through the lens of Western-style actor training techniques. This unusual class provides an environment for these students that encourages different ways of looking at the world and asks them to undertake processes of discovery and creative problem solving that are different from a traditional classroom. Most of these students do not have an opportunity to take classes like this in their home countries.”

An Impromptu Wedding

Michele and husband James Hiser met in graduate school at UC Davis in 1992. “It was one of those encounters where I thought, ‘Ewww, I don’t like him, but I’m immediately attracted to him. Hmmm.’ We were off-again, on-again partners until 1997, when we finally figured it out. In the ensuing years we had lots of adventures together, both romantic and professional, but it wasn’t until 2018, after the death of my mother, that we decided to marry. We have a friend who is an Alameda County Superior Court Judge, and we chose to have a fairly impromptu wedding at the Japanese Teahouse in Piedmont Park. For fun, I call it our ‘Elovement.’”

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Heritage
“My mother was from Argentina and my father was from the Bronx, NYC. I am a first-generation Californian! A bit-tersweet memory that I hold dear is that my mom, Emma Leavy, was chosen to be the subject of a mural on the side of a building in at 17th and Broadway in downtown Oakland entitled, “Vintage” by the internationally known anonymous artist BiP back in 2016. The mural was featured in a few articles (including in the February 2018 issue of Montclair Living) and even captured in print by the San Francisco Chronicle. Unfortunately, the mural was eventually obscured when the lot next to the building that held the mural was developed and the wall was covered by a new building, with no way to see it. I take comfort in knowing that it remains there to this day, even though it is no longer visible.”

Sports Fan
Oakland and Argentina converge with Michele’s love of baseball and soccer (fútbol), the games of choice in the couple’s home. “Having grown up in Oakland, I’ve been an A’s fan since childhood and my husband has been a Giant’s fan since he was a little boy. When World Cup comes around, Argentina is our team! My mother was from that country and most of my family is there,” she said.

The Neighborhood
“I love Oakland. I grew up here. We have a rich, vibrant and diverse community. I’ve lived elsewhere in my life, but I am proud of where I come from. Despite all the challenges this city faces, I know in my heart that ‘The Town’ has tremendous potential and is so much more than the negative press it receives.

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Travel
Michele’s mother was a travel agent, and the couple loves to travel. “In 2018 I was able to visit Cuba for the 33rd International Havana Jazz Festival, and in 2019 my husband and I went to Argentina for one of my cousin’s wedding. It was a blast! Since my family is so far away, I don’t have a chance to see them often. It was James’ first time visiting the country and he fell in love with it. Unfortunately, the pandemic cut short any plans or opportunities we may have had for 2020, so we started looking at our home and our neighborhood through a new lens. We’ve taken more walks than ever before, which has allowed us to meet so many of our neighbors…and their pets!”

A Love of Animals, Wild and Domestic
“We love animals and had cats for many years. At present, we’re pet-less, as we lost both of our cats due to illness and old age. That loss was hard. From 2016-2017, over a span of 22 months, we lost one cat, then my mom, then the other cat. Before, we had a family of five in one house – two cats and three humans. Now, it’s just the two of us. We thought we might adopt more cats during the pandemic, but that hasn’t happened…yet.

“We’ve taken to bird watching in our front yard and have set up feeders and a birdbath. The songbirds and hummingbirds are delightful and have brought us such joy during the shelter-in-place. Also, we love watching the nighttime activities of our local wildlife while reviewing video footage from cameras that we have around our home. Who knew that skunks are territorial and that they grunt and stamp their feet trying to protect their space from other skunks or neighborhood cats? And a vixen’s bark is a thing! There are possums, deer and raptors to see. There’s also a gang of raccoons who could have a throw-down with the wild turkeys. If I say that I sometimes feel like Marlin Perkins, am I dating myself? My father and I used to love to watch TV nature shows when I was growing up,” she said.

Motto: Never give up! No effort is ever wasted.

For more about Michele Aprinia Leavy:
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- **Peek of the Bay & San Francisco from atop**
- **Quick access to Redwood Regional Park**
- **Near Montclair Village businesses**

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Hey Lambies!

It’s Hugh from the Hugh Groman Group. I am a hospitality expert, caterer and event planner in the San Francisco Bay Area. I’ve been in business for myself for 25 years, both in New York and, for the last 19 years, in Berkeley as a caterer and event planner.

It’s Time to Celebrate! Or at least it’s time to start planning to celebrate. As of this writing, things are changing quickly for the better. As an act of hope, let’s start thinking about how we might be able to celebrate and gather as the year goes on.

