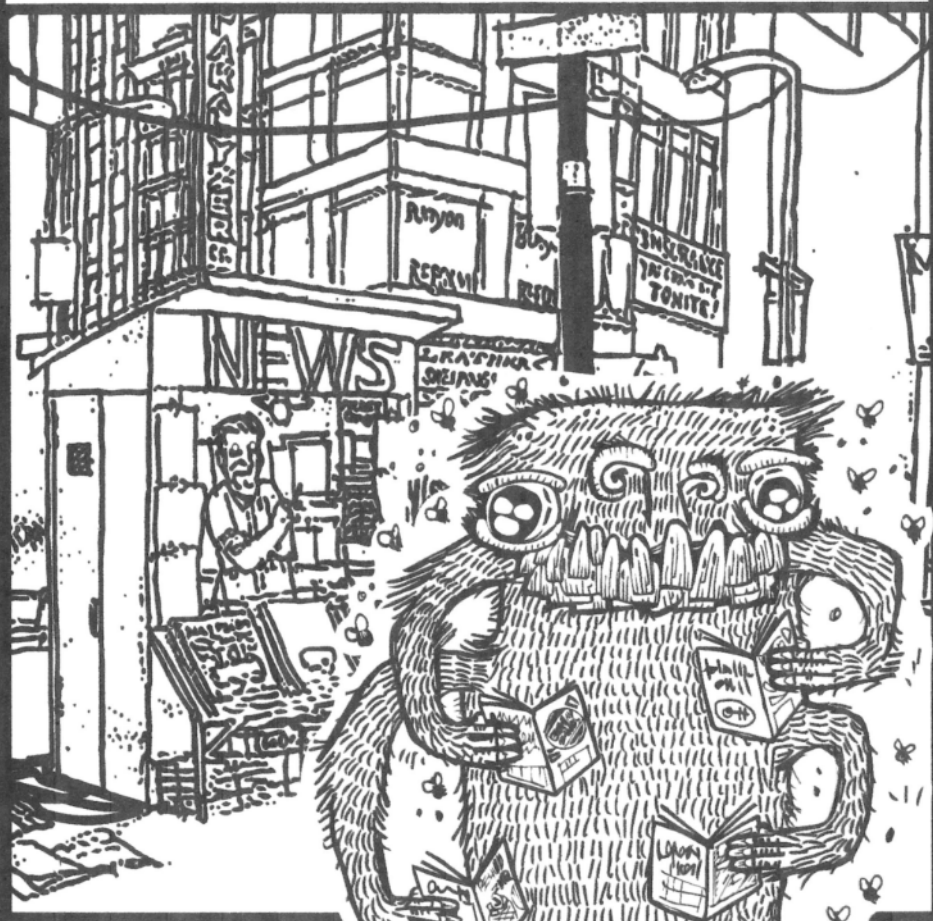


# Behind the Zines

March 2022

#13



A zine  
about zines

Cover by:  
[artbybillytherobot.com](http://artbybillytherobot.com)

## the freedom feeling

For the past few years I've been running my choices through a kind of gut check that I call "the freedom feeling." The basic idea is, will this bring me closer to the freedom feeling, or farther from it? I'm not sure when I articulated it exactly, but I think it was after a terrible breakup, when I was single, and starting to see things more clearly in my life. It's astonishing how many decisions seem nebulous until I ask myself this simple question, and then the answer becomes immediately clear. I'm thinking about this right now because I'm thinking about how I got back into writing zines. I initially discovered zines in high school but I stopped writing them at some point in college. Years later, I rediscovered zines at a point in my life when I needed a safe space to write about things I found confusing, and difficult, and a little embarrassing. The only space I could imagine exploring these ideas was in a zine. I needed a space even safer than therapy, or maybe not safer but separate from it, where I could explore the types of ideas I might explore in therapy, but from the comfort of a typewriter at home.

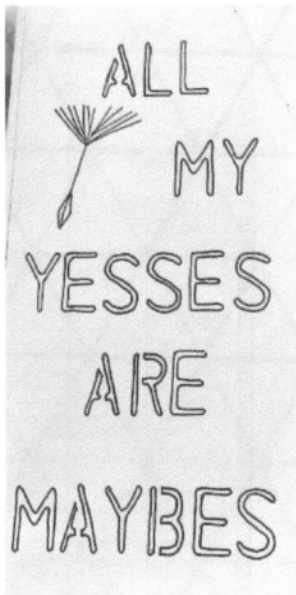
People who write perzines are so inspiring to me because the writing feels so fresh and raw and unfiltered to me. There's a sense of trust in the reader that seems almost naïve in a digital world, as though the writer is handing notes to passersby with a sideways flick of the hand. Here! We share zines with one another but the sharing happens one copy at a time, and is passed individually, slowly, and that changes everything about how I write them.

Anyway, that's how I came to write about my own burgeoning sense of gender identity in a zine I called Alex. If I were to do it again, I probably wouldn't have called it Alex, and I probably would have used a pseudonym from the outset, but instead I created a small alter-ego in the form of a zine with a human name that was not mine and then attached my real name to it. Hahaha. But it worked as a marvelous avenue for writing whatever the fuck was on my mind. It felt really necessary and important, and remains the

foundation of the exploration I'm still doing today around gender identity. The zine means everything to me. What a magical vessel for creative expression!

I now openly ID as nonbinary, and I use they/them pronouns with friends and at work. I work in academia, which is famously "progressive" and whatever, but I did not find asking my colleagues to use different pronouns for me easy or smooth at all. I met with HR and requested a diversity rep to train my colleagues on a day I wasn't there because people could not wrap their heads around the change. And even though the process was a little distressing, it was also fine, because I had built up enough confidence in myself and my sense of self through a journey I began expressing in my zine.

I quickly outgrew the desire to write exclusively about gender ID, but I continue to find it fun to explore different topics in my zines.



More recently, I wrote two issues of a pandemic zine called All My Yesses Are Maybes. Here, too, I felt safe calling out my place of employment over their handling of closing during the pandemic. Obviously it could get back to my employer that I wrote it, but it's more naturally fallen into the hands of like-minded critical zine librarians, and that's another thing I appreciate about zines - the readers are a smaller, more self-selected audience than other venues. The internet seems like a hairy place to me these days. I know there are people using social media as a tool to effect (sometimes good) change, but for me, those spaces don't feel like the freedom feeling. Zines still do.

--A.E.H. of Sleeping Creatures Zines  
<https://www.etsy.com/shop/SleepingCreatures>

## ...FROM THE HEADWATERS OF ZINEDOM

By Calgary Tuffpoint

11 February 2022

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"...it's hard to understand how **FANDOM** [was] born and why it persists. I [myself] think that it was mainly the **FANZINE** that crystalized fandom into an "entity"...

**AMAZING STORIES**, "Club House" featurette by **ROG PHILLIPS** in tribute to **WALT DUNKELBERGER**. January 1949, V. 23, No. 1, p.145.

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The **ZINE** is of little interest to the **FAN**. **FANS** are interested in ideas and stories, not pieces of paper. The **FANZINE** developed out of the desire and necessity for **FANS** to communicate with each other.

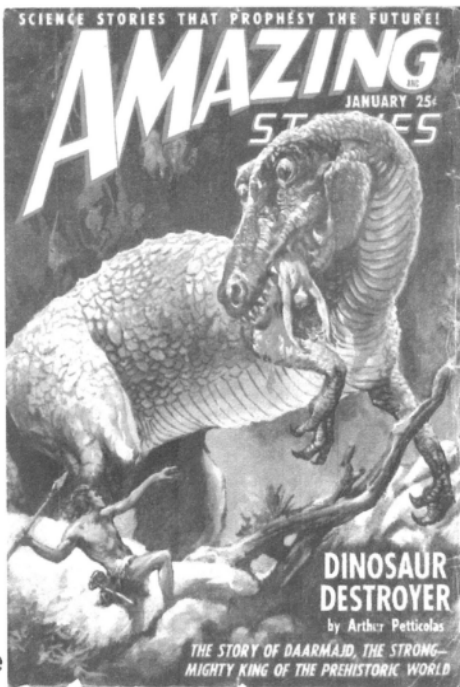
**FANS** of baseball and other games for sport, fanciers of late 19th century **SHERLOCK HOLMES** novels and other fictions, and tulip fanatics and their faintings all presage **SCIENCE-FICTION FANDOM**. Antecedents of **ZINES** include the founding father pamphlets of **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** and **THOMAS PAINE**, poetry chapbooks, APAs, samizdat, rib music, DADA and SI manifestos. One could look at the individual histories of ink, paper, printing, and binding which, in some cases, go back thousands of years. But the **SCIENCE-FICTION FANZINE**, built upon fan self-identification and a shared interest in an "unmonopolize-able" idea meant the **FANZINE** was a wholly new creature.

