

SELF-PUBLISHING POWER FOR TEEN GRRRLS

Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go - the name reflects the attitude that our small group of women wants to encourage, both within the group and in the dynamic zine and book-making workshops we organize. Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go works with community groups and non-profit organizations in the San Diego area, conducting workshops for adults and teens. Our primary focus is on the empowerment of teenage girls through the production of zines and artist books.

Formed in 2002, the instigator of the group was Elke Zobl, founder of the Grrrl Zine Network. As a visiting graduate student from Austria, Elke networked with local zinesters in San Diego. She hooked up with Margarat Nee, Claudia Lucero, Kim Schwenk, and Britton Neubacher. Just over a year old, the group has already hosted eight workshops and events, starting with the S/he Collective's Army of S/he Festival. Our latest event, in October 2003, was playing host to The Bookmobile Project along with DIY TO GO!, a showcase of local zinesters, book artists, and independent publishers.

Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go doesn't just want to encourage zine making, we also hope to inspire other groups of like-minded folks to start running workshops in their areas too. These sorts of workshops are easy to put on as long as you have a few people willing to share the responsibility of getting resources together and share their interest in self-expression with others.

Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go stays energized by keeping it simple, and by working in a variety of

circumstances. Currently five members, the group remains small to ease communication and organizing. We also work with other DIY groups in San Diego like the S/he Collective and The Independent Media Center, as well as out-of-town visitors like The Bookmobile Project. We've also worked in the academic world, helping San Diego State University develop their West Coast Zine Archive. These varied interactions provide fresh energy and perspectives, and offer new venues to infiltrate with our DIY ethic.

This DIY ethic is the cornerstone of the political aspect of Grrrl Zines A-Go-Go. We believe zine-making embodies the phrase "the personal is political" by encouraging active participation in the creation of one's own culture, and independence from mainstream media. This is especially important for teen girls who discover a new avenue for expression that is uncensored; something that they can produce alone, without the need for experts or expensive tools - their tools are their mind and a pen - anyone can do it. It is a truly democratic form of media, everyone who reads a zine can create one. Every reader should be a writer, and zines

make this possible, removing the fear of writing and emphasizing the process for each person.

While there is a political motive to the group's activities, we also like to enjoy ourselves, hosting a "Zine Picnic" as a get-together that inevitably produces a collaborative zine by the attendees. Our "Go-Go" attitude is also evident in the workshop process, in which our favorite moment is watching people dive into the "Scrap Lounge" and start cutting, pasting, and writing. We bring a manual typewriter as well, sometimes having to help the young girls use the archaic but very handy device.

Most workshops culminate in the production of a compilation zine in which each participant has designed a single page. The resulting publication represents a unique moment in time, a collection of ideas that run the gamut from profane to poetic. The group has learned to expect the unexpected, as junior high girls produce moving pages of text and imagery, confirming the need for just this kind of creative activity for the youth of today.

by GZAGG

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Kim Schwenk is Special Collections archivist at UCSD, book artist, and editrix of **Girl Noire**.



Claudia Lucero is editrix of **Glue Magazine: Sisterhood Down to a Craft** and a S/he Collective Organizer. gluemagazine.com



Margarat Nee published the zine **OYA: a feminist rag** from 1993-95, She is currently publishing the zine **Dogrrrl**. margaratnee.com



Britton Neubacher was the author of the zines **Skew** and **Wive's Tales** and is a S/he Collective Organizer.



Elke Zobl is creator of the web site **Grrrl Zine Network** and former zine editrix of female sequences, a feminist art, literature and music zine in Vienna, Austria. grrrlzines.net



WANNA WORKSHOP?

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MEETUP!

Feb 12
zines.meetup.com