

# BEHIND

# THE ZINES #18

A ZINE  
ABOUT  
ZINES!



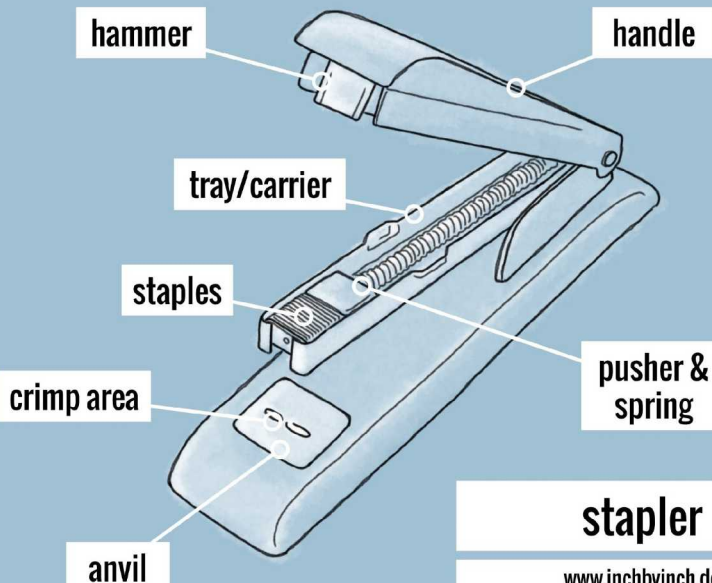
SEPT '24

Behind the Zines is produced and edited by Billy McCall, and comes out twice a year, in March and in September. We are always looking for new contributors, so if you have an idea for an article or piece of artwork, get in touch.

The deadline for issue #19 is January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

For more information regarding subscriptions, back issues, submissions, or to get in touch with any specific contributor to this issue, please contact Billy McCall at:  
[iknowbilly@gmail.com](mailto:iknowbilly@gmail.com)

[www.behind-the-zines.com](http://www.behind-the-zines.com)



# Using Zines to Change the World

Everyone I know is sad. Like, everyone. They are sad and depressed and upset. Frustrated. Angry. Anxious. They are distraught over climate change, and disillusioned by a corrupt political system. Everyone I know is fed up with the rich assholes who run our world, and they're furious at our ancestors for letting it all get this bad.

I don't need to tell you the news; you already know.

Everyone I know is sad, yet somehow they are also hopeful. Because this world has never given a shit about the weak or the poor or the outcasts. And now, more than ever, all of us weirdos, freaks, and geeks need to band together. The punks and the zinesters and the vinyl-listening music lovers need to stick together. Now, more than ever, you're either a fascist or you aren't. Fuck the government, fuck the billionaires, fuck it all. We'll always have zines, baby.

Behind the Zines #16 was themed with "Zines Saved My Life," and was about how zines *changed us*. This issue's theme is "Using Zines to Change the World," pointing outward instead of inward.

Everyone who has ever read or contributed to BTZ is vitally important to me, but I want to mention a couple people by name. First off, Audra McNamee and Sarah Shay Mirk. Sarah does a million things, and drew the cover of BTZ #10. Audra was interviewed in BTZ #17, and drew the cover for **this** issue. The two of them are starting a new press called Crucial Comix, which launches this month. Make sure to check it out.

I also want to thank Josh MacPhee, from Justseeds. Thank you for all your hard work trying to make the world a better place, thank you for the interview, and thank you for donating 200 stickers, which will be given out with the first 200 copies of this zine.

And thank you to everyone who keeps reading this zine!

Keep in touch, and keep  
fighting the good fight.

*Billy*  
#

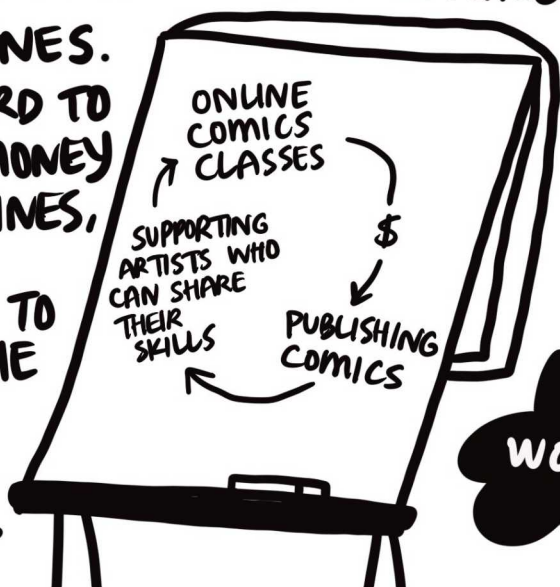




# CRUCIAL COMIX



THERE'S A REAL LACK OF PLACES TO PUBLISH NONFICTION COMICS AND TO TAKE AFFORDABLE COMICS CLASSES. SO WE'RE AIMING TO CHANGE THAT! CRUCIAL COMIX WILL BE A HOME FOR NONFICTION COMICS AND ZINES. IT'S HARD TO MAKE MONEY FROM ZINES, SO OUR PLAN IS TO FUND THE PRESS WITH CLASSES.



# WHO'S STARTING THIS?



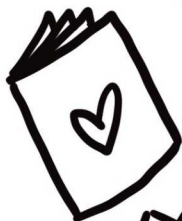
**SARAH SHAY MIRK**

- ZINE-MAKER AND COMICS JOURNALIST
- AUTHOR OF MANY BOOKS
- SNAIL MAIL ENTHUSIAST
- LONG-TIME TEACHER

**AUDRA McNAMEE**

- MAKES COMICS ABOUT SCIENCE & STUFF
- COMPUTER NERD
- PASSIONATE ABOUT ZINES & TO-DO LISTS

WE BELIEVE COMICS HAVE  
THE POWER TO CREATE EMPATHY  
AND SHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING  
OF OURSELVES AND THE WORLD.  
IN OTHER WORDS...  
COMICS ARE CRUCIAL!



WE'RE LAUNCHING IN  
SEPTEMBER 2024!

WE  
WANT  
YOU!

GET INVOLVED:

- SIGN UP FOR A CLASS
- READ OUR COMICS
- SUBMIT YOUR OWN WORK

CRUCIALCOMIX.COM AND

@CRUCIALCOMIX ON INSTAGRAM

## Survey Says!

By Robyn Braegger

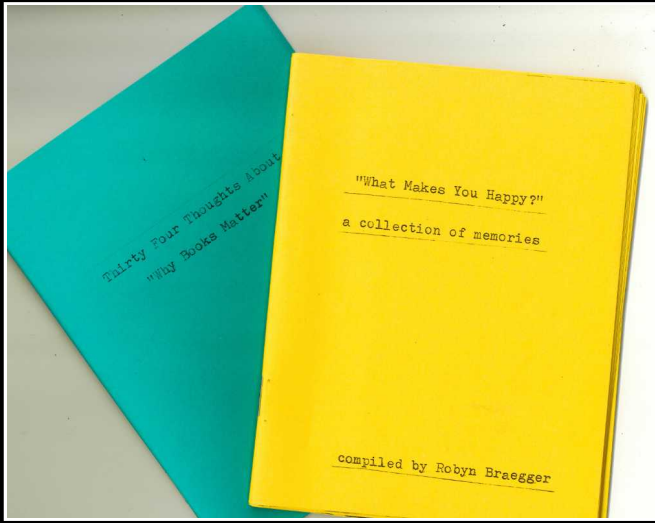
I've always been enamored by snail mail. My childhood in rural Utah was spent sending letters back and forth to relatives in Ohio whom I rarely saw. As I grew I became penpals with numerous people for all kinds of reasons. When I open the mailbox and find a letter addressed to me I feel good. I'm also the type of person who loves connecting with people, big ideas and a good project.

Winter 2020 - I decided to try a social experiment. I created a simple survey entitled "Why Books Matter" and sent it (and a self addressed self stamped envelope) out to most of the people in my address book. Over the next several months surveys came trickling back; reading answers to my questions from my friends was absolutely delightful. Compiling answers from the returned surveys into a zine in the Winter of 2021 was the next natural progression in the project for me... and then it just made sense to send out a new survey including the newly made zine.

My 2021 survey asked about favorite books, 2022 survey asked about unforgettable teachers, 2023 survey asked what makes you happy and this year (2024) I asked about how you have fun. I don't really have a name for the project. I don't know that I expected much out of it when I sent out my first survey. Like many of the projects I've worked on, this one has taken on a life of its own. I'm just enjoying the ride it's taking me on.

This project has turned into what I believe is an important and interesting compilation of thoughts and ideas. I probably sent out more than 100 surveys this year, so far I've gotten about half back. I think a few more will find their way to me before January rolls around. Every year I send out a few more than I did the year before. Using Zines to Change the World? I do believe this project is a positive way to connect to people.

