
HillTopics Production

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Hi Dennis, I will do my best let you know what goes into the production of **hillTOPICS**. It is really a fun job! As a bit of a techie and a lover of jigsaw puzzles, I can be easily entertained – but putting the issue together is a little like putting together a jigsaw puzzle.

I use a software package called In-Design which is a publishing software package from Adobe that is pretty straight-forward once you get used to it. In addition, I have put together a step-by-step handbook that shows how to put together an entire HT issue. (I started the handbook when I was learning the publishing end from Sarah Nordquist – four years ago, and it just kind of grew into what it is now.) I build all the headers, add all the pictures and stories, basically do all the formatting, and try to make it look generally pleasing. Sarah has a background in graphics, and that can be helpful. Everything I know about graphics I have learned from her.

Frank's area is more creative than mine. We all discuss (editors included) what should go into the Center Spread. The topic is decided, and either we have multiple photographers from HT taking pictures of an event, or in the case of say an employee art display, Frank will take the pictures himself. He then uses Adobe Photoshop to put together the back ground and photos for the spread. He usually comes up with captions. At some point he hands it over to me via Dropbox. Frank works at home on his version of Photoshop, but there is also a version in the HT office.

What I do for the Center Spread is pick it up from Dropbox and paste it into Pages 6 and 7 of my In-Design template. After that I add the captions. So the bulk of this work is done in Photoshop for this piece.

I take all the stories and try to design a flow – what is the feature story? What stories have similar themes? That kind of thing. Then I try to figure out what stories would “fit” to what pages. This does not always work the way I want so sometimes my “flow” gets broken apart. Oh well. If the stories just don't quite fit, then I let the editors know that they need to come in and edit a story.

Sometimes I can get an issue done in a couple of days. Usually it takes about three days, and on the days I work on it, I am working nearly all day. Technically, I get 4 days, but that 4th day gets crowded because the editors are anxious to examine the issue post-input into In-Design to make last minute changes before turning over to proof readers. So, if possible, I try to be done prior to the day it goes to proof readers.

After it gets returned from the proof readers, the editors go through and correct the issue. Sometimes additional formatting changes are needed, so I will do those. After that, we take it to Sarah Nordquist who goes through the issue one last time. When she is done I will almost always use her recommendations for changes.

At that point it is ready to be sent to the printer. I create a pdf that is a very large-size pdf and put that into a Dropbox that is designated just for the printer, and I create a smaller-size pdf that I will later move to myRVM. I should add that early in the process, I send a note to the printer to give him dates for our turnover to him, and our expected return date to us. This helps him to know what to expect, when, and if there is a problem on their end that might mean they don't meet our deadlines. This usually does not happen, but occasionally when we do an insert there can be a delay.

On the day that Carol Solomonson and her team distribute the new HTs, I move the pdf out to myRVM.

I forgot to mention that I put together the inserts that come out quarterly for the Foundation.

There are templates that I work from for both the HT issue as well as the Foundation inserts.

This is probably way more information than you ever wanted to know!

Thanks for asking!

Sandy Roberts

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