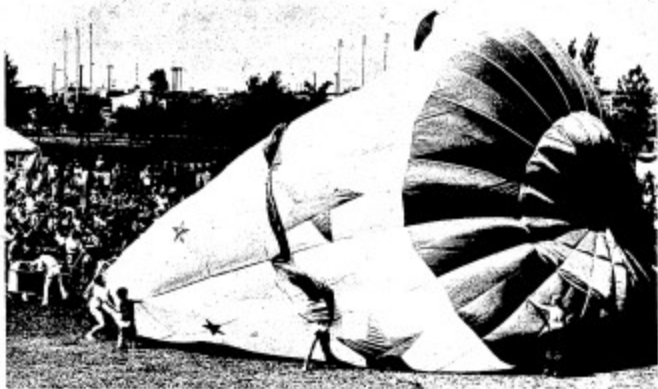


Beautiful balloon



Independence Day was a beautiful day for balloon watching, and hundreds of people turned out to Centennial Park Wednesday to do just that.

The object of the crowd's attention, Eagle II, a hot air balloon measuring 56 feet in diameter, was piloted by Wayne Skaw, formerly of Urbana, and Jerry Kiskadee, of Knoxville.

Although takeoff time was originally scheduled for 2:30, the process of inflating the balloon was not begun until 3:00. Shortly thereafter, the balloon ascended, carrying its two passengers southeast while the crowd applauded.

Only the wind could control the balloon's course. All the pilots could do was control its altitude and hope to land somewhere close to civilization.

Staff photos
by Marla Edelman
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