

Incredible **IDAHO**

75
CENTS

Vol. 1 – No. 1

JULY, 1969

4 MILES
NORTH-WEST



FLYING
THE
WILDERNESS



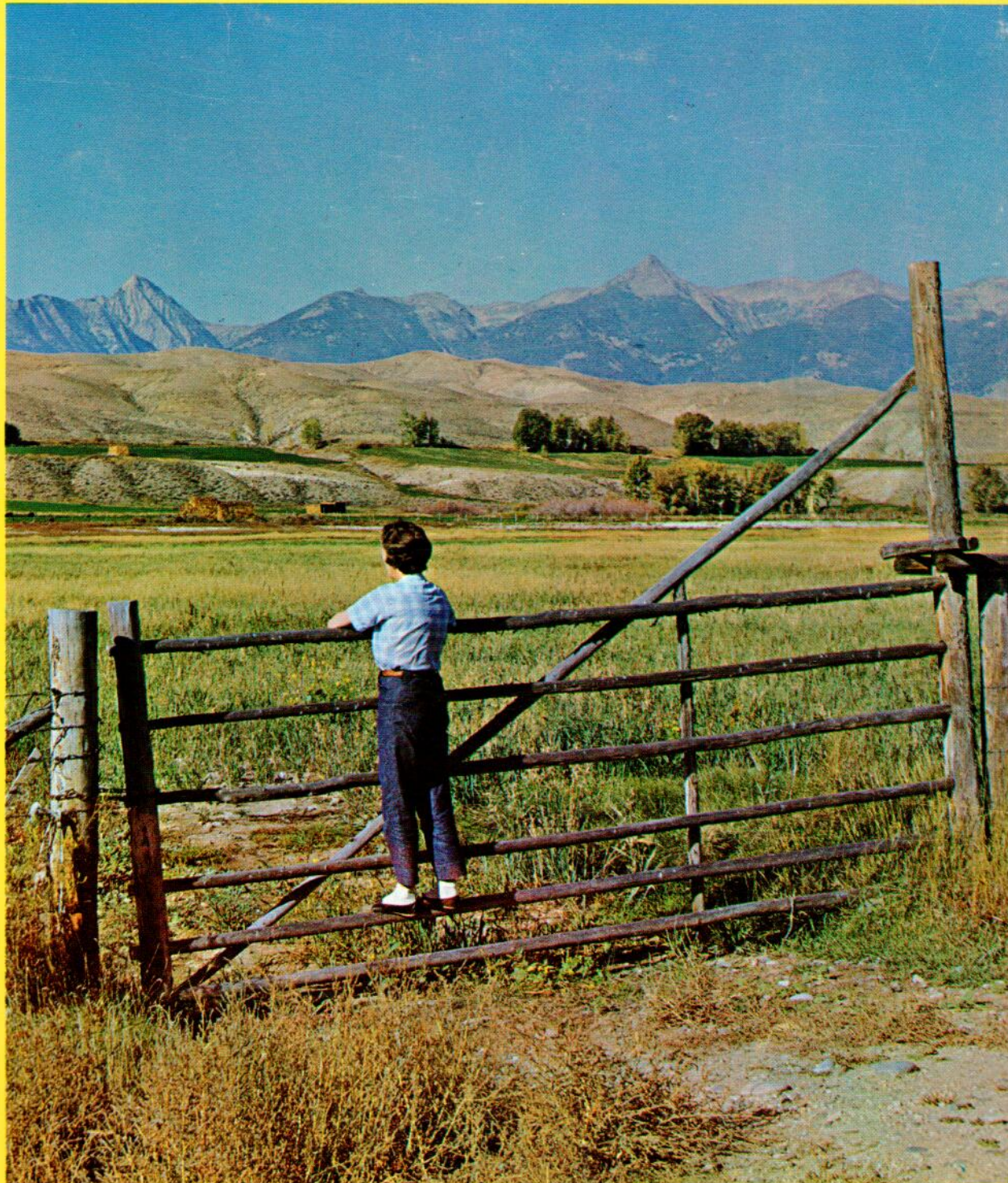
ROCKY
BAR
GOLD



IDAHO
BASQUES



NORTH
IDAHO'S COEUR D'ALENE COUNTRY



Fabulous Ice Formations of **IDAHO'S GREAT RIFT**

A New National Landmark

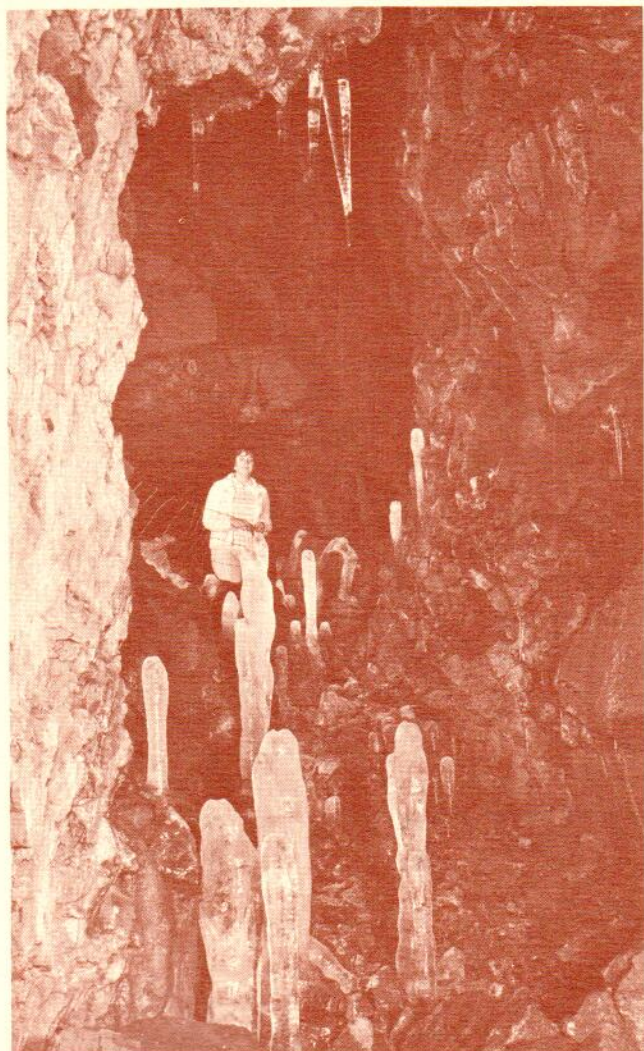
