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## Navigation

[UFOs](#)  
[Paranormal](#)  
[People](#)  
[Places](#)  
[Area 51](#)  
[Random](#)  
[Top 100](#)  
[Catalog](#)  
[What's New](#)

## Search...

...for this word in:

Page Titles  
Page Contents  
Book  
Title/Author

[Help](#)

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[Mothership](#) -> [Area 51](#) -> [List](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Jul](#) -> Here

[Our Focus](#)

# Report on Great Roswell Loonfest

From: [campbell@ufomind.com](mailto:campbell@ufomind.com) (Glenn Campbell, Las Vegas)  
Date: Wed, 9 Jul 1997 09:09:38 -0800  
Subject: Report on Great Roswell Loonfest

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Mission accomplished: A Research Center expeditionary force (2 adults & 3 children) successfully penetrated Roswell at the height of the Great Loonfest and got out alive. We lasted only about 20 hours in town. We were charmed, then amused, then annoyed, then SCREAMING TO GET THE HELL OUT.

Best thing I can equate it to is some town in Idaho holding an annual Potato Festival. Everyone eats potatos, gets dressed up as potatos, crowns a Potato Queen. Nothing very deep or useful, just potatos, and by the end of the day you've had quite enough.

Replace spuds with aliens, and you have the Great Roswell Loonfest of 1997. It was an exercise in alien merchandising and cute alien events no more substantial than cotton candy. If no UFO ever crashed near Roswell in 1947, then the celebration was a harmless giggle -- equivalent to a potato festival. If, however, the Roswell Incident was REAL, then this 50th anniversary event was one of the saddest display that humanity has ever put on. This is how we are presenting ourselves to the universe: as a horde of shallow Ferengi whose only manner of relating to other worlds is through the buying and selling of souvenirs.

The array of alien-related merchandise was astounding: Hundreds of booths selling every conceivable item you can stamp an alian face on. Some items were creative enough to bring a smirk to our face, but the information content was still zero. I did not attend any of the \$10 lectures but heard nothing to indicate that they were worth the cost. Just the usual speakers grinding their usual axes in an environment where nearly every claim is accepted except intelligent ones. (You could have heard the same on Art Bell for free.) I'm sure there were a dozen astounding revelations, but none I would believe.

The UFO vendors were clustered around the Roswell Convention Center, with a midway and tons of media outside. Inside the "Alien Trade Show," I spotted Philip Corso and his son ambling about. Corso's co-writer William Birnes was also in Roswell, although I did not see him. I am told that he has a prominent affiliation with Soldier of Fortune Magazine. (The owner of it?) What does this say about Corso?

We couldn't get near the "International UFO Museum and Research Center," but since I had been there a couple of years ago, I don't think I missed anything. This is also a big alien souvenir outlet. They do sell some books, too, but I was told by a journalist that they decline to sell any book that is critical of the Roswell crash claims -- only those that toe the "party line." Is this research or religion?

One beacon of light: The Bureau of Land Management had a small booth at the trade fair, manned by their public relations officer, and HE SOLD LOCAL MAPS. I thought it ironic that only the federal government could provide any useful information. This booth was the only one I can recall that sold the Randle and Schmitt books that are the cornerstone of the pro-Roswell arguments. BLM also gave away a FREE flyer with directions to the alleged crash site on BLM land. It was on the only island of data in the UFO wasteland that was Roswell.

UFO burgers, UFO drinks, "Crash With Us" on motel marquees... Driving down Main Street was a numbing experience. Turn on the radio, and ninety percent of the local ads - for everything from cars to insurance - made some kind of cutesie alien reference. Doesn't anyone in this town have any dignity?

There is no way that Rachel, Nevada, can compete with Roswell as the "UFO Capital." Rachel is just a couple of Joes selling T-shirts, while Roswell is big league alien exploitation.

The town was crowded, but not much more than, say, a busy summer day at a beach resort. I am proud to say that we spent not one cent at local merchants. (I bought only some books & maps at the trade show.) We camped on BLM land outside of town, and saw no one else out there. This was a blessed relief, because Roswell did not give us any reason to love humanity. We needed to visit the Great Loonfest to say we had done it, but I never want to see Roswell again.

We left town by the afternoon of the 4th and headed for Lubbock, Texas, hometown of our Assistant Director. Ah, Lubbock! Paradise on Earth! It was a pleasure to go someplace where there were no alien references.

It is times like this when I realize just how alone we are in the universe -- and here on Earth.

Glenn

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|                GLENN CAMPBELL - Ufomind Webmaster                |
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Index: [Roswell Crash 50th Anniversary Celebration - July 1997](#)  
Index: [Glenn Campbell](#)

**[Mothership](#) -> [Area 51](#) -> [List](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Jul](#) -> [Here](#)**

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PO Box 30303, Las Vegas, NV 89173 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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