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2025 BALLOONS OVER VERMILION

JULY 11-12

The
Independent News

The News-Gazette[®]

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July 11 and July 12

**Where the Sky
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2025 BALLOONS OVER VERMILION
VERMILION REGIONAL AIRPORT

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2025 Balloons Over Vermilion Pilot Roster, Field Positions & Sponsors



24 Pilot: Andrew Robinson Location: Highland, IL Balloon: Fire + Ice Years Flying: 9	25 Pilot: Darrell Day Location: Rock Island, IL Balloon: Pi-Ball Years Flying: 44	26 Pilot: Jenny Spencer Location: McCordsville, IN Balloon: Sky Candy Years Flying: 15	27 Pilot: Walt Rudy Location: Wadsworth, OH Balloon: Hour Big Bundle of Joy Years Flying: 41	28 Pilot: John Johlas Location: Ogden, IL Balloon: Joyful Noise Years Flying: 5	29 Pilot: Greg Saul Location: Galesburg, IL Balloon: Good N Plenty Years Flying: 35	30 Pilot: Brian Serge Location: Indianapolis, IN Balloon: Amberwaze Years Flying: 13	31 Pilot: Brian Koch Location: Byrnes Mill, MO Balloon: Carried Away Years Flying: 21
16 Pilot: Ed Devore Location: Covington, IN Balloon: Papa's Joy Years Flying: 5	17 Pilot: Lynn Brownell Location: St. Louis, MO Balloon: Sweetfish Years Flying: 11	18 Pilot: Stephanie Maughan Location: Wentzville, MO Balloon: Zulu Years Flying: 3	19 Pilot: David Boesdorfer Location: Springfield, IL Balloon: Memories in Flight Years Flying: 10	20 Pilot: Kathy Reineke Location: Mahomet, IL Balloon: Sensational Years Flying: 42	21 Pilot: Jim House Location: MacKinaw, IL Balloon: Heaven Bound Years Flying: 37	22 Pilot: Mike Boylan Location: Washington, IL Balloon: Irish Rover Years Flying: 34	23 Pilot: Gary Whitby Location: Columbia, MO Balloon: Deja Blu Years Flying: 29
8 Pilot: Glen O'Connell Location: Gilberts, IL Balloon: Re/Max Years Flying: 43	9 Pilot: Mark Woodard Location: Hookstown, PA Balloon: Carpe Diem Years Flying: 12	10 Pilot: Seth Goodman Location: Lincoln, IL Balloon: 2-Faced Years Flying: 16	11 Pilot: Jared Miller Location: Springfield, IL Balloon: Feisty Gizard Years Flying: 18	12 Pilot: Chad Kerns Location: Lincoln, IL Balloon: N Debt Years Flying: 10	13 Pilot: Jason Gaines Location: Foley, MO Balloon: Sugar Momma Years Flying: 27	14 Pilot: Brad Chism Location: Fishers, IN Balloon: Irish Rover Years Flying: 18	15 Pilot: Bradley Haeger Location: Nashville, IL Balloon: Rising Tides Years Flying: 5
1 Pilot: Tom Steinbock Location: Crestwood, KY Balloon: Fire Dog Years Flying: 34	2 Pilot: Brian Chase Location: Moscov, PA Balloon: Police Dog Years Flying: 43	3 Pilot: Dean Carlton Location: Danville, IL Balloon: Wagz Years Flying: 28	4 Pilot: Todd Spicer Location: Danville, IL Balloon: Bary Years Flying: 14	5 Pilot: Scott Wooge Location: St. Louis, MO Balloon: Always Changing Years Flying: 34	6 Pilot: Donna Carlton-Vish Location: Danville, IL Balloon: Sunny Side Up Years Flying: 24	7 Pilot: Al Reusch Location: Macomb, IL Balloon: Knot Crazy Years Flying: 35	Fathered Hot Air Balloon Rides Pilot: Theodore Gramburg Location: Carmel, IN Balloon: Round About Years Flying: 14 Pilot: Tony Santilli Location: Fishers, IL Balloon: Smile High Years Flying: 23

