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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

Good sense.

By *C.J. Hadley*

An old cowboy used to say about well-educated people who had no sense, "They don't know they don't know." I tossed that off at first because I am not well educated and it didn't seem possible. But after 25 years with *RANGE* covering some tough subjects too many times, it's obvious Don Coops was right.

When I was a secretary in New York City, I worked for a brilliant but difficult man. He was vice president of Hayden Publishing Company, which produced trade magazines. When he wrote performance ratings for dozens of staffers, I typed them all on an IBM

Selectric. Some were effusive, others simply gracious. There were no bad ratings because those people had already been fired.

My rating consisted of only two words. I wept, and asked him to explain why I was given such short shrift (don't try to say that twice). Shocked that I had the grit to question his sagacity, he said with a grim look, "That's the highest praise I can give anyone." The words were "good sense."

The quality that my old boss liked so much seems to be missing from the politicians, bureaucrats and activists involved in several of the issues discussed in this magazine—perhaps because rational, reasonable action does not emanate from a collective. Fires. Drought. Too many feral horses on western ranges. Green groups trying to replace multigenerational sheep ranchers with planted bighorns. Washington politicians thinking climate change is the biggest problem in the

world—apparently because ISIS, Russia's recent aggressions, Iran's nukes-almost-ready ayatollahs, and millions of homeless, helpless or dead Syrians and other appalling things haven't reached their psyches yet.

Even so, last fall some of our work was honored. We won 18 awards—including eight first places—from the Nevada Press Association for its "Better Newspaper (and Magazine) Contest," judged by Wyoming Press Association (which obviously has good sense). The biggest thrill was winning, for the third year in a row, the Freedom of the Press award. In 2013 we won for our coverage of Hage v.



Purple Coyote Corp.'s made-in-U.S.A. purple T-shirt celebrates 25 years of RANGE. Phew!

United States; in 2014 it was climate change/Agenda 21; and in 2015 we won for "Patterns of Harassment," our special report on the Cliven Bundy standoff near Las Vegas—mostly thanks to Vin Suprynowicz. Other major winners include Dave Skinner for Best Critical Writing, Leo W. Banks for Best Profile/Interview, Scott Baxter for Best Portrait, and Cynthia Baldauf for Best Feature Photo. To check all of *RANGE*'s 18 awards, go to our website at rangemagazine.com and click on "Winners!"

I hope you don't find this issue depressing, because the only thing lacking to turn it into good news is honorable and righteous behavior—and good sense. The West could be a treat again if real producers were respected, if forests were managed (with timber cut), if glorified mustangs were kept to the numbers the resource can sustain, if private property rights were considered sacrosanct, if forage were eaten by cows and sheep rather than by fire, if a migratory bird treaty were not to take precedence over hardworking people, and if Washington's leaders were to give a damn about anyone west of the Potomac.

Coops watched me labor for years and suggested that producing *RANGE* "is like giving birth to a brahma calf backwards." I do it anyway. Is that good sense? ■

LATE NEWS: Oregon's Hammond family is paying a high price for burning a bit of federal land while trying to protect their ranch and range. Dwight and son, Steve, have already served time in federal prison, but the BLM wasn't satisfied and appealed the sentence to force them to serve the minimum demanded for "domestic terrorism"—five years each. "Isn't it ironic that people in Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore, Md., can burn their towns down and that's not domestic terrorism?" Hank Vogler asks. "The Hammonds burn 127 acres of brush to put out a fire that threatened their livelihood with verbal permission from BLM and they are convicted as terrorists? Or could it be they own land that the Greens and the government covet on the Steens Mountains and the Hammonds have been outspoken critics of land use and management by the government?" Check www.rangemagazine.com, "Enemies of the State." To help with legal costs, go to <https://orcattle.com/oregon-cattlemens-stewardship-fund/> or send check to: OCA Stewardship Fund, 1320 Capitol St. NE, Suite 150, Salem OR 97301. Mark it "For Hammonds."—*Ed.*