



Conz Street CHRONICLE

Have you fall-proofed your home?

By **SCOTT A. TRUDEAU**

More than 75 percent of falls take place inside or in close proximity to the home, but your home doesn't have to be an obstacle course of potential falls. Some simple and quick changes will easily help reduce your risk of falling. Review the steps below to get started today.

THE FRONT DOOR

- Check your front steps. If you have steps at the entrance of your home, make sure they are not broken or uneven. Try to fix damage, such as cracks or wobbly steps, as soon as possible.
- Check the lighting around your front door. Make sure all entryways

are well lit so you can see where you are stepping. It's best if you can have motion sensor lights, so you don't have to worry about turning lights on yourself. Plus, they can save you money on energy costs.

- Consider installing a grab bar. Putting grab bars on one side of your door can provide balance while you're putting the key in the door, or stepping up once you have the door open, especially if you are carrying bags or the steps are slick.

KITCHEN

- Move your most commonly used items within reach. Put the kitchen items you use every day, like plates, glasses, or even seasonings, on the lowest shelves. This will help you avoid using step stools and chairs,

things you can easily lose your balance on, to reach items on higher shelves. Plan ahead for special needs. Ask a loved one or visitor for help every few months or so to rotate seasonal items to within reach – for example, baking dishes that are only used at holiday time.

- Replace scatter rugs with rubber-backed rugs. Scatter rugs or area rugs are tripping hazards. If you prefer to have a mat on the floor near the sink or stove, make sure it is placed securely on the floor and doesn't have turned corners or edges that you could trip on. The best rugs have heavy-backed rubber bottoms so they stay in place.
- Clean up spills immediately. Kitchen floors can be slippery and very dangerous when wet. Keep

a hand towel within easy reach to help you clean up spills easily and quickly.

STAIRS

- Keep steps clutter-free. Give yourself a clear path up and down by making sure things like shoes and books are put away and not left sitting on steps.
- Add strips of contrasting color to help visualize your stairs better. Adding colored tape to the edges of each step will help differentiate monochromatic steps. Pick a color of tape that will stand out against the color of the stairs. Make sure to put the tape on the top and over the edge of each step.
- Try to have lighting at the top and bottom of the stairs. Overhead lights

at the top and bottom are ideal. A light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs keeps you prepared no matter which direction you're going.

- Add a second handrail. Most staircases only have one rail, but handrails on both sides will help keep you balanced. It's important to make sure they are both installed securely so that they will support you.

HALLWAY

- Check your lighting, but don't change the bulbs yourself. Good lighting is key in all areas of the home, but don't get a chair or stepladder to change out-of-reach

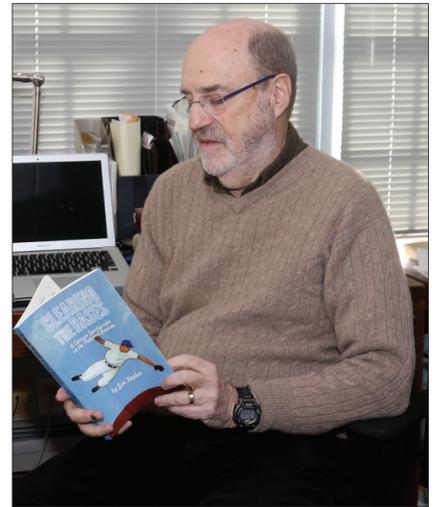
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On their way

Seniors from western Massachusetts boarded a train in Northampton on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, joining with others headed to Women's March activities in New York City and Washington D.C. Among them, from left, were Sarah Buie of Worthington; Jody Plummer of Portland, Maine; Lois Ahrens of Northampton; and Walter Wright of Worthington. Connie Burak of Leeds, a Conz Street Chronicle contributor, also traveled on that train to the march in New York. An article by her, reporting her own impressions of the Jan. 21 event and its significance, will appear in the March edition of the Conz Street Chronicle (The marches were held after the February Chronicle deadline). The March edition of the Chronicle will be mailed to Northampton residents, age 60 and older, during the last week in February.



DENNIS LEE PHOTO



DENNIS LEE PHOTO

Jim Kaplan of Northampton reads from his new book of baseball writings.

