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Northeast Region (FEW)  
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**Are you a member of the T.E.A.M?**



## Regional Manager's Message

By Dawn Nester

*Happy New Year, everyone!*

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and saw 2011 pass into history with good cheer. May 2012 be a LOT kinder to us than 2011 was, to be sure.

I will be working with key Regional Board members to develop the Region's Strategic Plans by January 31<sup>st</sup>. After that, I will work one-on-one with the Chapter Presidents to develop their Chapter Strategic Plans by March 31, 2012. These Strategic Plans are mandated by National FEW as part of the overall FEW Strategic Plan. Our plans must dovetail with the national goals so that we are working on the local level toward the same goals and initiatives in the areas of leadership development, membership recognition, membership recruitment and retention, fiscal security, and training. It will be a challenge, but it will also be exciting to put these plans in place by the prescribed timelines so that we can turn over strong chapters and a strong Region to the new leaders.

I say that because, as you know, at the National, Regional, and Chapter level, we will also be turning our attention to the upcoming elections. I cannot stress enough the importance of new people stepping up to the leadership roles within all levels of FEW. New people bring a new perspective, fresh ideas, creativity, and a new energy level to the organization. If FEW is to retain its reputation as "the most active of all the employee organizations," and being "the employee organization of choice," it is going to need all members' vitality and participation. Please look at where you are in the organization now and where you want to be for 2012-2014...and consider running for an office or serving on the Nominations and Elections Committee at the Region and Chapter levels.

As you know, I have served in my position for two back-to-back terms. I must step down to make way for new leadership in the Northeast Region. I won't express my deep appreciation to all of you on the Board just yet...that will best be done when my term ends...but, I will say to those of you serving on the Board, "Where do you want to serve next?" Are you looking up toward National or down to an officer position in your Chapter or laterally at a different position on the Regional Board. All of these are good options. I will happily talk with you about whatever direction you want to take in 2012.

We will also be looking toward the Spring Regional Training Program (RTP). You're your calendar now for [June 8, 2012](#). We will be meeting again at UMass Inn and Conference Center, 50 Warren Street, Lowell, MA. This will be my last RTP as your Regional Manager. I'm excited about this coming RTP. We have grown our RTPs to be high quality, top-notch training opportunities for all members on the local level. I look forward to the kick-off meeting later in January, as the committee begins to think about what training opportunities we want to present, who we want to tap for classes, and what direction the RTPs will take in the future. If you are interested in serving on the Spring RTP Committee, please let Jayne Cousins, Training Chair, know at [schillingfan@hotmail.com](mailto:schillingfan@hotmail.com) or [Jayne.M.Cousins@irs.gov](mailto:Jayne.M.Cousins@irs.gov). Or you can let me know at [Histrylady@yahoo.com](mailto:Histrylady@yahoo.com) or [Dawn.M.Nester@irs.gov](mailto:Dawn.M.Nester@irs.gov). While we have a core RTP committee comprised of myself, Lisamarie Rykowski as Regional Representative, and Jayne as Training Chair, we welcome representation from all of the Chapters for a more diverse perspective on what we should be offering to members in terms of training.

Happy New Year, everyone! I so look forward to being with all of you in 2012 and beyond in whatever capacity I can continue to serve this Region and its chapters. ☺



## Chapter Updates

Most of the Chapters took December off to give members time to do what they needed to do to ready themselves for the approaching holidays or to celebrate together in a more relaxed setting.

For example, Big Apple Chapter hosted a holiday party for members to celebrate the achievements of the past twelve months, which included holding a successful election of interim officers and hosting the Autumn Regional Training Program, to name just two.

