

## Annual United Way Balloon Glow helps kick off Balloons over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Balloons over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In opened on Friday with the annual United Way Balloon Glow presented by Flo-Gas Propane at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, bringing people from Mt. Vernon and the surrounding areas to see the spectacular sight.

The event started at 6 p.m. with people taking part in games and other activities and looking over several airplanes on display. As the sun began to set preparations for the balloons began.

Airport Director Chris Collins discussed the turnout for the Balloon Glow and mentioned that there were concerns about the weather at the beginning of the day due to the wind.

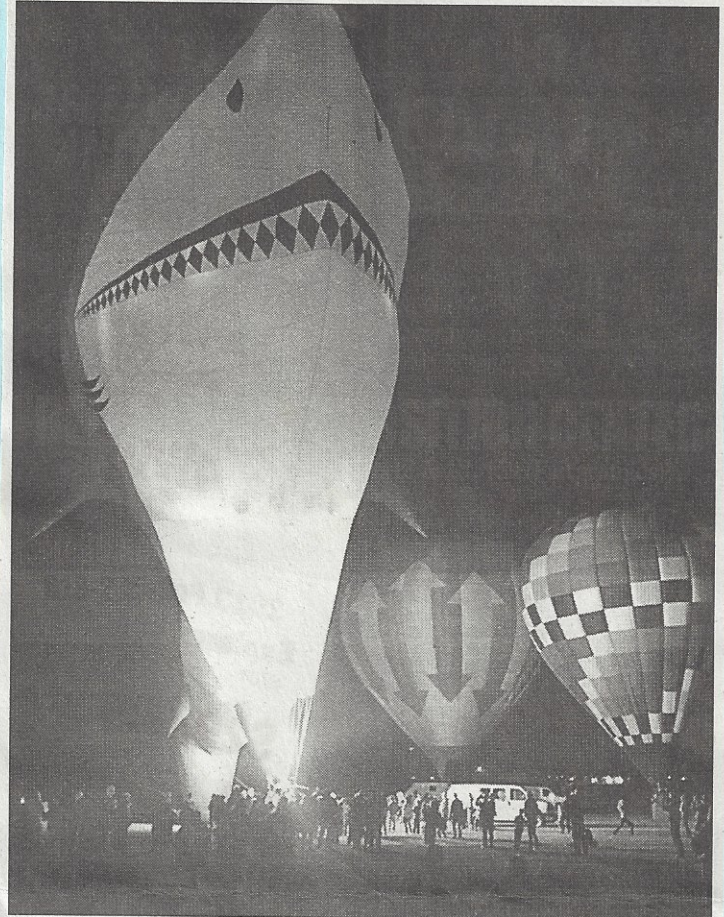
"We were [concerned] a little with the winds earlier but they have died down and everything is proceeding according to plan," Collins said. "Based on the parking it looks like 4,000 to 5,000 [people]. We are getting are getting close to Fourth of July-type parking here."

The balloons began to light up the night sky at around 7 p.m. The activity gave pilots the opportunity show off the unique designs of their balloons.

Jennifer Miller, executive director of the United Way of South Central Illinois discussed her reaction to the balloon glow and United Way's involvement with the event.

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# Balloon glow lights up Mt. Vernon Airport



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**SHARKY** — People went out to the annual United Way Balloon Glow on Friday at Outland Airport in Mt. Vernon to see the several unique designs of the balloons showcased at the event, including "Sharky," which was sponsored by RARE Chop House.

## Glow:

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"The crowd is great. There is a lot of people enjoying the evening," Miller said.

