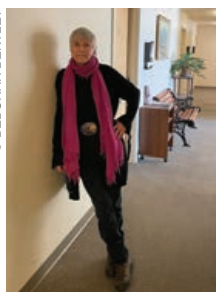


Up Front

*Opportunity
and wandering off.*
By C.J. Hadley



It was dark and raining on the docks in Liverpool on Oct. 8, 1958, as riffraff Brits crowded onto the RMS *Carinthia* to roll across the Atlantic to Montreal, then hop a train to Toronto. Most had small cardboard suitcases with a change of homemade clothes and hearts full of hope. We had believed the billboards spread all across the country displaying huge photos of Niagara Falls, Quebec City and a red-coated Mountie on a white horse in front of the Rocky Mountains. The ad's simple message was: "Canada: Land of Opportunity."

It was tough for my parents, Bert and Audrey, to find the 70 pounds it cost to get me on Her Majesty's 28,000-ton ship. The steel mill and the glass factory didn't pay much, they enjoyed tobacco and beer, and we had a government plot to grow our own veggies. But my mother made leather gloves at night and they somehow managed to pay to send me to typing school for six months so that I might stay off the lines. They believed I would have a better life across the Atlantic but at the time I had no clue if that wrenching change was a plus or a minus.

I got a typing job for an insurance company in Toronto my first day and noticed that the Canadian girls had lots of bright and lovely clothes. I still wear black and have always been an unflashy laborer, interested in way too much that was none of my business.

I found my way to New York and was told that England fit into Montana 13 times. I had to see something that big so I hitchhiked to Billings, then thumbed my way through every state in the Lower 48. I worked odd jobs on multiple trips to support myself then boarded the *Queen Elizabeth* in New York to sail back to Southampton and get a green card.

That's the first time I was in London and loved it. I worked for a while and wandered through France, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, just long enough to attain my immigrant's visa to the United States. I flew back to New York on Israeli El Al Airlines, which offered the best and most timely deal I had ever seen: "Fly Now. Pay Later."

New York was good to me. So was Seattle where I worked for Simpson Timber Company, and San Francisco where I worked for an architect and city planner. In "The Big Apple" I worked in publishing, ending up as managing editor of *Car & Driver* magazine. But Nevada and the high desert is the place I always belonged. And *RANGE* has been an inspiring, exasperating, dead-broke-decades-long entry into the real world, surrounded by real producers.

I think you have to be old to think back like this. According to the government I am several years past my off-sale date but that doesn't change the fact that life in America has been an extraordinary blessing and one heck of a ride.

Canada was the land of opportunity, but America has been even more amazing and will be again, if we let her.

Thanks for letting me stay. ■

P.S.: My last plane trip was from Reno to El Paso, then an hours-long road trip through Sinaloa Cartel territory to Alpine, Texas, to attend the Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Many of RANGE's writers were there, including Vess Quinlan, Bill Jones, Deanna Dickinson McCall, Joel Nelson, Randy Rieman, Patrick Sullivan and a whole bunch more. For many, our last hurrah. The shocker was that the entire event was dedicated to RANGE, which was overwhelming. I am onstage clutching the beautiful plaque, thanking Kay and Gene Nowell, Bob Saul and family, and every member of the LSCPG board. You have made me weep, crashed my cool and blessed my soul. God bless America.



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