

Up Front

*Cuddling
the sweet spots.*
By C.J. Hadley



Last year our book, “Face to Face with the American West,” won a Will Rogers Gold Medallion in Fort Worth, Texas. It also won “Best Special Project” from Nevada Press Association in its Better Newspapers & Magazines Contest. And the red meat under 2023’s gravy was being honored as “Outstanding News Reporter” by the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts with a beautiful plaque and splendid belt buckle which—after covering rodeo for decades—is dearly cherished. Those were all sweet spots.

For much of my life I have been on perpetual walkabout, with a map of the world and no distinct destination, accidentally wandering into places I had never seen and always looking to learn. On a beach in the Bahamas I taught grammar to the maids of West Street so they could try for jobs as shop assistants. I learned a lot but was called back to New York City during that adventure to work as managing editor of *Car and Driver*. I stayed six years, then left for the Calgary Stampede and 23,000 miles on the rodeo trail producing “Winston’s Guide to Rodeo” for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

Later I joined Aboriginal ranchers rounding up wild cattle using a helicopter and a pack of Toyotas in Australia’s Outback, then rode a camel 300 miles across the Northern Territory for *Sports Illustrated*. (We hit water three times in 14 days.) I “raced” an ancient classic around Germany’s wine country with a few other press people thanks to Mercedes-Benz, loitered with talented gauchos and rawhide braiders in Argentina, tested the Lunar Rover at Cape Canaveral before it went to the moon, and thought I was a tuna fisherman until I puked 21 pounds of my own viscera into the Pacific. On my 21st day at sea, after starting to quote Titania from Shakespeare’s “*Midsummer Night’s Dream*”—“Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed”—while tied to the mast to get some air in rough seas, I was returned to shore and dropped on the docks in Sausalito with \$4, as a failure for women and my good captain.

After I relearned how to walk, I sought the driest state in the Union, hitchhiked to Reno

and borrowed a car until I could collect my van from Port Angeles, Wash. Within days I got a job as a photographer for Nevada’s Department of Tourism, which was preparing a slide show covering its rurals to encourage Hawaiian gamblers to consider visiting more than Vegas.

It was in those West high deserts where I got my comeuppance and my socialist Brit and leftie New York political beliefs turned sideways after I met a Basque sheepherder with his border collies and flock on Waterlog Summit in Elko County, then miners and prospectors in desolate places, and a few cowboys out in the brush or in towns that took a flash to traverse. It was also there—in dry, raw and empty—that I found home and my true sweet spot.

This is not my swan song but I want to thank you, dear readers, for backing *RANGE* and its tiny crew as we celebrate America and the most important people on earth—food and fiber producers and other natural resource providers—who all make our world and lives

better and easier. I have spent 34 years on this outfit so far and amidst the rush to national suicide it continues to be one hell of a ride at a time when our destructive federal bronses have already broken out of the gate.

We need to throw a loop on this country and drag it back to the almost-sublime America it was. Meanwhile, *RANGE* will continue to fight for ranchers against a bloated government so that we can save the country from socialists, Marxists, RINOs, pedophiles, climate zealots, indoctrinators and opportunists led by affluent elites telling us to eat bugs and drive electric as they push the New World Order, travel on fossil-fueled private jets and feast on chateaubriand.

We should *unjoin* the United Nations, the WHO and the Paris Accords. We should reclaim our “Shining City on a Hill” and lead the world in independence and freedom while helping other countries to do the same. We need to get back to our constitutional basics and bring this bloody, battered, bitchy, narcissistic, twisted, Godless, gadget-overwhelmed and almost illiterate country back to health.

And, if possible, please bring *RANGE* 10,000 new paid subscribers so that we can try to do more for liberty. I am not close to ready to quit as editor, but a brighter, smarter publisher would be an enormous plus. Any serious wannabe *RANGE* leader with experience in circulation, advertising, promotion, publicity and subscription fulfillment—and an affinity and affection for western ranchers—should call me at 1-800-RANGE-4-U so that we can all share many more sweet spots. ■

A MAYNARD BUCKLE

