

# Behind The Zines

#15

March 2023

A Zine  
About Zines!



# Memorandum

For someone who typically has way more words in my mouth than I know what to do with, I'm unusually silent today. Last night I found out that Jen Angel passed away.

I didn't know Jen, I mostly knew *of* Jen. I'd met her a few times, but honestly hadn't thought of her in years. Yet the impact she had on my life is extensive. From 1999-2006, Jen Angel and Jason Kucsma edited and published a magazine called Clamor. They also started the Allied Media Conference, in Bowling Green, Ohio. The AMC was the first zinefest I ever attended. When I attended again, a year later, it was the second zinefest I'd ever attended.

It's no exaggeration to say that the AMC changed my life. I had already fallen in love with zines, but the AMC helped me fall in love with zine *culture*. I met people there, 20 years ago, whom I am still friends with today.

I don't know that I talked with Jen much more than checking into that conference, then heading to my table. But without her, the conference may not have happened, I may never have met the people I met, and so on... How many lives did Jen influence in such a way?

Her passing was sudden, unexpected, violent, and unnecessary. This is what was posted on [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org):

**Longtime activist, writer and beloved baker Jen Angel has died at the age of 48. She owned the popular community-based Angel Cakes in Oakland. She was a pioneering force in independent media, co-founding Clamor magazine and Agency, an anarchist media organization. She was also a longtime organizer of the Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair.**

**Jen Angel was actively involved in antiwar and anti-capitalist struggles through the years, including Occupy Wall Street. She died after she was critically injured in a violent robbery in Oakland earlier this week.**

**In a statement Angel's family and friends wrote, "We know Jen would not want to continue the cycle of harm by bringing state-sanctioned violence to those involved in her death or to other members of Oakland's rich community. As a long-time social movement activist and anarchist, Jen did not believe in state violence, carceral punishment, or incarceration as an effective or just solution to social violence and inequity." Jen Angel's family has asked that traditional prosecution be avoided in her case, and alternatives such as restorative justice be employed instead.**

Months ago Todd Taylor pitched me the idea of writing a story about the RIP memorials he is always publishing in Razorcake Magazine. I liked the idea, and liked the story when I read it. With this week's events, his article hits even harder.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Jen Angel, her family, and her loved ones.



A Short Line or Two By Todd Taylor

\*Trigger warning. Suicide.\*

It's only a line or two in a majority of issues published over the past twenty-two years. It's on the table of contents page of *Razorcake* and starts, "This issue is dedicated to the memory of..." These are obituaries and it's important to me that we run them.

To me, zines are first drafts of history. They are source documents. They are acts of intentional memory. We're a small community, not driven by the usual suspects of making money or pursuing traditional success. It does us good to remember those who pass before us, in places they felt accepted. If not us, then who?

Razorcake is at two large crossroads. We're zinesters. We're DIY punks.

It's important for me to remember those who stood with us. Even solely listing their names puts them on record that they were here. They showed up. They made an impact. They populate my memories. Some of them, I only met a handful of times, but their impact was lasting, far beyond music. Some of their names are tattooed on me, since they're part of my chosen family.

Many of the people we memorialize in the zine were and are my friends and I don't want to forget them. Few of them were famous. Few of their names will be recognized beyond their immediate families, close friends, or bandmates. Chances are many of you reading this won't know them.

Collectively, they inform how I act today. I talk to them in my mind; bounce ideas off them. They've become part of my conscience. They were beacons, engendering the best of what punk could be. Collectively, they're a utopia of people.

Chris Pepus was a *Razorcake* contributor par excellence. He had one of the clearest political visions I've ever witnessed first-hand. He saw through bullshit both on the left and right, advocating that

discrimination based on class is bigotry, and the United States still had a lot of reckoning to do. The day before he killed himself, he left me a voice message telling me that the folks at Razorcake were explicitly not to blame. That we were one of the reasons he'd hung on, but that he couldn't take it any longer. We rushed a contributor over to his apartment in St. Louis and he was stopped by crime scene tape. Chris had cleaned and boxed up the entire apartment. He was still thinking of others until the very end.

I'd met Namella J. Kim during my Flipside years in the late '90s. Her wildness was infectious. She made bad ideas seem reasonable and presented convincing arguments to not let an evening end. She was largely responsible for introducing me to the seedier underbelly of garage rock, accelerating my tinnitus, and showed up to interview Johnny Chan And The New Dynasty 6 in a nurse's costume. She was fearless. Once, she was on a game show on MTV that pitted zinesters against



investment bankers and her team won with her answer of "*Ulysses* by James Joyce." It was always a mistake to underestimate Nam, so I never did. She was only forty-one when she took her life.

There are people who are the glue to an entire scene. And like dried glue on a book's spine, they're almost invisible, but they're the binder that keeps hundreds of pages together. Scott Rogers was one of those people. He booked punk bands from around the world to play the Bay Area for multiple decades. During that entire time, he never ripped a band off, often gave them a place to stay, and fed them. We approached him for an interview, but he deferred. He didn't want attention or a spotlight. What he did wasn't about him.

What he did, he said, was merely a catalyst to be able to see the bands he admired. He got an aggressive form of cancer, almost beat it, and it came roaring back. If another COVID wave hadn't been cresting at the time—and it was one of his last wishes that he wouldn't be responsible for a super spreader—over 1,000 people were scheduled to attend his memorial service.

I sorta enjoyed fucking with Travis Fristoe, whose zine *America?* and the book about Radon co-written with Aaron Cometbus are well worth tracking down and reading. One of my favorite memories was talking to him about books and how I thought the punch line to *Infinite Jest* was on the last page because if you made it that far, the joke's on you. Fuck twelve-hundred page books about tennis. On this point, he vehemently disagreed with me. But in Travis, I saw a parallel life, like if I'd grown up in Florida instead of rural Nevada. He was a seeker, someone who showed up, did the work, and was interested in setting up equitable infrastructure so others could participate too. Alcoholism—that he hid from people not in his immediate vicinity—accelerated his downturn. He took his own life.

I won't lie. There was a time when I spent an entire year in a basement while ending an abusive relationship and going through a terrible divorce, while multiple friends took their lives, that I seriously contemplated suicide. Everything good seemed drained out of me. I was incapable of smiling without undertones of bitterness, of feeling anything except worthless. It was my living friends and family who checked in and showed me how threaded together we all were and are that helped me through it. The friends I've made through music and zines had parts of me and I had parts of them. We were in this together, even if it was super shitty. I'm so grateful for all of them and have made a conscientious effort to be a more present, better friend, better son, better brother, and better husband ever since.

This column is dedicated to the memories of Raymond "Raybo" Vogelman, killed under suspicious circumstances in the San Diego prison system, and Jed Schipper, F.Y.P bassist and glorious wingnut.

# Reconstituting the Sprawl: Reflecting on The Factsheet Five Archive Project

by Jason Luther • f5archive.org

Zine reviews are a weird thing. Even as someone who writes them periodically for *Broken Pencil*, in my more cynical mood I suspect the only people who actually read them are the authors under scrutiny. And whether that's true or not, there's always the question of whether zines should be scrutinized in the first place. I'm a teacher of writing by day, so at the very least I try to see my reviews as a conduit for thoughtful feedback to publishers, a chance to encourage them to keep making impactful, entertaining, or unique work — and to also (re)consider paths not taken.

However, there are times when I also wonder about that *other* reader — the subscriber listening in, the one who might be reading the review section in search of exciting new stuff. Maybe that's you. At a time when much of zine distribution happens locally at zine fests or online via e-commerce, what is the role of these sections? And what purpose do they serve if readers are more prone to find zines based on their identities or affinities rather than if a

stranger considers their work good or not? What is a good zine anyway? Heck, in 2023, what even is a *zine*?

