

RANGE magazine Receives Major Awards

The Nevada Press Association (NPA) recognized journalistic excellence on October 2 during its annual convention in Reno and conveyed 18 major awards upon RANGE: seven first places, four seconds, and seven thirds. The first-place awards include the coveted Freedom of the Press Award, which makes the third consecutive time judges have recognized RANGE. The Wyoming Press Association judged the competition. There were 10 magazines in the 2015 competition, submitting more than 200 entries.

NPA executive director Barry Smith says of RANGE: “These awards confirm what readers of RANGE magazine already know—that it is serious about journalism and its commitment to covering tough issues. Congratulations on a job well done.”

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS is a major editorial recognition awarded for upholding the principals of the First Amendment and protecting the public’s right to know. RANGE received its third consecutive Freedom of the Press award based on its coverage of the Cliven Bundy standoff, which took place in the desert northeast of Las Vegas. Although the standoff drew a great deal of media attention, including national, RANGE’s four-part special report, “Patterns of Harassment,” went further than just reporting the “what,” the “when,” and the “how.” RANGE focused on the big picture, the “why.”

The contest judge commented: “I can appreciate a passionate and detailed account of the other side of the story, even when it is colored strongly by the writer’s point of view. It certainly adds to the diversity of the coverage, which is what Freedom of the Press is about.”

It was a story that begged to be told so the public would understand—and question—why so much pressure was being put on one old rancher to remove his cattle in order to save a tortoise that isn’t even endangered. “I knew RANGE could suffer criticism by running this special report,” says Hadley. “But RANGE is the only publication that would or could give it enough space to tell the whole Bundy story.”

Supporting reports and information included in RANGE’s award involve the “math” used to figure the million dollars Bundy allegedly “owes” the government, the part the desert tortoise played in the standoff, and the unflattering supporting role in the drama played by former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. One of Reid’s staffers, Neil Kornze, worked for the senator as a policy advisor from 2003 to 2011, and now heads the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Kornze was in charge of the armed raid on the Bundy ranch. And waiting in the wings to make a grand entrance is the planned “Gold Butte Conservation Area”—the fenced-off Bundy ranch without its cattle.

Significantly, the connecting report, “More Federal Takings,” reads like a who’s who of ranchers dealing with overreaching bureaucracies. People like the Wayne Hage family, who have been battling and waiting for justice for 35 years, despite winning in court. (Trial coverage of Hage v. U.S. earned RANGE its first Freedom of the Press Award; the second involved how the magazine dealt with climate change and Agenda 21.) Further examples involve the Hammond family of Oregon, a father and son who pled guilty to setting a backfire and accidentally burning approximately \$175 worth of government-owned trees and served hard time in federal prison. Since then, the BLM (which seems to want the Hammond Ranch and range rights) forced resentencing and on October 7 an Oregon judge gave Dwight (now 73) and Steve five full years each for being “terrorists.” States reporting similar abuses include California, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oregon, Nevada, Montana and Arizona.

RANGE also received numerous editorial awards.

Six More First Places:

Best Feature, “Desert Legacy” by Carolyn Dufurrena of Winnemucca, Nev. Judges commented: “Best of the bunch. It combined a fascinating human-interest tale with a serious issue.”

Best Profile/Interview, “Lost Paradise of Peck Canyon” by Leo W. Banks of Scottsdale, Ariz. The judge commented: “Maybe it’s the subject, but this is a fantastic profile. The story reads smoothly. I loved the way the details of this man’s life wove in and out of what he’s doing now. Excellent!”

Best Portrait, “Arizona Cowpunchers/Sheila Carlson” by photographer Scott Baxter of Scottsdale, Ariz.

Best Feature Photo, by Cynthia Baldauf of Wisdom, Mont. Judges commented: “A great moment captured!”

Best Critical Writing, Dave Skinner of Kalispell, Mont. His contribution in the competition year is “The Front Line,” and a sidebar, “Anything Else?” in the Fall 2014 issue. “Identify Your Enemies,” with sidebars “The Partnership,” “Big Money, Small World” and “Willing Sellouts,” appeared in the Winter 2014/2015 issue. In the Spring 2015 issue, Skinner focused on “The Green Insiders,” with sidebars “The SWyss Connection,” “Beyond First Class” and “Maximum Impact.” In all, Skinner’s well-documented investigation reveals that facts and figures don’t lie, but people and their organizations do. The criteria for the award dealt with clarity of argument, quality of writing, and impact of the story.

Best Multi-Color Ad, “The Life & Art of J.N. Swanson.”

Second Places:

Best Multiple Photo Essay, “Arizona Cowpunchers,” photographer Scott Baxter of Scottsdale, Ariz. Judges commented: “Captures a raw and honest feeling of a rugged life.”

