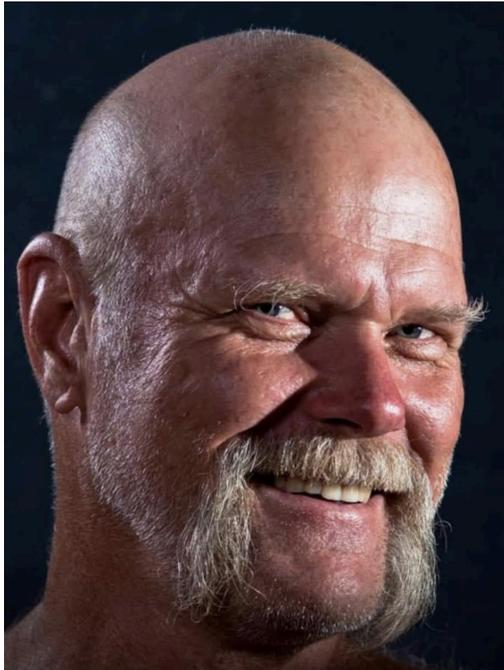


Bradley Gillum “Gill” Ediger
Dec. 20, 1947 - Jan. 4, 2026

As a rancher, aviator, Vietnam helicopter pilot, railroad engineer, whitewater rafter, cartographer, and minister, Bradley Gillum Ediger, NSS 10010FE - or Gill, as he was known - was also an icon of the Texas caving community who helped create the state’s annual caving reunion and grow its regional organization while expanding our knowledge of Texas and Mexico caves. He died after a long-term battle with Alzheimer’s on Jan. 4, 2026, two weeks after his 78th birthday.

Although many cavers know of Gill’s long decline that included a fall inside an Austin cave, the story of how the Central Texas caving community came together to support his treatment, attempted rehabilitation, and ongoing care is an inspiring one. They have been giving back to Gill, just as he made a big difference for caving in Texas and Mexico for a half-century or more.



Gill deserves considerable credit for helping to create the Texas Caver Reunion, then organizing more than 20 TCRs around the state - and for serving many years as Texas Speleological Association’s foremost raconteur. Gill also served the most non-consecutive terms as TSA chairman - 27 years apart! Gill was also a National Speleological Society Fellow and life member, former NSS director, and Texas Underground Grotto member.

A “Celebration of the Life and Shenanigans of Gill” was planned on Saturday, March 7, at the Texas Speleological Center in southwest Austin. Some oldtimers were scheduled to be featured speakers, with time for everyone to share their stories.

Born in Sinton, Texas on Dec. 20, 1947, Gill attended high school in the city located about 30 miles from Corpus Christi before attending Texas A&I University in Kingsville. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and trained to be a pilot, attaining the rank of Captain. He flew large, fixed-wing prop planes and then later was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

Gill in many ways was a renaissance man of many talent, but focused on caving as his true passion. Ediger helpe explore the Natural Bridge Cavern system with Orion Knox, one of the men who first discovered the cavern in the 1960s and helped to develop show caves for the public to see. Gill also was married in the Natural Bridge Caverns’ Hall of the Mountain King in 1970, the first time a wedding was officiated inside the caverns, located 30 minutes northeast of downtown San Antonio.

"His influence was deep and his impact significant," Natural Bridge Caverns stated in a social media post, adding that Gill was known for roles as a mentor, conservation advocate and multiple leadership positions in cave associations and societies. "We honor his legacy and continue his work by supporting and teaching conservation of karst and caves, as well as sponsoring exploration well beyond Natural Bridge Caverns."

Medical issues

Gill took a fall inside a cave at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on July 31, 2013, receiving 10 fractured ribs and requiring 19 stitches, many on his head. Although not known at the time, Gill's injuries may have contributed to a slow cognitive decline which he had expressed concerns about as early as 2003. Gill's father had died of dementia in his late 80s, while his mother lived to her 90s but had similar issues.

By 2020, Gill had established a system of medical support with Cathy Winfrey, Jocie Hooper, Denise Prendergast, and Cait McCann. With the COVID lockdown looming, Gill signed and notarized a medical power of attorney (MPoA) with Cathy - and Jocie serving as backup along with Denise and Cait. As Gill's condition declined from 2019 to March 2022, the team maintained him in his home in South Austin, along with Louisa, his last wiener dog. They placed a succession of housemates with him at first, then hired spot help for mornings, and lunches, trusting and encouraging cavers to participate in Meal Train to bring dinners and share his stories.

A neurologist ordered a series of psychological and medical tests which would eventually lead to an Alzheimer's diagnosis. Cathy said that Gill's need for support increased while availability of volunteer care dropped. While she arranged for caregivers' engagements for morning, noon and evening duty, gaps remained - and Gill needed more and more supervision. He was talking less and fluid intake dropped. In December 2021, his neurologist tested him again and activated the MPoA, directing that Gill must be located in a safe environment before the end of March.

With Jocie, Cathy scouted a facility - and they found a suitable choice the Auberge on Onion Creek, south Austin. It was preferable to other facilities, having a central courtyard, full access to the facility - and allowing Gill's pet Luisa to come along! Gill moved into the Auberge the third week of March 2022. Gill made a home there, charming the ladies who would swipe posies from the dining room tables and leave them at his room.

Gill had physical therapy and greeted cavers who occasionally visited. He broke his hip in August 2023 but quickly recovered - except that he now needed a wheelchair. He was losing strength. In October 2024, he fractured his other hip. After surgery, he was released back to the Auberge for rehabilitation care.

Many people who break a hip over the age of 70 die soon afterward. Not Gill. The beginning of 2025 saw improvement with physical therapy. But he was having more trouble speaking.

On his 78th birthday on Dec. 20, one of his therapists brought him a small birthday cake with a candle, which he was able to blow out and then softly but clearly say "Old Man!" afterward. He ate his last meal on Dec. 22. He didn't recognize Cathy on Dec. 23 or 24 and didn't recognize Jocie on December 26.

Jocie said that Gill had ceased being interactive with even his favorite caregivers at the Auberge, started suffering from aspiration pneumonia, and had stopped being able to swallow water. She and Cathy set up hospice care after determining that his condition now meant hospitalization for IV antibiotics but that he was adamant that he "did not want to be kept alive just to be alive."

A few old friends stopped by to see him on Saturday, Jan. 3, although he was non-responsive. Yaz Avila stayed the night with him, and contacted Cathy when he died. He died, under Hospice care, early Sunday morning, on Jan. 4.

"As everyone knows, Gill had a long and difficult decline over a period of seven years or so," Peter Sprouse wrote. "During this time, his care team worked to keep him safe and comfortable. That team included Cathy Winfrey, Jocie Hooper, Jessica Gordon, Cait McCann-Teran, Yazmin Avila, Dylan Beeler, Amy LoBiondo (and others). If you see these folks, be sure to thank them for their efforts, especially Cathy and Jocie who spent a lot of time caring for him."

Family life

Born in Sinton, Texas near Corpus Christi to Bethel Hudgins Ediger and Ott D. Ediger on Dec. 20, 1947, Gill played high school football before enrolling at Texas A&I, probably about 1965.

Bethel Ediger was the oldest of three sisters. One sister, Aunt Tessie, was a dwarf and a beloved school teacher for 30 years. Bethel's family weathered the Great Depression with determination and financial insecurity that often required them to travel great distances to feed the family. Bethel's father worked for a Texas railroad and suffered a debilitating injury while working in Mexico and never recovered, requiring the four women of his family to take care of him and themselves during the depression. Bethel quit school and worked to send her sisters to college. Bethel died at age 90 on June 18, 2005 in an Austin nursing home. Born in Saratoga, Texas on Sept. 3, 1914, she lived from 1947 to 2002 in Sinton. She was preceded in death by Ott, her beloved husband of 58 years; her parents; and two sisters.

Ott Ediger was a Mennonite of Russian origin, one of eight children living on a Comanche reservation in Oklahoma. He grew up in a parsonage environment, with a mother of relentless energy and a spirit. Ott shared many happy stories of his brothers and sisters. He was a gregarious man, like Gill. Ott met Bethel Hudgins at the end of World War II as a member of the U.S. Army. They settled in Alice, Texas (where they often boasted Gill was conceived) and later moved to Sinton to raise Gill and younger sister Erin A. Ediger. Ott was a county ag agent and Bethel worked in church management. Gill told Christa Riddington, his partner of six years, that his father's limited vacation time from work was an inspiration for him to avoid working for

others. Gill had some knowledge of ranching and farming practices from Ott and tried his hand at that for a time on South Texas property.

Gill's father died Dec. 7, 2003 at age 90 in an Austin, Texas nursing home. He was born Oct. 13, 1913, in Clinton, Oklahoma, the fifth of eight children born to the Rev. Jacob B. Ediger and Agatha Regier Ediger. Ott graduated from Clinton High School and Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) with a degree in agronomy. His career spanned 35 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the Soil Conservation Service, from 1939 to 1974, taking a break only to serve in the Army during WWII. He and his wife Bethel moved to Sinton in 1947 where he headed the Soil Conservation Service work unit. Ott had purchased a small ranch in South Texas that the family never lived on, or worked. After inheriting the property, Gill and Erin sold it.

Gill and Erin were brought up in a loving home, with traditional values including sustainable gardening, small farming practices, home cooked meals, homemade clothes, church, local school activities such as FFA, drama clubs - and a unique mode of verbal communication that was clearly a family tradition that required responders to be of good humor, quick wit, and have knowledge of classical education.

Gill was preceded in death by his sister, Erin Ediger Page, who died on Aug. 14, 2007, in Austin following cancer treatment. She had worked for the Office of Accountant Certification for the State of Texas and married Gilbert Nelson Page, who siws on Nov. 26, 2022 in San Angelo. Survivors include cousins Sarah Gayle of Gerton, N.C., a caver and daughter of Bethel's sister; Gary & Belva LeVrier of Bullard, Texas; Beverly Nelms of Fate, Texas; Bobbin Gayle, a rancher and Sarah's older brother; and various Ediger cousins.

Gill was married twice, first to Phyllis Jill Moody at Natural Bridge Caverns, from Aug. 1, 1970 to July 22, 1976; and then to Virginia (Ginny) Webber, a rafter, from Aug. 1, 1982 to Dec. 9, 1983. Christa Riddington and Gill spent time together between 1992 and 1998, before Gill left Texas for Baltimore to be a train engineer in 1999. (Later, in the 1990s, Gill helped remodel a house for Christa near his own in South Austin.)

After Gill and Jill Moody were married, Gill peeled back his tux as the ceremony concluded to proudly display his Carta Valley S.U.C.K.S. T-shirt, Carl Kunath recalled. CVS had been founded the year before, in July 1969, and Gill became a Charter member. He almost instantly became a fixture in the CVS group and was always a stalwart supporter.

Military life

Ediger was in Reserve Officers' Training Corps at A & I University in Kingsville (renamed Texas A&M University-Kingsville in 1993) where he first began caving. He was inspired by a geography professor, Dr. Stanley Bittinger, who had made regular caving excursions to Mexico.

Receiving his pilot's license in 1967, Gill had started flying small craft. By age 20, he was flying Ercoupes, Cessna 150s, 172 and Beechcraft planes. He received his radiotelephone permit on

July 21 of that year. He was drafted during the Vietnam War and entered the Army as an officer. He was promoted to Captain and given an honorable discharge in 1972 due to damaged eardrums resulting from lighting acetylene bombs on a beach with caver friends on leave.

After basic training and special training in large, multi-engine, fixed wing aircraft for the Army, he had leave and had returned to Austin. On the night before reporting for deployment, Gill went with caving friends to Padre Island to play with pyrotechnics. He said the fuse was too short, and a device went off before he had a chance to get out of the way. This damaged his eardrums, gave him a concussion and deposited material in the skin of his chest.

The next day, he reported for duty with the damaged eardrums. The Army was so angry, according to Cathy, that they almost sent Gill to Leavenworth (his words) because they thought he'd done it deliberately to avoid his tour of duty in Vietnam. But when the flight surgeon examined him, upon seeing the material embedded in his chest, decided it had really been an accident. So the Army changed their mind about shipping him off to Leavenworth (prison).

