

The **Bugle**

Saving cranes and the places where cranes dance

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Backseat DRIVER



Slide-and-Seek. Look at this photo carefully. Do you see both chicks? This little guy was napping up top when mom stood up from the nest. Wildlife photographer Ted Thousand caught this amazing image of a “tailgating” chick from his kayak just as the chick slid down to the nest. The photo was posted on our Facebook page as a *Caption This* commentary, where it received thousands of views and many witty captions. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see more wonderful crane photos.

Hooded Crane chick, Opal, on exhibit with her parents at the International Crane Foundation.



Opal

COLLABORATION YIELDS A PRECIOUS GEM

By Cyndie Gitter, Assistant Curator of Birds

This story begins several years ago with a Hooded Crane egg, produced at the International Crane Foundation, and its whirlwind journey across the country to the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. The egg was originally intended to hatch at the Denver Zoo. In fact, a Denver Zoo aviculturist was accompanying the egg when the flight plan was re-routed after a late-breaking update that the Woodland Park Zoo had a pair of Hooded Cranes incubating. That well-traveled egg produced in Baraboo, Wisconsin, ended up in the care of a different pair of Hooded Cranes across the country in Seattle! The new parents, Aliena and Quercus, had been unable to produce fertile eggs of their own. The Association of Zoos & Aquarium's Species Survival Program (SSP) initiated the egg transfer to strengthen the captive population of Hooded Cranes. SSPs are conservation programs where accredited zoos holding a particular species participate in breeding and transfer recommendations aimed at creating a sustainable captive population that is healthy and genetically diverse. A few days after that flight, a bright, downy chick appeared to the world.

You might think that was the end of the story...

Last year, a similar cross-country exchange occurred. But instead of an egg, this time it was Aliena and Quercus traveling from Seattle to their new home at the International Crane Foundation. The pair had proven themselves as excellent parents with their foster chick. The Hooded Crane SSP hoped that the transfer would finally enable the pair, with the assistance of ICF's artificial insemination program, to successfully produce their own offspring – especially because they are two of the most genetically valuable Hooded Cranes in captivity.

Moving to a new home is stressful and it takes time to settle in. Our staff patiently watched the pair acclimate to their new surroundings, with little expectation they would be comfortable enough to lay eggs only months after undergoing such a big event. But the pair adjusted to the change effortlessly. During their first breeding season, Aliena laid four eggs. Unfortunately, they were all infertile. The infertility was expected, but knowing Aliena was relaxed enough to produce eggs was good news.

This year, based on SSP recommendations, two pairs of our Hooded Cranes, including Aliena and Quercus, were a focus of our 2017 breeding plan. The pairs produced five fertile

eggs through artificial insemination. Aliena and Quercus produced three of them. We kept two of the eggs, one from each pairing. The remaining three eggs were transferred to the Denver Zoo. Unfortunately, all three of those eggs died during the hatching process, underscoring the difficulty of breeding this species in captivity.

On June 13, 2017, this story came full circle as a plump, fuzzy chick hatched. Aliena and Quercus were finally caring for their very own chick, Opal! To the joy of our visitors, Opal is being raised on exhibit by her dotting parents, where they are excellent ambassadors for their species. And as if that wasn't enough good news for one breeding season, the second fertile egg also survived. The chick, Geode, is being reared off-exhibit in Crane City.

The significance of this story is not just the rare chicks, but also the care and collaboration of many zoos working together. Were it not for the leadership of John Azua, Hooded Crane SSP coordinator at the Denver Zoo, managing the breeding and transfer recommendations, Woodland Park Zoo for their willingness to transfer Aliena and Quercus, and the International Crane Foundation having specialized captive breeding expertise, the valuable genetic material that is Opal might have been lost. With this hatch, we celebrate the future of a new individual to carry on the unique lineage of its parents and fulfill the purpose of the Species Survival Plan. When we see Opal, we don't just see a crane chick. We see the hard work, dedication, and years of collaboration between aviculturists across the country to produce a gem like Opal.



