



**When the COVID crisis hit**, we had just published our April issue and, given the uncertainty of what lay ahead, made the decision to combine our May and June issues into one. We had planned May as our “Top Doctors” issue, and we proceeded with that as the theme and cover feature.

In the ensuing weeks, life changed rapidly, daily even. Dramatic covers capturing real life in a pandemic world kept appearing. I suggested to our team that perhaps forging ahead without acknowledging our shared reality was a mistake.

Challenged by stay-at-home orders and logistics, we landed on the concept of using a piece of art on our cover — specifically, “Rhode Island Angel of Hope and Strength,” commissioned by our governor and created (and donated) by Rhode Island School of Design graduate Shepard

Fairey, whose iconic “Hope” poster for President Obama received worldwide acclaim.

In a matter of days, facilitated by the Governor’s office, we received permission from the artist. And then our staff thought, “What about a poster?” — a pull-out for all Rhode Islanders to have in homage to the front line workers and our state motto, hope? Not wanting to appear like we profited in the crisis, we looked for a corporate underwriter to cover our costs. Just days before our deadline, regional utility company National Grid agreed to pick up the tab. Adjacent to the poster is a full page ad in which they were able to acknowledge their contribution and reinforce the message: *Keep Hope*. This was a creative collaboration that enabled us to engage various parts of our community and, ultimately, signifies the best in all of us.

— *John Palumbo, Publisher, Rhode Island Monthly*