But, because Gill could no longer fly large, multi-engine, fixed-wing aircraft when his eardrums healed because he'd get vertigo every time he went into a turn, the Army retrained him to fly helicopters. He still shipped to Vietnam, but because he became adept at avoiding herky-jerky flight, with extreme accelerations, stops, and side-to-side swinging maneuvers, he became a go-to choice to fly "the Brass" around Vietnam. Colonels and generals would request his services for his ultra-smooth flying technique. So Gill would answer the "What did you do in Vietnam?" question with: "I used to fly The Brass all over the place in a glorified helicopter taxi."

After the war, Gill took a break - but then resumed flying small craft again in 1972, with occasional check-rides. He later re-passed his Airman's Medical while in Baltimore, around 2005, and made several flights in and around Baltimore.

Working on the railroad - and ministry!

It seems that Gill had two licenses to preach: One from J.R. "Bob" Dobbs and the Church of the SubGenius and another from the Universal Life Church, Inc. He officiated at an unknown number of caver-couple weddings.

In 1999, Gill went to Overland Park, Kansas, to train a school, at the age of 52. Gill had a longstanding fascination of locomotion and had worked with Terry Raines to set up a railroad track of sorts on his property outside Austin. Gill secured a job with the B&O Railroad and lived in the Baltimore area, starting as an Engineer. But after he exceeded speed tolerances on one downhill run, the B&O reassigned him as a grade cartographer.

Gill worked for the B&O long enough to be eligible for railroad retirement, which had been one of his stated goals. But trains remained in his blood even after retiring.

Caving exploits

Gill met his first wife Jill at Texas A&I. They first lived on a farm owned by his family and later moved to Austin. Gill co-founded a caving club at Texas A&I with John Kreidler in the 1960s. In February 1967, Gill went on a trip to Gruta del Palmito with Kreidler, a Texas A&I freshman. This trip led to the club's formation. A second trip that month attracted 12 people and, in the weeks that followed, the Texas A&I Speleological Society drew up a constitution and gained recognition from the university. In 1969, it became a student grotto of the NSS.

Gill was vice-chairman in 1967. Carl Kunath writes, "Texas A&I produced some of the best cavers Texas could offer in the late 1960s and early 1970s. ... Ediger became a recognized figure in Texas cave politics, was principal editor of the *Texas Caver* for 1976-1977, and was co-founder of the Texas Old Timers' Reunion as well as serving three terms as TSA Chairman." While at A&I, Gill was a grotto officer and contributor to *Oztotl*, the caving club's newsletter.

The A&I Grotto had a traditional Beer Bust and Body Roast in the Padre Island vicinity, and Gill participated in the early 1970s event that attracted cavers from as far away as San Angelo.

As Gill started caving statewide, he became active in TSA. The Texas Old Timers' Reunion was organized in 1978 by Gill, Mike Walsh and Chuck Stuehm in order to fill a need created by the absence of a TSA Labor Day Project during most of the previous decade. It was felt that the TSA needed a fall caving event to bring Texas cavers together for fun and frolic and social interaction, all an important part of most cavers' caving education and experience.

Over the years, the event grew from the original 90 participants at Luckenbach to well over 500 at some recent gatherings. Years ago the name was quietly changed from TOTR to TCR, the Texas Cavers' Reunion, to avoid confusion with the "original" OTR -- Old Timers Reunion -- in West 'by God' Virginia. Although many cavers help with the event, the general philosophy is to try to make the Reunion appear that it just happens spontaneously without any or much direction from anybody. As Gill was fond of saying, "The only rule is that there are no rules!"

In "[50 Years of Texas Caving](#)," Gill receives credit for conceiving, organizing, and expediting more than 20 TCRs. Gill was TSA chairman in 1970, when he was also named a Caver of the Month in the *Texas Caver* magazine. The same year, Gill and Jill Moody were married within Natural Bridge Caverns. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Gill peeled back his tux to reveal his caving affiliation (Carta Valley S.U.C.K.S.) Debbie Marrong and John Kreidler assisted Rev. Joseph G. Rogers.

Gill edited the *Texas Caver* in 1976. Wife Jill Ediger's article "Women in Caving?" appeared in the February 1976 *Texas Caver*. Here, Jill discussed the responses of 84 women when asked to comment on their perspectives and experiences as females in a male-dominated activity. Gill described the obstacle course at the 1976 Old Timers Reunion: "Timed event: boots and hardhat required. Contestants maneuver through a series of ridiculous physical impediments designed to simulate some (not all) of the grossest and most difficult caving conditions. Course changes annually with conditions and attitudes. Rules are usually made up on the spot and subject to the whims of the judges."

Gill received the Stately Bizdash Award for 1978, related to publication of the *Texas Caver*. At the June 18-23 NSS National Convention in New Braunfels, the opening weekend's activities featured armadillo races, a chili cookoff, geology field trip, and trip to Devil's Sinkhole.

In December 1978, Chris Kerr fell and broke his leg while deep in Cueva del Brinco. When word of the accident reached Austin, the rescuers quickly mobilized. The National Guard flew Gill along with Jerry Atkinson, Mark Minton, Terry Sayther, Bill Stone and others - plus Sayther's 4x4 vehicle - directly to Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas in a C-130.

Diplomats and officials were cooperative, local residents were helpful, and Kerr's companions did what they should have done to insure his well-being while awaiting help. The rescue was effected in exemplary fashion with an absolute minimum of bureaucratic red tape. The rescue - and injury - spot was named the "Kerrplunk." Kerr was not a Texas caver but all his rescuers were. The rescue is a testimony to the prowess of Texas cavers and the power of learning from past experiences.

In the July-August 1979 *Caver*, Gill reported: "A motion to disband the TSA and *Texas Caver* was soundly defeated by the Board of Governors at the recent meeting in Kerrville, indicating that a spark of life still twitches in the old body we know as the Texas Region."

In 1981, Gill supervised evacuation of trucks from the TSA Convention campground after a rainstorm.

More than 50 cavers went to Uvalde in 1988 for the third Texas caving convention held in that city. Gill presented a talk summarizing Mexican caving in the past decade.

The September-October 1992 issue of the *Texas Caver* led off with a letter from Gill discussing the *Caver's* role in TSA and Texas caving in general. Gill pointed out that the *Caver* is the only means TSA has to communicate with its membership and that it should aim to be a timely "newsletter" first, in preference to all other considerations. Gill suggested that TSA publish a monthly newsletter and a less frequent, perhaps quarterly, journal. These were worthy comments, made all the more interesting when reviewing Ediger's performance as *Texas Caver* editor in 1976 and 1977.

The year before the NSS Convention in Brackettville, the TSA Convention was held in May at Fort Clark Springs. Gill recounted some of the actions, writing about the TSA board meeting with ~10 cavers in the basement of the old Commissary Building: "A constitutional quorum being present, we conducted the meeting. Dissenting discussions and the usual arguments were mercifully absent, although opinions were requested and expressed, even of and by the nonmembers. We were democracy in action."

Also, in 1993, Gill was instrumental in providing a membership list to TSA members for the first time in seven years. The October-December *Texas Caver* included a list for hundreds of Texas

cavers, including preprinted post cards for use in updating the list, subscribing to the *Caver*, and supporting the Texas Speleological Survey. Stick-on cards providing the cave rescue phone number for Texas and Mexico were also included.

In 1994, Gill's five-page article in the January-March *Caver* summarized Texas caving from the 1940s to the present, noting the highlights and low lights as well as offering thoughts on the situation: "It will be noted that the Texas Caver continues to be untimely, TSA membership fails to show much life. The two are related ... at a recent meeting of the TSA, there were three officers and about six spectators present. ... "

Gill returned for another round of TSA introspection in the April-June *Caver*, including a massive chart showing how the caving world is organized in Texas. His lengthy article reviews most TSA aspects and makes suggestions for change and improvement. "Gill should surely get the award for persistence in attempting to make the TSA rise and shine as it should," Carl Kunath writes.

A TSA membership directory was distributed in 1995. Gill Ediger deserves most of the credit for compiling this listing of more than 1,000 people who have been involved with Texas caving at any time during the previous 40 years. This was the first such full directory since the 1958 version and would prove a valuable tool for years to come."

In 1997, Gill was TSA chairman, and Powell's Cave received its long-awaited concrete culvert entrance. The entrance had long been unstable, and the solution was to stack sections of large concrete culvert vertically inside it. Following efforts to prepare the entrance, the materials were donated and a large West Texas Utilities crane brought onsite to install them. Gill along with Jon Cradit, Terry Holsinger, Dave McClung, Bill Mixon, Pete Strickland, and George Veni helped with engineering support and labor. Gill was featured in a comic strip by Charlie Loving entitled, "Texas Caver Comics."

In 1998, Gill sounded the alarm at the TCR when floodwaters started inundating the campground along the Nueces River at Chalk Creek Bluff Park near Uvalde. The flood washed away the hot tub and part of camp, blocking highways with high water. Gill continued as TSA chairman in 1998.

The following year, Gill was hired by the B&O Railroad and moved to Maryland. Charlie Loving solicited several pages of comments from Gill's friends for the occasion. Among the comments, Carl Kunath wrote: "I didn't want you to leave Texas without again expressing my thanks to you for all the wonderful support you have rendered to Texas caving for all these years. Yours is a remarkable record of service which I don't believe can be equaled by any other. It's true there are cavers with greater tenure but none with greater sustained public service. While others of your era have stepped aside (or been run over), you have been an almost constant touchstone and point of reference. Your methods and tactics have been controversial upon occasion, but your critics usually had less beneficial effect on the caving world than you did. Your departure will leave a considerable hole in Texas caving which cannot be filled by a single individual and will doubtless be viewed as a waypoint in our speleohistory."

Also in 1999, the Texas Caver Reunion returned to Flat Creek Ranch. This was the first time that Gill had not been in charge since the first reunion in 1978. A chart showed that Gill was TSA chairman in 1970, 1997, and 1998. He wrote, "... the TSA chairman's job is to keep track of those few people who show an ongoing interest in the "organization" and to encourage them to take charge of TSA activities. He is the nucleus of the organization, and should write letters, and encourage them [general membership] to help the vice-chairman in any way possible, pressuring everybody to be timely; to send out meeting announcements well in advance of meetings, call, and get people to meetings, etc. In short, to expand the requisite energy to see that other people get the job done."

He was also a caving populist, writing about TCR, "even those with marginal M&B (mud and blood) lines are allowed to openly commingle. We welcome foreigners as well, and even people and dogs with no ethnicity whatsoever, nor are anyone's ethics or esthetics or any other e-words checked closely enough to identify them as such. Bring cash, and you're pretty much guaranteed a spot to pitch your tent - no questions, no IDs, no shoes, no shirt, no problem."

Gill helped organize the Kendall County Cave Project from March 1999 to January 2000 along with Tara Martin, Karen Perry, Joe Ranzau and Allen Wong. A chart shows Gill was *Texas Caver* editor in 1976 and in 1977 - along with James Jasek and Chuck Stuehm - and in 1997 along with Becky Jones, Jim Kennedy, and Chris Vreeland.

Gill was considered to be a Texas caving guru. After CaveTex, the Internet-based computer remailer for cavers, was created in 1998, some spinoffs occurred, including AskGillTex.

After the formation of Carta Valley SUCKS on July 13, 1969, there were no officers, no treasury, no constitution, no bylaws. As Gill later stated, "The only rule is that there will be no rules." Ediger was initiated into the group in an official photo on Feb. 14, 1970. For a CV "Wake" in May 1977, Gill is pictured in a coffin.

When Gill and Jill Moody were married at NBC on a Saturday night in August 1970, there was an audible gasp from the audience when Gill capped the ceremony by showing his CV T-shirt beneath his tux. (Phyllis Jill Moody, Sinton, and Bradley Gillum Ediger, Kingsville. Both bride and groom were university students).