Hooded Crane chick, Geode, at Crane City. Photos by Ted Thousand

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The Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation. ICF was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauey, Ph.D. (1948 - 1987) and George Archibald, Ph.D.

Editor: Betsy Didrickson

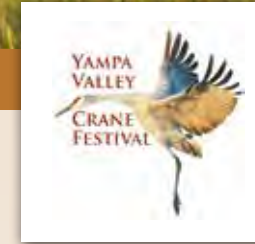
Bugle comments or questions? Please write Betsy at Bugle@savingcranes.org or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

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Photo by Abby Jensen



Four days of events celebrate Colorado's magnificent Sandhill Cranes!

YAMPA VALLEY CRANE FESTIVAL

Steamboat Springs and Hayden, Colorado | August 31 - September 3, 2017

Sandhill Cranes are an iconic species of the Yampa Valley and northwest Colorado. For years, a group of enthusiastic birders and nature lovers gathered each fall at a small ranch near Hayden, Colorado, to watch the cranes. The sights and sounds of these spectacular birds on their fall staging ground in the Yampa Valley led some to dream about an event where locals and visitors could gather to learn about this population of cranes and to celebrate their presence in northwest Colorado. In 2012, The Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition Inc. turned the dream into a reality with the inaugural Yampa Valley Crane Festival.

The festival celebrates Sandhill Cranes as they migrate through the Yampa Valley and features guided crane viewings, expert speakers, films, bird art, photo and journaling workshops, live raptors,

children's activities, and more. This year's keynote speaker is our very own Dr. George Archibald, Co-Founder of the International Crane Foundation, who will also be signing copies of his new book, *My Life with Cranes*.

Additional festival highlights include educational displays, guided bird walks in some of the Yampa Valley's most magnificent settings, birding by pontoon boat on Lake Catamount, a community picnic at The Nature Conservancy's historic Carpenter Ranch, a ranch tour of a "crane-friendly" agricultural operation, a guided nature hike on the Steamboat Ski Area and a sketch-a-bird session with live birds.