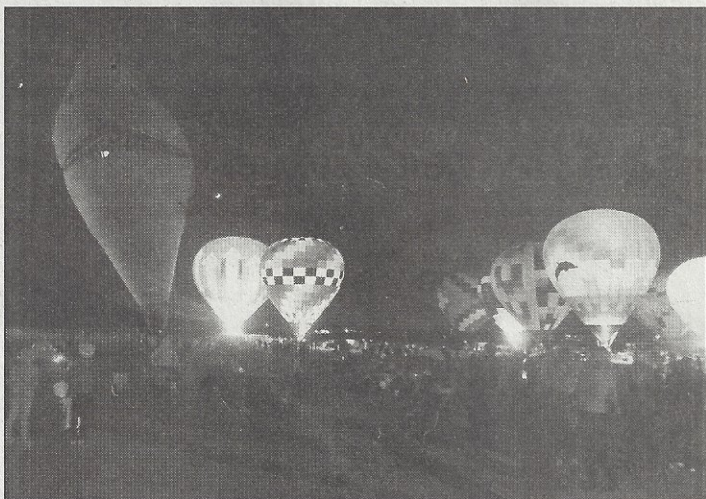
United Way-funded agencies provided family fun and kid-friendly activities for the event. Miller finished by mentioning all of those who helped make the event possible and showed their support for the united way.

"There is a lot of work and

effort that goes into planning Balloons Over Mt. Vernon and everyone has been really great to work with," Miller said. "We have volunteers working the gate for anyone who wanted to donate when they came in because this is a free event. The proceeds do benefit the United Way and our 2015 Community Fund Campaign."

Balloons over Mt. Vernon continues from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and 7 a.m. to noon Sunday. Saturday events will include a salute to veterans at 2 p.m.

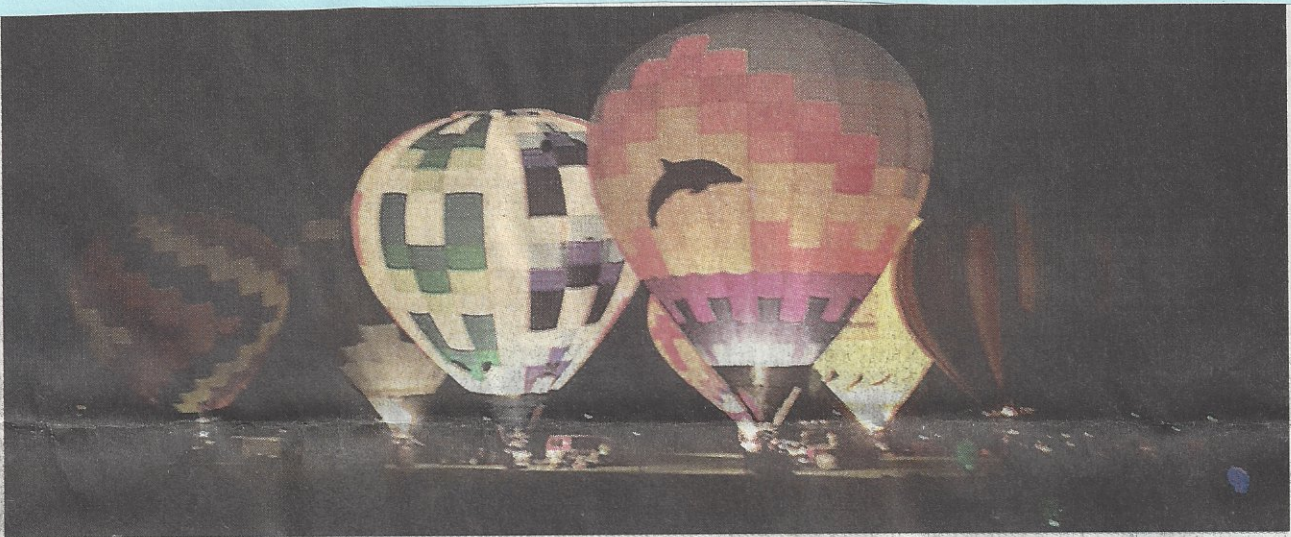
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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**UP AND GLOWING** — Around 18 balloons were showcased during the United Way Balloon Glow Friday at Outland Airport in Mt. Vernon. The event kicked off the annual Balloons over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In which will continue throughout the weekend.





Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**BALLOON GLOW** — Several people were out and about at the annual United Way Balloon Glow at 6 p.m. Friday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to witness the balloons brighten the evening sky.



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**BALLOONS OVER MT. VERNON** — The balloon "Drifting Dolphins" lights up the night sky on Friday during the United Way Balloon Glow at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. The illuminated event served as a kick-off for the third annual Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In which will continue throughout the weekend.