

William Weston “Bill” Mixon

29 December 1940 – 8 May 2019, 78, NSS 5728RL-OS-CM-AL-FE

After a long battle with myasthenia gravis, Bill Mixon passed away on 8 May 2019. He worked tirelessly over many years on AMCS publications and the website. He maintained the AMCS files at his house, which today is the Texas Speleology Center. Mixon was editor of the AMCS Activities Newsletter for 21 issues from 1992 to 2018, a total of 2952 pages, or 56% of the 5272 newsletter pages published since 1965. He served as layout editor and production manager for many issues of the AMCS Bulletin with little or no credit. He also placed images of 4065 cave maps on the AMCS website. We now have a project to carry on his tradition and index all the cave maps that Mixon put online for us.

Mixon was a very patient and resourceful layout editor for my AMCS Bulletin 26 on cavefishes in 2018. I deeply appreciate his work.

Many cavers contributed to these newsletters and bulletins, and all deserve our thanks and respect, but none did more than Bill Mixon. Thank you Bill, we will miss you.

William (Bill) R. Elliott



13 March 2013 photo of Mixon at his Macintosh computer in his library. William R. Elliott

Tributes from Kunath and Minton

I agree with everything Elliott wrote. Bill Mixon was a friend for many years and I shall miss him in several ways.

There are a lot of statistics in the comments but they scarcely begin to enumerate the contributions Bill Mixon made to the caving world. He had a hand in nearly all the speleo-literature coming from Texas in the past 20 years. If not for him, the quality and frequency of publications would have surely been less impressive.

Bill had a talent for organization and detail and he was a strong grammarian as well. Beyond all that, he was a fun

person to chat with and was very knowledgeable in many fields. His frequent book reviews were thoughtful and entertaining. His dry sense of humor was a delight.

R.I.P. Bill Mixon. I miss you dearly. You were unique and cannot be replaced.

Carl E. Kunath

Recollections of Bill Mixon

I've known Bill Mixon since the 1970s. I knew him first as editor of the Windy City Speleoneews and may have met him a couple of times at caving events in Indiana or elsewhere in the upper Midwest at that time, but we became fast friends after he moved to Austin in the early 1980s, where I already resided. We shared an intellectual curiosity and interest in all things scientific, often discussing and critiquing the latest announcement of a scientific advance. (Bill worked in physics at the Tokamak fusion reactor at the University of Texas and I worked in the chemistry department doing organic synthesis.) We also shared an appreciation for concise writing and good grammar, often lamenting the poor quality of even official pronouncements and journal articles. We met for lunch almost every work day, even long after UT Grotto lunch gatherings had faded away.

Bill Mixon was intensely interested in the phenomenal caving taking place in Mexico, even though he was no longer personally doing hardcore trips. He moved to Austin to be closer to the action and very quickly moved into a leadership position within the AMCS, becoming the primary editor of its flagship publication, the AMCS Activities Newsletter, which he transformed into a world-class journal. He also oversaw the publication of many AMCS Bulletins covering specific topics in great detail. He was a meticulous grammarian and conscientious editor, keeping countless details in order. Bill also maintained a vast personal caving library as well as the AMCS library with extensive material on Mexico from AMCS exchanges and other foreign publications, all of which was indexed online. He had a great memory and could often point to an obscure publication to answer a question or provide background material.

In addition to his work on publications, he also devoted a large amount of time to making the AMCS website an outstanding reference source for Mexican caving. He scanned and posted or archived thousands of cave maps, photographs from major expeditions, videos, out-of-print publications, and other items involving caving in Mexico. He was also often the primary representative of the AMCS at NSS Conventions, where he maintained a small space selling publications.

After he became gravely ill, Bill arranged for his house to become the Texas Speleology Center, which provides offices, meeting space and a permanent home to the libraries and archives of both Texas and Mexican caving. Bill Mixon's legacy will live on for decades to come.

Mark Minton