by

PEGGY PAPADAKIS



Eternal winter in the Idaho desert is shown in this view of the Crystal Ice Caves, located 28 miles northwest of American Falls.

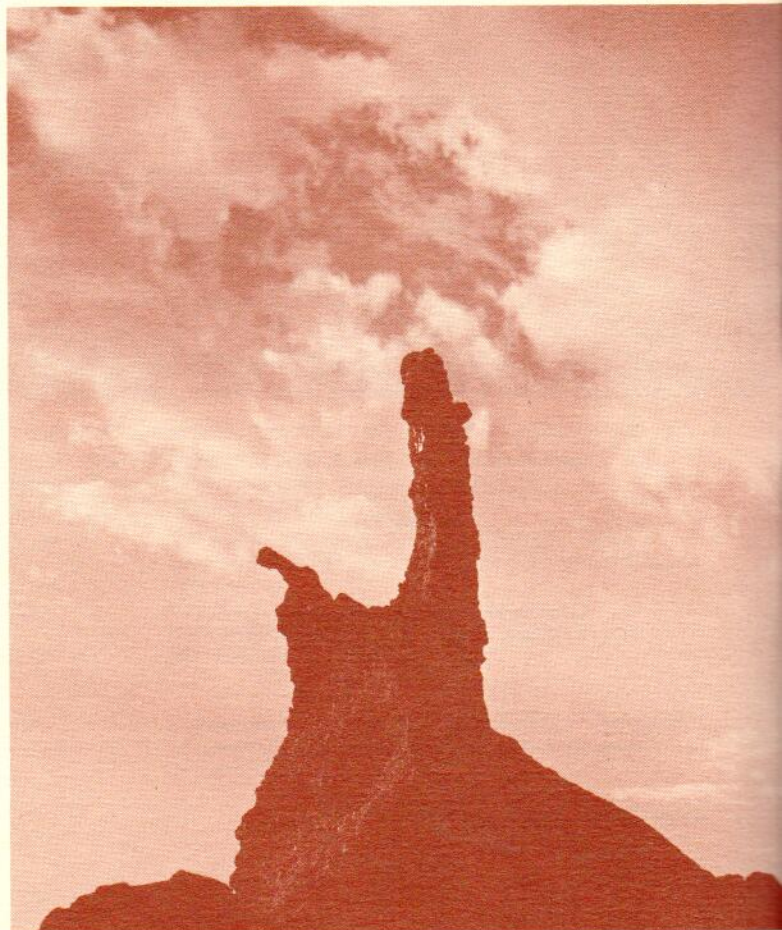
The Ice Garden where fingers of ice form anew each year but diminish during the summer months because of air flow and persons touching them.