These weren't questions zine culture asked very much before 1995, when zine reviews filled a different function. Maybe you relied on reviews from zines you traded with. Or maybe you convinced the clerks at your local book or record store to put a few copies of your zine on their shelves with a blurb scribbled on a cardboard tag. Or maybe you received a mention in review-oriented zines like *Action Girl*, *Global Mail*, *Queer Zine Explosion*, *Poopsheet*, *Underground Zine Scene*, or the biggest of them all: *Factsheet Five*, "the zine of crosscurrents and cross-pollination."

At its peak during the zine explosion of the 1990s *Factsheet Five* (F5) circulated 15,000 copies per issue, publishing reviews of hundreds of zines sent to its founder and first publisher, psychonaut anarchist Mike Gunderloy. Although Issue 1, published in Boston in 1982, was



nothing more than a typewritten double-sided mimeo, 10 years later Gunderloy moved it to Albany, and along with a small cadre of writers, reviewed 1,300 alphabetized zines spanning 56 double-columned pages in teeny 7-point Palatino font. Zines weren't all; F5 also reviewed videotapes, t-shirts, buttons, stickers, armbands, software, BBSes (which the underground used extensively), and other non-zine ephemera which took up more than a dozen additional pages. When its third and final publisher, R Seth Friedman, took over a few years later there would be even more reviews.

In fact, there were so many reviews, that when Friedman took over, he separated reviews by different categories like *Quirky* ("zines that embody zine culture") *Medley* ("a little bit of everything"), *Sex* ("most require an age statement"), *Fringe* ("they strive to make their voices heard at all costs"), and a range of identities (*Punk*, *Grrl*, *Queer*) and affinities (*Humor*, *Sci-fi*, *Political*, etc.). Eventually there were categories for records, catalogs, books — even a category for review zines themselves, which "offer[ed] tips about getting into print." All this fragmentation made it difficult to find zines quickly, so the editors created a review index that spanned the final 4 pages of the magazine.

I'm endlessly fascinated by the network that F5 helped organize during its 15-plus years of existence. When it folded abruptly in 1998, it marked an important sea change in zine culture, one complicated by a range of other cultural, economic, and technological forces. That's partly why I started the **Factsheet Five Archive Project**. I wanted to consider zine history in terms

of what came before, after, and during its existence, centering F5 in telling the story of zines during the late age of print. As I attempt to make sense of its 64 issues, I am posting content to [f5archive.org](http://f5archive.org) and its social media accounts, interacting with folks who were there. In the process I feel like I am slowly mapping out what Stephen Duncombe called the "nongeographical sprawl" of the underground. I've sorted through

Gunderloy's early publishing days when he was making more than ten other zines, including a perzine and several sci-fi APAs. I've read interviews he did with *MMR* and *Flipside*, when the F5 BBS was just getting booted up. And I've dug into some of the end days, when Friedman moved it to San Francisco to publish F5's final 18 issues, at a time when "sellout" was the deepest insult one could spit. I was publishing my first zine at this time and since the beginning of this project I wondered: was I ever reviewed in F5? After all, I was never a subscriber and if I had a tear sheet, I certainly didn't save it. (Note: under Gunderloy, F5 was traded with zines for review,

but subsequent editor Hudson Luce realized that was financially unsustainable. This was one of many changes to the magazine that affected, and was affected by, zine culture.)

I recently and serendipitously got my hands on the final few issues of F5, and as I flipped through the review indexes, I was amused to see *Mud* reviewed in two consecutive issues in 1997, both written by editor Chris W. Becker. While interviews with post-rock bands like Tortoise and others got *Mud* #6 categorized as a Music zine, *Mud* #8 got moved to the larger-print Medley section, thanks in large part to better writing and an explicit piece by my new college girlfriend, who wrote vividly about getting her period.





It was validating to read a review of *Mud* in 2022, just as I can only imagine it would have felt back in 1997 — and I was relieved that they didn't trash me. Those days were incredibly formative for me, as I imagine they were for a lot of the folks who were publishing zines at the time. They shaped the records I bought and the books I read. But most importantly, publishing zines taught me what writing could look like when connection was more important than perfection.

My interviews were brief and clumsy. My music reviews were lazy. And my essays were embarrassing at best, problematic at worst. But at the time these didn't feel so risky, and what I gained as a writer in the 25 years since I published *Mud*, I lost in terms of my audacity.

As terrible as some of this writing is, I miss how basic and effortless authorship felt to me at that time. In 1997, the hard part was distribution. Now in 2022, the hard part is making the time and shaking the inhibition to write.

individual zines rather than magazines like F5, who had a circulation in the thousands.

... reads: (46 pages/DTPed/CWB) ...  
**MUD FANZINE #6.** Fairly straightforward genre zine with good sideline articles on streaking and golf. shares his hilarious story of running naked through the college library with the rest of the cross country team. Short interviews with Tortoise, Ui, and Girls Against Boys. Price:\$2??? Jason Luther, Hamburg, NY 14075 (28/half-legal/DTPed/CWB)

However, it still holds true that for some people, any reference to their old zines or attachments to the underground can usher a painful, complicated past or even put them in danger. For instance, soon after sharing an image of F5 from my account on Twitter, former F5 writer @typewritersarah reached out to me as a fan, but also to make sure I redacted addresses to protect folx from getting doxed. In fact, I redact my own review here to protect myself and collaborators, some of whom might not appreciate being named or associated with zines or *Mud* or even me.

**Mud Fanzine**  
#8. A solid read with lots of original, lengthy writing. describes for the non-menstruating readers just what it's like to be "on the blob." She starts her story by waking up to stained sheets and panties, describes what it's like to feel like you're dripping all day, and then treats us to the smell of "period in crotch." Then there's the cramping, the running out of tampons at the most crucial time, and the mood swings. Nice interview with Palace (reviewed in F5 #60) and a guest appearance by Ryan Taxles of Catch 22. Loves trading/reviews zines music. Price:\$1. Jason Luther .. Hamburg, NY 14075—Email: luth0618@ginko.ait.fredonia.edu—URL: <http://www.fredonia.edu/business/97sba350/luther> (32 pages/xerox/digest/DTPed/CWB)

I admit these issues are probably the most difficult about The Factsheet Five Archive Project. I believe that F5 should be more than just name checked in brief histories of zines. I would argue that it not only influenced

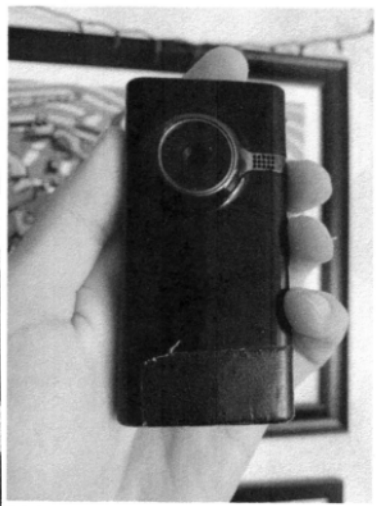
I try to hold these paradoxical feelings close as I endeavor to explore zine history through F5. The **Zine Librarian Code of Ethics** calls attention to the "inherent tension" in making zines accessible and the ways in which zines were born from a particular context and often written for a specific audience. I'm not a librarian and the Code of Ethics was clearly written for

zine culture at the height of the zine explosion, but foresaw much of the weirdness that is now standard fare on the web today. It brought together snarky cynics, pirating artists, pansexual freaks, paranoid conspiracy theorists, fringe thinkers, and absurdists to create its own sense of reality. How to represent that world — and how much of it is possible — remains an open question.

## Zinesters and Filmmaking

Here are 10 reasons why zinemakers (or anyone, for that matter), should consider making their own movies. I'm not talking little short films, or music videos, or docs (although those are super fun to do, too!) I'm talking big movies, 20-120 minutes long.

1. It isn't (outrageously) expensive anymore. You can shoot on a cell phone, or buy a used camcorder from a flea market/pawn shop for less than a cartridge of ink. Also editing systems can be a phone, library computer, or if you're shooting on tape, edited in camera.



