

# NEWSLETTER

THE STAFF OF ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONALE  
WISH ALL OUR FRIENDS A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY  
SEASON



For those of you who did not attend the Roadrunners Internationale 22d reunion last October, the reunion was a major success. As Reunion Committee Chairman Harry Martin put the event together, it appeared at first that we would not have many

attending, however as time drew near, Roadrunners and friends stepped up to the plate to give us a 247 attendance. The hotel staff at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino were five-star in their professional hosting of the reunion. All activities were optional this year.

## THANKS ATOMIC TESTING MUSEUM

*The Roadrunner staff, NVAHOF and the Atomic Testing Museum arranged a public meets Roadrunners day-long event again as they did the previous reunion. It was a great success with Roadrunners contributing exhibits relating to their participation at Groom Lake and numerous Roadrunners gave presentations to the public. Jack Bassick and Robert Banks with David Clark Co. contributed the pressure suit of Jack Weeks for display at the Atomic Testing Museum during the next two years for the museum's Area 51 exhibit. The CIA EAA store set up again for the public attending the ATM events.*



## THANK YOU LOCKHEED MARTIN

Lockheed Martin supported the reunion by providing beer at the Command Post, beautiful wine glasses and a beer mug for all attending, and a buffet lunch at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino on

Tuesday. It was a pleasure working with Maggie Macfarlane and having Eric Knutson, Heidi Gesirich, and Heidi's daughter join us from Lockheed Martin - Palmdale





ROADRUNNERS AT THE ATOMIC MUSEUM



L-R: Museum Director Allan Palmer, Museum Development Kathleen Frantz, Roadrunner President TD Barnes, Jack Weeks pressure suit, A-12 pilot Frank Murray, and U-2/SR-71 pilot Tony Bevacqua



Jack Bassick w/David Clark Co. Weeks' pressure suit, A-12 pilot Frank Murray, Robert Banks w/David Clark Co.



Throughout the day, various Roadrunners conducted presentations in their field to the visiting public



[HTTP://WWW.ATOMICTESTINGMUSEUM.ORG/INDEX ASP](http://www.atomictestingmuseum.org/index.asp)

The Roadrunners thank the staff of the Atomic Testing Museum for their years of support. Executive Director Allan Palmer, Development Director, Kathleen Frantz, Chief Financial Officer, Jim Braun, Education / Volunteer Coordinator Aaron Warkentin, Curator Karen Green, Admissions/Store Manager Kathy Powell, Event Coordinator Erik Wright, Librarian Lisa Clark

The Roadrunner staff, NVAHOF and the Atomic Testing Museum arranged a public-meets-Roadrunners day-long event again as they did the previous reunion. It was a great success with Roadrunners contributing exhibits relating to their participation at Groom Lake and numerous Roadrunners giving presentations to the public. Jack Bassick and Robert Banks with David Clark Co. contributed the pressure suit of Jack Weeks for display at the Atomic Testing Museum for the museum's two-year Area 51 exhibit. Cheryl Moore and Nee Wah brought the CIA EAA store again for the public attending the ATM events.

CIA AND ROADRUNNERS' PRESENTATION AT UNLV

On Tuesday evening of the reunion, many of the Roadrunners attended a presentation moderated by Dr. David Robarge, Chief Historian at CIA with CIA pilot Frank Murray, USAF Operations Officer LtCol Roger Andersen, and Special Projects specialist TD Barnes speaking and fielding questions from a large attendance of engineering students and Air Force personnel from Nellis and Creech AFBs. Robarge, Murray, Andersen, and Barnes autographed posters afterwards. The event was organized by the UNLV engineering department and the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame at UNLV. Photographer Mike Schmitz took some great photos that are posted at: [http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/photos/reunion\\_2011/reunion\\_2011\\_3.html](http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/photos/reunion_2011/reunion_2011_3.html)

The Roadrunners thank Dawn Curtis, affiliated with both UNLV and NVAHOF, pictured with Frank Murray right, for setting up this event.

