ZINE CAPSULE

Zine collecting for the future
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But, if you would like to make a donation or help defray copy and postage costs, please send $2 (PPD)/US or $4 (PPD)/International* to:

ATTN: Zine Capsule Zine
Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go
605 Normandy Road
Encinitas, CA 92024
USA
info@gzagg.org

*bulk rate can apply, please get in touch

(Disclaimer: I'm sure I have left out many things. This is supposed to be pretty basic stuff here. I'm not opposed at all to taking suggestions and ideas for future editions though!)

This is the first installment edition, 2008
ZINE CAPSULE

Written and edited by:
Kim Schwenk

With contributions from:
Jenna Freedman
Margaret Nee
Torie Quiñonez
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Margarat Nee
Torie Quiñonez

Questions?
info@gzagg.org
gzagg.org
Breaks down over time, turning the paper brown and releasing acids.

Open-source - describes a broad general type of software license that makes source code available to the general public with relaxed or non-existent copyright restrictions.

Preservation is concerned with maintaining or restoring access to artifacts, documents and records through the study, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of decay and damage.

Silverfish are small, wingless insects typically measuring from one half to one inch (12–25 mm). Its common name derives from the animal's silvery blue color, combined with the fish-like appearance of its movements.

ZINE CAPSULE: Zine collecting for the future

There is no definite reason why people collect. Many of us collect things because it makes us happy, reminds us our families and friends, good memories, educates generations of the past and future and to some, collecting equals stability in a monetary sense. It’s fun, stressful, provocative, exciting, and empowering.

Over the years, I have traded, bought, and donated many zines, but I never really thought of myself as a collector. One day, I looked through my collection, “Wow, I have several zines on bikes and alternate transportation”. I guess I developed a niche. The beauty of zines has always been the applied value from each person. Just because I don’t own any early 90s riot grrrl zines, doesn’t mean my valuables aren’t worth anything less. The value is to me and/or whoever may enjoy them. What is important about the zines of the past and having copies of those early zines is knowing here lies the beginning of a revolution and how beautiful we can trace that back to the minds and hearts of the first voices. They are culture snippets. Slices of meaningful existence! Now we are grateful that somewhere, someone held onto those zines in their rooms, closets, and backpacks in whatever condition they are in. They are reminders that we too will linger on and make an impression one day.

What do zines mean today?

Interestingly enough, the scholarship about zines is exploding. Despite some protest to severe analyzation, zines appear in academic journals, dissertations, topics of symposiums, and in the curriculum of university students studying women’s studies, culture, media, and politics.
Like punk rock, zines are investigation for their influence, nature, significance, and validity. After it is all said and done, what does the dissection really lend to? Zines today are growing on both the facets of freedom and the threat of censorship. Many thought the internet would’ve killed the zine world, but instead, zinesters are utilizing a long reach system of networking, locating, and contacting to trade and communicate. How amazing it is to know that zines are produced in the Middle East, Thailand, and Mexico! Zines are now becoming the arms of global friendship and relationships and of the truth to the world, we sometimes are insulated from. Now more than ever, we have the opportunity to be custodians of the truth, collectors of the written word, and thoughtful educators. And how? Keep your zines.

For more information:

Zine Wiki
http://zinewiki.com

Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go
www.gzagg.org

Grrrl Zine Network
www.grrrlzines.net

Conservation On-Line “CoOL”
http://palimpsest.stanford.edu

Preservation supply vendors:

www.metaledgeinc.com

www.universityproducts.com

www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

Dekko packs are an economic and easy way to control silverfish. They can be purchased online or at local hardware stores.


Some terms to consider:

Lignin - a complex chemical compound most commonly derived from wood and an integral part of the cell walls of plants. Lignin
collection of the library or museum. The goals are access, networking, and education. An individual or group could do the same, partnering with a space to show like at a library, historical society, or non-for-profit center. You would be able to keep your zines, but share them, instead of confined in a box.