2. It's easy! Come up with an idea, shoot some footage, throw it together, and release it on burnt DVDs/VHS tapes, online, at a house party, or at a local arthouse cinema. The people who run local movie theaters *love* to help new filmmakers!

3. Zinesters have a VOICE unlike any other group of artists. They're scrappy, they make do with the materials on hand, and the stuff they make is way more FUN than most blockbuster-type movies I've seen in movie theaters.

4. It removes the power from media conglomerates. Disney/Netflix/Hulu have a stranglehold on the media we

consume, so by making alternative media, with alternative points-of-view, there will be more choice available to the TV/movie watching crowd.

5. It's accessible. Reading can be difficult for some people, so videos can be a great way to share information with those who don't want to/aren't able to sit down to read.

6. Expanding your mediums for communication can help reach audiences who may not come across your zines.

7. It'll help expand your creator's toolbox. Working in unfamiliar mediums can increase your creativity in the mediums you're already comfortable with.

8. Now you can include music, or spoken word, or flashing, seizure-inducing colors alongside your message in ways that aren't as easy with paper and ink.

9. It's scarier to the establishment.

Nobody's afraid of a zine about how to build a bomb, but everyone is terrified of a movie about some guy chopping up college co-eds. That's kinda hilarious, right?



10. It's fun. I don't really know what to tell ya, but if you like cutting and pasting and stapling and photocopying, you might also enjoy pointing and shooting and editing and burning copies.

Scotty Leonard is a zinester, filmmaker, and all-around underground artist. You can find some of his stuff on [zinema-cinema.com](http://zinema-cinema.com) and [lilyyellowtags.com](http://lilyyellowtags.com). If you make a project (of any kind), and you want it featured on one or both of these sites, send it to [lilyyellowtags@gmail.com](mailto:lilyyellowtags@gmail.com) :)

## The Road to Re-Writes

by Kris Mininger

My creative process, in a nutshell, is total chaos. Well, it was, until I started a newsletter and forced myself to publish every two or three months. This gave me the kick in the ass I needed to sit down and write on a regular basis. Maybe it's only thirty minutes a day, but sometimes that's all it takes to get the creative juices flowing. The real work of fleshing out ideas, developing stories, etc., happens away from the desk, when I'm taking out the trash or riding my bike or walking through the park. (As Grant Wood, the painter of *American Gothic*, once said, "All the really good ideas I ever had came to me while milking a cow.")

The newsletter was an ugly, eight-page, text-heavy, A4-sized zine with a staple in the upper left-hand corner. It ran for twenty issues and was called **Chorrada**. One of the issues was about a road trip to Morocco. I wrote the account quickly, shortly after returning home. It was full of wide-eyed, misguided first impressions, lots of exclamation points, and very little insight. And the newsletter had limited space, so when I reached the bottom of the last page I wrote, "To be continued..." But I never printed the rest of the story in any future issue!

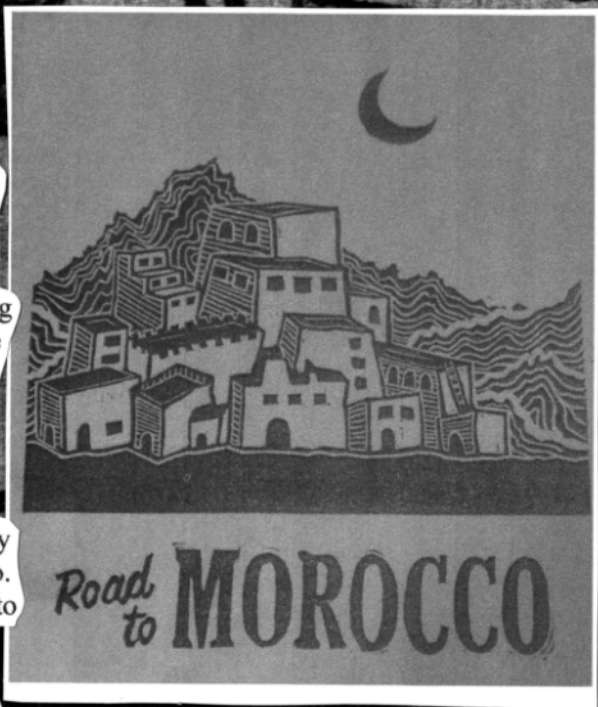
During the pandemic, when we were all locked down and quarantined and socially distanced from each other, I found a copy of that Moroccan issue while tidying up the apartment. I was shocked by how poorly it was written and decided to give it another shot. Among other things, it's a tale about the importance of forcing yourself to step out of your comfort zone in order to learn, grow, become a better person, etc. I know that sounds kind of lame, kind of cliché, but it's the truth.

I pushed myself to do things that terrified me when I was younger. If I hadn't then I'd still be hanging around with my high school buddies, drinking 40s and smoking weed at the lake. By the way, you don't have to physically go somewhere *exotic* to step out of your comfort zone. There are plenty of things you can do right there in your own town. For example: getting up on stage and playing a song, or signing up for foreign language classes, or (the most stressful situation of all) celebrating Thanksgiving with extended family. (And what the hell does *exotic* mean anyway? My wife is Spanish and she thinks the small town in Southeastern Pennsylvania where I was born and raised is exotic as hell.) Anyway, I felt it was a tale worth telling properly and I hadn't done it justice on the first try.

One thing I noticed about the first version I published is the amount of facts and figures and dry statistics. It was like I was writing a Wikipedia article about Morocco. (Apologies to everybody who read that version. I must have bored a few people to death.) In the second version I made sure any facts and figures were related to the story, connected to my personal experience while traveling around the country.

Another thing I noticed about the first version is how self-absorbed I am in the story. Too much ego. I barely mentioned my traveling partners. This brings me to a critical thing that happened between the first and second versions: I aged seven years. Now that I'm older and mellower and (maybe a little bit) wiser, I don't dash things off and quickly publish them like I used to. Also, problems like what to put in, what to leave out, how much personal information to share, etc., became easier to solve.

I find that looking back over (some really cringe-worthy) stuff I wrote long ago is extremely helpful. It does wonders for improving one's editing skills.



Everything I wrote was true, from the police attempting to shake us down for a bribe on a back road to witnessing the aftermath of a tourist getting stabbed in an attempted robbery. However, to make the story entertaining I exaggerated here and there in order to keep the reader interested. If the reader isn't motivated to keep turning the pages, I'm not doing my job. But I've never gone full-on Jerome K. Jerome in any of my stories. (In 1889, Jerome published a humorous semi-autobiographical account of a boating holiday on the Thames. The book, *Three Men in a Boat (to Say Nothing of the Dog)*, is a travel classic and is still in print. The dog, Montmorency, was completely fictional, added to the story for comic effect.)

Continuing with the theme of Exaggeration: I recently read *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton. In a chapter about Van Gogh he talks briefly about the artist's creative process. Botton writes, "The part of reality that concerned [Van Gogh] sometimes required distortion, omission and the substitution of colours to be brought to the fore, but it was still the real—the 'likeness'—that interested him. He was willing to sacrifice a naive realism in order to achieve realism of a deeper sort, like a poet who, though less factual than a journalist in describing an event, may nevertheless reveal truths about it that find no place in the other's literal grid." I'm not comparing myself to Van Gogh (obviously), but that's exactly what I try to do in my travelogues. (Van Gogh referred to this process as "playing hell somewhat with the truthfulness of the colours." I like that.)

I revise and edit obsessively. This process used to frustrate the hell out of me, so I'd just skip it. This is why my early zines are so painful to read now. (Good thing I didn't print too many copies!) What's that Beat Generation mantra? First thought, best thought? Nonsense. Now I enjoy the challenge of sitting down and trying to improve on what I wrote the day before. I look forward to it. It's one of the highlights of my day. Now I fine-tune a story until I find myself inserting and removing the same commas over and over again. That's when I know it's time to stop messing about and get publishing.

