

'Tis the season to be busy

Busy Times. 'Tis the season for having way too much to do. The next couple weeks bring dozens and dozens of events, a few on the same nights, leaving many of us feeling rushed and exhausted by the time Christmas actually gets here.

I've become a big advocate of slowing down, saying "no" when you have to and taking the time to savor things. Case in point for me - decorating for the Festival of Trees this past weekend at the Beaver Village Lodge. It was quiet when I was hanging ornaments on the National Sports Center for the Disabled's tree, so I took time to just sit in the lobby and walk around the halls of the old place. It's been years since I spent any time at Beaver's and I'd forgotten how cozy it is with the nostalgic look and feel that a vintage wood-paneled, snow-covered, friendly ski lodge should have. Staying in a condo has its advantages - a kitchen being one of them - but shouldn't a ski vacation include soft leather furniture, a huge fireplace, friendly international staff, inviting bar and funky architecture? I think so.

There's a whole different feel at the Wild Horse Inn near Tabernash - one of comfortable elegance and luxury. I attended the last Business Without Borders mixer at the Inn recently and it felt, as another attendee said, like going home. My childhood home was never that nice, but there's something about the inn, the gracious owners and the inviting staff that says "have a seat, stay a while, let me get you something to eat, you're family."

(Note to Wildhorse Catering: the experimental chorizo-stuffed dates are fantastic. Keep them on the menu. The spicy sausage, cilantro leaf and sweet, chewy date combine to make an unex-



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pectedly tasty appetizer.)

Business Blues. Not all of the activities around the Valley are fun ones these days. Construction companies locally are cutting employees as jobs diminish. These aren't just seasonal workers not getting called back; some of the recent job

losses have affected craftsmen and professionals who've been with the companies for many years. These job losses, combined with those at Winter Park Resort and smaller businesses, are going to have a domino-effect on the entire Valley's economy. That makes it important for those of us with jobs to use this generous time of year to donate time, money or talents to the dozens of non-profits in Grand County that work to help those in need.

Go to the theater, enjoy yourself and help the hungry. The Grand Theater Company in Winter Park is offering \$3 off one adult ticket if you bring a can of food with you to the theater. All food collected will be donated to the Mountain Family Center. The theater opened for the winter with "Ha Ha Holidays," which will run this Thursday through Saturday. On the 19th, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" will open and run through Dec. 30.

Nature Bites Back. Be careful out there when it's dark. I've heard two reports in the past week of coyotes attacking dogs and one very unnerving report of a possible bobcat attack on one of the side streets near the top of Wapiti. The victim was taking the trash out at night when "a large gray and brown cat-like animal" attacked. It made cat-like noises, she said, and left what looked to me like several dozen scratches on her face and neck.