



Charlie Drum and Mattie have a heart-to-heart chat. Photo courtesy of Mattie's owner, Will Thomson.

Heart, chest, stroke symptoms? Call 911!

Heart disease and stroke are still the world's leading causes of death. However, seeking immediate emergency care can save your life. Below, the American Heart Association offers insight into three of the most common reasons people hesitate to call 911.

DOUBT: *I'm not sure this is a heart attack or stroke. It's probably nothing. I'll be fine.*

THE TRUTH: You can die or face serious disability from doubt. Symptoms such as chest pain; pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, or jaw; and shortness of breath are still symptoms of heart attack. Sudden face drooping,

Continued on page 2

Charlie's story

TRAIL member Charlie Drum shares his experience as an initially reluctant 911 caller.

I am a catastrophist. Every little thing avalanches: a pinprick of pain confirms cancer, a forgetful moment, dementia. I dialed 911 for an ambulance ride twice in November. Both times, I was uncertain, embarrassed, sure I was making a fool of myself. Both times it was the right thing to do, fool status notwithstanding.

I admit, the first time I tried to hedge the bet. I'd taken the three nitroglycerine my cardiologist had given me, but the chest pressure remained. Pressure, not pain. They'd said pain, but this pressure seemed unusually strong. I didn't want to wait for pain, but I waited longer than I should have, out of uncertainty. Then instead of 911, I called my next-door neighbor, asking if he'd drive me to the emergency room. I don't have a car. My neighbor was not home, but miles away in Coralville. He couldn't get to me in good time. He urged me to call 911. Of course, I called another near neighbor. She said absolutely not.

"What if something happened on the drive? Call 911. I'll be right down."

My mind was cloudy, but that question hit hard. How selfish I was being. I could easily imagine my dear friend stuck with me, deathly ill in her front seat. I called 911 and only minutes later, the fire truck and ambulance arrived almost simultaneously with my neighbor. The first neighbor had known I wasn't going to call 911, so he had done it for me.

The second call was weeks later, one day after a surgeon had implanted a stent in my 90% clogged artery. Again, the pressure, the three nitroglycerine tablets with no results. This time I called immediately after taking the last nitro pill, as prescribed. I spent the next three days in the cardiology ward. It was what they call a "spasm," but there was no way to know that in my bedroom.

The minutes surrounding an emergency are confounding. It's hard to think straight. For me, the routine with the nitroglycerine was critical, making the decision path clearer. I recommend that you have a plan in the event of an emergency requiring 911. Talk to your doctor about

Continued on page 2



In recent months, TRAIL members have participated in tours of museums and members' studios. On February 21 members enjoyed a private viewing of Guatemalan huipil textiles and Maya earthenware at the Stanley Museum of Art. Connie Petersen, Affiliate TRAIL member and member of the social/educational committee, organized the tour and shared information about her own huipil textiles (*above*). Check the TRAIL calendar for upcoming art tours and more.

Home entry in an emergency

The Iowa City Fire Department is offering a free Knox Box service for people living in a one- or two-family residential building, age 55 or older, or having medical or physical conditions that affect their ability to open a door in an emergency.

A Knox Box is a small, secure container that is professionally attached to your front door and is almost unnoticeable. In case of an emergency, the fire department can unlock the box with a master key and use your stored house key to enter your home, rather than breaking down the door.

Iowa City residents can apply for this free service by calling the Iowa City fire marshal at 319-356-5257.

North Liberty residents interested in a Knox Box for their home can call the North Liberty fire marshal at 319-626-5709.

Coralville does not use the Knox Box system for residential properties. However, residents can call the Coralville Police Department at 319-248-1800 and ask for the Community Service Officer to arrange another method for emergency personnel to enter the home, such as providing a garage door code.

Charlie's story continued

specifics to watch out for with your individual issues and make if/then protocols. Then stick with it and call.

