

Colorize photos

Whenever a new look book comes out I get lots of requests for tutorials on doing things that schools have seen others do. All of them start with “How did they do that?” This one came in today (Figure A). The original is on page 116 of the Look Book and it’s from the 2013 Saga produced by the staff at Niles North High School in Skokie, IL. I am not sure if they did it this way, but here is what I did to create the effect.

1. Open a photo you want to use and cut out the background. (Figure B)
2. Choose Image>Canvas Size and when the dialog box opens, change the measurement increments to picas, click in the lower, middle box as the anchor point and type in the height of the color block you want in the yearbook. My photo was a 20 pica square so I chose to leave it 20 picas wide but make the canvas 60 picas high. Make sure the Canvas Extension color is white. (Figure C)
3. Select the area where the background was. Since it is white, you can probably use the Magic Wand to select it. You may have to tinker with it to get only the background. Once you have it selected, choose Select>Expand to grow the selection into your subject. When the Expand dialog box opens, type 3 pixels. That should do it.
4. While the selection is still active, create a new layer and click in the Layers panel to make it the active Layer.
5. Change your foreground color to a light gray by clicking the foreground color tool at the bottom of the tool panel.
6. Choose Edit>Fill and choose Foreground Color. This will fill the background with with gray but still leave your photo in color.
7. From the bottom of the Layers panel, click the Adjustment Layer icon. It’s a circle that’s split by a diagonal line. From the menu that drops out, choose Hue/Saturation. The Properties panel should open with the options for Hue Saturation.
8. Click the Colorize button and slide the Hue and the Saturation slides until you get the color you want. I chose a purple. (Figure D)
9. Your Layers panel should look like Figure E. We purposely left the gray background on a separate layer in case you want to make it lighter or darker. To do that, just double click the background layer in the Layers panel and choose Color Overlay. Change the overlay color to anything darker or lighter to fit what you are looking for.
10. Save the file as a Photoshop document in case you want to come back and change it and save a copy as a JPEG or PNG to upload to YTO (Figure F).
11. Don’t add the text until you are in either YTO or InDesign as it will be easier to make changes and check for misspellings.

You may also want to experiment with other effects. For instance I tried a posterization which I got by choosing Image>Adjustments>Posterization and using the slide to experiment (Figure G).

