



## Practices for your protection

Iowa has begun reopening, and medical services such as elective surgeries and dental appointments are again being scheduled. We realize and respect the fact that many TRAIL members and volunteers still want or need to continue sheltering in place. Others, however, may be ready to request transportation or other TRAIL volunteer services—and we want to be ready to serve our members while coronavirus protections are still advised.

Toward that end, TRAIL is developing volunteer-service guidelines based on the best available medical and scientific advice. These guidelines will pertain to volunteer services available to Full members such as transportation and in-home chores, like changing smoke detector batteries, that do not require close in-person contact between the member and volunteer.



In the case of volunteer transportation, we will require both the member and volunteer driver to wear face masks at all times, ask that they maintain appropriate social distance while outside the vehicle, require the passenger to sit in the back seat during the drive, and take various

other precautions. We will also supply the driver with hand sanitizer and ask that interior and exterior surfaces be cleaned before and after each ride.

We expect to finalize these guidelines very soon and will share them with all TRAIL volunteers and post on the member website. We will review and update the guidelines on a regular basis as the virus situation evolves. In addition, we will keep in close contact with our colleagues in the [Village to Village Network](#) and stay abreast of best practices followed by other aging-in-place organizations nationwide.

As always, we deeply appreciate your loyalty and patience as we work through the challenges posed by COVID-19. Please let us know if you feel there is more we can or should be doing to serve member needs. Whatever the “new normal” looks like, we’re eager to get back to seeing more of you face-to-face—and if our faces are masked, know that we’ll be smiling. Hang in there!

—The TRAIL Staff and Board



## Happy Belated Birthday, TRAIL!

The day passed quietly but was important nonetheless: TRAIL of Johnson County marked its third birthday on Friday, April 24.

TRAIL’s goal continues to be helping Johnson County residents age more safely and comfortably in the places they call home. We couldn’t do so without your support as TRAIL members, volunteers, donors, vendors, and friends.

Here’s to many more years of thriving together!

## Face masks update

The past month has been a busy one! When the Senior Center and TRAIL asked for volunteers to sew and deliver face masks, the community responded. As part of the “Sewing for Seniors” project:

- ★ **64** people did the sewing
- ★ **1,300** masks were created
- ★ **18** volunteers delivered masks to more than **384** residential addresses

Not only that, but people responded to the request for monetary donations to help pay for the fabric. More than \$2,500 was raised. With the additional funds, the project continues. Requests from some area organizations have been filled, including residents of Capitol Street Apartments, Jefferson Point, Ecumenical Towers, and Diamond Senior Apartments.

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**“I am getting ready to go out for groceries and I am wearing my new mask—which I love!—that was made and delivered by volunteers from The Center and TRAIL of Johnson County. I just want to say thank you very, very much. I appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness and all the work you went through to make this happen. Thanks to everyone!”**

—A TRAIL member

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If you need a free mask, call the TRAIL Office at 319-800-9003 and leave a message with your name, address, and contact information (phone number and email, if you have it) and how many masks you would like. Masks will be left on your doorstep, with instructions for wear and care. Delivery time will vary depending on mask availability.

Want to learn more about the project? Several stories appeared in the press recently. Visit these URLs to learn more: [tinyurl.com/y9ngh3cg](http://tinyurl.com/y9ngh3cg) (*Daily Iowan*) and [tinyurl.com/y9ys852b](http://tinyurl.com/y9ys852b) (*Cedar Rapids Gazette*).

## New book group hosting virtual meeting

The success of TRAIL’s inaugural book club hosted by member David Rust has spawned another book group—this one with a twist!

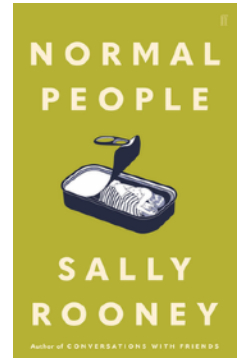
Beginning Monday, May 18, the new group will “meet” virtually from 1 to 2:30 PM on the free Zoom application and will be hosted by TRAIL members Maureen McGuire and Barb Stein. They will be discussing *Normal People* by Sally Rooney—a novel recommended at TRAIL’s Great Books of 2019 presentation last fall.

Barb notes, “With David’s book club at capacity, Maureen and I thought there might be interest in starting another group, and then the coronavirus hit. We knew we couldn’t meet in person but thought we could use technology to connect and have fun, even while we are all staying in our homes.”

Members who are interested in trying out the new group can sign up for the May 18 session through the TRAIL calendar, and Barb will contact you with details about how to participate via Zoom.

David is thrilled to see a new group start up. The first club started in 2018, meets monthly, and the 14 members have read and discussed 20 books. He says, “Sometimes our discussions are intense; they have been thought provoking, revelatory, and, many times, humorous. In the process, we have gotten to know each other and the club has become more than just a gathering of bookworms.”

