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## Female job-seekers share war stories and encouragement

By Nancy Gier

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The chatter increased as nearly every chair in the 144-seat auditorium at the Illinois Institute of Technology Rice Lake campus in Wheaton was being filled for the October meeting of Women on Work.

There was an air of expectancy. A visitor would not have guessed from the smiles and hugs that most of those in attendance were facing the grim task of finding a job in a deep recession.

Women on Work, or WOW, has been meeting on the first Wednesday of the month since April with an average attendance of nearly 100. Women come for professional advice, job leads and tips on resumes and interviewing, as well as the opportunity to commiserate. The baked goodies served after the presentations each month serve as an incentive to linger and network.

"Our mission is to educate, inform and enrich women's lives," said Teri Clancy, a career consultant and adjunct professor at Benedictine University in Lisle, and one of the group's founders. "We do this not only by helping women with their job search but through the support and camaraderie of other women. We can address the unique issues that women face, like juggling a family and children along with a career."

Sandy Duffy of Lombard, who has been unemployed for more than a year and has attended several WOW meetings, said the meetings are beneficial because "sometimes you feel like you're really alone, but you can come here and meet others in the same situation, other women who are also trying their best. You can hand out business cards and network. Plus, they have speakers."

Women on Work is led by Clancy and her business partners, Joy Maguire-Dooley and Sally Morrison. Maguire-Dooley is a therapist and educator, and Morrison is a career consultant. The three represent 50 years of experience. All three said they saw the need for WOW because of a lack of community resources for women in a widening recession.

"There was a huge influx of women trying to enter or re-enter the work force," said Morrison. "When

people are having cookies, they feel comfortable enough to still be networking at 10 p.m. This meeting gives women the chance to talk about things that affect them during their job search."

WOW brings in speakers every month to offer fresh perspectives on new technology, such as Internet networking. Speakers also address topics such as the emotions of job hunting.

The three women formed a partnership a year ago. In addition to coordinating WOW, they offer career consulting, career workshops and motivational speaking. They recently collaborated on a book, "A Taste for Work: Your Menu for Career Success," which they introduced at the October meeting. The book offers advice on finding and keeping a job, as well as recipes for appetizers, main dishes and desserts. Readers can discover how to conduct themselves during an interview at a restaurant, for example, and find a recipe for chicken marsala.

Women on Work meets at 6:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month at the Illinois Institute of Technology Rice Lake campus, 201 East Loop Road in Wheaton. Admission is \$3. Author and businesswoman Luisa Buehler will present "The Generation Gap: Whose Rules Rule?" at Wednesday's meeting. Visit [careerpartners3.com](http://careerpartners3.com).

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