

WALDMAN CAVE

by Peter Sprouse

The UT Grotto 40th Anniversary Party - as good a time as any to map a cave. The party was held at Terri Whitfield's lovely country getaway near Spicewood. While cavers frolicked naked in the beautiful swimming hole, others climbed up a nearby hill to check out the numerous caves. We decided to make a map of the largest of these, Waldman Cave, named after the landowner I'm told.

Gradually a crew formed in the parking lot, Jim, Susie, Nico, Jennifer, Chris. Chris, being new to caving, needed a helmet and lamp. How about some gloves and kneepads too? Okay, now we're ready. Nico has already been in this one and says that with some digging we may be able to get out a lower entrance. Jim and Susie stayed with me to map while the others head in. The entrance was a chimney for 5 meters down a rift to a low, wide room. A bellycrawl through this room led to a 4- meter climbdown and a squeeze along a joint. We jogged left across several more joints that created complex bedrock forms in the floor and ceiling. At the end of another long joint Jim had trouble squeezing his chest into the next room, leaving a place name behind.

The passage got wide and low, in fact only a ceiling channel in the middle allowed us to continue on. The walls were somewhere off to the sides of us, the ceiling was too low to see them. As we popped up into a breakdown passage we caught up with the others trying to push upwards to the new entrance, to no avail. Chris, being skinny and also too new to know any better squeezed his body up into the rift to where he could actually shake hands with someone on the surface. But a true connection was not to be that day. We all left via the original entrance. As I trudged down the hill Nico was rolling boulders around in the lower entrance, trying to open it up. Five minutes later I was stripping off my clothes for a rinse in the stream and then into Pete's hot tub. Ah, if only it could be this way after every caving trip...