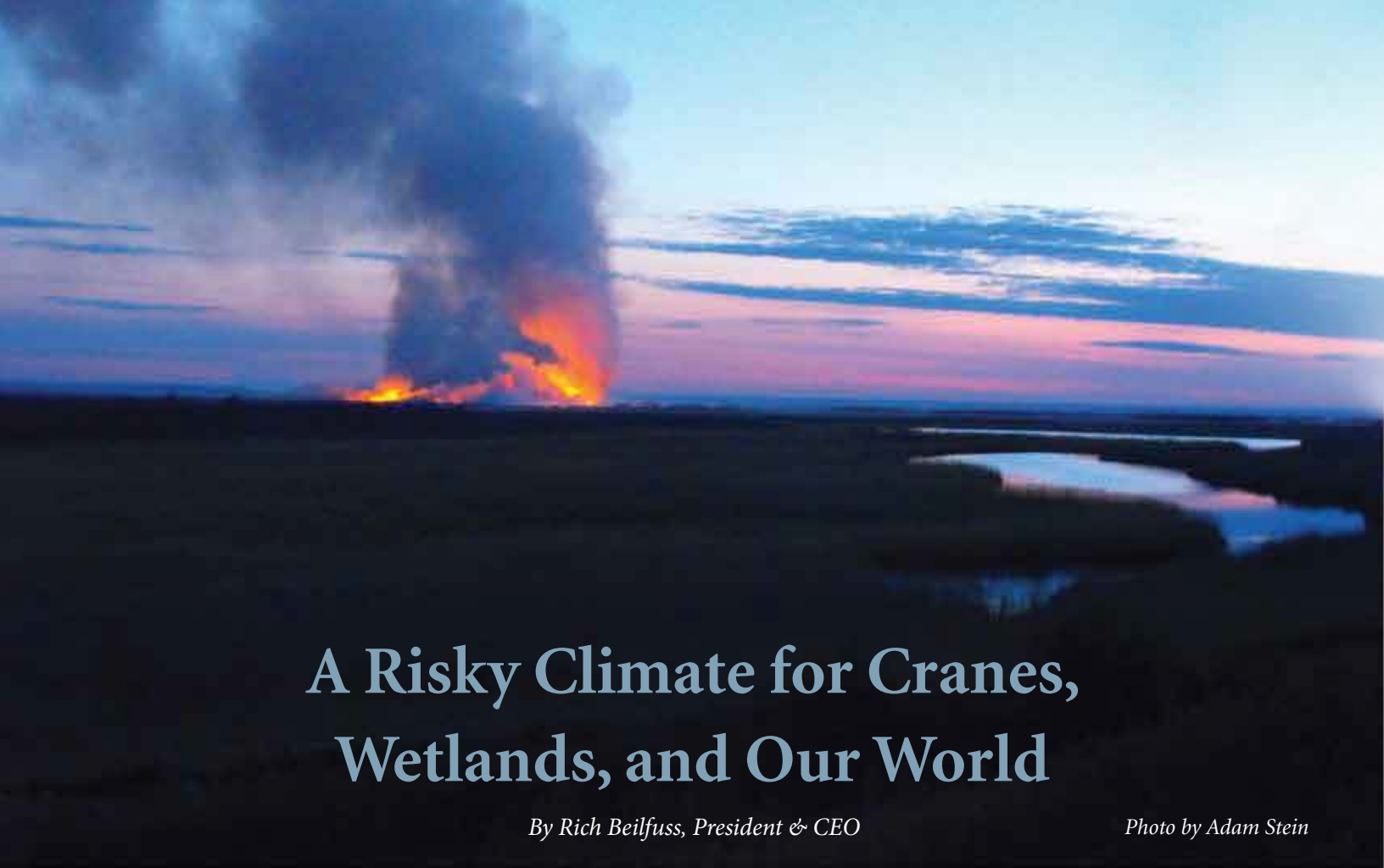
For more information on the festival and a schedule of events, please visit www.coloradocranes.org.

Puzzle This!

River Roost, a Gathering of Cranes

This puzzle was created exclusively for the International Crane Foundation just in time for family fun this summer! The puzzle features the annual migration of Sandhill Cranes at the Platte River in Nebraska. The 550-piece puzzle measures 18" x 24" when completed, and is printed with soy-based ink on recycled cardboard. To order visit craneshop.org, or call 608-356-9462 ext. 171. **\$15.98.**





A Risky Climate for Cranes, Wetlands, and Our World

By Rich Beilfuss, President & CEO

Photo by Adam Stein

I was working in Zambia when word came that the United States would pull out of the international Paris Agreement on climate change. Listening to this news with a group of Zambian colleagues, I was saddened. In Zambia, and nearly everywhere we work around the world, climate change is treated as a life or death matter. The prospect of intensely prolonged droughts and water shortages, chronic food insecurity, power outages, coastal land loss under rising seas, and extremely violent storms doesn't bode well for poor countries like Zambia that lack the resources to adapt to these daunting challenges. These countries have contributed little to global warming but face the brunt of its impacts.

When I returned to the comfort of a wet and green Wisconsin summer, it was easier for me to see why some are still debating or even ignoring the reality of climate change. For many people in the U.S., it just doesn't feel very risky to be wrong. Some believe it's too costly to combat climate change. Doing so would threaten our way of life, some fear. For others, warmer winters don't sound so bad. If oceans rise, we'll build more seawalls. And even if the doomsayers are right, the rest of the world seems awfully far away. Without a sense of risk or urgency, our wait-and-see complacency seems like a reasonable way forward. But is it really?

And what does all this have to do with cranes? Plenty.

