

# ● a decade of common dyke publishing

by Tracy Moore<sup>1</sup>

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When I think about writing a retrospective history of this lesbian quarterly, I think of the miracle of her survival, amazing feats of lesbian publishing accomplishment, the grass roots/collective nature of the project, and the unrealized visions along the way. But I want to begin with an account of her origin, both to honor it and to let it be seen in the personal, regular-dyke way it happened.

## The Beginning

The inspiration to start a lesbian magazine came from the cofounders of *Sinister Wisdom*, Catherine Nicholson and Harriet Desmoines. In February, 1980, as part of a tour focusing on lesbian publishing, they spoke in Los Angeles at a reading by local lesbians they had published.<sup>2</sup> Insisting that publishing was something anyone could do, they called for the establishment of more lesbian periodicals. Their stories of the writing and artwork going unpublished for lack of our own lesbian media convinced some of us that the need was pressing, and that ordinary women could make it happen.

Cindy Cleary, Anne Lee, and I formed the core of the group of eight lesbians that started CL/LL in the LA area in the fall of 1980.<sup>3</sup> The three of us were planning to move to Iowa City in June, 1981, so in the intervening ten months the group did everything we could think of to launch a magazine. The basic idea was immediately obvious to all of us, and we spent hours describing what we wanted: an inclusive, non-academic,

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1. With much appreciation to Cindy Cleary for her morale support, important suggestions, and memory.

2. Held at The Church in Ocean Park in Santa Monica, 2/2/80, and produced by me, the reading featured Terry Wolverton, Anne Lee, and Alice Bloch, but Alice got the flu and couldn't come. About fifty women attended.

3. Members of the L.A.-area founding collective were Jan Monical, Moire Martin, Joan Leech, Chris Selgren, Cindy Freedman, Cindy Cleary, Anne Lee, Tracy Moore.