To give people a chance to say something and to take the time to listen to what they say. Connect. Matter. So in those ways, yes ideas have the potential to change the world.



Five years in and I don't know if I will ever know if all of the people participating appreciate or benefit from their contributions. I know I do. I know it matters to me. I know every time I get a survey back I feel like I've been seen. I want everyone who participates to know they've been seen and listened to. It matters to me.

Yesterday I opened my mailbox and found a survey. It 100% brightened my day. I learned some new things about a friend of mine I never before knew and I added her survey to my binder with all of the ones that have come back so far this year. Today I'll pen a little thank you postcard to her and let her know I appreciate the time she took to fill it out and send it back to me. Sometimes I feel out of sorts in this highly digitalized world; this project helps me feel grounded.

If you'd like to be a part of my annual survey/zine, send your mailing address to: [thelittleredpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:thelittleredpreschool@gmail.com).

I'd love to add you to my mailing list.



# ZINESTER PROFILE FERAL COMICS

**RICH LARIOS** is the creator and publisher of *Feral Comics* and is based in central California. *Feral Comics* is a monthly anthology of short comics by artists from around the world. Most of the artists are unpublished, off-beat and usually from underrepresented groups. Rich publishes, curates and prints every issue. He often contributes as well. I know Rich through his comics, his YouTube videos and a handful of emails we have traded. A true entrepreneur, once Rich identifies a need for something he focuses his energy on meeting that need.

**BTZ:** Rich, I know you are a child of the 90s and very into skate culture. Did you grow up with both zines and comics? How did you get interested in publishing your own?

**RL:** I've been reading comics for a long time. My pops was keen on taking his kids to the dying retail stores of the 90s comic book market crash. He'd give us a few bucks and we'd get all kinds of crazy shit, so my brothers and sisters all have their own comic book collection.

Even though we all had comics, I was the only one that gravitated towards zines. I think that growing up skateboarding and listening to punk really exposed me to many fan zines that related to bands. That, mixed with the punk flyers from that era, really made me start on my zine-making journey.

I started publishing my own comic book zine called *Stupid No Talent Comics*, and I even went as far as to make a silly company imprint called Stupid No Talent Productions. 😞 Very self depreciating. But I did that in my teenage years.

Once I sold my restaurants, I realized I should go back to something I really enjoyed and I started Feral Publication as a way to get back into my childhood passions that were always gnawing at me.

**Editor's Note:** Rich was an owner and co-creator of Dirt Dogs, a street food hotdog restaurant chain with 10 locations spread across Southern California and Las Vegas, NV. [www.dirtdogla.com](http://www.dirtdogla.com)

**BTZ:** *Feral Comics* feature different voices in each issue. What made you want to take on the project, and how do you find your cartoonists?



**RL:** I wanted to empower the art community through diversity in art, story, and creators. Through Feral Publication I want to destroy and rebuild what we value in art.

In truth, I seldom look for artists and my relationship with other cartoonists is usually word of mouth or being in the same artistic spaces as them.

**BTZ:** What is the most important thing you look for when hunting for a comic to print?

**RL:** I look for diversity. That can be as stated, in the art style, the story or its structure, and in its creator. I think that diversity is exciting. I also do not fund or promote anything I view as hateful which warrants mention. Some people think all ideas are welcomed to *Feral Comics* and that's not the case, something that comes from a good place is, but I also have to think of what will be read. If the art attacks what I'm trying to do, if it attacks ideas of diversity and empowerment through art, then it has no home here.

**BTZ:** *Feral Comics* offers a subscription service for 20 dollars a year. I know you print the issues yourself. Are you able to keep the project in the black? Do you have any tips for zinesters who are trying to launch their own, similar projects?

**RL:** I've had hassles before when speaking on the money aspect of what I'm up to, but I do want to say that Feral Publication has found itself in the green for the last few years.

Although I don't make much, I make enough to keep growing and expanding, but that's not only through the zines. I've had to work real hard to build different revenue streams but all relating back to the overall goal.

This year I've reached a point where I can finally have the zines printed for me, and I am excited for that. It all takes time, and it's a slow process. I've met many people that think they should become the next Matt Groening publishing a zine.

It's not easy to get into publishing spaces, but you should create a metric for your success. What do you value? How do you want to get there? These questions matter, once you know what you want to do, and how you want to do it, sale and scale. For every order, figure out the best thing you can do with that dollar made. This will be trial and error for sure.

**BTZ:** Last question, I know you created a mini zine vending machine; can you talk a little about taking on that side project?

**RL:** For sure, this is a prime example of the last question and that trial and error statement. When I launched the vending machine project Feral had found itself in the green with 700 bucks in hand. I decided to launch *Feral Comics*, hoping to put some money in zinester's hands, and also the vending machine.

COVID happened and all the shops I thought of were closed for that time. Once they reopened I set out to find it a home, which I briefly did until the store closed down, and now the vending machine is just collecting dust waiting for a new home.

The problem with that project is that businesses don't see the value in building community. I've had many shops explain that they didn't want to compete with the vending machine in their stores.

Trial and error, I have a new idea for where to place them outside my original target of art supply stores and comic shops, so this is not the end of this project. I hope to get the first one established and add more soon.



*Rich next to his Mini Zine Vending Machine.*

**THANKS RICH!** Richard Larios and *Feral Publication* can be found at: [feralpublicationzines.bigcartel.com](http://feralpublicationzines.bigcartel.com) and [www.youtube.com/@FeralPublication](http://www.youtube.com/@FeralPublication)  
Interview for *Behind the Zines* by Ed Tillman, who can be found at [edtillman.net](http://edtillman.net)

## **Making/Living History** – by Anna Gecko

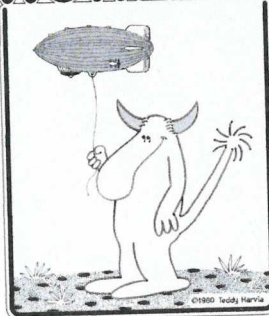
Lately I've been thinking about history and community. When people talk about the origins of fandom we as know it, they'll usually mention paper mail fanzines made by women in the 1960's. They paved the way for today's queer fandom: people posting their stories on social media or other websites.

But here's the thing. People who made fanzines in the 60's? They are still making fanzines today! Many make them in PDF format alongside paper copies. I've been reading a lot of zines through **Fanac.org** (Fan Activity) and **the UFO** (United Fanzine Organization).

These classic-style fanzines look very different from the colorful, professional fanzines we often see today. Classic fandom was a broad community, devoted more to sharing creativity than to consuming specific media. I had been under the impression that this fandom died out when the internet happened. That was a false impression.

The Minnesota Science Fiction Society's club zine, *Rune*, published a reflection by David Cummer in issue 65. He talks about realizing he's gay and coming out of the closet — and this is in the 1980's. Cummer continued in fandom for years before dying in

### **RUNE 93**





2022. *Run* itself is still published (if irregularly), with issue #93 coming out in December 2023.

People are out there. If we want to connect, we have to be willing to look for connection. I wanted to be part of a classic fandom community, so I read fanzines and wrote letters of comment to the zinesters. I joined the National Fantasy Fan Foundation and I highly recommend it (public memberships are free).

History sometimes gets treated as a separate, faraway place. It's not. People who were there might still be here. If they are not alive today, their existences still influence the world we currently live in.

I am grateful for the archivists who keep older zines accessible. Older zinesters paved the way for what we do today, and many continue to create alongside us. Reading their zines is one way to ensure we can build on their foundations.

### ***Tetragrammaton Fragments #274***

You can get this for \$3.50 from  
[\*\*stevekeeter@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:stevekeeter@gmail.com)

The United Fanzine Organization is a collaborative of small-press publishers who support each others' works. Each member sends copies of their work to the others, and each member reviews each others' work for *Tetragrammaton Fragments*. Additionally, *Fragments* includes reports from the members about how their lives are going. This issue has an article about Kurt Vonnegut's guidelines for writing and how to





apply it to sequential art storytelling. Reading this zine feels like getting to listen in on a club meeting.

### **Rune #93**

This zine is available for free at [mnstf.org](http://mnstf.org); prior issues, including the #65 mentioned earlier, are available at [fanac.org](http://fanac.org)

*Rune* is the club zine for the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. (Apparently the "t" in "MNSTF" is because science fiction was once called *scientifiction*.) The zine has been irregularly published since 1968, with #93 coming out December 2023. Issue 93 features contributions from club members about COVID, a short story about cats, and a review of a British TV show called Quite Interesting.