Cranes are one of the most endangered families of birds in the world, and highly vulnerable to climate change – especially in the places where habitat loss, water resources development, and invasive species are already taking a toll on crane populations. Changing climate already affects cranes across large parts of Asia, Africa, Australia, and North America.

Along the coast of Texas, rising sea levels threaten to drown critical habitat for the Endangered Whooping Cranes that winter in salt marshes. The freshwater inflows that sustain blue crabs and other food sources for Whooping Cranes in these coastal marshes are also diminishing as droughts become more frequent and water demands rise across the region.

In the polar regions where the effects of climate change are most pronounced, the islands, peninsulas, and low-lying shores where Critically Endangered Siberian Cranes breed are being replaced by open water as ice sheets melt. It is unclear how the cranes will respond, but many nesting sites will be irreversibly lost.

The high altitude landscapes of central Asia, where Vulnerable Black-necked Cranes nest, have experienced some of the most dramatic warming due to climate change. In the coming decades, the retreat of melting glaciers may greatly reduce the extent of lakes and marshes where the cranes nest and feed. Will they find alternative habitat? Their future is uncertain.

Even the great floodplains of southern Africa, home to most of the world's Vulnerable Wattled Cranes and a wealth of elephants, hippos, buffalo, and other iconic wildlife, are increasingly vulnerable to drought, fire, and invasive species spurred by hotter, drier conditions, and more extreme weather patterns. Rainfall-runoff across large swaths of this region is projected to decrease by 40% or more, which would displace people and wildlife on an unprecedented scale.

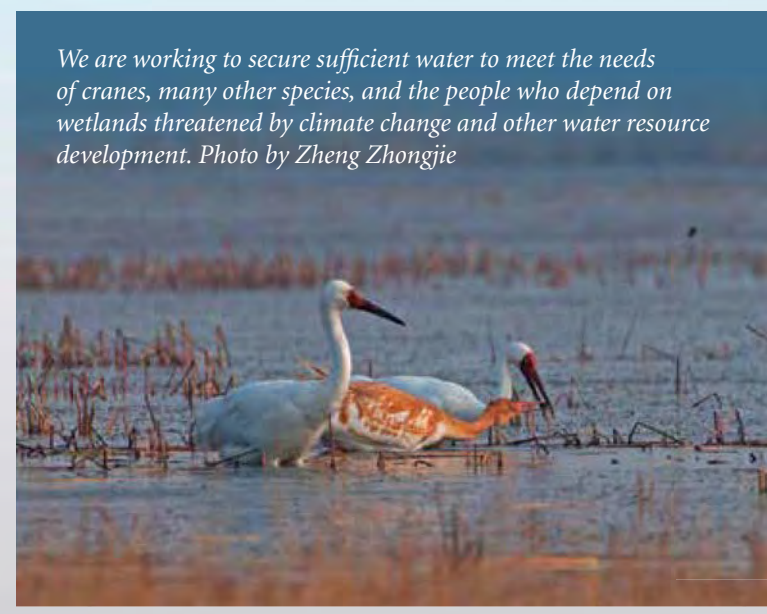
As a licensed, professional hydrologist, I understand the severity of these challenges. I have published research on the impact of climate change on hydropower production and wetland services in

the Zambezi River Basin of Africa and the Mekong River Basin of Southeast Asia. I've worked in the trenches of water management projects in more than a dozen countries, and served on international think tanks around these issues. The changes to our land and livelihoods are not decades or centuries away. They are happening now, and they are getting worse every year.

Is there reason for hope? Yes – there is much we are doing already, and much more we can do. Cranes are important flagships, modern-day “canaries in the coal mine,” for environmental changes that threaten us all. When we work to save cranes, we are working to find new pathways to sustain our water, land, and livelihoods in a rapidly changing world. In seeking to better manage water resources in the face of climate change, for example, we draw from important lessons gained from two decades of engagement – that the needs of people, and the needs of cranes and many other species of plants and animals, are often surprisingly compatible and linked strongly to healthy wetlands and watersheds.