~ ~ ~

Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter hosted its fourth annual coat/mitten drive...and was it a success! As Lisa Lombardi, President, wrote to her members: "The volunteer work that we do may seem small scale at times but the impact is tremendous. Mr. Lennon is one of many I keep hearing from and am very proud of all we do with FEW! **Excellent job, folks!**" They ended their coat drive by donating the following:



874 - coats  
 38 - scarf's  
 132 - sweaters  
 1 - pair of boots  
 35 - pairs of mittens  
 41 - pairs of gloves  
 2 - pairs of slippers



Congratulations to all of the members of the Greater Merrimack Valley Chapter for organizing the collection of these items in three locations and ensuring families in the Greater Merrimack area will have items that will warm not only their bodies, but their hearts!

In addition to the coat drive, they also collected needed items for a local animal shelter this year for the first time.

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Greater Boston Chapter held a meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup> in which Matthew Fogg, Vice President for Congressional Relations, was the invited speaker. Matthew provided legislative update information to the members and guests in attendance. This meeting was a teleconference meeting.

If your Chapter would like to have Matthew or any of the other FEW Vice Presidents give a presentation via teleconference, contact Dawn Nester, Regional Manager, to assist in making the arrangements. Dawn can be reached via e-mail at [Dawn.M.Nester@irs.gov](mailto:Dawn.M.Nester@irs.gov) or by phone at 603-433-0560 (work)

## CBP and the Office of Disability Employment Form Alliance – GovExec.com

By Andrew Lapin, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Customs and Border Protection on Friday signed an agreement to form an alliance with the Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

The alliance is intended to increase agency hiring of people with disabilities, in accordance with [Executive Order 13548](#), which President Obama signed on July 26, 2010. The order seeks to establish the federal government as a model employer for the disabled workforce.

"There has been literally an intimidation factor here," CBP acting Commissioner David Aguilar told Government Executive, saying federal agencies including his own have been wary of hiring disabled people because of uncertainty about how they would fit into the workplace. "We want to get past that."

CBP is the first federal agency to sign such an agreement with ODEP, which plans to work with the bureau in a primarily advisory capacity to seek out disabled candidates for open positions. Such cases would include newly disabled veterans looking to return to the workforce. In addition, ODEP will train CBP supervisors on ways to reach out to people with disabilities.

"This is not an affirmative action issue; it's not a charity issue. It's bringing people in who are qualified and who should be expected to complete their job if they're given the proper accommodations," said Kathleen Martinez, assistant secretary of ODEP.

"I don't know why it took this long, but the fact is it exists now and we're happy about it," she told Government Executive.

As one of the largest components of the Homeland Security Department, CBP currently employs more than 58,000 people. Disabled employees make up about 2 percent of the bureau's total workforce. Aguilar's goal is to increase CBP's portion of disabled employees by 3 percentage points within the next five years.

Aguilar and Martinez expressed hope that the alliance would foster similar cooperation between ODEP and other federal agencies. To Martinez's knowledge, however, ODEP is not currently in talks with any other agencies about setting up a similar formal alliance.

"The more diverse we are, the much better off we're going to be as a country, as an organization and certainly as CBP," Aguilar said.



Michelle Crockett  
Vice President for  
Compliance

## Texas Roadhouse Litigation

The EEOC has sued the nation-wide Texas Roadhouse chain of restaurants for employment discrimination, claiming that Texas Roadhouse did not hire people age 40 and older because of their age.

If you believe you may have been denied a front of the house position -- such as server, hostess/host, bartender, etc. -- at Texas Roadhouse because of your age or if you have any information that would be helpful to the EEOC's suit against Texas Roadhouse, contact the EEOC toll free at (855) 556-1129 or by e-mail at [texasroadhouse.lawsuit@eeoc.gov](mailto:texasroadhouse.lawsuit@eeoc.gov).



## Bass Pro Litigation

The EEOC has sued Bass Pro Outdoor World for employment discrimination claiming that it did not hire people because of their race (African-American or black) or national origin (Hispanic or Latino).

