

# The show begins

Fly-In & Air Show  
takes flight under  
cloudy conditions

*Fly-In*  
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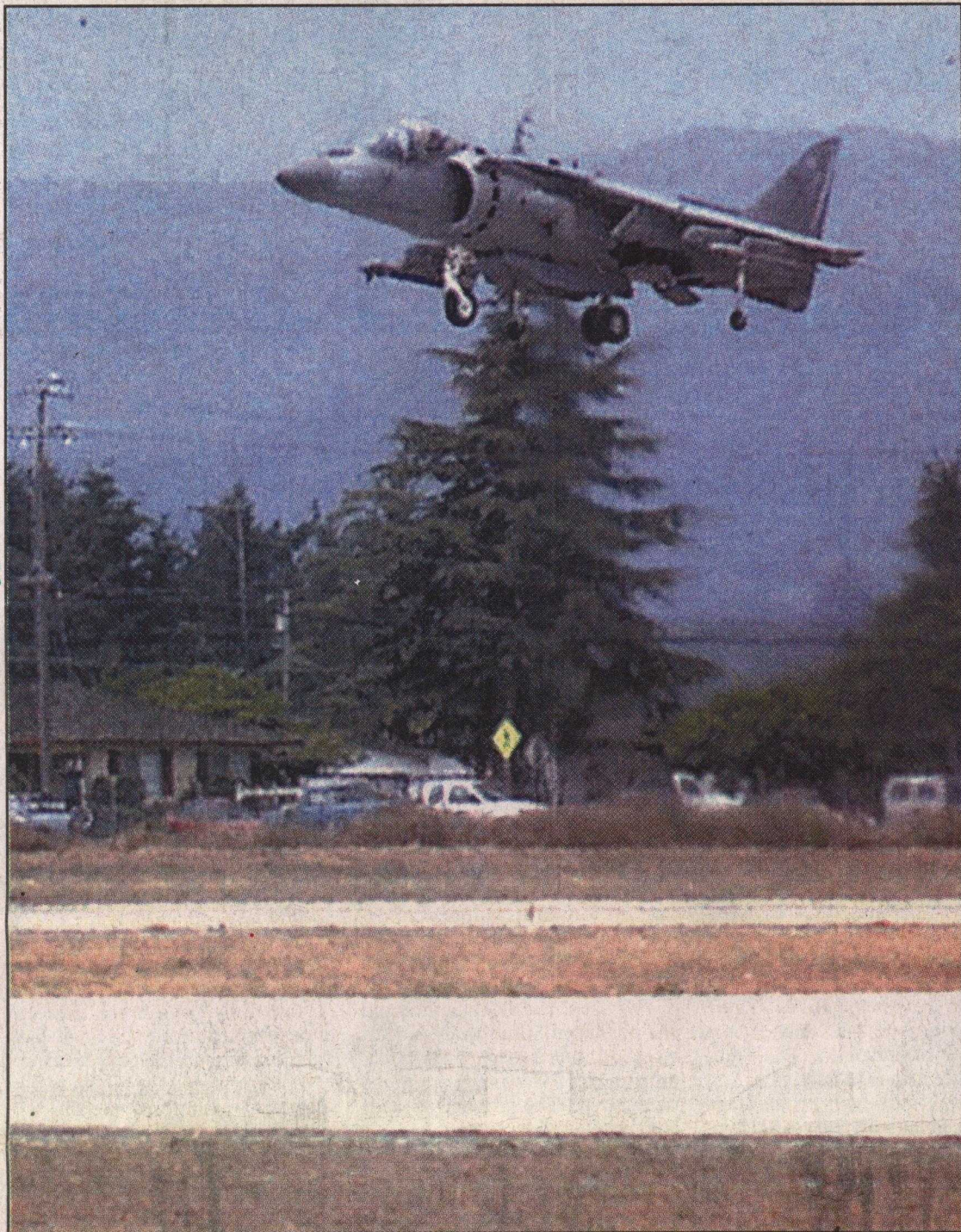
The 39<sup>th</sup> annual Watsonville Fly-In & Air Show got under way Friday, and though the heavens withheld the bright sunshine that was forecast, nothing could keep the bright smiles off the faces of those who made the trip to see airplanes and jets make their dramatic take-offs and landings.

Visitors with hats, sunglasses and cameras mingled through rows of antique and newer airplanes. Vendors sold everything from leather aviation jackets and sunglasses to cotton candy and chicken kabobs.

But the highlight of the day was reserved for the special guests that made their dramatic entrance around 2 p.m.

Like eagles soaring on the horizon, the bird-like shapes swept over the hills separating Santa Cruz County from the rest of the world and appeared at the end of the cloud line that seemed to ominously hang just past the reach of the furthest runway.

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Michael Seville/Register-Pajaronian

One of six Harrier jump jets ascends at the Watsonville Airport Friday afternoon to kick off this weekend's Fly-In & Air Show. The jets, along with various models and makes of airplanes, are on display this weekend at the 39th annual event.

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"That is pretty spectacular," exclaimed George Larsen, though his voice could barely be heard over the piercing screech of the six Harrier jump jets as one by one they gracefully touched down on the main runway.

"They look even cooler than in the movies," said Jesus, a Watsonville High student who refused to give his last name. "But I still think those big bombers and their paint jobs are the best planes out here."

Jesus was referring to the B-17 and B-24 bomber planes that are also highlighted at this year's event:

"It seems that there are many more airplanes here on the first day than last year's opening day," said Larsen, who was making just his second trip to the annual air show in the two years he has lived in Watsonville.

He was right, according to Dave Brockman, one of the many organizers of this year's event.

Brockman said that the early break in the cloud cover gave a lot of people the chance to get their planes over the hill and land before the clouds took over the sky in mid-afternoon.

"It is really a good cross-section of aviation and technology on the ground this year," Brockman said.

Scores of planes lined the vast concrete fields of the airport — everything from World War I-era biplanes to the high-tech, funky flying contraptions of the new millennium.

Bob and Jim DeLong were on hand to showcase their co-owned Breezy, an experimental and registered aircraft with Woody Woodpecker painted on the nose of the craft.

The plane, with its exposed seats and only a steel frame and a stock aircraft engine, can reach speeds of 100 mph, though the two generally cruise at a "safe" 70 mph.

"How can you not like this," questioned Bob DeLong, as he looked around at the other lightweight craft surrounding his.

The two had flown over earlier in the morning from Morgan Hill and eagerly eyed the growing line at the spaghetti feed taking place in the hangar just down the road.

On the other side of the complex, screams of laughter came from the children's fun area, where volunteer John Amos kept an eye on the day's events.

"I really like coming out and volunteering at events like this," said Amos, a San Jose resident who is volunteering as a radio operator in his fourth consecutive Fly-In. "However, I thought the world was coming to an end when those Harriers came screaming overhead."

Though the sun hid during the majority of the afternoon, which grounded most of the flights, the rest of the weekend looks more promising. Partly cloudy skies are expected today and tonight and again on Sunday.



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian  
**Ben Scott flew into Watsonville in his father's 1936, three-seat Stearman Speed Mail Jr. from Carson City, Nevada.**



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian  
**Ted Miller of Santa Rosa arrives at the Fly-In Friday in his 1943 Navy Stearman. He said he has been attending the Fly-In & Air Show since about 1966.**



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian  
**Low clouds and cool conditions kept crowds on the slight side for the first few hours of the Fly In & Air Show but breaking clouds and sporadic sunlight eventually drew a crowd.**