Gill also contributed to publications of the Texas Speleological Survey, including McKittrick Hill, N.M., in June 1978. In summer 1968, as recalled by Frank Binney, at the NSS Convention in Springfield, Mo., and a trip to Carroll Cave: "When we pulled up in front of the low, water-filled entrance, the Texans piled out of their caravan of psychedelically painted speleo-vehicles and walked over to feel the temperature of the water. One of them - a big, well-muscled, macho-looking guy in a Hoss Cartwright cowboy hat - bends over, sticks his finger in the 55-degree water, straightens back up, and - in a perfect South Texas drawl - says, "Nope." ... That was my first encounter with the famous Gill Ediger."

Gill won the Stately Bizdash Award in 1978 (dismal performance as Caver editor). In fact, Ediger was slated to be a two-time winner, but the award mysteriously vanished and was never seen again ... Gill was named an NSS Fellow in 1976 along with Jill Moody [NSS 12058].

Gill reported on the party at Frank Binney's house in Buda on Oct. 23, 1976. Ediger anointed Lisk Wilk, Marcia Crossey and others with holy water from the Cave of Oztotl brought by Craig Bittinger when they professed to have "seen the darkness." Gill's truck was in a lineup of speleo-bumpers at Dripping Springs in 1978.

Gill went to Mexico and reported that visiting Palmito "is a mind-altering experience." On July 10, 1971, Gill Ediger helped Jon Vinson install a gate at the lower entrance of Midnight Cave. In 2017, an NSS Convention program featured Gill and other former "pit hippies" of the 1970s-era Kirkwood Kavers gathering with scientists studying that famous caver village, including anthropologist Maria Perez and sociologist John M. Wilson.

Gill may have been thinking about mortality back in 1970 when he wrote in a poem published in *Oztotl*, the Texas A&I Grotto newsletter:

*Encase my bones in a concrete grave
Beneath the earth in a great long cave.
Far from the earth man did ascend
And it is right, there he should end.*

*Where people passing by can see
A poor old caver such as me,
Who lived his life in hopeful search
Of social escape with a carbide torch.*

*This beautiful world set up by man,
Then ruined it all by greed and sin.
Why can't all men go down under
And see the beauty of nature's wonder?*

*Untouched by hands that spoil the land,
Above the ground they've built a sham;
But down below where few men go,
Where waters drip and streams run cold,*

*Stalactites form, and then they hang
For eons, outliving any walking thing.*

- Gill Ediger

To Gill and Jill this thought:
Friends depart, and memory takes them

To her caverns, pure and deep.

- T. Bayly

References and sources

- [50 Years of Texas Caving](#) by Carl Kunath
- TCR history from cavetexas.org
- [Natural Bridge Caverns](#) statement
- Bill Elliott's database research
- [Hall of Texas and Mexico Cavers](#)
- Conversations and emails with:
 - Cathy Winfree
 - Jocie Hooper
 - Christa Riddington
 - Sarah Gayle
 - Craig Bittinger

Tributes

Editor's note: Two days following Gill's death, Jim Kennedy established a Facebook group, [Memories of Ediger and 300 Mockingbird](#). It continues to receive contributions. Below is a sampling of comments and "Gillisms," followed by a number of photos.

"My last long conversation with Gill was a little over 10 years ago. We had just returned from a Quintana Roo expedition in the early days of Sistema Jaguar and found ourselves alone at the house we had rented for a couple of weeks while other crews were out surveying for the day. Some local repairmen were working on the defunct AC unit in the August heat. We sat in the kitchen for 2-3 hours uninterrupted --talking about a wide range of topics, including how to get younger cavers more involved in the trips at that time. What struck me the most though was that probably 90% of what we talked about had nothing at all to do with caves or caving. We talked about ATX (as he called it), urbanization, water rights, protecting nature, trains, kids, family, and a wide range of eclectic topics. He briefly mentioned "people been telling me my memory isn't as good", but nothing more and I didn't pry, but nodded. Nothing about the day was larger than life, just two people taking the time to talk. Returning home, we exchanged the messages below.

"We texted several times off and on in the year after, mostly about survey notes and cartography topics, but we never had another chance to just sit and talk. My time in Austin and daily contact with Texas Caving was over 20 years ago, and too brief at that. I will never take for granted the welcoming nature of the caving community there, and I hope no one ever does, because it is special." - *Aaron Addison*

"Ediger had an aunt who was a dwarf. In the late 80s, he had Terry Raines print up postcards with an old photo of his aunt. They were pre-addressed to her. He gave them out to cavers and

asked them to mail them to her from anywhere they traveled to. He and his aunt laughed and laughed at all the postcards she got from far away places from total strangers.

“Ediger put together my first trip to Devils Sinkhole in the 80s. On the way home, he hit a deer with his old GMC truck. Some of the ribs punctured the radiator and we had to pinch off the leaks on the fins with a pair of pliers.” - *Alan Cobb*

“So many memories filled with laughter and appreciation. Knowing Gill was a gift. One time in 2020 when I brought him dinner and we sat around quietly talking for a couple hours, he asked if I'd shave his head. It was all the small moments. That man's smirk, shenanigans, kindness and Gillisms remain treasured.” - *Liza Colucci*

“When I met Gill ... It would've been the late 1970s, most likely at a slideshow at 1404 Kirkwood. One recollection ... He was printing T-shirts and bumper stickers at Sheauxnough Studios at 16th at Lavaca St. The studio was shared with many of the OG Austin poster artists. And his printer printed the early Austin Chronicles.

I will always remember his New Year's parties watching fireworks from the roof at Mockingburd. Especially when Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen show was broadcast over the radio from AWHQ when the Armadillo World Headquarters was closing!

Historical Note - written by Patrick McGarrigle who was on early exploration trips of Huautla, Oaxaca.

*How the interwoven history of cavers and Austin music/counterculture are inextricably linked since the Vulcan Gas Company and Janis Joplin on 33 1/2 street.

'Formed in the 1970s, Sheauxnough Studios was a collective of poster artists in Austin, Texas, formerly associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters.'

When the studios closed (15th (and) Lavaca) and the building was demolished in 1987, Seth I. Aronie, now known as Emmanuel Aronie, produced a program about the closing of Sheauxnough Studios, entitled "End of an Era," which aired on the local television public access network, ACTV. Aronie transferred footage and copies of the program to Patrick McGarrigle, who in turned donated the collection to the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

Local Austin artists featured and interviewed for the program include De" Guy Juke "White, Danny Garrett, Micael Priest, and others.” - *Martha Connell*

“Gill's Damned Fine Beans (from the Recipé of a Scoundrel in Deep-South Austin:

- 2 Cups Pinto or Black Beans (or damn near any other kind)
- 6 Cups Holy Water
- 1½ Cups Onions sliced
- 1 Handful Salt Pork cut into ½" cubes, or
- Ham Hocks smoked, or
- Chicherones, or
- Sausage
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Comino
- 1 tsp Oregano
- 1 tsp Black Pepper

- 1 tsp Brown Sugar
- 1 Tbls Vinegar
- 3 or 4 Whole Jalapeños or Serranos
- 3 or 4 Whole Bay Leaves
- 3 or 4 Garlic Cloves whole, quartered, or crushed

Clean the beans to remove rocks, trash, or other relics. Put the beans and enough unsanctified water into a 4 or 5 quart pressure cookerpot and boil for 2 or 3 minutes with the lid off. Strain off the water. Repeat this process 2 more times. This process dissolves and removes about 90% of the gas producing enzymes in beans. It also makes them wrinkle and swell, so you may have to divert your eyes and use more water each time.

Next put everything into the pot--Beans, Onions, Flesh, Spices, Everything--stir them up and add the Holy Water.

Put the lid on the pressure cooker, set the jigglers at 15 pounds, turn up the fire 'til it jiggles. Then follow the standard pressure cooker guidelines for safety and righteous living.

Light a Virgen de Guadalupe candle nearby and place it in a saucer of water with red rose petals floating on it. Wait 45 minutes to an hour. Kill the cooking fire and cool the PC under running water till the pressure is equalized. Return the jigglers to its keeping place, open the lid, and taste the beans. If they are OK, extinguish the candle and give thanks. If they are not good, smash the candle and all it stands for with a cast iron skillet.

Alternatives ... If your hobby is the avoidance of flesh as food, you may substitute a lesser amount of butter or chicken bouillon or vegetable oil for it. Beans are dry, pasty things and they really do require some manner of fat to carry the flavor through the broth.

(Another Gillism) "‘Everyone say, ‘cunnilingus!’ always produced the best photos.” - *Crystal Datri*

“I remember Gill from 50 years ago. Before Mockingbird, he was my roommate on Kirkwood. I moved out of 1307 1/2 a few doors down with Blake (Harrison), "to be alone." It wasn't long before Gill moved in and I had one rule, no more roommates. It wasn't long before Katie moved in. What can I say, Gill loved women and cavers, and both were drawn to him like a magnet. I was so young, Gill helped me sell my car so I could fund my trip to the Frogtown convention. He painted my body with a cyalume and I was the glowing girl at that convention. To know Gill was to let go of all inhibitions and be free! I will never forget him. He was one of a kind.” - *Jill Dorman*

“As Kara said: ‘Gill was always so kind to the little ones.’ He truly loved being around children and was always happy to pose for photos holding the babies. I’m so grateful my son (Kraz) had the chance to make those memories with him, and I hope he carries them with him for a long time.” - *Yaz A. Flores*

“I am thankful to have known Gill Ediger while he was here on earth. The many ways he inspired our caving community will live on in all of us.” - *Jessica Gordon*

“Let’s get a little book of all his Gillisms done, and his recipes, too!! It would sell! I bet our community could come together and produce this by the TCR! We would not be able to attend, but would buy the book 🥰

We were not around Gill except at functions, for as Jim said he was a 'deep' caver, and we were not. Jim may have had contact when visiting Kirkwood House. Also when he was working on the railroad out at Tick Acres in later years!! I can still hear his 'Jasek' greeting in my head whenever they did see each other. He rarely called him anything else, unless James. We gathered at his place before going on a trip to Whirlpool.

I let my younger sister, Jane Laurens-Day, know of his passing, and this was her response: 'I do remember him. He was very kind to me and kind of watched over me when I went to that conference with Terry and Jan to Iowa. Sorry for that ending. Is Terry still around?' She went to UT Austin and caved with the UTG in the early 70s.

It is hard to imagine this larger than life persona is gone from us, but through memories, pictures, isms, and recipes, he will be with us forever. How lucky you were to have known him." - *Mimi Jasek*

"I always think of Gil when I add fat to my vegan beans. I learned it from this recipe!" - *Jeffrey Nichols*

Former wife "Jill Moody. They met at A and I. She was also a caver." - *Sarah Gayle*

"My first memory of Gill was in 1980. He and Blake came to a SWT grotto meeting. I was a newbie yet had heard their names. Probably a few stories but that was long ago and I don't remember. They walked into the classroom where the meeting was held, a few minutes into the meeting. In my mind's memory, it's like they walked into the room with a golden aura shining behind them. They filled the room with their presence. The meeting felt more animated because these Austin caving legends arrived.

I remember Gill being the most Alpha male I'd encountered. He did it without even trying although he was keenly aware of his charisma. People gravitated towards him. Part was the air of confidence he carried. He was the Pied Piper of Mirth and Mischievous. He could be deadly serious and then you'd see the glint of humor and his wry grin. And the mood could change back to serious three seconds later.

So many nights sitting at the river's edge sharing stories and listening to tales with his evening's "not water" allocation close by. Mostly I listened. I don't have those kind of stories he had to share. We all giggled as the night progressed. We'd stare at stars and look for shooting streaks across the horizon.

One night we watched the glow of the moon grow brighter as it traveled a path to the canyon's rim. It appeared, peeking halfway over the rim before starting its descent. We all sat together, in awe of the canyon's beauty. As the moon's glow faded, we did too. That show was over. The next morning, (and most every morning of that trip), Gill was banging pots pre-dawn to wake everyone up. We had 20 miles to row each day in low water. The rest of us yelled from our tents.

