

Notes from Lillian

P.O. Box 2473 • Chapel Hill, NC 27515 • 919/967-3438 • Winter 2002

Seven Lillian's List Candidates Elected

Setting new records, 7 of the 8 candidates recommended by Lillian's List were elected to the North Carolina General Assembly on November 5. In each of the two previous elections in which Lillian's List has participated, three pro-choice Democratic women running for the first time were elected.



Margaret Dickson, LL Recommended Candidate speaking to crowd in Winston-Salem. Dickson, one of the few Democrats to win against an incumbent Republican, defeated the most anti-choice woman in the legislature.

Lillian's List recommended candidates who were elected are Katie Dorsett (NC Senate 28 Guilford); Jean Butterfield (NC House 24, Wilson); Deborah Ross (NC House 38, Wake); Margaret Dickson (NC House 41, Cumberland); Lucy Allen (NC House 49, Franklin); Alice Bordsen (NC House 63, Alamance); and Becky Carney (NC House 102, Mecklenburg). For more information on these campaigns, see page 3. These new legislators, pending a recount in the Bordsen race, bring the number of women in the North Carolina legislature to a record high of 35.

In addition to these significant victories, several incumbent Democratic women were also successful in overcoming opponents in districts targeted by Republicans. Rep. Maggie Jeffus (Guilford), Rep. Marian McLawhorn (Pitt), Senator Kay Hagan (Guilford), and Rep. Lorene Coates (Rowan) all defeated their Republican opponents by sizable margins. Senator Hagan and Rep. McLawhorn were recommended by Lillian's List in 1998, and Rep. Coates in 2000. It is worth noting that, not only did Rep. Coates defeat the former longtime legislator she had defeated in 2000, but she did it in the Salisbury district home to Ms. Elizabeth Dole.

This year, Lillian's List contributed crucial campaign funds to all the new women candidates in both the primary and general elections. Lillian's List also contributed to all the incumbent Democratic women. And then, to help ensure that they were re-elected, Lillian's List gave a second significant contribution to those incumbent Democratic women targeted by Republicans.

October Event Foreshadowed Success

Anticipating election night success, Lillian's List members from across the state gathered in early October at the home of NC Secretary *(continued on page 5)*

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Democratic Women in the 2003-04 General Assembly

NC Senate

- Linda Garrou*
- Kay Hagan*
- Katie Dorsett*
- Ellie Kinnaird
- Jeanne Lucas

NC House

- Alma Adams
- Martha Alexander
- Lucy Allen*
- Alice Bordsen*
- Jean Butterfield*
- Becky Carney*
- Lorene Coates*
- Margaret Dickson*
- Beverly Earle
- Verla Insko
- Maggie Jeffus
- Mary McAllister
- Marian McLawhorn*
- Earline Parmon
- Deborah Ross*
- Edith Warren
- Jennifer Weiss*

* indicates Lillian's List Recommended Candidate. Lillian's List began recommending candidates in the 1998 election.

Victory Breakfast

January 29, 2003

8:00am – 10:00am

Cardinal Club, Raleigh

Rep. Jennifer Weiss: Reflections on Her First Term

by Dr. Christie Knittel Mabry

Cary's Hotpoint Deli was the recent setting for a lively and thought-provoking lunch with State Rep. Jennifer Weiss. Jennifer and I played phone tag for over six months and, between both of our crazy schedules (hers, however, is decidedly crazier than is mine!), we finally managed to find half an hour in which to talk and to reflect on her first couple of years in office.



Q: How did you decide to run for office?

When Democratic friends encouraged her to seek appointment to the seat, she was somewhat apprehensive. Although she had been involved in party politics since 1994 (Andy Penry's house race in 1994, then a Cary precinct chair, Vice Chair for Wake County Democratic Party in Cary), she had been home with her two children (six and nine at the time) for the previous nine years.

Although Jennifer was an attorney by training, her years at home had filled her with a fair amount of self-doubt about her abilities, whether or not she was qualified, and whether or not this was the right time to throw her name into the hat. Although running for office had emerged as a long-range goal, she was truly not prepared to entertain this as a possibility in the fall of 1999. Michael Weisel, Chairman of the Wake County Democratic Party, urged her to seek the appointment and stressed that this would be a great way

for her to get her name on the "map," so to speak, and to establish herself as a viable candidate for future races. At his suggestion, she contacted John Wilson, the former Executive Director of the NC Association of Educators, to discuss the possibility of her candidacy. Wilson was very supportive of her and helped her through the appointment process. She served the remainder of Mosley's term, and then was elected to the seat in her own right in 2000.