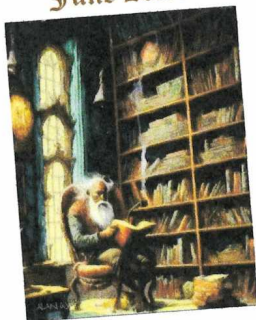
### **Tightbeam 357**

Available for free on the [TNFFF.org](http://TNFFF.org) website.

*Tightbeam* is one of the National Fantasy Fan Foundation's club zines, with this series focusing on reviews of science-fiction/fantasy works. Usually it'll have reviews of anime, movies, and books. My favorite recurring article is the "Food of Famous Writers," recipes often accompanied by a novel recommendation. Under "SerCon" (**Serious Content**), there will often be a biography of a sci-fi writer and reviews of their work.

**Tightbeam 357**

**June 2024**



*The Reader*  
by Alan White

# It's Not Up to Me to Decide

By Todd Taylor

**“So it drips away**

**Wears the stone down each day**

**It drips it drips away**

**Sometimes you can't see what you change, too close to it.”**

**—Cable Ties, “Change,” from *All Her Plans***

I'm unsure why I hesitate to be so explicit, to pull back the sheet and show you some internal workings of a long-running zine project. Perhaps it's the prompt of changing the world. My first instinct is if I claim any part of that change, it's too boastful. Or incorrect. I don't think I'm alone, in a zine-maker setting, when I say I feel so small—inconsequential in the context of the big, bad world—but helpful to family, friends, and allies. I can confidently say, “I can change my mind,” or, “I can change my socks,” but have my actions changed the world? Jeez, Billy, that's a lot to put on someone. How do I answer that without sounding like an arrogant asshole?

We live in a capitalist society. It sucks. This is the framework American society has decided upon. I don't like it, but I balance my checkbook every month and live within my means. I think capitalism is horribly abusive and it's done a bang-up job of making people think there are few, if any, alternatives to it. (And those alternatives quickly get demonized as existential threats to civilizations or trivialized as naïve. For an in-depth analysis of the stupidity of capitalism, I highly recommend David Graeber's *Debt*.) Capitalism infects and perverts everything it touches.

Kevin Dunn, my good buddy, and author of *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*, came up with the term “intentionally bad capitalists.” Nothing's set in stone with this way of looking at the world, but it's more than merely a thought exercise. When given opportunities with *Razorcake*, the punk zine I co-founded and have edited since 2001, we push back against capitalism. Most often, we do it quietly, away from a spotlight. We're doing it because it's the right thing to do for us. We're trying to live up to DIY punk's ongoing promises and ethics, something I've taken seriously since I first discovered it in 1983.

Speaking broadly, the mid-'80s were a rough time for punk. There was a realization by many that punk couldn't change the world on a macro

level. Disillusion was rampant, but there were pockets of people who internalized its lessons and became social workers, teachers, activists, artists, therapists, and caretakers. The grassroots strengthened. Thousands of zines flourished. Punk ideas could be used for long-term good, as templates to honest, thoughtful, and ethical lives. It just didn't garner as much attention as punk's initial splash, so it had time to develop.

Three years after starting *Razorcake*, with the help of Megan Pants, we went through a grueling two-year process of becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity. We're the only music print publication in the United States to hold its own charitable designation. (*Maximum Rocknroll* was sponsored by an umbrella arts organization.) Being an official non-profit isn't the same as not-for-profit or "not making money," but it did set the stage that no one single person can hoard money made through collective effort. By being transparent about our finances, we hope to continually build trust with others who believe in our shared mission. We also wanted to plant a clear flag: We're not guided by money. Money is fuel to keep us running in an unfortunately capitalist society.

Let's start at the cover of an issue of *Razorcake*. After years and years of battling distributors and mostly getting ripped off, but being able to sustain through direct subscriptions, reasonable advertising rates, donations, and grants, we persevered. In January of 2018, we pulled the plug on the last of our national magazine distributors. Doing so, we no longer had to have a UPC code. If we hadn't included them up to that point, we would have been charged a printing and stickering fee because "How could a store sell them?" (the distro's response to our query). We also no longer had to put a price on the cover because... why? We jettisoned them both and suffered no ill consequences.

Also, on every cover of *Razorcake* are two statements. One is mainly a descriptor of the contents, in case you're interested in our coverage: "Non-profit punk rock." The second is "We Do Our Part." I'll be fully honest with you—I stole that slogan after a years-long search. It's from The National Recovery Administration, set up by FDR in 1933, which set a minimum wage and abolished child labor. It was formed in an attempt to eliminate, in its own words, "cutthroat competition." It's important, *Razorcake*-wise, to tend to our own garden. We focus on our actions. We try to do the best we can. As an organization of 165 volunteers, we aren't prescriptive, telling people how they *should* live. Instead, we attempt to live, and share, by example. We do *our* part.

As mentioned previously, *Razorcake* accepts advertising, but there are caveats. Advertisers have to fall within our mission. So, no cars, no cigarettes, no banks, no large corporations. Basically, they have to be DIY punks or provide a service that DIY punks appreciate. Mostly small record labels, other zines. The prices are at far below “fair market value” (starting at \$43.50, which will get that ad into over 6,000 hands worldwide). I also can’t stress enough that there’s a separation of editorial work and advertising. We tell our advertisers we’ll do our best to review their music in a timely manner, but can’t promise the review will be positive. So, yeah, we’ve lost quite a few advertisers due to negative reviews. We’ve also featured tons of bands and artists who don’t advertise with us. It’s not a pay-to-play situation. As a quick aside, I wrote for *Alternative Press* for a hot minute over a decade ago and for the vast majority of my reviews, I was paid half price. I learned that they sent the music that their advertisers had supplied to multiple reviewers and published only the positive ones. Negative reviews weren’t published. I learned the phrase “kill fee” and quit shortly after. What this capitalist equation ignores is the intimate relationship between fanzine writers and readers. We aim to establish long-term trust over being a defacto PR arm of the record labels we love. Not smart capitalism, but great for building integrity.

What’s saved our bacon has been the shift to completely controlling our own distribution. We go through great pains—with constant effort and diligence—to maintain a database of all our subscribers and places that carry *Razorcake*. We do all the shipping directly, through the USPS. It’s no small feat that three people’s labor puts 6,000 copies in the mail every two months from a 540 square foot office. Managing Editor Daryl and I maintain that database, keep on top of ever-evolving postal codes and the-ever-more-shitty postage meter, not because we like office work, but because if we do it this way, we can keep “econo” subscriptions in the United States at \$17.50 for a six-issue subscription. That’s 696 pages of zine goodness per year. We break even. We remain sustainable. Could we charge more? Sure, I guess. People can also get a \$35 “supporter sub.” Do we pocket that money? Nope. We send those supporter subs to zine libraries and public libraries across the country. The point is DIY, independent of industries. The point is keeping zines affordable and available, not the maximizing of profits at every possible point. (Through partner programs, we also offer free issues to people experiencing incarceration, but do not do it directly.)



*Razorcake* was saved from possible extinction when Daryl formalized the sponsor-a-space program. We know there are people out there who would totally appreciate *Razorcake* but don't know it exists. There are also spaces such as bars, community centers, music venues, record stores, bookstores, breweries, recording studios, punk houses, tattoo and pizza parlors—pretty much any independent enterprise—that would be interested in receiving copies to give out to their patrons. Here's the twist; we solicit \$150 donations for a space to receive 25 copies of every issue for an entire year. That donation covers the cost of us printing and shipping magazines to be given away for free. Often times, the people who need *Razorcake* most don't have access to it. (Let's recap: the space itself often doesn't pay to have *Razorcake* there and we, as publishers, are pre-paid for an entire year to send it to them, all through the grace of a donor.) Again, we break even, pay ourselves a living wage, and continue seeking out and celebrating marginalized artists (even marginalized in punk) to feature in the zine.

The medium is the message, and the message is that zines aren't great at creating profit, but are often great at building communities based on shared interest. During our over two-decade tenure, I've come to appreciate sustainability more and more. It may look static from a distance, but it's actually building healthy ecosystems. Improving processes. Learning new skills. Taking the time to tend. Building and maintaining friendships. The zine is a means to an end, not a mechanism to another "growth opportunity." Hell, we've spent an embarrassing amount of time working on our website, but its main purpose is to work in service of being able to continue printing a physical zine—and not the other way around.

The continual growth of capitalism is a virus that's literally eating the earth. (Look into the raw material consumption needed to fuel AI and shit like cryptocurrency and tell me how humans survive if that's the course society chooses.) I'd rather live and create art humbly, fucking over as few people as possible in the process. So, have my actions changed the world? I honestly don't think it's for me to decide. That's a question for whoever is reading this zine right now. That's a question for anyone who has picked up one of the 705,000 copies of *Razorcake* we've published since we first started.

