

# Former CIA officer writes about PARI's secret past



Courtesy photos

The Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute once belonged to the Department of Defense's National Security Agency.

## Craig Galley: "It's a success story that needed to be told"

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Craig Galley first heard of what is now the PARI Astronomical Research Institute in the mid-1980s when he was a junior analyst at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, but over time he came to know many of its secrets.



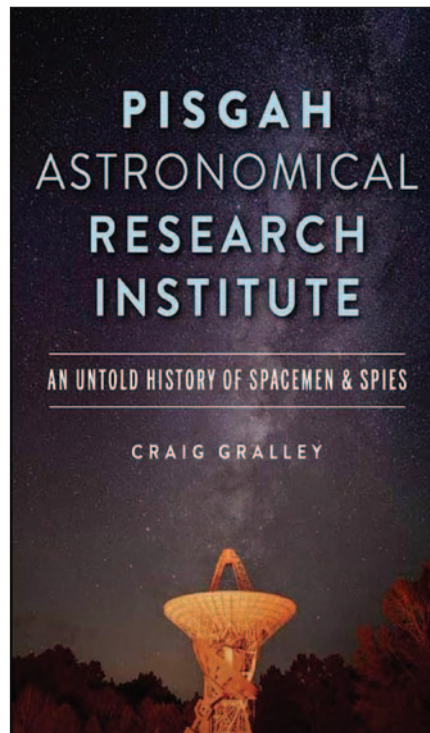
Craig Galley

"I didn't know much about it," Galley said, "just that it was in the mountains of western North Carolina, belonged to the Department of Defense's National Security

Agency and it intercepted secret foreign communications."

That changed almost four decades later after Galley and his wife had just moved to the Brevard area and were on a hike in the Blue Ridge mountains when they passed a big white and blue sign displaying a satellite dish.

"That's when the light bulb switched on," Galley said. "Rosman, satellite dishes, the Rosman Research Station,



PARI. It all fit. I had to know more."

Galley's quest for more is now a 176-page book, "The Pisgah Astronomical

Research Institute: An Untold History of Spacemen and Spies," scheduled for publication by The History Press on April 24.

Years of secrecy surrounding the Rosman site led to many myths about PARI and its past. People speculated the site was a Nazi prisoner of war camp or that Rosman is related to Roswell, New Mexico and PARI's underground tunnels held space aliens.

Galley's book aims to set the record straight as it uses hundreds of declassified government documents and interviews with former employees to piece together the six-decade-long story of how the Rosman site passed from NASA to the Department of Defense's National Security Agency and finally became a non-profit student science education facility.

"Like all great institutions, PARI's story is America's story," Galley said in a news release. "Few realize its employees helped to win the space race, the Cold War and now PARI is embarked on another important mission: science

– PARI, 12A

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education. It's a history everyone in western North Carolina should be very proud of."

Under NASA, the Rosman site was the most advanced ground station of its day and tracked and collected information from experimental scientific satellites while also conducting research that led

to developments in satellite television, cellular communications and the Internet.

Gralley said research station employees were at the forefront of weather prediction and used the site's satellite dishes to support the Apollo program that landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon.

"Rosman's achievements are huge, but mostly unknown," he said. "It's a

success story that needed to be told."

Gralley was able to peel back the secrecy of the site's Department of Defense days, too.

Prior to 2008, the military's association with the site was stamped secret and armed guards patrolled the property. While many details about station's former targets and operations remain classified, Gralley

has been able to decipher the story of how the large dishes were used to spy on Russia and Cuba to stymie their advances in Central America, Africa and elsewhere around the globe.

For the author, writing this book is personal.

"I learned a lot about PARI's work and how today it's educating a new generation of scientists," he said. "It's a gem buried in the

mountains of North Carolina. People need to know about and have pride in what they have in their own backyard."

"The Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute: An Untold History of Spacemen and Spies" is available for pre-order on PARI's website ([www.pari.edu](http://www.pari.edu)) and at Highland Books in Brevard ([www.highland-booksonline.com](http://www.highland-booksonline.com)). All of

the author's profits are being donated to further PARI's student science education programs.

Gralley will also be a special speaker and sign books during PARI's annual space day and open house event on May 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about Gralley and his work, visit [www.craiggralley.com](http://www.craiggralley.com).