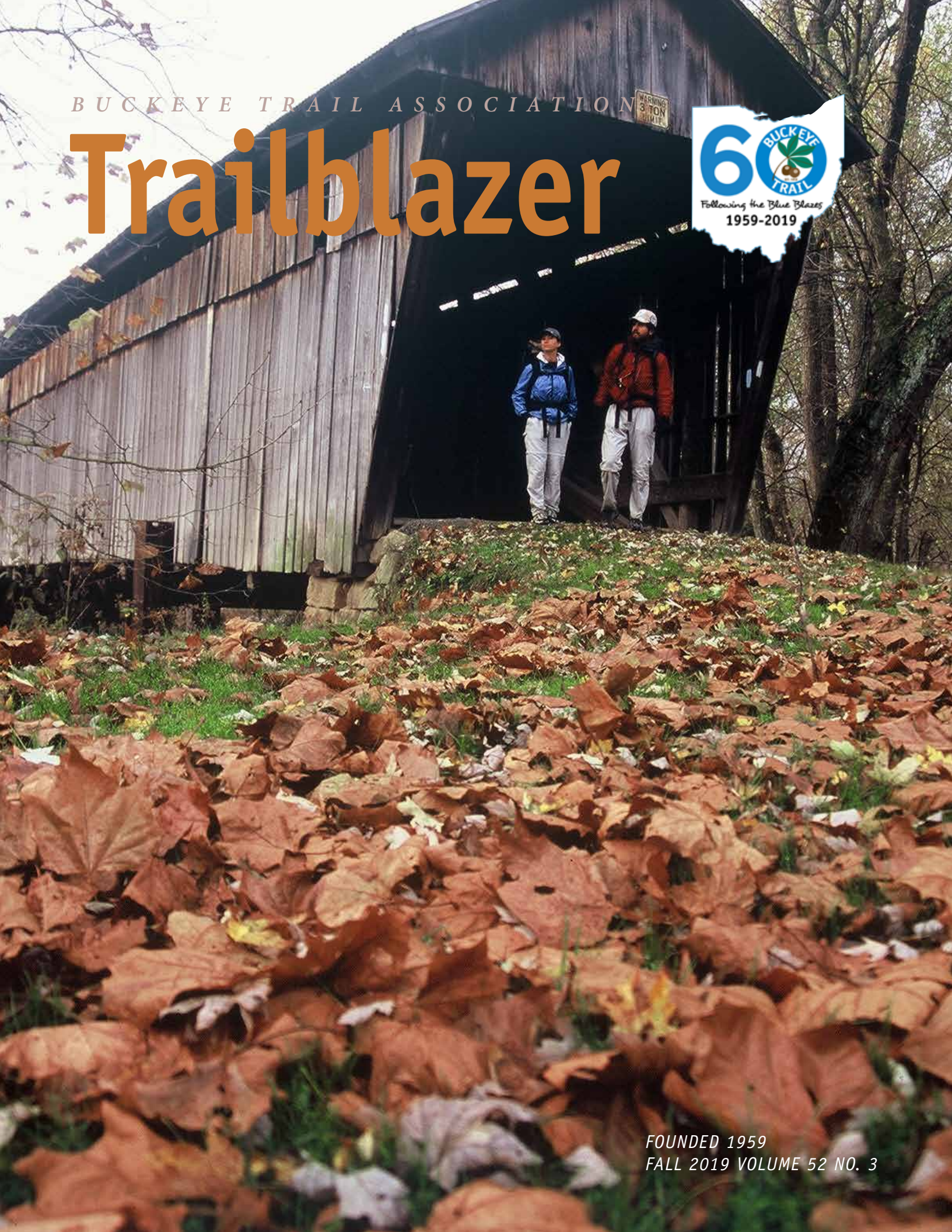


BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

# Trailblazer



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# BTA Member Wins State Award at the 2019 International Trails Symposium

*Article by Karen Power*

Andy “Captain Blue” Niekamp was honored on May 1 in Syracuse, New York with the American Trails “State Awards: Outstanding Trail Leader” for Ohio. This prestigious, biennial national award recognizes individuals who have made “compelling and significant contributions” in the advocacy, design, construction, and/or maintenance of trails in their home state. Andy was recognized not only for promoting trails in Ohio among state legislators and residents in all regions of Ohio, but also for providing hiking opportunities for thousands of hikers in the Dayton area, for supporting Five Rivers MetroParks, township and city parks, and the Buckeye Trail Association with his time, skills, and finances. Andy accepted his award at the closing keynote luncheon where participants from all over the U.S. and abroad gathered to recognize outstanding achievements in the trails industry.

“Daytonian of the Week” in The Dayton Daily News featured Andy as “Daytonian of the Week” in celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dayton Hikers, Andy’s hiking club,

and also in recognition of his two long-distance thru hikes within the past year: the John Muir Trail and the Florida Trail. The “Daytonian of the Week” is a weekly column that features local residents in the Dayton area who have interesting and inspiring stories.

You can read more about this at <http://bit.ly/dotw-captainblue>.

Earlier this year, Andy received the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award for 2018. Nominated by Montgomery County’s Five Rivers MetroParks, Andy was honored for his excellence in outdoor recreation leadership and trail stewardship.

Andy serves as a volunteer on the Buckeye Trail membership committee, the electronic mapping committee, and in other capacities as needed. For a description of Andy’s hike on the Florida Trail, check out this July 2019 article:

[www.outsideonline.com/2399071/florida-national-scenic-trail-thru-hike](http://www.outsideonline.com/2399071/florida-national-scenic-trail-thru-hike)

Congratulations, once again, Andy, for your continued positive impact on hikers and our trails.



*Andy with Roger Bell, previous American Trails Board chair.*