Best Investigative Story or Series, for coverage of climate change, which included the following: “**Hot Air**,” Fall 2014 issue, author Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.; “**Polar Bears Miss the Message on Global Warming**,” and sidebar, “**Good News About Polar Bear Numbers**,” Fall 2014 issue, author Susan Crockford, Ph.D.; “**Grading Eco-Terrorists**,” Winter 2014/2015 issue, author Hank Vogler; “**Victories**,” Winter 2014/2015 issue, author Tom DeWeese; “**Drama from the Viscount of Brenchley**,” Winter 2014/2015 issue, author Vin Suprynowicz; and “**The Inmates are in Charge**,” Spring 2015 issue, author Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D., continues his investigation of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report #5. Coffman’s research indicates the earth’s temperature has not increased from September 1996 to September 2014, which all but disproves the theory of man-caused global warming. Recent weather events around the world seem to indicate that earth’s temperatures are trending down in a new cycle of global cooling, maybe heading into a new Little Ice Age. Judges commented: “Although clearly slanted information, the depth was good.”

Best Profile/Interview, “The Hard Way” by Mary Branscomb of Lamoille, Nev. Profiles Steve and Glenda Medlin whose Nevada ranch has been described as “a desolate area that originally had only one watering hole, no electricity, no telephone, no house, and no cattle.” It is located in the “neighborhood” of the super-secret military base, Area 51. (RANGE was also awarded a first place in this category.)

Best Local Column, writer Hank Vogler. In the competition year, Vogler’s four columns include: “**Day Before Yesterday**,” Summer 2014 issue, in which he reflects on the childhood joys of haying season spent on his grandfather’s ranch in southeast Oregon. “**The Letter**,” Fall 2014 issue, finds Vogler fantasizing about receiving a letter from the Bureau of Land Management notifying him that “You are grossly under-grazing your allotments.” Vogler turns to “**Grading Eco-Terrorists**” in the Winter 2014/2015 issue and traces the growth of the environmental movement since 1967. His writing serves as a reminder: “Now with climate

change as the buzzword and carbon footprints in vogue, what will I do? Carbon dioxide is what is exhaled by animals and used by plants that in turn emit oxygen. I have trouble seeing what is wrong with that relationship.” In “**Geezers**” in the Spring 2015 issue, Vogler delivers his own version of the State of the Union. “We don’t need a fence on our border. If you want to build a fence, build it around Washington, D.C. Let no one in or out unless they can prove that our nation is better off for their actions. If you listen real close to the doublespeak of the politicians, the Republicans are merely planning to be Democrat Lite! Out here on the high, wide and lonesome, it appears that Democrats and Republicans fight all day long and sleep together at night. They are like two drunks in a bar on the Titanic, arguing who is responsible for creating the biggest share of the bar bill.” The judge commented: “I like the humor—can make more points with a laugh! Also, very full of history, details—engaging. Nice variety.”

Third Places:

Best Page Designer, John Bardwell, RANGE art director, for the five nominated layouts: “**Arizona Cowpunchers**,” Summer 2014, lead photo spread by Scott Baxter; “**Polar Bears Miss the Message on Global Warming**” with lead photo by Joel Sartore of a bear feeding on the jaws of a bowhead whale harvested by natives along the coast of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; “**Men of Wisdom**” lead spread by British photographer Graham Hughes in the Spring 2015 issue of RANGE. Hughes took a leave from his usual photo assignments in the fashion, commercial, sports—Olympics, racing, tennis—and the latest advertising shoots for Nike, Adidas, Sport Relief, Coca-Cola, to name a few. He sought out Wisdom, Mont., because the name appealed to him and photographing cowboys took him “out of his comfort zone”; “**Out on the Range: ZX Buckaroos**” lead spread by award-winning photographer Larry Turner of Malin, Ore. In the Spring 2015 issue, Turner’s image takes the reader on a visit to the fabled ZX Ranch where buckaroos (they are not referred to as cowboys due to their Spanish influence) still use time-honored traditions, except the working crew includes two married couples. “**Empty Quarter**” by award-winning photographer/rancher Linda Dufurrena. Each issue, RANGE features a photo spread spotlighting open spaces in the West. Judges commented: “With the minimalistic design, the designer has effectively embraced the ‘no gimmicks or tricks’ philosophy of the publication.”

Best Large Space Ad, John Bardwell, RANGE art director, for creating a series of four ads for the Nevada Rangeland Resources Commission, based in Elko, Nev. The full-page ads feature different images promoting the need to keep Nevada rangelands productive and healthy. No models were used in the production of the ads; the people pictured are real individuals engaging in everyday activities. Each of these ads speaks directly to the consumer and has a strong message supporting RANGE’s editorial focus: presenting commonsense solutions that help preserve and protect the land and the people who feed the nation. The judge commented: “Excellent image choices bring this series together. I feel a creative background could really give this the extra oomph.”

