

# Balloons Over Mt. Vernon returns to airport

*Event concludes today  
with Balloon Fun Flight*

**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Several hot-air balloons were seen high in the sky at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport over the weekend during the fifth annual Balloons Over Mt. Vernon.

Gates opened at 4 p.m. Friday, and Airport Director Chris Collins gave his reaction to the start of the event.

“We have had a lot of questions leading up to it, a lot of phone calls from well outside of Jefferson County interested in coming,” Collins said. “This is one of the best nights we have had for no wind.”

Several activities were scheduled over the three-day event including laser tag, inflatables, tethered balloon rides, the Jefferson County Balloon Chase 5K run and a duck drop balloon flight, Young Eagles Rides, Vietnam Era Veterans Salute, “When Hogs Fly” fundraiser, a classic car show and much more.

The Friday night balloon glow was canceled due to weather, but the pilots had a plan by hosting what is called a “candlestick” where the baskets are brought out and burners shoot fire that would be used to light the balloon. People also had a chance to meet with the pilots during that time. A second balloon glow was scheduled for Saturday evening.

This year’s featured pilots and balloons were Mark Shoemaker in the Humbly Lifted, Keith Barry in the Highly Cool, Kevin Heinzeman in the Drifting Dolphins, Al Reusch in the Aeroknot, Tim Clody in the Son Light, Stephen Bennett in the Sun Kissed, Seth Goodman in the Honest Abe, Betsy Kleiss in the 4EVER39, Scott Wooge in the Eclipse, Jared Miller in the Fiery Gizzard Kurt Vitense in the Eden and Matt McClinton in the Ridem 1.

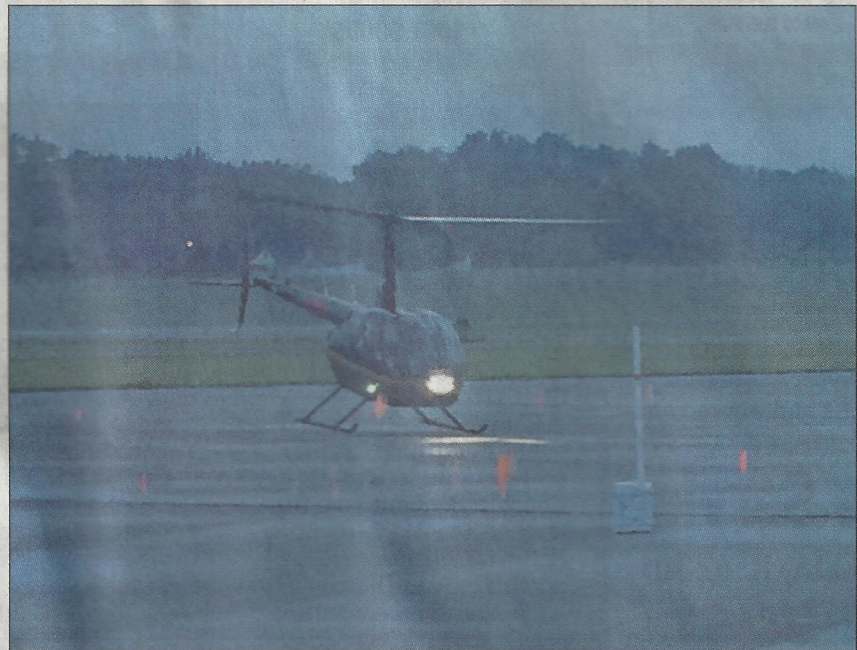
According to Sentinel archives, Balloons Over Mt. Vernon was last held in October 2016, but, wanting to try and new schedule for the event, the Airport Authority Board of

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**A FIERY PERFORMANCE** — Though the Friday balloon glow was canceled, the pilots of the various hot-air balloons at Balloons Over Mt. Vernon still put on a show. The event known as a “candlestick” saw the pilots show off what the machines under the balloon can do at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

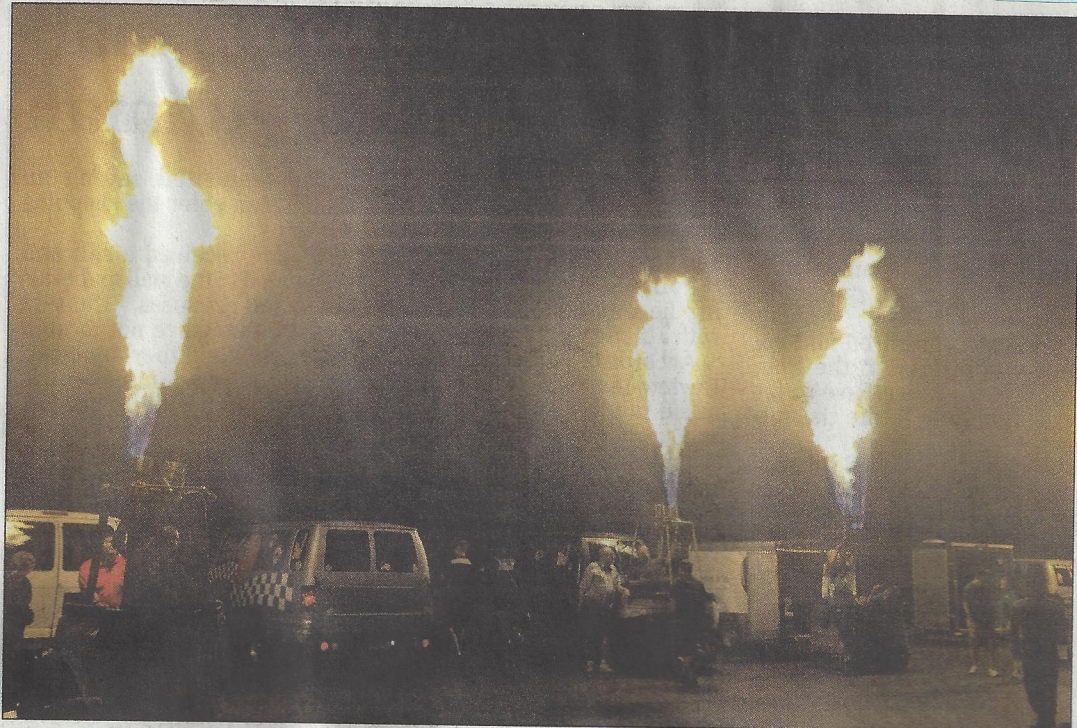


Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**VARIETY OF AIRCRAFT** — There was plenty to see during this weekend’s Balloons Over Mt. Vernon. The event featured a variety of colorful balloons, helicopter rides, airplane rides and even historic aircraft from the Vietnam era.

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**“CANDLESTICK”** — The “candlestick” event at Balloons Over Mt. Vernon entertained a large crowd of people as pilots performed various tricks of the machines that power their hot-air balloons.



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**ACTIVITIES** — Outside of the aircraft, Balloons Over Mt. Vernon featured a plethora of different activities for families this included laser tag, a car show, music vendor fair and much more.

## Balloons:

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Commissioners voted to move the event to May 2018. Collins explained that he was proud of administrative assistant Sheila Scrivner and everyone

working together to make the event possible.

“She has rallied a town. This is a total team effort. But that team has to have a leader, and she has really hit this one out of the park,” Collins said. “It is great to see all of the different organizations and businesses coming to-

gether, just trying to do something for our town and provide a good family friendly event.”

The event wraps up today with a scheduled 6:30 a.m. Balloon Fun Flight, which saw the pilots lift off from Mt. Vernon.

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