Q: What was it like when you first arrived in the General Assembly?

Weiss tells a funny (and, I believe, telling) story about how she was twice turned away in her minivan at the General Assembly after her appointment to Mosley's seat. Apparently, she did not look like a legislator, and was mistaken for a clerk. After she was finally able to park her car, her first impressions were of amazement of how smoky it was, and how many lobbyists were present. Although civics and law courses had prepared her to understand the governing process at an intellectual level, she was surprised to discover how palpable the influence of lobbyists was on a day-to-day basis. In these early days, she felt like the new kid in school—she was not sure whom to trust. Her strong sense of intuition, however, proved to be very useful in helping to decipher who were her allies and from whom she needed to maintain a healthy distance.

Ironically, her naiveté worked to her advantage in a major way during her first term in office. Unaware of the

tacit rule that freshman legislators are not supposed to file bills, Weiss drafted legislation on behalf of some constituents. The legislation made sense to her, and she shepherded it through the process. With the help of the House Majority leader (who, by the way, was shocked to realize that this was her own piece of legislation and that she was using her own smarts and chutzpah to push it through without the tutelage and support of more senior legislators), the bill finally made it to the floor of the house. It was debated for an hour and a half, and every Republican questioned her.

Weiss's training as an attorney came in handy during that tense hour and a half, and she was incredibly gratified by how her fellow Democratic house members rallied around her. Some passed notes to her during the debate that said things such as "You go, girl!" and the rest offered moral support. After her bill was passed, the House Democratic caucus convened, and gave her a round of applause. This was an incredibly galvanizing moment for her, and one that helped establish her as a viable legislator. Indeed, she was rated the most effective freshman legislator in the N.C. House that year in a survey conducted by an independent research group.

Q: What were some things you learned about how the "system" works?

Weiss picked up valuable pieces of wisdom along the way—some she figured out on her own, some were shared by more senior (continued on page 4)

Representative Jennifer Weiss, appointed in 1999 to fill the term of Jane Mosley who died of breast cancer, was recommended by Lillian's List for her first election in 2000. In 2002, Weiss was one of the incumbent women targeted by Republicans who received an additional contribution from Lillian's List. This article is the second in a series of interviews of new legislators recommended by Lillian's List being conducted by Dr. Christie Knittel Mabry, a Lillian's List Board

Member. Dr. Mabry is currently Director of Admissions/ Adjunct Professor of Human Resources at Peace College in Raleigh. Mabry was approached by Laura Bingham, President of Peace College, to consider the position of Director of Admissions after 1 year as Assistant Professor of Human Resources at Peace. Prior to joining Peace College, Mabry had spent 13 years with General Electric and Sciquest in Research Triangle Park.

Seven Lillian's List Candidates Elected



Margaret Highsmith Dickson (H-41) of Fayetteville, winning slightly more than 50% of the vote, ran a well-organized focused campaign with bi-partisan support. She ousted the most right-wing, anti-choice woman in the North Carolina House. This legislator, rated one of the least effective members of the legislature, sponsored more anti-choice bills than any other legislator. Margaret will add a strong pro-choice voice to the legislature.



Alice Bordsen (H-63) of Mebane, who won a hard fought primary with 48% of the vote against two well entrenched conservative male Democratic politicians, went on to win by a very slim margin against a well-known Republican! Alice deserved to be elected to this newly created house seat. A recent law graduate, Alice is a former librarian and real estate broker, and has served on the Mebane City Council since 1998. Alice will become another much needed pro-choice Democratic voice.



Jean Farmer Butterfield (H-24) of Wilson won the primary for this seat formerly held by Representative Toby Fitch with an incredibly strong grassroots campaign against three men, one of whom had been appointed to fill the seat, and another who had been on the city council. A long-time political activist, Jean has, in addition to teaching, held positions with organizations providing services in the areas of developmental disabilities and mental health.



Deborah Ross (H-38) of Raleigh, who scored an impressive victory in her primary against two men, won her election with 90% of the vote. A non-profit leader, lawyer, and former Executive and Legal Director of the ACLU of North Carolina, Deborah is currently a Senior Lecturing Fellow at Duke Law School and a Consultant on Business Ethics at Duke's Kenan Ethics Institute. Uniquely qualified, Deborah will use her strong pro-choice experience in the conservative 2003 legislature.