# FIVE QUESTIONS WITH JUSTSEEDS

QUESTIONS BY ANSWERS BY  
BILLY M'CALL ✌ JOSH MACPHEE

When considering the theme for this issue, "Using Zines to Change the World," I quickly thought about the artist collective known as Justseeds. Founded in 1998, then transformed into a worker-owned cooperative in 2007, Justseeds is a group of 41 artists who strive to make the world a better place through the creation and distribution of politically-themed artwork. This includes posters, postcards, clothing, books, zines, and so much more. For those who have never heard of Justseeds, now is your chance to catch up. For those who are already familiar with them, this is your gentle reminder to check back in with this hard-working group.

## 1. The Justseeds organization is made up of 41 artists from all over North America. How do so many viewpoints blend together to form such a unified message?

Although we have broad agreement and orientation towards social issues (antiracism, feminism, pro-trans, etc.) I suspect when you get down to the details you will find a fair amount of contention. The reality is that most cultural production articulates politics in broad strokes, it's not the place the nitty gritty gets worked out. Justseeds is also highly decentralized, and everyone makes their own work, it doesn't have to pass some sort of litmus test, we try to trust each other. So we can all fairly comfortably co-exist with our differences because we are not the art police and no one is in a political party that demands all the work articulates the same exact ideology.



*Free Palestine by Alec Dunn*





*Unions Are People by Roger Peet*

**2. Do the artists of Justseeds collaborate on the various art projects? Or each art piece is made by an individual, and then submitted to the group?**



*Voto\_1 by Pete Railand*

We've developed multiple ways of collaborating. We have done large-scale 20+ artist collaborative exhibitions in the past, but generally found those difficult and challenging in ways that outweighed the reward. More facilitated collaborations have worked well for us, for instance our print portfolios, where a small group develops a concept, sets a frame for participation, and each member creates their own print submission to the project. Then all of these are assembled into a finished collective portfolio. We've also worked on publishing projects together, including a book (Firebrands, released over a decade ago), two coloring books, and a cookbook is in process now.

**3. How do artistic expressions, such as zines, create positive change in the world?**

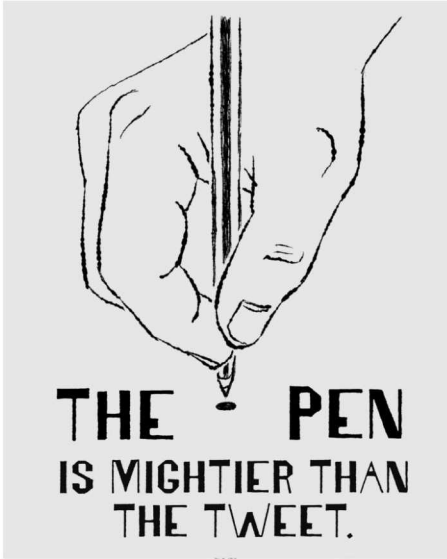
Although there is theoretically an infinite number of media outlets, in reality we access so little of the information that is available to us, and so much of it is channelled through platforms we do not own or control. Zines truly are self-publishing, they are independent—written and published by individuals and small groups outside mainstream distribution channels. I think of zines sometimes as signposts, or Cliffs Notes, for ideas—a taste that points you in a direction, something that lets you know whole worlds exist outside your own experience.

Often times how you do something is as important as what you are doing, and zines are a great example of how you can start to think about controlling as many aspects as possible of your self-expression.



*No Matter the Results... by Josh MacPhee*

**4. Every day it seems there are more and more global issues which demand our attention. How does Justseeds decide which issues to address?**



*The Pen is Mightier than the Tweet by Dave Loewenstein*

Again, being decentralized, it is really up to each member to decide their focus. I spend a lot of my time and energy producing culture against incarceration, while others focus on immigration, climate, etc. This is one of the great things about working as a cooperative, I don't feel like I need to do it all. If I'm focusing on shutting Rikers Island Jail Complex here in NYC, I can trust that Melanie and Jesus will be supporting movements in the Bay Area, Aaron will be working with vets and making work against militarism in Chicago, Roger will be fighting

for climate justice, Zola will be supporting Indigenous struggles up North, etc.

**5. What are the advantages of collaborating with like-minded artists?**

We collaborate in so many ways, it's hard to pin down a clean list. In the micro, collaboration can often be quite challenging, we are all coming from such different experiences and locations (geographic, but also identity, politics, etc.). In the macro, it is just these sorts of challenges that we need to struggle through to make the world more livable for all of us, it's the work!



*You Can't Bomb The Future by Roger Peet*

*My eternal thanks and gratitude to Josh MacPhee of Justseeds for taking time to answer these questions. To learn more about the group, and to support their various causes, please visit <https://justseeds.org>*

*Layout for Behind the Zines by Ed Tillman*



## Zine Reviews

by Davida Breier

For 25 years, I was part of Xerography Debt, a zine review zine. In January, we decided to put the zine on hiatus. While the zine was written by about 15 people, the back office and editorial work got to be too much with everything life was throwing at me. Instead, I'm reviewing zines for other publications for a while. Cheers to Billy for his work on **BEHIND THE ZINES!**

### **BOOGER BEAR MINI-ZINE #1, \$1 or a stamp, 2 1/8" x 2 3/4", copied, color, 8 pages**

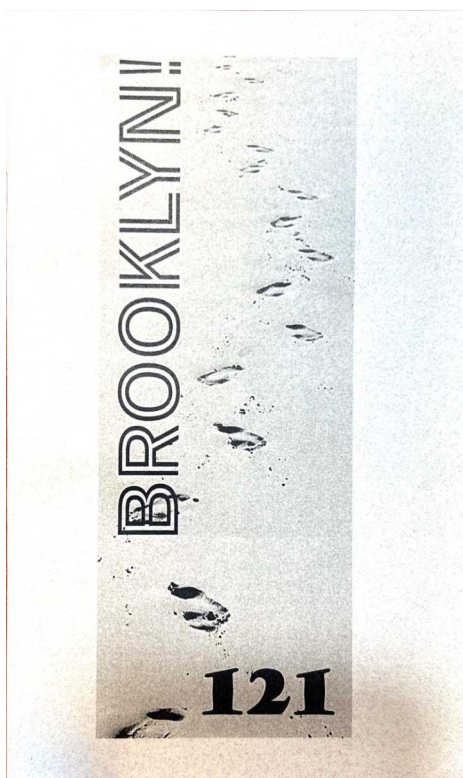
Join Booger Bear and Andrew as they demystify the 90s. Was the flannel sustainably sourced? Where did all the Xs come from? Why were jeans made for giants?

(Andrew Coltrin, Partly Robot Industries. PO Box 220121. Milwaukie, OR 97269; [partlyrobot.com](http://partlyrobot.com))

### **BROOKLYN! #121, #123 1/2, and ANACHRONISMS XVII \$10 for a 4 issue subscription, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 20pg**

**BROOKLYN! #121** takes readers to Coney Island! I learned that the name may come from the Dutch word for rabbits (coney). Issue #123 1/2 revels in the beauty and history of Brooklyn – from the Mermaid statues on Mermaid Avenue to the oldest dedicated bike lane in the US. It's impossible to read an issue of **BROOKLYN!** and not learn something.

**ANACHRONISMS XVII** discusses history (real and mythologized) and society with a



cranky bent. Female pope, fezzes, abacuses, roller derby, maps, computers, letters, and more.

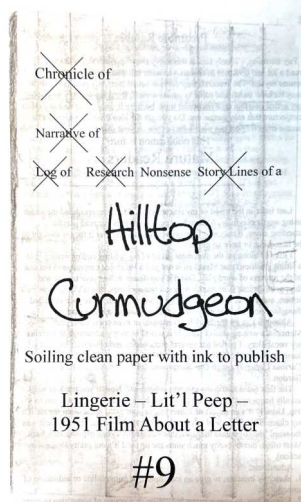
(Fred Argoff, Penthouse L, 1170 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn NY 11230)

### **DWAN #91a, #91b, and #91c, free/trade, 8 ½" x 11", PDF**

**DWAN** is an amalgam of the personal and the poetic, with rich and jarring visuals. The visuals, like the words, zoom in on details. In issues #s 91a, 91b, and 91c we see the HD rendering of short-sighted bureaucracy and how that is failing teachers and students. The poetry is ancient and modern, symbolic and blatant, native tongue and translated. (bay.donny.smith@gmail.com)

### **HILLTOP CURMUDGEON #9, free/trade, 8 ½" x 5 ½", copied, 20pg**

From high atop his hilltop lair (A-frame), DB Pedlar cartwheels though life like a man trying to shake a kidney stone lose. Okay, that last part might be true. DB publishes **HILLTOP CURMUDGEON** as a form of self-amusement and hopes that readers are also amused, but doesn't count on it. In any given issue there might be fiction that borders on the absurd, medical maladies, historical fact and cranky opinion. And yes, if you are imagining DB Pedlar and Fred Argoff as the Statler and Waldorf of zines, you'd probably be right.