Oh, I almost forgot the most important difference between the first and second versions of my Moroccan tale: the first one was an ugly eight-page zine with a staple in the upper left-hand corner and the second version was a nice and thick 44-page saddle-stapled zine with incredible artwork by my friend Meredith. That was one of the problems with the newsletter: it wasn't aesthetically pleasing in any way, shape or form. It was really just a vehicle for me to try things out and improve my humble writing skills.

And on that note, never forget what Kenneth Rexroth once wrote: "Against the ruin of the world, there is only one defense – the creative act."

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Kris is a Yank living in Spain. He currently has two zines available: **Tools on Tour** (about helping a friend move a 500 kilo combination machine from Ireland to Finland in the dead of winter) and **Road to Morocco** (about a week driving around Morocco in a car full of Spaniards). Send a few bucks or a trade to Kris Mininger, Calvo Sotelo 13B, 4B, Plasencia 10600, Caceres, SPAIN. Or contact him at [kmininger@gmail.com](mailto:kmininger@gmail.com)

## Welcome to the Club

By Jordan Sea

Once upon a time, I had to stay in my house. All the time. Everyone else in the world did too. I had re-connected with good friends from Chicago and we sent Marco Polos to each other every day. We didn't have much else occupying our time. One of my friends mentioned that the Zine Club Chicago would start having online meetings in lieu of the in-person ones they used to have. I missed the Chicago zine scene—their zine club had started up long after I had moved away. So I started attending every month. My social anxiety sometimes suffocated my voice and I would shut off my camera, anxious and overstretched, slipping away and closing my Zoom window. But over time, and particularly after I wrote my first zine, I felt more comfortable with the folks who were in attendance. Most importantly, I felt like I was actually worthy of being among these writers and artists.

After attending about 2 years of virtual Zine Club Chicago, and we no longer had to all stay in our homes, I spread my sights out into the potential for local zinesters. Now that I was an actual zine-writer and not just a consumer and patron, I yearned to find more of what I had in ZCC.

My Big Idea came after Santa Rosa held its in-person zine fest. I could not believe my luck—it was at the library a block away from my home. The fest was well-attended and inspiring. My people were actually here. I decided I needed to create a local zine club.

I'm the type of person who will doggedly search for a way to obtain the thing I want, particularly if I think that thing will vastly improve my life. So, I decided that I'd will a zine club into existence with the sheer force of my persistence. I'm logistics-

oriented. I get things done and I brook no internal hesitation in pursuit of accomplishment. I put my strategic mind to work. What would need to happen to birth a zine club?

# SONOMA COUNTY ZINE CLUB

August 2

6:30 - 8 PM



LETS GO!



WOWEE!



C'MON



LIBRARY

I happened to notice someone sitting outside of the cafe I frequent wearing a pin that I knew had to have been obtained at the zine fest. I felt bold as I approached and asked them if they were familiar with the organizers of zine fest and while the person wearing the pin wasn't, their companion was. They directed me to the teen services librarian (my connection!) and I soon made a phone call to get my foot in the door.

Intriguing



What followed was a flurry of marketing and sharing and scheming. I bought a button maker and made buttons to give away to attendees. I designed the shit out of a handful of social media stories and posts. I pondered the best locations to get the word out. I even scored a mention on the Long Arm Stapler podcast.

And I sit here even now, writing at a circular arrangement of library conference room tables, surrounded by zinesters and artists and generally cool people. This thing happened.



So, really this has been a long evangelical rant to get you to contemplate starting a zine club in your area if there isn't one already. What you'll see next is a rough checklist of what I did to pull this together.

1. See if your local librarian knows about zines. What I've heard is that most librarians, even if they're unfamiliar with zines, really dig the concept. Also, most libraries allow folks to "rent" space for a meeting, so you can have a well-appointed neutral location. So, if you can make a connection at the local library, you may have access to a wealth of resources. Talk about your dream. So many libraries are very much into creating healthy creative community, especially if someone is volunteering to take the lead on it.
2. If you're able to secure a space for your first meeting, see if you can reserve it as many months out as you can so you don't have to worry about where you're going to meet.
3. Realize that your first few meetings might be sparsely attended. The important thing is consistency over time. Sometimes, it can take someone a long time of knowing about an event before they feel brave enough to attend (or it syncs with their schedule). If you're going to do this, make sure you really want to go the distance. That's what community is seriously about. Consistency establishes trust.
4. And because you want to go the distance and not burn out, try to space apart the really amazing ideas you have for the club. Make it as chill as possible. It's enough to just establish a space where people can feel creative and

not have to purchase something to pursue it. Your first few meetings don't have to have a theme or a guest speaker or an agenda.

5. Make some flyers. The librarian might even help with xeroxing and posting them. Make big ones, and small, quarter-page ones. You'll find a place for them.
6. Get guerilla in spreading the word. Write it in chalk on the bathroom wall. Casually mention it to the cashier at Hot Topic (Hot Topic cashiers need to know about zines if there's going to be any hope in this world.) Make flyers and then leave them neatly in corners of the huge chain bookseller. Tuck 'em individually into art magazines or local arts newspapers. And, of course, seek out the legit spaces — community bulletin boards. Loads of places have them, like grocery stores, cafes, independent bookstores.
7. Get on the socials. Use hashtags. Ask folks to repost. Tag the library, if they're helping or hosting. You don't have to immediately create a social media account for your club, but you'll want to eventually.
8. Be ready to be friendly. You might get talkative folks, or you might get shy folks who are really stepping out of their comfort zone. Approach attendees with sincerity and gratitude. It might be cheesy, but everyone likes to be seen and encouraged.
9. If you're able to gather a bunch of friends to make this happen, you have hit the jackpot. Divvy up tasks. Share a spreadsheet of places to spread the word. Tag said friends in social posts and make sure they're reposting. Eventually your club attendees may do this too.

10. Take pictures of stuff at the meeting. If you have a pile of zines folks brought, make an Instagram reel or TikTok video or at least snap a few photos and tag the writers. Be sure to ask permission if you take photos of any humans, and tag them if they wish.

11. At the end of the meeting, make sure to announce when (and where) the next meeting will be. And make sure you commit to being there, no matter what.



And don't forget to look for other zine club meetings online, like Zine Club Chicago, to get inspiration for your own gatherings. Fingers crossed, your first event will rock and folks will be grateful and stoked for the next time. If it's just you, count it as a chill time to get some writing or art done. That's a pretty sweet deal.

## Pseudonyms!

**Jordan Sea** - One of my favorite movies is Real Genius and one of my favorite characters in that movie is the gender-bending, hyper-kinetic genius Jordan. She's a manic pixie girl for nerds; she was my hero. So, in a situation where I could choose my own name, I chose Jordan. I researched the character's last name, Cochran (which isn't mentioned in the movie), and it didn't resonate (Zephram Cochran connection notwithstanding) so I chose a variation on the initial—Sea. A huge body of water speaks to me, deep, dark, and a little scary.

**Kelly Shortandqueer** - When I was preparing for a move from Denver to Chicago in 2004, I was informed that friends started calling me Kelly Shortandqueer (based on my shortandqueer@ email address) to distinguish me from another local Kelly. While it had been my email address for several years, this was the first time it was used as my name. I can't remember what came first, the nickname or my zine series titled Shortandqueer, but it was quickly how I became known in zine circles and the name has stuck for close to 20 years!

**Heather Andhercats** - I started using the name Heather Andhercats when I was living with 6-7 cats. Only one of them was mine, but he was very much a part of the cat crew. It felt like the cats belonged to nobody and everybody. Andhercats also sounds like my actual last name, which people tend to mispronounce and misspell, so it was kinda fun to make a version of it that people could easily remember and spell. I started using it as my zine pen name to add anonymity. I also hope to get a second cat someday so it'll be grammatically true.

**Donna Ramone** - Hiding out in a library when I was twelve I found a book on The Ramones - but they didn't have any of their music for me to check out from the CD collection. So I used my birthday money to get one of their CDs from the Best Buy and sincerely thought I had discovered a band no one else seemed to know about it. Then I started to use the moniker when writing so my parents couldn't find any of it and get mad at me for using the f-word in print. After twenty years, guess it's too late to change it now!

