

Well.....

That kind of sums up where I am right now. Well.....?

2012 is behind us. Time to put away all the Christmas decorations and get the house tidied up. Time to get all the year-end reports written and sent in. Time to get out all the receipts from last year and organize them and tally up the expenses for our taxes.

2012 came and went, with all its ups and downs and arounds and abouts. The End of the World came. And went. Jeez, what a let-down that was. I've got no faith in those Mayans anymore. I've got no faith in Congress anymore, either. What a pathetic bunch of politicians, ALL OF THEM! Sometime in the night between 2012 and 2013 did we slide down the slippery slope of the Fiscal Cliff, or not?? It's kind of hard to tell.

2012 had some pretty rough moments. Lots of hellacious storms and weather patterns battering other parts of the country. Along about Thanksgiving, the thing I was most thankful for at the moment was that I didn't live on the east coast! We seem to be pretty fortunate in this little part of southern Idaho; we get 4 seasons, but are spared all the terrible, terrible storms and droughts that just about every other part of the country experiences at one time or another. And so far, knock on wood, we haven't had any freakish killing episodes. What is the world coming to, when little tiny kids are used by deranged people to make their statement to the world? That is SO sad. And by the way: it is NOT a matter of gun control. If there were no more guns of any kind ever sold in the United States or the world again, there would still be mass killings. Because there are guns out there. Guns that were obtained legally. And putting an armed guard in every elementary school is not the answer either. How stupid is THAT? We'd have to put armed guards in every movie theater, every shopping mall, on every street corner, send them along with the fire department to every fire..... I think Mr. NRA put his foot in it with that idea. Mass killings are not a gun control issue; it's a social issue. It's the way our society is going and has been going for years. Kids these days don't have the family unit we once had—the nurturing and the discipline and the attention that core families and extended families used to provide. They don't have the attention they need to develop into well-rounded people. Not enough family attention and too many violent video games that teach them that violence and killing is okay, because the next time you play the game---there

those same killed people are, back up living and running around again! Mass killings are somebody's way of being noticed. Each mass killing has to one-up the last mass killing. What better way to get noticed and really devastate people than kill a bunch of little kids right before Christmas? If the shooters weren't memorialized so much in the news and given so much attention, there would be no incentive to create such random acts of violence. Katy Curick had an excellent suggestion—perform a random act of kindness for every random act of violence. This should be our way of life anyway. Random acts of kindness toward our fellow humans, and go back to the old way of child-rearing: 'It takes a village to raise a child.' We need our family units back again.

On a personal note, in 2012, as you may or may not know, I rescued 7 Thoroughbred horses from the place next door where the owner of the race horses was commencing to 'dispose' of them. 'Dispose' of them not in a good way. So thanks to Mike, the caretaker next door who brought it to my attention, I bought 5 mares and 2 little stud colts, a yearling and a two year old, to try and find homes and jobs for them and save them from a fate equal to death. One mare, I'm sorry to report, had been neglected too long, had too many health issues, and didn't make it. I'm happy to report that the rest of my bunch have all been re-homed to good homes, all have jobs to do and will be taken care of and used. It was a rather hard go, finding places for them, until I had the good fortune to be referred to **Sheelagh Zamzow** (she gave me permission to use her name as long as I put it in **bold** and made sure I spelled it right! Ha-ha, there you go, **Sheelagh**). Sheelagh deals in horses, and I swear she knows just about everybody in the country that has ever petted a horse, or maybe even ever *thought* of petting one. Her forte is English riding (wait, wait, all you Western riding people, it might not be so bad!). She knows Dressage, Hunter/Jumper, Eventing and....uh, oh, you know, all those other English things. But she knows her horses, and she knows people to refer the horses to. She was a God-send to me. I'd never have been able to find homes for the TBs if it hadn't been for her. So—two mares went to another guy that runs horses on the track (he'll take care of them!) and will be brood mares and have awesome babies for him; two mares went to a lady up in Bellevue who has a Train-the-Trainer program and she'll use them in that program to teach trainers to train horses, and the two little babies who are now geldings, one went to a lady who is teaching him English stuff, and one went to a lady just getting back into horses who will raise him and train him and spoil him and just ride him for pleasure. That rescue ordeal was not a money-maker, but between Sheelagh (who also bought MORE horses from over there) and me, we

saved several fine horses by re-homing them. Thank you, Sheelagh! There's one odd little thing, though, that I can't figure out how it happened.....through all the buying, selling, pasturing, and shipping horses back and forth out of my pasture, there is a little 6-year-old buckskin quarter-horse mare that seems to be staying. How did it happen that I was trying to rid myself of horses, and ended up buying another one?!? Sheelagh, you horse-trader, you knew that would happen!!

So here we are in 2013! Whew. Clean slate. Except, that clean SBBCH slate is getting filled up fast with all sorts of projects and rides and activities, thanks to our illustrious Project Coordinators, Rob and Laurie. I think we have a busy, and no doubt, fun-filled year ahead of us. I've seen pictures of one of the projects we'll be working on; it is a meadow full of nothing but blown-down trees needing to be removed to open the trail back up. Thankfully we have a grant in progress to get our Chapter a couple new chain saws, because we're going to need them! And, we'll need help running those chain saws and moving logs, too.

If you're looking for a good group to go riding with, and also like to do a little volunteer work to help keep our back country trails open for everybody to use, Squaw Butte Back Country Horsemen is the place to be. We have something for everybody: work (where the fun *really* starts), fun rides, potlucks, weekend camp-outs, campfires, potlucks, and then we throw in another potluck just to make sure we keep our strength up for all that work we do! You can take part in all of it, or pick and choose your activities. If you're thinking of joining, come on along! We'd love to have you; it will be great fun, and you'll see some of the prettiest country (minus the terrible weather in other parts of the country) with some of the finest folks around.

See you on the next switchback!

Janine Townsend

President, SBBCH