



Reading to raise awareness

In the wake of recent high-profile murders of Black Americans and subsequent protests in our community and around the world, the TRAIL Board of Directors at its June meeting reaffirmed its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and began a process of raising our awareness about systemic racism and social justice.

We have also heard from TRAIL members and volunteers about their participation in virtual presentations

and discussions as well as reading recommended books. We share below some books and lists of additional books, movies, and other materials that Board and TRAIL members have found helpful to their understanding of race and justice.

Books

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo describes the defensive anger, fear, and guilt that emerge when white people are forced to deal with racism, for example in diversity trainings.

Uprooting Racism by Paul Kivel, now in its fourth edition, provides the tools for white people to engage in racial justice work in practical, informed, and accountable ways.

How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi points toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. Instead of working with

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Volunteers and members “step up” during pandemic

TRAIL sends a **BIG THANK YOU** out to the dedicated volunteers who have continued to serve our members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Since late March through July, volunteers have contributed more than 740 hours to COVID-19–related projects, from launching the Phone Buddies service, to partnering with the Senior Center on a mask-making program, to deliveries of special surprises to members.

In addition, beginning in May, TRAIL volunteers resumed providing in-person services for Full members who have signed and returned COVID-19 waivers to the TRAIL Office; these volunteers logged more than 37 hours from March 20 to July 31. Transportation continues to be our most requested service and we thank our willing volunteers for adopting the required guidelines to keep our members safe while providing this essential service, such as sanitizing their vehicles, wearing masks, riders in the back seat only, and hand sanitizing for volunteers and members, pre- and post-rides. Volunteers have also been fulfilling requests for other services, including no contact deliveries, home and/or yard work, and friendly visits.

Because pandemic social restrictions have gone on longer than originally expected, any TRAIL member who may be feeling isolated or lonely can still sign up for the Phone Buddy service to receive check-in phone calls from a volunteer. Some members have requested a daily call; for others, it is weekly or bi-weekly.

Whether remarking on the special COVID-19 projects or in-person volunteer services, our members have been expressing their appreciation for all that TRAIL has been doing to help them weather the pandemic.

We appreciate our members too and want to make sure we are serving your needs. Remember that you can contact Sue at the TRAIL Office number, 319-800-9003, from 9 AM to 1 PM, Monday through Friday, for any questions you have about memberships and benefits.

CALLING ALL COLLECTORS!

TRAIL's first "collections" event, held last month via Zoom, drew participants who were curious about the objects fellow TRAIL members have been collecting over the years. It was fun to hear what sparked each person's interest and to see why these objects are so appealing. If you're a collector and would like to share your passion with others, let us know! We hope to schedule another collections show-and-tell session this fall.



Betsy Fischer searches lake shores for rocks with unusual shapes, patterns, and colors.



Barb Stein collects hand-carved wooden Santa figures, each with a unique personality.



Susan Shullaw collects antique toy typewriters, including this model from the 1940s.

Happy
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DAY

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Learning and love at a distance

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Full TRAIL member Joy Smith received a welcome gift from her son, Aaron, who asked her to lend a hand with granddaughter, Ella. After the pandemic hit, Aaron and his wife, Nadia, were both working from home in northern California while caring for an 18-month-old, plus helping 8-year-old daughter Ella finish up second grade online. Ella is enrolled at Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley, a French international school, the same school her mother attended. (Her mother and maternal grandparents are French.)

Joy began her career as an elementary and special educator in 1979 at Kalona Elementary, where she taught the first classroom for children with severe multiple disabilities that was located in an Iowa public school building. After a teaching and consulting career, she retired in 1999. For the past 8 years, she had volunteered one-half day each week with primary grade students. When the pandemic hit and classes met online, she thought, "Am I ever going to miss this."



But when one door closes, often another door opens. Joy brushed up her teaching skills and helped facilitate the portion of her granddaughter Ella's school day that is taught in English: reading, writing, and math. About 75 percent of Ella's instruction is in French. The two worked together four days a week for an hour each day. This summer, they have continued to chat twice a week.

Not only is Joy glad she has some skills to help her son's family, but her relationship with her eight-year-old granddaughter has blossomed.

"This has changed my relationship with my granddaughter in a completely positive way," Joy says. "We went from seeing each other three times a year to seeing each other four times a week. Zoom gives me a little peek into Ella's day-to-day life."

How are you building relationships with grandchildren?

Researchers at Georgetown University are studying how young children and grandparents build relationships over video during the pandemic. If you have grandchildren under age 5, consider completing a short online survey.

If you include your email, you'll be registered to win a \$50 e-gift card. Learn more at elp.georgetown.edu/portfolio/videochat.

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the policies and systems in place, Kendi asks what an antiracist society might look like, and how we can build it.

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin is Baldwin's response to the social and racial injustice he witnessed in America and is comprised of two essays, "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind."

The New Jim Crow: mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness by Michelle Alexander highlights the racial dimensions of the "War on Drugs," arguing that federal drug policy unfairly targets communities of color.

White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son by Tim Wise uses stories from Wise's own life to reveal how racial privilege shapes the daily lives of white Americans in every realm: employment, education, housing, criminal justice, and elsewhere.