**Nicole Morning** - My pseudonym is my favorite name, and one day it'll be my legal name, too. I didn't want my ex-husband's or my father's last name, so I decided to choose my own. I looked through the family tree my grandmother made, and chose a name from one of my female ancestors. I

kept it mostly secret at first, and felt kinda weird about telling people. But then one of my best friends sent me a letter addressed with this name I chose for myself, and it felt real and right. My fake name is my true name.

**Cheyenne Neckmonster** - Neckmonster is the name of a perzine I did for years, though I've moved on to do lots of other projects, including other zines, playing drums in Yellow Wallpaper, and setting up a local zine fest. Some people also call me "Cheyborg" which is just a combo of my name and a reference to my love for sci-fi/fantasy.

**Billy McCall** - Mary McCall was an artist-friend of mine in Chicago, who once told me I felt like family to her, like I "might be a long lost nephew" or something. I jokingly referred to myself as "Billy McCall," which I thought sounded great. Like an old west gunslinger. She passed away a year later, and in memory of her I started using that name for all of my creative projects. But one alias isn't enough! I am also known as "Billy the Bunny" due to my habit of dressing like a rabbit, especially at zine events.

**Julia Eff** - I moved around a lot growing up but luckily never had the inconvenience (disaster) of having another julia in school with me.....until I moved to the school I was gonna be in til the end, where not only did they have a julia already but she was in MY GRADE. Absolute torture. Due to tenure, she got the good (basic, unmodified, singular) name & I got the scratch-and-dent added-last-initial version. People have been calling me "julia f" since fourth grade. I just started spelling it phonetically to look more legit.

**\*Ayun Halliday** - I am a 16 year old camp counselor in Southern Indiana. Like the little girls in my charge I am afraid of the dark (and the latrine is a long walk from our cabin.) However, my bladder is sufficiently big and strong enough to hold it 'til dawn.

I feign sleep hoping the little Hoosier lambs will stop bleating my name.

They don't and my counselor buddies whose cabins are within earshot begin spelling (and pronouncing) my name A-yun. As do I.

\*transcribed from Ayun's handwritten original, **East Village Inky #67**, and used with her permission



## Pseudonyms Continued!

**John Dishwasher** - In 2005 I set out to self-publish a novel on the web. Considering the problem of a pen name rather methodically, I realized that in the Western tradition most surnames refer to either a family affiliation, an occupation, or a place. I thought through all the many places I had lived and none of them felt right as a last name. Tucson? Kansas? El Paso? Honolulu? Then I considered the many part-time jobs I had had: Telemarketer? Distributor? Chickenschlepper? Dishwasher? Ah ha! "John" got the nod as a first name because it rhymes with 'wash' and has an 'everyman' quality. Also I felt like "John Dishwasher" really



owned the defiant withdrawal from the mainstream that I was, and am, still living. I started making zines in 2017 and quickly learned that the name 'Dishwasher' already had huge cache in the zine community. I was crestfallen.

But after 12 years of building all kinds of cyber-infrastructure, there was no turning back. When people ask if I'm that famous zine maker of the 1990s, Dishwasher Pete, I just say we're not related.

Do you write zines under a secondary name? Is it for safety reasons? Just for fun? Something else? Tell us the story!  
[iknowbilly@gmail.com](mailto:iknowbilly@gmail.com)

# What's in a Neckmonster?

(by Cheyenne Neckmonster!)

I get this question fairly often, and though I answered it in my very first (now long out of print) issue of Neckmonster zine, it bears repeating, I guess! I chose the name "Neckmonster" when I was 18 years old, because I wanted a unique and memorable, but slightly mysterious, name for my perzine. It also became my punk last name. When I was four or five years old, I noticed a patch of slightly bumpy skin on my neck. I panicked and thought maybe I was turning into a snake, or some sort of reptile, so I dubbed it my neck-

monster! Probably a decade later, I got the rough spot checked out by a dermatologist (it hadn't spread, changed, or done anything weird) and it was diagnosed as "epidermal nevus," a harmless condition that changes the texture of the skin slightly. So it's literally nothing, but I gave it a weird name, and it stuck.

Little did I know... from 2007 - 2009, I suffered from a rare and painful condition called a 'ranula' - which is what it's called when a spit gland doesn't empty its contents into your mouth, and instead swells and swells. Just so happened to be the gland on the right side of my neck! Maybe my neck decided it hadn't had enough weird stuff happen to it. I had to get the ranula surgically removed, which sucked, but now I'm fine.

Neckmonster zine ran from 2001 - 2011, chronicling my travels (including one issue dedicated to a study abroad experience in China!), school, friendships, and random thoughts. I think it was a good run. I did 9 issues, and maybe someday there'll be a tenth, but for now I'm focused on lots of other projects, like the Halftone Zine fest, which I am putting on in May 2023 in Lexington, KY where I live.

# neck- monster!



NUMBER ONE.

## LUXURY CARPETS MAKE ME MAD

by: Mark Ostler

Antique rug peddlers piss me off. You know those tiny shops that sell big, expensive luxury carpets? Hanging in the window is some gaudy tapestry with a price tag of \$4,975.00? I have a deep, irrational hatred towards these merchants of overpriced textile junk.

During the early 2000's, I was dead broke and riding the bus to work. I worked event staff at major concert venues in downtown Seattle. It was an awesome job. I got paid to work shows like Cher, Tool, Peter Gabriel, Puff Daddy, Pearl Jam and more. But work was either feast or famine. Some weeks were back-to-back shows, other weeks, nothing. Regardless, I was broke and scraping to get by.

To pour salt in the wound of my poverty, my bus route passed not one, but TWO luxury carpet peddlers. Each workday, I would glare out the bus window and wonder, "How can anyone spend money on this crap?" Then, I'd see that fancy garbage again, on the way home,

TWICE!!

"How does this place stay in business? Who's buying this overpriced stuff? If I had FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, no way I'd buy something to walk on, and on and on...." All these questions bloomed the beginnings of my second zine, Waltzing Carpet Juliette.

I imagined a rich old woman- an addict. A shopping junkie with an addiction to buying luxury carpets. I saw the weasel salesman salivate when our protagonist waltzed through the door. A swirling world of consumerism unfolded before me and poof, out of nowhere, the name

Juliette.



For weeks, I unintentionally memorized which ramshackle rugs hung on display. When the front window drapings changed, I thought to myself, "Juliette must have Waltzed in and bought another Carpet."

Then I'd get mad! Mad thinking about all that wasted money and how hungry and struggling I am. My quasi-desperation switched to hope - hope my favorite late night coffee shop has day old bagels today.

There I was, wishing for a cheap dinner while these wealthy scumbags were spending hundreds, even thousands of dollars, for what? A rug? Literally, trampling money underfoot? Grrrrr...

Rage Against The Machine says, "Your anger is a gift." Anger is a force, a motivator. I wrote Waltzing Carpet Juliette fueled by anger and frustration. I turned my inner anger into motivation. My motivation became writing. Spurred by frustration of being money poor and reminded of it every workday, TWICE!

I channeled my rage and wrote passage after passage. I crafted a scathing commentary of consumerism, false intimacy and fraudulent accomplishments. How money and wealth replace real emotions like

love.

Instead of personal fulfillment, a false promise has grown: that gathering commodities and more physical possessions can lead to a life well lived... at least that's how it looks in the advertisements.

I must've looked like a crazy man on the bus, quietly muttering under my breath, "Wow, somebody only spent \$2,150 on that floppy piece of fabric. Sure got a good deal on that one!!"

Many years later, the resulting record of my personal loathing of luxury carpet shops has become a comic book.

[etsy.com/shop/bangzap](https://www.etsy.com/shop/bangzap)

# Coffee Creamer and Water

Charles is a prison pen pal of mine. We've been writing for about 2 years now. His zine, IB64, publishes various prisoners conversing and sharing information. It's not the only prison-made zine I've ever read, but is the only one I am currently aware of. If you've never had a prison pen-pal, I highly recommend it.