(D.B. Pedlar, 25727 Cherry Hill Road, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403)

### **POLICYMAKER #34, \$20 annual subscription, 8 ½" x 11", copied, 4 pgs**

This is a short perzine/newsletter zine that is surprisingly text-dense. Like Jenna Freeman's **IRREGULAR PERIODICAL** and Billy's **The Desert Sun**, **POLICYMAKER** offers brief snapshots about Mike's daily life. He goes to gigs and plays in a few, watches baseball, grades his students' papers, and so much more. It is filled

with the minutia of daily life, but the way it is captured it's akin to a letter to a friend or journal entry.

(Mike Fournier, PO Box 530, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675,  
[@xfournierx](mailto:@xfournierx))

## READING LOG 2023, \$2, 7" x 8.5", copied, 8 pgs

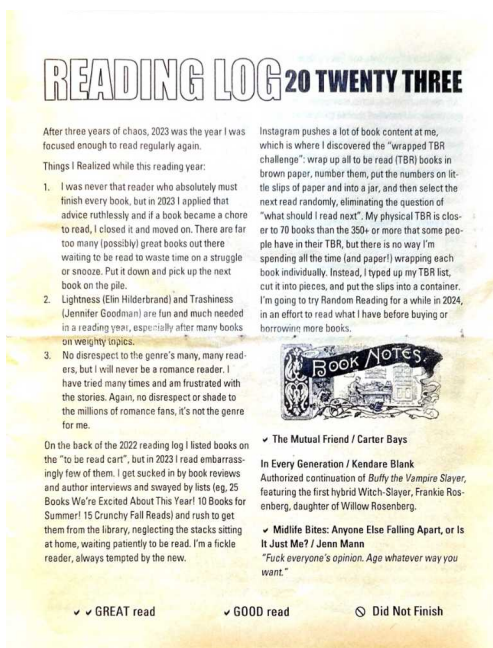
Aj's annual reading log is a perennial favorite and something I look forward to each year. It isn't just that I learn about books I might enjoy or that we both read during the year, it goes deeper than that. The act of pleasure reading is personal, transforming this into a per-zine that doesn't look like a per-zine. I always learn a bit more about Aj's interests, reading habits, and how she feels when she reads (or doesn't read) a book. Recommended.

(Aj Michel, PO Box 877,  
Lansdowne, PA 19050,  
[syndprod@gmail.com](mailto:syndprod@gmail.com), [syndprod.etsy.com](https://syndprod.etsy.com))

## SLEEP TO WAKE, \$?, 4 ¼" x 5 ½", copied, 24pgs

**SLEEP TO WAKE: A CHRONICLE OF INSOMNIA** details Kate's battle with sleeplessness. I've also had bouts and routinely fight to stay asleep, so this was an interesting look at the condition. After trying OTC and prescribed medication, as well as all the usual tips, she visits a psychiatrist. The solution was behavior therapy and along the way Kate got to learn about the mammals in the PNW.

(Kate Haas, 3510 SE Alder St., Portland, OR 97214,  
[kate.haas@runbox.com](mailto:kate.haas@runbox.com), [www.katehaas.com](https://www.katehaas.com))



## **Zine Reviews for Billy / Behind the Zines**

**from “Kris with a K” (Summer 2024)**

As a slightly older zine publisher (I'll turn fifty at the end of the year) the loss of so many zine review zines is really starting to bum me out. *Zine World* stopped publishing way back in 2012. *Xerography Debt* is currently on hiatus. And just last month I received the very last issue of *Node Pajomo*. It turns out, the older zinesters are burning out (or getting swallowed up by real life responsibilities) and the younger zinesters are finding each other online. And man, that makes me feel like a fucking dinosaur.

I remember the first zine review zine I ever held in my hands: it was the second issue of Violet Jones' *The Free Press Death Ship*. It was a completely overwhelming experience. Hundreds of reviews of weird little publications, most of them available for a donation of stamps or a few well-concealed dollar bills, or a trade. Since I hadn't yet published any zines (the seed, however, had officially been planted) dollar bills would have to make do.

There must still be a few zine publishers out there clandestinely photocopying their review zines after-hours when the office is empty and there aren't any busybodies around to be a nuisance. And there are still a handful of perzines out there that throw in a few zine reviews to help keep what us old folks refer to as “the Papernet” afloat. But I'm really going to miss the joy of reading reviews on paper as opposed to on a screen. I've bought a few little mags on Etsy over the years, but clicking a button doesn't have the same thrill as stuffing dollar bills into an envelope and wondering if it'll make it past a postal worker with sticky fingers.

I suppose all is not lost. *Razorcake* has a massive review section and Jason Rodgers' *Asymmetrical Anti-Media* is still coming out fairly regularly. Anyway, thanks for letting Grandpa rant and ramble about his strange little hobby for a couple of minutes. Now if you could just roll me over to the window so I can watch the pigeons and drool all over myself while I try to remember the name of the poet that said, “Against the ruin of the world, there is only one defense – the creative act.” On to the reviews.

**A LIFE OF WORK #2: FICA YOU – \$3 / 5.5 x 8.5 / 24pg**

**David LaBounty – PO Box 250382, Plano – TX 75025-0382**

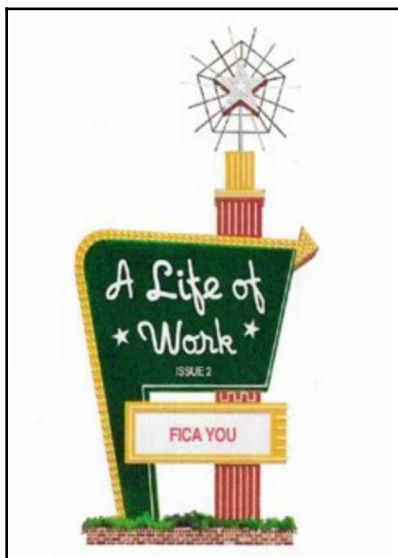
**[info@thevellumunderground.com](mailto:info@thevellumunderground.com)**

Let's kick things off with a work zine. This is the second issue of a limited four-issue run by David of Blue Cubicle Press. I love a good work zine. They take me back to all the odd jobs I've had over the years. Many of them were awful, but in hindsight I realize they gave me the



kick in the ass I needed to do some serious soul-searching and figure out what the hell I wanted to do with my life.

In this second installment of **A LIFE OF WORK** David brings us tales of the jobs he had during his college years. “They were my foray into the service industry, and the experience was invaluable.” I smiled when I read the word *invaluable*. I know what that *invaluable* means. It means, I better study hard, otherwise I’ll be unpacking boxes in the dark and dingy stockroom of the Men’s Department at Sears until I retire. It means, I better not screw up, otherwise I’ll be smiling through clenched teeth as I flip burgers at the club house for the rest of my days while flabby old golfers tease me about my sex life and tell me politically incorrect jokes. These are only two of the horrible jobs David writes about. I hate to admit it, but I was highly entertained reading about his suffering. But I guess that’s kind of the point: turning your pain and agony into art. Eagerly awaiting the next installment.



**ANACHRONISMS #XVI** – \$2 / 5.5 x 8.5 / 20pg / Trades: Inquire  
**Fred Argoff** – 1170 Ocean Parkway (Penthouse L), Brooklyn, NY 11230  
There are many genres of zines. Perzines, fanzines, work zines, literary zines, art zines, political zines, review zines, 24-hour zines... You get the gist. The other day I was thinking, *What genre would this zine fit into? A rantzine? A curmudgeonzine?*

I’ll let you be the judge. Topics in this issue include: when you see or hear the words *modernization* or *improvement* you should turn and run for your damn life; the vanishing of trolleys from the American landscape and how it’s a well-documented conspiracy involving the auto industry, the oil industry, and the Federal government in order to get people into cars; clever corporate marketing strategies designed to make you spend your hard-earned money; a *Remember when you had to lick stamps?* rant, and more.

**ANACHRONISMS** is too informative to be labeled a rantzine. And it’s too humorous to be labeled a curmudgeonzine. I don’t know... Maybe I should stop trying to put labels on things and just say that you should drop Fred a line and request a copy and see for yourself.

**BIZARRISM #18 – \$12 (in Australia) /\$16 (International) /  
8.5 x 11 / 40pg / Trades: Inquire**

**Chris Mikul – PO Box K546 – Haymarket NSW 1240 -- AUSTRALIA  
[chris.mikul88@gmail.com](mailto:chris.mikul88@gmail.com)**

Fans of Fortean mystery, madness, and mayhem are going to love this zine. In this latest issue we get seriously in-depth articles on such topics as the brief and mysterious life of Kaspar Hauser, the wild adventures of Maria (daughter of) Rasputin, and the life and times of the nineteenth-century artist/criminal Thomas G. Wainewright (aka: the Prince of Poisoners).

