

Art Carroll

Arthur William Carroll, known to his friends simply as Art, was born in Peterborough, New Hampshire on June 30, 1935 to Elmer and Charlotte Carroll. He spent his early years in New Hampshire. In those early days he was known as “Billy” to his family. He was the second child with an older sister, Barbara. His father was in the lumber/hardware business but was not having the success that he wanted in New England. He first tried Florida and then moved his family to Texas in the mid 1940s.

They settled in Texas City near the Gulf Coast in time to witness the great Texas City explosion of 1948 when a French freighter loaded with ammonium nitrate fertilizer exploded in the harbor. Although the explosion blew out the windows of the school that Billy was attending, no one there seems to have suffered more than minor cuts and scratches. A car radio was broadcasting stories of a mass disaster in which vast numbers of people were fleeing the town. Art said he wondered where all this was happening because he just didn't see it. Forever after he was skeptical of news reports and anything he didn't see first hand.

In high school he began calling himself “Art” and was a good student who liked math and science. He wasn't involved with sports or other student activities. He did like music, and seemed to regret that he never learned to play an instrument and be in the school band. After graduation from high school he enrolled in the University of Texas in 1953 to major in Physics. There he was active in the Uni-

versity of Texas Speleological Society which was known as the spelunkers or UTSS. Before graduation he dropped out of college and was drafted into the Army. Barbara, his sister, was also a UT student and member of the UTSS.



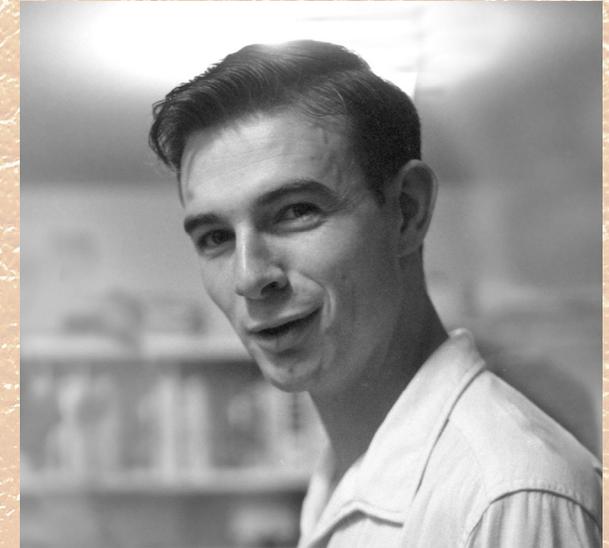
Group on a UT cave trip. L-R: Art Carroll, Holmes Semken, Ed Smith, Nan Jones?, Mel Huebel

She said Art spent more time helping other students than doing his own work. A memorable cave incident was in 1956 when a boulder shifted trapping Art's hand for several hours until his fellow cavers were able to rescue him.

In the Army, Art didn't have to go away to fight. He was sent to do computer work at White Sands, New Mexico. Computers in those days were new, primitive, and very large. Art enjoyed computer work, but didn't like being told what to do by the military. When his Army time was up he returned to the Uni-

versity of Texas and graduated in Physics.

To assist a college friend who was moving to Washington with his pregnant wife, Art went along to help drive. Art liked what he saw in Washington and got a computer job



Art in Austin circa 1962

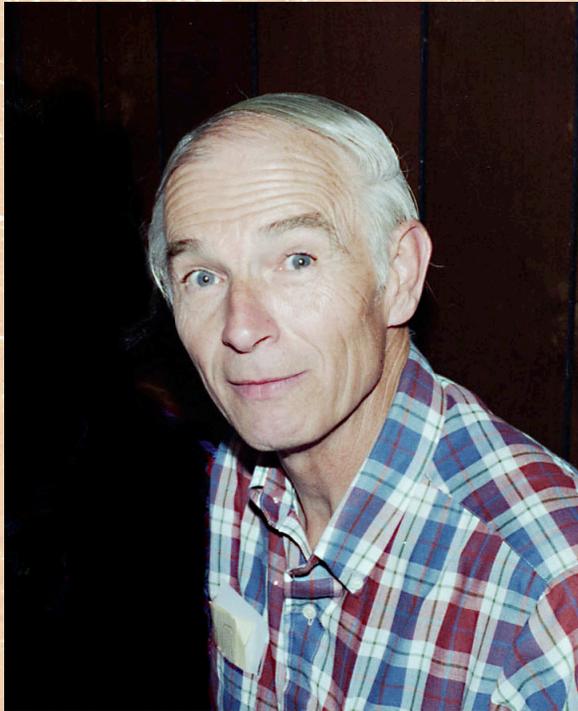
there with Control Data Corporation. He was in Washington for only a year when Control Data moved him to San Francisco. He was in San Francisco for several years and in San Jose for at least a year. Then Control Data sent him to Los Angeles to work there for several years before returning him to San Jose.

During these years Art was very active in AYH, American Youth Hostels now called Hosteling International. There were no caving activities but there was hiking, bicycling, canoeing, camping, and—of course—travel, all things Art enjoyed very much. He was an

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officer or board member in AYH in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose.

In 1976 there was a San Jose AYH bicycle ride in celebration of the country's bicentennial— "historic San Jose". It was on this bike ride that he met his wife to be, Sylvia Hollis,



Art at the 1994 spelunker Reunion
at Fort Davis, Texas

who was also an AYH member. Art and Sylvia became friends, then got serious, and a year and a day later (April 23, 1977) were married in a park in San Jose with a big pot-luck picnic and even entertainment by a German band and a Mexican folk dance group.

Art became more involved with AYH as president of the local chapter with Sylvia helping out as treasurer, writer, and general aide. There was a proposal to use a historic building in a county Park in Saratoga. The County Board of Supervisors voted yes,



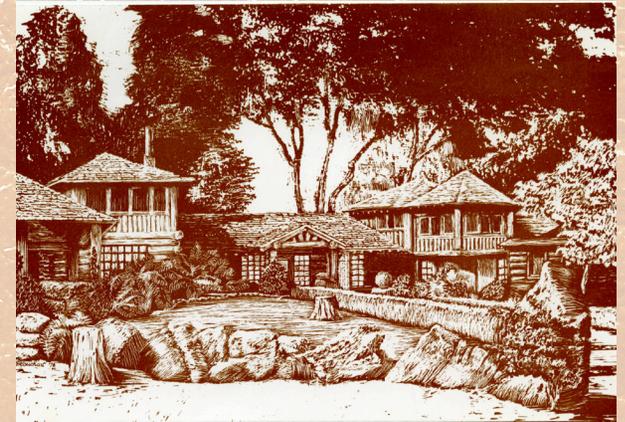
Art at the 2015 spelunker Reunion
at Roundrock, Texas

unanimously and that began a huge chapter in Art's and Sylvia's life.

Near the end of 1979 Control Data was telling Art that he was to go to either Minneapolis or Stockholm, Sweden, effective the end of December for six months. He chose

Stockholm. Sylvia stayed behind and continued work on the repair of the building that became the Sanborn Park Hostel. She was able to join Art for about a month and they got to travel some in Europe.

In July of 2020 Art felt a pain in his back and thought it was from carrying so many books the day before. (He volunteered also as a Friend of the Library.) He went to the hospital and was found to have an abdominal aneurism that was totally unexpected. He survived a long surgery but would have been an invalid and in pain for however long he lived. He begged to be allowed to die. He could have died back in that cave in Texas in 1956, but he lived 85 good years until July 26, 2020.



Sanborn Park Hostel

BY ROBERT M McCLURE AND SYLVIA CARROLL