



DIY in Halifax: The Anchor Archive Zine Library

The Anchor Archive Regional Zine Project is a zine library in Halifax, Nova Scotia dedicated to encouraging zine-making and reading in Halifax. Founders Sarah Evans and Sonia Edworthy opened the library in the front room of their house in July 2005 when they suddenly found themselves with the space to make their extensive personal collections of zines accessible to the public. They started the library to provide the community of Halifax with access to alternative thought and media that is not usually available in libraries and bookstores.

Sonia and Sarah continue to add zines to the collection through trading their own zines with other zinemakers, buying zines through distros and at zine fairs, and donations. To borrow zines from the library, patrons must purchase a membership for \$2, or sign up for a shift at the library or donate a zine instead. Sonia and Sarah publicize the zine library through tables at community events, e-mail lists, a website, zine fairs, and zine-making workshops.

While the Anchor Archive Regional Zine Project occasionally receives funding for zine-related projects, the library itself runs off of the small amount of income generated by membership sales and zine sales through its distro, and it is operated entirely by volunteers. It is open Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evenings. In the future, Sarah and Sonia would like the Anchor Archive library to exist in a more publicly accessible, inclusive space, but do not want the overhead costs of paying for a space.

The Project also offers zine-making workshops at a variety of schools, libraries, community centres, and galleries around the city; a summer residency program for artists, writers, and zinemakers from all over North America; zine fairs; and community presentations. This summer, members of the project plan to take a bicycle tour around Nova Scotia for three weeks, delivering workshops on zine-making and

bicycle maintenance in the small communities that they visit. The zine-making workshops are an important part of the Project because they expose people to zine culture who would probably never visit the Anchor Archive library or encounter zines otherwise.

Currently the zine library's collection is not catalogued, but is shelved according to main subject, with the exception of personal zines, which are organized alphabetically by author. Sonia and Sarah would like to catalogue the collection, but are seeking librarian expertise to find the best way. The advantage they see in cataloguing is being able to place zines under more than one subject and allowing patrons to search for zines by author, title, year, and city, rather than just subject. They do not plan to introduce call numbers or change their shelving, however, as they believe it is important that patrons are able to browse zines by subject. Sonia and Sarah also do not process their zines in any way, as they feel that if a zine begins to fall apart, it is easy to simply make another copy. When they catalogue the collection, they plan to stamp the zines with an "Anchor Archive" stamp.

The majority of the Anchor Archive zine library's patrons are in their teens and twenties and the majority of the people who take the zine-making workshops are teens. However, Sonia and Sarah find that both teens and adults have the same needs in this context, since zines appeal to people of all ages and tend to have "the enthusiasm of youth."

The Anchor Archive library is one of many zine libraries that exist across North America, such as the Aboveground Zine Library in New Orleans, LA and the Bibliograph Zine Library in Montreal, QC. Some exist on their own while others are part of other alternative media centres, bookstores, or cafes. Sonia and Sarah have visited other zine libraries and zine collections in libraries in Canada and the United States. They see each one as different and hard to compare because each has different origins and serves a different community.

Sonia and Sarah had this advice for libraries who wish to establish zine collections. It is important for zine collections to be accessible and browsable, not stored in closed stacks. As well, patrons should be made to feel welcome. They recommend that libraries who want to start a zine collection should get youth involved and access zines for their collections through zine fairs, reviews in Broken Pencil, and zine distros (including Anchor Archive's!).

Learn more about Anchor Archive by visiting their website:
<http://anchor.revolt.org/index.html>

