

RANGE

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PUBLISHER/EDITOR: *Caroline Joy "CJ" Hadley*

ASST. TO PUBLISHER: *Ann Galli*

DESIGN CONSULTANT: *John Bardwell*

CUSTOMER SERVICE: *Deborah Bentley*

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS: *Joani Haws*

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PROOFREADER: *Denyse Pellettieri White*

WEBMASTER: *Larry Angier*

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDITORS: *Carolyn Dufurrena (NV), Barney Nelson (TX); SOUTHWEST CONNECTION: Al Topping (AZ); APPALACHIA: Alan Hart (VA); PHOTOGRAPHERS: Linda Dufurrena (NV/OR), Larry Turner (OR/TX); NOT FORGOTTEN: Don Coops (CA), Tim Findley (NV), Chet Mercer (WY), Jack Swanson (CA), J. Zane Walley (NM); WEBLOOKERS: Gail Brooks (AZ), Carrie Depaoli (NV), Paul Etzler (NV); COWBOY ADVISORS: Ed Depaoli (NV), Carolyn Carey (CA/HI), Terry Sullivan (NV), Tom Wahlen (CA).*

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775-884-2200

FAX: 775-884-2213

1-800-RANGE-4-U (credit card orders)

Publisher/Editor: cj@rangemagazine.com

Advertising: ads@rangemagazine.com

Customer Svc: service@rangemagazine.com

Business: admin@rangemagazine.com

Freelancers: edit@rangemagazine.com

Website: www.rangemagazine.com

Photos: www.cowboyswest.com

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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

Attitude on tilt.

By C.J. Hadley

I am called many names. 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.” It’s clear these name-callers don’t like my attitude or my opinion and (to my delight) tell me how wrong I am, that I never listen “to the other side,” and suggest I educate myself and pay attention to Deepak Chopra, Jessie Jackson and Michael Moore.

Within the last few weeks I have been accused—twice—of being a pawn of (or sponsored by) the Koch brothers. When I worked at *Car & Driver* in the Big Apple, I probably would have appreciated the Koch brothers’ alter ego, George Soros, but I was too involved with auto racing to know who he was (or maybe he was still in Germany actually helping the Nazis). I might have joined Acorn because I always wanted to right wrongs even though I knew little about what was really wrong. As soon as I was eligible to become a citizen I laid down the Union Jack, started waving Old Glory, and quickly signed up to vote for Jimmy Carter.

I paid annual dues (probably to assuage my guilt) to The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Audubon, National Wildlife Federation and Save the Whale. I thought my \$20 would help them to save the world and I was far too busy listening to Janis Joplin and John Coltrane to bother with that myself.

The West has changed me. My attitude is on tilt. I left New York City, population about 10 million, and arrived in Reno when there were only 33,000 country souls inhabiting the high-desert town. Gas was 33 cents a gallon. I had been traveling around the country, living in a van named Son of Moon Trash. I had a 175cc Kawasaki dirt bike inside that van, a cot, and an AC/DC refrigerator to keep my film cool. My cameras recorded anything with attitude. Mostly rodeos in any town I had never heard of. Camel races in Virginia City. Snowmobile races between West Yellowstone, Mont., and Mosport, Ontario.

A rancher with my kind of attitude called from South Dakota in November. She found

RANGE on a newsstand last June and loved it so much she subscribed for three years. She received the Summer issue then sent \$10 for a Real Buckaroo Calendar. And several weeks after the Fall issue was delivered in August, she sent a check for another three years. But this instant RANGE fan has apparently changed her mind and accused my part-time helper of dastardly deeds. She also flagellated my bookkeeper. I wanted to know what got her knickers in a twist so I called to find out how we had offended her so deeply.

“I want my money back,” she yelled. “Do I have to go to the Better Business Bureau or call VISA and reverse payment? Cliven Bundy is a criminal. He is breaking the law. He put his children in front of guns. Bundy is a Hitler type. He is an embarrassment for all good ranchers and farmers. RANGE is supporting radical reckless ranchers; it is too extreme and doesn’t suit us.” (Check Vin Suprynowicz’ “Patterns of Harassment,” Fall 2014, at www.rangemagazine.com.)

Her tirade didn’t end there because she was also offended by Dr. Coffman. “Climate change is real and anyone who doesn’t believe it is backwards. The science is proven and even the most backwards Republicans and Fox News believe it now. We have ranched for years and the weather is not the same as it was when I was growing up.”

And then the knockout: “The Koch brothers bought the 2014 election [for Republicans]. They have so much money they can buy elections.” She didn’t want to hear about George Soros’ or Tom Steyer’s progressive shenanigans but when I asked her about the 2012 elections that the Koch brothers obviously hadn’t bought because President Obama gained a second term, she said softly: “That was terrific. I love President Obama.” Obviously her positive attitude toward our president is equal to mine for cowboys and sheepherders. And asked why she had subscribed for 12 more issues weeks after the Bundy piece had been in her hands, she said, “I saved \$7.95.” And I saved more grief and refunded all her money.

I am a Democrat from New York City and admit some of my attitudes were developed on the streets of Manhattan. And even though I live in the high western desert and the cost of running a national magazine is huge, the thought of being a pawn for the Koch brothers sounds pretty intriguing. And I like their attitude. So will someone please tell those rich country boys I’m waiting for their call at 1-800-RANGE-4-U? ■