If you feel overwhelmed about the possibility of organizing, housing, and documenting your own collection or just feel a responsible organization or library would benefit from your collection, you can always donate to pre-established or up-and-coming libraries and community centers.

As of 2008, there are at least 50 zine libraries and infoshops just in the United States. Some are academic, some are community centers, but with many common purposes to educate, expose, and preserve.

For a list of libraries and infoshops:
http://www.undergroundpress.org/infoshops.html

The advantage of donating to an established library is the care and responsibility the libraries give to zines for preserving such a unique human experience. Many libraries like Barnard College accept two copies of zines, one for hands-on reading and one for archiving.

Generations of people to come could be affected by a few words spoken by someone, not even in their lifetime.

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Zine collecting is serious business. Think about it. Zines “represent lives, moments, and movements extant in this particular time in history.” (Quiñonez) We have the opportunity to be a part of that history, that voice of the revolution. Take hold of your own history!

Zines in the Library--Why Bother?

From Jenna Freedman, Zine Librarian, Barnard College

When I pitched the idea of a zine collection at Barnard College, the rationale I presented was kind of dumb¹, so I’m excited to have a shot at laying out some of the more compelling reasons for libraries to collect, preserve, and provide access to zines.

For me the three most important reasons have to do with culture (preservation of the thinking and artifacts of a movement), providing access to publications that reflect a different aspect of society than is normally housed on library shelves, and making these smart, funny, observant, and important works available to the reading public. They are also an invaluable educational tool, teaching people that it is easy and rewarding to create media, not just consume it. An added bonus is driving fussy catalogers nuts with the various problems presented by these wacky ephemeral objects that are often lacking in identifying information, come with oddball attachments like condoms, tea bags and tarot cards, that may or may not have copyright information, and sometimes have inconsistent or even contradictory titles and other metadata.

At times people have asked me if it’s weird or even insulting to the publishers to put an underground culture in what might be perceived as a mainstream establishment, especially a fancy Ivy League library like mine. While I am sensitive to that concern, especially being a zine publisher myself, I feel mandated by the first two items in Library Bill of Rights² to collect the little buggers, regardless.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Past

Zines are the primary sources of punk. Other than the music itself, zines are our best way in to this important subculture. I offer kudos and great thanks to the people who understood at the time of punk's beginnings that its creations were documentary and needed to be preserved. I have been lucky at Barnard to have received donations from several 90s riot grrrl zinesters of color. Without the forethought of someone like Lauren Jade Martin (Boredom Sucks, You Might as Well Live, and Quantify), the efforts of the marginalized of the marginalized would not have been preserved for the study and enjoyment of those who came after.

Q: Well, I don’t really know how to use those programs or have access to a computer all the time!

Like myself, I’m old fashioned. You could always design a personal system for yourself using note cards or a notebook like the old Dewey Decimal card file system! Each card could have the title, author, date of creation, number of pages, description, dimensions, etc. You could number the zines OR put them in title order. Then have a corresponding card with a number, color, or letter for that specific zine and keep it in a notebook. It would be up to you how to organize your zines however you choose!

Other alternatives for your zines

Rather than developing a personal home library, the option to share your collection is always a consideration. Our group, Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go, plans on setting up mobile zine reading rooms, in addition to the ‘zine picnics’ we’ve already organized. They are fun and informal ways to expose people to zines in a “non-institutional” atmosphere. Many libraries and museums in an effort to start collecting, circulating, and recognizing zines and zine culture have organized zine exhibitions. Many times the organizers will have a call-out for submissions and then after the show, the zines are donated into the
Try Open Office for free open-source office suite programs, compatible with other office suites. http://www.openoffice.org/

New social cataloging applications like Library Thing can be used to organize the inventory of your zines. www.librarything.com
For features on library thing, check http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LibraryThing
As well as other “social cataloging applications” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_cataloging_applications

I’m sure many individuals out there have scanned in entire zines and saved them on sort of CD or DVD just like the new revolution of music media. Remember all digital media has a sustainable life too. If you go the digital route, be sure to update software, making sure you will be able to download or even access those files in the future.