Author of the month: Jim Kaplan

By **SUZANNE WILSON**
Chronicle volunteer

Jim Kaplan and baseball go way back. As a kid in Cambridge, he saw Ted Williams play at Fenway Park and remains a Red Sox fan to this day. As a student at Yale University, he covered sports for the college paper. As a young reporter at the Minneapolis Star, he wrote sports stories and book reviews. At Sports Illustrated, he spent 16 years on the baseball beat. And as a freelance writer, he produced 20 books, most of them about baseball history.

His latest is "Covering the Bases: A Veteran Sportswriter on the National Pastime," published by Levellers Press of Amherst.

What, you might ask, does Kaplan have left to say?

Quite a bit, it turns out. "There's always another wrinkle," Kaplan said in a recent interview at the Senior Center. "There's always something weird, something unpredictable going on." Whether it's a single, quirky play in a game the other day, or a years-long national debate about players taking steroids - it's all worth pondering, picking apart and arguing about.

"I've been studying baseball for most of my 72 years," Kaplan writes, "feeling all the while that I have much to learn about it."

"Covering the Bases" includes 10 articles,

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Artist of month: Anne Ely

By **CAROL BEVAN-BOGART**
Chronicle volunteer

"I'm not sure if it keeps me out of trouble or gets me deeper into trouble," says Anne Ely about her love of photography. Ely, whose nature photographs will be exhibited at the Senior Center in February, started taking photographs in the '60s, when she was "bitten by the photography bug."

An intrepid nature lover, she spent 12 summers in the Canadian Rockies on horseback, photographing horses and wildlife. On the first day of her first ride, her horse tripped and Ely ended up with a broken ankle. Undaunted, she continued the ride for six days in an inflatable splint and finally got her ankle cast after the ride was over. When she showed up the next year for the ride, the guides greeted her with, "Hey, Hopalong is back!"

A native of western Massachusetts, Ely's family roots go back to Enfield, which was one of the towns flooded to create the Quabbin Reservoir. Being at Quabbin inspires her but you can also run into Ely on the Norwottuck Rail Trail in South Amherst, or at the Silvio Conte Wildlife Refuge, Arcadia and the Honey Pot in Hadley.

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DENNIS LEE PHOTO

Anne Ely, the artist of the month, displays two of her photographs.

**NEWSPAPER OF NORTHAMPTON
SENIOR SERVICES & SENIOR CENTER**

67 Conz St., Northampton, MA 01060



Author of the month: Jim Kaplan

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several of which were previously published in Sports Illustrated or the Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine.

Some are profiles. The most in-depth offering is Kaplan's portrait of Ron Taylor, a retired relief pitcher for the Mets who went on to medical school after his playing days were over. Other essays focus on Kaplan's reflections on the game, and its place in American life.

They're all written in Kaplan's informal, conversational - and often humorous - style that brings the players to life, and makes the facts and stats easy to take.

In an essay titled, "Baseball and American Culture," Kaplan eases into his subject with this gem: "The Bible begins, 'In the big inning . . . ' But enough levity. Where is baseball today, and what does it say about the country?"

In another piece, titled "My Turn," he weighs in on players' politics.

"While I'm foaming at the mouth, I'm also aghast at the fact that ballplayers who became millionaires thanks to a union as well as their personal excellence too often vote for the anti-union party.

Players would rather complain about their high taxes than go to bat for decent, honest, hard-working, regular, rock-bed Americans getting the short end of the stick."

Kaplan is modest about his knack for putting words together. "I'm not the kind of stylist who can wow you with the writing," he told me. But others who have read his work over the years beg to differ.

Ira Berkow, a longtime writer for The New York Times, calls Kaplan "one of America's finest writers on baseball, which

means he's a gifted writer on an essential part of the fabric of this country." And John Bowman, a baseball historian who lives in Northampton, says "Kaplan's relaxed, no-nonsense tone is backed by the authority of a guy who truly knows and loves the game."

It may be that Kaplan's work stays fresh because he still savors the game's magical moments. On the morning we talked, he described the epic 2016 World Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Chicago Cubs as one of them: "The Indians won't agree with me, but I think there were really no losers. It was a celebration of baseball."

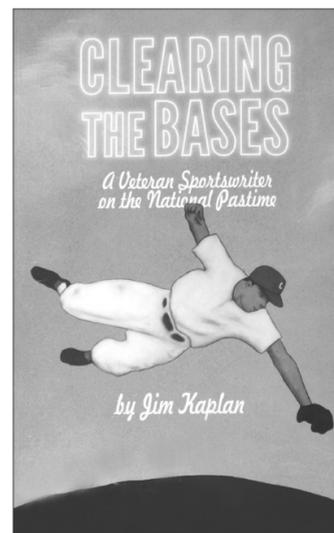
He has opinions, to be sure, but they're not all set in stone. For years, he told me, he was adamantly opposed to admitting players who'd taken performance enhancing drugs to the Hall of Fame.

