

# *The Southeastern Caver*

*Newsletter of the Southeast Regional Association of Grottos*



Vol 19

Feb 2014

*Brian Roebuck - Editor*



Soda Straws (photo by Mike Bishop)

## **In This Issue:**

- *Spelunkologists!!*
- *Fun with Cave Photography*
- *My Farewell to The Southeastern Caver*

Jeff Harrod  
Brian Roebuck and Mike Bishop  
Brian Roebuck

# Spelunkologists!

By: Jeff Harrod

Finding items of interest to put in the *Southeastern Caver* is a continuous challenge that thankfully is made much better when SERA cavers take the time to contribute. There are many SERA cavers that have shared stories, photos, and other caving related content to us for many years without asking for anything in return. We should thank them all! This is the story of one such group. (ed.)

What is a "Spelunkologist"? Well, it's just about the silliest word I could come up with when searching for a name for a website. A mixture of the somewhat derogatory term "Spelunker" and the much more respected word "Speleologist." I thought it was a good description for our caving group - a competent group of cavers who don't take themselves too seriously. Little did I know I'd be typing that word in 1000's of times and trying (unsuccessfully) to pronounce it to cave landowners for the next decade. Luckily I have business cards now and rarely have to actually say it out loud.



photo of Illiad Cave by David McRae 2011

I started the website back in 2003. We had been taking cave pictures for 10 years prior but something strange happened when my friend John Roberts bought a digital camera - our caving pictures actually started to look good! No more blurry, dark and terrible photographs but pictures we actually wanted to share. Shortly thereafter [Spelunkologists.com](http://Spelunkologists.com) was born.



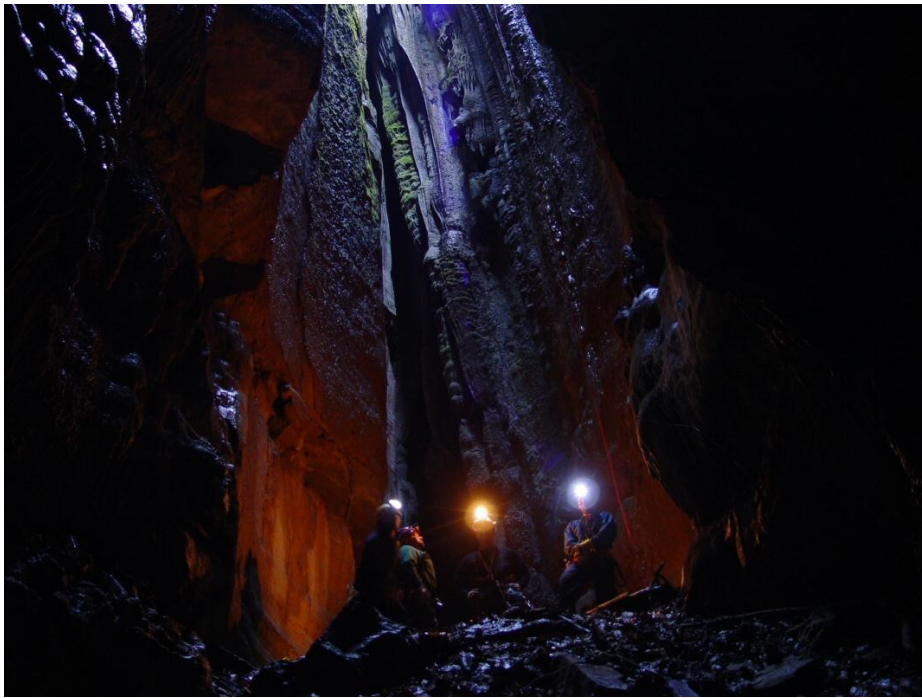


photo by John Roberts 2004

The site itself is a total homage to Andy Porters [tagcaving.org](http://tagcaving.org). It was always my favorite caving site back in the day. There was something about how Andy would show a trip in its entirety from gearing up to the hike back. The way he presented his caving experiences sort of made us feel like we were on the trip with him. Andy also always included a bit of subtle data just to keep things interesting. It gave you an idea of where to park, a little detail about the hike and even what the entrance looked like. I saw this as a good way to write caving stories and always try to include those bits of information in the caving articles I write.

Typically after a cave weekend I'll have 100s of pictures from various friends who give me total editorship over which pictures to choose and include. I think that as it stands now the site has photographs and videos from 40 different people. Lately the primary photographers have been Alan Cook, David McRae and myself.