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**HUGO GERNSBACK** made a fortune selling electric dongles to amateur radio enthusiasts before WWI. In 1908, his print catalog, **MODERN ELECTRICS (POPULAR MECHANICS** debuted in 1902) featured howto's, and amateur radio success stories, and product descriptions. After the success of his **WIRELESS REGISTRY** of national radio owners and their equipment (kinda like **BYOFL**), he sold the magazine and introduced **ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTER**. A holder of over 70 patents, **GERNSBACK** is also known for the "Hydraulic Fishery", an "Ear Cushion", and watching television on the cover of his **RADIO NEWS MAGAZINE** back in good ol' 1928. He famously anticipated the sensory immersion of virtual reality when he demonstrated his "television goggles" for **LIFE MAGAZINE** in 1963.

In 1926, **HUGO GERNSBACK** began publishing a new magazine from his New York City office called **AMAZING STORIES** devoted to the kind of stories he personally enjoyed to read and write. By publishing new and established authors and, by extension, popularizing works by authors such as **EDGAR ALLEN POE**, **JULES VERNE**, **H.G. WELLS**, **GEORGE ORWELL**, **ARTHUR C. CLARK**, **PHILIP K. DICK**, **C.S. LEWIS**, **J. R. R. TOLKIEN**, **RICHARD SHAVER**, **EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS**, **ROBERT HEINLEIN**, and more, he inadvertently codified the parameters of what he called "**SCIENTIFICTION**", sometimes abbreviated to "**STF**", what we know today as **SCIENCE FICTION** and the literary genres of **SPECULATIVE FICTION** and **FANTASY**.

**AMAZING STORIES** quickly reached a broad readership and readers responded to each monthly issue with letters to the editor which were published in following issues. Strategically, the return addresses were published with each letter. Aided in this way, a network of interconnected correspondence formed with fans spontaneously communicating not only with **AMAZING**, but directly with each other. **AMAZING**'s first heyday ended when **GERNSBACK** lost ownership in the early 1930s, but **AMAZING** continued under new owners for decades to come.

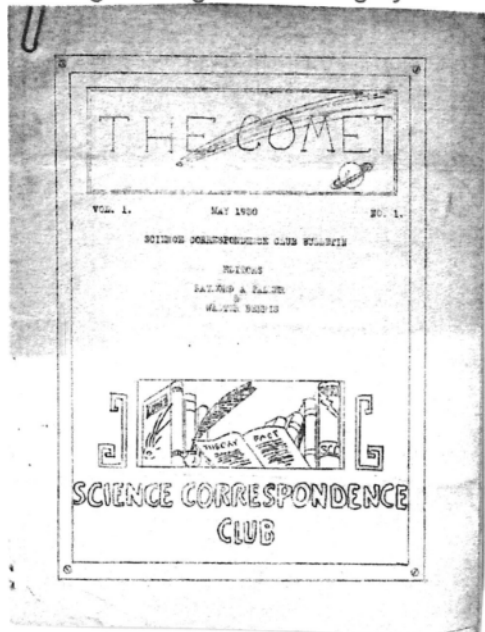


**RAYMOND A. PALMER** was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1910 and was struck by a milk truck while playing baseball in the street when he was 7 years old. The child suffered a broken spine, developed a hunchback, and grew to an adult height of 4'4" (**TOM BRAIDWOOD**'s **MELVIN FROHIKE** was 5'2"). Confined to his bedroom for a year, he developed a preternatural reading aptitude with a strong preference for anything related to science and fantasy and became an early fan of **AMAZING**.

In 1930, at age 20, **PALMER** and fellow science-fiction fan **WALTER DENNIS** distinguished themselves by forming the **SCIENCE CORRESPONDENCE CLUB OF CHICAGO** and made a ledger of their activities titled **THE COMET**. Considered within **FANDOM** to be the first of its kind, **THE COMET** demonstrated how fans could efficiently expand the amount of information conveyed to each other in their letters by using a spirit duplicator (**DITTO**) to make packets or booklets to include with their usual correspondence, thus launching a pillar of fan activity, **FANAC**, if one is speaking **FANNISHLY**.

The result was the **FANZINE**, a modified "magazine" made by fans intended to be read by fans, specifically fellow **STF FANS**. **RAY PALMER** became the editor of **AMAZING** in 1938 after the **ZIFF-DAVIS** company bought the magazine and relocated production to Chicago. Fans in New York City organized the first **WORLDCON** in 1940. In the years since, a small galaxy of authors including **ISSAC ASIMOV**, **CARL SAGAN**, **KURT VONNEGUT, JR.**, **GENE RODDENBERRY**, **ROGER EBERT**, **FRANK HERBERT**, **DOUGLAS ADAMS**, **WILLIAM GIBSON**, **NEIL GAIMAN**, and **SCOTT MCLLOUD**, and

more, directly participated in the ensuing web of fan correspondence by reading, contributing to, or creating their own fanzines. The prestigious **HUGO AWARDS** (in tribute to **GERNSBACK**) are presented each year at **WORLDCON** recognizing authors and fans. Indeed, **BEST FANZINE** is a longstanding **HUGO** category.



During the height of McCarthyism, psychologist **DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM** testified before the 1954 Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency drawing from his recently published book **THE SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT** alleging indecency against publishers of comic books printing corrosive filth aimed at the youth of America. The **COMICS CODE AUTHORITY** was formed in response and legal aid was obtained to defend comic book creator's freedom of speech funded in part by those little donation cans collecting coins near the cash registers of every comic book store in the country. Suffice to say, **DR. WERTHAM** did not earn himself a reputation as "the life of the party".

In 1973, however, **DR. WERTHAM** published **WORLD OF FANZINES** praising the science-fiction fanzine as an egalitarian art-form and a triumph of the freedom of expression. Some saw this new book as an apology for his wrongs in the 1950s, but either way, **WORLD OF FANZINES** became the first high-profile academic work germane to the subject and brought **FANZINES** beyond **FANDOM** as artful physical objects and unique sources of content.

The age of the **ZINE** (sans "fan") begins in the early 1980s with **PERSONAL FANZINES**, whose paradoxical nomenclature implies a person writing a zine to or for themselves; a person being a fan of themselves (example: the title of **BILLY MCCALL**'s zine: **PROOF I EXIST**). Since naval-gazing magnifies to absurdity, shortening **FANZINE** to **ZINE** provided a way forward, however, that has not hampered **WIKIPEDIA** editors from maintaining two separate articles for each term. Though **FANZINE** predates **ZINE** and provides the subject, **FANZINE** became a subcategory of **ZINE**. **ZINE** as the craft of homemade booklet duplication applicable to the community of creators-at-large who make them.

With the gradual proliferation of corporate copy shops (**KINKOS**, **OFFICE MAX**) beginning in the 1980s, the material for the standard hamburger-fold **HALF-SIZED ZINE** was ready at hand. Hand-made art (art-zines had

been around for decades), photographs, stories, journalism, mini-comic strips, political screeds, poems, and much more made their way into the **PERSONAL ZINE** (shortened to **PERZINE** to distinguish it from other kinds of **UNFANNISH** zines).

**FACTSHEET FIVE**, starting in 1982 (the name in reference to a story by noted British sci-fi author **JOHN BRUNNER**), was one of the first significant **ZINE REVIEW ZINES**, primarily publishing reviews of other zines, and became the main hub for fanzine connections during its era (along with **MAXIMUMROCKNROLL**). Starting with science-fiction fanzines, it fanned-out to cover all fanzine activity including the musical, political, literary, mystic/spiritual, idiosyncratic (**8-TRACK MIND**, **THRIFT SCORE**), and the **RIOT GRRRL** zines of the 1990s, before closing up shop in 1998 after 64 issues.

In recent decades, access and personal representation have become two of the most important concerns. **ZINE LIBRARIES** have been founded by independent groups and at universities and institutions, though they do not exist without controversy such as material content, digital reproduction, and conservation. **ZINE STORES** (both online and brick and mortar) and **ZINE DISTROS** (also both online and in person, often tabling at indie rock shows) continue to find ways to make zines more visible and available.

The **UNDERGROUND PRESS CONFERENCE** of August 1994 on the campus of Chicago's **DEPAUL UNIVERSITY** was an early example of a **ZINE FEST** and there have been hundreds of zine fests independently organized around the world in the years since. Whereas sciencefiction conventions may sometimes include a **FANZINE LOUNGE**, zine fests are dedicated zine affairs which are poised to curl in on themselves. Tabling ones own zine may be problematic logistically and existentially, especially for those making personal zines.

The black and white typewriter rip-up montage style has nearly vanished in recent years and the emergence of the **NEATZINE** with mannered handwriting and computer fonts accompanied by sparse but attractive line art has come into vogue. In some cases, this aesthetic becomes indistinguishable from the codified mini-comic.

The average age of **ZINE** producers has increased. Instead of high school kids making collages in their bedrooms with the hope of free records, ticking someone off, and meeting new people, the emphasis today is for college undergrads to use the zine format with intent to build one's resume or for the zine itself to be a portfolio. The color aesthetics of the **RISOGRAPH**, the letterpress, and the delicate binding options available to artists through print collectives are a sign of these times as the zine becomes an exclusive object of fetish to contrast over its origin emphasizing communication.