If you are looking for book suggestions, check out [this video](#), where David reviews four of the books the club has read. You’ll find all those titles and more posted in the Member Documents section of the member website. Happy reading!



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## Plan now for June primary voting

Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate is encouraging Iowans—especially older Iowans—to vote by absentee ballot this year. Voting from the comfort of home helps protect poll workers as well as voters. That’s why the Secretary of State office has mailed absentee ballot request forms to all active registered voters in Iowa. If you have not yet returned your form to the Johnson County Auditor, remember to do so by Friday, May 22, at 5 PM.



If you did not receive an absentee ballot request form, use [this form](#) on the website of the Johnson County Auditor.

For more information about absentee ballots, visit the [Iowa Secretary of State website](#).

## Coming together while staying apart

Among the TRAIL offerings our members miss most are TRAIL events, from group dining to classes and tours. In light of COVID-19, we decided to check in with **Barb Stein**, chair of TRAIL’s Social and Educational Programs Committee, which organizes most member events.

*How is your committee adjusting its activities during COVID-19?*

“Normally, our committee gets together to brainstorm and assign host tasks and dates. With the advent of sheltering in place, we were very sorry to have to postpone our events, including those we’d already begun planning for summer and fall.

“Once we realized there are other ways to connect, we started watching for events and ideas to post on the [TRAIL calendar](#) for folks to do from home. We discovered that YouTube video is another way to let our members learn through local resources, including people who’ve given TRAIL presentations before. One example is Jason Taylor, Executive Director of the Bur Oak Land Trust. Their land stewards have led us on wonderful hikes, and [Jason’s video](#) shares a great hiking suggestion for seniors.”



*How can TRAIL members assist your committee in its work?*

“We want to remind TRAIL members that we are driven by what they want. We are always open to new ideas of places to visit, or community resources that we want to support or learn more about. **Bring on the ideas!** We all are ready to be sprung, so even if the state’s full reopening is farther away, we want to be ready and planning ahead. We will reschedule and supplement to provide interesting programming and social times to be together.”

*Have ideas for Barb and her committee? Contact her at [barb@trailofjohnsoncounty.org](mailto:barb@trailofjohnsoncounty.org) or 319-331-7130.*



## Outdoor projects?

With the weather changing, Full TRAIL members may request help with outdoor projects—it’s something TRAIL volunteers can do to help you while practicing physical social distancing. For example, your deck may need a power-washing or your flower garden may need attention.

To make a request or to offer your volunteer services, call Sue Mellecker in the TRAIL Office at 319-800-9003 or email her at [membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org](mailto:membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org).





## FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE

TRAIL Board member and Treasurer Beth Legue recommends the podcast “Coronavirus Fact vs. Fiction” with Dr. Sanjay Gupta. “It’s daily, pretty quick—10 minutes or less—and informative,” she says.

Watch next month’s *TRAIL Guide* for a roundup of great podcasts recommended by TRAIL members.

## TRAIL ONLINE CALENDAR • MAY—JUNE 2020

More details about each event can be found on the TRAIL calendar online.

**TRAIL Office closed for Memorial Day, Monday, May 25.**

### [Fridays with Friends Zoom chat](#)

**Friday, May 15, 3:30 to 4:30 PM**

Hosted by TRAIL Board member and Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center Program Specialist Michelle Buhman. Open to anyone who would like to connect with others about how you’re coping in the COVID era.

### [TRAIL Virtual Book Club—NEW!](#)

**Monday, May 18, 1 to 2:30 PM**

A Zoom gathering to discuss the book *Normal People* by Sally Rooney. See story on page 2.

### [TRAIL Yarning Group—VIRTUAL meeting](#)

**Wednesday, May 20, 1:30 to 3:30 PM**

The group is trying something new!

### [Fridays with Friends Zoom chat](#)

**Friday, May 22, 3:30 to 4:30 PM**

Hosted by TRAIL Board member and Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center Program Specialist Michelle Buhman. Open to anyone who would like to connect with others about how you’re coping in the COVID era.

### [Fridays with Friends Zoom chat](#)

**Friday, May 29, 3:30 to 4:30 PM**

Hosted by TRAIL Board member and Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center Program Specialist Michelle Buhman. Open to anyone who would like to connect with others about how you’re coping in the COVID era.

### [TRAIL Virtual Event Pick: Elder Law Webinar](#)

**Monday, June 15, 11 AM to noon**

The Legal Hotline for Older Iowans invites you to join them from home for this free webinar about elder abuse protective orders and elder abuse prevention strategies, presented by Angela Broughton-Romain, Deputy Director of Iowa Legal Aid.