Yes in fact, zinesters are digitally preserving zines. Check out QZAP (Queer Zine Archive Project):
“The primary function of QZAP is to provide a free on-line searchable database of the collection with links allowing users to download electronic copies of zines. By providing access to the historical canon of queer zines we hope to make them more accessible to diverse communities and reach wider audiences. http://www.qzap.org

Present

I wasn't on the scene with Lauren and the others, but now that I am, I see it as an essential part of my job--of the archivist's job--to identify and collect zines that reflect the world of their creators. Many of today's zines focus on body image, activism, DIY craft making, vegan cooking, third-wave feminism, and, like yesterday, the thoughts that pain isolated high school punks and other misfit teens. Some of these topics may make it onto the library shelves in the form of academic writing or exploitative bestsellers, but rarely do their authentic voices survive the publication process, if they're even identified by corporate or even small or university press imprints.

Future

Whether zines die out or not in this bloggy new world (and I say not), it will be essential in the future for scholars and misfits to have access to yesterday and today's do it yourself print publications. The next generations can only benefit from reading--in their predecessors' own words and images--what life was like before they were born. Maybe hiero-glyphs were seen as nothing more than vandalism back in their day, unrecognized for the vital messages they'd one day carry to tomorrow's historians.

For more information on zine librarianship, see http://zinelibraries.info and http://groups.yahoo.com/group/zinelibrarians
How-To Archive: DIY tips for the independent archivist

I’ve been working in rare book libraries and archives for about 10 years. Quite considerable care goes into the preservation of these items, some of them don’t exist but in one source! How can we brush aside the past to reinvent the future? Our zines are very special, (some one-of-a-kind) like those rare manuscripts, so the hope would be to find a place to have them for a really long time. All this right in the convenience of our own homes!

Archiving on a budget: Preservation issues, housing, climate control

The advantage a library has over us personal collectors is a budget, although, that’s not always the case with some nonprofit organizations. Most of us don’t have the funds to buy top-of-the-line archives supplies and climate controlled conditions. Of course, those are ideal, i.e. acid-free folders, boxes, temperature control, and adequate storage. Those products are really expensive. There are some simple and cheap ways to keep your zines safe from wear and age!

Wood is the primary source of cellulose fiber for paper being produced today. The lignin (see glossary of terms) breaks down and produces acid. Acidity causes paper to lose its strength because of the loss of molecules binding it together. The more lignin in paper, the more acidic it is.

The two worst elements to paper are heat and light (big components of cellulose breakdown). Heat makes paper weak and brittle and light fades images reversibly. Moisture, water, and bugs come around second, although in many cases, the damage can be

Now that you’ve got your zines housed, enveloped, foldered, wrapped, or ready to be stored, the best place to keep them is in a fairly neutral temperature room and the less light the better.

Q: Well, won’t plastic melt? What if I have a fire?

Ultimately, you have to decide what is important to save in an emergency. Storing paper in a fire-proof metal box is an option. But plastic is cheaper and metal can rust.

Arranging and cataloguing? Using easy spread sheets and databases or other programs to arrange and organized your zines

Microsoft Excel has come a long way from being the “other application” attached to Word. It also goes beyond the cell formula little box and field driven table, it utilized very complexly to store your data. For instance, you can add comments to each field like sub-notes, even images. You could scan the covers of your zine and have a visual reference to that information. The other nice aspect about Excel is you can sort by title, subject, date, creator, if you add in those fields too. Excel can be imported into other databases like Access, as well.

Don’t have Microsoft Office, or just hate it?
Stay away from using any adhesives like sticky notes, glue, tape, rubber bands, and metal paper clips. Plastic clips are ok, but over-time they indent paper. As a general rule, you might want to remove staples, rubber bands, and metal fasteners, as well, unless you really feel strongly about the integrity of that object to the zine itself. Attachments (like correspondence) with zines could be wrapped separately and placed next to that zine with the same identification.