"But I think I would at this point," he said, citing Hall of Famers of bygone eras whose character flaws were overlooked. And Bud Selig, the commissioner who presided over the steroid era, was voted in last year. If he's in, Kaplan asks, why are the players out?

He's not blind to the modern game's challenges, but he seems to be an optimist at heart.

"Baseball's a tough sell in a time of instant gratification and constant entertainment," he told me. "It's not a great TV sport. The camera doesn't really capture the depth and atmosphere of the game."

But, as Kaplan sees it, all is not lost. He's noticed that as people get older, they often discover - or rediscover - the game. "I'm not too worried about its future. I don't think it's about to fade out."



Jim Kaplan will read from "Covering the Bases: A Veteran Sportswriter on the National Pastime," on Tuesday, Feb. 7 at 1:30 p.m., at the Senior Center.

Have you fall-proofed your home?

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high bulbs. Ask your family members, friends, or neighbors when needed and consider LED bulbs to help reduce the number of times you have to address this issue. They last longer and can save you money in the long run.

BEDROOM

- Make sure the light near the bed is easy to reach. If you have to get up in the night, you know you're just a click away from better visibility.

- Keep the path from your bed to the bathroom clear. Make sure it is well lit and clutter free. Place night-lights along the route, so you can see where you're walking. Some night-lights have sensors and go on by themselves after dark or in response to motion.

- Consider installing a bed rail. There are railings that fit easily between your mattress and box spring and can provide support when you are getting in and out of bed. The bed rail is also good for times when you go from lying/

sitting/standing, and the change of position makes you dizzy. Having something to hold onto will keep you steady while your body adjusts.

- Move the phone within arm's reach of your bed. You might need help in the middle of the night, so having a phone nearby is a safe option.

BATHROOM

- Add a non-slip rubber mat to the shower or tub. The traction of the mat or rubber self-stick strips will help keep you from slipping when stepping on the wet surfaces.

- Install grab bars by the toilet and tub. The hard surfaces of the bathroom can make falling even more dangerous. Having properly installed grab bars around the toilet and tub provide needed support and balance. Remember, towel racks aren't grab bars, but grab bars can be towel racks. Grab bars should be installed by a professional to make sure they are at the correct levels and properly anchored to the walls. The National Association of Home

Builders has Certified Aging-in-Place Specialists who work in many communities. If you cannot find a certified professional, then check with your local Council on Aging for a list of handymen who can help with installation.

- Consider a shower chair and a hand-held shower head. These can help you avoid reaching or straining during your shower.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapists help you continue doing the things you want and need to do every day. Occupational therapists ask, "What matters to you?" not "What's the matter with you?" When it comes to falls, they can assess your home environment to identify hazards and suggest ways to improve the fit between your home and your activities to keep you safer.

When purchasing equipment for your home, like grab bars, ramps, etc., it's important to keep in mind that not every toilet, doorway, etc. is made equal. It's not always as simple as going to your local

hardware store or pharmacy and asking a clerk for assistance — sometimes you need an expert, and that's where an occupational therapist can help.

CONCLUSION

When assessing your home, remember to look for these three things:

Good lighting, clutter and easy access to the things you use the most.

Also, keep in mind that you always want three points of contact no matter what you are doing.

There will be Fall Prevention classes in the activities room for six weeks, the dates are: Fridays, May 5, 12, 19, 26, and June 2, 9. The times are 11:30 a.m. To 12:30 p.m.

Scott Trudeau is an occupational therapist and a member of the Productive Aging and Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Program.

This article was provided by the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging.

Artist of month

Continued from Page One

A member of several local photography clubs, Ely likes the challenge of meeting with other photographers and seeing things from a different angle. "I always want to know more about my subjects," she says and has learned to be patient and adapt to their schedules. Recently, she discovered that beavers have regular paths on the rail trail and come out at dusk so Ely waits there quietly until she gets the shot she wants. "It's relaxing," she says. "I forget everything else and just focus on the moment".