Best Overall Design, John Bardwell, RANGE art director, for overall design. RANGE’s hard-hitting editorial is balanced by photo essays by some of the nation’s best photographers, plus profiles of interesting and dedicated people who devote their lives to feeding America—people impacted by policies and seemingly limitless new federal regulations. RANGE’s technical, informational and explanatory features and special reports focus on easily understood context and illustrations. In the current 2014 journalism competition, RANGE addressed climate change, Agenda 21, Green lobby groups and their money sources, the expanding power of the Environmental Protection Agency and its threat to private property rights with a spotlight on John Beale and his reign of fraud and deceit at the EPA (and his subsequent prison time), the

background story of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, polar bears, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the truth about the Humane Society of the United States (not to be confused with local pet shelters). For the most part, RANGE editorial is meant to be informative, not “pretty” in the classic sense. Judges commented: “This magazine has the most unique covers in the group. The inside is not awe-inspiring graphically. The great content inside this magazine needs a more innovative presentation.”

Best In-House Promotion, RANGE’s four-page house ad promoting sales of Collector Sets. Each set contains 90 issues, spanning 25 years. Covers are laid out to remind buyers that most of what matters to the West over the past quarter-century—Spring 1991 to Winter 2015—has been covered by RANGE. The Collector Sets are a living history of the land, beautiful photography, wildlife, and the people and the issues they face. Encased in black binders, the set sells for \$500 and is valued at \$1,655. RANGE has found that a market exists for the Collector Sets and single issues in classrooms of the West, where teachers have confidence enough in the historical significance of the publication that they use it as a teaching tool. The magazine’s 25th anniversary campaign is a positive statement about what RANGE has accomplished and introduces new readers to editorial that is basically timeless. Also, the campaign is proof that archives can be marketed effectively. The RANGE ad states, “If it happened, if it matters, it’s here.” Judges commented: “An idea that enhanced interest in past publications.”

Best Nonstaff Story, “A Sacred Thing” by writer Suzanne Finney of Cora, Wyo. Profile of Alice Platt, who ranches near the Colorado-Wyoming border. Platt raised two children while working as a heavy equipment operator at a coal mine. She also spent time in the oil fields, training horses, fencing land, running ranches, and cowboying in Montana, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Nebraska. She battles nature and neighbors to keep water flowing to her IK Ranch. “I’m fighting the worst fight of my life to bring the water to the land,” she says, referring to the resource as a “sacred thing.” The judge commented: “Very well written, draws the readers’ interest from start to finish.”

Best Local Column, “Upfront,” C.J. Hadley, editorials: “**The Wrangler,**” Summer 2014 issue of RANGE. CJ expresses her thanks to the poets and painters who helped RANGE win the coveted Wrangler from the National Cowboy Museum & Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City. The Wrangler honored the book, “Brushstrokes & Balladeers: Painters and poets of the American West,” as the Outstanding Poetry Book of 2013. In addition to the Wrangler, the hardcover book earned three more awards, including two Will Rogers Gold Medallions, and a third place in Nevada Press Association’s Special Projects category. “**Bravado From Bunkerville,**” Fall 2014 issue. CJ looks at RANGE’s coverage of the Cliven Bundy standoff against the Bureau of Land Management. She acknowledges Bundy is not exactly a poster child for public relations or the politically correct, but he is a man with a large family and his livelihood is under assault. Should he give up more than a century of history and good management and go away, allegedly for a desert tortoise—like 50 other ranchers in Clark County did—or does he fight for his right to stay on land his family has worked since the 1870s? CJ guides the reader into RANGE’s four-part, 16-page special report that offers a broad view of the confrontation. It addresses the history, facts, and pressures felt by Bundy and other ranchers facing similar threats. In other words, coverage is heavy on WHY it happened, not just WHAT. She notes: “Cliven Bundy put his foot in his mouth and lost a lot of support when he made comments that were considered by the intelligentsia to be racist. He definitely wandered too far off the ranch reservation but was making a point that the way the country works is much like slavery, with huge reliance on the federal government. No self-respect. No independence. No liberty. Bundy had a point but stated it badly.”