"Go back to bed. Stop! Shut the f up." We grumbled that he should had brought a woman. He never stopped the morning pot bangs, and he'd be grinning as everyone straggled into camp. We made our mile goals everyday.

Gill rafted through the Grand Canyon in flood. He found Georgie White's dry bag floating by and fished it out of the river. She was the First Lady raft guide of the Colorado. How many rafters float the Usamacinta River shot by bandits? How many rafters pull out their boats to look at a dam release when the fourth gate opens?

When we were scouting river rapids, I always tried to stay within close proximity of he and Blake. They worked off of each other's observations until they picked their paths. Often the same but certainly not every time. He had the 18' pontoon while Blake had a 14' sports raft. I learned how to read water from the masters.

He and Blake and George Love engaged in what I termed side by side play. They always had a project. They theorized together what might be the best plan forward. They'd come up with a few "what ifs" and end with with a workable design, usually fabulous but sometimes needing refinement. And they'd refine. The friendship between them felt as much about the camaraderie as the end result.

Yet through all that toughness, he was never afraid to be vulnerable. He didn't take anyone too seriously, mostly himself. He would help anyone and everyone. Take what you need....just write your name on the borrower list and bring it back when you're done. An enigma. A friend. I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to have known him all of my adult life. He taught me one of the most important lessons I've learned that has saved my life once or twice. He taught me to trust my instincts, my gut. I can follow but not past my point of comfort. I am forever grateful.

I will miss him. I'm one of so many people whose life he touched and am thankful I had the opportunity to be his friend. I'm glad he's free of his body and illnesses. I know he's doing whatever's next on his path.

Damn sure know he's not in heaven. If there's a hell, he's setting it on fire.
One thing for sure: Dog Loves You. I do too." - *Kira Holt*

"He has a lot of old friends to hang out with in 'Caver Heaven.'" - *Jocie Hooper*

"I met Ediger in July 1968 at the Springfield, Mo., NSS Convention. He was just getting started in the caving world and was a bit of a wild card even then. ... When TSA and the *Texas Caver* rose Phoenix-like from the ashes of Texas caving in January 1970, Gill proudly accepted the nomination as TSA Chairman. For the next five decades, Gill was a fixture in the caving world and contributed to that community in ways that were sometimes controversial but always thoughtful. He once said, "I could never vote for the sort of person that would run for public office." Gill's decline and eventual passing has left a sorrowful gap in my world and likely a similar space for anyone that knew him. There will never be another like him. Vaya con Dios, mi amigo!" - *C. Edwin Kunath*

"To paraphrase a Gillism: He was an equal opportunity offender. To your point of not taking himself or others too seriously. He offended everyone at one time or another!
So many memories! Do you remember the built in hot tub getting fired up?" - *Martha Connell*

"I remember Gill with great affection. I didn't know him well, but enough to see him as a wonderful person. I met him in Austin over 40 years ago, and we occasionally crossed paths at

caving meetings. The last time we saw each other was when we shared some explorations in Chihuahua in 2017 (with Peter Sprouse and others). I had a long conversation with him then. I still have some minerals he gave me on that occasion. I have very fond memories of him.” -

Carlos Lazcano

“I know (Gill) married Jill, and I think I met her once but I wasn’t around for their wedding. If he really had divorce party, perhaps it was ‘with’ Jill, but I missed that too.

“Regardless, I had heard that Gill had a divorce party, and I thought that was a great idea. So Gill, so weirdly normal.

“So when Ron Ralph and I divorced in 1984, we had a divorce party and invited lots of cavers. We had a pickup parked in the backyard, filled with ice and beer. We had a band on the driveway. I think it was Plum Nelly or Balcones Fault. People danced a lot, and Ron and I both had a great time.

“I never did get around to thanking Gil for the idea. If you’re listening, Gill ... Thanks.

(Another comment about the photo of Gill’s bumper stickers) “You are missing ‘Eat More Fish’ with a picture of a person eating the Christianity fish symbol (Ichthys), and something about Sunday School for Children is Propaganda (can’t remember exact wording). Good ol’ Gill!” -

Pam Lynn

“Gill and I started kindergarten together and graduated high school in the same class in Sinton. We both raised duroc hogs in FFA. From middle school through high school, Gill wore different colored socks daily as well as a vest his mother made from scraps of cloth. Every time I hear Dolly Parton’s song, ‘Coat of many colors,’ I think of Gill and that vest. Gill’s caving started in about ninth grade when he would traverse storm drains for hours beneath the town of Sinton. Most unique guy I’ve ever known. His dad, Ott, was head of the Soil Conservation District and he and Gill were like twin brothers. Gill was truly a one of a individual.

“...In addition to wearing different colored socks everyday in high school, he would often change up his footwear. He might wear a moccasin and a boot one day, followed by a dress shoe and lace up boots the next. I think he wore out that vest his mom made him. The youngest student in our graduating class of 120ish in ‘65 as I recall. I was riding around with Gill (some of us called him Ott (his character of a dad’s name). Mr. Ediger is where Gill got his training!!! Gill picked me up one night to drive around Sinton and see what was going on in our big town of about 6k. We stopped for a red light and a muscle car pulled up beside us and Gill started revving the motor on his mom’s go-to-church-in 6 cylinder sedan. The dude beside us did the same thing to his big V8 meaning a drag race was on when the light turned green. When it did both cars burned tires and away we went. Typical Gill. He had no intention of racing the guy so he had the tranny in REVERSE and peeled out backwards!!! A few stories about Gill as an adolescent which is probably no surprise whatsoever to all that knew him and loved him as an adult. They threw the mold away when they made those 2 kind-hearted Ediger men.” - *David Mckee*

“I don’t have photos, but I met Gill at the hot tub the year he moved back to Texas. He commented he liked my legs. When he later met Joe, he asked if I was sure I was married. 🤔 I

loved seeing him at every caver event there after and always getting a good hug.” - *Evelynn Roth Mitchell*

“Gill was the first person to take me to Mexico. He let me live with him and taught me drywall so I could help finish the back house. Mostly I just remember his incredible wit and humor, and his wealth of knowledge on everything. Trains, caves, history, construction, plants, cooking, etc etc. Even though I didn't live in Austin for too long, Gill had a huge impact on a young impressionable me. Knowing him gave me the courage to go out on my own adventures and I think my life would have been much different without him. Anytime I was around Gill or Pete I was in awe of them. They were truly living legends. Here are some pictures from my first trip to Mexico with Gill.” - Ryan Morgan

“I met Gill Ediger in 2009 on a trip to El Cielo, Tamaulipas, with Corinne Wong. I liked him very much and have great admiration for this great figure in caving as well as for others who are no longer with us. These photos were taken by two members of this 2009 group, Andy Zanker and Lacey, and the last one is mine; I had them stored in my archives and wanted to share them with you in honor of Gill. I am greatly saddened by his loss. My sincerest condolences to his family and may he rest in peace.” - *Jean Louis Lacaille Muzquiz*

“Gill took Louie (one of his dachshunds) to the 1970 TSA Labor Day project at McKittrick Hill in New Mexico, which was a 3-day mapping effort attended by over a hundred cavers from four states. On the first day, Louie accompanied Gill's team into the cave. The dry, rocky passages were difficult for Louie's short legs to negotiate, and he spent a goodly amount of time high-centered on the larger rocks. On the second day, Louie stayed in camp under a shade tarp. Exhausted and feet too sore to walk, he spent the day sleeping on his back with all four feet up in the air.” - *James N. Morris*

“A favorite Gill quote: Never break more than one law at a time!” - *Denise Prendergast*

“I'm going through my messenger convos with Gill and a few things pop out. He just had this way of pulling these words out like a preacher.

“Caving will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no caving.”

“Never make decisions during times of emotion.” - *Philip Rykwald*

“Yes! It was in one of the AMCS Bulletins or News, and captioned, ‘With apologies to Gilbert Sheldon.’ It was adapted from a Freak Brothers cartoon, with Freewheeling Franklin holding a huge joint, saying, ‘Dope will get you through times of no money, better than money will get you through times of no dope.’ “ - *Michael McWhirter*

“Gill loved books and often browsed the dictionary, with a gin and tonic, for hours after a long day of work. He was a hard worker, but rarely felt the reward of hard work. He would create a garden space, yet not garden, create camping spaces, but did not really enjoy camping, provided spaces for others to gather and party, but rarely imbibed, set up camp kitchens, but

didn't cook. He often confirmed rewards of labors that included bringing people together, coming up with solutions to difficult problems, such as providing hot water showers or swamp coolers to campers in Mexico or events such as the Bracketville NSS Convention in 1994. He enjoyed being part of group activities, but was a bold individual." - *Christa Riddington*

"I met Gill's house before I ever met Gill. I attended parties and parked my car during trips to Mexico there, while Gill was off driving trains. When we finally met, some of my favorite memories of him are from when we would walk from Painter Hall to the Posse. We often walked and talked together.

When I was living out in Lytton Springs and Phoebe was small, he offered us a spot to rest in Austin at his house between library story time and swimming lessons, so I didn't have to drive so much.

We had some non-caver friends in common, and he liked that I had studied midwifery and been a midwife's apprentice.

One of my last best memories of him was well into his decline, I had visited for dinner. The creek had flooded and deeply eroded into the banks. You could see some really amazing tree root structures that had been exposed. We stood there gazing at it all and talking about the creek, rocks, floods, the trees, the roots and for a while he very much had the Gleam of Gill in his eyes. I'm sure he had old memories of the creek, and old memories were the easiest for him to talk about in those days. I was acutely aware of what a precious moment it was, and I let it soak in to me." - *Kara Dittmer Savvas*

"There was a time at Punkin and Deep when Phoebe got spooked at the entrance of Deep cave and didn't want to complete the Caving trip. Gill had come to the entrance with the group, but was going to hike around and find some survey stations on the property. He very kindly noticed Phoebe's distress and offered for her to hike with him instead of going Caving and promised to see her safely back to the cabin so that I could enjoy my caving trip. She agreed to go with him. Along the way, we hadn't planned very well, and she got hungry and dear Gill shared his sandwich and some Nutter Butter cookies, which had mustard on them, with Phoebe. She was both grateful and disgusted. 🤢 it was a much longer hike than she had anticipated, but they both made it back to the cabin safely as promised. I was always grateful for his help in that moment and surprised that he would voluntarily spend an afternoon hiking with a child. 🙏 He was always very kind to the little ones." - *Kara Dittmer Savvas*

"Ediger taught me John Prine songs as I slowly climbed out and he waited at the top of each drop" at Hoya de las Conchas.

"*There's a hole in daddy's arm where all the money goes ...*" - *Terry Sayther*

"Gill, past director of the NSS, loved and served the caving community. He was a mentor to many, and everyone was infected by his wild sense of humor.

"As everyone knows, Gill had a long and difficult decline over a period of seven years or so. During this time, his care team worked to keep him safe and comfortable. That team included Cathy Winfrey, Jocie Hooper, Jessica Gordon, Cait McCann-Teran, Yazmin Avila, Dylan Beeler,

and Amy LoBiondo (and others). If you see these folks, be sure to thank them for their efforts, especially Cathy and Jocie who spent a lot of time caring for him.” - *Peter Sprouse*

“Ediger was a mainstay of caving in Texas and Mexico for several decades. He served the NSS as a director. He was a good friend to many. His smile and wit will be missed,” *Bill Steele* wrote, adding, “I didn’t go to Gill’s divorce party, but I did go to his Gun Shot Party. He was shot in the leg by a small caliber rifle while on a rafting trip down the Rio Usamacinta on the border of Mexico and Guatemala in the late 80s or so. I’d almost gone on that trip. A Swiss woman and friend of mine caught a bullet in the torso and got flown back to Switzerland.

“About Gill’s Gun Shot Party: Gill caught a bullet in his calf muscle. I got to touch it while it was still bandaged. The Swiss woman, Ursi, got hit in her wrist and torso. She was hurt much worse. She had travel insurance and got flown out and back to Switzerland.