Many libraries undo the binding staple and store their non-circulating archives copy zines “flat” or unbound. This would work too and that way you could put one zine per folder or in-between two sheets of acid-free paper or cardstock in a file box type plastic container. Literally, like a filing system.

Be mindful, but don’t be afraid to be creative your housing! An old dresser might work! Watch out for silverfish! :P

controlled, unless of course your zines get dunked in a bucket of water.

[DIY Tip: If your zines get wet, don’t dab them with anything, hang them out to dry like laundry. Best if pages are separated, but sometimes a cool “on low” fan will “unstick” those pages. You don’t want to risk tearing the pages. Sometimes you can peel pages apart, but mind the level of damage. Before storing again, make sure the paper/fabric is completely dry.]

Care is about common sense mostly. Keeping zines away from the direct sunlight from windows, humid basements, our pets, etc. are just a few. The best ideal conditions for any paper based material for longevity is dark, cool, dry environments, say a closet or shelf away from a window off the floor.

So ultimately, where would you keep your zines? We love our zines, like we love our books, art, knick-knacks, and old stuffed animals. Of course, we are going to read them showing them our devotion. Most people just stack them on a bookcase, like our books. The problem with that are curled pages, improper book ends, and fading images. You could always keep a few out at a time, and store the rest, when not reading.
“In communities where there is no other outlet for “alternative” voices, collection, and preservation of alternative materials is critical. Where does a teenager in a conservative town read about other peoples’ experiences of being gay? Or about radical feminism, labor history, non-judgmental information on drug abuse? Zines often serve to function as memoir: primary sources for the recollection of life at the turn of the (21st) century.” (Quiñonez)

So you’ve decided you want to “preserve” your zines? What to do?

Q: What can I keep them in?

Ideally, acid-free, lignin-free boxes or pamphlet binders. These products can be purchased from vendors like Metal Edge, University Products, or Light Impressions* or archives safe polyester Mylar enclosures (which can be purchased by the roll, as a cost saver) and 100% cotton rag envelopes. Be careful of so-called acid-free supplies you can buy at a craft store, best places to purchase from are library and archives preservation vendors.

Q: But I can’t afford those products!

Most of us can’t. There’s no shame! For the at home archivist, here are a few ways to keep zines out of harm’s way. Firstly, DO NOT store in cardboard boxes. Little paper eating bugs called “silverfish” (you’ve probably seen them running around in a drawer) lay their eggs in the corrugation of cardboard in the factories! They feed off the tasty morsels of the paper. They have been known to ruin entire libraries! If at all possible avoid cardboard.

Cardboard also retains moisture, so given your climate, another nasty occurrence happens: mold.

[DIY Tip: If you notice mold, quarantine everything in that area from your other zines, books, or papers. Mold is something not to mess around with actually, it can be deadly. There are “mold specialists” trained in preservation methods who use freezing techniques to kill the spores. If there is a way to replace those zines, do so. Otherwise, you might consult your local university or archives preservation officer in your town or a quick email to one for help. There are simple methods of freezing paper, but you don’t want to ruin your zines. Consult an expert.]

Frankly, I’d invest in some plastic bins with good secure snap lids. The stackable kind could work best considering the size of your collection. Analyze your collection to see you if have odd shaped size zines, zines with attachments, zines with special “acid type” paper i.e. wax coated, newsprint, metal objects. Those plastic dresser type bins with the pull out drawers would work as well. Sometimes you can find those at thrift stores, garage sales, and discount stores without having to buy new.

Like books, the best way to house a zine, if not in a stiff, protective housing (like a pamphlet folder) is storing them with the spines down, if intact (folded) and using a plastic bin. If you don’t have access to individual envelopes or Ph balanced Mylar, each zine could be wrapped in acid-free, lignin free paper. (You can buy a REAM -500 sheets- of this paper for a good price, or split the cost with a friend). The outside of the paper wrap could be then marked in pencil with your own cataloging system (later discussed) for easy retrieval or some sort of color coding labels.