If you applied for a job at any Bass Pro location and think you may not have been hired due to your race or national origin; or if you have any information about the EEOC's lawsuit, please contact the EEOC at this special phone number toll free (855) 857-8747 or by e-mail at [Basspro.lawsuit@eeoc.gov](mailto:Basspro.lawsuit@eeoc.gov)

## Coast Guard Lacking in Equal Employment Opportunities, GAO Finds – GovExec.com

By Andrew Lapin, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Though the U.S. Coast Guard has made progress in its efforts to remove barriers to equal employment opportunities, more improvements are needed, according to a new report.

The Coast Guard lacks a systemic approach to identifying EEO barriers in the workplace, as the Government Accountability Office reported in December 2011.

All federal agencies are required under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's management directive for reporting standards to identify workplace barriers to equality, make an effort to remove them and report progress annually to EEOC. The directive is commonly referred to as MD-715 and has been in effect since October 2003. GAO's analysis is based on data compiled from the Coast Guard's MD-715 reports from fiscal 2008-2010.

GAO found that though the Coast Guard had established some guidelines for improvement in accordance with MD-715, the agency "has not documented any assumptions or reasoning to support the rationale for its improvement initiatives, and it is not apparent that the initiatives are part of a larger strategy."

The Coast Guard's Civil Rights Directorate had implemented a performance measurement plan in July 2011 in response to a 2010 GAO recommendation. This plan, however, still failed to provide clear performance goal measures, baselines for measuring future goals or credible measuring procedures, according to GAO.

As an example of questionable measuring practices, GAO pointed to the Civil Rights Directorate's decision to cite an employee job satisfaction survey as representative of leadership effectiveness, despite an unclear relationship between the two.

EEOC nevertheless praised the Coast Guard for committing to quickly resolving EEO-related workplace complaints and for educating senior management on diversity issues.

In the report, GAO recommended that the secretary of the Homeland Security Department direct the Coast Guard commandant to take two actions: develop a systematic approach to identifying EEO barriers, and refine the agency's performance measurement plan. Homeland Security concurred with both recommendations.

## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

The annual observance of Dr. King's birthday falls on January 16 in 2012. Dr. King was born on January 15, 1929. He graduated from Morehouse College (B.A., 1948), Crozer Theological Seminary (B.D., 1951), and [Boston University](#) (Ph.D., 1955).

Dr. King was ordained in 1947 and became (1954) minister of a Baptist church in Montgomery, AL. In 1956, he gained a major victory and prestige as a civil-rights leader when Montgomery buses began to operate on a desegregated basis. He went on to lead the civil rights efforts in the United States that eventually lead to President Lyndon Johnson signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1969. Sadly, Dr. King did not live to see the passage of the Civil Rights Act into law. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in in Memphis, TN. The Lorraine Motel is now a civil rights museum, created in 1991.

It took 15 years to create the federal Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. Congressman John Conyers, Democrat from Michigan, first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after Dr. King was assassinated in 1968. After the bill became stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress.

Conyers and Rep. Shirley Chisholm, a Democrat from New York, resubmitted King holiday legislation each subsequent legislative session. Public pressure for the holiday mounted during the 1982 and 1983 civil rights marches in Washington. Congress passed the holiday legislation in 1983, which was then signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. A compromise helped overcome opposition to the law. The compromise involved moving the holiday from Jan. 15, Dr. King's birthday, which was considered too close to Christmas and New Year's, to the third Monday in January.

**Source:** [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)



Georgia Thomas  
Vice President for  
Diversity

## Emerging Leaders – a New Column by Dawn Nester, Regional Manager/Interviewer

Around the Table (ATT): Hi, Aimee. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today (December 8, 2011). We'll start with an easy question. How long have you worked for your agency?

Aimee Molien (AM)<sup>1</sup>: I work for IRS in Puerto Rico. I've been here for 4-1/2 years.

ATT: What do you do for the IRS? Tell me a little about your job.

