

## Where We Find Each Other

Creating a space where sapphic voices aren't just heard, but celebrated

By Bea Kress

Scissors, staples, and patterned washi tape scattered the tabletops of Bird Library at Syracuse University where the members of [Sapphic Magazine](#) scrambled to assemble their third issue, [Yearning](#). It was a bone-chilling Wednesday night, just a week before finals season began, and while the rest of campus braced for the stress ahead, this small community came together with purpose and pride. The students divvied up the tasks based on their preferences: printing each page, trimming unnecessary edges, arranging the pages in order, stapling them together, and finishing with washi tape for both security and a touch of flair. “[It’s] comforting having that time to build something together as a community,” said Magdala Klein, Head of Web. One table buzzed with chatter and laughter while the other sat silent, engulfed in their separate tunes playing through their own headphones. The work was imperfect, resourceful, and deeply personal — mirroring the spirit of the [sapphic community](#) itself.

For three hours, the team stitched their creation together, improvising as needed, sharing tools, and offering encouragement. By the end of the night, 50 copies sat ready to be scattered around campus. “Thank god for the automatic staplers,” one member said, but it was clear that what powered the night wasn’t the bougie staplers or the other gathered supplies — it was the group’s collective care for the work and for each other.

For [sapphic individuals](#), the feeling of isolation is all too familiar, especially when navigating spaces that often overlook or misunderstand their experiences. *Sapphic Magazine* emerged as more than just a publication — it became a vital community platform where underrepresented voices could find belonging and connection. What started as an idea from Syracuse University junior, Maya Dupuis, to create a space for sapphic women and nonbinary folks on campus quickly transformed into a hub for shared experiences, where everyone could engage, express themselves, and find solace in knowing that they aren’t alone. “Even within the queer community, it’s easy to feel lost, as many experiences are often generalized,” a member said.

Dupuis had just moved from London to Syracuse to begin her college education. Like many students entering college, she was excited to be freed from everything that’s defined her in the past and begin this new chapter of her life; experimenting, finding herself, and navigating new experiences. Though, there was one setback that still shackled her down to life back in London and limited her potential to a true American college experience: a boyfriend back home. It wasn’t until Dupuis met a girl, her first and only queer friend at the time, when she ended things with him six months into her freshman year.

There was no real spark between the two, just the allure of a first queer experience. In the moment Dupuis was made to feel guilty for encountering same-sex attraction, from roommates telling her she “wasn’t actually gay” to super Catholic parents exclaiming their religious agenda.

Dupuis didn’t have many queer friends in the beginning, isolating her experience and delaying acceptance of her own queerness. Many sapphic individuals seek refuge in the broader queer community, hoping to find support and understanding, but are often left feeling hollow and unseen. Too often, conversations and spaces within the community are overly generalized, glossing over the nuanced experiences of sapphic people. It’s easy to feel lost in a dialogue that doesn’t truly speak to you. To make it worse, these spaces often center on narratives that cater to men, sidelining women and nonbinary folks. That’s why smaller, intentionally crafted spaces are so essential — they create room for sapphics to feel genuinely seen, heard, and celebrated for who they are, not just an afterthought in a larger conversation. These spaces remind us that our identities deserve focus, not just inclusion.

It all began when Dupuis noticed there wasn’t much of a sapphic presence on campus, isolating a vital part of the LGBTQ+ community. It wasn’t that sapphics didn’t exist within the Syracuse University community, but that there were no safe spaces designated for them. Originally, the idea was to create a space to host parties for sapphics, but owning a known space is difficult without creating a name for yourself first. “The magazine is a sort of way to introduce that idea, so even if you’re not a part of it you can still come, hang out, and meet new people,” Dupuis said, “and having a magazine is a nice way to archive things and express [yourself].”

The idea of starting a magazine circled endlessly in her mind throughout her sophomore year, a constant daydream she couldn’t quite shake. Yet, between classes, commitments, and the sheer chaos of college life, finding time to breathe — let alone launch a brand new magazine — felt impossible. Over the summer, however, something shifted. Determined to give her idea the attention it deserved finally, Dupuis decided to return to Syracuse ahead of the usual semester rush. It wasn’t just a project anymore — it was her “baby,” as she fondly calls it. Those extra weeks became her sanctuary, a time to pour her energy into shaping a vision that had lived in her head for so long. What started as a fleeting thought was now becoming a reality, one she was ready to nurture into existence.

It started with a simple poster design with the words “general body interest meeting” plastered across the top, accompanied by a QR code leading to a Google Form tucked into the corner. Nothing flashy, just straightforward enough to catch the eye of its intended audience. Dupuis scattered them across campus with equal parts hope and anxiety, wondering if anyone would notice yet another on-campus magazine. Still, it was a start — the first step toward making *Sapphic Magazine* a reality.

The first general interest meeting was a nerve-racking milestone. “I put these silly posters up for a general interest meeting where eight or nine people showed up. That’s where I met Jenna Sents, our Co-Editor, and she was super interested in the magazine,” she said. Sents’

enthusiasm turned out to be a game-changer. With a background in magazines and a shared passion for the vision, she brought both expertise and energy to the project.

For Dupuis, an architecture student with no prior experience in publishing, finding Sents felt like serendipity — proof that she wasn't alone on this. Together, they began transforming an ambitious idea into something real. The meeting allowed for collaborators to bring different perspectives and skills to the table. More importantly, it was the first step toward creating a team that reflected the very community the magazine was designed to serve. Each connection built that day became part of the foundation for something bigger: a space where sapphic voices could flourish, unfiltered and unapologetic.

