

Steve Uelner

## Country Travel DISCOVERIES

13500 Watertown Plank Road, Suite 107, Elm Grove, WI 53122

5th Anniversary Message  
from the President  
Updates, Specials and Sneak Previews  
from CTD





*Good Morning!*

I like to tell my Director of Marketing, Stewart Ikeda, that this anniversary letter is one of my favorites to write all year long. It's my chance to simply "talk" to you, our family of customers. I'm excited to announce that February 1 marked our fifth ("wood") anniversary of being in business as Country Travel DISCOVERIES, so I'm pleased to share my annual "State of the Company" report, some news...and a few secrets.

For our entire staff, it's truly been an honor to serve you on our discovery trips in the United States, Canada and elsewhere. It's thanks to you that we've continued to grow each of the five years since leaving behind our roots as World Wide Country Tours in 2012. It's also thanks to you that 2016 was our best year yet...

### *2016 by the Numbers*

From the Midwest and New England to Panama to the Rhine River and Alps, we had a fantastic time hosting our largest number of travelers yet. Travelers from 13 to 95 years old, hailing from 50 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, the UK and Sweden, joined us. Here's a few notes you may find interesting:

- We took more CTD travelers to Iowa than any other destination.
- Although industry colleagues warned us "you'll never sell North Dakota," we sold out *all three* departures of our new tour to the Peace Garden State.
- For the second consecutive year, we chartered—and again sold out—a European river cruise ship exclusively for CTD travelers.
  - Traveler "B.F." joined us on *four* trips across the Great Lakes, Middle States and the South, while hundreds of others took advantage of our Travel More, Save More Program to take multiple trips—with savings to the tune of \$55,000.00!
  - One avid explorer racked up her 27th, 28th and 29th trips with us in 2016.
  - We led over a dozen organized private groups—from senior center and bank clubs to reunions—to destinations including Alaska, NYC and Scotland.



### *Forces of Nature*

Mother Nature was fickle with us in 2016. In October, we determined it was safest to cancel (and fully refund) a sold-out Coastal Carolina & Georgia Shores trip due

*Read more* →

to Hurricane Matthew just three days ahead of departure. And, a landslide forced us to creatively reschedule one the scenic rail routes on West Virginia's Mountain Rails.

As I wrote last year, over 30 years in the travel business, our staff has dealt with many unexpected events—natural, economic, governmental—and world events designed to affect our country and citizens. We make our travelers' safety our priority. I'm proud to say that again in 2016, we did not have one incident amongst our thousands of travelers that required any type of safety personnel other than a couple of minor medical situations.

Fortunately, Mother Nature was extremely generous to us in other ways. We saw a calf born on a dairy farm, grizzlies protecting their ground in Alaska, whales breaching in the Pacific, bald eagles majestically gliding over the Mississippi, elks roaming in Colorado, manatees swimming in the Atlantic, and other wonders.

### *Meet Chris and Jodi*

Our growth and activity really kept our staff busy, perhaps none more so than our crack Reservations team, whose steady hands and smiles keep up with it all. If you've called in to CTD, you've likely talked to either **Chris Gaines** or **Jodi Fischer**.

A native of Germantown, WI, **Chris** (left) and her husband have seven children, as well as six grandchildren whom she enjoys hosting almost every weekend. You won't be surprised to know that traveling to new places is a major hobby and her favorite place to travel is "everywhere"! Memorable CTD tour moments for Chris have been Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, the giant redwoods of Muir Woods, and the breathtaking views of fall foliage colors during our Autumn in New England tour—especially New Hampshire's Flume Gorge, where a wooden pathway winds past waterfalls and rock formations.



**Jodi** (right) has lived all her life in the Milwaukee area, where she likes attending the many ethnic festivals held along Lake Michigan—especially Irish Fest and Festa Italiana (she fell in love with the art, food, and history of Italy, her favorite travel destination). She also enjoys knitting and planning out personal road trips to take with her husband, Dean. Last year, they had an amazing time completing the Bourbon Trail and staying in quaint B&Bs across Kentucky. Some scenic parts were reminiscent of her favorite CTD tour, Blue Ridge Country & Biltmore Estate.

### *New Expert Partners*

For me, another highlight of 2016 was being invited to give a presentation to numerous prominent publishers at the International Regional Magazine Association Conference. As a result, we have been







privileged to team up on new tours with several magazines whose editors are true experts in their regions—from NY’s Adirondacks to Nebraska and Missouri. These partners provide invaluable local insight to planning our characteristic off-the-beaten-path stops.