“Vaja Con Dios, Viejo,” Winter 2014/2015 issue. CJ memorializes artist J.N. “Jack” Swanson, her friend, supporter of cowboys and RANGE, and an unforgettable painter. His works have been exhibited in major museums, the California governor’s mansion, and are in numerous private and corporate collections throughout the world. Ronald Reagan loved Jack’s work and hung one of his paintings in the White House while he was president. Swanson was never a “cowboy artist,” but a real cowboy who happened to be a talented artist. In 1991, Swanson was wandering the Great Basin with horse and trailer and stopped at Wayne Hage’s Pine Creek Ranch. Hage welcomed him even though he didn’t know who he was. They talked. They drank whiskey. They rode up Table Mountain where the feds had confiscated more than 100 of Hage’s cattle at gunpoint. Soon after, Swanson painted “Stewards of the Range,” auctioned off the original, and offered high-quality prints to aid financially with the precedent-setting, property rights case, Hage v. United States. Swanson also donated (and signed) four of his favorite paintings to be offered as limited edition prints to benefit the Range Conservation Foundation. One of his paintings, “Tough to Saddle,” is featured on the cover of the Winter 2015 issue. When Swanson died on Sept. 17, 2014, the world lost a brilliant and soulful artist, and RANGE lost an amazing friend. **“Attitude on Tilt,”** Spring 2015 issue: “I am called many names,” CJ writes. “Most vivid are ‘the shill of industrial polluters,’ ‘a right-wing Nazi,’ ‘a cousin-marrying Shepler-shopping troglodyte’ and ‘a Democrat from New York City.’” When CJ worked at Car & Driver magazine in the Big Apple, she says she contributed to do-gooder causes such as The Nature Conservancy, because she always wanted to right wrongs even though she knew little about what was really wrong. “The West has changed me. My attitude is on tilt.” When she arrived in Reno, Nev., she had been traveling the country, her camera recording anything with an attitude. She lived in a van named Son of Moon Trash. She had a 175cc Kawasaki dirt bike inside the van, a cot, and an AC/DC refrigerator to keep her film cool. When a subscriber recently took exception to RANGE’s coverage of rancher Cliven Bundy and his standoff with the Bureau of Land Management, CJ gave her a call wanting to know “what got her knickers in a twist.” The reader angrily demanded her money back. Asked why she had renewed her subscription for 12 more issues weeks after the Bundy piece had been in her hands, she said, “I saved \$7.95.” Her refund check was promptly mailed! Judges commented: “An editor should have strong views. She is very forthright and you can tell her feelings are very strong. Nice endings.”

Best Special Project, “The M Bar,” a 120-page hardcover book. “The M Bar” (and other firsthand stories of the old West) is RANGE’s 11th hardcover book and is a sequel to “Call of the Cow Country.” (Of 79,000 books printed to date, more than 90 percent have been sold.) It follows the further adventures of Harry Webb, a tall, dark cowboy who looked like he stepped out of central casting during the glory days of silent movies. A prolific storyteller, he wrote more than a hundred true stories for western magazines—a life he called “good, bad, and plain hell.” Many accounts recall in expressive detail his life as a bronc rider with the international phenomenon, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.

Webb’s exploits also include colorful experiences as a wrangler/actor for the Lubin Moving Picture Company of Philadelphia, one of its few real cowboys. Harry broke horses for soldiers fighting in World War I, played fiddle for dances, and trapped rabid predators for the U.S. government. And then he did what he had always dreamed of—built a cattle and sheep ranch in Nevada’s high desert. When he was forced to leave his beloved ranch due to his wife’s illness, he could not forget where his heart had always been and began to write about the humor, pathos, danger, and sometimes lunatic happenings that made up his life. Friend of the famous and foolish, he wrote it all down.

Webb's literary recognitions include "The Gold Spur for Western Literature" awarded in 1972 for a story he wrote about his journey from the Colorado mines to Wyoming's ranch country to become a cowboy when he was a week past 15. His book, "Nuthin'," was selected by Disney Studios for a movie that would star Forrest Tucker and Ron Howard (at a time when the young star was at the height of his popularity). The film fell between the success of the "Andy Griffith Show" and the beginning of the megahit, "Happy Days."

In 1983, Webb was honored with a Wrangler award "for a lifetime's contribution to the western heritage" by the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. That same year he was asked to appear in Cody, Wyo., for a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Buffalo Bill's first show. Webb was the last surviving bronc rider from the show of 1910.

Webb and Hadley were close allies the last seven years of his life and shared a love of the American West.

"When I met Harry, we were instant friends," she recalls. "I like old men, particularly old men who ride horses. They don't mess around with what's politically correct. Their wisdom and calm inspires."

Harry Webb's books are an amazing tribute to America's heritage and culture, Hadley says. "The stories are told in the language of the day. They are historically accurate and authentic and cover love, hate, jealousy, generosity, greed, murder, theft, insobriety, tenacity, foolishness, and many other peculiar human traits. They are entertaining and educational because Harry's a great writer, but it's also raw and real."

Many of Webb's stories are compiled in the two books, "Call of the Cow Country" and "The M Bar," both published by the Range Conservation Foundation and edited by RANGE magazine publisher Caroline Joy "CJ" Hadley. "The M Bar" paintings are by the late J.N. Swanson and Vel Miller, with illustrations by John Bardwell.

The judge commented: "I like the way the pages are laid out with the handwritten letters, antique photos, sketches and paintings. Nice variety."