## IB 64

Nov. 2022

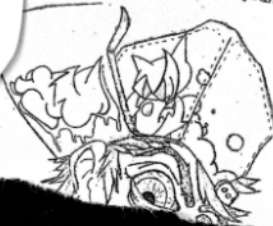
Issue #7

Price: FREE

A 'zine by Prisoners... KIPPIN'

First, thanks to our readers and everybody that has helped to spread the circulation. We're sending out over 80 copies this month. We had to reduce the size to eight 3rd columns to save on the cost of copy/print. As prisoners, we have pretty limited financing. We'd like to get back to 12 columns next month; we'll see how it goes.

Finally, keep those questions and comments coming! Please do not hesitate to submit work, we'll publish just about anything.



2. How often does it come out?

WE PUBLISH MONTHLY. IT'S A BIT DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH THE SCHEDULE BUT WE DON'T WANT TO PART-TIME IT SO WE PUT IN THE EFFORT TO GET IT OUT EACH MONTH.

3. IS IT MORE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN A PUBLISHING SCHEDULE IN PRISON?

I'M NOT SURE. I NEVER PUT OUT A 'ZINE BEFORE I CAME TO PRISON. IT IS A BIT OF A GRIND TO KEEP TO THE SCHEDULE IN HERE BECAUSE

Bully?

I TRUST THIS FEELS YOU WELL.

LET'S DO SOME INTERVIEW!

1. WHAT DOES IB64 STAND FOR?

WHEN I STARTED THE 'ZINE, I LIVED IN CELL 64, B-Pod, I BLOCK. IN PRISON LINGO, THAT'S IB64. I DON'T LIVE IN THAT CELL ANY MORE BUT I'M STAYING WITH THAT NAME.

I CAN'T JUST MOVE AROUND WHENEVER I WANT. I CAN ONLY GET TO THE LIBRARY ONCE A WEEK TO GET COPIES. I GET IT OUT EACH MONTH BUT I'VE GOT TO STAY ON TOP OF THINGS.

4. How big is the print run?

WE'RE DOING ABOUT 150 COPIES EACH MONTH. ABOUT 145 GET MAILED OUT TO ABOUT 120 PEOPLE.

To receive IB64, submit questions, or submit artwork for publication, use this address:

Smart Communication / PADOC  
Charles Picarella #MZ7013  
PO Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

5. WHAT TOOL & SUPPLIES DO I HAVE ACCESS TO?

NOT MUCH! I HAVE A WORD-PROCESSOR THAT I USE FOR 90% OF THE TEXT. I MIX COFFEE CREAMER AND WATER TO MIX UP SOME TASTE SO I CAN CUT &

PASTE THE LAYOUTS.

TO CUT THE PAPER, I

USE ONE

HALF OF A

BROKEN

NAIL-CLEPERS,

THAT'S ABOUT ALL

THE SUPPLIES

I USE.

6. HOW DO OTHER PRISONERS FEEL ABOUT IT?

MOST ENJOY IT.

OF COURSE, SOME

PRISONERS HATE

EVERYTHING SO

THEY AREN'T

INTO IT, I

LISTEN TO A LOT

OF THESE SUGGESTIONS

BUT THE CURRENT

WRITERS LOVE IT

JUST THE WAY IT IS.

8. WHAT SORT OF CENSURE DO WE HAVE TO FOLLOW?

I'D SAY THAT NOBILITY IS

KIND OF A UNIQUE PROBLEM

FOR US. PENNSYLVANIA'S PRISONS

DON'T ALLOW PORNOGRAPHY SO

WE DON'T INCLUDE IT. WE

ALSO STEAR CLEAR OF RADICAL

RHETORIC, SUCH AS VIOLENCE

OR ANTI-LEGAL PUSHING ILLEGAL

CONDUCT SO THE PRISON WON'T

WANT TO SHUT US DOWN. WE

TRY TO FOCUS ON LEGAL

AVENUES OF PRISON REFORM.

OVERALL, WE TRY TO BE OPEN

TO ALL POINTS OF VIEW SO

WE DON'T LOSE ANY DISCUSSION

JUST BECAUSE IT'S NOT HOW WE

SEE THINGS.

9. WHAT'S THE IDEA BEHIND THE 'ZINE?

WE TRY TO MAKE IT FUN SO THAT

PEOPLE WILL WANT TO READ. AT

THE SAME TIME, WE TRY TO RAISE

SOME AWARENESS ABOUT WHAT A

SERIOUS PROBLEM MASS INCARCERATION

HAS BECOME IN THE UNITED STATES.

WE REALIZE THAT IT'S A DIFFICULT

SUBJECT SO WE TRY TO TAKE

LITTLE PARTS OF IT AND PRESENT

ARGUMENT THAT OUR READERS CAN

GET BEHIND WITHOUT HAVING TO BE

EXPERTS IN PENOLOGY.

7. HOW DOES STAFF AND GUARDS FEEL ABOUT THE 'ZINE.

WELL, IT'S DIFFICULT TO KNOW,

WE DON'T REALLY SHARE THE

'ZINE WITH STAFF. I'D

ASSUME THAT THEY DON'T LOVE

THE IDEA OF A GROUP OF

PRISONERS DOING SOMETHING

INDEPENDENT FROM THE

PRISON BUT IT'S NOT AN

VIOLATION OF ANY RULES

SO THEY PROBABLY AREN'T

TOO WORRIED ABOUT IT.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE MARCH ISSUE OF IBCN, IT MIGHT JUST BE THE LAST ISSUE IF I GET RELEASED ON PAROLE.

BE COOL,

CP

To send us a copy of bound material, such as a 'zine that is stapled, use this address:

Security Processing Center  
Charles Picarella #M27013  
268 Bricker Rd.  
Bellefonte, PA 16823-1667

# Why We Catalog

By Stacey Piotrowski

On January 1st, 2022, I began a long-term project of cataloging my zine collection and digitizing my own zines. I'm a pretty organized person by nature and a cataloging librarian by profession, but I had never made a concerted effort to compile a comprehensive inventory of the zines I've amassed over the past 20+ years of my involvement in the self-publishing community.

Zines are ephemeral objects by nature, and I may be in the minority as someone who compulsively tracks and organizes their media consumption. Several variables converged in the early 2020s which caused me to catch the nesting/organizing bug. First and foremost, I had been living at the same address for five years (and counting!), which is no small feat of stability for someone who had previously moved 15 times in 10 years. I began to feel more comfortable taking things out of storage, putting them on shelves, and generally not living as if I had to be prepared to drop everything and GO at a moment's notice. Then, of course, the pandemic forced many of us into home-bound isolation: a time-consuming, detail-oriented project like this can be an effective way to stay sane during insane times. For me, repetitive data entry work makes it possible to almost meditatively zone out, and I enjoy the illusion that by following specific rules, I am working gradually towards the completion of something (i.e., a database) greater than the sum of its parts.

The pandemic also nudged many of us into a reflective mood. For me, this also coincided with the end of my 30s, so I was grappling with existential questions on both the personal and global scale. What have I done with my time so far? What am I going to do with whatever time I have left? Writing, and zines in particular, have played a huge role in my life, but at the same time, part of the reason I hadn't done a

cataloging project like this before was the cringe factor: I was mortified by most of the zines I published in my younger years, and throughout my adulthood, and I strictly avoided looking at my old writing because I didn't want to dredge up any memories. Now, from the apocalyptic vantage point of Pandemic Year 2, I felt compelled to integrate these disparate aspects of my past lives. (One exciting benefit of exiting the adolescent years is that I've finally learned to have some tenderness towards my former selves, but that's another story.)

But okay, let's say you're not *personally* having a midlife crisis and assessing the value and purpose of your personal effects and accomplishments at this moment. Why archive? Why catalog?