I am grateful that food workers have been allowed to be vaccinated. By the time you read this, my entire team should be fully vaccinated, which means we will be more and more comfortable providing service for your celebrations.

This spring and summer, we can confidently plan for outdoor events. The size of those gatherings is still TBD, but things will evolve quickly.

One of our favorite creative new catering options has been our gift baskets. Gone are the days of a basket filled with a bunch of not so tasty packaged food and novelty items wrapped in a ton of cardboard and plastic. We can now deliver a beautiful basket filled with homemade soups, salads and main dishes, delicious wines and homemade cocktails, and fun items like our famous homemade granola, assorted appetizers and scrumptious desserts.

Some recent examples of how people have used our gift baskets:

• Virtual cocktail parties where everyone receives a basket delivered to their home, with appetizers, sweets and alcohol to enjoy together during an online gathering
• Picnics with a few families where each family receives a basket with a full dinner, drinks and dessert, delivered to a picnic spot

• Corporate client and employee gifts that include flowers, wines, desserts and a few frozen meal items delivered to individual homes for people to enjoy at their leisure

I think we can at least tentatively plan for larger celebrations and indoor celebrations in the fall and winter.

So what does this mean? If you want to plan small celebration events with full-service catering or picnic basket options outdoors, we are ready! Our staff will continue to wear masks and plan events with safety in mind. If you want to plan larger gatherings outdoors over the summer, we are ready to plan!

If you have a special birthday, graduation, any big milestone or holiday party in mind, let’s get you a proposal and reserve a date now! Again, we can’t predict the future, but once COVID numbers come down and we are allowed to gather, people are very likely to go a little wild. In fact, weekend dates on our December calendar are already starting to book up.

We plan to continue with our family oriented Greenleaf Provisions (www.greenleafprovisions.com) to support busy families, plus we have Greenleaf Platters (www.greenleafplatters.com) as an option for elegant drop-off party platters. We have two new websites that we have recently launched (www.gromangroup.com and www.hughgromancatering.com) that highlight all the services we can offer you.

Please email me directly at info@gromangroup.com with questions or if you need any of our services.

Hugh Groman Group
Office: 510-647-5165, Phil’s Sliders: 510.845.5060
hugh@gromangroup.com

Time to Celebrate!
By Hugh Groman, Hugh Groman Group
Earthquake Insurance Update: Why Your Earthquake Rates are Skyrocketing and What You Can Do About It

By Ruth Stroup, Ruth Stroup Insurance Agency

With rising real estate values, Bay Area homeowners have more equity in their properties than at any time in the past. Today’s 20% down payment today was enough to purchase a whole house 30 years ago. Homeowners with 5+ years’ price appreciation are likely to have even more equity. That’s a lot of money on our fault lines! For many, the California Earthquake Authority (CEA) is the only carrier they know. And while CEA insures about 85% of the market, there are alternatives that you may want to consider.

CEA Update
The California Department of Insurance approved a CEA rate and form filing in 2018 that went into effect July 1, 2019, directing CEA to phase in the new rates over three consecutive years, on:

- July 1, 2019
- July 1, 2020
- July 1, 2021

In the East Bay, with our proximity to two major fault lines (San Andreas and Hayward), new science showed increased earthquake risk, so some policy holders experienced rate increases of 25% or more. The largest increases were applied to older homes, multi-story homes, and homes with cripple walls as some or all of their foundation. Increased discounts for retrofitting offset some of this increase, but for many policyholders, the new higher rates have been a shock.

Alternatives to CEA
As with other disaster types of insurance (wind and flood), the marketplace of private insurance companies providing alternatives to consumers is growing. These companies typically specialize in disaster coverages, and you may be unaware of them. With the rising rates, we now regularly include quotes from these private companies when shopping for our clients. Carriers like Geovera, ICAT, Palomar and QBE all have their own underwriting criteria and pricing. Sometimes we can save our clients hundreds of dollars per year.

The key difference between CEA and the private market is that you do not have to use the same insurance company for home and earthquake. For many policyholders, their home insurance company only offers CEA, making it difficult to compare rates and policies.

Shopping the private markets can be challenging. Most do not have a consumer-direct channel so you can’t just purchase a policy off of an 800# or website. You will need a broker to access these alternate markets. My agency can provide you with a quote and a policy.

