



Opening Lines

The work we do.
By Rachel Dahl

Seven years ago, on Jan. 1, 2019, I started *The Fallon Post* as an online newspaper in my hometown, after our hundred-year community paper was bought and sold until it barely resembled the institution it once was. People complained constantly that we needed a better newspaper, until one day I uttered the words, “Someone is just going to have to start a new paper.”

And here we are.

“Due to popular demand,” as they say—though not entirely convinced it was a good idea—we put our first printed edition on the street on Nov. 6, 2020. Last year we started printing a local community paper for the town 30 miles to the west, and a couple of months later launched one an hour north of us. Each was built on the same simple premise: a community cannot function without reliable, local information.

Watching 23-year-old journalist Nick Shirley early this year investigate and uncover fraud and corruption in Minnesota, I saw a kindred spirit. This kid sees a problem and uses the tools at his disposal to provide information that forces accountability. Before Minnesota, he reported on illegal street markets on Canal Street in New York City. He spent time at our southern border documenting the flood of people entering our country illegally. All he wants is to make things better.

I’m a believer in the old adage, one I later learned is *The Washington Post’s* tagline, “Democracy Dies in Darkness.” No matter the size, a community cannot live or thrive without information.

That’s why *RANGE* matters.

For 35 years, this magazine has filled a vital role for ranching and resource-producing communities, telling stories that don’t fit neatly into national narratives and covering issues that affect cowboys and sheepherders—industries, communities, and families that rely on putting the abundant resources we’ve been given to use as they were intended.

I’ve loved magazines for as long as I can remember. As a child, my sisters and I fought over *The Friend*, *Highlights*, and *Reader’s Digest*. As a teenager, I saved my money to subscribe to *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Rolling Stone*, and of course *RANGE*. When John F. Kennedy Jr. launched *George* in 1995, the political junkie in me found heaven. (*George* ceased publication in 2001.)

Recently, trying to learn more about this trade, I’ve subscribed to a couple of magazines I’d never heard of. When they arrive in the mail, I still get that same thrill.

Last week, settling in to read the second issue of my subscription to *Russia Life*, a beautiful magazine that’s been in print since 1995, I opened the publisher’s note and read: “You hold in your hands the final print issue of...” My heart broke. The soundtrack screeched to a halt. Cold fear gripped my soul. The editor explained they were “refocusing on their online presence.”

We won’t be doing that at *RANGE*. What you’ve helped CJ create over the years has been a beacon for me, and with your help, we intend to keep this thing going.

Our fulfillment house tells us they’ve never seen a magazine supported by so many gift subscriptions. Your generosity allows us to place *RANGE* in schools, libraries and high-traffic urban areas across the country. Keep it up. Pass this magazine along when you’re done or send us the name of someone who needs a copy.

Reading back issues recently, I noticed CJ wrote at this time last year that she wished for 10,000 new subscribers. It’s all we talk about in the office now: grow the subscriber base. So we’re making that our goal this year—10,000 new subscribers by this time next year. The present we give CJ as she tutors us into running this magnificent storytelling machine ourselves.

Load up. We’ve got work to do.
Go team! ■

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