Lucy Allen (H-49) of Louisburg won her election with 56% of the vote. A former teacher and homemaker, Lucy served eight years on the Franklin County School Board and four terms as Mayor of Louisburg. Lucy's deep involvement in public policy and governance issues give her a unique understanding of the issues. Lucy campaigned tirelessly and won her election against a young Republican woman in the general election.



Becky Carney (H-102) of Charlotte won a hard fought primary battle to fill the seat being vacated by the retiring, long-term legislator Ruth Easterling. She then went on to win the general election with 91% of the vote, defeating a Libertarian candidate who was backed by the GOP. Becky will be another strong pro-choice advocate in the North Carolina House.



Katie Dorsett (S-28) of Greensboro, who is replacing Senator Bill Martin in the NC Senate, won her election with 64% of the vote against a Republican and a Libertarian. Recently retired, Katie has served on the Greensboro City Council, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners, and as Governor Hunt's Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Administration.

Empowering Women 2002



Attending event at home of Libba Evans: Richard Giles, Chrissy Galaher, and Lucy Allen, LL Recommended Candidate (2002).



Laura Edwards, Lillian's List Co-Founder and Development Chair, addressing crowd in Winston-Salem. Seated on couch: Katie Dorsett, LL Recommended Candidate; Clarice Cato Goodyear; Jean Butterfield, LL Recommended Candidate. Background (right to left): Berni Gaither, Candidate Chair; Libba Evans, host of event; LL Recommended Candidates Becky Carney and Lucy Allen.

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Rep. Jennifer Weiss *(continued from page 2)*

colleagues. Perhaps one of the most important points is that people in the House have long memories. You have to figure out whom you can trust and whom you can't. In addition, you are only as good as your word. She recounts advice that Rep. Bob Hensley gave her. He said that in your first term you get "screwed." In your second term, you figure out who did it. In your third term, you get even.

Rep. George Miller's advice of the need to make "prior arrangements" and line up votes ahead of time has also been instrumental. Finally, she has learned that you must always be respectful of legislative staff and fellow members – regardless of their party. She has learned that it helps to help people, whenever possible, because you never know who knows who, and who will be a helpful ally to you at some point in time. Essentially, you have to "check" your partisanship at the door and be as collegial as possible...you never know when you will need someone's vote.

Q: Were there any people who were particularly helpful to you early on?

would miss someone, she easily relayed a long list of names of people who were helpful to her early on. Some of these people (this is by no means an exhaustive list) include: the Speaker and the Majority Leader (both very supportive and very respectful), Rep. Martha Alexander (who really stuck with her), Reps. Verla Insko, Ruth Easterling, Maggie Jeffus and Beverly Earle, and all of the Democratic women in the House and Senate.

Rep. Paul Luebke has been extremely supportive, and has helped her understand that the legislative process is an incremental one, and that small victories are better than nothing. Also, she has learned a lot by simply watching how Rep. Joe Hackney debates and amends bills. Her legislative assistants, first Pearl Honeycutt and currently, Susan Doty, have provided great assistance and encouragement.

Q: Three years into the process, what have been some of your most significant "aha's"?

Weiss emphasized the fact that you have got to do your homework. She went on to say that, unfortunately, women get

"grilled" more than do men, and will be tested to a greater extent. As such, they have to be twice as prepared, but should not be dissuaded by this fact. Also, she has learned not to treat every little bend in the road as a crisis. She has learned to simply make a mental note of it and to move on. She has learned to be herself, and to trust her intuition. Indeed, her first hunches about people have almost universally proven to be true. Finally, she has learned that it's more important to listen than to speak.

Q: Finally, how can Lillian's List help you and other progressive incumbents?

Weiss emphasized that it is helpful to get together with other women leaders and activists. The General Assembly can be a frustrating place, and it is incredibly uplifting to be around supportive women. She was also emphatic about the need to help incumbents. It takes a long time for women to get into leadership roles, and there are currently no women in the inner loop. Thus, any and all help (monetary and otherwise) that Lillian's List can provide to help incumbents advance through the system and up the ladder is critically important.

From the Chair

This election has dealt a severe blow to the struggle for reproductive freedom, but it is not the end. In what can only be described as bleak election losses, the historic victories of 7 of the 8 Lillian's List candidates are especially impressive. These 7 women bring the total number of women in the legislature to a record number. This 2002 elections cycle has had some other dramatic firsts as well.

Lillian's List contributed the highest amount of money ever to these new candidates: a total of \$54,000. You, our members, have contributed, thus far, an additional \$21,000 directly to them. In addition, Lillian's List contributed a total of over \$11,000 to the incumbent Democratic women for their re-election bids, with a significant portion of that to those women who were targeted by Republicans. Particularly in a year of so many losses, we are proud that most of these women won with comfortable margins.