A hallmark of early **ZINE FESTS** was the practice of trading zines with fellow tablers. Even if they were not in the same price range, there was a general sense that a zine is worth a zine, especially newly introduced zines. These days, due to labor-intensiveness, high cost, and limited numbers made, the joy of zine trading culture has all but dried up.

In 1984, the personal computer and the video game system became household appliances joining the light bulb, the radio, the telephone, the phonograph, the television, the alarm clock, and the VCR. Within a decade the PC would merge with the telephone and another ten years would see the rest merge and shed their wires in the smartphone.

What validity do **ZINES** offer when information is accessible at swipe speed? What functions are zines performing? If the medium is the message, what message is in zines? What does freedom of expression and freedom of the press mean in a world trading on communication futures? Are zines more irrelevant or more priceless than ever? For whom or what do the streams of **ZINEDOM** flow?



With graphics resembling early fanzine art, the first appearances of **SUPERMAN** and **BATMAN**, in 1938 and 1939 respectively, brought a new kind of fantasy to a younger audience, birthed the modern superhero, and the classic comic book format filled with fantastic stories paired with exaggerated, idealized illustrations for the imagination to compete with radio in the decade before the debut of commercial television in the late 1940s.

**PLAYBOY**, with a different mode of pictures, started in 1952, and published controversial journalism and cuttingedge literary work. **RAY BRADBURY**'s **FARENHEIT 451** ran as a serial its first year. The photographs depicted real people

presenting a sexual fantasy.

The **BEATS** provided an intermediary, a necessary **ANTI-SCI-FI** counterbalance, real writers having real experiences and really writing about them whether in verse or prose. **BURROUGHS** on the narcotics beat, **GINSBERG** on the psychiatric beat, and **KEROUAC** on the street beat just so long as they're not hanging around Jazz Heaven all night.

Counter-culture publications of the 1960s, from the micro-sized **F\*\*\* YOU: A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS** to the macro-debut of **ROLLING STONE** in 1967 demonstrated the power of the free press and presented a variety of political fantasies.



In the 1970s, with the industrialization of the music business and the platform of pop star secured, punk fanzines such as **PUNK MAGAZINE** (NYC) and **SNIFFIN' GLUE** (UK) sought to bring the pop fantasy back to earth. The prophesy of science-fiction fanzines manifest an unfurling of human potential to experience what could only be first imagined in the minds of those bedridden in societal noir prior to the Second World War.

Punk ethos hipped us to our super powers, our super responsibilities, and we woke to the very real superheroes, sexual beings, reporters, politicians, and the rock stars in ourselves. The **ZINE** completes the dialectic with the **FAN**.

Cue: "**ANOTHER GIRL, ANOTHER PLANET**",  
by **THE ONLY ONES**

SOMEONE  
I made a zine.

SOMEONE ELSE  
I agree.

---

**THE COMET** may be found as a PDF online. Expect to pay \$15.00 on average for a print copy of **AMAZING STORIES** [1926 - recent] in fair condition.

\*\*

**CALGARY TUFFPOINT** is **BRADLEY SCOTT HARRIS** who first published **A DAY IN THE AIR** in 1998 available at **QVIMBYS** in Chicago and New York City and who wrote this piece in tribute to **RAYMOND A. PALMER**.

The author would like to recognize: **RAYMOND A. PALMER**, **BILLY MCCALL** (for encouraging this topic and letting me lose at bowling in New Mexico), **LB**, **DEVIN** (of **CHAMPLAIN GUITARS** in Bellingham, WA), **ANDREW FURSE**, **DAVE ROCHE**, **LIZ MASON**, **JONAS**, **JIM JOYCE**, **JOHNNY MISFIT**, **NELL TAYLOR**, **ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE**, **HARPER REED**, **KEMBREW MCLEOD**, **JAMIE SCHWESER**, **JOE MUSHUGANA**, **MARC RUVOLO**, **AARON COMETBUS**, **KURT VONNEGUT JR.**, **KENNETH HITE**, **STORY MUSGRAVE**, and **KING TOAD** who is **JAMAL RIVER**.

For **HAYLEY**, **JJ**, and **WOW**, nothing gold can stay and that's okay too.

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Notes:

1. Simply agree with the first thing said. Never speak first.
2. Consolidation makes a group dumb and fatty. It becomes stronger but loses flexibility and mobility. It becomes blobby and less diffuse.
3. Do Electrons Dream of Android Sheep?

# Keep Reading & Keep Eating...

(by fast foody rudy)

So, finding inspiration to do a zine is tough and tiring. (Especially since our zine's perimeters is around fast food). We here at Deep Fried Zine Mpls are on issue 20.... and well.... what stoner has been left unturned?

I personally consume as much media as possible... which doesn't help with our normal functions in life like eating. Here are some tricks that zines can help when you need to keep reading and keep eating.

- 1** Grab some tape and chopsticks to make a food grabber. This will keep your fingers clean while making you look like a dime store Wolverine.



- 2** Or try the funnel technique. This is perfect for that yogurt that has gone sour. Plus, you can still fill your eye holes reading, while filling you mouth hole eating. (Hopefully don't fill your nose hole breathing.)

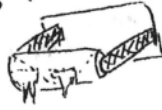
- 3** No napkins? A zine is perfect for holding on to that greasy burger..... and a zine can help with your greasy aftermath.





FIND  
FOOD  
FAR  
AWAY

NO TOILET PAPER?



TRY A ZINE



- 4** Using disposable plastic straws have been deemed NOT COOL. (You've seen that youtube video of a sea turtle with straw stuck in his nose.)

But what about my Boba tea? That ain't gonna slurp itself. Roll up that zine, it becomes the perfect bio-degradable straw that can't possibly get stuck in an animal's hole.....



- 5** After you're done eating? You know my teeth are known to keep some food for later. Well, rip a corner off a zine, roll it to a point and now you got a tooth pick. Need to floss? Use the rest of that zine to sop up all that gushy mouth blood.



For more tips and tricks to navigate this terrible post covid world, pick up Deep Fried Zine MPLS out of a trash can near you.

Anna lives in Baltimore and makes lots of comics. She also does a podcast with my friend, Theresa! It's called: "Make Art, Talk Shit." Look it up! Spotify, etc... Two friends just hanging out; making art and talking shit.

## My Zine Making Process by Anna Sellheim



- ① Obsessively draw from childhood to cope with trauma
- ② Obsessively read comics until it becomes intuitive to make comics
- ③ Be lucky enough to get a good fine arts educator
- ④ Have an experience



⑤ Proceed to process it (times vary → usually 1 year - 29 years\*) while living your life  
 \*I'm 33



⑥ And here's the tricky part! It might be auto bio or Fiction

IS IT'S  
 AUTO BIO

IF IT'S  
 FICTION

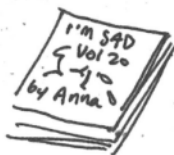


Hurl your literal experience and feelings onto a page



Hurl your self insert's feelings and experience onto a page

AND VIOLA



Hope this helps anyone a Sraid to start making a zine take up the cause! ♡

anna.sellheim .com  
 patreon, Instagram, Tumblr  
 @annusellheim

# Joy and Pain, Sunshine and Etsy

By Kari Tervo

So yesterday, I essentially quit Etsy. I pulled up the listings manager, clicked the omnipotent box that selects all, and clicked “deactivate” on the pull-down menu.

I had had enough.

I’d been thinking about quitting Etsy for a long time because it’s such a pain in the ass, but for that same long time, the joys outweighed the stupid stuff. Like:

## THE JOYS OF ETSY

My Etsy shop, Sweet Mayhem Zinery, operated as a gallery of sorts. I got to show off my zines and buttons, write fun captions, and let people get to know me a little bit. That part was really fun.

And, it’s always super cool when someone wants to buy what you made! At this point, I don’t charge more than three dollars for any of my zines, so it’s not about the money (although a few bucks here and there don’t hurt). It’s about like—wow, hey, someone wants to spend money on what I made! That’s so cool. I want to send them something they’ll find cool.

When someone leaves a good review that lets you know that you have created joy in someone’s life, that’s a feeling like no other. I feel really happy when someone digs my zines!

But then, there were the stupid parts:

## THE PAINS OF ETSY

Bad reviews hit harder than I know they should. But they do. I’ve gotten them, and I’ve witnessed other people getting them. It’s harsh. There are people who don’t understand what a zine is and destroy your star rating on the basis of what they paid a freaking dollar for. Some people say things that are just incoherent. One person *lied* and said I didn’t have a description of what they were buying (for a dollar! They lied about

something they bought for a dollar!). Just flat out *lied* in their review. And Etsy told me there was nothing I could do about it.

Also, just the time it takes. If you're courting good reviews (or at least avoiding bad ones), you have to make sure everything is tip-top and perfect and has cute add-ons. Like I handwrite a note, put fun washi tape on the envelope, and include trivia cards, Black history flash cards, and stickers. And that's beyond the photocopying, stapling, and mailing prep. I counted once: It's like 17 steps to send out an Etsy order that I'm essentially losing money on, all things considered.