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**Where the Sky
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2025 BALLOONS OVER VERMILION

Balloons Over Vermilion

July 11-12, 2025

3 p.m. - 10 p.m. | Vermilion Regional Airport, Danville, IL

FRIDAY - JULY 11TH

- 3 p.m. - Gates Open
- 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. - BAND: The Riders
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Food Truck Frenzy
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Kids Zone
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Touch a Truck
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Beer Tent
- 3 p.m. - Dark - Summer Skyz Helicopter Rides
- 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Balloon Photo Booth
- 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Sponsor/Hospitality Hours
- 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - BAND: The Bossy Novas
- 5:45 p.m. - Salute to America and National Anthem
- 6 p.m. - Parade of Pilots
- 6:30 p.m. - Balloon Launch
- 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. - Tethered Balloon Rides
- 8 p.m. - 10 p.m. - BAND: 90s Daughter
- 8:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Balloon Glow
- 10 p.m. - Gates Close



KIDS ZONE

FREE ALL WEEKEND:

- Touch a Truck
- Joyful Bubbles
- DSA Soccer Area
- Halleran Family Discovery Zone
- Art & Science Experience
- Amazing Giants
- Face Painting
- Balloon Animals
- Children's Crafts
- Disc Golf
- CU Circus Collective Aerialists
- 501st Legion Appearances

FOR A SMALL FEE:

- Inflatables
- Air Jumping
- Rock Climbing
- Zip Lining
- Lazer Tag
- Hair Braiding
- RC Cars
- So much more!

SATURDAY - JULY 12TH

- 6:30 a.m. - Community Flight
- 3:00 p.m. - Gates Open
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Food Truck Frenzy
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Kids Zone
- 3 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Touch a Truck
- 3 p.m. - 11 p.m. - Beer Tent
- 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. - Balloon School
- 3 p.m. - Dark - Summer Skyz Helicopter Rides
- 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. - BAND: Crozier & Co
- 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - CU Circus Collective Aerialists
- 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Balloon Photo Booth
- 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Sponsor/Hospitality Hours
- 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - BAND: Shotguns & Shot Glasses
- 6:30 p.m. - Balloon Launch
- 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. - Tethered Balloon Rides
- 8:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Balloon Glow
- 8 p.m. - 10 p.m. - BAND: The K-Tels
- 10 p.m. - Gates Close



- Nightly rides for all ages!
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- Weather Dependent
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- Times: 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
- CASH ONLY!

Parking: \$5 - Admission: \$5, Kids 10 & Under Free - CASH ONLY!
 No coolers - No Pets Allowed - ATM On-Site
 All Balloon Flights & Activities are Weather Dependent



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BALLOONS OVER VERMILION

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Co-chair passing along memories to her son



Photos provided

Balloons Over Vermilion Co-Chair Carly Goodwin is shown with her family at last year's event.

By JENNIFER BAILEY
jbailey@news-gazette.com

DANVILLE — This is the second year Carly Goodwin and Jackie Vinson have co-chaired Balloons Over Vermilion. They took over the event, now in its ninth year, from previous co-chairs Pat O'Shaughnessy and Jim Anderson. Goodwin shared what her role is as a co-chair and other insights into the fun family event.

When and how did you get involved with Balloons Over Vermilion?

I became involved with Balloons Over Vermilion when I moved back to the area in 2018. I was on the Kids Zone committee for several years before becoming co-chair in 2024.

What's your role entail as co-chair of the event?

Our event is run entirely by a volunteer steering committee of approximately 40 community members. Our steering committee excels in each of their respective areas and many have been with the event since its inception. As co-chair, I communicate with each steering committee member to make sure they have everything they need and that everything will flow seamlessly together. I also help with sponsorship recruitment and recognition as well as marketing.

What should someone know about the event if they haven't gone before?

If you've never been before, you should come! Seeing one hot-air balloon is a beautiful sight, but seeing 30-plus hot-air balloons in one location is truly magical. In addition to the balloons, our event offers something for everyone — a massive Kids Zone, live music, beer tent, and more than 20 food vendors.