In March of this year, Lillian's List sponsored and helped organize the first EMILY's List state legislative training. More than 40 women participated, including most of our new candidates. Clearly, this training has had a significant impact on their campaigns.

These accomplishments are a direct result of the commitment of our members to electing excellent pro-choice Democratic women.

Through your generosity and your commitment, the number of pro-choice Democratic women in the General Assembly has steadily increased. Beginning in 1998, the first election in which the organization participated, Lillian's List helped reverse the trend of more Republican women than Democratic in the legislature. Since that election, the total number of Democratic women has increased from 14 in 1997 to 22 in 2003.

These women will play a significant role in holding back the anti-choice forces in the legislature. With the Republicans in control nationally, and now in charge of the North Carolina House, we are in for some very difficult times. It is clear that the state legislature must take on the responsibility for defending a woman's right to choose.

The work of Lillian's List to elect pro-choice Democratic women is critical in protecting our reproductive freedoms. We know we can count on you to help Lillian's List continue to help these women accept these challenges. This is just the beginning. Thanks to you, our members, we will continue to elect pro-choice Democratic women. We will continue blazing the trail begun by Lillian Exum Clement.

Jan Allen, Chair

Seven Elected *(continued from page 1)*

of Cultural Resources Libba Evans in Winston-Salem. This last event of the 2002 election season drew about 70 people and concluded a successful election cycle of supporting candidates recommended by Lillian's List.

The candidates expressed great appreciation not only for the generosity of the members of Lillian's List, but especially for the enthusiastic supportive atmosphere for them and their campaigns. One referred to Lillian's List as the political "onstar"

for Democratic women candidates in North Carolina.

Jan Allen, Chair of Lillian's List, thanked Lillian's List Board member Claire Giffin for organizing the event, as well as the host committee for their support. Among the host committee were Clarice Cato Goodyear, Sylva Billue, Nancy Cotton, Terrie Davis, Charlotte Hanes, Pricey Taylor Harrison, Bertha "B" Holt, Emily Wilson, Rep. Mary Jarrell and Senator Kay Hagan.

The board of Lillian's List will elect new board members in December. If you are interested in applying to be a board member, please call (919) 967-3438 for information.

Seeking Charter Monthly Contributors

This election Lillian's List was able to contribute the maximum contribution (\$4000) in the primary and the general election to our recommended candidates. In addition, we also contributed to the incumbent Democratic women, with additional help for those who were targeted. Lillian's List has become a major political force in North Carolina. To continue to build on this solid foundation—to prepare for the many new women to be elected—will require ongoing support. Please consider a monthly contribution. We are now accepting credit cards. We will automatically deposit the amount you specify and thank you each month.

Victory Breakfast

January 29, 2003

8:00am – 10:00am

Cardinal Club, Raleigh

This biannual event, which honors the Lillian's List newly elected legislators, has become a celebration of women in power. Mark your calendar now!

Membership Enrollment / Time to Renew for 2003

Yes, I want to join **Lillian's List**, the powerful political network that elects pro-choice Democratic women in North Carolina by raising campaign contributions and building winning campaigns. Let's defend our Democratic women legislators and thwart right-wing extremists by electing many more Democratic women to the North Carolina General Assembly.

- I am joining **Lillian's List** for the year 2003 with my membership contribution of:
- \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50
- I'm already a **Lillian's List** member! I am enclosing/renewing with a special contribution of:
- \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50
- I want to be a monthly contributor of \$ _____ /month (credit cards only, minimum \$25/month).
- Please charge to my credit card VISA/Mastercard, American Express, Discover (circle one).

Card number	Expiration Date	Signature	Name on Card (please print)
Name			
Address			
City		State	Zip
Phone		E-Mail	
Occupation		Employer	

I am also prepared to consider making contributions of at least \$50 to two or more Democratic women legislative candidates recommended by **Lillian's List** during election years. Contributions of \$50 or more to **Lillian's List** include membership in **Lillian's List**.

Contributions to **Lillian's List** are not tax deductible for federal tax purposes. Corporate checks cannot be accepted. NC law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, job title or profession and name of employer or employer's specific field for each individual whose contributions aggregate is in excess of \$100.00 in an election cycle. While the General Assembly is in session, no individual registered as a lobbyist under Article 9A of Charter 120 of the General Statutes may make a contribution to **Lillian's List**.

Please return this form and your personal check payable to **Lillian's List**, PO Box 2473, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. For information call 919/967-3438.

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