

New newspaper for Hilltop; new purpose for group

By Matt Driscoll

mdriscoll@thenewstribune.com

AUGUST 22, 2016 09:19 AM, UPDATED AUGUST 24, 2016 11:53 AM



Korbett Mosesly, pictured in 2008, is the main force behind the new Hilltop Action Journal.

DREW PERINE *STAFF FILE, 2008*

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

While you probably shouldn't expect newsies in period attire to be slinging issues from the corner of South 11th Street and MLK Way, you can expect to see the debut installment of [the Hilltop Action Journal](#) hit the street this week. Admittedly, I'm a sucker for newspapers. Let the record reflect my bias. Still, for Hilltop, it's an exciting, potentially important development.

As the name implies, the Hilltop Action Journal stems from work the [Hilltop Action Coalition](#) has been engaged in for nearly three decades — when the grassroots group formed to help combat gang, violence and drug issues on the Hilltop back in 1989. In its heyday, current Hilltop Action Coalition President Brendan Nelson — who assumed the position in December — says the organization had “72 block leaders all across the Hilltop area to help clean up our community, and kind of move some things forward.”

Obviously, much has changed on Hilltop since 1989. And so, too, has the purpose of the Hilltop Action Coalition — which is decidedly smaller these days. Lately, an organization that started mainly with community policing in mind has set its sights on finding new ways to move the community forward.

In a world increasingly dominated by the internet and social media — and in a neighborhood where many residents don't necessarily navigate this new landscape — that has meant finding effective avenues to disseminate information to all who need it.

Enter the Hilltop Action Journal, and the 4,000 issues that recently rolled off the presses.

We know that the Hilltop has an older population. It's not all on Facebook. They still write letters. They do things the traditional way. How do you create a platform to reach them?

Korbett Mosesly, co-creator of the Hilltop Action Journal

As Korbett Mosesly tells it, the impetus for the Hilltop Action Journal — a free community newsletter that will be distributed at local Hilltop businesses as well as door-to-door by current Hilltop Action Coalition block leaders — was born out of meetings of the community advisory committee that worked alongside the city and Metro Parks during the planning and construction of the new pool at the People's Community Center.

He says that, during these meetings, it quickly became clear that many Hilltop residents needed new and better ways to get information about things that were happening in their neighborhood, and about the resources that existed for them there. A list of priorities was generated — from jobs and job-training opportunities, to programs for youth and seniors, to pathways to homeownership — and these are all reflected in the 12-page debut issue of the paper.

Articles include an update on the grand opening of the People's pool next month, a breakdown of the city's ongoing efforts to improve the relationship between Tacoma's police department and residents, and an examination of how Hilltop can leverage growth in the construction trades to bring more family-wage jobs to the Hilltop.

Meanwhile, the paper also includes an announcement intended to help residents sign up for Medicare and take advantage of first-time homebuyer's education.

According to Mosesly, the Hilltop Action Journal effort — which he led, and the Hilltop Action Coalition and other organizations, including Sound Outreach, have supported — falls under the umbrella of "community journalism."

"It's something that I'm passionate about, because I have a background in doing different kinds of communication work," Mosesly told me by phone last week when I asked him about the newspaper he helped spearhead. "It's just kind of a way to engage audiences that wouldn't otherwise get the information. ... We know that the Hilltop has an older population. It's not all on Facebook. They still write letters. They do things the traditional way. How do you create a platform to reach them?"

"As the inaugural edition, it's really about just bringing awareness that this is a medium that other resident groups and community leaders can use as a resource to get out information," Mosesly continued. "I think the idea of community journalism is that average people can write articles."

It opens the door for other people who love to write and want to out their stories or their information, it gives them a place to do that. ... It's not necessary about reporting on the news of what happened, but what can happen as people work together."

Asked for a tangible example of how something like a grassroots community-based newspaper can help the people of Hilltop, the 33-year-old Nelson revisited his youth growing up in the neighborhood, where his parents rented a home at what was then 12th and Sprague, always wanting to buy, but unaware of some of the resources available to them — like a program he says was offered by Key Bank geared toward helping Hilltop residents purchase their homes.

I think that's another part of this newspaper; there are some things people just don't know unless it's put out in certain places. We need to know what's going on on the Hilltop.

Brendan Nelson, president of the Hilltop Action Coalition

"Man, my parents never knew about those programs. To learn that this program was there all that time, it really bothered me as an adult," Nelson said. "My parents could have been homeowners 20 years ago. I think that's another part of this newspaper; there are some things people just don't know unless it's put out in certain places. We need to know what's going on on the Hilltop.

"I don't want people on Hilltop to experience what my parents went through," he said.

At this point, where the Hilltop Action Journal goes from here remains to be seen. Mosesly and Nelson tell me it may be published bi-monthly, or quarterly, but that decision will come down to the feedback this first issue receives.

One thing that's clear from the get-go: It's a project of neighborhood passion, and one that can only strengthen the community it serves.

As Mosesly puts it: "A strong Hilltop is a strong Tacoma."

Matt Driscoll: [253-597-8657](tel:253-597-8657), mdriscoll@thenewstribune.com, [@mattsdriscoll](https://www.instagram.com/mattsdriscoll)