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# Up Front

*Prancing horses.*  
By C.J. Hadley

**W**ill Rogers said, “There is something about riding down the street on a prancing horse that makes you feel like something, even when you ain’t a thing.” A cowboy, humorist and showman, Rogers had a gift for keeping us thinking and laughing.

Will Rogers is needed now, more than ever, because it’s been an ugly quarter from coast to coast. Many western states have suffered from hellish fires. People from Texas to Puerto Rico have been tormented by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and lack of food, water and power. A mad gunman in Vegas killed 59 people and injured hundreds at a country music concert. And the awful and most recent fires in California wine country are raging as I write. Neighborhoods are wiped out. Too many people are missing, 42 are dead, and cadaver dogs are searching through the ashes. Hundreds of square miles and thousands of homes and businesses have gone up in smoke.

RANGE is dealing with much smaller things but those affected also suffer. People have died, been imprisoned, homes destroyed, livestock and wildlife burned to death, huge fines imposed, and yet Americans do not know the truth about ranchers on the western ranges, or hear only sound bites or read versions created by green spin doctors.

RANGE tells the ranchers’ stories and, perhaps due to our work on the Hages, Hammonds, Bundys and others, in late September we starred at the Nevada Press Association Better Newspapers and Magazines annual banquet, winning 15 major awards. The Better Magazines competition attracted 285 entries and was judged by the Utah Press Association.

First place wins are: Best Investigative Story (“Wolves, Killers at Your Door” by Chance Gowan, Earl Stahl, Ph.D., and Dexter Oliver); Best Profile/Interview (Carolyn Dufurrena for “Rough and Beautiful Places”); Best Ad Series (for our 100th issue “A Quarter Century. No Quarter” promos, photographer Mark Hayward); Best Special Project (for “Cowboys & Critters”); Best Illustrated Photo (of D.W. Groethe by Jessica Brandi Lifland); Best Portrait (of Josh Granell by Todd Klassy); and Best Feature Photo (by Roxanne Knight for “Daddy’s Hands”). The most coveted award for Best Critical Writing was won by Michael S.

Coffman, Ph.D., for “Original Intent,” “Powerful Forces,” and “Climate Racketeering.” Dave Skinner won a close second for “Monumental Megabucks,” “The Shadow Force,” and “Unforgettable.” Other winners are Barry Perryman, Ph.D., Craig Rullman, and Lee Pitts.

In 2017, RANGE took second place for Freedom of the Press for eight reports focusing on people faced with destructive issues forced on them by special-interest groups and/or the federal government. It is clear that ranching interests have one thing in common: they have something that is coveted by someone, or some other organization, even federal agents. Winning writers are: Mike Coffman for “Powerful Forces”; Dave Skinner for “Monumental Megabucks”; Judy Boyle for “Rapacious Feds”; Rachel Dahl for “Ignoring Nature’s Law”; Hank Vogler for “Endangered Intellect”; Barry Perryman for “National Theft”; Dan Dagget for “Eco-Profits”; and Steven H. Rich for “How It Should Be.” Note that RANGE took first place for Freedom of the Press four years in a row (judged in Arizona, Montana and Wyoming): in 2013 for the “Hage v. U.S.” precedent-setting case; in 2014 for stories on climate change; in 2015 for Bundy and the “Onslaught at Bunkerville”; and in 2016 for “The Grass March.” Check all results at [www.rangemagazine.com](http://www.rangemagazine.com).

Barry Smith, NPA executive director, said: “RANGE wins awards year after year because it not only looks good, there is plenty of substance in its pages. The photography and design capture the essence of the West, and that’s what draws readers in. Once they get there, the articles are a blast of fresh air.”

The judge for Best Special Project said: “RANGE’s ‘Cowboys and Critters: Symbiosis in the American West’ is the clear first-place winner.... The writing is phenomenal, some humorous, but all factual and interesting. The photographs are some of the best I have seen capturing the ‘Old West’ experience.”

RANGE writers prove that the West could be productive again if real producers were respected, if forests were managed sustainably (with timber cuts), if glorified mustangs were kept to the numbers the resource can sustain, if private property rights were considered sacrosanct, if forage was eaten by cows, sheep and wildlife rather than by fire, if government policy did not take precedence over hardworking people, and if D.C.’s leaders were to give a damn about anyone west of the Potomac.

Thanks, Will Rogers. We just shared a few steps on that prancing horse. ■

*LATE NEWS: RANGE just won a Will Rogers Gold Medallion for “Cowboys & Critters” in Fort Worth, Texas. See page 28.*

## RANGE

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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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