What can people look forward to this year? Anything new?

I'm very excited for this year's special shapes — "Fire Dog" and "Police Dog." They are going to be a great addition to our balloon lineup. We have many returning balloons and pilots, but we have some new ones as well, and we are always glad to welcome them to our community. The stilt walkers will be back again this year, and we have a special performance from the CU Circus at 4 p.m. Saturday.

What do you enjoy most about the event?

My favorite thing about Balloons Over Vermilion is that it's an event by the community, for the community. The number of sponsors, volunteers, collaboration, cooperation and support that it takes to pull off the event is immense, and in our ninth year, our community continues to show up.

This year is also extra special to me as this event was started "for the kids." I remember attending the Balloon Classic when I was a kid, and after having my son last year, I'm excited to get to experience the festival through his eyes this year too.



ABOVE: Goodwin talks to students inside a partially inflated hot-air balloon. BELOW: A hot-air balloon is shown in flight during last year's Balloons Over Vermilion festival at Vermilion Regional Airport in Danville.



Jennifer Bailey/The News-Gazette



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BALLOONS OVER VERMILION

LATE BLOOMER

Pilot who started later in life enjoying the ride

By JENNIFER BAILEY
jbailey@news-gazette.com

DANVILLE — Ed DeVore was in his late 40s when he started working as a crew member for local hot-air balloon pilots about 15 years ago, and well into his 50s when he started flying himself five years ago.

Now 63, he said pilots can range in age from 16 to 80-plus, and it's never too late.

"I started this later in life," DeVore said, and while he would have liked to start younger, he's enjoying his flying time now.

DeVore's "Papa's Joy" hot-air balloon will be one of the approximately 30 taking part in this weekend's Balloons Over Vermilion festival at Vermilion Regional Airport in Danville.

DeVore said he worked on hot-air balloon crews for a long time and got hooked on flying.

The Westville native who now lives in Covington, Ind., spent 22 years at Danville Metal Stamping, then became a manufacturing engineer for GE Aerospace in Terre Haute, Ind. All of his professional work experience has been in the aviation industry.

"I've been around Danville all my life," he said.

He also has been involved in shows put on by the Red Mask Players shows and other theater groups.

He said a castmate in a past Red Mask theater production said he should try crewing for a hot-air balloon.

"And she was right," DeVore said about loving the experience.

He got his first hands-on experience helping other local balloonists in 2010.

DeVore said he'd seen balloons for years, including at the former Balloon Classic event held annually in Danville.

"Danville is fortunate to have a number" of pilots, he said.

He enjoyed being on a crew and lending a hand where needed.

"I enjoyed being on the ground," he added.

He said he encourages anyone interested in hot-air balloons who also likes to be outside and likes people to volunteer as a crew member.

DeVore said he was told he'd make a great pilot and that's what happened, leading him to buy his

own hot-air balloon and start flying himself.

"I just liked to crew, and then it gets in your head and you start to think about it," DeVore said of becoming a pilot.

He learned everything he could while crewing and decided to start down the pilot road, thinking that he could do it.

He said he likes the adventure and adrenaline.

"I worked hard at it," he said.

He received his pilot certification in 2021.

DeVore's balloon got its name and color scheme by combining what gives him joy — his kids and ballooning.

The red, white and blue are national colors and represent his three children. The purple symbolizes his adopted child, and the aqua and green reference their birthstone colors.

DeVore said Balloons Over Vermilion is "something positive for the community. It's positive for everyone. It's a family sport and it's a family attraction."

He said no matter your age, hot-air balloons are beautiful and mesmerizing.

He was hoping for nice, calm nights at this year's event, and said he loves that Balloons Over Vermilion is community oriented.

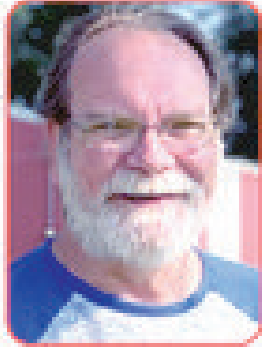
"We can get so many people up and close to the balloon," he said, which allows them to ask questions and feel the heat.