Ely has published a book of her photographs on "blurb," an online book creation site. Ely's book, titled "Look Around...there's so much to see," exhibits 100 of her photographs and shares a bit of information about each one to widen the lens through which the photographs are viewed. "To me, nature is the spice of life" says Ely, and she enjoys sharing the taste of the wild, with others.

A reception for Anne Ely will be held Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center.

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All work is published at the editor's discretion.

Any opinions, or information about businesses, candidates or services do not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the Conz Street Chronicle, The City of Northampton, the Northampton Senior Services or any of its employees.

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The Conz Street Chronicle does not endorse any products or services provided by public or private organizations.

Chronicle volunteer staff includes:

Editor: Lou Groccia; writers/copy editors: Susan Adelson, Suzanne Wilson, Carol Bevan-Bogart, Connie Burak; photographer/writer Jim Spencer; photographer Dennis Lee.

How can I receive the Chronicle?

To receive The Conz Street Chronicle, either by mail or email, contact the Senior Center at 587-1228.

The publication is mailed at no cost to residents of Northampton, Florence and Leeds, ages 60 and older, six times a year: January, March, May, July, September and November.

The Chronicle also appears six times a year as a supplement in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. Those months are February, April, June, August, October and December.

The publication can also be mailed to residents ages 55-59 and non-residents for a fee. A postal subscription is \$18 per year; an email subscription is \$6 per year.

If you are interested in subscribing you can pay in person at the Senior Center or mail a check to:

Northampton Senior Services
67 Conz St.
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Attn: Conz Street Chronicle
Make checks payable to: NSS

NORTHAMPTON SENIOR CENTER

67 Conz St., Northampton, MA 01060 | 413-587-1228

February 2017 Calendar of Programs and Events

Ongoing Programs

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20 Dynamic Fitness DVD	8:45 Strength & Stretch	8:20 Dynamic Fitness DVD	8:45 Strength & Stretch	8:20 Dynamic Fitness DVD
9:30 Low Impact 1	9:30 Cup of Conversation	9:30 Low Impact 1	9:00 Benefits Counseling Appointments*	9:30 Low Impact 1
10:00 Creative Writing	10:00 Walking Group	10:30 Low Impact 2	10:00 Walking Group	10:30 Low Impact 2
10:30 Low Impact 2	10:00 Caregiver Support Group*	11:30 Beginner Tap	10:00 Stretch & Tone	12:00 Duplicate Bridge
1:00 Needle Workshop	10:00 Stretch & Tone	12:30 Cribbage	10:00 Wisdom Project	12:30 Visit from Dewey the Therapy Dog
1:30 Learn to Meditate	12:00 Duplicate Bridge	1:00 Scrabble	10:00 Knitting Drop In	1:00 Gentle Chair Yoga
2:00 Coloring for Adults	1:00 Pitch	1:00 Zumba Gold	11:30 Mixed Level Tap	1:00 Senior Gay Men's Drop-In Group
2:45 Free Tai Chi	12:30 Sewing Workshop*	2:45 Feldenkrais	12:00 Contract Bridge	2:45 Yoga
	2:45 Tuesday Tea	2:45 Free Tai Chi	12:30 Advanced Beginner Tap	2:45 Free Tai Chi
		7:00 Group Sing February 1 ONLY	1:00 Mahjongg	
			1:30 Intermediate Tap	
			1:30 BINGO	
			2:45 Tai Chi	

** Please register before the first class. Programs requiring pre-registration are marked with an asterisk symbol. Please note that programs requiring pre-registration may be canceled if minimum numbers are not met.*

Upcoming events and activities

Wednesdays 12:45-2:45 p.m.
SHINE counselor. By appt only.

Tuesdays, 10 a.m.
Caregiver Support Group. Pre-registration required. Call 455-1936, ext. 104.

Tuesdays, 1 p.m.
Interfaith Help

Wednesday, Feb. 1
AARP Tax appointments begin. The program is designed for seniors, those with low incomes, but will take all reasonable returns. In order for a tax aide volunteer to do your return, you must bring government issued ID (driver's license, etc.), Social Security numbers for everyone on your tax return, all W-2's, 1099s, unemployment compensation statements and proof of health care coverage. Bring property

tax bill and a water bill if you live in your own house or rental information. Please bring last year's tax returns. The tax aide can only do federal and Massachusetts resident returns. The tax aide program can't do returns of those with rental property or bankruptcy. For itemized deductions, bring the totals for the various categories.

Wednesday, Feb. 1
10-11:30 a.m. - Low Vision. Pre-registration required.

