

✓ Fly-In

Antiques, classics to soar at Watsonville air show

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BY PAULINE ZENNER
Special to the Mercury News

Airplane buffs will be flying high Memorial Day weekend as the 29th Annual West Coast Antique Fly-In and Air Show gets under way at Watsonville Airport.

About 500 pilots flying antiques — built before 1943 — to neo-classics (at least 30 years old) to home-built designs will take to the skies to display their vintage craft to an estimated 20,000 people over the three-day week-

end.

There will be helicopters, hang gliders, hot air balloons and experimental aircraft; some will offer rides for those who want a firsthand experience.

"People today are used to flying in jets where you can't even hear the engine," said Patty Groves, volunteer coordinator with the Northern California Antique Aircraft Association, the show's sponsor. "These old planes are a lot different, and the fly-in is a chance for people to see how aerodynamics has

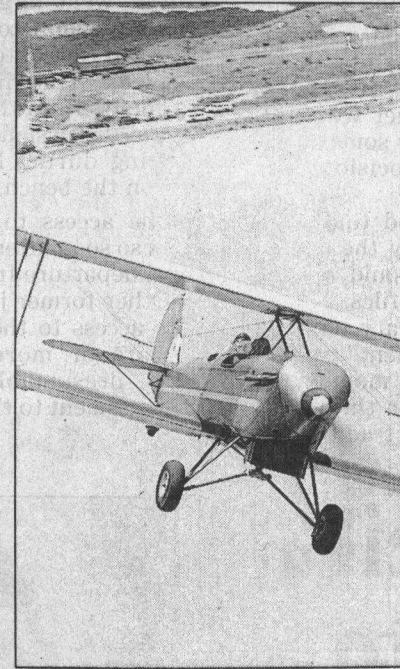
evolved."

Groves said that this year's show includes some unusual airplanes and "a great line-up of aerobatic acts."

"We've got someone who's restored a wood-framed 1917 WWI Curtiss Jenny and covered it in clear Mylar so that you can see right through it," Groves said.

New this year will be a custom-built sports area that will offer aviation-re-

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Among classics attending past fly-ins was Len Von Clemm's American Eagle biplane in 1987.

MERCURY NEWS FILE PHOTOGRAPH

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29th air show to begin Friday

Watsonville Airport is site for festivities

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lated seminars, including wood-working, fabric covering and composite construction, and a youth tent where kids can build their own wing rib of an antique airplane, said Pam Cox, public relations coordinator.

Food booths offering hot dogs, hamburgers and California produce, such as strawberries and cream and artichokes, will be op-

erated by non-profit organizations, said Cox.

"The air show is run entirely by volunteers," said Groves. "There are 1,000 volunteers on hand at any one time to assist the public with anything from parking to security."

All proceeds from the event will go to support the construction of the California Antique Aircraft Museum at South County Airport in San Martin, which is expected to begin in 1994.

"The museum will be a place where old aircraft are maintained and restored to flying condition so that people today can see what it was like to fly, say a 1927 American Eagle Biplane," Groves said.

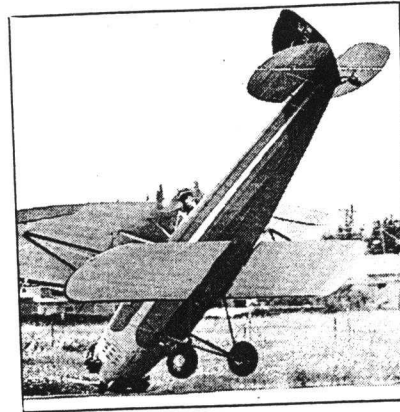
The museum will offer a restoration facility, a library and a gift shop, but the main emphasis will be to preserve and display on loan and donated antique aircraft, said Cox.

The air show will be open from noon to 5 p.m. Friday. Adults pay \$5; children and the elderly get in free on Friday.

Gates open Saturday and Sunday at 7 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. Weekend tickets for adults are \$8; for children 6-12 and the elderly \$4. Children 5 and under get in free. No pets or bicycles will be allowed on the airport grounds throughout the air show. Parking for cars is \$3; RV parking is \$10, and there are no hook-ups. There will be a free shuttle from the parking lot to the airport.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

For more information, call (408) 496-9559.



AP FILE PHOTOGRAPH

Al Cermak of San Jose had trouble with the winds at Watsonville Airport as he was landing his 1929 Bird at the 1988 air show. He received minor injuries.