There's also plenty of fascinating Australia-related content as well, tales of deception and scandal and missing persons that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the very last page. And if you're interested in learning about micronations with eccentric leaders or the history of books bound in human skin, well, Chris has you covered with book reviews on those and many other bizarre subjects. It's all rounded out with notes and sources and tons of strange and macabre photos and illustrations. One of my all-time favorite publications.

**COMMUNICATING VESSELS #31 (FALL/WINTER 2023)**

**Donation / 6.5 x 8.5 / 44pg // PO Box 2048, Tuscon, AZ 85702**

"We spell it Tuscon, not Tucson." It's been three years since the last issue so this was a pleasant surprise. When you tear open the envelope you're hit with the smell of ink, as Anthony publishes this himself with the help of an old, salvaged printing press. Anthony has been busy. He published a book, *Dante in the Desert*, he's been learning Latin, and he got evicted.

Anthony's eviction tale and his experiences dealing with a scam artist of a mortgage loan company make up the bulk of this issue. It makes for some truly horrifying reading. As one of the last holdouts in the fight against the current all-digital smartphone-only online-24/7 culture, Anthony is finding it hard to survive in the 21st century. No smartphone? Too bad. Can't do online banking? Not our problem. Can't open the files we sent you? Go to hell.

Anthony turns to the works of Dante in search of answers. "Dante steps in and forces me to realize that people have been confronting similar dilemmas since the dawn of time. The people he shakes hands with and strikes up conversations with on the mountain teach him about himself and the ways of the world, how in order to make it up there we must first descend downward – humbling ourselves and learning through experience how to remain calm in the face of dire circumstances. Dante learned this in the Inferno; I learned it in the Hell of a bad real estate deal."

The translations of Dante in this issue are Anthony's own. There are also lots of letters, reviews of publications of the anarchistic persuasion, and one of the most beautiful covers I've ever seen on a zine. Anthony says send a donation, but he's being modest. I would recommend sending \$10 for a sample copy, well-concealed cash or stamps (or a check made payable to "Anthony Walent, NOT Communicating Vessels") as he's about as far off the grid as you can get these days.

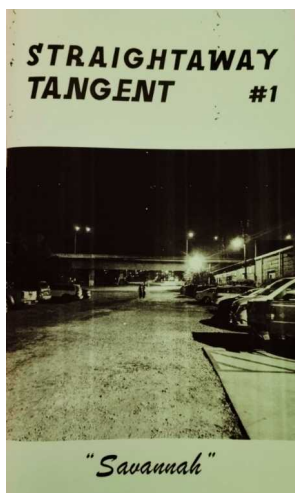
## **THE KEN CHRONICLES #70 (FEBRUARY 2024)**

**\$4 / \$2 PDF / 5.5 x 8.5 / 24pg / Trades: inquire**

**Ken Bausert – 2140 Erma Drive -- East Meadow, NY 11554-1120**

**PassScribe@aol.com – thekenchronicles.zinesite.blogspot.com**

Like clockwork, I hold in my hands yet another fine issue of the perzine to end all perzines. As Ken states in the introduction, "it's all about me... my life, travels, opinion and philosophy." This time around we learn about some Queens architecture that is no longer there, as well as some Long Island architecture (a train station) that never used to be there. There's also a brief but fascinating history of the Mel-O-Roll!, a trip report from a classic car show, and a little DIY tree removal. A guest writer takes over the long-running "People, Places & Things (that aren't there anymore)" column with a piece about her father, musician John Hemminger. And then there's my favorite part of every issue: what Ken's been reading and listening to recently and the lively back and forth between Ken and his readers in the letters section. A cool map of Manhattan's Hidden Etymologies graces the back cover. Always a pleasure.



## **STRAIGHTAWAY TANGENT #1 &**

**#2 – \$5 / 5.5 x 8.5 / 50pg**

**Michael Rebinski, 452 S. Atlantic Avenue,  
Apt. 1, Pittsburgh, PA 15224**

**personage.august@gmail.com**

A zine about "travel, coffee shops, roads, urbanism, waking up in a van, working through an unrequited crush, goth shit, escaping winter, hot water, video games, zines, Krishna consciousness and other spiritual paths, and social anxiety." That's a lot of stuff, but it's very accurate. Issue #1 covers Michael's trip from Pennsylvania to Georgia. He lives out of

his van for a month or so, working remote via laptop in cafes and coffeehouses, showering in the local Y, meeting local characters, and having lots of the mundane everyday adventures that make up the bulk of our lives.

Issue #2 continues with Michael's adventures from Florida to Virginia. Highlights include a visit to the Travis Fristoe Zine Library at the Civic Media Center in Gainesville, a hike on Black Hammock Island, and searching for human connection on Tinder. This is a text-heavy zine (my favorite kind) with lots of metaphysical/soul-searching/introspective insight throughout. This is a real page-turner of a road trip account with a nod to the Mad Monks (*Monk: The Mobile Magazine*) and William Least-Heat Moon (*Blue Highways*). Check it out!

**TOURING AMERICA #SECOND TO NO CITY,  
#NORTH BY PACIFIC NORTHWEST - 5.5 x 8.5 / 20pg**  
**The Word Distribution, 347 8<sup>th</sup> Street Apt. 4, Jersey City, NJ 07302**

## Touring America:



## North by Pacific Northwest

Ed writes great little travel zines. The best places to get a cup of tea and some interesting local food, bookstores, museums, attending baseball games, playing pinball, meeting up with fellow zinesters and lead heads (aka: pencil enthusiasts). (Ed also publishes a zine called **PENCIL OF THE WEEK.**) Ed packs an incredible amount of stuff into each day. I don't know how he does it. I'm usually ready for bed after lunch these days.

**#NORTH BY PACIFIC  
NORTHWEST** covers a trip to Seattle, Olympia, Salem, and Portland. And **#SECOND TO NO CITY** covers a trip with his partner to Chicago. Ed's writing and energy are contagious. He's excited to be

experiencing new places and just as excited to be sharing what he's learning with his readers. And there are lots of color photos. I especially enjoyed the Trivia Notes section written by Ed's partner in the Chicago issue. Fun and educational. What more could you ask for?

## **UNCIVILIZED AND QUEER - \$2 US / \$3 WORLD / 5.5 x 8.5 / 16pg / Trades: Inquire**

**Jason Rodgers – PO Box 701 -- Cobleskill, NY 12043**

This is an “anti-essentialist critique of gender” by Isabel D’Nihil. I have to admit, I didn’t know what the hell an anti-essentialist was before reading this. I’m still not entirely sure, but this zine explores the tension between anarcho-primitivism and the concepts of non-binary gender and transgender existence. In Isabel’s own words: “I am not satisfied with the solutions offered by the mainstream transgender movement. I am not happy with the solution being hormone replacement and medical intervention. I’m cautious with my own critique of transgender ideas, because this is a critique that could be co-opted by transphobes. Yet it remains that I do not fit well in the way it is constructed. Each person needs to find their own way; the current options are not the ones for me. Part of my discomfort may connect to the psychiatric basis of much of the way transgender is contextualized.” Includes lots of quotes from the works of Michel Foucault, Robert Anton Wilson, and John Zerzan throughout. Heady stuff. There is also a long list of works cited for further research/study.

## **YOU DON’T GET THERE FROM HERE #60 – \$4 / 32pg**

**4.25 x 5.5 / Trades: Inquire**

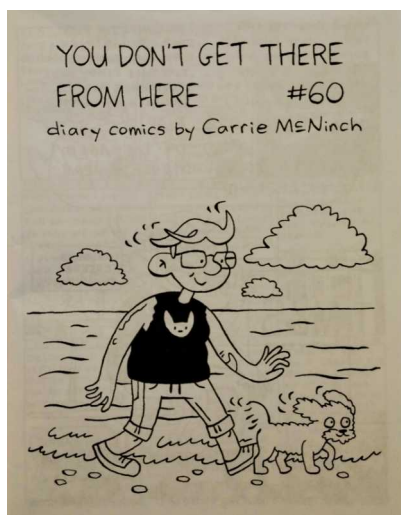
**Carrie McNinch – PO Box 34091**

**Granada Hills, CA 91344**

**[cmcninch@gmail.com](mailto:cmcninch@gmail.com)**

Diary comics covering Carrie’s adventures from June 20, 2019 to August 31, 2019. Dealing with depression and an aging cat. Dogsitting in the UK. Visiting friends and sampling the local mezcal in Mexico. Carrie had quite a summer.

