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OLYMPIC AIR SHOW “TEST DRIVES” AIR SHOW BUDDY PROGRAM

It’s the kind of simple risk mitigation program that only the air show business could pull off. And it is the brainchild of ICAS member and air show veteran Bud Granley.

At every show, two pilots team up. They agree to deliberately, but informally critique each other. They agree to be polite, but constructively critical. The buddy is not a coach, a mentor or a critic; just an air show colleague who commits to bringing any safety issue -- no matter how small – to the attention of his buddy.

“My suggestion is to pick a buddy at the air show briefing,” says Granley. “The buddy doesn’t have to be an ACE, but just someone who will watch your performance. If something comes up that concerns the buddy, the door has already been opened for some communication.”

Organizers of the Olympic Air Show in Olympia, Washington on June 14 and 15 thought it was an idea worth trying. At the Friday briefing, all the performers were asked to team up in pairs.

“We watched each others’ performances and reported back to each other on anything we noticed that may not have been as safe as it could have been,” reports air show performer and ICAS member Brian Reynolds who flew at the show. “As ‘air show buddies,’ we could step aside and discuss the performance one-on-one in private. We were both able to give comments and ask questions privately of each others’ performances. We were careful to pick partners that also fit the schedule, so as not to invade each performer’s pre-performance private time.”

“This is the kind of thing we had in mind when we initiated our program to change the culture of air show safety,” said ICAS President John Cudahy. “We’re looking for ideas that will return safety to top-of-mind awareness among ICAS members without introducing new rules or restrictions into the air show environment. Kudos to Bud for his suggestion and to the Olympic Air Show for actually implementing the idea.”

To learn more about the “air show buddy” program and how you might put it to use at your show, contact Bud Granley at cobra1444@aol.com or Brian Reynolds at breynolds@nwhelicopters.com.