In the Zambezi River Basin, we are challenging river developers to incorporate climate change into the design and operation of new dams, encouraging environmental flow releases from existing dams, and seeking energy alternatives more resilient to climate change and less harmful to river users and wildlife. In China, we worked with nature reserve authorities and scientists to negotiate water releases to maintain water and vegetation in four key wetlands of the Songnen Plain. At Momoge National Nature Reserve, we helped the reserve incorporate community needs into water management plans to reduce vulnerability to highly variable precipitation. This approach benefits the people who share the wetlands with cranes, reduces risk of resource conflicts, and results in more efficient water use.

Where shifts in climate are driving changes in key landscapes, we set a high priority on research and modeling to understand the impacts



We are working to secure sufficient water to meet the needs of cranes, many other species, and the people who depend on wetlands threatened by climate change and other water resource development. Photo by Zheng Zhongjie

on cranes and their habitats so we can devise adaptive conservation responses. Our Russian colleagues are studying the impact of climate change in the tundra environment where Siberian Cranes nest, including key indicators of change such as a reduction in the permafrost layer. We are modeling how sea level rise will impact current and future estuarine wintering grounds of Whooping Cranes in Texas, and we use this knowledge to assist in securing conservation easements and other set-asides that will accommodate the recovering crane population under future sea level conditions.

Of course, adapting to the harsh realities of our changing climate is only half the battle. We also need to combat the drivers of climate change directly. And therein lies my greatest source of hope,

because climate change solutions enhance, not threaten, our way of life. The mayors of our major cities realize that climate change is a public health issue. Efforts to make cities better, cleaner, healthier, and more economically productive places also reduce carbon emissions. Hundreds of companies, through partnerships like “We Mean Business” now recognize that tackling climate change is one of our biggest economic opportunities, worth trillions of dollars. Businesses are setting ambitious targets to lower emissions and scale-up low carbon investment, while creating new products and services, generating employment, and reducing energy

consumption. When enough of these success stories are shared and understood, perhaps our elected leaders will follow.

At the International Crane Foundation, we understand the profound risks of climate change. We work with local communities, national governments, and international treaties to find meaningful solutions to climate change, and a host of conservation challenges facing our land, water, and livelihoods.

We believe that a future with cranes means a future with a healthier and more livable planet for all.



Photo by Mike Sloat

You're Invited!

Member Appreciation Day

Saturday, September 23, 2017

International Crane Foundation Headquarters in Baraboo, WI

Mark your calendars for our annual Member Appreciation Day. Sign up when you arrive for behind-the-scenes tours of Crane City, which are first-come, first-served the day of the event (gates open at 9:00 a.m.). Don't miss this rare opportunity to see our captive breeding facility up close. Other special activities include a guided prairie walk, radio-tracking demonstrations, photo opportunities with Hope, our Whooping Crane mascot, and special talks by our expert staff.

Don't forget your membership card! Not a member? Not a problem. Join the flock today by visiting www.savingcranes.org/membership or call 608-356-9462 ext. 807, or email: membership@savingcranes.org. Memberships may be purchased or renewed at the Visitor Center the day of the event. Visit our website as Member Appreciation Day approaches for a detailed timeline of events.



And the Winners Are...

Thanks to everyone who participated in our *Poetry in the Prairie* competition, celebrating cranes and the places where cranes dance. We received more than 140 entries from around the world. The poems displayed in our public areas have greatly enhanced the visitor experience!

POET'S CHOICE:

- Grades 3-6 **Liza Kanne**
A Wetland Through Seasons
- Grades 7-9 **Coralee Bodeker**
How can it be morning without their calls?
- Grades 10-12 **Dria Poulson**
My Prairie
- Adult **Megan Schliesman**
Spotted (Wetlands Walking)

HAIKU:

- Grades 7-9 **Brynna Schindel**
Untitled
- Adult **Sharon Fisher**
A Haiku for the Cranes

Many thanks to our wonderful judges Karla Huston, Wisconsin Poet Laureate 2017-18, Julie Zickafoose, artist and writer, and Jim Blackburn, environmental lawyer and poet. You can view the poems on our website at www.savingcranes.org/poetry or visit the International Crane Foundation this season to enjoy the poems in person.