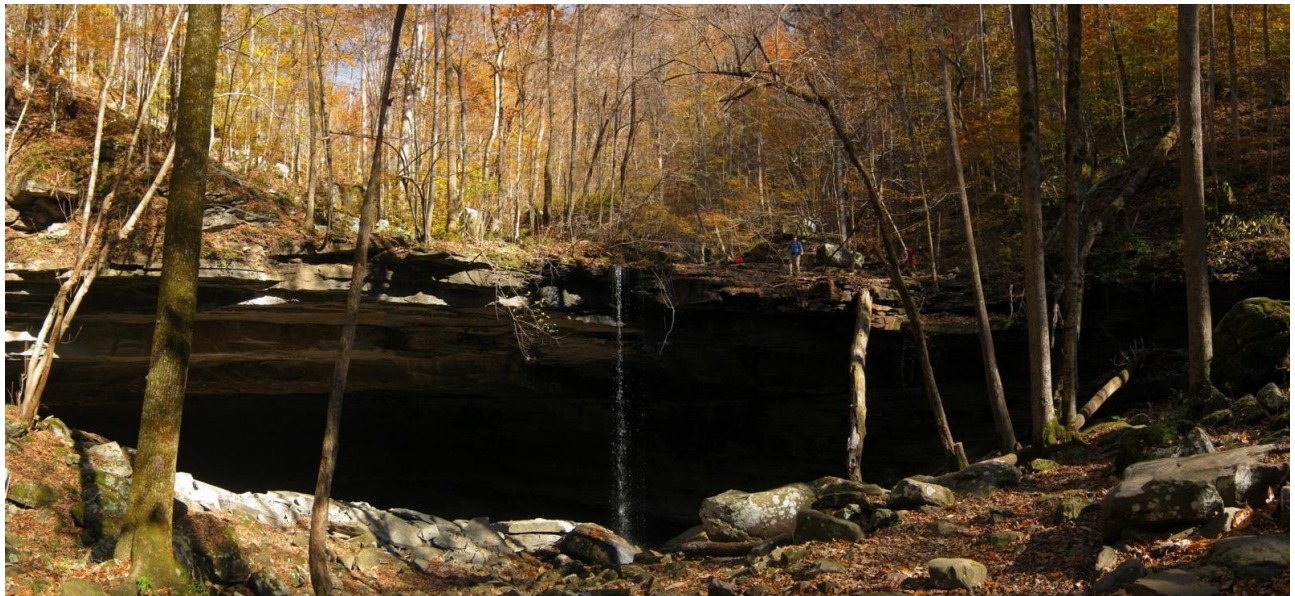


photo of Big Laurel Creek Cave by Jeff Harrod

In my opinion "Dirty Dave" McRae's photos stand out the most. His love for the warm glow of carbide and the

use of the newest super bright LEDs definitely give his photos a certain look. He's also one of the fastest photographers around. He quickly ascertains what type of lighting he needs and where he wants everyone. Most of the time you don't know you're on a photo trip other than you were told to "freeze!" for 30 seconds.

[Spelunkologists.com](http://Spelunkologists.com) now has 498 different galleries with upwards of 20,000 pictures and hundreds of videos. It's still just a snapshot of the wonderful adventures you can have in T.A.G. There's still so much more to come.

---

## **Fun with Cave Photography Section**

**By: Brian Roebuck and Mike Bishop**

It is always difficult to create articles for our newsletter now that so many people share caving information daily on cell phones, tablets, and online lists. Usually someone has already reported the latest and greatest news, events, or even gossip cavers are interested in. There are always new faces and stories to be found if you are paying attention and I have been relying on my wife Lynn for years to help me find worthy subjects for this newsletter. Once again Lynn suggested a SERA cave photographer for this newsletter that has something different to offer. We both thought y'all would enjoy the cave photography of Mike Bishop (his work is on the cover too). Mike describes how he got into cave photography below:



Photo of Blue Spring Cave TN by Mike Bishop

"My interest in caving began after a trip to Belize where I managed to do a little caving. After doing some online searching I found some caver related sites as well as the NSS which I joined in 2008 or so. I enjoy caving slowly



and looking for the things most of us might speed by on our way to the bitter end! I eventually started out using a small point and shoot digital camera to capture some of the interesting things I have seen while caving. I joined the Dogwood City Grotto to tag along on more cave trips and meet other cavers interested in photography. I would one day like to start learning to do large room photography using my full size DSLR. “

From what we can see he should do just fine after learning how to capture quality caving photos with minimal photo equipment. See more of Mikes photography on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/belikinbreath/>



photo  
Bishop

by Mike

## **My Farewell to The Southeastern Caver**

*Brian Roebuck – Editor*

Well it's been a long ten years as your editor of this newsletter. I started out taking over for Don Hunter in 2003/2004 and have been at it since then. I have found that I cannot attend the winter business meetings like I used to and honestly because of this I am out of touch with what SERA is doing these days. That doesn't make for a good newsletter editor and because of that I feel I should resign as of this year. It has truly been an honor to serve SERA and have the opportunity to work with so many talented writers, photographers, and all the interesting cavers that have sent me content to make this newsletter what it is! I thank all of you for your support and your efforts to make SERA what it is today.

Brian

## ***Editors Blurp***

All submissions to "*The Southeastern Caver*" are gladly accepted in the following forms, written text, MS Word, plain text files, jpeg, tiff, scanner size prints (8.5" x 11" max), photo slides (I have a slide scanner), pdf, Adobe Photoshop native, and many others (please contact me if you have any doubt). Please send all submissions, photos, etc to the editor by the last day of January for possible inclusion into the next "*The Southeastern Caver*" electronically to: [solow@charter.net](mailto:solow@charter.net) (broadband) or via snail mail to the following address:

Brian Roebuck  
Editor: "*The Southeastern Caver*"  
94 Magnolia Lane  
Normandy, TN 37360

Please visit our website at <http://www.caves.org/region/sera/> for the latest information and to view older newsletters etc.

Caving related discussion forums and websites of interest to SERA members can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=333106360986>  
<http://www.hiddenworld.net/tag-net/>  
<http://www.webwhisper.com/tcs/default.html>  
<http://www.caves.org/survey/fcs/>  
<http://ourworld.cs.com/alabamacaves/>  
<http://www.caves.org/survey/gss/>

SERA Facebook page  
TAG – Net  
Tennessee Cave Survey  
Florida Cave Survey  
Alabama Cave Survey  
Georgia Speleological Survey

For all of you cave photographers out there please head on over to Flickr to see some amazing cave photography in various groups such as Cavers, Caves, and Caving Photos (CCCP) located here: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/cavers/> as well as many individual accounts and cave related groups. Search to find more!

This issue is dedicated to my wife Lynn who has helped me with editing this newsletter since my first issue.

## ***The Southeastern Caver***

***Volume 19***

***February 2014***

**A publication of the South East Region Association of the National Speleological Society**

Bambi Dunlap – Chairman    Ohad Newton -- Vice Chairman    John Hoffelt – Secretary/Treasurer