On the brush covered desert of Southeastern Idaho, lies the Great Rift—a gigantic fissure over 40 miles long. Tremendous pressure from below caused the earth's crust to split, and from the depths of this geological phenomenon surged molten lava which spread white-hot fingers across the land, burning and destroying everything in its path. There were, however, remnants of plant and animal life preserved in the hardened lava flow. From these remnants, carbon dating has established the age of the Rift to be 2,100 years old—minutes in geological time, in historical time—the Era of Christ.

The Great Volcanic Rift is the long-

Standing guard near the entrance to the Crystal Ice Caves is a grotesque hand of hardened lava.





Squeeze-up field was formed when molten lava from the King's Bowl explosion, pushed up through cracks on top of the hardened lava field.

est in the conterminous United States and is reported to be the deepest open rift in the world. Cave explorers have penetrated its open portions to a depth of over 800 feet where they were stopped by lack of equipment and an ice floor.

The Rift extends southward from the Craters of the Moon National Monument to the edge of the bleak Wapi Field, some 40 miles distant, where it seems to disappear under the more recent flows of that field, which is an area of 160 square miles. Except for the surface lavas at the Craters of the Moon, the lava flows of both the Craters of the Moon and the Wapi Field came from craters. Only the comparatively tiny, but unusually interesting Crystal Ice Caves Lava Field, was spawned by the Great Rift.

It was in this tiny lava field of one and one-half square miles that the forces of nature were unleashed in a tremendous steam explosion which occurred when molten lava from the Rift receded below the water table level of 800 feet. The top of the Rift had crusted over, and when the lava subsided back into the rift, water began encroaching upon the 2,000° F. material. Tremendous quantities of steam were generated and geyser activity probably preceded the explosion. Finally, the pressure was too great to be contained and the result was an enormous steam explosion.

The most awesome proportions of the explosion created the King's Bowl, a huge hole in the Rift, over 200 feet deep. From the air, it takes on the appearance of a gaping wound in the Rift. At the bottom of the Bowl is a crystal clear pool of water with a constant ice floor.

Of the many curiosities in this lava field, the most fantastic are the spectacular centuries-old ice formations which are located 150 feet underground in the netherworld of the Rift. It is even more amazing when one considers the ground temperatures of the sun-baked lava desert range in the high 90's while the ice cave remains a consistent, cool 32° the year around.

Though the surrounding areas have long been settled, the Great Rift remains almost as much of a mystery as it was to those first sheepmen and adventuresome pioneers who viewed it with wonder.

Because of its uniqueness, it was proclaimed a new National Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior in May 1968.

Though the Rift's dark interior still lies shrouded in secrecy, the studies to be made of it this summer by geologists working under a National Parks Service grant will bring to light some of the age-old secrets men are continually seeking in the never-ending quest for knowledge. ●

The Crystal Tower, graceful yet bold; its 25 feet of icy beauty capture the eye.