I hung on to my Etsy shop for almost 10 years despite these vagaries. I didn't want to give up the good stuff just to avoid the bad stuff.

Joy, and pain. Sunshine, and rain.

### WHY AREN'T YOU ON INSTAGRAM, MA'AM?

Then one recent day, I finished crafting a paper yak. Afterwards, I went to Michael's (the craft store) in order to buy an organizing caddy for all of my papercraft and calligraphy tools, which had gotten out of control. The cashier was waiting for the manager to see if he would give me an online-only deal on the caddy (yes he said yes he will yes). To kill the time, I showed the cashier a photo of the yak. She was like, hey, that's a cool yak, and we talked art a little (like that part in the midst of creating something where you hate it and are convinced it's the worst thing in the world).

The cashier asked me for my Instagram because she wanted to see more of my art. Despite having this exact same awkward moment about 57 other times in the past (I foist photos of my art on a lot of people; I'm sure many are just being polite), I still did not have an Instagram. I was inspired in that moment to take away the pressured elements of having a retail store and just host a gallery of my zines and art on Instagram so that I can connect with fellow crafters.

The decision was clinched the very next day, when, in the middle of an important work day, I got TWO Etsy orders back-to-back. Really?! I mean, that's great, but I just didn't have the bandwidth for that, to take all that time to print and package the orders and then worry about getting a bad

review because the staples weren't placed just right. I was done. I had had enough.

I fulfilled the orders and informed the buyers that I'm leaving Etsy and migrating Sweet Mayhem Zinery to Instagram. Then, with those few clicks towards deactivation of my items, I functionally shut down my Etsy store. I started an Instagram to serve as a gallery and informal marketplace (via direct-message sales and trade requests) for my art and zines. I'm in the process of uploading the items now—using my Etsy photos and descriptions as the template, which, when we're talking almost a decade of creations, is a very nice assist. I'm looking forward to participating on Instagram, where I can more easily see what my fellow zinesters are posting and avoid the ish of retail sales.

Overall, I enjoyed my time on Etsy, but eventually, the bad and annoying outweighed the good and lighthearted. I'm not ruling out going back in the future, though.

Sweet Mayhem Zinery is dead (on Etsy)! Long live Sweet Mayhem Zinery (now on Instagram)!

## Subscribe to Behind the Zines!

\$12 for 4 issues

[iknowbilly@gmail.com](mailto:iknowbilly@gmail.com)

**Billy**

P.O. Box 8818  
Albuquerque, NM 87198

Behind the Zines comes out twice a year –

In March and Sept

Want to contribute? Get in touch!



## Patreon: by the numbers

--Anna Jo Beck

In this day and age, there are so many ways to try and make a buck off your own zines, and I have tried a lot of them. I've set up an online shop on Etsy, then switched to a Storenvy shop. I've cold-called (well, cold-emailed) distros and submitted my zines to be carried by them. I've tabled zine fests across the nation. But it took a year of isolating to finally give Patreon a try.

Patreon is a membership based platform for creatives. Lots of different types of creators use it: podcasters, cartoonists, non-profit orgs, and more. Supporters of said creatives can sign up to automatically pay a small sum each month (\$5, \$3, and \$1 are common tiers) for perks like exclusive blogs, videos, and in-the-mail goodies.

Why did I wait so long to give Patreon a go? Back in the Before Times, I figured I was too busy to take on another reoccurring commitment. There were friends to see, zine fests to organize, daily commutes to be had! Then, with the pandemic, those time commitments halted and were replaced by general anxiety and movie binges. By the winter of waiting for vaccines, the urge to create zines and share them began to return to me.

I knew other zinesters who used the platform (Billy McCall and John Porcellino) and they offered perks like newsletters (mailed and e-mailed, respectively) and mailed copies of each zine they put out. I decided to keep it simple and just focus on one thing: making new zines and not being too precious about it. \$5 a month, would get you a new zine by me each month, on whatever topic I feel like doing. I decided to name it Zine-A-Month.

Setting up the site wasn't too difficult: create a logo and a banner image, write up some text about what to expect when signing up, and a bit about myself as a creator. I promoted it on my instagram (@biffboffbamsock) and my e-newsletter (tinyletter.com/ZineFiend) and got to work on making my first zine (Dulce Discourse, pictures and brief reviews of Hispanic candies).

When people sign up, they create a Patreon account, and put in their payment info and their mailing address. From that one account, they can sign up to support as many users as they please. Once they opt into the Zine-A-Month Patreon, they can immediately access a blog I keep with photos and summaries of previous issues of the subscription. They'll get their first zine in the mail the following month.

On the 1st or 2nd of the month, Patreon charges their cards \$5.45: \$5.00 for the subscription, \$.45 for sale tax. On the 3rd of the month, Patreon creates a list of all the "benefits" due and I can check them off to make sure I send each person their zine.



## ANNA JO BECK

DESIGNER • ILLUSTRATOR • ZINESTER



On my end, I get \$4.15 of every \$5.00 that comes in. The missing \$.85 cents comes from Patreon's two fees: an 8% fee that goes to Patreon (in this case, \$.40) and a 2.9% + \$.30 payment processing fee. (The fee structure varies by pledge amount and what features you use on the site). I can then have all the pledges direct deposited into my bank account.

Once you factor in postage, envelopes, toner, and paper, I make between \$2.46-\$3.47 per zine (depending on how many pages, if I splurge for kinkos printing, etc.). And this is before income taxes (~15%), so it's actually \$1.77-\$2.81 per zine (but if you make less than \$600 in a year on the platform I don't think they file a 1099-K? But we all know you must report all your income to Uncle Sam ;D) So, with around 45 subscribers currently, I make roughly \$80-120 a month on it.

All that to say, it's not really a money-maker considering how much time I put into it. But making money was never really the point! I've amassed a small, loyal following of zine lovers and that feels really good. And the subscription is growing in ways that I'm really excited about: I've offered subscribers the opportunity to be "guest artists" and send their latest zine as the Zine-A-Month monthly send. It's turning into a kind of zine distro that I never knew I had in me! So I'm not

about to quit my day job but having a dedicated audience and enough dough to cover the costs of printing and shipping makes it all worth it to me.

Could I try to circumvent Pateron's fees and just sell an annual subscription on PayPal? Sure, but I like not having to manage the money aspect; subscribers have the autonomy to pause or stop their subscription. It's a joy to receive an email about a new subscriber, rather than wrangling payments and addresses across texts/emails/instagram DMs, etc. I could also pause the subscription if need be, without having to worry about having already accepted people's money and not being able to deliver. It's worth the fees for that payment management and flexibility.

So would I recommend Patreon for zinesters? It's hard to say. Acquiring new subscribers on the platform does take a degree of self-promotion to advertise it, which many zinesters are highly allergic to (myself included!). But if you want to experiment with a monthly newsletter, this is a great way to get money for stamps. There's also an option for charging your patrons "per creation" so they only get charged when you make something and you don't have to commit to a monthly schedule. I will say that overall it's pretty easy to use and get started. Poke around the site, see what other people have to offer, and see if you're inspired to dive in!

## Ziney Patreon's to check out:

**Billy McCall** - Behind the Zines, and others

**John P** - King Cat Comics

**Wasted Ink** - Zine Distro out of Arizona

**Glasgow zine library** - Zine Library in Scotland

**Jerk Store** - Monthly zine printed on thermal paper

**Sarah Mirk** - Artist and zine-maker

**Pigeon Parade Quarterly** - Visual Art and Poetry Zine

**Art Noose** - Ker-Bloom, and other letterpress art

# “You should make that into a zine.”

by Eric Bartholomew (of Junk Drawer Zine)

That’s always an interesting suggestion for almost anything. In this case, somebody said it to me at a zine fest around 2012. They were referring to an interactive display I had set up on my table called “Guess the Odds & Ends.” This featured several objects I brought as a guessing game, challenging people to identify them. Answers were revealed by lifting cardboard flaps.



I wasn’t sure how to do a zine from it, exactly. The format would have to replicate the table setup so the experience could remain similar.

I continued doing the game.

It catches people's attention as they walk by. Some recognize an object they know, and others pause to ponder one that stumps them. It's been helpful to an introvert like myself, by diverting attention away from me and my zines to the objects. It's an ice-breaker, and kind of a free intro into the world of Junk Drawer. I like hearing guesses out loud too.

