

# Thousands of miles, surprisingly

There's always the North Country Trail — 1,200 miles of it right here in Michigan. But I'm always talking about that.

No, there are two other trails of more than 1,000 miles each that are only a state away. The Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin is a sister trail to the North Country Trail in that they are both National Scenic Trails.

The 1,400-mile Buckeye Trail in Ohio circles the entire state, and 800 of its miles are concurrent with the North Country Trail.



## GET OFF THE COUCH

JOAN YOUNG

And, as usual in March, I went looking for books about epic adventures to review. Although more than 160 people have completed all the Ice Age miles, only one book has been written about such a walk. That is "Thousand-Miler," by Melanie McManus, trail name Valderi. She also currently holds the women's fastest known time on the Ice Age Trail.

McManus' book chronicles her effort to best the previous women's record holder. Almost immediately she is beset by an infected foot. This does slow her down a bit, but she presses on.

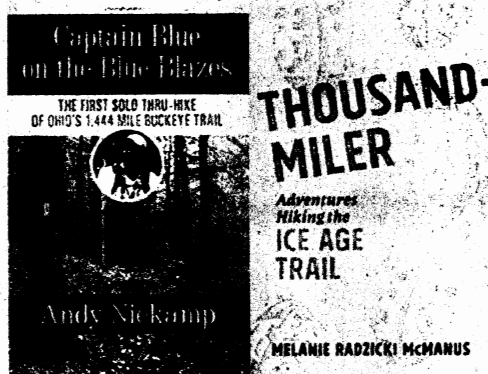
Pretty much as soon as that foot heals, the other one develops a similar problem. But that speed record is dangling in front of her eyes, a very tempting carrot.

As she tells her own adventure, she weaves the stories of other Ice Age Trail legends through the narrative. We become acquainted with others who hiked, and people who supported the idea of the trail and helped create it.

Her book will familiarize you with the glacial geology of Wisconsin — the feature unique to the Ice Age Trail, and will also give you slices of warm trail magic served with cold beverages in



Author Andy Niekamp poses for a photo on the Buckeye Trail in Ohio.



Images of the covers of "Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes" and "Thousand-Miler."

Melanie McManus poses for a photo by the Eastern Terminus of the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin.



small towns.

As I read, I felt that I was getting to know the bigger picture of Ice Age Trail ambiance, not just each foot-jarring mile.

As she finalized her plans she says, "By this point I

was exhausted from... preparations, and overwhelmed by the details... Now all that remained was the easy part: running eleven hundred miles."

Ohio's Buckeye Trail has been hiked in its entirety by

fewer people. Yet, there are more books written about the experience. I chose to review "Captain Blue on the Blue Blazes." This is Andy Niekamp's tale of the first solo through-hike on the Buckeye Trail.

Andy, Captain Blue shares his adventure a minimum of space voted to his mileage and the mundane.

You'll scramble through nearly every trail and share his o