This year, for example, *Missouri Life* introduced us to Warm Springs Ranch (pictured previous page), 300 acres of lush, rolling hills—and the breeding farm for the famous Budweiser Clydesdales. We’ll go behind the scenes to visit a mare/stallion and foaling barn, veterinary lab, grazing pastures and housing to learn what it takes to breed, raise and train these massive and majestic creatures. You’ll be amazed at what they eat and drink daily, the size of their horseshoes, and what goes into the selection of a future Budweiser Clydesdale.

### *A Sneak Peek...*

Warm Springs Ranch is just one of many unforgettable stops featured in the unique trips crafted with magazine partners including *Missouri Life*, *Nebraska Life*, *Adirondack Life*, *Our Iowa* and *Our Wisconsin*...a trend that will continue in 2017 and beyond.



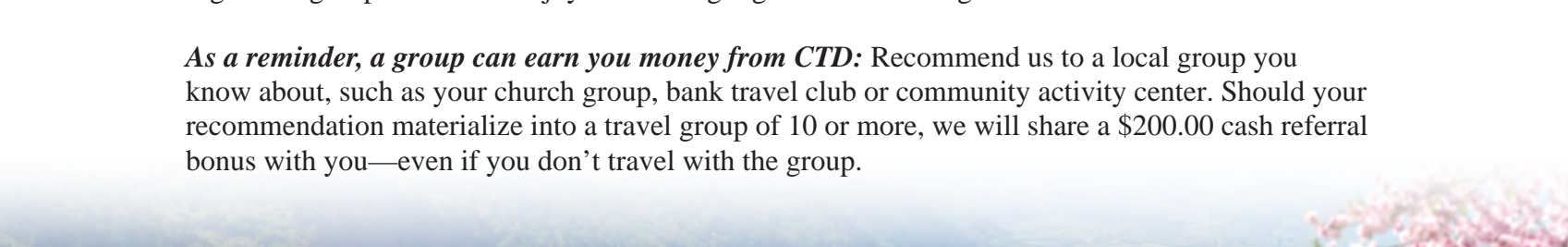
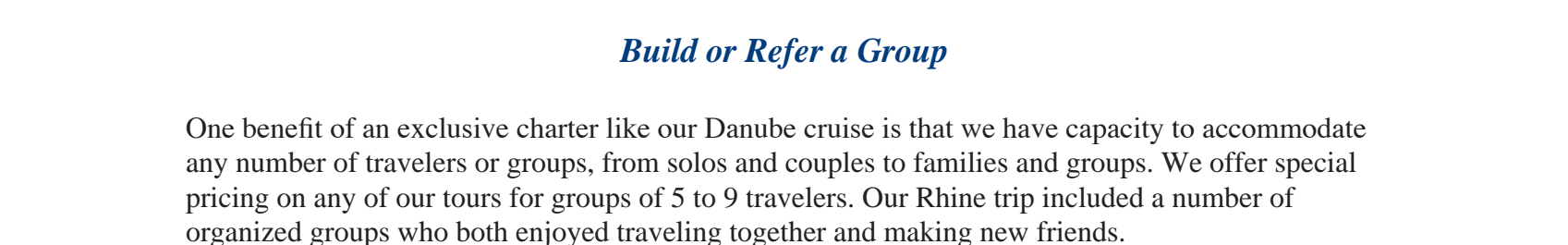
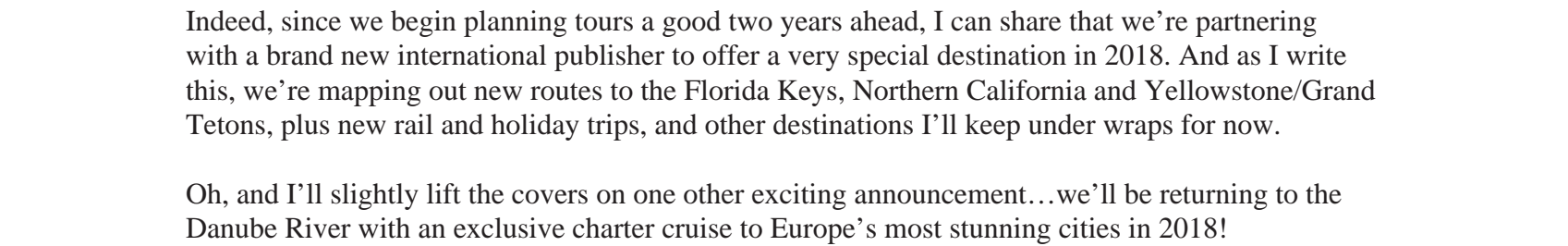
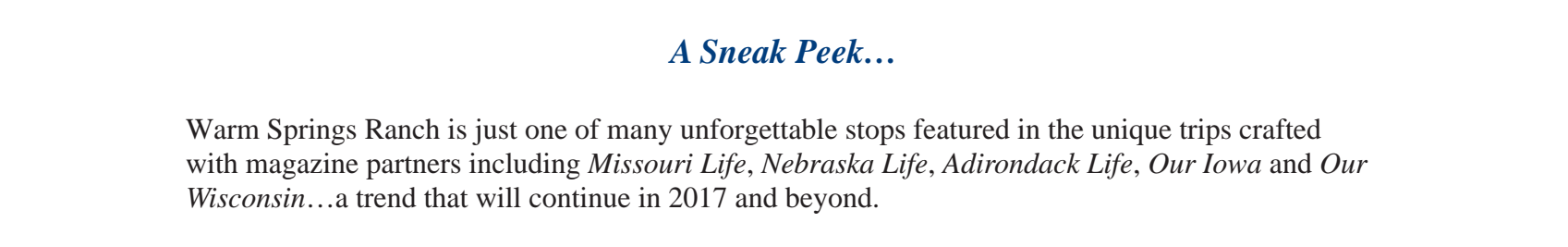
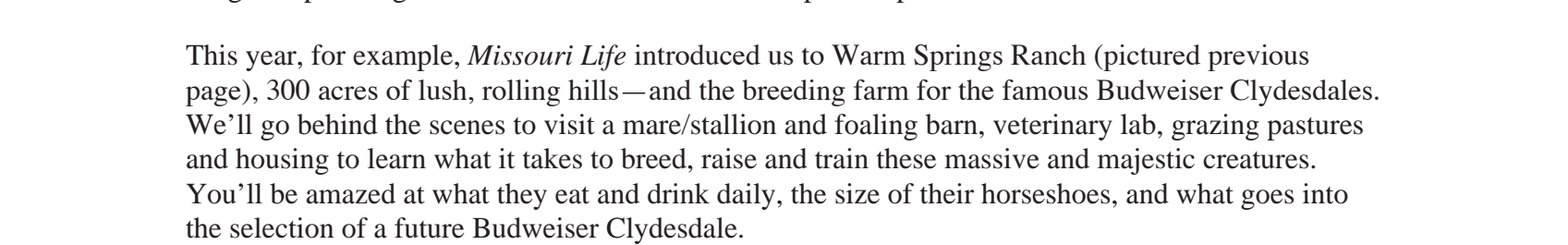

