

Travelin' man raises money for PTSD vets

By Cheryl Hoefler

GO! Magazine

Ever had a dream to just chuck it all and spend your life — or a good chunk of it — traipsing around the country?

Yeah, me too!

How many of us have ever done it?

Jake Sansing has, and by now he's darned experienced at it.

However, Sansing isn't just wandering. This is a man with not only a purpose, but a book full of some intriguing, wild and harrowing tales from his roadside ventures.

"Walking America: 10,000-Mile Journey of Self-Healing" chronicles Sansing's numerous cross-country treks, the first of which was nearly 10 years ago, in the summer of 2013.

An Army veteran from Tennessee, Sansing is on a healing mission not only for himself but for other vets as he meanders throughout the United States. He's hoping to raise enough money through his book sales to someday open a free campground — location still-undetermined — for veterans with PTSD.

Sansing's current on-foot trek, which he launched in Newport in

early April, took him along Highway 26 through Grant County recently, befriending folks along the way as he explores the country, sells his book and shares his purpose. His destination this go-round is Maine.

So, what on earth makes a guy want to keep doing this?

As Sansing explains in his book, he tried maintaining what most folks would call a "normal" lifestyle, but it just didn't seem to be for him. He actually established a successful audio engineering business a couple of times, but he discovered that he needed change to keep his PTSD at bay. For him, increased stability just created more restlessness and depression. Soon enough, he'd find himself yearning to hit the road again.

"I had gotten so caught up with making money that I forgot how great simplicity was. I was beginning to hate material things and longed for an escape," Sansing said in his book.

"I knew walking across America wouldn't fix my situation, but it would change it."

Mostly he makes his way on foot but he's also traveled by bicycle, train and plane. The latter was several years ago on his quest to reach Alaska.

His book is a collection of memories, experiences, observations, lessons and accounts of the good nature and kindness of people everywhere. It was first published in 2017 under the title "Jake Does America: 10,000-mile trek." The newer version with a slight title change, published in April 2020, is a bit more polished.

Readers will find occasional grammatical errors and rambling passages, but they are almost unnoticeable in this easy-going read. This wanderlust girl found the book hard to put down. Sansing speaks from the heart and says it like it is. Some of his accounts and experiences seem almost too unbelievable or coincidental to be true, but how am I to know and who am I to judge? I decided it didn't matter. I was along for the roadside adventure.

Whether you're a real-life wannabe trekker or you're content to read from the armchair sidelines, this is an entertaining book, which supports a worthy cause, to boot.

Special deals on Sansing's book, links to all his social media connections and more information about his story are all available at JakeWalksAmerica.com.

WALKING AMERICA

A 10,000 Mile Journey
of Self-Healing




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