(Another story) “Back sometime in the early 1980s, Gill left his truck at my house in San Antonio while he went to Mexico. I drove it to Austin for him. As I drove up I-35, people honked at me, frowned, and a couple of them gave me the finger. When I got to Gill’s in Austin, I think I found out why. Two bumper stickers on the back bumper said: ‘Jesus is Coming, get him a towel’, and ‘Mandatory Sterilization of Christians.’ ”

“Eeyore’s Birthday Party is the quintessential Austin hippie event, as is Pease Park’s name itself, intended to be Peace Park at first. But parks had to be named after people and this Pease guy was in the list of acceptable historical dudes. I always included Gill with the hippies.

“Gill was also an ordained minister in the Church of the Subgenius, he told me. ‘It’s a different kind of fun, those guys.’

(Regarding Proyecto Espeleologica Purificacion) “Gill built that cabin for the PEP. I went on a similar small trip with him and Felicia Vreeland, amongst others. I shared my four Guinness beers with everyone since they were unable to buy at the store on Sunday. When we entered the cave, Gill paused at the Crack of Doom and said, ‘Just got a little of the heebie jeebies!’” - *Tim Stich*

“I knew Gill for decades and always was amazed at the variety of people that were impressed by him. He provided us all a great example of how to get along with others. I never heard him speak ill of others or they of him.” - *James Strick Strickland*

“I made all my frames for screen printing in (Gill’s) shed for over a year on his radial arm saw. He set me up with a jig that would cut a sort of mortise & tenon joint on a standard 2x2 and it got me going. I probably made a couple of hundred at least until we got busy enough that I started buying them from a vendor. I recall him having a really nice drill press out there, too.

(Another story) “After printing in his outbuilding for a year or so, we moved Vreeland Graphics down to 5th & Lavaca (with a lot of help from Gill), and he decided to convert that building into ‘the domicile.’ He wanted to enlarge it and decided the easiest way to expand would be to add 10 feet in the middle so that he wouldn’t have to tear off and rebuild an outer wall. He managed to detach two of the three segments, and we put skids underneath the south side, jacked up the section of house and then put long pipes perpendicular to the skids underneath it. The two of us

rolled that section of the house 10 feet to the north. Right as we got it going, he said, 'You know Vreeland, some people go their whole lives without ever moving a house.'" – *Chris Vreeland*

"We printed the (Virgin de Guadalupe) shirts. I love that Ediger had the cojones to wear it in México ... LoL." - *Felicia S. Vreeland*

"Gill smiled a lot. He was a constant for a lot of cavers, lending advice, safety and security for so many. You could count on Gill to be at his house, any event, or where he was needed. He didn't expect a thank you. Here's a great memory where Gill took me up In a cherry picker he rented to do tree work at Mockingbird Lane." - *Ellie Watson*

"Ediger set this group photo up (at Hoya de las Conchas)! He had carried in a tripod and 35mm camera with B&W film and took this photo that was in a few publications. I asked everyone to hold on, switched cameras to my 35mm with color slide film and set the timer. Gill's photo has Peter's brother, John Strickland, but he had already wandered off to another adventure by the time my camera shutter opened." - *Bob West*

"1972, Ozark, Alabama: Gill, Jill Moody, Larry Gibson, Jim & Linda Harrison, Ken Branson, Pete Schultes, Phil Winkler, and Paul Boyer form FROG: Ft Rucker/Ozark Grotto of the NSS. Gill, Pete and I had just returned from Vietnam. We all responded to an ad in the Ft. Rucker newspaper placed by Jim Harrison looking for cavers. In just a short time, we were practicing rappelling in the tree in Ediger's front yard. Many trips to Climax Cave, Florida Caverns and Glory Hole followed. Gill always called me Phillups." - *Phil Winkler*

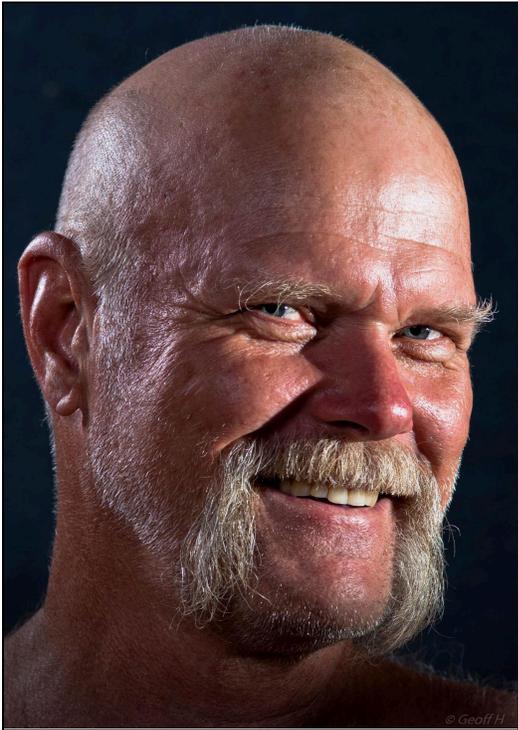
"Don't decide. Just do it.

"When Gill gave me that advice, I was a young college student. I had discovered caving my first week of college at Southwest Texas State in San Marcos (it's called something else now), and I knew then that it was the best thing that had ever happened to me in my life so far. Not very well parented, and not equipped properly for life on my own (who really is at the age of 18), I was perpetually caught in the throws of indecision: 'Should I go on this caving trip, should I take this class, should I buy this motorcycle.' Gill told me to stop all this indecision and just do something. It's advice I've lived by for the rest of my life. My choices have not always produced stellar results, but I have learned a lot along the way, and am a better person because of it. Much better than being stuck in indecision and doing nothing. Gill was a huge influence in my life in those early years. His ability and willingness to reach out and help others is something I will always remember him for." - *Lisa Wilk*

Recalling a "Brinco trip in the late 90s. That was a fun trip. We spent a lot of time in that kitchen listening to Gill, Pete Strickland and Bill Mixon telling caving stories. Bill's dog Silly was a sweet dog. Bathing after a full day of caving was not fun with the freezing cold water we had to carry to the camp from the village waterhole." - *Mei Zhou*

[Please view photos of Gill on next 48 pages]

Photos



Geoff Hoese photo of Gill



On the way to Cueva Bonita in El Cielo, Tamaulipas, México - Lacey photo.



Painting of Gill. Yaz A. Flores snagged this at a TCR silent auction the year COVID killed the spring convention. – *by Joe Haus*



Gill shuttling rafts, Browns Canyon, August 1996, NSS Convention, Salida, Colo. - *James N. Morris photo*



At the lookout in Alta Cima, El Cielo, Tamaulipas México. *Photo by Andy Zanker.*



Gallus Gingham Gillum - *Wesley Schumacher photo*



Martha López, Gill Ediger, Corinne Wong, Jean Louis Lacaille, Lacey and Andy Zanker. Group photo next to Sótano de Gómez Farías, El Cielo, Tamaulipas. *Photo by Andy Zanker.*



Gill and [Vico Jones](#) helping Jim Kennedy build an extra-large bat house in Cuero, Texas back in 2014. The bat house now has lots of bats! *Photo by Yaz.*



Gill just outside the entrance to Cueva Bonita, El Cielo, Tamaulipas, México. *Photo by Jean Louis Lacaille.*



Promotion to Captain, 22 Nov 1974, as Jill Moody looks on - *photo from Jonathan Wilson*



Gill (third row, second from left) in US Army, USASATC&S, Fort Devens, Mass., on 8 April 1971 - *photo from Jonathan Wilson*



Gill with many butterflies - Muzquiz 2016 - *Richard Zarria photo*



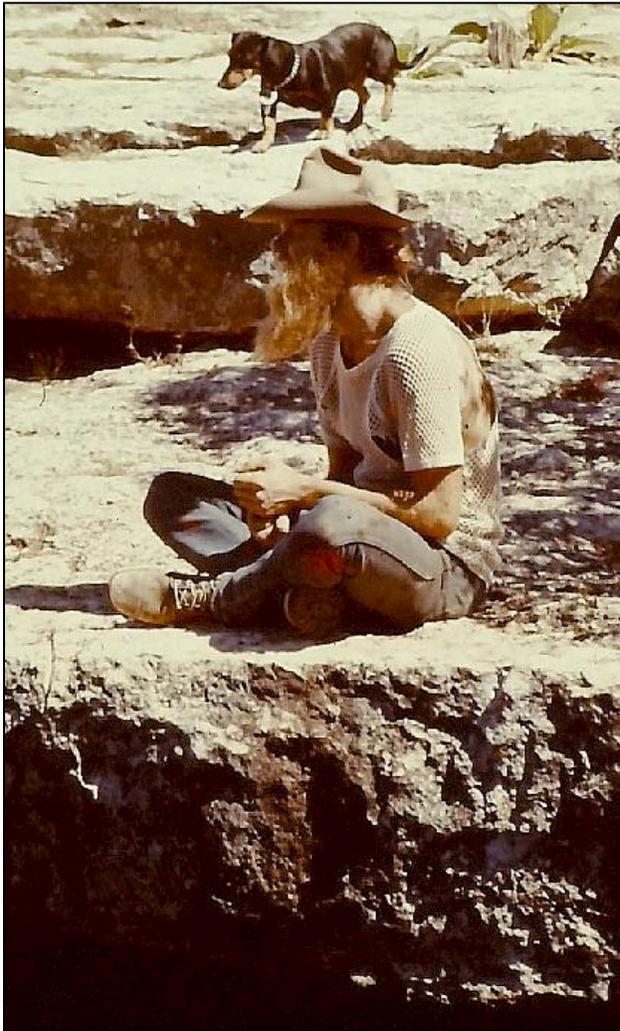
Eeyore's Birthday Party, Pease Park, 1981 - *Bob West photo*



Gill with his beloved PeeWee, who tragically died young - *Jonathan Wilson photo*



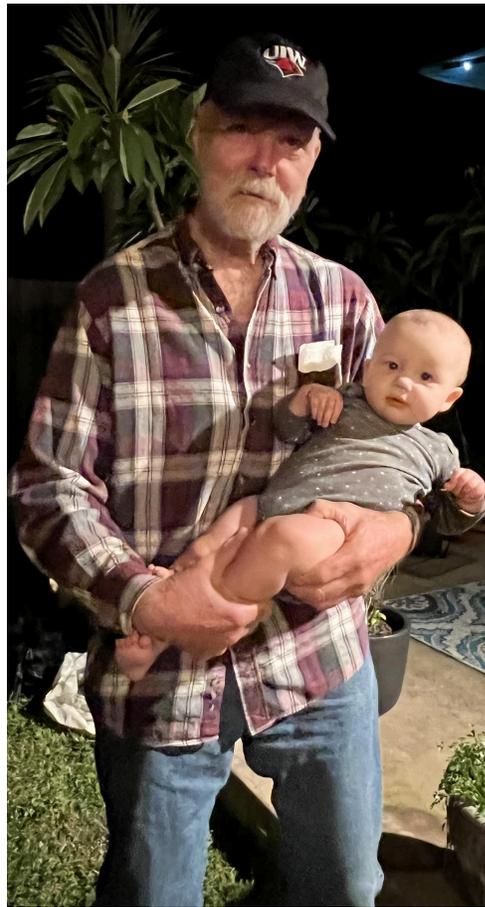
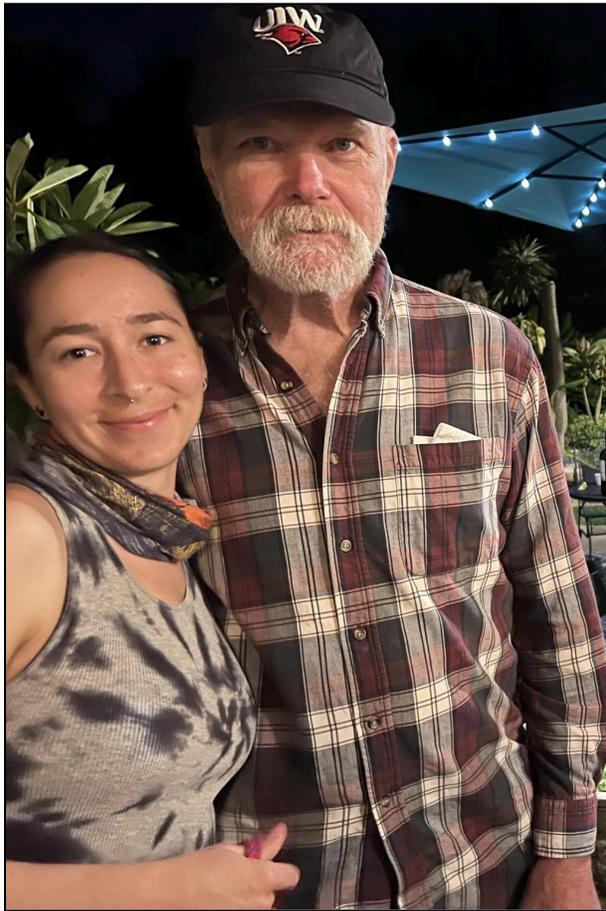
Jerry Atkinson and Gill Ediger look at a recovered helmet from a mishap months before in Tin Can Alley, Cueva del Brinco, Thanksgiving 1977. The carbide light (The Holy Carbide Light?) was not recovered. - *Dale Pate photo*