Indeed, since we begin planning tours a good two years ahead, I can share that we’re partnering with a brand new international publisher to offer a very special destination in 2018. And as I write this, we’re mapping out new routes to the Florida Keys, Northern California and Yellowstone/Grand Tetons, plus new rail and holiday trips, and other destinations I’ll keep under wraps for now.

Oh, and I’ll slightly lift the covers on one other exciting announcement...we’ll be returning to the Danube River with an exclusive charter cruise to Europe’s most stunning cities in 2018!

### *Build or Refer a Group*

One benefit of an exclusive charter like our Danube cruise is that we have capacity to accommodate any number of travelers or groups, from solos and couples to families and groups. We offer special pricing on any of our tours for groups of 5 to 9 travelers. Our Rhine trip included a number of organized groups who both enjoyed traveling together and making new friends.

***As a reminder, a group can earn you money from CTD:*** Recommend us to a local group you know about, such as your church group, bank travel club or community activity center. Should your recommendation materialize into a travel group of 10 or more, we will share a \$200.00 cash referral bonus with you—even if you don’t travel with the group.



Magical Danube & Prague 2018



### *Best for Last...*

To celebrate, we're pleased to offer you a limited-time anniversary discount. Just refer to code **LET17B** between now and March 15 while booking a 2017 discovery tour to save **\$250.00** per couple (\$125.00 per person) on your first tour, **\$300.00** per couple (\$150.00 pp) on a second, and **\$400.00** per couple (\$200.00 pp) on a third.

And, remember, this *can* be combined with our **\$100.00 Refer-a-Friend Thanks Bonus** or specials like our **Alaska & the Yukon \$200.00 per person early booking savings** if booked right away! Call or visit us online for more details.

So, that's our "wood anniversary" gift to you. We hope you'll be able to find something of interest in our recently mailed expanded catalog edition, and make good use of this special treat just for preferred travelers.

Thanks for again letting me talk to you as we head full-steam into year six...when we will be honored to show you an amazing world of travel!

Sincerely,

Steve Uelner, President



**PS:** If you have not received our new expanded-edition catalog, or would like us to send a copy to a friend on your behalf, please contact our Reservations Team at 855-744-8747 (toll free, U.S./Canada), 262-923-8120, or [Info@CountryTravelDiscoveries.com](mailto:Info@CountryTravelDiscoveries.com), or see our easy-to-use digital catalog online at [CountryTravelDiscoveries.com](http://CountryTravelDiscoveries.com).