The event also gets kids involved early with learning about ballooning, and gives the student ambassadors a sense of civic responsibility in being involved in a community event, DeVore added.

"They come up with interesting designs," he said of their balloon drawings.

Proceeds from both this event and the Festival of Trees benefit community organizations and projects geared toward the youth, he said.

DeVore added that he can't do his job and Balloons Over Vermilion can't happen without all the great volunteers. He recommended that people contact the festival organizers if they're interested in helping out and being paired with a pilot.



Pilot: Ed DeVore
Location: Covington, IN
Balloon: Papa's Joy
Years Flying: 5

Balloon Sponsor



Ed DeVore is shown with his hot-air balloon, 'Papa's Joy.'

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BALLOONS OVER VERMILION



Provided

The 2025 Balloons Over Vermilion student ambassadors pose for a photo at First Baptist Christian School in Danville.

LEARNING THE ROPES

Student ambassadors delight in their role

By JENNIFER BAILEY
jbailey@news-gazette.com

DANVILLE — When it came time for this year's Balloons Over Vermilion student ambassadors to design their own hot-air balloons to be used on posters for the event as part of their duties, their creativity really shined.

The 28 third-, fourth- and fifth-graders at First Baptist Christian School in Danville used their school colors and Knight mascot, their love of their pets and animals such as pigs, cows and wolves, and a variety of colors to make their hot-air balloon creations stand out.

As junior balloon pilots, they asked lots of questions of pilots Dean Carlton and Larry Owen and learned a lot about hot-air ballooning.

All the students told Carlton they'd seen a hot-air balloon in the area.

"Everybody's seen them. That's good. That means we're doing something," he said.

Students' questions included what fuel makes the balloons rise. Carlton said propane is used. He said if they fly for about an hour, they use about 20 gallons.

"It also shoots a flame 30 feet tall," Carlton said.

Another student asked how the balloons are steered.

Owen said they guide the balloons up and down to take advantage of winds that may be going in different directions at different altitudes.

"When we fly, we go up to different altitudes, different heights, and we catch the winds that go different directions," he said. "The winds are our steering wheels."

Carlton said they study the weather a lot, checking it every day.

"It's really easy to fly — you just keep hitting the burner and it will keep flying," Carlton said. "Landing is the skill we work the hardest with our balloon pilot students."

Landing involves leaving letting the balloon cool off.

"So, we have to manage the going up and then the going down parts, the temperature of that balloon, which we have a gauge that we can watch," Carlton said. "But also, as you get better at flying, you can feel what the balloon wants to do. So, you bring it in, and you just let it cool off."

There are about 3,000 hot-air balloon pilots in the U.S., compared with 300,000 airplane pilots, Carlton told the students.

At this weekend's Balloons Over Vermilion festival at the Vermilion Regional Airport, the students will lead the parade of pilots.

The student ambassadors' classes — Jenna Picray's third-graders, Amber Seest's fourth-graders and Andrea Byram's fifth-graders — have continued to show their excitement about their role.

In addition to learning about the world of hot-air ballooning, they also were tasked with brainstorming ideas for the Kids Zone. This year will see the return of touch a truck, in addition to pickleball, soccer, arts and science activities, lawn games, Joyful Bubbles, inflatables, a zipline, an air jump, a rock wall and laser tag.

Kids Zone Chair Kayla Fleming has also brought in some new events, including an performance by aerialists on Saturday.

The Amazing Giants stilt walkers will also return this year, as will tethered hot-air balloon rides and helicopter rides, in addition to Balloon School from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

Specially shaped balloons in attendance this year include "Police Dog" and "Fire Dog."

A full event schedule is available at balloonsoververmilion.com/.

For updates, check website and the festival's Facebook page (@BalloonsOverVermilion) or sign up for text alerts at VermilionCountyFirst.com.



Hot-air balloon pilot Larry Owen talks with student Lily Williams about her pig and cow designs.

Jennifer Bailey/The News-Gazette

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