

All eyes on the sky



Chryl Barroza holds up her son, Justin, so he can see the planes.

Mike McCollum

Sun comes out Sunday, gets Fly-In off the ground

By RICHARD EGAN
STAFF WRITER

One out of two ain't bad.

The West Coast Antique Fly-In and Air Show was beset with miserable weather Saturday, forcing organizers to scale back the afternoon air show and keeping attendance down. But the sun came back yesterday, and so did the crowds.

Airplane fans of all ages who made their way to Watsonville airport for the 24th annual Fly-In yesterday were treated to bright sun and brisk winds. Which beat the chilly, wet stuff that plagued the 5,600 who paid their way in Saturday.

"Thank god for the sun," said Carolyn Dugger of Watsonville Chamber of Commerce. The chamber, which sponsored the show along with the West Coast Antique Airplane Association, won't have an official attendance

total until tomorrow, but yesterday's crowd seemed to be at least twice as large as Saturday's.

What they came to see was the largest gathering of antique aircraft this side of the annual gathering in Oshkosh, Wis., which is generally regarded as the granddaddy of fly-ins.

There were biplanes galore, airplanes with three engines, airplanes with no engines (gliders), helicopters, balloons, parachutists and row after row of beautiful gleaming aircraft on display.

The show began Sunday with the traditional sky dive by Allen Silver of the California Parachute Club, who dropped from the blue with smoke spewing from flares and Old Glory trailing in the wind while the national anthem was played over loud-

Silver could have done without the wind gusts that were measured at about 25 mph. "Boy, I'll tell ya, that's exciting," he said before rushing off to the announcer's stand to describe the next jump.

Among the next jumpers were Mike and Alice Ogden, who performed a tricky maneuver when they left the plane separately, then joined in midair and floated down together.

"Your adrenalin gets pumping a little higher in the wind," Alice said.

"It always gives you a rush, but it's especially nice to look down and see such a big crowd," Mike said. "The crowd here is always one of the best."

After the chutes were all gathered, it was time for the airplanes to do their stuff.

See FLY-IN page 2 ►

✓ CF 12P 5/30/88
FLY-IN
From page 1

The crowd lining the runway was cheated a bit, because the takeoffs had to be rerouted to another runway because of the wind, but once the planes were airborne the show was as good as ever.

It was a great day to pack up the brood for a family outing. Dan Wanless, wife Linda, and their children, Nicky, Alex and Ryan made the trek from San Jose. "This is the first time we've been to this air show," Dan said. "This is great."

"I like the part where one guy held on to the other guy in their parachutes," Ryan, 5, offered.

There were a lot of veterans and current military personnel who came to check the scene. Ron Schowe, a Naval reserve helicopter pilot, brought his family from Hollister.

His boys, Daniel and David, stood with their mouths gaping at a rare Stinson tri-motor while their mother, Janice, idly rocked the baby to and fro in a stroller. "Oh, yeah," Janice said, "I love these old planes, too."

Andrew West of Saratoga and Brian Rees of Washington state enjoyed the show with binoculars while strolling among the planes on display.

"We used to know a lot of the people who brought planes," Rees said. "But most of them have either packed up and quit or are dead now."

Away from the larger crowd were roped-off sections for the VIP and President's Club. For the first time this year, tickets for \$25 were sold that earned the bearer a folding chair seat and all they could eat and drink.

Scott Johnson of the chamber said it was well-received. "It's a good deal. We expected to sell 50 of them and we surpassed that," he said. "Yesterday it was a record."