UNLV



ROADRUNNERS, CIA, AND AIR FORCE FUN-PACKED PR INVASION OF RACHEL, NEVADA

NVAHOF and Gene Hill - Outreach Division 99 Air Base Wing Public Affairs at Nellis AFB in conjunction with Roadrunner webmaster Joerg Arnu and his volunteers organized a fun field trip to Rachel, Nevada where the Roadrunners and Air Force met the public and media while chomping down on Alien burgers. The owners and staff of the Little A'Le'Inn did a great job of feeding a standing room only crowd. Dr. and Mrs. Robarge along with the CIA EAA store attended with the store setting up on the pool table to afford the locals an opportunity to purchase CIA and Roadrunner memorabilia. Dr. Robarge and many of the Roadrunners autographed Dr. Robarge's monograph "Archangel" for the public. NVAHOF and Nellis AFB advertised the event, drawing considerable media to attend the event. The event made local news, the Las Vegas Review Journal, and George Knapp's CBS KLASTV I-team news. [More Great Photos](#)



ROADRUNNER BANQUET



The banquet was a very social event with those attending honoring the Groom Lake commanders Col. Robert Holbury and Col. Slip Slater. Colonel Amundson, the founder of Roadrunners Internationale was

also honored. The families of all those honored was recognized as well. The food was judged my most as the best ever. Cheryl Moore with the CIA EAA store presented Colonel Slater, the CIA A-12 Operation Black Shield pilots, MGen Mele Vojvodich, BGen Dennis Sullivan, Col. Ken Collins, Col Jack Layton, LtCol Frank Murray, Jack Weeks, and Walter Ray, Roadrunner President T.D. Barnes, and Roadrunner photographer Mike Schmitz. Fred White and Mike Schmitz too numerous photos that the

webmaster has linked on the home page of the Roadrunner website.

The various media accounts of the reunion have also been posted by Roadrunner webmaster Joerg Arnu at: [Link to what happened in Las Vegas that stays in Las Vegas](#)



RECOGNITION



Depicted in the photo above CIA EAA store manager prepares to present the A-12 pilots Ken Collins and Frank Murray, commander Slip Slater, RI photographer Mike Schmitz, & RI President TD Barnes an afghan in appreciation for their participation in agency events. A-12 pilot Jack Layton was presented an afghan in absentia, and A-12 pilots Walter Ray, Jack Weeks, and Mele Vojvodich presented posthumously.



RI BUSINESS

For the last year, Roadrunners Internationale has implemented changes in its staff structure to ensure the legacy of the veterans of the CIA's U-2 Project Aquatone, A-12 Project Oxcart, A-12 Operation Black Shield, and the CIA/Air Force project Keylock, and Project Tagboard is not lost due to age attrition.



Assuming the task of web master of the Roadrunners Internationale web site is associate member Joerg Arnu. Joerg has long been one of the web masters upon which RI Webmaster Barnes relied upon for support when needed. Arnu was born in Hamel, Germany in 1962. He became an aviation enthusiast during childhood after attending the annual Hanover Air Show, the largest Air Show in Germany at the time, with aircraft from both sides of the Iron Curtain. The Cold War was very real for him back then, and seeing the American planes perform was somehow reassuring. After graduating from high school he obtained his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering with a minor in Computer Science from the University of Hanover in 1986. He moved to the United States in 1995 where he has continued his career as software developer. Joerg has made some refreshing improvements to the website to include a guest book. Barnes will continue to assist with the website as needed. We welcome your comments in the [guest book](#).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the General Membership Meeting the members voted to retain TD Barnes as president, Harry Martin as executive vice president. For the first time, a nonvoting member was elected to office in the Roadrunners. The staff and members are honored to have Judy Prucnal, CPA as our newly elected treasurer. Judy succeeds her husband, Jim, who has held the office for the past six years.



