



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**BALLOONS OVER MT. VERNON** — Several people came out Saturday to the annual Balloons Over Mt. Vernon and Fly-In at Outland Airport, the event featured the Tri-County Aviation Education Zone, an inflatable children's area and Young Eagle Rides. More photos from the Fly-In can be found on page 10A of today's Sentinel.

**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MT. VERNON** — The first full day of the annual Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In has come and gone and although high winds prevented morning balloon rides there was still plenty of fun to be had.

The grounds opened at 6:30 a.m. at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, where many people started their day with the United Way Pancake Breakfast at 7 a.m.

Jennifer Witzel, event coordinator discussed her reaction to the turnout for Balloons Over Mt. Vernon.

"It has been very good and it is very humbling to see the community come out," Witzel said. "It is a small group of people that put this on and it is pretty amazing that this small group can pull off something that draws 4,000 people."



Sentinel Photo/DAVID BELCHER

**AUTOGRAPH** — Lyle Endicott prepares to autograph an inspection panel of the FM-2 Wildcat featured at Salute to Veterans on Saturday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Endicott flew an FM-2 while serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Stories featuring the Veterans Reunion and Endicott are on page 6A of today's Sentinel.

Events for Saturday included a YMCA 5K Walk and Run, a children's area with inflatables, a Cruise to the Balloons and more.

Roy Stinson, a pilot who had a balloon at the event gave his reaction to Balloons Over Mt. Vernon, as this was his first time at the event.

"It is my first time and I have been very impressed with it. I fly all over the United States and this is a very impressive event," Stinson said.

Keith Berry, another pilot who also had his balloon at the event discussed how events like these are good for the community.

"Fundraising for the community is a big factor and being able to host something that brings people in, get donation, get charitable funds for those big charities that is important," Berry said.

The event helps raise funds for United Way of South Central Illinois, which assists people in four area counties through 11 partner agencies.

Berry went on to share some details about balloons in general, stating that wind really does play a factor.

"Aviation in a balloon is kind of like sailing. We are sail boat compared to an airplane, which is like a motorboat," Berry said. "So we are at the mercy of the wind and we fly with the wind. We can't go against the wind. We can't turn around and come back unless the winds are right."

Stinson finally discussed what he enjoyed most about the Mt. Vernon event.

"When we see children smiling and families happy, then we are happy," Stinson said. "This is a good, wholesome event."

Balloons Over Mt. Vernon will conclude today with the grounds open from 7 a.m. noon.

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*Activities abound Saturday at  
Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In  
at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport*

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