

## **National NOW Vice President's Report**

To: NOW National Board

From: Bonnie Grabenhofer, Vice President

Date: June 12, 2017

Board Meeting: June 29, 2017

### **Staffing Changes**

#### **Elissa Blattman, Chapter Services Specialist**

After nearly 2 years without a full-time Chapter Services Specialist, in April, we hired Elissa Blattman. She not only has the skills we needed for this job, but is a NOW member who is committed to our issues, is an activist and an officer in her chapter. We are delighted to have her at NOW and are grateful for the work that Paul Wommack did for the past year valiantly trying to fill in at one day per week.

Elissa Blattman is excited to join the National NOW office and work for an organization with such a strong reputation of fighting for women's rights. Elissa has seven years of experience working for nonprofits, including at another women's membership organization. She has an MA in Cultural & Creative Industries, with a focus on gender in the media, from King's College London. In her free time, Elissa enjoys serving as the Vice President of her local NOW chapter, visiting museums, watching 1970s sitcoms, and spending time with her dog.

Elissa is providing services to state and local chapters, assisting with state-level leadership development, supporting convening chapters, recording chapter annual reports, helping chapters with IRS reporting and status, sending NOW rounds, and responding to inquiries about rebates and other issues. You may email her at [chapters@now.org](mailto:chapters@now.org).

#### **Paul Wommack / Network Administrator**

Paul is now back to focusing on his work as Network Administrator. He recently did an audit of our IT and phone equipment. To save money, several years ago, we replaced our phone system with phone service over the internet. Paul and I recently developed plans to convert the unused voice ports to data ports in the closed offices and add several data ports to increase wired access to the internet. Paul will do some of the work to reduce our costs, and we've received several of the requested bids for the remainder of project. Additional Wi-Fi routers will be added to improve Wi-Fi access.

## Charitable Registrations

NOW Inc. and NOW Foundation each have to be registered in every state and several cities in order to solicit donations. They each have their own forms, requirements, and fees. More than half of them were due in May. They have been completed.

## FYI NOW

The FYI NOW is the communication vehicle sent by email several times a month to NOW leaders – those who hold office at any level in NOW. The FYI NOW contains updates from Government Relations, the NOW PAC, our allies and coalitions, and Chapter Services. It includes items like issue advisories, legislation updates, actions, litigation updates, and chapter information and reminders.

The following FYI NOW's, addressing the following topics, were sent since our last meeting at the end of February.

- **March 21**
  - Nevada Ratifies ERA – One Down, Two More to Go
  - Gorsuch Confirmation Hearings & Upcoming Vote – Send message
  - GOP Replacement for ACA is Disaster for Women, Low Income Persons – Call House Members
- **March 31**
  - Republican Opponents of Women's Health Care Win in Senate Vote
  - Pauli Murray House Homecoming Celebration, April 1
  - Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, Byway Opens
  - Chapter Events; Chapter Reminders
  - Congratulations to Doris Steppe
  - National NOW PAC Meeting
- **April 13**
  - Gorsuch Confirmed; GOP Pressure on Kennedy to Retire
  - Must-Pass Appropriations Legislation Limits Women's Access to Health Care
  - Sign on to VAWA funding letter & Call Your Member of Congress
- **May 17 - LGBTQIA Updates & Actions**
  - Equality Act Reintroduced to advance Rights of LGBTQIA, Women
  - Muted Response from U.S. to Anti-LGBTQIA Violence in Chechnya

- First Person Prosecuted for Gender Identity Hate Crime
- **May 22 – Special Edition – Crises Ahead**
  - Devastating Budget Proposals
  - ACA Repeal Energizes Major Coalition Pushback
- **May 27 – Trump Budget & Health Care Bill Alert**
  - Oppose Cruel Trump, Republican Budgets & Horrible GOP Health Care Bill – Call Congress NOW

### Chapter Highlights in recent FYI NOWs

The FYI NOWs also contain information about some chapter events. To be included, encourage chapters to send us information. Here are some examples.

- **Illinois NOW** and multiple local Illinois chapters were coalition partners of the huge Illinois Women March on Springfield on April 25. The goal of the march was to show support for progressive legislation being considered in Illinois' upcoming legislative session. Some of the bills introduced address Illinois possibly ratifying the ERA, paid sick leave, and securing abortion rights. Several IL NOW members carrying NOW Rounds and signs at the march were prominent in a picture on the front page of the Chicago Tribune.
- **Virginia NOW** published many videos from their Virginia Fore-mothers Oral History Project. The project's goal is to "interview, archive, and preserve oral histories from Virginia's Second Wave Feminists / ERA Advocates." You can view videos from the project on [YouTube](#).
- The **Southwest PA NOW** chapter planned and implemented a rally at the Beaver County Courthouse in Beaver, PA, on March 25, 2017. The "Stand Up for Women's Lives" rally had 7 allied speakers including Janet Hill, President of Southwest PA NOW. Approximately 55 people attended with numerous signs, large NOW signs and handmade signs. MANY pictures are available on [Southwest PA NOW's Facebook page](#)
- **Morris County NOW** in New Jersey is celebrating 21 years of their TV show called: New Directions for Women. You can view these interesting and informative 30-minute shows on [YouTube](#).

### Conference Workshop: So You Want to Become Active in NOW

Bonnie Grabenhofer will be moderating a workshop about convening chapters and task forces. It addresses the options, process, and resources and tips for starting new chapters, task forces, and action teams. It will be on Friday morning at 8:30 am.

Panelists are:

- **Kim Villanueva**, former IL NOW state president, national NOW board member, and currently is responsible for IL NOW Chapter Development.
- **Diana Egozcue** is the president of VA NOW who has started a number of chapters including restarting those who lost their IRS tax exempt status; and
- **Elissa Blattman**, the new NOW Chapter Services Specialist and Montgomery (MD) NOW co-president.

## Hate Crimes

Bonnie Grabenhofer and Jan Erickson have been participating in the Hate Crimes Coalition. Frequent guests are members of the FBI and Department of Justice who report on hate crime statistics, training, issues with reporting hate crimes, prosecutions, initiatives, resources, etc. NOW has provided input especially with developing training scenarios related to gender based hate crimes and hate crime coalition priorities for each new Congress and the Obama administration.

The most recent meeting was in May. A representative from the Justice Department Civil Rights Division discussed data; and how to work with victims to report hate crimes and how to work better with first responders.

A representative of the Justice Department Community Relations Service discussed their work. The Community Relations Service is the Department's "Peacemaker" for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and disability. They don't investigate hate crimes but respond to communities across the nation to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts and tensions. The majority of their work currently involves religious issues but also includes gender identity and disability conflicts.

The FBI Civil Rights section addresses threat areas of: Hate Crimes, Color of Law, FACE Act, and Human Trafficking. A representative from discussed their initiatives on training and protecting houses of worship.

Lawyers Committee representatives discussed their Communities Against Hate project that focuses on collecting data and reporting crimes. And they discussed their Stop Hate Project that includes a template letter for when the KKK comes to your town, some pro bono attorneys, legal training, a resource map, a hotline and a website for reporting hate incidents.

NOW was pleased to be invited to participate in a day-long Hate Crimes Summit on June 29 hosted by the Department of Justice's Hate Crimes Subcommittee. The purpose is to meet with subject matter experts, including community representatives and advocates, to gather feedback about what the federal government is doing well and what needs improvement in identifying, prosecuting, and preventing hate crimes.