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RANGE is an award-winning quarterly devoted to the issues that threaten the West, its people, lifestyles, lands and wildlife. No stranger to controversy, RANGE is a leading forum for opposing viewpoints in the search for solutions that will halt the depletion of a national resource—the American cowboy.

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Up Front

Looking for Madison.
By C.J. Hadley

James Madison (1751-1836), fourth American president and political theorist, is often referred to as the “Father of the Constitution.” He was a major contributor to the Federalist Papers, participated in the framing of the Virginia Constitution in 1776, and served in the Continental Congress. He wrote the Bill of Rights—at the request of several states for greater constitutional protection for individual liberties and prohibitions on governmental power.

The short, uncharismatic, analytical Madison read a lot, wrote a lot, did a lot:

“The internal effects of a mutable policy are...calamitous,” he wrote. “It poisons the blessings of liberty itself. It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice, if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood: if they be repealed or revised before they are promulgated, or undergo such incessant changes that no man who knows what the law is today can guess what it will be tomorrow.”

Does that sound like Obamacare?

Madison looked to the past to plan for the future: “Do not separate text from historical background. If you do, you will have perverted and subverted the Constitution, which can only end in a distorted, bastardized form of illegitimate government.”

Does that sound like amnesty?

Another Madison quote: “The ultimate authority...resides in the people alone.”

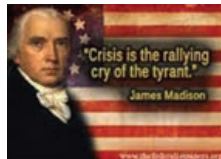
Is he telling us to vote, *very* carefully?

In his sixth State of the Union address on Jan. 20, 2015, our tall, charismatic 44th American president, Barack Obama, said, “No challenge—no challenge—poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.”

Dr. Mike Coffman takes exception to that. “Other nations are mocking President Obama for claiming climate change is the world’s greatest threat,” Coffman writes, “and yet they could vote for a treaty that will damage the United States just because they don’t like us. America is possibly entering the most

dangerous time of economic hemorrhage in our history. Capitalism, property rights, and individual freedom are all being systematically destroyed.” (See page 28 to discover that what Madison and the Founding Fathers believed in and fought for is about to be handed to the United Nations.)

Also in this issue, U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA) writes about the drought and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act: “Backed by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and other extreme environmental groups, large Democratic majorities in Congress passed the CVPIA in 1992 after attaching it to a must-pass public lands bill. It stipulated that 800,000 acre-feet of water—or 260 billion gallons—on the valley’s west side had to be diverted annually to environmental causes, with an additional 400,000 acre-feet later being diverted annually to wildlife refuges.” California farmers, and thousands of workers, would not be under such duress without that massive taking of water for the sake of a short, uncharismatic fish. (See page 22.)



Western ranchers are suffering too. Dwight and Steve Hammond (father and son) have served time in federal prison thanks to the Bureau of Land Management. While trying to save their range and ranch in the deserts of eastern Oregon from wildfires in 2001 and 2006, and with permission of the BLM to start a backburn, they inadvertently scorched less than 150 acres of federal land. The burn, according to the BLM, actually improved the range but the feds still took the Hammonds to court, accusing them of conspiracy and 19 felony arson charges. Dwight, now 74, and Steve pled guilty in 2012 to setting fires on federal land. All other charges were dropped. Dwight got 90 days; Steve got a year and a day. Their guns were taken, and Dwight’s pilot’s license, and they served their time even though the judge declared in court that the damage “might have been \$100.”

But the BLM still isn’t happy and has appealed the sentence to force Dwight and Steve back into prison to serve at least five years more, for “domestic terrorism.” Resentencing was scheduled for July 9 but it’s been postponed until October. Meanwhile looting and burning is allowed in Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore, Md., while the local police are told to “stand down.”

To quote Madison again: “Liberty may be endangered by the abuse of liberty, but also by the abuse of power.” ■