

Dear NOW Sisters,

Two months ago, I went through a serious emotional crisis, during which I realized that I needed the support of my NOW sisters. I hadn't seen most of you for months and wondered what had happened to us. We used to get together often (twice a month) to work on various issues; we had C.R. groups; and we shared our hopes, frustrations, and depressions as the E.R.A. was fought for and eventually defeated. Well, as with most of my crises, this one was resolved and is now in the past, but I was left with a determination that something be done to bring us back together. That is what this letter is all about.

Bay Area NOW is in the process of starting a women's support group. The purpose of this group will be to bring us together. It will provide a safe, confidential environment of support where we can air our feelings, frustrations, accomplishments, depressions, etc. It will also be a group where we can just sit back and enjoy each other's company and strengthen our sense of sisterhood. It will be a group where we are free to share our differences as well as our similarities without fear of rejection. In short, it will be a group where we can share ourselves with each other.

Here are a couple of things the support group will not be. First, it is not designed as a C.R. (consciousness raising) group, though I'm certain that a little C.R. will be a pleasant side-effect. Also, this will not be a therapy group. However, support groups can be very therapeutic and I'm sure that there will be emotional healing from time to time (another side-effect?).

I've told you what I envision the support group to be. Now I'd like to share the thoughts of some of our other members. A few of us met recently to discuss the formation of this group and each expressed what she wants to share in a support group:

"A place to share problems of living in a repressive environment for women's rights and trying to hold on to ideals."

"I want a support group to renew my strength and help my mental attitude."

"I want to enlarge my circle of friends and acquaintances and share my views on life."

"To recapture a sense of sisterhood, offering a safe environment for seeking and giving support--hopefully incorporating new blood and fresh ideas."

"I need a place to introduce potential members and to share, support, etc., with good friends. I would like special guests, occasionally, who might give information on particular subjects of interest to us."

"A place and time to share ideas--rekindle the flame (so to speak) of our feminism--getting back in touch with everyday issues that reward

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and infuriate us--being able to have a sounding board or vehicle for finding solutions to women's oppression."

Everyone of you could add to the above list of personal needs. That is what I hope you will do. This group will become whatever you want it to be. It will be a group open to all interested women, both B.A. NOW members and non-members, so please bring a friend. We will meet on the first and third Thursday of each month beginning May 21, 1987, from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. Rusty Richards has volunteered her home as a meeting place. For further information please call 488-5546 or 409-948-8896. I am looking forward to seeing you.

Your NOW sister,



Donna Donoho Berend

Phoenix Wheeler, one of this Chapter's former presidents, says she has changed her plans. She expected to be in Houston in early May, but now she plans to be here on June 5 and will be around for several days. She wants to see as many friends as possible.

She lives in Sonoita, AZ, Southeast of Tucson, where she and Carol Heller have a guest house.

Address: P.O. Box 691, Sonoita, AZ 85637
Telephone: (602) 455-5823

For more information, call Rusty, 488-5546.

A former Bay Area Chapter member, Jeanne Salatan, is an active (to put it mildly) member of OWL (Older Women's League). The March/April issue of THE OWL OBSERVER, a national newspaper, contains the following paragraph.

"Thanks to the hard work of Jeanne Saletan, the Houston Chapter of OWL has received a cash award from the Live Oak Fund for Change, an Austin-based public foundation supporting grass-roots organizations. The grant will allow the chapter to launch a major new membership campaign. All OWL chapters should investigate local philanthropic institutions that may be interested in supporting OWL's work, remembering to coordinate these efforts with the National Office."

WORKERS' EQUITY NETWORK (Austin) has a quarterly newsletter, a very informative publication. Purpose? "to facilitate communication among individuals and groups throughout the state of Texas who are involved (or at least interested) in the pay equity struggle."

Here is a little sample.

LOCAL PAY EQUITY INITIATIVES IN TEXAS

Austin

In early 1986, the City of Austin began a reclassification and compensation study for its employees. Concerned about pay equity, Austin City Councilmember, Sally Shipman introduced a resolution to the City Council stating that the City "is committed to eliminating wage disparities based on race, sex, age, ethnicity and religion, and is further committed to ensure compensation based on job content, educational qualifications, skill and responsibility." Based on a recommendation by WEN, the resolution also established a Task Force to "ensure the implementation of pay equity for all City of Austin employees." Without a dissenting vote, the resolution passed.

Austin's Pay Equity Task Force consists of 14 members who represent various groups in the city. WEN currently has two members who serve on the Task Force-- Arsinoi Lainoitis and Beth Paulin, chair of the Task Force. After some initial difficulties, the Task Force is now gearing up to better define its role in the evaluation process, thus enabling the Task Force to effectively serve the City and its employees.

Thus far, the Human Resources/Compensation Division has surveyed approximately 8,500 city employees. Using the Position Evaluation Questionnaire (PEQ), job content data provided by these questionnaires has been computerized and is now being edited and reviewed. Also in progress are follow-up interviews with employees and the collection of salary data.

"Convictions are potent only when they are shared. Until then, they are merely a form of daydreaming." -- Norman Cousins