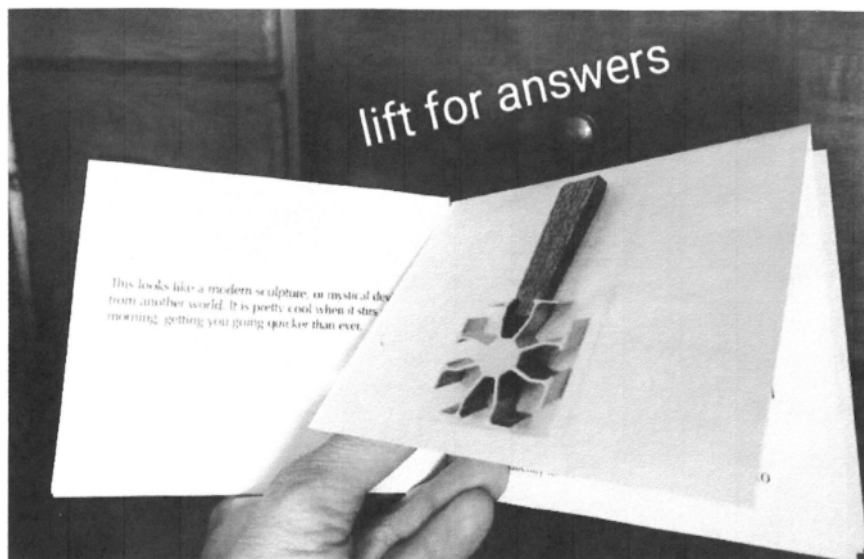
Even when they're incorrect, perceptions can be rather creative when viewing something for the first time. I like seeing how other people see. Once in a while this prompts me to see an object in a new way. I often



provide hints. It's great when people learn about a new object, and just have that junk drawer wonder like I feel.

The concept originated from the "Science of Obscurity," an event that invited artists to present their projects as science fair displays. It was co-sponsored by the Chicago Read/Write Library, which holds many zines. It was neat thinking scientifically about what I was doing, with observation into junk drawers, and reaching a

hypothesis. The interaction element of the guessing game is what went over best, and I decided to try it out at zine fests.



It wasn't until 2020 that I finally figured out how to do this zine. I wanted it to read through smoothly, with the interactive part of lifting the flap. One night I cut pages and folded until it just came together. Then I thought of the title and did the title page: *Mystery Objects*. Suddenly I was intrigued by the objects all over again.

Over time I had collected many new objects. At zine fests I discovered which were easy to guess and which were difficult, and I always bring a range. They can be ordinary items seen out of context, and parts of things. Many are vintage, and get some people exclaiming "I haven't seen one of those in years!" Even if you've never seen something, it can always be guessable. Some of the objects I didn't know when I first found them.

The zine format allowed me to provide hints like at the table, and expand on the answers with a little history and observation. There's also pictures of the packaging or something showing the object's identity.

Readers have given kind feedback, telling me which objects they were able to guess, and how they've played it as a game with someone else.

When asked why I do zines instead of posting content online, I usually respond by talking about the physical act of handling a zine. That tactile connection is one that bonds words and pictures into memory in deeper ways. That's what studies have shown, and what I think most zine creators and readers truly get. For Junk Drawer, the zine itself is an object, and can even end up in a junk drawer. That seems pretty meta, although not like the metaverse. The junk drawer, to me, is its own universe.

For Mystery Objects, the folded design resists translation to the digital world. It would require some page lifting effect for it to be seen in the same way. It cannot be read as a straight e-book on a Kindle or something. It exists only on paper.

One of the biggest reasons people make zines is for the community. That's where Mystery Objects evolved. Part of it is about sharing and connecting, and not just on social media but in social real life. That's been something harder to find lately, but zines are there to connect with and grasp in their physical form. Junk drawer objects are there too.

## The Hazards and Honesty of Free and Cheap

by Todd Taylor

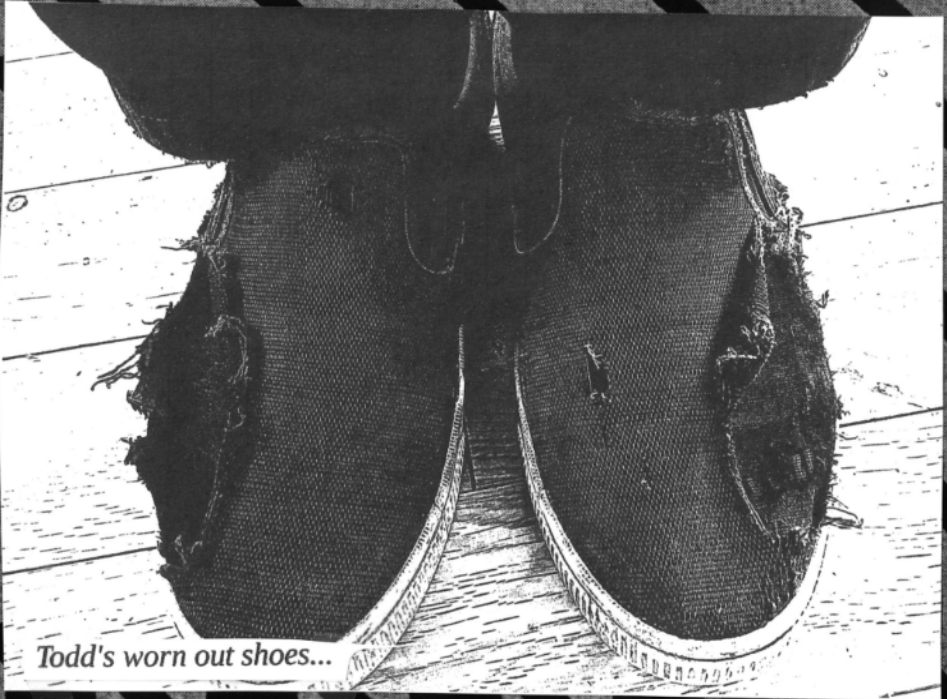
Being thrifty was engrained in me at an early age. My grandparents were a product of the Great Depression, eating from a permanent vegetable garden watered by a handmade greywater system. My father made it through college by eating oranges from the surrounding groves, working in a men's prison, and living in a cell there for room and board. My mom swears that two of my first words were "garge sale." (I couldn't yet pronounce "garage.") Growing up, I have distinct memories of stale beer running down my arms, and of glassy-eyed men playing evening league softball as my brother and I reached into trash barrels for recyclables. I remember being called a garbage picker by other kids and not caring what they thought.

My family always recycled, rarely ate out at restaurants, picked stuff up from curbs, shopped at thrift stores, used things until they broke and could no longer be repaired. My mom had an itemized, index-carded box of coupons she used when grocery shopping. Clothing was worn until it became too thin to wear. Pants with holes became shorts, became rags. We were of limited means, but we were always fed, always had a safe place to sleep. Were always loved. For that, I'm perpetually grateful to my parents. They hammered home—and daily lived—the difference between wants and needs.

Today, I drink out of a thermos I found on the side of the road on a bike ride with my dad. Beyond a ding, it was totally serviceable after a thorough scrubbing. The computers I use daily and rely on heavily are a decade old. I've never bought a new cell phone or vehicle. The reasons are multifold: I'm a cheap bastard. I always comparison shop and try to use discount codes. On a large scale, I know that any society predicated on endless expansion and unchecked consumption is doomed, and I want to participate in it as little as possible. It's in this profound, almost subconscious level of thrift that Razorcake was started in 2001. It also partially explains why DIY punk was such a natural fit for me as a kid. I was living this way—the free and cheap way—before I heard a single note of the music. This is what I'm used to; this is the world I'm comfortable with, multiple generations deep.



There are some down sides, for sure. I'm my own "fun police." It's hard for me to buy a drink at a bar (when at a nearby store I can get six beers for the price of one in a dimly-lit environment), hard to justify paying full price to a first-run movie in the theaters, hard to enjoy meals at restaurants when I know we could make it at home for a third of the price, and probably better.



*Todd's worn out shoes...*

When thrift is overlaid on an ongoing activity that requires some predictability, it's a harder road. Razorcake can't throw money at most of our problems because there's little money to be thrown. We have to fix. We have to patch. We have to adapt. When shit gets fucked—and it will periodically get fucked—it's largely up to me or co-Razorcaker Daryl to figure out a solution. It's more work: diagnose, attempt repair, try to self-educate, repeat. If we have to—and can afford it after all else has failed—we'll call in a professional. It's too depressing to calculate the cumulative weeks that have been completely derailed by the internet going out (at first caused by dump trucks hitting our line every couple of months), a computer not talking to the printer (operating system updates rarely cover peripherals), the main server's hard drive failure (due to an electrical

spike when solar was being installed on the house) and data recovery of fifteen years of work (it took three months).

Another challenge is that I have to become at least passably competent at a bunch of tasks I either don't care about or had no prior experience with prior to starting a zine, but are essential to our continued survival. I've taught myself basic accounting and finance, rudimentary coding and website construction, graphic design, offset printing pre-press, carpentry and acoustics (for the podcast station), and bicycle repair. On cruddy days, it feels like I'm trapped in a bureaucracy that's largely a product of being an official 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization and not an outlaw operation run by pirates who can do what the fuck we want, consequences be damned.

I just wish I was better at repairs. I wish I was smarter than I am. It sucks that if I hired me to do a job, I wouldn't be happy with my work most of the time. (We're two years and thousands of hours into a website build that, as of this writing, has repeatedly failed to launch. Fuck you, internet.)