For many years, associate member Mike Schmitz has been assisting the Roadrunner photographer Fred White, in many cases covering events that Fred was unable to attend. Schmitz has assumed the job of photographer for the Roadrunners with Fred White



Another associate member who has for years made major contributions to the historic legacy of the Roadrunners is Pete Merlin who has assumed the duty of historian for the Roadrunners. Long time historian Frank Murray will continue collecting items for the scrap



book that will be eventually be donated to an entity for permanent display as part of the Roadrunner legacy. Peter W. Merlin has worked as an archivist and historian at NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, under various contracts since 1997. He is the author of Mach 3+: NASA/USAF YF-12 Flight Research, 1969-1979 and co-author of Donald L. Mallick's autobiography The Smell of Kerosene: A Test Pilot's Odyssey, both NASA publications. He has written From Archangel to Senior Crown – Design and Development of the Blackbird for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, a technological case study of the design evolution of the A-12 and SR-71. With Tony Moore, he wrote X-Plane Crashes: Exploring Experimental, Rocket Plane and Spycraft Incidents, Accidents, and Crash Sites, a collection of stories about aerospace archaeology published by Specialty Press. As a freelance writer, Merlin has published numerous articles on the Internet as well as in a variety of periodicals, including AIR&SPACE Smithsonian Magazine, covering subjects from aerospace history to nuclear weapons accidents. He has also appeared on such television programs as Man, Moment, Machine: Shot Down – The U-2 Spy Plane; Modern Marvels: Edwards Air Force Base; Inside Area 51; UFO: Down To Earth – Retrieval; Return to Area 51; Mystery Hunters; and Atomic Journeys: Welcome to Ground Zero. A founding member of the X-Hunters Aerospace Archeology Team, he specializes in recovering

historic aircraft artifacts from crash sites in the southwestern United States. Merlin was born in Hollywood, California. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Studies from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. Merlin is a member of the Flight Test Historical Foundation and Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation, as well as an associate member of Roadrunners Internationale.



Many of the members of Roadrunners Internationale have united on the social circuit of Facebook. Associate member Alan Johnson of the UK has assumed the job of administering the Roadrunner Facebook. Alan acquired a love for aviation as a child and was particularly interested in the U-2 and the Blackbirds. He acquired a similar attraction to the SR-71 even before it came to the UK 1974. Alan was an Embroidery Designer of Badges in Macclesfield where in the late 80's he started collecting U-2/SR-71 patches on a small scale in addition to his interest in aircraft. Alan started a website in 1999 after receiving some 4080th SRW patches that he wanted to show since there was at the time little public known about reconnaissance aircraft and

operations. Alan is retired as project manager after 32 years service with ICI Pharmaceuticals/Zeneca of which 28 years were in an aseptic environment. Other hobbies besides his patch collecting and website include photography & landscape.

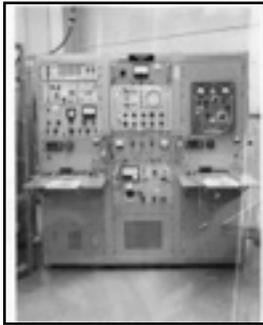


Connie Pardew-May is one of the first associate members. As a freelance writer based in Reno, NV she has served as our publicist for many years. She has a background in broadcasting and advertising. Pardew has written articles ranging from business profiles to feature articles in local publications.

Her real love is telling the story of the people, past and present that make things happen in the aviation community. She has the highest regard for our aviation pioneers and the sacrifices they made to protect us and give us a promising vision for the future. Her aviation related material has been seen in various publications and a number of websites. Although she never served in the military, she holds our Veterans very dear to her heart. "Every time I meet a veteran, I take the time to shake their hand and express my gratitude," she said. Pardew is the Media Coordinator for the National Aviation Heritage Invitational – a competition at the Reno Championship Air Races. The Invitational encourages the preservation and restoration of historic aircraft to airworthy condition and to the very highest standard of workmanship and historical accuracy. Pardew's full time occupation is with a major airline. The flexibility of working at an airline affords her the opportunity to freelance and the chance to fly to various destinations.