7 p.m. - Group Sing
For singers and non-singers alike. Singing with others improves one's breathing, health, energy, mood, and attitude toward one's community. Our Group Sing puts several generations together in a room for no purpose other than the enjoyment of singing with others.

Friday, Feb. 3
10 a.m. - Nutritional Outreach
1:30 p.m. - Photo Club

Tuesday, Feb. 7
10 a.m. - Blood Pressure Clinic

Tuesday, Feb. 7
1:30 p.m. - Author of the Month Jim Kaplan shares from his non-fiction book, "Clearing the Bases: A Veteran Sportswriter on the National Pastime." Jim will discuss personal qualities of the ballplayers as well as baseball and American culture. Open to the public.

7 p.m. - Artist of the Month: Anne Ely hosts a reception showcasing her photography. Open to the public.

Thursday, Feb. 9
10 a.m. - Brown Bag
1 p.m. - Readers & Thinkers

1:30 p.m. - NCOA Board Meeting

Friday, Feb. 10
1:30 p.m. - Chess
Haircuts With Kendra, by appointment only.

Wednesday, Feb. 15
Foot Clinic, by appointment only.
7 p.m. - Mystery Book Club meeting

Friday, Feb. 17
10 a.m. - Nutritional Outreach
9 a.m. - Lap Quilt Project

Monday, Feb. 20
The senior center will be closed in honor of President's Day.

Tuesday, Feb. 21
4 p.m. - Disability Commission Meeting

Friday, Feb. 24
1:30 p.m. - Chess

Monday, Feb. 27
1:30 p.m. - Movie Monday "Southside With You," 1 hour, 24 mins.
What it's about: On an eventful summer day in 1989, a charming young law associate named Barack Obama tries to woo a reluctant attorney named Michelle Robinson. Their date takes them from an art exhibit to a screening of Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing," and to a first kiss outside of a Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlor. Inspired by Barack and Michelle Obama's first date.

Zumba is canceled on Feb. 8, 15, 22

PVTA Photo IDs are no longer held at the senior center. Call PVTA Customer Service for more information on photo IDs. 413-781-7882.

FYI

The state of the senior population

EDITOR'S NOTE: Submission for this listing of events and information for seniors can be emailed to: svol@northamptonma.gov

As refugees arrive, Chronicle seeks your stories

As the Northampton community begins to welcome refugee families, the Chronicle thought it would be helpful to have people in the Northampton community share their own family's stories of coming to America.

The transition of coming to a new and strange country with no family, little money and sometimes speaking another language takes courage and an inner strength. Please share your family stories with us, so that we as a community can reflect on the many challenges and sacrifices made by our forefathers in creating our wonderfully culturally diverse country.

Please submit your stories and/or contact information we can use in a story to: svol@northamptonma.gov

Handicap parking being monitored

Just a reminder that the Senior Center parking lot is a city lot and the city does check for the required placards if your vehicle is in a handicap spot.

More donations for center listed

The following donations didn't make it into last month's list of donors. Daniel and Jennifer Ahearn in memory of Pat Ahearn; Faye and Ed Harris (Annual Appeal 2016); Ellen Koteen (Donor Directory); Mary Lastowski, in memory of Beverly Cooke; Carol Owen & Michael Posner (General Donation-put in Transportation Fund); Maureen A. Sienkiewicz (Elder Vision donation); Lee Tonet in loving memory of Earl F. Tonet from his wife Lee (Donor Directory); Maria A. Tymoczko (Annual Appeal 2016).

Pre-loaded Kindles free to Borrow at Forbes

Have you ever wanted to take a stack of books on

vacation to read at the beach, but they were too heavy for the suitcase? Or do you want to skip the waitlist on a popular new novel?

Forbes Library has loaded up five Kindles with current best-sellers and classics that you can take out for as long as a book, with a fraction of the weight (or wait, in some cases).

Each Kindle has 90 titles to choose from, and new e-books are added regularly. Loans are for three weeks with one renewal. For more information, or to reserve a Kindle, please call the Arts & Music Department at Forbes at 587-1013.

Group Sing set

The next Group Sing at the Northampton Senior Center is Wednesday, Feb. 1, at 7 p.m. It's free and open to the community. Group Sing, which is entering its sixth year, is a monthly sing-along that will be led this time by Chris Haynes on the accordion and piano. Chris is chair of the Springfield College Music Department and has served as a director for the Young at Heart Chorus. It's two hours of singing popular songs. For more information call 587-1228.