It's humbling that for over twenty years, my life has been in service to publishing a punk zine. It's crazy that it's my only job; a job I made for myself out of a sustained act of sheer will. It's more than full-time and the pay is modest—less than what a substitute teacher earns. Partially, Razorcake survives because we don't have a lot of overhead and we carry no debt. We don't need a lot because of this continual—often grinding, sometimes maddening—attention to thrift.

On paper, Razorcake shouldn't exist, but we do. We're an outlier. When this enterprise works as designed—making and maintaining a small world where my friends, people I respect, and I have a hand in every single little thing to make it possible to make and send a zine worldwide—it's a thing of ever-more-rare beauty, and it makes me proud. We made something out of virtually nothing. We're using antiquated equipment in unorthodox ways. We didn't fuck over or exploit anyone in the process. We built this thing up from the ground ourselves and it still works most days, two decades in. We've made an operational alternative to pure consumption for pennies on the dollar and passed the savings on at DIY punk prices. If we didn't do everything as frugally as we can, we wouldn't exist. I'm convinced of that.

And now for another installment of...

## ZINE NAME ORIGINS!

**Zine's Name:** Razorcake

**Zinester's Name:** Todd, Daryl, etc

**Date of first issue:** 2001

**Number of issues created:** 126

**Contact info:** [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)



In 2000, it could be cost prohibitive to buy a domain name—that part of a website address after www. It was during the first internet bubble and one byproduct was “domain squatting,” people or companies buying .com and .org addresses in bulk, then selling them at hyper-inflated prices. Often, it was done in bad faith, profiting off the goodwill of an existing body of pre-digital work. One example was the organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. They found out that PETA.org was squatted and run as “People Eating Tasty Animals.” For years, the squatter wouldn’t relent. The real PETA eventually went to court and won the rights to their own digital name. When I worked at the zine Flipside, we looked into how much Flipside.com, just the name, would cost. It was exorbitant. The url was later purchased by a gambling company for \$1 million. (I found out from a friend who got a job there without knowing the name of the website and couldn’t believe the price when he found out. The site was out of business within a year.)

I had little money in late 2000. I was owed over two years of back pay from Flipside, but that money evaporated the day after we won the lawsuit against our distributor Rotz. Its owner Kai Dohm—seriously fuck you Kai—declared bankruptcy and never paid us a cent of the \$80,000 he owed. After five years of 60+ hour weeks and living in a windowless basement, I was broke without a job. I wanted to continue writing about punk music, but my options were severely limited by my finances. My pants pockets were Hoover flags. I had just enough money to move into an above-ground apartment, but little else.

Beyond buying a recognizable domain name, setting up a modest website was certainly cheaper than printing and shipping 2,000 zines, so that's where I focused my attention. This was my plan: start with a webzine, earn some money, launch a print zine. My good college buddy, Skinny Dan, had earned a degree in computer engineering. He'd been dating KT when we were in college and they'd since been married. Dan was game to help launch the website. At KT and Dan's house, we brainstormed a master list of around three hundred webzine names. We had a check-down. First, we'd type in a name we liked into the web browser and see if an offer to buy the domain name popped up. This was before the ascendancy of Google searching, so we did searches on both AltaVista and Netscape, which had wildly different results. We'd write down the

price. Second, we'd do our due diligence to see if they were already existing zines. Zines we thought existed often didn't show up online, so we double checked through copies of Factsheet Five. (Like Fireball. Too bad, I really liked the name, but I'd never willingly take another zine's name, even if they were no longer active.) It was a process fraught with huge holes.

Yet, a pattern developed. Any sort of recognizable domain name would cost thousands of dollars. Fireball was listed for \$10,000. So we relied on two separate tacks. I went profane. Barbedwireasshole.com was available for free, but then I had a moment of clarity about cold calling bands, artists, or activists for interviews and the thought of asking Howard Zinn, "Hey, I'm Todd from Barbed Wire Asshole. Would you like to chat?" seemed like it would close too many doors before they could be opened. KT suggested going absurd, of juxtaposing words that usually don't go together or jamming two words together to make something new. Like dynamitepizza.

We were super fucking close to the name "Nail Pudding." Initially, it made us laugh, but it's not that we loved the name; it's just that we didn't hate it, we hadn't come up with anything better, and the url was free. It had devolved into that time when you stare at words too long and they lose meaning. So we slept on it. I believe KT came up with "Razorcake." It didn't suck. It meant nothing. It was short. We didn't have to pay for the url. We pulled the trigger. Razorcake.com was ours.

Around this time, another buddy, Sean Carswell, a carpenter by trade and co-founder of Razorcake, convinced me to start the print zine. To show he was serious, he built an entire house, sold it, and used the money to move to Los Angeles from Florida. The first issue of Razorcake zine was released in March, 2001. And the name stuck.



**Quitter Quarterly. 1994. Evan and Shelley.**

Here is one half of an origin story. A teenager reading *Sassy* magazine. This was their featured zine of the month in one issue. Intrigued, I wrote and sent fifty cents for two issues. A drawing of a ballerina wearing doc boots on the cover. Largely opaque, this was a mystery. Revealing little of the authors. A focus on all things beginning with the letter Q and a manifesto on quitting. Mind expanding for me. Such a raw publication. Possibilities opening before me. An elusive format. 8.5x11 but folded in half along the 11. Tall and narrow.

**Destroy All Comics. 1994. Jeff Levine, editor.**

The other half of the origin story. I came to zines through comics. I stumbled upon an issue of Jeff Levine's comic, *No Hope*, in the quarter bin at my local comic shop and loved it. In it

there was a blurb about the zine he made, and I ordered that too. At the time I was thinking about organizing a collaborative newsletter and this zine made it clear that the zine format was the way forward. Reviews of comics and minicomics, interviews with comickers, essays about comics. This opened the way to an entirely new space.

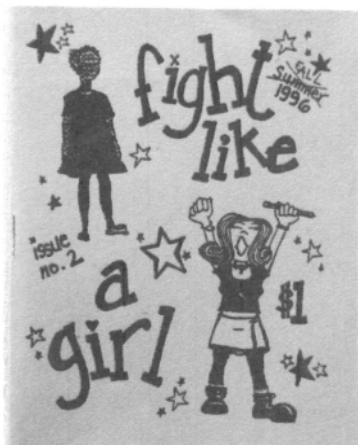
**Daffled [1996-1997]. Sarah Hilmarsson.**

I've had very few pen pals over the years. As much as I love mail, it's not something I've ever really managed to maintain. Sarah was my first pen pal. She contributed drawings and other art to my high school zine, *Bored to Death*. She initially found me via a bulletin board page that ran in the back of *The Maxx* comic book in the early 90s. I must've advertised my zine and mentioned that I was looking for contributions. We wrote regularly for a few years, eventually losing touch around the turn of the millennium. I valued our exchange and was motivated by our correspondence and sharing art with each other. *Daffled* was her first zine. Collagey. Drawings. Photos. Dreams. Notes.

***Fight Like A Girl 2.* Rhonda and Tamara.**

**1996.**

Recently into Bikini Kill, I found this riot grrl zine at a small press show at the Chicago Cultural Center. Handwriting. Typewriters. Quarter size. Cut and paste. Info sharing about birth control, domestic violence, curry recipes, women artists. Sharing personal experiences with harassment. Band shout outs. I lived for this energy. This knowledge sharing. This punk rock personal politic. The feeling of importance. Of vitality.



***Otaku.* 1997. Jeff Otaku.**

It's possible I knew of personal zines before this, but this is the first one that stands out in my memory. Sitting on the floor in my basement room. Reading about someone else's life. No reviews. No interviews or articles. One singular authorial voice. Sharing. *Bored to Death* had ended and I was tired of relying on others to create. *Otaku* offered a new path. Handwritten. Typewritten. Drawings. Collage. Recipes. Inserts. This felt real. Quarter sized and packaged in a small, decorated envelope that doubled as a further cover.

***Sob Story.* 1998. Andrew Kumquat.**

I moved into my first apartment in August of 1998. It was in Uptown at Lawrence and Clark. Here was a perzine that focused on skating and living in Chicago and listening to punk rock. Quarter size. Mostly a personal zine, it also included a few interviews and contributions from others. A hybrid of sorts. I loved the photography and the use of half tone to help it look clean and unmuddy. Feeding my dreams of young adult city glamour. A fantasy that I wanted to be part of.

***Cakewalk.* 1999. Missy Kulik.**

I met Missy at the Underground Press Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio in 2000. She was set up at the table next to the one I shared with Anders and John. I was not prepared for and amazed by the amount of color, small tchotchkes, and variety of zines and comics that she had for sale. Her productivity and enthusiasm for zines was a giant inspiration for me. She

seemed to be a nexus point for a huge, shimmering web of diy artists. And to be on the periphery of that was motivational. We became pen pals, sending each other our zines as we made them. Swapping mix tapes and letters. We are still in touch today. Which is cool and something that I



appreciate. *Cakewalk* is a digest size zine made in celebration of Missy's 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. Featuring comics and illustrated text and birthday themed contributions from her friends.