Devil's Sinkhole, 1976. - *Bob West photo*



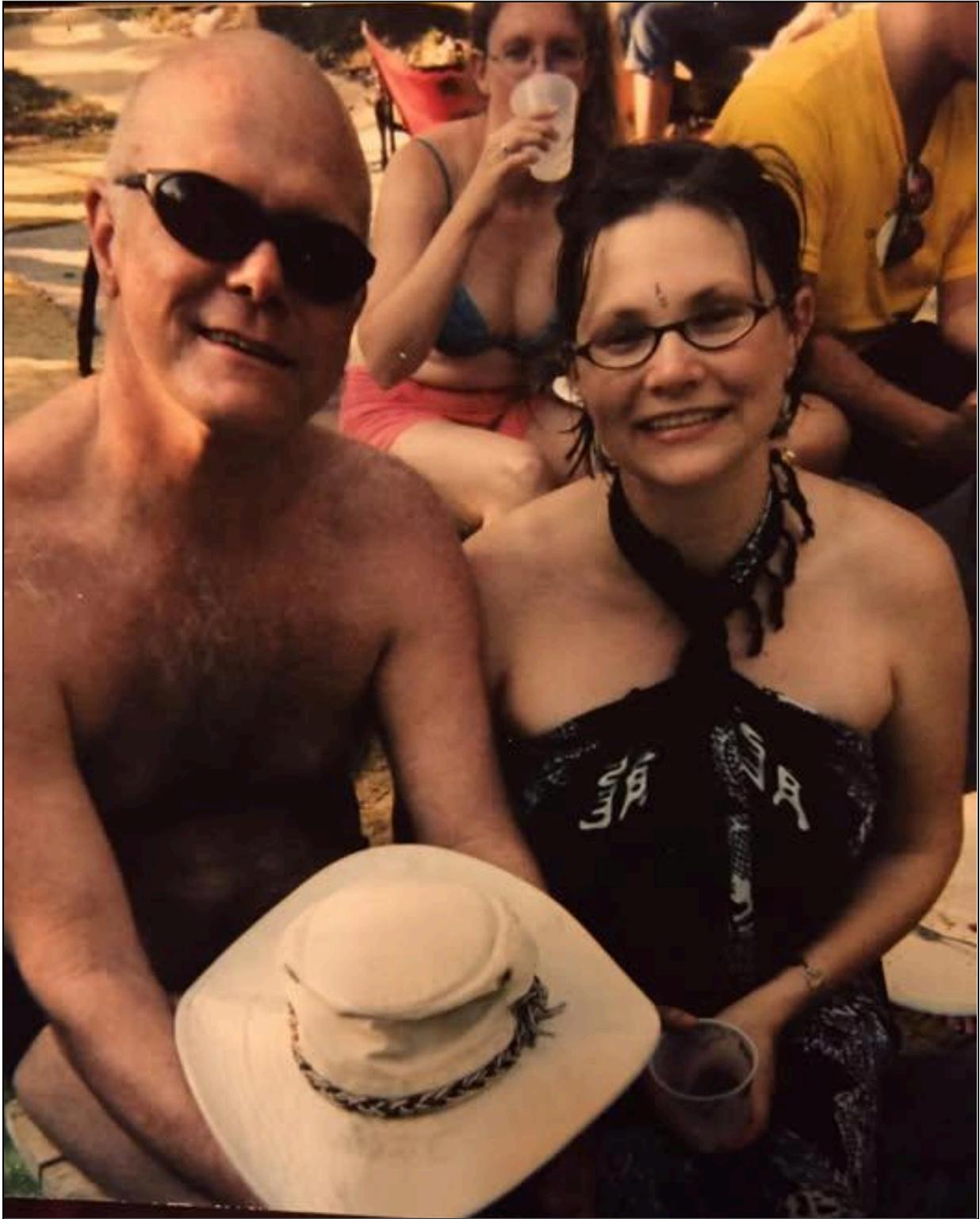
Photo of Gill - *by Steven Bittinger*



Gill photos during 2022 UT Grotto meeting - by Amanda Pixler



Middle Fork of the Salmon, 1982 - Bob West photo



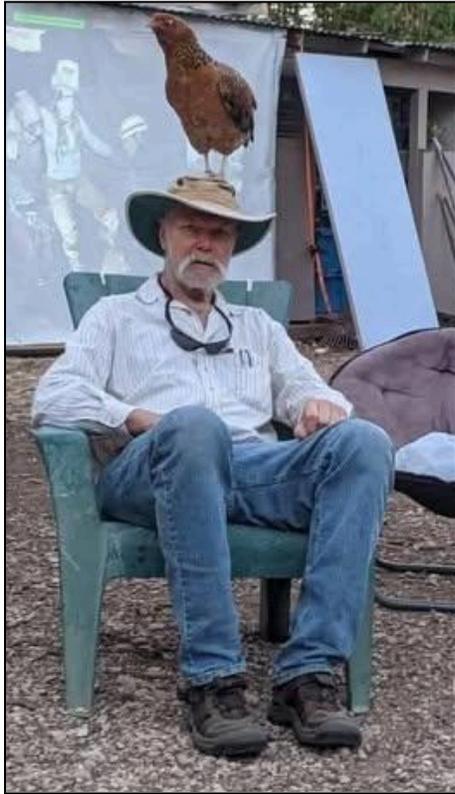
Pond party sometime in the 2000s - Kara Dittmer Savvas photo



Burt Reynolds-style shot of Gill - Photo from Jonathan Wilson



Doo-dah Parade at TCR - Liz Frank photo



Gill with chicken - *Denise Prendergast photo*



Looking into the 100m deep entrance pit of Sotano de San Agustin - *Gill Ediger photo digitized by Chris Vreeland, provided by Bill Steele*



Main entrance of La Grieta, now part of Sistema Huautla, where the infamous machete rope-cutting incident occurred in 1969 - *Gill Ediger photo, digitized by Chris Vreeland, provided by Bill Steele*



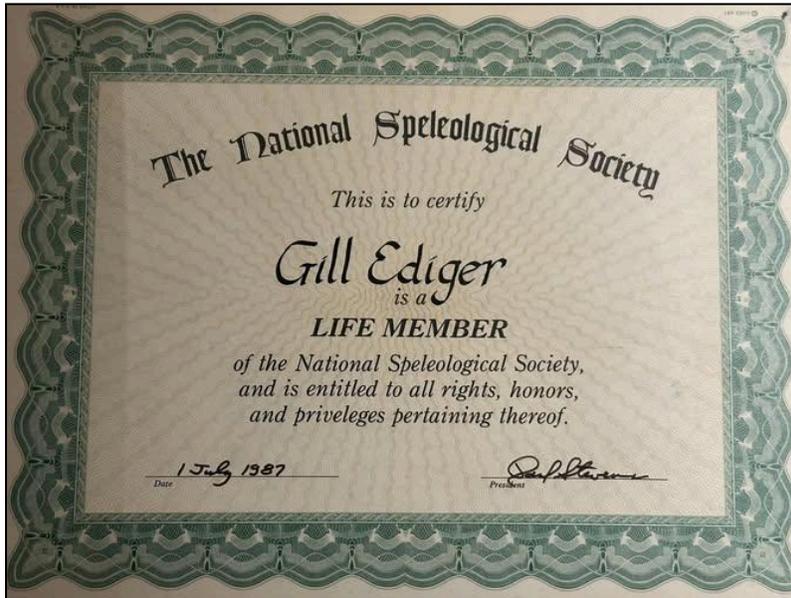
The late Don Broussard, who passed away in 2019. - *Gill Ediger photo, digitized by Don Broussard, provided by Bill Steele*



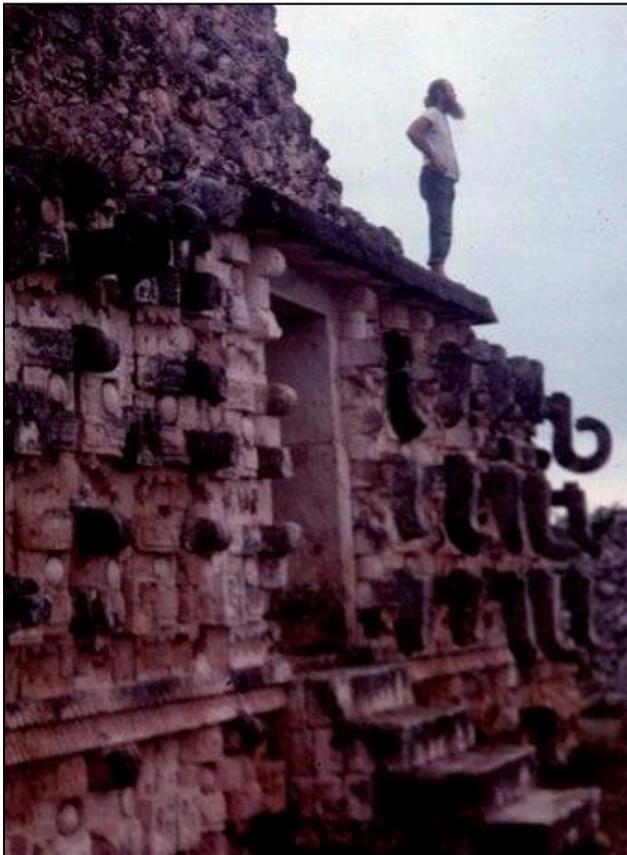
Gill's original Virgin de Guadalupe sketch + notes for T-shirt design - *Jonathan Wilson photo*



Gill-designed Virgin de Guadalupe shirt printed by Chris Vreeland - *Will Rupley photo*



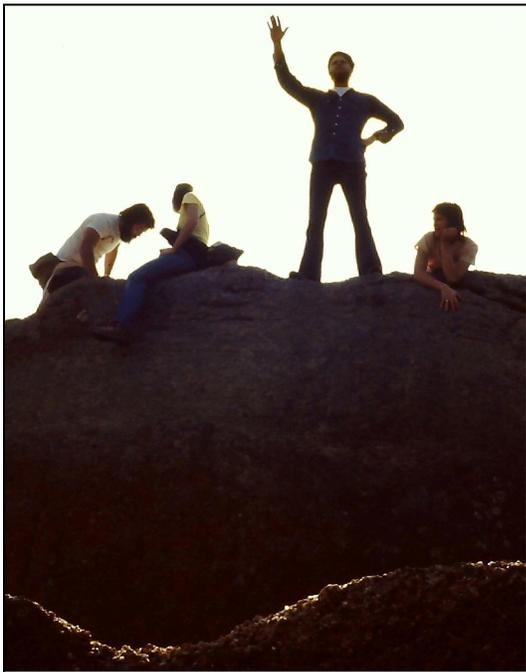
NSS life membership began for Gill in 1987



