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Watertown Free Public Library Embraces the Power of Zines

[WATERTOWN] On Saturday, October 2, The Watertown Free Public Library will host WFPL Zine Fest—a day-long celebration of zine culture and DIY publishing. Whether you are a die-hard *zinester*, or just want to learn what zines are and why they matter, the Library invites you to browse the marketplace, attend talks, and check out the brand-new circulating zine collection.

If you're asking "what's a zine?" that's ok. Zines are easier to describe than define. They are DIY, handmade magazines that come in all different shapes, sizes, and formats.

Many are handwritten, photocopied and stapled, while some are professionally printed. A favorite medium of punks, the Riot Grrrl movement, and superfan sub-cultures, zines have flourished in various forms for decades. But you won't find zines in most bookstores, so why would a public library host a zine fest?

“Zines are an important way to support and empower marginalized voices,” says WFPL Zine Fest Coordinator Carey Conkey-Finn. “They’re also a way for people to create community and share ideas that do not typically appear in the traditional publishing industry. Our goal is to provide a place for zines and the ideas of their creators to be represented in our collections. We believe they belong in the Library.”

The main event at WFPL Zine Fest will be the Zine Marketplace, hosting 30 zinester-vendors from near and far, showcasing and selling their work in the library's largest meeting room. Throughout the day, there will be also breakout talks on mental health and zines, integrating one's identity through zines, zines as a source for empowerment, and the history of Boston's 80s/90s independent publishing scene. Want to be part of the creative process? People of all ages will have the opportunity to create their own zine or work collaboratively in the Zine Hive.

In the weeks leading up to the festival, the Watertown Free Public Library will debut a circulating zine collection, with over 700 titles by local zinesters and national zine distributors. WFPL Zine Fest is a way to shine a light on these new materials while encouraging attendees to get involved and submit their own work to the collection.

“Zines can tell the story of a place, or the story of a people, and we want to preserve a part of Watertown that isn't currently reflected in our local history collection,” says Conkey-Finn. “You don't have to be a zinester to attend zine fest. People of all ages and types are welcome to browse, listen, and get inspired.”

To learn more and RSVP, head to watertownlib.org/zinefest. The Watertown Free Public Library is located at 123 Main St. in Watertown and is accessible by public transit. Masks are required for all people ages two and older inside the Library. If you have questions about Zine Fest or want to be involved, contact cconkey@watertown-ma.gov.



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About WFPL

The Watertown Free Public Library provides access to a wide variety of popular materials, resources, services, and programs that fulfill the informational, cultural, and recreational needs of Watertown and surrounding communities. Our Library works to create an environment that attracts and welcomes users of all ages and abilities. For more information, visit watertownlib.org.

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