Dupuis wasn't afraid of launching *Sapphic Magazine* on a predominantly straight campus. She had grown accustomed to navigating hetero-normative spaces, brushing off the occasional clueless comment or well-meaning but cringeworthy misunderstanding. "Straight people can be silly sometimes, I can deal with that," she said with a laugh. What weighed on her mind was something much closer to home — getting it wrong within the queer community.

"For me, it was like, 'Am I using the right terms for the posters? Will this attract the right people?'" she said. The thought of unintentionally alienating the very community she was trying to uplift was daunting. The queer community is her sanctuary, her family, and the idea of facing backlash from people she cared so deeply about stung far more than any outside criticism ever could.

Her fears weren't unjustified. The language and representation within queer spaces are layered and nuanced, and the stakes feel higher when you're trying to build something meaningful for a group that's often misrepresented or outright ignored. Dupuis poured over every detail of her messaging, from wording on her posters to the tone of the magazine's mission statement, obsessing over whether it would resonate or miss the mark. But these fears also drove her. They reminded her just how important it was to get this right — not to be perfect, but thoughtful, intentional, and open to learning.

The launch of *Sapphic Magazine* was more than just an unveiling of a new campus publication — it was the creation of a space where people could gather, connect, and feel seen. The event itself was a chaotic whirlwind, with Dupuis running around trying to fix last-minute mix-ups. Despite the chaos, the sapphic community's empathy and genuine warmth were undeniable. "It was lovely to see people interact that way," she said, reflecting on the night. Despite the larger venue, people naturally gravitated toward the bonfire, huddling together with s'mores in hand, sharing stories and laughter. The launch party was a collective moment of belonging.

Of course, not everyone understood what the space was meant for. Dupuis recalled having to turn away several cis men who showed up at the door. "I had to explain that this is a sapphic party, and they replied, 'Oh, but I'm gay for you.' Like, that's not what that means, sir," she said, shaking her head. Inside, though, was pure magic. Everyone was free to be themselves,

surrounded by people who truly understood and shared their experiences. “It was a super safe space — no looks of menace or misunderstandings. Everyone was just having fun,” Dupuis said. The timing couldn’t have been more significant, either. The party happened just days after the U.S. Presidential Election, a time when many members of the LGBTQ+ community felt vulnerable and in need of reassurance.

Later that night, Dupuis received a text from someone who had attended. “Thank you for hosting a space like that, especially right after the election. I think we all needed it,” they wrote. The message was a reminder of just how vital *Sapphic Magazine* was becoming — not just as a publication, but as a platform for community and healing. The launch party was not merely a celebration, but proof of concept. Attendees approached Dupuis throughout the night, expressing their gratitude. “People were coming up to me and saying, ‘Thank you for creating this. I’m able to see myself in an on-campus magazine for once,’” she said. Those moments validated everything — the sleepless nights, the nerves, the effort. *Sapphic Magazine* is more than stories on paper; it’s about making a space for people to feel recognized and at home.

As the clock ticked past 5 p.m., the third floor of the Schine Student Center became a quiet hub for creative energy. Near the fireplace, a few days after the assembly of the third and final issue of the semester, members of *Sapphic* gathered for their last meeting of the year. A small group of underclassmen filled the vast room with their casual chatter. Though still a little awkward, confidence in their creations is shown through recaps of their latest issue. It wasn’t the most glamorous setting, with bright overhead lights shining down, but it didn’t matter. Every week, they gathered for a relaxed, no-pressure meeting, where ideas flowed freely and connections were made over laptops and quiet laughter.

Their outfits spoke for them and the harsh winter weather outside: winter boots paired with baggy jeans, oversized leather jackets, and patterned sweaters. Their conversations were as varied as their outfits, with detailed discussions about visuals for the next issue of *Sapphic Magazine*. This time, the theme was close to many of their hearts: gender roles and the representation of the nonbinary community, a topic that felt not only timely but essential. In the midst of it all, there was talk of bigger dreams. The group was determined to make their presence official, to secure the Recognized Student Organization (RSO) status that would unlock the adequate funding and opportunities for future events.

As the meeting wound down and people started trickling out into the cold night, there was a quiet sense of pride left in the room. *Sapphic* is far more than a magazine anymore — it is a community and lasting platform where every voice, every identity, can be celebrated. Something real, something meaningful, and most importantly, something that would continue to grow as they did throughout their time in college. This was only the beginning.

#### Writer's statement:

As a queer woman, I wanted to focus on the small community that my very self is a part of. After discovering campus's newest publication, *Sapphic Magazine*, I wanted to highlight the challenges that I and many other sapphics encounter. Not only shining light on the obstacles we face but also *showing* how we overcome them. This story should pique the interest of its readers because it speaks to anyone who has ever felt isolated, unseen, or longed for a place to belong — a universal feeling that's not limited to queer individuals. The piece explores the tension between isolation and connection, following the journey of turning a personal need for a community into a shared platform that uplifts others. The central theme revolves around the power of creating spaces where people feel understood and seen. Narratively, I followed a character development storyline with founder Maya Dupuis. Through detailed scene-setting, like the launch party and meetings, readers get a vivid sense of the togetherness and challenges involved. This piece reflects my growth as a writer and journalist by showcasing my ability to balance storytelling with broader themes.

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Experience:

Magazine assemble

Last magazine meeting