RI NEWS



Dick Habegger of Feline, CA found this Polaroid photo that was taken while he worked at Magnavox Research Labs (MRL) in Torrance, CA. This was the company he was with at The Ranch. Then, it had a code name of: Vose. The photo is of the ARC-50 test station. Two units were setup to communicate with each other. The ARC-50 was used in the Article for TACAN and secure communications. It was the first spread spectrum system that had discrete components on the boards. Rather ancient, but there has to be a beginning with all designs. It still is a very impressive system which cannot be intercepted. These systems were also used in the SR-71 and Tankers. The Tankers would be able to get automatic ranging, or



Kudos to Col. Ken Collins as well for his being enshrined into the Kansas Aviation Hall of Fame.

[More about Colonel Collin's Induction](#)



The Roadrunners are proud that our own Francis Gary Powers is finally going to receive his most earned Silver Star award. We commend Gary Jr. for making this happen.

[More about Powers](#)

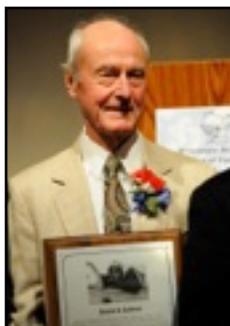


Our kudos to A-12 pilot Frank Murray for his researching and authoring the account of how Lockheed and CIA moved the 18 super secret A-12 from Burbank to Groom Lake. Frank and the rest of us thank Jim Noce of CIA security fame, Lockheed honcho Bob Murphy and others who helped reconstruct this untold event that has received international acclaims since posted on the website. California Highway Patrol were most appreciative of receiving this bit of history unknown to their historians.

[Read Frank's story:](#)



Those of you who have not read Col. Sam Pizzo's book "As Good As It Gets" really must do so. It is available in hard back at various gift shops and on demand by contacting Pizzo. An e-book version is available for download to Kindle readers at: [Amazon](#)



We are proud to acclaim the enshrinement of BGen Dennis Sullivan into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.

[More about General Sullivan's](#)



Haven't had a chance to do this in a while: A-12 pilot Frank Murray claims he was showing a pilot maneuver, but looks more like he's showing off his famous Herman Cain maneuver.



The Roadrunners were saddened at the loss of Col. "Gimo" Yang, one of the first six Blackcap U-2 pilots in Taiwan.

[More about Colonel Yang](#)



Former Pratt & Whitney employees visiting the Palmdale Air Park in 2005



John Evans being interviewed the the Pima Air and Space Museum by Steve Kates aka DrSky (KFNX 1100 AM) and his brother Joe Kates while a party of former Pratt & Whitney personel tour the museum.



Donated to the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame by Ron Girard, a flight planner for the Oxcart program, which flew the A-12 aircraft for the CIA during the 1960s. Ron's father, Msgt. Leonard F. Girard, obtained the photo(s) shortly before retiring from the Air Force at Nellis AFB in 1952".

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## For Immediate Release

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# Journey through the History of Area 51

## Local author pens history through vintage photographs

New from Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series is *Area 51*. In over 200 vintage photographs, local author Peter W. Merlin shares the unique history of this remote military base.

Area 51, a top secret military installation for testing unacknowledged or black projects, lies in a desert valley northwest of Las Vegas. During the Cold War, CIA and Air Force officials chose this remote location to shield such efforts from foreign spies and US citizens.

Although the base has been known by many names—Paradise Ranch, Watertown, and Dreamland among others—the designation “Area 51” has taken root most deeply in the public imagination. Since 1955, it has grown from a temporary camp into a national test facility supporting nearly 2,000 military and civilian workers and dozens of projects including aircraft capable of cruising at Mach 3 and stealth airplanes that are virtually invisible to radar.