Fifteen years ago, I made the decision to open my agency in Oakland to serve the community that has been so welcoming to me. I was at Mills College in 1989 on the day of the Loma Prieta earthquake, and saw its devastating impacts on our local infrastructure and economy. Earthquake Preparedness and Earthquake Insurance are an essential part of our offering because we care about our community. For more information, call my office at 510-874-5700 or send an email to me at ruth@stroupins.com.

Ruth Stroup Insurance Agency
510-874-5700
ruth@stroupins.com
www.stroupinsurance.com
Is a Heat-pump HVAC System Right for My Home? Things to consider before installing a residential heat-pump system in your home

By Rahsaan Whitney, Sales Coordinator/Energy Upgrade Specialist, Hassler Heating and Air Conditioning

In 2018 the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 100. This environmental measure set a world-leading precedent by committing to 100% clean energy in California by 2045, speeding up the state’s timeline for moving to carbon-free power sources. This bill combined with homeowner education, building codes, the rise of solar system installs, ADUs (accessory dwelling units), new construction, and net-zero construction has created an interest in installing all-electric high-efficiency electric heat pump equipment.

A heat pump works similarly to an air conditioner except there is a reversing valve that allows the heat pump equipment to change the flow direction of refrigerant in the system, allowing for both heating and cooling in one high-efficiency electric unit. To put it simply, heat pump equipment moves heat from one place to another.

Some examples of heat pump equipment are ductless mini splits, central ducted units, hybrid dual fuel units, water heaters and clothes dryers. In addition, there are some very appealing incentive programs in the Bay Area that are affordable if you decide to move forward and make the switch from natural gas to an electric heat pump.

Among the things to consider when thinking about upgrading your home to all-electric and installing heat pump equipment are:

• Are you planning to install solar or already have solar?
• Does the electrical infrastructure in your home have space to add dedicated circuits for the new equipment?
• What PG&E tier are you currently enrolled in?
• Are your home’s existing ducts optimized for delivering cooling?
• Are you planning to tighten up your home’s building shell and upgrade insulation levels?

Because heat pump equipment uses electricity, having solar already installed will greatly reduce the costs of running the system. Because natural gas is still less expensive than electricity, it makes more sense for some homeowners to use high-efficient gas equipment or a dual fuel high-efficiency gas furnace with an outdoor heat pump condenser. This gives you flexibility when you use natural gas or electricity to heat your home.

In the East Bay, most homes do not have air conditioning units because of our overall mild temperatures. We often find homes with old asbestos insulated ducts or ducts that are leaky and undersized for optimal cooling of the home. In order for a ducted air conditioning or heat pump system to function optimally, duct leakage should be kept under ten percent leakage and the ducting should provide enough airflow to the correctly sized unit.

The building shell of your home is also something to consider. Making sure your home’s air leaks are sealed up, proper ventilation is installed and your attic walls and floors are insulated to recommended levels will ensure you are not using more energy than you need. Air sealing and insulating your home will also increase home comfort, improve system efficiency, and decrease the size of the unit that needs to be installed, decreasing the overall installation costs of your project and saving energy.

If you are ready to make the switch to a hybrid dual fuel system, ductless mini-split, or a central ducted heat pump, give the heat pump experts at Hassler Heating and Air Conditioning a call to set up a no-cost estimate or reasonably priced Energy Assessment or Home Energy Score to assess the upgrade possibilities for your home.

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510-848-3030
www.hasslerheating.com
customercare@hasslerheating.com
When the moon rises over the Mayacamas Mountains, it rests, sumptuously, above Mount View Hotel & Spa. The 102-year-old art deco hotel – the crown jewel of Calistoga’s Americana main street – has courted Luna’s romantic appeal by creating an outdoor movie venue, The Moonshine Theater.

Without a doubt, COVID-19 restrictions and last year’s two wildfires were challenging; but Calistoga’s Mount View Hotel & Spa has never been more welcoming to guests, many of whom consider the inn a second home. In many ways, devastation has spawned innovation.

“I have an idea almost every day,” says proprietor Michael Woods, who cares for the artfully restored 1920s hotel along with wife Stephanie and 11-year-old daughter Indie Blue.

The April grand opening of The Moonshine Theater coincides with the return of mild Napa Valley temperatures in the 70s and 80s, perfect for wine-tasting, a lighty romantic movie and dinner under the stars. The retro theater seats 30. And the 11-foot-wide screen and strategically placed speakers re-create the allure of the movie house with the safety of socially distant outdoor seating.

Adding to the appeal is Mount View Hotel & Spa’s outdoor pool and mineral spa, where guests can soak in the celebrated geo-thermal waters. To say there’s something in the water is an understatement. The healthful properties of Calistoga’s mineral springs have long drawn weary travelers seeking miracle cures. A scientific breakdown of the ingredients includes calcium and sodium bicarbonate minerals that are believed to increase circulation, relieve tension and encourage a restful night’s sleep.