She always manages to pull you right into her experiences and make you smile in recognition or tug fiercely at your heartstrings with her deceptively simple drawing style. It always takes me much longer than it should to finish an issue of **YDGTfH** because I check out all the songs Carrie mentions with each diary entry. (Great way to find new music.) And my copy came with a cool cat sticker. Drop Carrie a line!



(Rexroth! That’s the poet, Kenneth Rexroth!)



# Supply & Demand

By Ken Bausert

Lots of people enjoy making zines but most of the real pleasure comes from having people actually read it and – even better – tell you they liked it. What about your zine? After you’ve completed all the hard work writing, composing, and assembling your project, how do people learn about it or order it? How many copies do you make up? Do you advertise it or rely on word-of-mouth to alert people of its existence? Of course, none of us expect to get rich making zines but what do you charge for yours... or do you just give them away, or trade with other zinesters?

I’ve been creating my quarterly perzine, the Ken Chronicles, for nearly 18 years now. And, before that, I was involved in an APA (Amateur Press Association) journal for another 12 years, with nearly a dozen other contributors. All of that kind of reveals the fact that I’m older than most other zinesters. And just as you might have a preference for certain types or zines – and a reluctance to read some others – I have to overcome the tendency for younger readers to avoid my zine because they might feel it’s not cool enough, or relevant to their interests. And I get that. But I’ve also had a few people write to tell me that, although they were hesitant to try my zine at first, they actually enjoyed it after all. My readers actually span the age spectrum. I have some twenty-somethings, lots of middle agers, and quite a few seniors so I try not to fill an issue with articles aimed at one generation.

Many zine makers give their stuff to family and friends to read – often people with no knowledge of zines or zine culture. I’ve had lots of people ask me about my Chronicles so whenever that happens I give them a copy. The next time I talk to them, I’ll usually hear something like, “Oh, you’re a really good writer,” or “That was very interesting,” but they seldom elaborate. I have an older cousin in Germany who self publishes travel books and he appreciates my zines; an old high school friend in Detroit, Michigan, (who’s had a stroke and can’t hold a paper copy) seems to love my zine so I send him a PDF version (which he can read on his computer).

My dentist found out about my zine and enjoys it so every time I go in for a cleaning, I bring her a copy. And my granddaughter and her husband liked my zines so much that they leave multiple copies out on their coffee table, so when friends come over, they can browse through them. It may be a bit of a novelty for those who are new to the world of zines but it's another outlet for me to connect with different people.

I print up a minimum of 40 copies of each issue. Depending on how many new requests I've received for sample copies, I might make 45. I create on Adobe InDesign (because I have an old version I bought for a reasonable price with a teacher's discount) but keep a PDF copy of everything I make on my computer so I can always run off one or two extras if the demand arises. About 27 to 30 of each issue go to my mailing list of trading partners and a handful of subscribers (bless their hearts!). I made up an Avery labels template with names & addresses on it and update it as necessary each mailing. Another 5 go to Steven at Quimby's Brooklyn zine store (they sell better than I'd expected). The rest will either go to new people who hear about my zine from someone else's review or my own blogspot, or into my back-issue file. I once tried listing my zines on Etsy and left them up there for nearly a year. Never. Got. One. Order. I obviously quit Etsy.



Sure, I'd love to have a larger readership but, overall, I'm happy with the demand for my zines considering I don't go out of my way trying to market them. I seem to have a core following that changes slightly from time to time and, by trading with so many others, I get a constant source of new reading material which I always look forward to.

**[passscribe@aol.com](mailto:passscribe@aol.com)**

## **Using Zines to Change the World by Markell West**

Hi! The main purpose of my zine, *Just a Jefferson*, is to have a writer's workshop by email (or snailmail). It's a round-robin format; anyone can ask or answer anything. There's also an Open Forum. So if participants want to change the world, they can send anything. (I like to limit it to a few paragraphs at a time, however, so there's room for everyone.)

One of my participants is a prisoner who was unfairly convicted, so lately a big part of our "change the world" focus has been "change the injustice system in Virginia." If anyone has connections who may help, please let us know! And, of course, if you have something *you* want to change, you may answer these sample questions about things that annoy you:

**#31, pet peeves about grammar;  
#72, pet peeves while driving; or  
#156, disclaimers that annoy you**

Or you may expound about anything you like in the Open Forum.

Free to participants, and also by email; \$2.00 in a single bill, \$6.00 in cash or unused stamps, or a zine trade for snailmail. Contact [\*\*markellorhighwater@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:markellorhighwater@gmail.com) for more information, a sample copy, or to just take the plunge.

# **ZINETHROPOLOGY: SUBCULTURE CROSSOVER**

**By Kari Tervo – POB 7831 – Beverly Hills, CA 90212**  
**[shardsofglassinyourey@gmail.com](mailto:shardsofglassinyourey@gmail.com)**

Do you ever want to do something cool in addition to zining, but you're not sure what to do? Maybe Tik Tok dances aren't your strength, Comic-Con is too commercial, and team sports are too expensive. Plus, zine culture is its own thing, so how can you get the same zings to your soul somewhere else in the world? Is there another subculture that focuses on expression, acceptance, and making the world a better place?

In a past installment of *Zinethropology* (*Xerography Debt* #35; June 2014), I explored the idea of “zine culture” and concluded that *self-expression* and *sharing* are the foundations of Zinedom. That means that zining shares a surprising extent of crossover with another subculture: Burning Man.

Burning Man is a temporary utopian city that springs forth in the Nevada desert for almost two weeks every summer. Whereas zine artists express and share on paper, Burners (Burning Man participants) express and share through huge art projects (like giant flaming unicorns you can dance on!), musical contributions, creative costuming, gifting, and saving the bacon of a random stranger who forgot to bring sunscreen (or eating his bacon if he traded that for the sunscreen). To top it off, there even used to be an irreverent daily zine distributed at Burning Man called *Piss Clear*.

I'm part of the Burning Man scene, and I'm proud to be a member of the zine scene, too. As subcultures, Zinedom and Burning Man may seem very different, but they share a similar ethos. Part of what makes them both so enjoyable for me is their year-round philosophies. Let's take a look, using the Ten Principles of Burning Man as a framework, at how you can get your soul zings through both subcultures.

## **RADICAL SELF-EXPRESSION**

Burners and zine artists express their ideas, feelings, and preferences without boundaries, and without putting any such boundaries on one another (within respect to the rights of everyone). Whether we're expressing what it's like to have diabetes or a preference for neon green fake-fur coats lined with blinky lights, zine artists and Burners let it all hang out.

## **DECOMMODIFICATION**

Both zine artists and Burners recognize that where there is money, there is the risk of decreasing the intrinsic value of items and experiences. So, we barter, gift, and minimize commercial cash transactions as much as possible. Like Burners, zine artists de-emphasize wealth, and wealth is not our goal in creating. We're doing it for the love of it.

## **RADICAL INCLUSION**

On the Burning Man website, the principle of Radical Inclusion states, "Anyone may be a part. . . We welcome and accept the stranger. No prerequisites exist for participation in our community." Yep, sounds a lot like Zinedom, doesn't it? Burners party with everyone from hobos to hedge fund managers; zine artists trade with everyone from vegans to velociraptors ("meat-eaters" doesn't have the same ring). Everyone is welcome; just come do your thing.

## **GIFTING**

Ever randomly leave your zine at a coffee house, or send a couple extra zines with an Etsy order? How about just giving a stack to an acquaintance who wants to find out more about zines? Aw yeah, that's some good gifting right there. Burners gift, too. They gift embellished wooden tokens, stickers, elaborate dinners, bacon (so much bacon), and camping supplies you forgot to bring. As a Burner and a zine artist, I gift zines, pinback buttons, and custom camping mirrors. None of us expects anything in return, because we're just spreading the love.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Zining and Burning Man are not spectator sports. We believe that the only way to achieve anything is by doing something, whether that is creating a zine about queer justice or greeting a stranger at a party with generous acceptance. Even zine readers who don't make zines participate by writing letters of comment to zine-makers and by buying more zines (which allows more zines to be made!). Likewise, Burners who don't dance, art, or wear fun costumes can participate just by being welcoming to others or gifting. Everyone can participate in these subcultures in some way, and everyone is welcome to participate!

## **RADICAL SELF-RELIANCE**

Burners are expected to bring adequate self-care provisions to the desert, and to be attuned to the needs of their body and their mind. Zinesters are expected to shake, shake, shake a few more copies out of



that toner cartridge before resorting to a GoFundMe campaign, and to get creative in using available resources to make really awesome zines. In both subcultures, if we don't have enough to rely on ourselves or see something we'd like to have, we are assertive enough to ask for trades. The other day, I wanted a \$3 zine but I didn't have any cash, so I sent a \$3-winning scratch-off ticket as a trade. I felt creatively self-reliant.

