

## Of a certain age...

By Sue Stafford  
Columnist

Well, the bad news last week is there will be no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in 2016 for over 70 million Social Security recipients, disabled veterans, federal retirees and their survivors, and disabled poor.

The COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), a broad measure of consumer prices produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI-W measures price changes for food, housing, clothing, transportation, energy, medical care, recreation and education.

The COLA is calculated by comparing consumer prices in July, August and September each year with prices in the same three months from the previous year. If prices go up, benefits increase. If prices drop or stay flat, benefits stay the same. Due to falling gasoline prices that have been 90 cents lower than a year ago, there isn't much inflation anywhere, according to the government.

However, it seems like many of my monthly expenses continue to increase, like cable service, cell phone plan, and house, car and flood insurance rates. Every year, the premium for my supplemental healthcare policy, which pays for the 20 percent of medical expenses not covered by Medicare, increases. The cost of my Part D drug coverage policy also increases annually. As new medications are added to my drug regimen, there are more out-of-pocket copays, which also seem to increase.

This will be my eighth year of collecting Social Security and will be the third time in those eight years there is no increase in the monthly benefit. Those three years are the only times in the past 40 years that there have been no increases.

Congress enacted automatic increases for Social Security recipients in 1975, when inflation was high and there was pressure to regularly raise benefits. Since then, increases have averaged four percent a year.

See **CERTAIN AGE** on page 22

## Caterer offers quality local food

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

Wendy DiPaolo brings years of catering experience and a passion for quality, locally produced foods to her new enterprise, known as Willow Camp Catering.

"I started catering 25 years ago in Marin," DiPaolo told *The Nugget*.

She catered film sets, weddings and private parties. Eventually moving to Sisters, "I met Sarahlee Lawrence and I've gotten very involved in the organic movement," DiPaolo said.

Lawrence operates Rainshadow Organics at Lawrence Farms just east of Sisters. DiPaolo has been partnering with Rebecca Sokol of Sisters in presenting Longtable Dinners at the farm.

Willow Camp Catering also recently presented a community dinner at The Belfry in conjunction with a literary evening centered around Edgar Allan Poe. Last Friday, she catered a ribbon-cutting celebration at Three Sisters Irrigation District's new hydroelectric facility (see related story, page 1).

She loves presenting



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Wendy DiPaolo catered an event at Three Sisters Irrigation District.

meals around local produce — and that's something more and more clients respond to.

"People choose this area because they like the area... They really appreciate being able to get food that was grown and raised here... I found I really like it and prefer cooking for people that way when I can," she told

*The Nugget*.

Local and organic can be challenging in winter, and DiPaolo doesn't confine herself. Working out of a commercial kitchen in Sisters, Willow Camp Catering offers a variety of options for all kinds of events. To learn more, contact Willow Camp Catering at 541-923-8675.

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