Aging issues focus of group meetings

Beginning in March, Audrey Bernstein will facilitate a group about aging issues. "Challenges of Aging with Grace: Sharing, Supporting & Celebrating" will meet the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Topics will include: valuing the wisdom of aging, the multiple losses of aging, seeing new potential, creating and finding wisdom and joy. The first meeting will be on Friday March 10. Resident and non-resident seniors are welcome to attend.

Public forum set

Beacon Hill Village will take part in a „live streaming“ event featuring Dr. Atul Gawande.

His 2014 book, „Being Mortal“ concerns issues of living well and ending well in older age.

His keynote address will be simulcast to villages across the country.

Northampton Neighbors will broadcast the public forum at the Senior Center from 4:30 to 6 p.m., Monday, Feb. 13. This event is free and open to the public.

Greetings, Parev, Goddag, Guten Tag, Bonjour, Dzień Dobry, and welcome.

My name is Don Levitan and I will be writing for the Chronicle on a regular basis. I plan to write about things that are of interest to Northampton seniors on a variety of topics. Suggestions are always appreciated.

I know where we are: Northampton is 103 miles due west from Boston; located on the world scene at latitude 42.33851 x 72.652073 longitude at approximately 230 feet above sea level. We are prominently located in the Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts and we are the county seat for Hampshire County, known in the trade as a "shire town."

The population for Northampton has leveled

Don Levitan's This and That

Editor's note: Don Levitan is a retired professor and lives in Northampton. He will offer his voluntary research and observations monthly in the Chronicle.



off at around 30,000, with seniors making up about 20 percent of that number, or slightly more than 5,500 people.

In three years, 2020, we look forward to the federal census numbers but until then here are some projections.

The U.S. Census indicates that our population is living

longer and that, in 2015, 14.9 percent of the U.S. population was 65 and older. The Census projects that the 65 and older population will double over the next three decades.

According to Susan Strate at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (www.donahue.umassp.edu), there will be a modest senior population increase in Hampshire County in the next three years, from approximately 30,000 to 43,000. In the decade that follows we should see a continuation of this increase.

It is further projected by a recent Harvard University study that in 2030, 20 percent of the total U.S. population, will be over 65.

As for Northampton, it is projected that in 2020 we may expect an increase of approximately 2,400 more

seniors, for a total slightly more than 8,000, while the total population will remain fairly level.

The bottom line, however, is rather straightforward: The overall population of Northampton has peaked and will remain steady while the population of seniors will rise.

I say it behooves us as a community to consider and adapt and/or build additional affordable senior housing as well maintaining and expanding services for seniors.

It is quite possible that we seniors could become the dominant population category in the Pioneer Valley in the decades ahead.

And to repeat, your comments and suggestions for future columns are appreciated.

donlevitan@gmail.com

Check out the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit

It's tax time again. That means it's also time to file a claim for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit for those age 65 and older. It is filed along with a state income tax return.

Too few people know about this credit, so too many people who are eligible fail to complete the simple, one-page form. In 2014, only 13.8 percent of those eligible filed for this credit. (83,000 out of a total of 601,600 tax filers age 65+).

Adults age 65 and older are eligible to receive this tax credit when their property taxes and half of their water/sewer bills total more than 10 percent their income.

Or, if they rent an apartment (without a state or federal subsidy) they may get this tax credit if their rent is more than 25 percent of their income.

Tax filers should use the state's "Schedule CB form" and "Form 1," respectively.

To download the tax forms - Form 1 and Schedule CB Form - go to the official Department of Revenue site at: <http://www.mass.gov/dor/forms/personal-income/2016/form-1/>

The benefits for elders could be sizeable.

In 2014, the average credit claimed was \$849. And, if someone pays little or no state income taxes, then the circuit breaker tax credit may be paid out as a refund check for the amount that exceeds their income tax obligation.

Refund checks will help immediately - to pay for other household essentials like food, utilities, transportation and heat.

For a summary of senior citizen and retiree state income tax rules, go to: <http://www.mass.gov/dor/individuals/seniors-students-and-military-personnel/seniors-and-retirees/>

To book a tax appointment with an AARP tax volunteer at the Northampton Senior Center please call 413-587-1228.

Information provided by The Massachusetts Councils on Aging



The knitting group at the Senior Center displays some of the hats they contributed to a good cause.