AM: I am a Collection Contact Representative. That means I talk with taxpayers on the phones, help them with collection issues. My office issues levies, liens, and notices...anything related to an enforcement action. But, it's not all serious. Sometimes, we have fun, too!

ATT: It's good to be able to have a little fun on the job, that's for sure! When did you join FEW?

AM: In March of 2011. I tried to join earlier in January, but ran into some technical difficulties along the way, so my membership was confirmed in March.

ATT: What chapter did you join?

AM: I chose the Greater Boston Chapter so that I could take advantage of – or try to take advantage, anyway – of the call-in option. Sometimes, it's difficult because Puerto Rico is an hour different from the east coast.

ATT: What drew you to join FEW?

AM: The main thing was the FEW focus area of training and education. I was very interested in the FEW National Training Program. NTP, right?

ATT: Yes, we commonly refer to the National Training Program as the NTP.

AM: I also liked that FEW is all about developing women in the federal government. I want to advance in my career, whether I stay with IRS or go to a different agency. I am not always going to be in Puerto Rico, either. I will want to go to America, too, sometime in the future.



ATT: What do you like about being a member of FEW?

AM: The amount of information that is available. I like the new website, too. But, I really appreciate that FEW keeps members involved and informed, especially on legislation. I belong to two other employee organizations and they aren't nearly as active as FEW. I like having the information that's shared with me.

ATT: What are your future plans for involvement at the Chapter level?

AM: I want to help open the first Chapter in Puerto Rico or in the Caribbean or the virtual chapter. I want to help open doors for other women.

ATT: What are your aspirations for your membership in the future?

AM: I want to move towards involvement in the training and education area or in the legislative area, whether it is at the chapter, region, or national level. Maybe start at the chapter level and then move up to Region and National.

ATT: Great, Aimee! Thank you for your interest in continuing a meaningful membership in FEW! We're lucky to have you in the Greater Boston Chapter and look forward to helping you start that chapter in Puerto Rico! Thank you, too, for taking the time to talk with me today.

AM: My pleasure.

This column will be used to highlight some of the Northeast Region's emerging leaders...members who are stepping up to take a leadership role within their chapter, within the Region, and/or at the National level. The first interview was done with Aimee Molien. Look for the next emerging leader interview with Jenine Dunn, Western New York Chapter.

## Management Tips: Ethical Decision Making: How to Make Ethical Decisions in 5 Steps by Lyndsay Swinton, Management for the Rest of Us ([www.mftrou.com](http://www.mftrou.com))

**Regional Manager's Note:** Having just come through a very recent situation in which several people challenged the ethics of the situation I was about to be involved in, I thought this article was timely. I only wish I'd seen it *before* the situation arose! It might have made the process a little easier, but, as it was, the group dynamics were such that we arrived at a win-win answer that satisfied everyone's sense of what was right for the situation. Whew! Here's the article. I hope you find it helpful and useful as you face various situations at home, at work, and within FEW (and any other volunteer organizations that you might belong to). - Dawn

What is ethical? Decision making can be hard enough but when we have to consider ethics and decision making we can tie ourselves up so tight we stop making decisions entirely. Here is a short guide to help you through the ethics maze and make effective decisions.

Consider this - is it ethical that CEO's get paid salaries hundreds of times greater than their most junior employees? You could argue a CEO contributes more to the overall wealth and health of the company and should be appropriately rewarded, however, others may say it is an unfair, indefensible abuse of power. I guess your answer depends how far up the management food chain you are!

Ethical decision making affects more than our working life. What are you wearing today? Do you know the working conditions of the person who made it? Are you happy with that? And that cup of coffee you had at breakfast - who made the biggest buck from your purchase?

Here is a short guide to help you think through ethical issues and make effective decisions.

### 1. Is it an ethical issue?

Being ethical does not always mean following the law. And just because something is possible doesn't mean it is ethical, hence the global debates about bio-technology advances such as cloning. And ethics and religion do not always concur.

