

Sept. 24, 2016: RANGE magazine receives fourth consecutive Freedom Award

The Nevada Press Association recognized journalistic excellence on September 24 during its annual convention in Mesquite and conveyed major awards upon *RANGE* magazine. *RANGE* received 13 awards: seven first places, three seconds, and two thirds. The first-place awards include the coveted Freedom of the Press Award, which makes the fourth consecutive time judges have recognized *RANGE* with the special award. The Arizona Press Association judged the competition.

The Nevada Press Association (NPA) is the formal member trade organization for news publications in the state of Nevada. It is a voluntary nonprofit organization that represents daily and weekly newspapers in Nevada and the Lake Tahoe region of Northern California, as well as magazines and two online news services.

Magazines in the 2016 competition, submitted 249 entries. *RANGE* is a national publication devoted to issues that threaten the West, its people, lifestyles, lands and wildlife. No stranger to controversy, for 25 years *RANGE* has presented thought-provoking, commonsense stories on the environmental and political problems facing westerners and their lands and families. Produced in Carson City, Nev., it is often controversial, political, and has been described as “the voice of reason amidst a cacophony of madmen.”

NPA executive director Barry Smith says of *RANGE*: “*RANGE* magazine takes on stories that are vital to its readers, yet often overlooked by other media. That’s why it is such an important voice in the West. These awards recognize not only the quality of *RANGE* but its willingness to kick up the dust on issues that need to be noticed.”

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 the most recent Freedom award based on its coverage of “The Grass March Cowboy Express,” in the Summer 2015 edition of *RANGE*.

RANGE issued a special report on the Grass March and the under-reported death of the March’s leader Grant Gerber of Elko, Nev. He was a respected lawyer, rancher, elected official and passionate advocate for private property rights. An intelligence officer in Vietnam, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

His last battle was to lead a coast-to-coast horseback ride of 11 men and women carrying a pouch to Congress containing petitions from several states addressing grievances, a saga that was both heroic and tragic. Gerber, by spearheading the March, was representing all ranchers trying to cope with government overreach, unreasonable rules and policies, and federal agencies in lockstep with greedy special-interest groups. Gerber’s intentions were honorable—and still are—which is why *RANGE* is speaking out for Gerber and the other courageous Grass March participants.

Gerber recognized and accepted the dangers involved in the March, which he acknowledged in the following prophetic message, written before the start:

“I do not expect the Grass March Cowboy Express to stop if I am killed or hurt. This ride is dangerous and I accept that danger. I believe the risk is worth the danger. Please carry on if I am killed or hurt. After the petitions are delivered you can scrape up my old bones and deliver them back to Elko County.”—Grant Gerber

A horse wreck in Kansas left him with a concussion and an eventual brain bleed. He continued to Washington, D.C., delivered the petitions to Congress, and headed

home—making it to Salt Lake City after being told in hospitals in Laramie and Cheyenne that he needed surgery and to continue to the University of Utah hospital.

Grant Gerber died on Oct. 25, 2014—a man worth remembering. Honest. Caring. Selfless.

Contributing writers to the Grass March report include: Jameson Parker, former Hollywood actor and author, introduction; “The Riders” and “The Muscle,” Julian Stone, frequent RANGE contributor and national freelance writer; and “The Leader” and “The Last Best Hope” sidebars, Carolyn Dufurrena, Nevada rancher, author, teacher and award-winning writer.

RANGE editor and publisher C.J. Hadley included a special report on the Grass March to share information and promote understanding about the difficulties faced by people who live and work on the land who help feed more than 300 million Americans. The special report explained the sacrifice made by Grant Gerber.

RANGE follows the politics affecting America’s food supply—politics and decisions in the coming months and years that could have a disastrous impact because of seemingly limitless new pending regulations, says Hadley.

Bureaucrats may view such issues to be of marginal importance. This has, and will always be, unacceptable to *RANGE*. The public has the right to know how its business is being conducted, even from the middle of nowhere—Nevada.

“Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that we are here to serve the public and be vigilant in our purpose to protect freedom of the press,” says Hadley. “Current Washington policies and positions are more onerous to western rural life and western rural productivity than ever, and continue to anger ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts, and local elected officials with its arbitrary decisions and its arrogant approach to land management. About 85 percent of Nevada is controlled by the federal government. The BLM considers the acreage it controls Washington property, not public property.”

BREAKING NEWS:

In April 2016, rancher John Klump offered George Martin, one of the Grass Marchers, a public service billboard relating to the Grass March. A resource was needed for people to go for more information, which brought RANGE magazine into the picture. So began a chain of companies and caring people wanting to keep the memory of the Grass March alive. The billboard is on Klump's ranch on Interstate 10 in Bowie, Ariz., around the 367-mile marker. It bears the image of a horse emblazoned with the word “Tyranny,” and directs those wanting to know more to the RANGE website at www.rangemagazine.com.

In turn, C.J. Hadley, publisher of RANGE, created a special editorial section on the Web’s Home Page with the corresponding head, “Tyranny.”

Supporters and friends of Grant Gerber and his mission to protect ranchers are grateful to the rancher for stepping up to help keep Gerber’s dream alive.

The history of the NPA dates back to 1888, when an association of Nevada newspapers was first organized. Mark Twain, who was working as a reporter at the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, was a founding member and was named to the NPA Hall of Fame.