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# Schuffert's Strides

**Newsletter** June 5, 2007

***Alabama Jubilee***

**Point Mallard Park - Decatur, Alabama**

Follow along with Robert Schuffert on his  
recent photographic expeditions

***Hot Air Balloons!***

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As another balloon drifts silently overhead, the Decatur team lands at Point Mallard Park during the "Key Grab" competition.



Taken inside the throat of the balloon as it inflates on the ground, this scene makes a striking image.

## 2007 Alabama Jubilee Hot Air Balloon Classic, Point Mallard Park

The 35-acre Point Mallard Park in Decatur, Alabama has been hosting the *Alabama Jubilee Hot Air Balloon Classic* since 1977, starting with just seventeen balloonists. Today, the event has grown to over sixty balloons attracting up to 100,000 visitors. The City of Decatur has been justly designated by the Alabama State Legislature as the “*Ballooning Capital of Alabama*”. It is one of the few hot air balloon events in the US where spectators are allowed to mingle among the balloons as they inflate and lift off. Visitors can even chase and watch them land after the wind carries them where ever it desires. Balloons, pilots and crews from across twenty states gather at the park on Memorial Day Weekend, and enthusiastically welcome visitors



**Struggling against light winds, volunteers help position the balloon for deflation at the end of the journey.**

with their ballooning skills, a balloon glow at night, and some even provide free tethered hot air balloon rides. The three day event, includes food stands, fireworks, a kite festival, antique tractor shows, classic car shows, arts & crafts booths, live stage entertainment and a children’s play area with slides and pony rides. All of this is available with free admission; it is an impressive event you shouldn’t miss next Memorial Day Weekend!

flames from burners of many tethered balloons illuminate their colorful fabrics, providing an awesome scene not soon forgotten. Hot air balloon events wind down after darkness on Sunday evening in preparation for the fireworks extravaganza at 9 pm. For more information and a schedule of events, visit the official Alabama Jubilee website at <http://www.alabamajubilee.net>.



**Within just a few moments, over sixty balloons inflated and lifted off at this year’s event.**

Since the air is calmer in early morning, balloon pilots schedule their first daily launch at 6 am, with an another afternoon flight scheduled at 6 pm. At 8 pm, just after darkness falls, a balloon glow is coordinated with a loudspeaker from the entertainment stage. Huge



**A composite image, this balloon lifts off shortly after daybreak on Sunday.**



**Gliding just above this corn field, the pilot and crew position for a landing.**



**Judging wind currents for the Key Grab Competition, these balloonists decided to launch from a church lot in south Decatur.**

Point Mallard Park also features a wave pool with 3-foot waves, water slides, tennis courts, ball fields, hiking trails, campgrounds, an indoor ice skating rink, a complete recreation center and a championship 18-hole golf course. The Water Park is open daily from May 27th through August 6th.

Point Mallard Park also hosts these annual events: (<http://www.pointmallardpark.com>)

- *The Spirit of America Festival*—Fourth-of-July  
This festival began in 1967 when anti-Vietnam war protests grew throughout the US. Citizens of Decatur show their patriotism and support for service men and women of the US Armed Forces. Fourth of July event and fireworks show. Free Admission.
- *September Skirmish*—Labor Day Weekend  
More than 200 Union and Confederate soldiers in authentic dress participate in mock battle reenactments at 2 pm each day. A candlelight tour of both the Union and Confederate camps is held on Saturday night. Free admission.

*Robert Schuffert*



**Early morning sunlight radiates through the fabric as balloons inflate prior to liftoff.**