This project was funded by a grant from Sauk County UW-Extension, Arts & Culture Committee and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

Love Cranes? I Do!

When saying their wedding vows this past spring, Larry Kueter and Rebecca Richardson were encircled in the love of family, friends and a thousand paper cranes. Larry, a member of the International Crane Foundation since 2003, and his bride Rebecca made cranes their wedding theme. While courting,



the pair discovered they both had a fascination with cranes, but in different ways. Larry was introduced to cranes through his parent's lifelong interest in conservation and cranes. Rebecca's interest in cranes stems from her love of Japanese art, in which cranes often are prominent.

Shortly after Larry proposed last fall, the couple traveled to the International Crane Foundation where Rebecca

saw an embroidered Japanese wedding kimono featuring Red-crowned Cranes. In Asia, cranes are symbols of marital fidelity and long life. "That's how we landed on the idea of the cranes," explained Rebecca. "It started with the kimono." For her walk down the aisle, Rebecca wore an antique embroidered kimono, with cranes throughout. Little did she know that her soon-to-be sister-in-law and family had been folding origami cranes for months, to create a 1,000-crane mobile for the wedding.

The happy ending to this story is that Larry and Rebecca wanted to find a special way to share their love with the International Crane Foundation. In lieu of gifts, the newlyweds asked guests to make donations to the foundation. To date, close to \$5,000 has been received in honor of Larry and Rebecca's wedding. **The International Crane Foundation thanks its members who find creative and spiritual ways to support our mission.**

We can help you celebrate your milestones with a customized approach to inviting support for the International Crane Foundation from your friends and family. Please contact Jen Bevars at 608-356-9462 ext. 103 for more information.



Every day, cranes worldwide face a variety of threats including degradation and loss of habitat, wildlife trafficking, illegal shootings, poisoning, power line collisions, and lack of fresh water. In fact, 11 of the 15 crane species face extinction.

The thought of future generations not having the chance to know the grace of these ancient birds is too upsetting to consider, which is why we want you to know that we won't let that happen.

Not on our watch. Not with your help.

We envision a day when endangered cranes will not just survive – but thrive – without our help. Until that day, we can't afford to let down our guard in our efforts to protect cranes from the many threats they face. Cranes also face new threats from the potential weakening of policies like the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, land protection rollbacks, and even lack of enforcement of the laws that remain on the books.

As the only organization in the world focused on saving all species of cranes, we are prepared to use every means possible to get the job done. It's a race against the clock, and we can't do it without you.

The time is now! Please use the envelope in this issue to donate today, knowing that your gift always makes a difference.

Every day I hear inspirational stories of crane conservation from our staff around the world. None of these successes would be possible without you. You are part of every small step and each large stride we make in the name of cranes and the places they call home.

With deepest thanks,

Rich Bielfuss
President and CEO





International Crane Foundation

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A Special Evening With Special People!



Our recent *Evening with the Cranes* event was a magical night with close to 600 visitors on the grounds enjoying the sounds of nature, intermingled with live music and gourmet food from top-notch area restaurants. Along with culinary delights, guests enjoyed a variety of wine, craft beer, and natural sodas. Of course, the brightest stars of the night were the cranes, whose stories were told by our national and international staff representing our work in China, India, South Africa, the United States, and Vietnam. We extend a big thank you to our 49 event sponsors, whose support helped us showcase our exhibits, nature trails, and lovely grounds, which serve as the gateway to crane conservation.



If you missed this year's event, no worries! **Mark your calendars now for Saturday, June 16, 2018, when we will host this event again.**

Photos by Carrie Quam, Jason Marten, Ted Thousand, and Deb Johnson