This is perhaps the trickiest stage in ethical decision making, as sometimes the subtleties of the issue are above and beyond our knowledge and experience. Listen to your instincts - if it feels uncomfortable making the decision on your own, get others involved and use their collective knowledge and experience to make a more considered decision.

### 2. Get the facts

What do you know, and just as importantly, what don't you know? Who are the people affected by your decision? Have they been consulted? What are your options? Have you reviewed your options with someone you respect?

### 3. Evaluate alternative actions

There are different ethical approaches which may help you make the most ethical decision.

- Utilitarian Approach - which action results in the most good and least harm?
- Rights Based Approach - which action respects the rights of everyone involved?
- Fairness or Justice Approach- which action treats people fairly?
- Common Good Approach - which action contributes most to the quality of life of the people affected?
- Virtue Approach - which action embodies the character strengths you value?

#### 4. Test your decision

Could you comfortably explain your decision to your mother? To the man in the street? On television? If not, you may have to re-think your decision before you take action.

#### 5. Just Do It - but what did you learn?

Once you've made the decision, then don't waste time in implementing it. Set a date to review your decision and make adjustments if necessary. Often decisions are made with the best information to hand at the time, but things change, and your decision making needs to be flexible enough to change too. Even a complete about face may be the most appropriate action further down the track.

Ethical decision making is a tricky business, but you can make more palatable, workable decisions if you follow these 5 simple steps.



[Download 'Ethical Decision Making' in pdf format](#)

Citation Information: Swinton, Lyndsay. " Ethical Decision Making: How to Make Ethical Decisions in 5 Steps." Mftrou.com. 21 February 2007. <http://www.mftrou.com/ethical-decision-making.html>

## FEW Attends Vermont's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Economic Opportunity Conference by Lisa Rees, Greater Boston Chapter

On Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, I participated in Vermont's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Economic Opportunity Conference hosted by Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy. The event took place at the Vermont Technical College in beautiful Randolph, VT. The conference was originally supposed to occur in August, but due to Hurricane Irene was postponed to December. I joined over 600 women from all over Vermont who came together to be inspired, motivated, and supported by each other.

The day got off to a fantastic start when U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor took the stage. Justice Sotomayor was sworn in on August 8, 2009, becoming the third woman to sit on the Supreme Court. She shared her life story with the audience and answered questions for over an hour. Justice Sotomayor was raised in the projects in the Bronx by her Puerto Rican-born parents and grew up watching Perry Mason and reading Nancy Drew books. She knew from an early age that she wanted to be a judge when she watched a Perry Mason episode with a woman judge who totally controlled the courtroom. To make her dream a reality, she studied hard and got good grades in school. She applied to Ivy League schools because she was naïve and thought she could get into any school if she really wanted it badly enough. And sure enough, she became the first person in her generation to go to college – and to Princeton, no less!



Sonia Sotomayor, Supreme Court Justice  
and Senator Patrick Leahy with his wife Marcelle Leahy.

The secret to her success is that she was supported by people who loved her unconditionally. The love that she felt from those around her gave her the confidence to love herself and to follow her dreams. She believes that the American Dream is possible if it is based on values, family, friends, and community. She concluded by saying, "You can achieve your own success based on what makes you happy. If you do it well, you will have an impact on others." And, what an impact these words had on the audience!

After Justice Sotomayor's presentation, the audience broke off into various workshops, including "Unstress for Success," "Principles of Marketing in Action," and "Localizing Your Business." I participated in the workshop "Discovering the Work You are Meant to Do." Even though I have been a government employee for over 26 years, I was curious to find out what I was meant to do! It was an interesting workshop and it made me realize that in every career you can expand on the parts that make you happy. And, if you find that you can't, you can find ways outside of the workplace that can.

I met so many wonderful women at the conference and many stopped by the FEW table to learn more about our organization. I left feeling energized and inspired and am looking forward to next year's conference!