Thanks given for donation of baby hats

The following email was sent last month to the knitting club at the Senior Center from Carrie West, an Ada Comstock scholar at Smith College.

"I'm writing to thank you for your very thoughtful and beautiful contribution of 70 baby hats! You are very gracious to knit for these babies and I'm writing to share with you who they are and how I came to find out about them.

"Last summer, my friend, Linda W., a pediatrician from the island I live on in the Pacific Northwest,

joined the Peace Corps to teach at a medical clinic in Gulu, Africa.

"She quickly wrote to her friends after she arrived and asked us to send hand-made baby hats for the pre-term babies in crisis. They don't have money at the clinic for incubators so the way they handle the shortage of incubators is to line (up) the wrapped babies on a bed in a small room, crank up the heat and monitor their progress.

The babies are malnourished or premature and they are working hard to keep warm. These hats

will provide a cover for their little heads and keep their body heat in.

"When I arrived at Smith College in the fall, I put the word out to people here who helped get the word out to the right people. I will head to the Pacific Northwest for January break and will give the hats to Linda, whom I will see over the holiday season. She will be thrilled!!!

"Thank you for being the right people for these little babies!"

The knitting group meets at 10 a.m. on Thursdays.

Trips and travel for 2017

Here are some of our upcoming destinations and events:

— Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Tall Ships in Boston (wait list only); Gloucester harbor cruise; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Patriot Place; Moon River with Jimmy Osmond, Quechee, Vermont; and the Rockettes in New York City.

Even if a trip is full, ask to be added to the wait list. We often can get extra tickets or sometimes a signed up passenger has a change in circumstances.

— Bermuda cruise on tap: The Celebrity Summit has undergone an overhaul, making her the most luxurious ship sailing to Bermuda. \$350 will reserve your cabin; full cost starts at \$1,189 for a double occupied cabin. Passport required.

— On May 21, we head to quaint Mackinac Island by bus for seven days, with four consecutive days in northern Michigan. \$75 will reserve your seat; full cost is \$595. First night is spent in Canada; passport required.

— Please take careful note on when reservations must be made. Trips may involve acquiring buses, tickets, meal reservations

etc.

Due to payment requirements for the Friends Group, reservations must be made at least 30 days prior to the trip date. In some cases, for multi-day trips, a deposit will be required prior to the 30-day trip date deadline. Trips need a minimum number of participants and will be canceled if enrollment numbers are not met by the deadline. So, please, sign up early. We will not cash your check until the trip date nears and it will be returned if a cancellation occurs.

For more information, call the Senior Center at 587-1228.

Here's the planned list for the year so far:

April 27: Boston Fine Arts Museum. \$70. Lunch on your own. Sign-up deadline April 1.

April 29: "Annie, the Musical," at the Palace Theater, Waterbury, Conn. \$133. Lunch on your own. Sign-up deadline April 1. All ages welcome.

May 6: Patriot Place Museum. \$76, lunch at Luciano's included. Sign-up deadline April 6.

May 11: Norman Rockwell Museum with special Hanna-Barbera exhibit. \$57. Lunch on your own at Michael's Restaurant. Sign-up deadline April 11.

May 21-27: Mackinac Island, a quaint island in Northern Michigan. \$595. Sign-up deadline March 1, with \$75 deposit. Passport needed.

June 19: The Tall Ships come to Boston Harbor. 50 vessels from 20 countries. \$118. Sign-deadline May 1. Wait List Only.

July 16: Gloucester Harbor Cruise. \$116, lunch included at The Gloucester House. Sign-up deadline June 17.

Aug. 20-27: Bermuda Cruise. 8 days-7 nights. \$350 will reserve your cabin; full cost starts at \$1,189 for a double occupied cabin. Passport required. Sign-up deadline May 1.

Oct. 5: "Moon River." Andy Williams' songs performed by Jimmy Osmond. Lunch included at Mohegan Sun Casino. \$87. Sign-up deadline Sept. 5.



Coffee With a Cop

Northampton Police Chief Jody Kasper talks with Senior Center participant Carla Bee during last month's Coffee With a Cop event at the center on Jan. 13. This is a monthly opportunity at various spots in the city for police officers and citizens to sit down together, enjoy a beverage, and talk. The goal is to give community members a chance to meet their local officers and get to know them in an informal, relaxed setting. There will be no agendas or speeches, just a chance to voice concerns, ask questions and meet the officers in your neighborhood.