

## FEATURED ARTIST: TOM MARTIN

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### Samantha Cole

Tom Martin is an outdoorsman, inventor, writer, and farmer who still lives in Mount Sterling, Kentucky, where he was born. Much of his adult life has been spent in the field of electronic research and product development on everything from burglar alarm systems to rappelling equipment. He is involved with the Save Our Cave movement, (<http://www.saveourcave.com>), Kentucky Heartwood, and other environmental causes that seek to return control of public lands to the people who own them. He is the author of the books *Rappelling* and *Observations*. A few of the pictures showcased in this issue of *Appalachian Heritage* come from Martin's book *Kentucky Ice: A Winter Adventure*, and were part of a traveling slide show and lecture he presented at schools, civic clubs, and churches. These photos were taken in Eastern Kentucky counties in the vicinity of Natural Bridge State Park during the winters of 1977 and 1978. The photo at left shows the artist in a cave in Lee County in 1977—the same miraculous winter when several waterfalls froze into majestic towers of ice, snow formed into “donuts” in fields, and hydromites grew in caves. One particular cave in Lee County had such spectacular hydromites that Martin renamed it “Cave of Heaven.” Along with pictures of this cave, you'll also find photos taken at Torrent Falls, Broke Leg Falls, and Fincastle Falls included in this issue, all of which are within a short distance of my own home in Lee County.

Martin's extensive volunteer work with scouts and other groups includes efforts to introduce people to the wonders of nature around them through rock climbing, rappelling, and cave exploration. He was also responsible for training many police officers and rescue workers in the art of rappelling and rope rescue. Through his many outdoor adventures, including hikes, campouts, and other exploits, Martin has helped to cultivate appreciation for the natural beauty of the Southern Mountain region. We are deeply thankful to Tom Martin for the contributions of his talents to this issue.