Lisa Rees, Greater Boston Chapter

## 2012 is a Leap Year

The year 2012 is a leap year. A leap year is a year in which one extra day is added at the end of February and consists of 366 days. The extra day, [February 29](#) is the leap day of the leap year and has been associated with age-old traditions, superstitions and folklore.

If you look at a [2012 calendar](#), you will see that February has five Wednesdays – the month begins and ends on a Wednesday. Between the years 1904 and 2096, leap years that share the same day of week [repeat every 28 years](#). The most recent year in which February comprised of five Wednesdays was in 1984, and the next occurrence will be in 2040.

### What is a leap year?

A leap year is a year in which one extra day has been inserted, or intercalated, at the end of February. A leap year consists of 366 days, whereas other years, called common years, have 365 days.

### Which years are leap years?

The next leap year will occur in 2012.

In the Gregorian calendar the following three criteria must be met to be a leap year:

- It is evenly divisible by four;
- If it can be evenly divided by 100, it is NOT a leap year, unless;
- The year is evenly divisible by 400. Then it is a leap year.

This means that years [1800](#), [1900](#), [2100](#), [2200](#), [2300](#) and [2500](#) are NOT leap years, while year [2000](#) and [2400](#) are leap years.

The year [2000](#) was somewhat special as it was the first instance when the third criterion was used in most parts of the world.

In the Julian calendar–there was only one rule: any year evenly divisible by four would be a leap year. This calendar was used before the Gregorian calendar was adopted.

### Leap Years 2000 – 2024

| Year | Day of the week - February 29 |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 2000 | Tuesday                       |
| 2004 | Sunday                        |
| 2008 | Friday                        |
| 2012 | Wednesday                     |
| 2016 | Monday                        |
| 2020 | Saturday                      |
| 2024 | Thursday                      |

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### Mission Statement

Supporting the development of women through training, networking and activities that promote personal and career growth, while organizing and participating in various charity events that link all regional states to National FEW's endeavors



**We're on the Web!**

<http://nerfew.org/>

## Strategic Planning in the Northeast Region

The Northeast Region is following the directive of National FEW's Strategic Planning Initiative Committee to develop strategic plans for both the Region and all of the chapters. The Strategic Plans, at all levels, cover important strategic goals such as leadership development, membership recruitment and retention, chapter strengths, communications, fiscal security, and training.

The Region's plan is due to Wanda Killingsworth, Vice President for Policy and Planning, by January 31<sup>st</sup>. I am pleased to report that the draft plan is with the Regional Board of Directors for review. Comments are due back to me by January 17<sup>th</sup> for incorporation into the final plan. We are on track to submit our final plan by the due date.

Chapter plans are due to Wanda by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Chapter Presidents have been provided templates in which they will add chapter-specific items and share the draft with the Chapter Board of Directors. I'm also pleased to say the Chapters are on track to have their final plans submitted by March 31<sup>st</sup>, as well.

As 2012 is an election year and someone new will take the helm for the Region and possibly within the Chapters, it is important to have strong Strategic Plans in place for the new leaders coming on board. The final plans will become the roadmap for the Northeast Region and its chapters for 2012 through 2014.

Once the plans have been finalized and submitted, I will post the Region's plan on the Northeast Region's website and each of the chapter's plans on their pages on the website. To visit the website, go to [www.nerfew.org](http://www.nerfew.org). There is a wealth of information available for members on the website!

## Getting your career in full bloom

### 2012 Spring Regional Training Program

[www.nerfew.org](http://www.nerfew.org)

**Save the Date!**

The Northeast Region (FEW)  
Regional Training Program (RTP)

**June 8, 2012**

**UMass Inn and Conference Center**

<http://www.uml.edu/>

50 Warren Street

Lowell, MA 01852-2224

**Members** \$65

**Non-Members** \$55

**Students (with ID)** \$35

**\*price includes onsite breakfast and lunch**