***Ker-bloom.* 2000. Artnoose.**

I also learned about Ker-bloom in Bowling Green that year. Are there other zines printed on letter presses? The design of the zine – it is always clean. By necessity? By choice? Both? It spoke and speaks to me. The space around the words. The value applied to the words chosen. The scenes documented. Small and personal. Minimal and beautiful.

***Proof I Exist.* 2002. Billy.**

I met Billy when I was working at Chicago Comics and Quimby's. He came in regularly to sell his zines, which he made at an insane pace. I was slowly moving to a one zine per year schedule and moving away from raw spontaneity. Billy would make like ten zines for every one that I could get out and they were fast and raw and gnarly and personal. They approached an ecstatic truth that I valued and even flirted with myself for a while before changing direction. Reading Billy's zines is to read along as he lives life and processes it as it happens. Always an inspiration since he has been making his art continuously for the past quarter century. His encouragement is a large part of why I continue to make zines. A few years ago, when I hadn't put out a zine for a long while, he told me that I was still a zinester, just on a really slow schedule. That is true. The first issue of *Proof I Exist* is digest size. Collagey, typewritten, a bit of handwriting. Photos of his roommates, relationship navigation, dick pics, ants, and mild Cometbus shade.



WELCOME TO

TEEN ZINE TEAM!



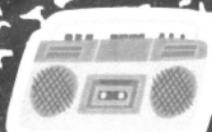
BY BONNIE K. V. COOPER

In the summer of 2018, after a particularly successful week-long summer camp focused on zine making, I found myself with a small crew of middle schoolers energized and excited about zines. Up until that point Grid Zine Fest had been hosting monthly, all ages, Zine Club meet-ups, but the teens from camp expressed a desire for something more they could call their own. Anxious to keep the creative momentum going I quickly worked through Grid to start an additional monthly meet-up, this time just for teens, and thus Teen Zine Team was born.

I secured a meeting room at the downtown Salt Lake City Public Library for the 2nd Saturday of each month, and blasted our Instagram with the details. A few of the teens from camp showed up, and we had a ball passing around mini-zines and collaborating on goofy compilations. Very quickly the library caught wind of what we were up to, and asked if we would be interested in working with the teen librarians, Madeleine Prado and Rebecca West, to make TZT an official library program. Delighted by the prospect of a more expansive space and access to additional resources we immediately agreed. For the next year and a half we continued to meet, with the teens schooling us on D&D campaigns, My Hero Academia, and long furbies, while the librarians and I did our best to ignite creativity and enable personal expression.





While a few new teens from around the valley found TZT through Grid's instagram and the library website, ultimately Teen Zine Team remained relatively small. Saturdays turned out to be a less than ideal meeting time with many teens busy with family and extracurricular activities on the weekends. Additionally, the monthly meeting dates proved difficult for the teens to keep track of without consistent reminders. By the beginning of 2020 the





librarians and I were toying around with the idea of moving TZT to a weekday after school, but we hadn't really settled on a solid plan when Covid hit. In March, much like the rest of the world, the city library abruptly shut down, and stayed closed for several months. Grid Zine Fest had to cancel our fest scheduled for April, and as an organization basically went into hibernation for the remainder of the year.

Fortunately for Teen Zine Team, Madeleine Prado at SLCPL didn't give up on trying to figure out a solution to our pandemic induced hiatus. After reaching out to me to see if I would still like to be involved Maddie traversed the logistics of creating an online program through the library, and has the following to say about her experience:



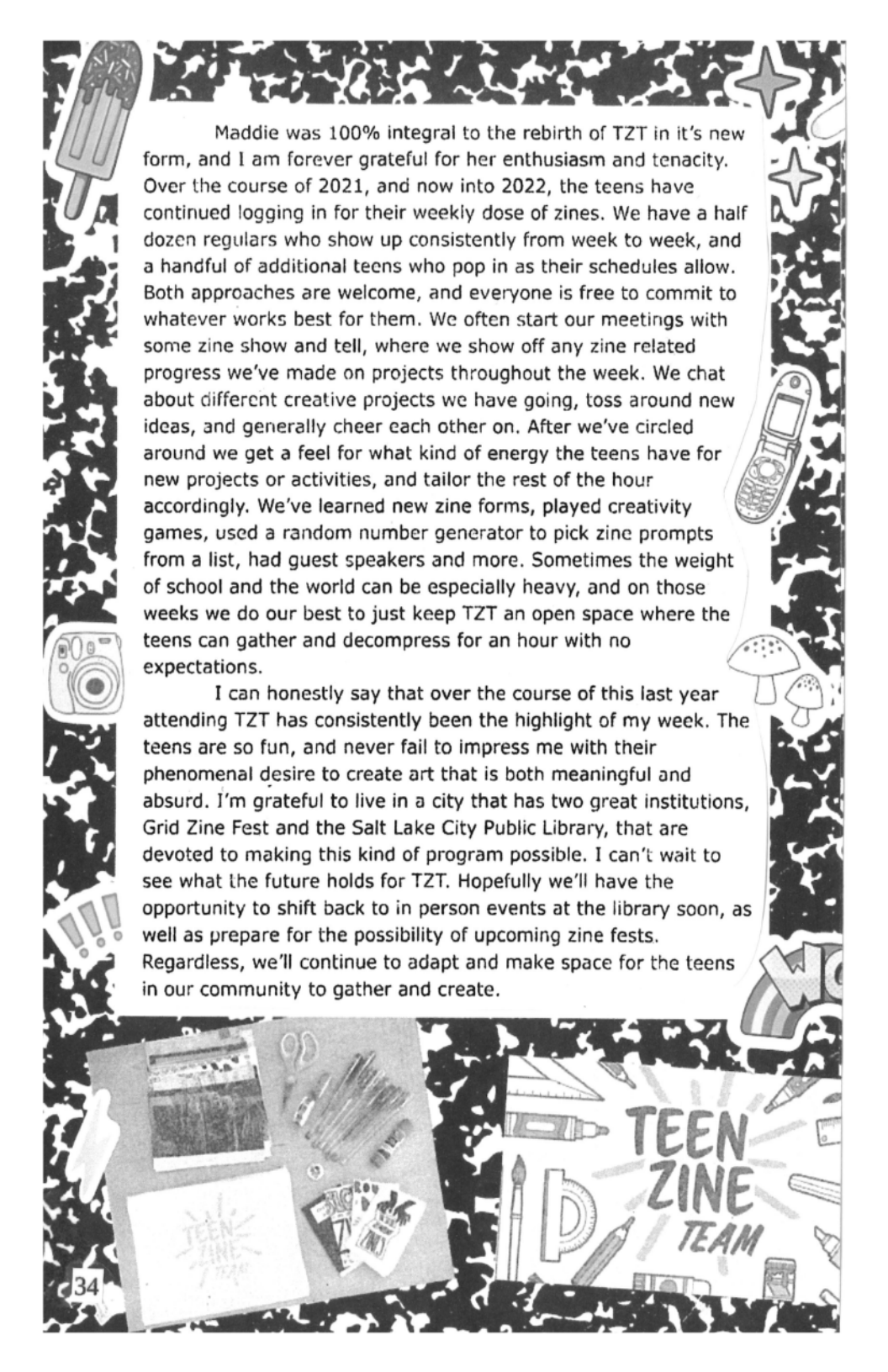
*During the pandemic, I decided to relaunch Teen Zine Team as a weekly online event. The City Library had successfully transitioned a few in-person programs to virtual platforms but Teen Zine Team was a different beast. One barrier I knew some teens may experience was limited access to craft supplies so I put together a bunch of zine making kits that included scissors, glue, stickers, washi tape, collage paper, and some zine examples. Bonnie and I worked together to plan zine making activities and exchanges. Our first meeting had 5 teens, three of whom are still in the club! Some of the teens had never made a zine before so we started with the basics. Because the program is online, we've mostly stuck to collaborative zines where each teen emails a scanned page for the zine. Our creations have ranged from zines about music and heroes to hidden gems and summer bucket lists. We've also played drawing games, trivia, watched videos, and attended a couple local zine events!*

*Of all the teen programs I worked on, TZT was the most rewarding and fun. Bonnie, Becca, and I created an inclusive space for teens to connect and create with each other. I was amazed that this group of teens would log onto another hour of zoom after a long day of virtual classes, but they did!*



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Maddie was 100% integral to the rebirth of TZT in it's new form, and I am forever grateful for her enthusiasm and tenacity. Over the course of 2021, and now into 2022, the teens have continued logging in for their weekly dose of zines. We have a half dozen regulars who show up consistently from week to week, and a handful of additional teens who pop in as their schedules allow. Both approaches are welcome, and everyone is free to commit to whatever works best for them. We often start our meetings with some zine show and tell, where we show off any zine related progress we've made on projects throughout the week. We chat about different creative projects we have going, toss around new ideas, and generally cheer each other on. After we've circled around we get a feel for what kind of energy the teens have for new projects or activities, and tailor the rest of the hour accordingly. We've learned new zine forms, played creativity games, used a random number generator to pick zine prompts from a list, had guest speakers and more. Sometimes the weight of school and the world can be especially heavy, and on those weeks we do our best to just keep TZT an open space where the teens can gather and decompress for an hour with no expectations.