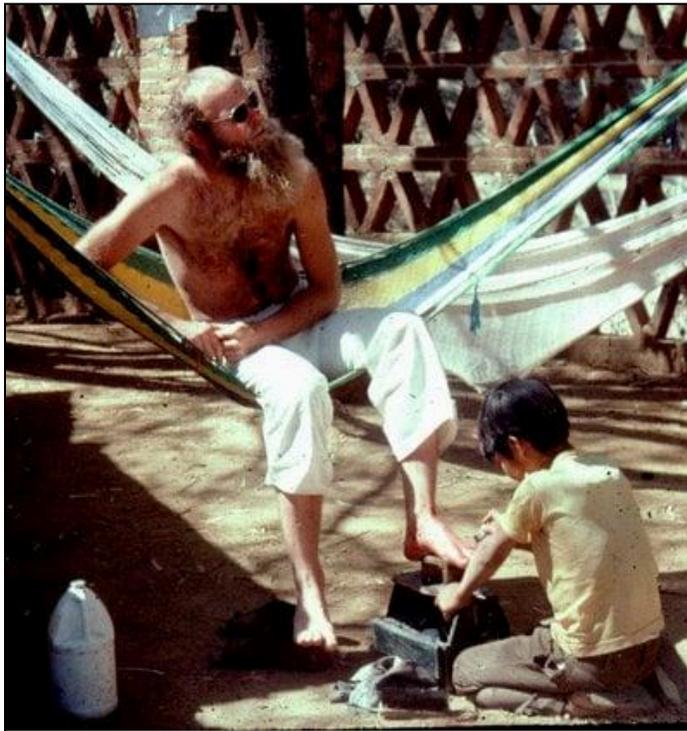
Gill at Mexican ruins - T.H. Moore photo



Before 300 Mockingbird, Gill lived among the many cavers in the famous Kirkwood Caver "village". Former Kirkwood residents at the 2017 NSS Convention: (back row, L to R) Mark Minton, Preston Forsythe, Blake Harrison, Gill Ediger, Janet Fitzsimmons, Peter Sprouse. (Front row, L to R:) Michael McEachern, Tom Byrd, Bill Steele, Frank Binney, Dale Pate. - Frank Binney photo



"Preaching" at Enchanted Rock, 1980 - Bob West photo



Classic Gill - T.H. Moore photo



Caving with Gill at Brinco - Mei Zhou photo



Austin American-Statesman carried Gill's river shooting story - from Christa Riddington



Full-page spread of Austin American-Statesman with Gill's shooting - from Christa Riddington



With Louie performing stupid dog tricks including Christina - 1981 - *Bob West photo*



Gill at 300 Mockingbird - *Liza Colucci photo*



Gill with Kras Kennedy - Yaz A. Flores photo



Gill with Kras Kennedy and pet - Yaz A. Flores photo



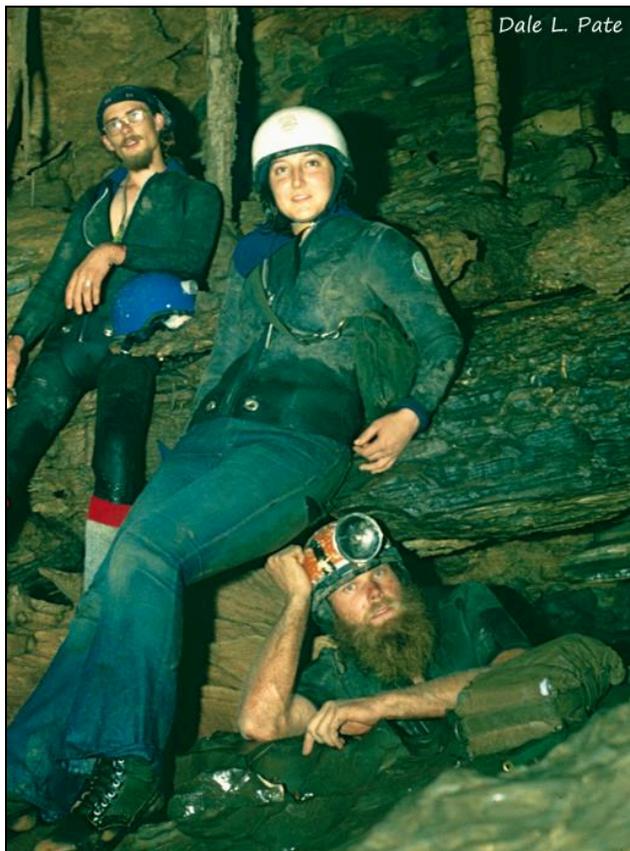
Memorial Day Flood, 1981, in Gill's back yard, 300 W Mockingbird - *Bob West photo*



Caving with Gill at Brinco - *Mei Zhou photo*



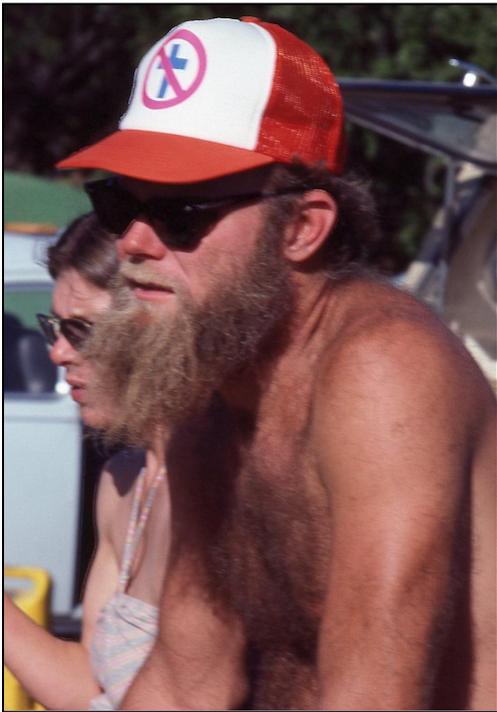
TCR 2019 at Paradise Canyon - Gill went "under the C (sea)" - Liz Frank photo



Jerry Atkinson, Sarah Gayle (on first Mexico trip), Gill Ediger in Tin Can Alley, Cueva del Brinco. Thanksgiving 1977 - Dale Pate photo



Gill in his tool shed ... helping me make a birdhouse out of one of the upo gourds he'd grown ... - Grace Borengasser photo



Gill - Terri Treacy photo



Hoya de las Conchas, 50 years ago, March 1976 - *Bob West photo*



Hoya de las Conchas crew (Gill at top center), 50 years ago, March 1976 - *Bob West photo*



Gill at Kiwi Sink in 2014 - Sarah Gayle photo



Rodent Extermination Squad (Ediger & Fieseler), Wilson Co. Farm, 1970s - Sarah Gayle photo



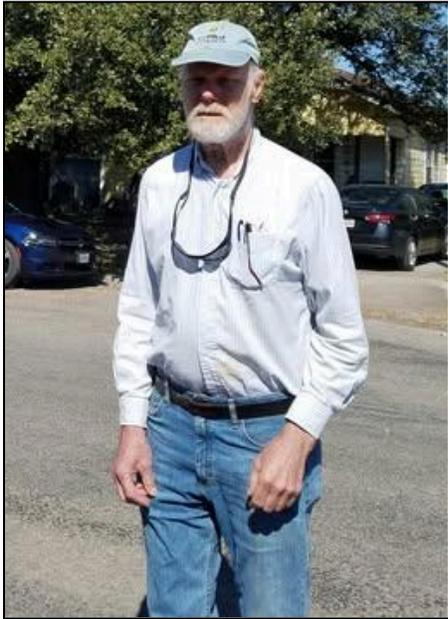
Gill with David Ochel at Espeleo Coahuila 2008 - *David Ochel photo*



Gill at Espeleo Coahuila 2008 - Jim Kennedy and Lee Jay Graves on right - *David Ochel photo*



Chicken Man - *David Ochel photo*



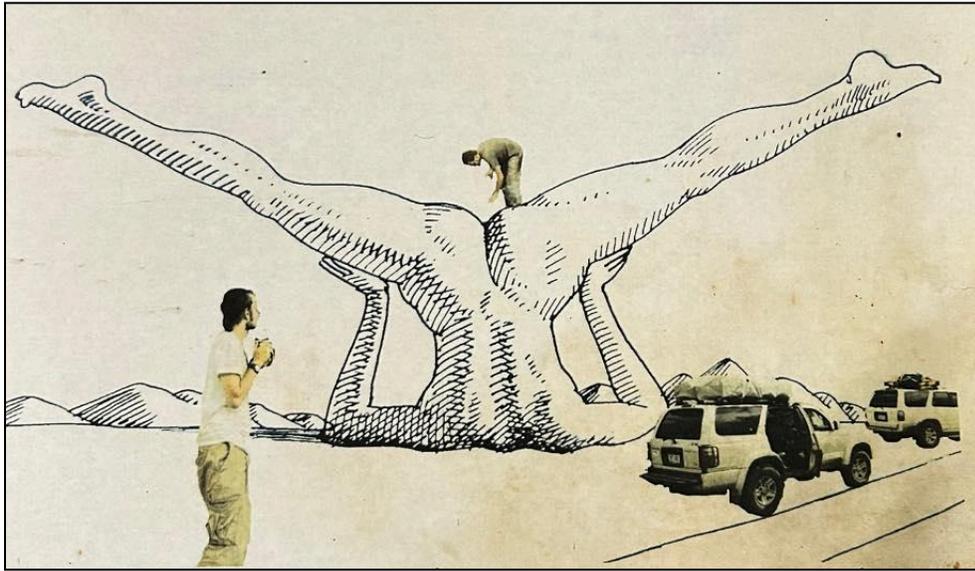
Gill - Sarah Gayle photo



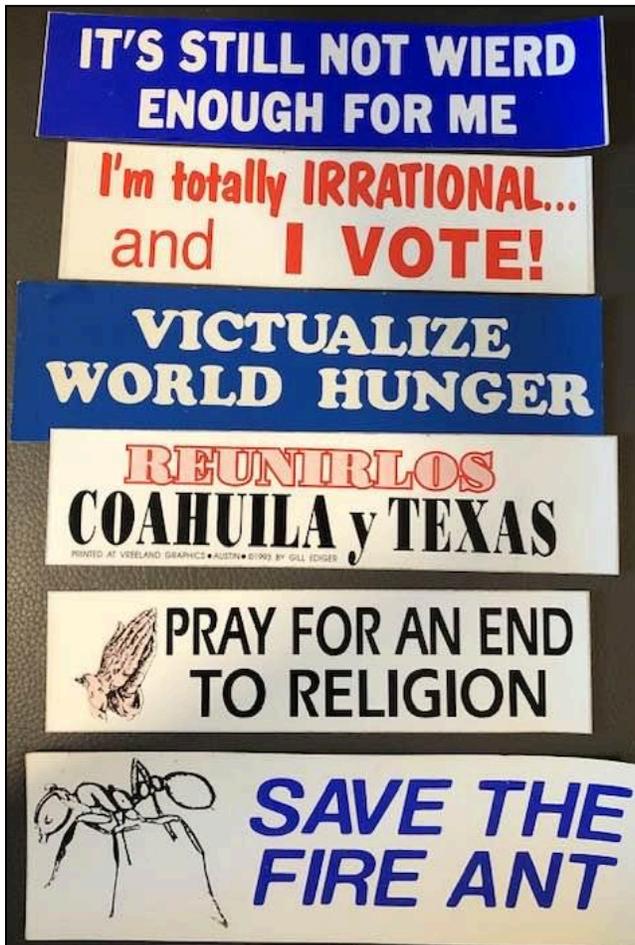
Mexico caving crews returned for celebratory supper at Threadgill's, including William Russell, Donald Broussard, Bill Mixon, and Gill Ediger - Dale Pate photo



