

Over the years, *CL/LL* collective members have not usually been academics, or even wide readers. They tend to be activists who relate to the cultural politics of the publication, and have never imagined they could act as editors (though they typically know what they like!). As a result, there is a process of consciousness raising that happens just in joining the collective, and that continues as the skills of collective process and publishing the magazine are acquired. I believe that the diversity of interests, jobs, and education among collective members contributes to the common character of the quarterly.

Staying Alive

Before an assessment of *CL/LL*'s successes and failures is made, it's important to account for her survival—not for ten years, but for five, or even two. The forces working against such a project are legion: outright opposition and suppression by the dominant culture; meager funding; the relative poverty of women/lesbians and scarcity of "leisure" time in which to do our political work; the competing claims of other, seemingly more urgent causes; internalized sexism and homophobia; self-doubt; the critical scrutiny of the lesbian community. It's a wonder we ever do anything! But our hardy needs and passions lead us to resist and to create.

The reasons for the continued existence of *CL/LL* begin with something the '80s taught us to call "infrastructure." Iowa City is an excellent context for the project because of the counter-cultural and lesbian support systems that have been growing there for decades. The Women's Liberation Front in Iowa City, first self-identified in 1968, grew out of the new left/anti-war/civil rights activism of that era. Immediately lesbians began extending their culture, through the "gay cell" of WLF;¹¹ the "publications cell"—lesbians and straight women who produced *Ain't I a Woman?* for 4½ years; women's dances held at the Unitarian Church; the Free

11. The first public lesbian group in Iowa City. Its purposes were consciousness-raising and social.