

All the talk is about the Yaks

Father-son act makes debut in Russian planes

By **VICTOR CALDERON**
The Salinas Californian

Among the thousands of people attending the California International Airshow will be fathers and sons together taking in the action in the skies.

One of those father and son pairs will not only watch the acts but take to the skies themselves, entertaining the crowds in what is called a “dueling Yak act.”

Bud and Ross Granley, originally from Canada and now based in Washington state, fly Russian aircraft known as Yaks. This will be the Granleys’ first appearance at the Airshow.

“I’ve heard nonstop about the outstanding management and tremendous community support in Salinas,” Ross said. “It’s been an Airshow I’ve wanted to be in for some time. I’m tickled pink to be invited.”

The performance starts with Bud taking off in a Yak-55 plane and Ross going up in a Yak-18. Their act is full of



PROVIDED PHOTO

Bud and Ross Granley, perform the ‘dueling Yak act.’ The father-and-son team will be making its first appearance in Salinas this year.

loops and spins with catchy names such as the “Loop Cuban,” “Synchronized Hammerheads” and the “Flop-

ping Taco,” an outside snapping 180-degree turn.

“Once you see (the act), you realize

ABOUT THE GRANLEYS

Father-and-son team Bud and Ross Granley, originally from Canada and now based in Washington state, fly Russian aircraft called Yaks.

it’s like nothing you’ve ever seen before,” said Bud.

Flying is in the Granleys’ blood. Bud’s father was a pilot, who inspired a love of flying in his son. Bud joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and later was a base solo demonstration pilot on the T-6 Harvard in Canada. He also flew for United Airlines before retiring in 1997. Bud was awarded the Art Scholl Showmanship Award by the International Council of Airshows in 2005.

Ross was born on a Canadian Air Force base where his father taught flying. Ross later joined the Air Force and flew for the Snowbirds precision flying unit. He, too, is a pilot with United.

Various uncles and siblings of the Granleys also fly professionally.

“It’s outstanding to do this with my father,” Ross said. “The best part of air shows is to see the joy in young people’s eyes.”

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Ken Pietsch brings laugh to the skies

Pilot’s comedy routine returning to Salinas

By **VICTOR CALDERON**
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Kent Pietsch is a comic, but he doesn’t perform his act in the comfort of a comedy club.

He takes his humor to the skies.

Pietsch, who pilots a 1942 Interstate Cadet plane, will perform at this year’s California International Air-

show Salinas.

In his aviation comedy act, the North Dakotan performs a “dead-stick” aerobatic routine in which he turns off the plane’s power at 6,000 feet. Pietsch also has added a runway to the top of his RV and lands on it at speeds of about 60 mph during his RV top-landing show.

“I have had some learning experiences in my 35 years doing this,” he said. “It is a risky business, but it’s done as safe as possible to provide the best entertainment possible.”

In another part of his routine, Pietsch

ABOUT KENT PIETSCH

Kent Pietsch (sounds like “peach”) is a pilot based in Minot, N.D. He’s known for his famous comedy routine, last performed at the Salinas Airshow in 2004.

lets an aileron — a pilot-controlled airfoil at the trailing edge of an airplane wing that controls rolling — fall off his craft in mid-air.

Pietsch Air Shows was founded in 1968 by Al Pietsch, Kent’s father, along with family and friends. Kent began

his flying career at 16. His brother Warren also joined the family air show business.

“I was lucky to be born into flying,” Kent Pietsch. “The best part about it is the accomplishment and the freedom you feel when you’re up in the air.”

He returns to the Salinas air show for the first time since 2004 and will perform in about 20 air shows in 2006 across the United States and Canada.

“Salinas is a huge show, and I’m just proud to be invited back,” Pietsch said.

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— Ken Pietsch,
comedy aerobatic pilot