

Cost of living raise not always needed

The wailing has barely begun. No cost-of-living increase for Social Security for the second year in a row!

That's never happened, and it may leave senior voters in a snit next month, especially after they've been hyped by all kinds of people who'll tell them they "deserve" the raise, known as a COLA.

Huh?
"When people aren't getting the COLAs, they certainly feel like they're falling farther and farther behind, particularly in this economy," David Certner, legislative policy director for the American Association of Retired Persons, told the Associated Press. "People rely on Social Security as a major portion of their income, and quite frankly, they have counted on the COLA over the years."

Counted on the COLA. The cost-of-living escalator has been in the Social Security rules since Congress passed it in the 1970s. In that era, inflation was a real problem. Social Security retirees were being left behind by a hot-running economy.

So enter the cost of living adjustment, which gave seniors a "raise" every year, year after year – until last year, that is. After the uproar arose, Democrats proposed a \$250 supplemental payment to make up for the increase seniors didn't deserve. It was blocked by Democratic defectors, but that will only make the uproar this year worse.

Since almost two-thirds of retirees depend mostly on their Social Security for income, this is no minor matter.

But out in the real world, few are getting raises this year. The real world is hard. Most people think they are just lucky to have a job.

Can they afford to pay more to finance a raise for retirees? Can the country afford to borrow more to finance a cost of living increase that's clearly not warranted by the figures?

The Democrats must think the answer is "yes." They've already introduced a bill to grant \$250 payments again this year. Those who haven't had a raise or who're unemployed might differ.

But the truth is, prices aren't going up. Seniors may have plenty of expenses, but no one has shown that they face any more inflation than the rest of us.

One thing for sure, the Social Security recipients won't be the ones paying for any increase. They paid taxes in their time, for sure, but they're past that now.

And given the facts, it'd be just plain wrong to tax everyone else to increase payments this year. Popular with one group of voters, for sure, but still wrong.

— Steve Haynes



Doing the math at the grocery store

They are doing it again—those crafty little corporate merchandisers: reducing the size of food packages!

I made chili, which the hubby does not particularly enjoy, and decided as his consolation prize I'd make a bar cookie he really likes.

The recipe calls for 12 ounces of peanut butter chips. As luck would have it all sorts of baking chips were on sale. It seemed like a good time to stock up. But something seemed amiss.

AHA---there are now only 10 ounces of peanut butter chips in a bag. The butterscotch had 11, milk chocolate 10 and a half, none of the sale chips had 12. Wasn't that always the standard?

Remember when ice cream came in half gallons not 56 ounces? A can of tuna was 7 or 8 ounces? A can of vegetables was 2 cups and not half water? Sugar was 5 pounds not 4?

Don't even get me started on toilet paper. I already did that rant and it didn't help because I'm still not over it!

I guess they think we won't notice. However I wasn't born yesterday (obviously)!

So there I am trying to decide how

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



much difference it makes if I use 10 ounces rather than 12. If I bought 6 bags I could make the recipe 5 times. The chips are on sale and I'd be saving in the long run. However I seldom make the recipe so I'd have to store the extra bags in the freezer and freezer space is limited.

And men wonder why it takes too long in the grocery store!!!

I finally decided it was terribly important if I was short a couple of ounces.

The chips are melted and spread over the top anyway. But if it was something that was mixed into the batter it would affect the outcome of the product so it can get tricky.

I know why they are doing this. If they sell you 12 ounces at three dollars, then switch to 10 ounces for three dollars they just got a price increase of 55 cents and

maybe not even noticed.

It costs them a bit more in packaging. It fills up the landfills faster. It adds to the frustration of cooks, but who really got hurt?

Recently I was filling out some paperwork in a medical office. I always leave the part blank where it asks about employment because I have three jobs I sort of get paid for but only one I leave the house for. It's just too complicated to explain!

When I returned the questionnaire the gal behind the desk scanned it and asked, "DO YOU WORK?"

Sometimes I just can't think fast enough. Who doesn't work? A few examples: Marie Antoinette, the Shah of Iran, Imelda Marcos, Saddam Hussein came to rather sad ends; exiled or worse!

But I've since come up with an answer: YES, I WORK. It is a stressful job that requires years of training, excellent mental math skills and physical stamina. And I'm good at it! My job is domestic procurement.

Sounds a lot more significant than saying I shop for the groceries, doesn't it!!!

Agreeing to disagree isn't always easy

An interesting phenomenon exists when others don't agree with us.

When we are children we take our marbles, now Wii games, and go home. As teenagers, boys ignore their peers until they forget about their differences or they engage in a physical settlement; girls on the other hand try to build their case and enlist other girls to join their cause.

But as adults, we try to show how those who disagree with us are uneducated. If our candidate of choice isn't elected, those who are responsible are to be pitied, "They just didn't know any better."

It can't simply be we disagree. No. One has to be wrong and the other right or one dumb and one smart. If only it were that simple.

To simple minds perhaps it is, but if one is committed to listening, studying and looking around our world, we realize many times there is more than one answer.

Sometimes there isn't even a right

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



answer, just an answer a little bit this side of wrong.

Can someone truly say they agree with everything their church teaches or everything their political party embraces or their spouse espouses?

My mother always said if a married couple never fights, one of them isn't necessary.

Religious affiliations (different from spiritual faith), party allegiance and strong marriages all share many traits and open discussions should be one of those, along with the understanding to agree to disagree.

Too many times people fear discussion

because it most surely creates pockets of vulnerability, but without those we won't really examine what we believe. And without examining our beliefs we most surely don't understand them. Our beliefs stem from many places; our environment, our upbringing, our education and our peers. Who of us can't say we were profoundly affected by the events of the sixties and seventies.

My experiences growing up in the Midwest were greatly different than those of my peers growing up in Southern California, not better, not worse, just different.

Bill O'Reilly and Keith Olbermann don't have all the answers, let alone the questions. Just as the Democratic Party doesn't hold the patent on perfect, neither does the Republican Party. Just because the Tea Party is made up of people wanting change, it doesn't mean it is all wrong. Our answers always will lie somewhere in the middle. Why? Because I said so.

Leader looking forward to new year

Dear Editor:

I am the new Cedar Ridge 4-H leader this year, and I am looking forward to another great year with the kids. 4-H is not new to me because my children have been involved in it for the last three years. We have had a great time watching all the children in our club grow and learn new things about their projects.

We have had a lot of state fair participants the last few years and that is GREAT! 4-H has taught our kids a lot of responsibility in caring for the animals, and they have learned how to manage their time when it comes to working on projects.

Another wonderful thing about 4-H is the record keeping that the kids have to do; which trains them for things later on in life. They have to turn in record books every year and in them they have to keep track of what they do with their projects and other aspects of their life.

Thank you,
Ruth Schillig
Long Island



Thumbs up to the 4H members and their interesting and well written letters in the Oct 8 insert section of the Norton Telegram. In addition to their ag related talents, they are very good at letter writing, a trait not common in this day and age. The 4H clubs are obviously a very worthwhile organization for our youth and our community.

John Snyder
Norton

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