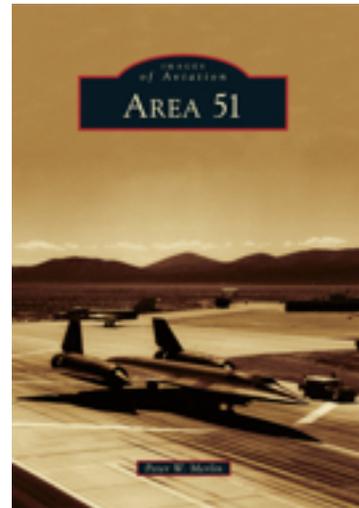
Although secrecy surrounding Area 51 spawned rumors of UFOs and reverse-engineered alien spacecraft, declassified photographs provide a rare glimpse into the true nature of America's most famous secret base. The book releases on Monday, November 21, 2011.

### Highlights of *Area 51*:

- Shatters several myths about Area 51.
- Contains a comprehensive collection of declassified photographs.
- Presents factual information normally lost amid conspiracy theories.
- Documents groundbreaking aircraft capabilities.

Available at area bookstores, independent retailers, and online retailers, or *Area 51* through Arcadia Publishing at (888)-313-2665 or [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com). by Peter W. Merlin  
*Images of America* series

Arcadia Publishing is the leading publisher of local and regional history in the United States. Our mission is to make history accessible and meaningful through the publication of books on the heritage of America's people and places. Price: \$21.99  
Available: **November 21, 2011**  
Have we done a book on your town? Visit [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com).



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# About the Author of *Area 51*

Peter W. Merlin is an aerospace historian who has been researching the history of Area 51 since 1984 and has written numerous



articles on the subject. He is the author of *Mach 3+: NASA/USAF YF-12 Flight Research, 1969-1979* (NASA, 2001), *From Archangel to Senior Crown – Design and Development of the Blackbird* (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 2008), *X-Plane Crashes – Exploring Experimental, Rocket Plane and Spycraft Incidents, Accidents and Crash Sites* (Specialty Press, 2008) and several other books.

As a freelance writer, Merlin has published numerous articles on the Internet as well as in a variety of periodicals including *AIR&SPACE Smithsonian Magazine*, covering subjects from aerospace history to nuclear weapon accidents. He has appeared on several television programs and also investigates historic crash sites in the southwestern United States.

Merlin was born and raised in Hollywood, California. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Studies from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. He is a member of the Flight Test Historical Foundation, Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation and serves as a volunteer historian for the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame and the Area 51 alumni

organization, Roadrunners Internationale.

An avid photographer, he spends much of his free time exploring the Southwest in search of ghost towns and mining camps, caves, prehistoric ruins and rock art, nuclear test sites, abandoned military facilities and interesting natural features. He has also journeyed to the mountains of Baja California, Mexico and the Tassili N'Ajjer plateau region of the central Sahara Desert in Algeria to photograph prehistoric cave paintings. Merlin occasionally lectures on aerospace history, meteorites, and prehistoric archeology.

With many once secret details of Area 51 now declassified, Merlin hopes this volume will bring back fond memories for workers who once toiled in silence, unable to share their achievements with friends and family and that it will help preserve the legacy of these unsung Cold War heroes.

## What lasting impact do you hope your book will leave?

This collection of historic photos will help preserve the legacy of Nevada's contributions to the Cold War, aeronautical technology, and national defense.



As most of you know, several members of Roadrunners Internationale form the officer staff of the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame. For the past two years NVAHOF has taken a lead in supporting the Roadrunners and ensuring the Roadrunners legacy will live on for the benefit of relatives, friends, and history. Thus far NVAHOF has conducted two annual hall of fame induction dinners and ceremonies with great success in obtaining the support of Navy Air Station Fallon, Nellis AFB, the universities of Nevada, and the private sector of aviation. Now that NVAHOF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, has established a positive track records, the organization is commencing a membership drive and is seeking donations and sponsors for its student scholars, oral history program, and for future events to honor our aerospace and aviation legends. We have recently received several inquires from Roadrunners wanting to be involved as members. To make it easy, check out our website at <http://nvahof.org/> where most of your questions should be answered. We thank all of you who have donated your personal memorabilia to NVAHOF for future exhibit. Many of you have agreed to participate in the Atomic Testing Museum Area 51 exhibit, in which NVAHOF believes is going to be highly successful. Thanks.