**1. You want to remember:** Who wrote this zine? Where did you get it? From a shop or a distro or a touring band passing through your town, or maybe picked out of the free box at a punk house? In my case, it may be a combination of aging, PTSD symptoms, and recreational drug use, but I've had the unpleasant realization that my memory is not as good as it used to be, and it bums me out that details I once thought would be burned into my brain forever are now either lost to time or buried in my paper journals (which would be too difficult and time-consuming to thoroughly search). If there is one piece of advice that I, officially an **Old Punk**, can impart to the younger generation, it's to write everything down and don't ever throw away personal items like journals, photos, mix tapes, original zine flats, etc., just because you had a strong BUT ULTIMATELY FLEETING emotional feeling about it.

**2. Knowing exactly what's in your collection:** I've been collecting for over two decades, so I have hundreds of zines. More than a few times, I've accidentally re-bought an issue I already owned! Not a huge problem, as I'm happy to give the "extra" financial support to a DIYer, but still. Having a searchable list is also helpful if you loan or share your

collection – for example, I can quickly pull titles from my list if I’m doing a zine-related workshop or presentation. If you use categories or tags, you can easily filter for perzines, feminism zines, queer zines, etc.

**3. It looks cool!** It feels good! Again, your mileage may vary, depending on your own personal accumulation of compulsions, but I love a good spreadsheet. I love being able to arrange information in a particular



order, I love being able to easily search that information, I love the feeling that all of my items are accounted for in the event my memory fails. I love that I can look at the Notes column of an entry and read a

little reminder of where and when I got a zine, who gave it to me, and what I thought after reading. It's just a different experience than physically rifling through one's collection; sometimes the object itself doesn't always trigger the same response as a written note to jog one's memory.

**4. Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe (LOCKSS).** The technical definition that I learned in library school is "the principle of distributed preservation by acquisition and preservation of the same content in multiple locations" [source: [dictionary.archivists.org/](http://dictionary.archivists.org/)] – in short, this means that keeping multiple copies of things (files, documents, etc.) in different locations should lessen the chance of accidentally losing the only copy of an item you're trying to preserve. In practice for archiving zines, this might look like keeping both paper and digital copies of your zines, and backing up your digital files in separate locations (e.g., your computer, an external hard drive, and the cloud). As someone who traveled and moved around a lot in my youth, I am frequently devastated to realize I've somehow lost original, unique things like photographic negatives, zine flats/paste-up sheets, old websites and email accounts, etc. Don't trust parents or punks to keep track of the stuff you left behind. Don't trust the corporate internet to protect your digital content; no social media or tech company is under any obligation to preserve the data you give them. It's always best to be in control of your own backups, physical and digital!

Well, I've gone way over my word limit (sorry, Billy!) for what was meant to be a brief intro. Stay tuned for the next issue of BtZ to learn some actual tips about cataloging and preserving your zines!

*Stacey Piotrowski is a photographer & writer living in Athens, Georgia. She sporadically publishes the perzines **Phases of the Moon** and **Moonshot**. Find her online at: [www.selenographie.com](http://www.selenographie.com)*

## Five Questions with Heather Kennedy!



Heather is a zine-maker from Bend, Oregon. She likes zines, Bigfoot, and other weird things. Find her stuff at: [letspartybigfoot.etsy.com](http://letspartybigfoot.etsy.com)

**Heather, I have an old zine of yours called "An A to Z Guide to my Hippocampus," and recently I've been reading your year-in-review zines, "Knicks and Knacks." What other zines have you done?**

\* My early zines started as The Smoking Bear Cub Club which is so cringey now when I look back at it, but we've all gotta start somewhere! I love perzines so that's mostly what I make. My current perzine series is Knicks and Knacks, which is on issue 10. I have a zine called "Chronicles and Quandaries of a Body Removal Technician" which is about the two years I worked for a funeral home. I wrote a zine about my dad, a guide to geocaching, and a guide to Central Oregon cemeteries. I made a clip-art zine called Pen Envy, which is full of little pen drawings that I did one winter when I was stuck at home with a bruised tailbone. I've made 3 issues of a zine called Eternal Nap which is about being a cemetery enthusiast (aka "taphophile"), and I have a lot of plans for a 4th issue but haven't been able to put it in motion yet.

**Knicks and Knacks is a summary of your personal life over the previous year. How is this mode of zine-making different than just a regular per-zine that comes out at random intervals?**

\* Originally Knicks and Knacks started out with the name "Stuff and Things". It was just a perzine catch-all for things I had been thinking or learning about, or stuff on my mind. I changed the name somewhere around issue 5 because I didn't realize Alex Wreck had a blog with the same name, it must have been trapped in my subconscious. Eventually it somehow morphed into an annual zine made in the winter, where I reflect on my year and set new goals and hopes for the upcoming year. I would really like to make Knicks and Knacks more than once a year. There's definitely enough thoughts rattling around in my brain.

**You took a break from zines for a few years, then came back to make some new issues. How did your zine-making process change after the hiatus?**

\* I went through some really big life challenges and was in survival mode for a while. I was working as an addiction counselor on the front lines of the opioid



epidemic throughout the pandemic, while simultaneously losing my father who I was extremely close with. I was working a schedule that was way off my circadian rhythm which threw me into this horrible insomnia/depression cycle. I was just overall having a bad time and couldn't create. In my previous experience, depression has been a catalyst for creativity but this time around, it nearly halted all hobbies for me. I knew I would come back to zines but I was just trying to survive life, feed myself, and pay bills. At the end of 2021 I was able to put out Knicks and Knacks #9 to work through my grief and the dilemma about my career. Eventually I decided I needed to leave my job for a while so I could do a better job taking care of myself. My sleep and hobbies have returned!

I think the structure of having an annual "New Year Zine" helps. It's a simple outline I can follow that gives my brain a break. With zines I have learned that I really need to be patient. For me, making zines is like a "flow state." The zine will let me know when it's ready to be made, and I will enter the "flow state." The ball will start to roll and I will lock myself in my room and create it manically until it's done. In 2023 I plan to do a split zine with a friend of mine who has never made a zine before. That's something that will hold me accountable to keep creating.

#### **What is the zine scene like in Bend?**

Well, I don't know if we have much of one? There are some young people making a skateboarding & fashion zine called Wanucu which is pretty rad. (IG@hesh\_media) Other than that, it's just me and Rachel Lee-Carman, who got me into zines.

We have a small zine library that I take care of. It's been located inside Dudley's Bookshop downtown for several years and they are sooooo supportive and awesome! The zine library was previously in a tea shop but they didn't like the radical political section so we swooped it out of there and it's been at Dudley's ever since. For some reason in our little town, the public library doesn't want to have anything to do with it. I just finally made an Instagram account for the zine library! (Please follow @bendzinelibrary). Bend is kinda a little vacation city so people leave zine donations when they come to town.

#### **What current zine is out there that we should all be reading?**

All zines are good zines! There is a brand new issue of "Smash the Skatriarchy" which is all about female, trans and non-binary skateboarding (IG @smash\_the\_skatriarchy). Also shout out to The Stay at Home Girlfriend by Kendy. Taryn Hipp is doing a zine-a-month Patreon which I just signed up for. I love skate zines and graffiti zines. I also collect addiction recovery zines so if you have any on that topic please contact me!