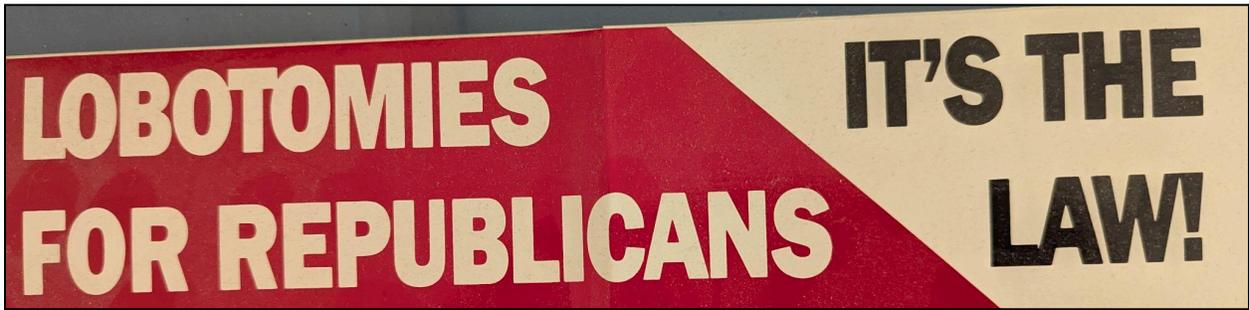
TSA 1983: Gill's T-shirt shop - Lisa Wilk photo



Gill's eclectic artwork - Galen Falgout photo



Selection of Gill's bumper stickers - Gary Napper photo



Another bumper sticker example - Jay Jorden photo



Gill blesses Lisa Wilk with holy water from the Spring Of Oztotl at famous "Buda BOG Party" at my 1970s loft on Main Street, Buda - Frank Binney photo



Across from Lil' Arkansas - *Lisa Guidry Stephens photo*



The cabin Gill built near Brinco for Proyecto Espeleologia Purificacion - *Mei Zhou photo*



Natural Bridge Caverns



Sep 24, 2023 · 🌐

You don't have to be a speleologist to get married in a cave, but in 1970, it certainly didn't hurt. These days we have had a few weddings in the cave; we hope to have several more. Here's hoping the happiness lasts as long as a stalactite!



Gill's and Jill's wedding, Natural Bridge Caverns, Saturday, Aug. 1, 1970 - from Bob West



Gill in a cherry picker he rented to do tree work at Mockingbird - *Ellie Watson photo*



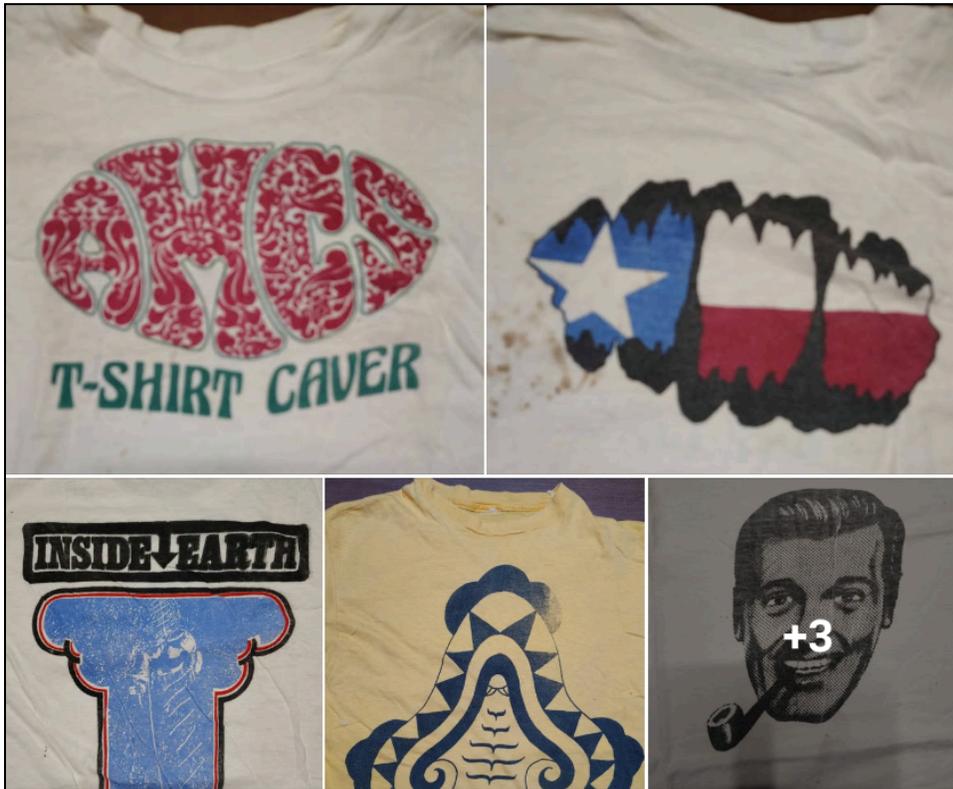
From a 2017 trip to visit Gill's brother-in-law Nelson Page in San Saba - Sarah Gayle photo



Gill's brother-in-law Nelson Page in San Saba, 2017 - Sarah Gayle photo



Gill in 2017 - Sarah Gayle photo



T-shirts Gill designed - including "Bob" Dobbs - from Bob West's T-shirt archives



T-shirts Gill designed - including "Bob" Dobbs - from *Bob West's T-shirt archives*



Tim Stich: Gill probably printed it before the MTV SubGenius ad in the '80s - *Bob West photo*



Bill Russell and Gill at 2009 International Congress of Speleology, Kerrville - *Frank Binney photo*



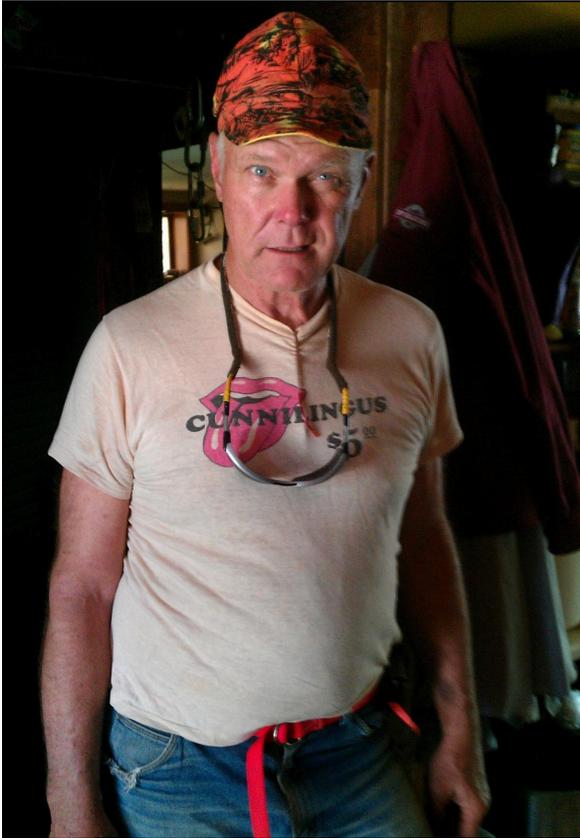
Obey the Pit Boss! (TCR 2013 at Paradise Canyon) - *Frank Binney photo*



Gill - Ryan Morgan photo



Gill with machete in Mexico - *Ryan Morgan photo*



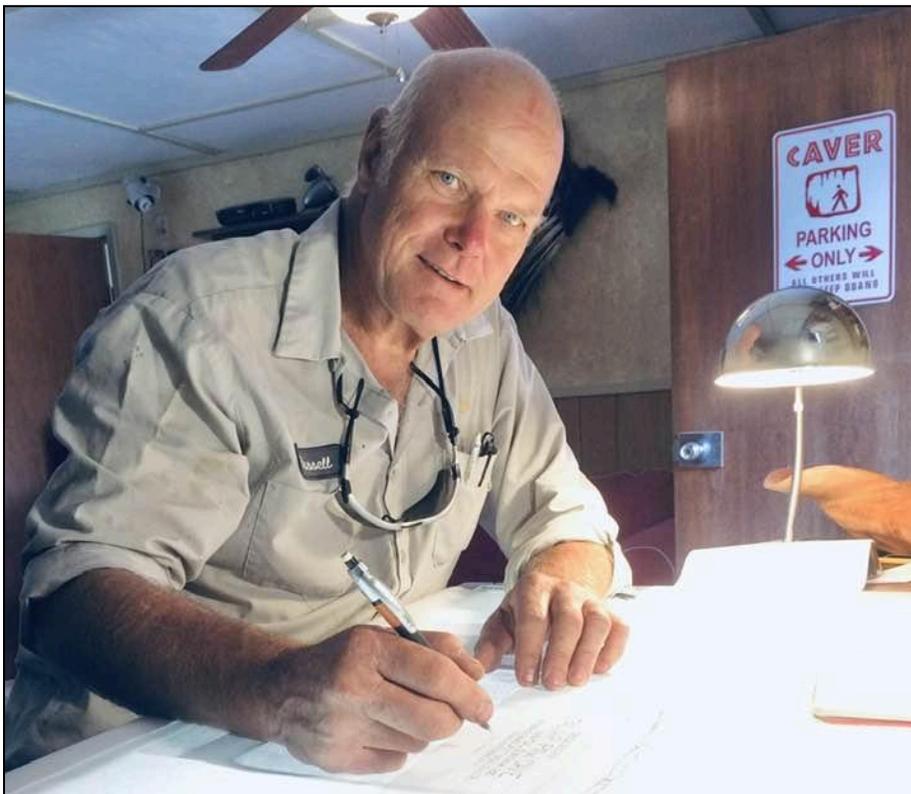
My ride or die. Eeyore's 2012. - *Crystal Datri photo*



Gill made a bat signal for my birthday! He said call the cavers - *Monica Ponce photo*



With one of many dachshunds - *Monica Ponce photo*



Gill - *Martha Meacham photo*



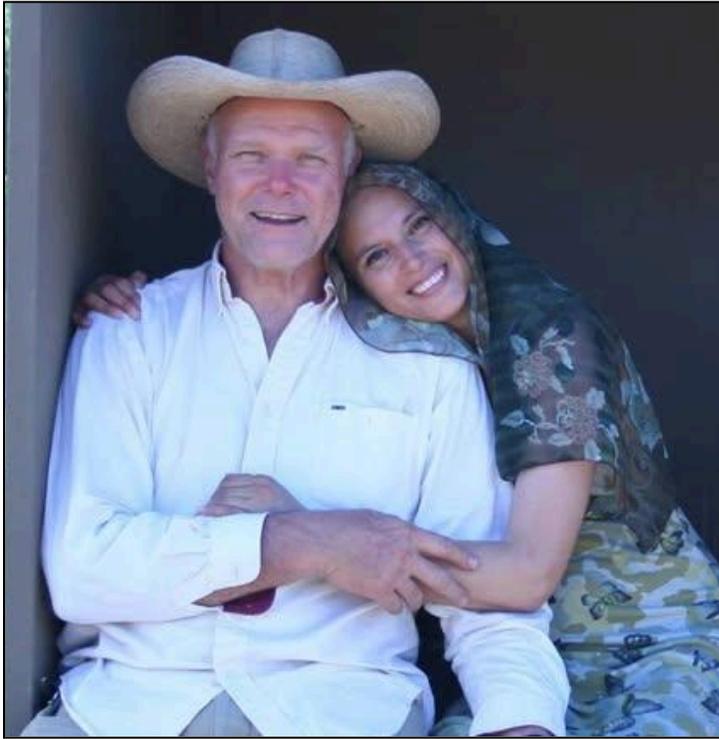
Gill with Grace Borengasser



Gill with Jessica Gordon



Gill with Jay Jordan at memory care facility - Pam Lynn photo



Gill with Monica Ponce - *Ernie Garza photo*



Ediger-Moody wedding at Natural Bridge Caverns



Gill flashed his CVS shirt following his 1970 wedding ceremony - *Carl Kunath photo*



Gill working on the railroad



Gill with another silk screening project

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Additional resources

- Dale Ellison's [video interviews](#) of Gill and others from 31st annual TCR at Paradise Canyon, October 2008