Inside the hotel, a full-service spa pampers guests with the most healthful and holistic treatments – massages and baths that restore the body and soul to a place of peace and wellbeing. The experience starts when you sip one of four elixirs that help hydrate, boost immunity and promote tranquility and relaxation. Choose the mineral mud bath and you’ll soak in a private tub of warm water and Moor Mud, unlike any other mud used in the spa industry. It’s a tincture of organic herbs, flowers and grasses, transformed over thousands of years to cleanse skin of toxins and impurities, promote circulation and relieve stress and pain.

Locally sourced food and fine wine have long been considered part of a healthy diet, and Mount View Hotel & Spa has outstanding offerings in both categories. The hotel offers grape-to-bottle blind tastings and educational experiences every month as they partner with Napa Valley wineries and winemakers. Two in-house restaurants – favorites with locals – make dining pure pleasure, whether indoors, on the patio or by the pool.

For Italian dining, Amaro (formerly Veraison) celebrates the seasons with an ever-changing menu of exquisite dishes. “Our menu will reflect this breadth by having a range of Italian dishes – gnocchi, pastas, braised meats and pizza – an Italian-focused wine list and one of the most extensive selections of Amaro in the country,” says restaurant owner Dan Kaiser. His hiring of Italian chef Taylor Jones is the perfect complement to a region widely known for the best meats and produce in the Bay Area.

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For a more casual experience that takes full advantage of Calistoga’s rural roots, there’s the popular watering hole, Johnny’s Saloon, where you can strike up a conversation with townsfolk. Johnny’s is named after John Ghisolfo, who built the Mount View Hotel in 1919. The saloon, just off the lobby, is the go-to sports bar in town, with one of the hottest happy hours in the area.

As COVID numbers decline, Napa’s hospitality industry continues to be a leader in setting new standards for safety. For their part, Mount View Hotel & Spa employees keep the 33-bedroom boutique hotel clean and sanitized. From the artfully decorated rooms to the impressive Art Deco lobby and gardens, the staff – many of whom have been with the hotel for decades – keep the inn and spa spotless. With so much outdoor space, and a hot springs spa in the pool area, there is no shortage of spaces to socially distance.

Here are just some of the innovative activities the hotel has come up with for spring:

- **Fab Five Tuesdays**, where the staff hosts a blind wine tasting the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Each event features five luscious wines from local wineries. Guess the varietals and win a complimentary bottle.
- **Wine and Film Wednesdays**, where guests taste a local winemaker’s best blends, share tasting notes and watch a film on how the wine is made.
- **Winemaker Thursdays**, where the winemaker speaks at a winemaker dinner where each course is paired with a carefully-chosen varietal.
- **Saturdays are “Date Night”** in The Moonshine Theater, where a light, romantic movie plays on the big outdoor screen while the weather is mild and the moon starts to rise. There are even blankets and heaters for couples who want to get cozy. Once the movie is over, guests can retire for a moonlit meal.

As always, guests are treated like family at Mount View Hotel & Spa, in the heart of a place with an irresistible small-town feel. Let Michael, Stephanie and Indie Blue welcome you home soon.

For special spring rates, wedding packages, things to do in the area, and more on safety standards, spa treatments and amenities, see mountviewhotel.com/

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April Recipe: Thai Style Wedge Salad
By Hugh Groman, Hugh Groman Group

Serves 4
This is going to become a favorite in your household. So yummy!

Ingredients
1 small to medium head organic iceberg lettuce, outer leaves discarded, washed, cut into 4 wedges
2 plum tomatoes, or equivalent amount of your favorite tomatoes, sliced
4” of cucumber, peeled and sliced into ¼” half moons
¼ small red onion, sliced thin
1 medium carrot, outer skin peeled and discarded, and then use peeler to shave the whole carrot into long peels

Sweet sesame dressing
1 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon sesame oil
¼ cup fresh lime juice (or to taste)
1 teaspoon siracha
2 teaspoons sambal oelek (Indonesian chili sauce)
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients with a fork or whisk.
Yields about 1.25 cup.
To serve: Place wedges on four plates topped with tomatoes, cucumbers, red onions, carrots and a generous drizzle of sweet sesame dressing. Enjoy!

Learn more about the Hugh Groman Group at www.gromangroup.com or email me with questions or ideas at hugh@gromangroup.com
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