We are fortunate to live in a community with such effective medical emergency services. The Iowa City firemen and Johnson County paramedics who came to help me both times were impressive professionals. The second round, I was better able to observe them at work. At the same time one medic was getting my vitals, a fireman was asking me "Is that you in that portrait?" and getting me to chat about various items he'd spotted. Another, playing the philosopher role, told me happily I was doing very well under the circumstances, lots better than many others she'd seen in this business. "I'd never know you were 80!" Calming me with friendliness. I am grateful.

Call 911 continued

weakness in an arm or leg, or speech difficulty are stroke symptoms. If you have these symptoms, every minute counts and you need to get to an emergency department.

FEAR: *I'm afraid I can't afford an ambulance or a hospital visit. My insurance might not cover it.*

THE TRUTH: You can't afford NOT to call 911. A heart attack or stroke can cause death or lead to permanent disability if not treated quickly. The **Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act** is a federal law that requires anyone being treated in a hospital emergency department with an emergency condition to be stabilized and treated, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

MYTH: *I can get to the hospital and get treated more quickly if I drive myself or a friend/relative takes me.*

THE TRUTH: Heart attack and stroke treatment begins in the ambulance. Research shows calling 911 helps patients get treated more quickly. Calling 911 also helps get you to the right hospital that can best treat your condition.

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NOTE: Some events are virtual, while others are in person. Full details for each event can be found on [TRAIL's online calendar](#).

New events are frequently added, so check TRAIL's weekly calendar preview emailed on Fridays or the [online calendar](#) to stay up-to-date.

Calendar key: **BLUE** events are hosted by and for TRAIL members. **GREEN** (virtual) and **YELLOW** (in-person) events are hosted by other groups but may be of interest to TRAIL members.

Members pay their own fees if there is a cost associated with an event (\$).

TRAIL Guide is published on or about the 15th of each month by the TRAIL Marketing and Communications Committee for the benefit of TRAIL members, donors, volunteers, vendors, and friends. If you have questions or suggestions about the newsletter, email info@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

Breakfast at Kava House \$

Thursday, March 16, 8:30 to 10:30 AM

Kava House, 122 Second Street SW, Swisher

Family Dementia Class

Thursday, March 16, 10 AM to noon

Iowa City Senior Center, Room 302, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

Tips for Being News-Savvy Online (via Zoom)

Thursday, March 16, noon to 1 PM

Four-Week Fall Prevention Class \$ (via Zoom)

Monday, March 20, 12:30 to 1 PM

Book Club: "West With Giraffes" (via Zoom)

Monday, March 20, 1 to 2 PM

Hearing Loss and Amplification

Monday, March 20, 1 to 2 PM

Iowa City Senior Center, Room 302, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

(This is a hybrid event and will be available on Zoom as well as in person.)

Facebook Marketplace

Wednesday, March 22, 1 to 2 PM

Jane McCune's Art Collection and Tour

Thursday, March 23, 2:30 to 3:30 PM

Home of Jane McCune

Silver Swing Concert

Wednesday, March 29, 2 to 3 PM

Iowa City Senior Center Assembly Hall, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

Come for Coffee and a Visit

Thursday, March 30, 10 AM to noon

Home of Vicki Tardy

Member Happy Hour \$

Tuesday, April 4, 4:30 to 6:30 PM

Orchard Green, 521 South Gilbert Street, Iowa City

Brown Bag Event: Medication Disposal

Tuesday, April 11, 1 to 3 PM

Iowa City Senior Center, Room 311, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City

Supper at Blackstone \$

Tuesday, April 11, 5 to 6:30 PM

Blackstone Restaurant, 503 Westbury Drive, Iowa City

All About Our Weather—Hannah Messier Presents (via Zoom)

Wednesday, April 12, 2 to 3 PM

TRAIL Book Club

Thursday, April 12, 1:30 to 3 PM

Location TBD

Visit the [TRAIL calendar](#) online for information about many more community events!