I can honestly say that over the course of this last year attending TZT has consistently been the highlight of my week. The teens are so fun, and never fail to impress me with their phenomenal desire to create art that is both meaningful and absurd. I'm grateful to live in a city that has two great institutions, Grid Zine Fest and the Salt Lake City Public Library, that are devoted to making this kind of program possible. I can't wait to see what the future holds for TZT. Hopefully we'll have the opportunity to shift back to in person events at the library soon, as well as prepare for the possibility of upcoming zine fests. Regardless, we'll continue to adapt and make space for the teens in our community to gather and create.

YEAH YEAH

## BUT WHAT DO THE TEENS THINK?




Without having any idea what in the world a zine was, I joined the teen zine team and instantly fell in love with zines. I found that they are a great way to put all of the crazy thoughts I have into a physical form that is both creative and sometimes very chaotic. -Madison

I love TZT because everyone has such cool ideas and it really exercises my creativity!! -Kim

Teen Zine Team is really fun and inclusive. I would never call it a class since it's so laid back and completely stress-free. It's all about having fun and letting yourself be creative and inspired by others. -Anonymous

Teen Zine Team to me is where I've found myself doing art in one of the darkest summers I've ever and probably will ever experience. I've made friends through it, and there are people that I know now that I would never have gotten a chance to get to know without this club. It's given me the space to be artistically free while also giving me friends to do that with, and there's very few places that I found that could do that in a way that feels as easy and warm and welcoming as TZT. I think probably my favorite part of the actual club itself is that you could be doing anything and everything, or not have done art in forever, and you can still come to the meetings, be part of a discussion, talk to people with like interests, and have a good time.

-Trin-Aber

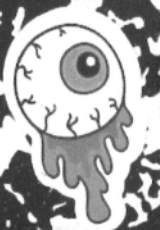



# HOW TO START





# YOUR VERY OWN

# TEEN ZINE TEAM

In my ideal world teens in every town and city would have the opportunity to join Teen Zine Team. It's the program I wish I could have had growing up in rural Utah, and truly such a delight to be a part of now. For anyone looking to start a chapter in their own city I would offer these tips:

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1. Find an organization to nest under or collaborate with. For the safety of the teens, as well as the organizers, it's best to work within the framework of a library, school, zine fest, 4-H club, art center, after school program, community center etc. This will also help with securing a regular meeting space and obtaining needed supplies and resources.

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2. Decide if you want it to be a digital program, in person, or a mix of both. The accessibility of online programming is especially convenient for teens who often have limited transportation options. Conversely, while the digital divide is shrinking, not all teens have access to join an online event from home. Both options have their pros and cons, so the best decision may differ from place to place.

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3. Find yourself some teens! This may come as a surprise, but it turns out zines are still pretty niche. Even if you were to somehow make every teen in your area aware of your plans for a teen zine team you would still get a very limited number of teens involved. Don't let this discourage you! You just have to know where to look. Reach out to local art and writing classes, LGBTQ+ organizations, and the teen librarians at your local library. Spread the word through community calendars, flyers, and social media.
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4. Don't fixate on having all of the perfect supplies, but do put a focus on eliminating barriers to zine success. Working with the library allows our teens to copy their zines for free. That may not be an option everywhere, but you could also create a small donation based zine copy fund for your teens to eliminate the financial burden attached to printing zines. Providing access to a long arm stapler, sewing machine, or other means for binding zines could also prove helpful in making your teens' zine dreams a reality.



5. Bring ideas to the table, but leave the creative control to the teens. They'll let you know what excites them, and what they have the bandwidth for. Supplying creative prompts, teaching new zine forms, and playing around with different artistic techniques can all be great jumping off points.



6. Find a time that works best for your teens. Monthly meet ups on the weekend did not work well for our group. Weekly meetings immediately after school have proven ideal for us.



7. Keep your teens safe. The point of having an age-determined group has everything to do with creating a space where the teens you are working with feel safe and comfortable to be themselves. Unless an adult is part of the organization hosting your teen zine team or has been expressly invited to come share something with the group, it's probably not appropriate for them to be there. This can be especially tricky with online events, and they should be moderated accordingly. We've found that two to three adults is a good number to keep everyone accountable without overwhelming the teens.



8. Finally, have the best time! Teens are so weird and wonderful, spending time with them is sure to inspire your own zine making and creativity. Let the goofiness wash over you and know that you're helping create a space of community and joy.



# How Zine are you?

How long have you been making zines?

- A. Is a zine like a blog? I used to have a Tumblr.
- B. 2- 5 years. My persine is super popular right now.
- C. 10+ years. I'm the old timer at the zine fest.
- D. I've been making zines longer than you've been alive.

What is the most you've ever spent at the post office?

- A. Almost \$5
- B. Between \$10 and \$30
- C. Over \$50
- D. Dude, I drop \$100 like NBD

How many zines do you produce?

- A. My first issue is almost finished
- B. Just one zine, but it's been a while since the last issue.
- C. I have a perzine, my work zine, an art zine, and the collab we all put together.
- D. I have 16 concurrent running titles, a monthly newsletter, my ezine, I write reviews for a music zine, and also I just finished a new zine while taking this quiz.

How many staplers do you own?

- A. My best friend has one I can borrow.
- B. One regular stapler
- C. I think I loaned my long arm stapler to a friend two years ago.
- D. I have a regular stapler, a mini stapler, two long arm staplers, a heavy duty saddle stitch stapler, a sewing machine, a novelty stapler shape like a frog...

Be honest: have you ever participated in a zine-related competition?

- A. What is that? Zinesters are dorks.
- B. Yes, but I came in 10th place
- C. I can fold a mini-zine faster than anyone in my zine club!
- D. Hell yeah! I'm the reigning Zine Jeopardy champion!

Do you have a secret photocopy spot?

- A. No
- B. I pay an arm and a leg at FedEx
- C. I miss copy-scaming at Kinko's
- D. I own my own photocopier. I AM the secret copy spot!

**RESULTS**

Do you have any zine related tattoos?

- A. Heck no, tattoos are stupid
- B. No, but I've been thinking about it
- C. A few of office supplies
- D. Does "Zine Life" across my chest count?

What is your favorite word that rhymes with "zine"?

- A. Sign
- B. Scene
- C. Team
- D. Queen

Mostly A's  
It rhymes  
with "bean"  
but you're  
still cool

Mostly C's

Mostly D's

Mostly B's

We're all chipping in to get you a long-arm stapler for your next birthday.

Your long running skateboarding zine is a cut n' paste, copyscanned legend. Thanks for always trading with us.

We owe you one. Odds are, you founded the zine fest in town and kept it running through all the "are zines dead?" days. Thanks for teaching me how to fold a mini zine.

♥ Juli Jump Rope (is just kidding)

## Five Questions with Mer!



Mer is a zine-maker who was born and raised in Reno, NV. She calls herself "the paper cut queen of mini zines," which is probably true considering *just how many mini-zines she puts out.*

I met her through Etsy, and you can too:  
[www.etsy.com/shop/sleepthroughkings](http://www.etsy.com/shop/sleepthroughkings)

*I've never been to Reno, and know almost nothing about "The Biggest Little City." What's the zine scene like there?*

Reno's zine community is pretty tiny. That said, we did have a small upstart zinefest pre-pandemic, but I haven't heard if/when it'll be returning.

*What draws you to the one-sheet mini-zine format?*

Laziness. Also, the immediacy. I can quickly put a zine together & print it off, & then mail it in a regular envelope with a regular stamp. No muss, no fuss!

*Although you are from land-locked Reno, you have multiple zines about seafaring topics, such as ghost ships, shipwrecks, and lighthouses. How did you become interested in those topics?*

Yeah, I've developed a heavy interest in seafaring things in the last few years. I read a book called *In The Heart of The Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick about the shipwreck that inspired Moby Dick, & then I was off to the races.

*You told me that the first zine you ever made was about Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a condition that you have. What would you like people to know about EDS?*

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome is a group of inherited connective tissue disorders that range from mild to fatal (in the vascular form). In EDS, you'll see a lot of joint & tissue hyper-mobility/elasticity/instability/fragility. That connective glue holding us together is a bit to a lot weaker than the average person & this has ramifications throughout the body. Thankfully, mine is fairly mild. EDS can be one of those invisible disabilities, both because you may not "look disabled" & because it's not a well-known condition...even among many physicians!

*And finally, what are some of your favorite zines?*

I don't have a particular series or maker in mind - my zine consumption tends to be erratic. I gravitate towards fanzines, photo zines, & informative zines on eclectic topics (much like mine). Recommendations are always welcome!