## **COMMUNAL EFFORT/CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

Both subcultures acknowledge the value of creative collaboration, cooperation, and mutual respect. We also accept that we all need to behave responsibly and within the general parameters of a civil society. I guess that's a good segue to pointing out a few *differences* between Zinedom and Burning Man culture. For instance, Burners are really into the environment. One time, I brought a bunch of my zines to gift at a Burner party, and I saw someone re-using one as a coaster. Unlike Burning Man, zine culture doesn't focus as much on the principle of Leave No Trace (environmental sustainability). I mean, that's by its very nature—we're very into paper. At the same time, many of us focus on re-using and recycling, and some of us even write zines about saving the environment.

Zine artists are also different from Burners because zinesters don't really follow the principle of Immediacy. Which, if you have ever written an apologetic introduction about how long it took you to put out the most recent issue of your zine, or waited for a zine sent at the media mail rate, you know what I'm talking about. However, immediacy in zining may be found in needing to use a paste of flour and water because you ran out of glue stick!

Sometimes, you might need an alternative to zining, though you crave the basic underlying ethos. By the nature of radical self-expression, zining often focuses on the documentation and preservation of pain, and that can be detrimental in large doses. Hence, another important difference between zining and Burning Man is that emotional pain is generally de-accentuated in Burning Man culture, while intense celebration is emphasized. So if you feel like taking a step back from the less pleasant aspects of life but still want an experience with positive foundations, you can get some of the same benefits by attending a Burner party near you! You might even get to dance on a giant flaming unicorn. Bring yourself to share and some of your zines to gift, and express the night away!

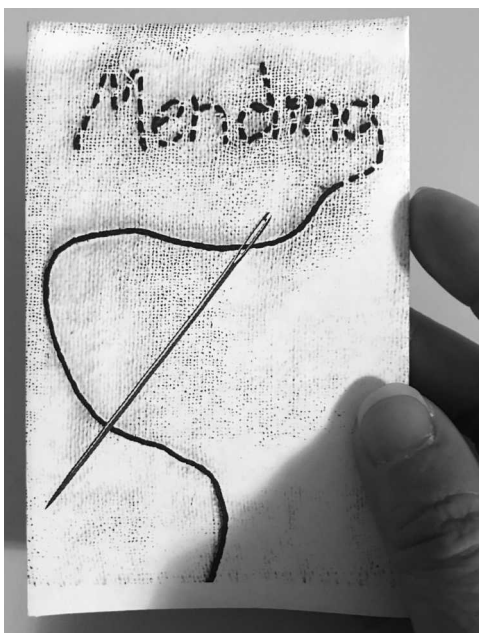
# Stitch by Stitch

By: Heather Andhercats Anacker

I made a mini-zine about visible mending for a workshop that I taught in 2022. Visible mending is a method of repairing clothes that emphasizes the fix, rather than trying to hide the repair. I have since made so many copies of this zine, that at this point, I have no idea how many are floating around in the world. I have sold them at independent bookstores, through distros, through etsy, at zine fests and I have given away over 100

copies this past spring in a series of free visible mending workshops that I offered through different branches of my local library. Some of the people who have been through my workshop have told me that their favorite part of the workshop was the free zine they took home, which always feels good.

Some of them have come back to take the class again, and I feel like in a very small way, my zine is making a difference.



I am a seamstress and sewing instructor by trade, so the topic of mending is very near and dear to my heart; I also have skin in the game. I love clothes, but I am also acutely aware that fast fashion is an ecological disaster that is rife with exploitative and flat-out dangerous and abusive labor practices. The reality is that everything, EVERY SINGLE PIECE OF CLOTHING we wear, was made by human hands, often by young women, in far away places, for low wages, under exploitative and unsafe working conditions. These are things I think are important to talk about with folks who take my classes; we can't keep turning a blind eye and pretending it's not happening. Not only is the production of our clothes exploitative to humans, it is also a major contributor to chemical pollution in waterways and microplastics in the oceans.

The majority of clothing items are also made so cheaply, on purpose, they only last a few washings before they start to fall apart. That's planned obsolescence, baby! That is late stage capitalism at its finest. The fashion/textile industry produces 92 billion tons of textile waste every year, which is a number I can't even fathom. It breaks down to one trash truck full of textile waste going to the landfill every second. (Yes, you read that right, you can fact check me if you don't believe it.) So what can we, you and I, do about it???

- Reduce our consumption, buying fewer items that are well made so they last a long time, we can hang them to dry rather than putting them in the dryer (I have a cheap drying rack that holds one whole load of laundry, it saves me \$2 every time I use it, and it extends the life of my wardrobe significantly)
- Reuse and Repurpose items, I buy my clothes almost exclusively from second hand and vintage shops. SO MANY clothes already exist in the world, if you know how to sew, you can also upcycle and restyle thrifted items.
- Repair items, and that's where visible mending comes in.

Here is the intro/mending manifesto on the first page of my mending zine: ***"Repairing our clothes is a tiny revolutionary act. It changes us from consumers to makers and transforms a mass-produced article of clothing into something unique. Visible mending is a method of repair that emphasizes the fix, it embraces the beauty in the imperfect and celebrates the life of a garment by letting it tell a visual history. Mending is an act of love and a gesture of respect for the human labor and materials from the earth that went into the clothes that we wear everyday."***

There is an example from the book *Mend!* By Kate Sekules that I like to show at the beginning of my workshops; it is an image of a shirt that has been repaired, there are big bright letters stitched onto the back of it that say "The Opposite of Hate is Mending."

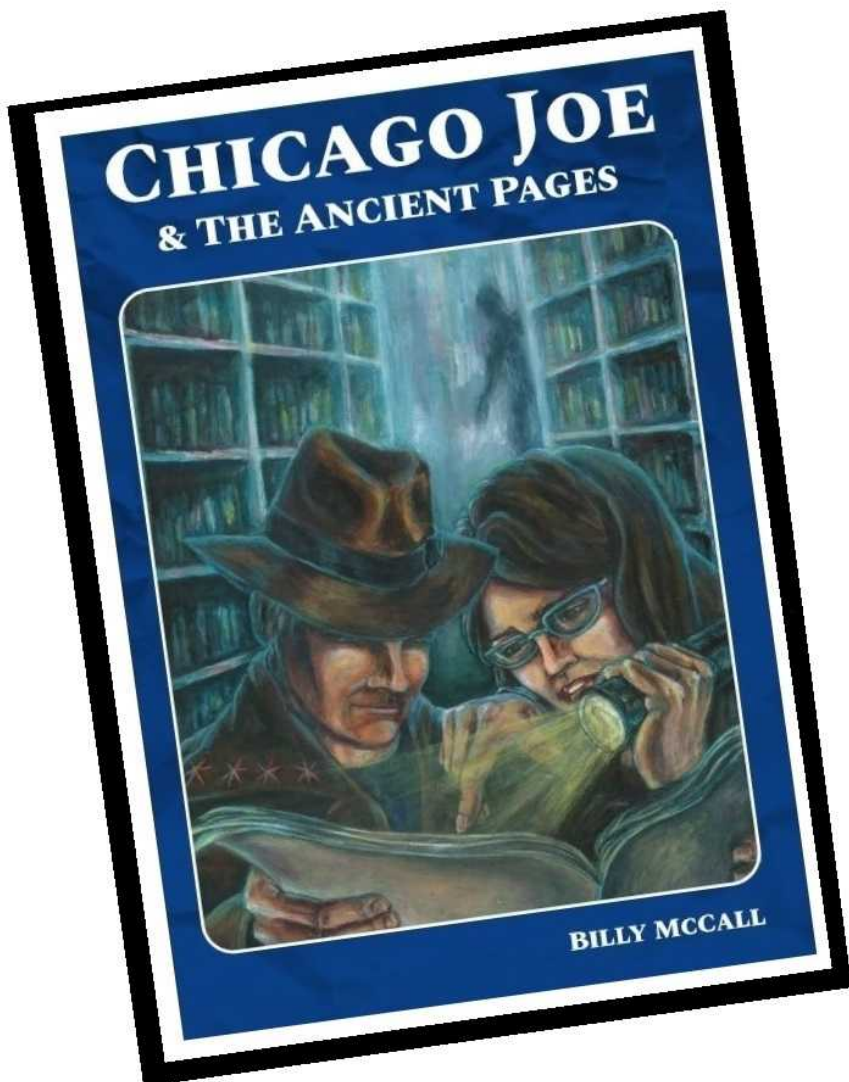


When we mend an article of clothing, we give it our time, attention and care, what is that if not love? Stitch by stitch, I hope to leave things a little better than I found them. Through the mediums of zines and workshops, I hope to inspire others to do the same.



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