Reading lists

www.booktable.net/black-lives-matter-reading-list

www.left-bank.com/black-lives-matter

www.surjbayarea.org/blog/racial-justice-books-for-white-people-non-fiction
skielibrary.info/lists/527/black-lives-matter-a-reading-list-for-adults/



Joni Jones and her Sunny

TRAIL pets **A tail of two Sunnys**

A positive outcome from the COVID-19 epidemic has been the growing popularity and enjoyment of pet adoption and ownership. TRAIL members are no exception to this trend.

TRAIL member Joni Jones was thinking about getting a pet, but her travel schedule was such that she didn't want to get a pet only to leave it behind during her many trips away. Then COVID-19 hit, and the time seemed right to add a furry companion to her home. So, in March, she brought home a 6-month-old Corgi she named Sunny (as in sunshine and sunflowers).

"I'm a pretty happy person so it's nice to be around a happy pup if a dog can be described as being 'happy,'" said Joni. "Having a pup provides some of the routine and responsibility that I lost, and Sunny diminishes the isolation that comes with living alone in the days of a pandemic."



Betsy Fischer's Sunny

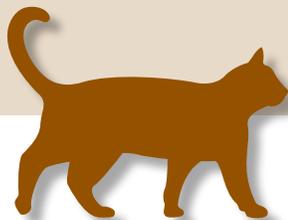
There are many documented benefits to owning a pet. Most notably, pet ownership reduces blood pressure, depression, and loneliness. Owning a pet also raises serotonin (a feel-good hormone), provides companionship, increases mobility, and provides opportunities for socializing. These are all welcome results as we age and especially during our voluntary COVID sequestrations.

Another TRAIL member, Betsy Fischer, has her own Sunny story. She always liked cats, and added Sunny to "enliven our household." And that she has. "I like watching how he has taken over our household," said Betsy. "He bullies dogs in our alley, and in the house, he makes my old dog move all the time. I've decided that maybe he is her personal trainer," continued Betsy.

Both Betsy and Joni had similar advice when it comes to pet ownership. Make sure you have the time to spend with a pet. Especially in the case of dogs, take the time to train them to behave. And also be prepared for a financial commitment. Pets aren't cheap. There are vet bills, food, toys, cat boxes, kitty litter, and so on. These expenses can add up.

COVID notwithstanding, pet ownership has its benefits, and these two TRAIL members would tell you their pets help them enjoy the "Sunny" side of life.

Interested in adopting a pet during COVID? Contact the Iowa City Animal Shelter (icanimalcenter.org) about how they can help bring some furry sunshine into your life.



NOTE: Most of these events are virtual, that is, they are being held online. More details and registration information for each event can be found on the calendar on TRAIL’s website.

New events are added frequently, so check TRAIL’s [online calendar](#) to stay up-to-date.

The TRAIL Office will be closed on **Monday, September 7**, in observance of Labor Day.

[TRAIL Yarning Group in the Great Outdoors](#)

Wednesday, August 19, 1:30 to 3:30 PM

North Hickory Hill Park Picnic Shelter (off North Dodge Street/Highway 1) Bring your own lawn chair and your latest needlework project. Parking is available next to the shelter.

[TRAIL Virtual Event Pick: “An Evening with the Presidents”](#)

Thursday, August 20, 6 to 7 PM

Presented by the Hoover Presidential Foundation and Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, this Zoom program will feature Dr. Larry Cook. He will discuss Presidents Buchanan, Harrison, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Carter, and Hoover.

[TRAIL Virtual Event Pick: Friday Night Concert Series with the Johnny Kilowatt Band](#)

Friday, August 21, 7 to 9 PM

Join the fun on Facebook as Summer of the Arts takes this concert series online. The Johnny Kilowatt Band has been playing electric blues since 1997 and has appeared at many regional music festivals.

[Coralville Public Library Book Sale on the Lawn](#)

Saturday, August 22, 8 AM to 5 PM

1401 5th Street, Coralville

CANCELLED

This pay-what-you-want outdoor sale features fiction and children’s books and is a great way to pick up some fall and winter reading.

[TRAIL Virtual Event Pick: “Between the World and Me” Book Discussion](#)

Monday, August 24, 1:30 to 3 PM

Author Ta-Nehisi Coates writes about the feelings, symbolism, and reality associated with being Black in the United States in a letter to his teenage son.

[TRAIL Virtual Event Pick: Chat from Old Cap with Dr. Craig Kretzling](#)

Wednesday, August 26, 3 to 4 PM

In this Zoom event, Dr. Kretzling, UI professor of physics and astronomy, will discuss the TRACERS mission that will launch in 2023 to study the sun and how it affects the environment of the solar system.

[Aging in Place Forum: Estate Planning When Going on Medicaid](#)

Wednesday, September 9, noon to 1 PM

This Zoom and Facebook Live event is presented by Johnson County Livable Communities. Watch for more information closer to the event date.

[Hiking with Llamas! \\$](#)

Tuesday, September 22, 10 to 11:30 AM

At Prairie Patch Farm near Swisher, you can take a hike in a beautiful nature conservation area—accompanied by three llamas and one alpaca! The hike can be customized to the comfort level of the group.