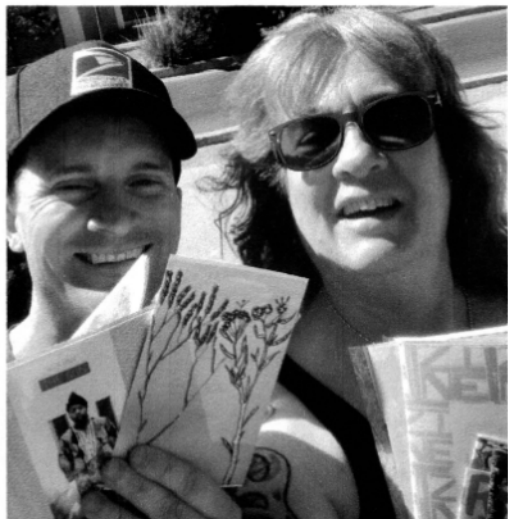
AJH 23

## New Zine Fests, New Friends

by Mita

I've been collecting zines for a few years now after kind of forgetting about them when I first discovered zines in the 90s. I stumbled across Quimby's on a visit to my hometown of Chicago in March of 2020. I used to go to Quimby's back in the day and I totally forgot about it. Cut me some slack. Moving across the country, starting a business, getting married and having a kid kind of absorbed my brain for a couple of decades! Anyway, I didn't even make it past the first third of the store after two hours and almost a couple hundred bucks. (I have since been back and can proudly say I have been through the entire store twice!) Since then, I have been a bit maniacal about collecting but it's been almost exclusively online. I live just outside of

Albuquerque, New Mexico and it's a little zine-dry here. Ok, maybe it's more like a trickle of zines that you can find in person.



*Billy and Mita, post SFZF*

Anyway, as the country started to open back up after the pandemic, I would always see announcements about zine fests all over the country and I was so jealous. I would imagine going table-to-table, fondling zinester's merchandise. Creepy, I know. The Albuquerque zine fest was cancelled once or twice, and I was starting to think I would

never get to one in person. Then this past year the Santa Fe Zine Fest was a go! I was so excited. But here's the best part, I got to go with Billy! We had met through Chicago's Zine Club online in the last couple of years. How cool was it that I lived in the same area as one of the most prolific zinesters alive! (ed. Note – she wrote that, not me, I swear!) So, we planned to meet up in a grocery store parking lot and I would drive. I have to admit, Billy, I was pretty nervous. It was like when I got to hang with the guys from The Jesus Lizard. He's like a rock star of the zine world. Would we get along? Would our conversation flow easily? Will he think I'm a big dork? You know,

stuff like that. Luckily, we had a lot in common. Billy had lived in Chicago for many years, we both went to Columbia College, we have both been in bands, and we both love zines! So the hour-plus trip flew by.

We arrived at the venue and headed inside, and we went in our separate directions. I was pretty excited about what treasures I would find. The fest was fairly small, about 10 vendors, but I think that it was a perfect introduction for someone who had never been to one. I think if I had gone to Chicago's Zine Fest first, I would have been completely overwhelmed. I methodically made my way from table-to-table, looking at every single item shown. I love to shop, and I can fall into a kind of hunting/gathering trance when I'm surrounded by things I love! Billy checked in with me and saw that I was floating along just fine. He was in his element, talking to vendors and asking if they were interested in trading zines with him. (Something I must practice more at future fests.) It was great to talk to the artists in person. You get to know their process and why they make what they make. Everyone seemed willing to discuss their work.

I purchased something from almost every table. I had three favorites I can think of. One was a woman named Jen Jordan who made a ton of mini zines that were watercolor, ink, and collage, with mostly perzine content. I have since purchased more of her work on Etsy. Another was a woman named D. Anaya who did a zine series called *The Adventures of Grief Girl* that center around her healing from having a young daughter pass. The zines show a collaboration of her and other women's artwork including masks, paintings and poetry that speak of loss and moving forward. She also had two of her children with her and they made zines about raising chickens and gardening which, of course, I also had to purchase. (They were the best to talk to!) One more zinester who impressed me greatly was an Asian American woman named Laurel Sardinas. She is a talented sketch artist who wrote some pretty scathing things about racism and misogyny in pop culture. She also did the funniest cartoon zine about her cat Felix's past lives, some perzines on public transportation and sexual harassment, and a beautiful photo journal of her travels in China, Vietnam, and Korea. I saw Laurel this past fall at the Albuquerque zine fest and enjoyed speaking to her again.

Truly it was a great introduction to a zine fest. I couldn't wait to get home and start reading. I also realize that I need to make more money....

Thanks so much Billy!

## Zinefest Houston, 2022

by Billy McCall



I'd never been to Houston, so a zinefest seemed like the perfect reason to go. I flew in a couple days prior, just to walk around and get a feel for the city. It was humid! Wet grass in the mornings, on the cusp of rain at any moment, a very different feel than the part of Texas that borders New Mexico.

The last zine event I tabled at was the Dear Diary Zinefest in 2020, just a few months before Covid took over the world. It felt like longer. And back then I was just selling *my* stuff, but this time I had a distro. Why did I start a distro? I don't know, I really shouldn't have. I have enough shit going on in

my life as it is, but so many of my friends do cool zines! And then they don't know where or how to sell them, so shit, okay, fine, I'll start a distro then. Thus, Behind the Zines Distro was ready to attend its first event.

They say everything is bigger in Texas, and that's certainly true of their zinefest! Holy shit, this ain't the east coast, where 30 people squeeze into one room, and for \$40 you get 1/8 of a table or whatever. Zinefest Houston took place in a gigantic open-air warehouse space! The room was the size of a football field, with 20 foot ceilings. Each person had their own 8ft table all to themselves, which were lined up in rows and rows and rows, with plenty of room in between. Some zinefests are so narrow and crammed that people in wheelchairs can't even get in there. You could have lined up 5 or 6 wheelchairs side by side and rolled from table to table in this place. In other words, it was really nice to not feel crowded, especially in this Covidy world of ours.

I was happy to wake up on Saturday morning and learn that a cold front had rolled in. If you're going to visit Texas, might I recommend going in

November? Instead of 75 degrees and humid, it was a cool 60 with a slight breeze, perfect weather for wearing a fuzzy bunny suit. I was so happy I decided to bring it along, and was probably the only person there who was perfectly comfortable. As I set up my table I realized that many other people were also dressed in costumes! There were corsets, hats, cloaks, and... oh yeah, this zinefest has a Renaissance theme! I never knew a zinefest could have a theme. So, while others were dressed as knights and wizards and queens, I was dressed as a bunny! Because I like bunnies...

On one side of me was a dude whose name was also Bill. He drew pictures and wrote love letters and would sell them to you. He also brought a giant pile of sweaters and dumped them on the ground to give away for free. Many under-dressed Texans were appreciative, many more were confused. On my other side was a 12 year old girl with a Venmo account. She sold lots and lots of zines, and some people remembered her from last year!? She seemed so much more prepared than me; I was just happy I'd remembered to bring a bunny suit.



I guess I will have to get a Venmo account. I don't have a smartphone, but Ed says I don't need one. I definitely missed a few sales on that. And although many of the cashless-smartphone people bought my zines using paypal, they did so reluctantly, and often with

difficulty. I wish our authoritarian fascism would progress to the point where zines are illegal, then everyone would *have to use cash*, lest they be arrested for creative thinking. Anyway, who has two thumbs and is a grumpy old zinester? **THIS GUY!**

Throughout the day one of the organizers would make announcements in a "Renaissance voice," which was really fun. Everyone was very nice, and Venmo or no, I sold a lot of stuff. And not just my stuff, but some of the distro-stuff too, so there ya go! It was all worth it. Another successful mission.

## Pertinent Info

Behind the Zines comes out twice a year, in March and in September. It is edited and published by Billy McCall, but is a group effort with a rotating cast of characters. If you'd like to contribute, please get in touch. Soft deadline for issue #16 is July 1<sup>st</sup> (rough draft) and hard deadline is August 1<sup>st</sup> (finished draft).

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**Bigfoot drawing by AJ Hermz.**

The cover of this issue was drawn by Jada J, whom I met at Zinefest Houston. I loved all her sketch ideas so much that I couldn't pick just one. So Behind the Zines #15 has 2 different cover variants!



Cover Variant #1



Cover Variant #2

Do yourself a favor and check out more of her stuff:

**@jadajdoodles**



## SEEK AND FIND!

GLUESTICK  
A RABBIT  
COFFEE  
FORTY BUCKS

PACKING TAPE  
DIAMOND RING  
AN ONION  
SCISSORS

A SEVERED HAND  
LONG ARM STAPLER  
STAMPS  
CAT TOY