

WORD ON THE STREET

"The last couple of years haven't been particularly good to Republicans."

Montgomery County Republican Committee Chairman Ken Davis

OUR TOWNS

The Intelligencer

Friday, January 25, 2008

NOW YOU KNOW

On this day in 1961, President John F. Kennedy held the first presidential news conference carried live on radio and television.

B

Abington lawyer to challenge Schwartz

At least two other Republicans also may run against the Democratic incumbent congresswoman from the 13th District.

By JACOB FENTON

THE INTELLIGENCER

Marina Kats, a Republican personal injury lawyer from Abington, said she's challenging two-term Democratic incumbent Allyson Schwartz in the 13th Congressional District.

"It's official," said Kats, 46, on Thursday.

At least two other Republicans are eyeing a run.

Lee Falgoust, 46, a management consultant who chairs Upper Moreland's Republican committee, said Thursday that



he hasn't made a decision yet. "At this point I'm simply considering the endorsement and we'll see how that goes," said Falgoust. He's circulating nominating petitions and expects to make



Allyson Schwartz



Marina Kats

a decision in the next week or so, but declined further comment.

Frank Szabo, 45, of Upper Dublin, is also seeking the nomination. A former limousine company owner who is now a stay-at-home dad, he is also seeking the nomination. See **ELECTION**, Page B 2

Montone to face Murphy

Republicans continue to line up to run against freshman Congressman Patrick Murphy, D-8.

Thursday, Joseph V. Montone, 47, of Falls, officially announced he was running for the 8th District seat as a Republican.

Montone, who ran unsuccessful campaigns for Congress in 2004 and state representative in 2006, is president of the Aviation Safety Institute and executive director of My Father's Vineyard, a nonprofit organization.

Montone joins Republicans Tom Lingenfelter of Doylestown, Jeff Madden of Plumstead and Tom Martin of Doylestown Township who all hope to run against Murphy in November's election. None of the four Republicans has held political office.



The Vent

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Please spell all names and include a daytime phone number for confirmation purposes only. It will not be published.

The youths who were harassing the tiger should be

Election

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home dad, Szabo said he was a "firm believer in the traditional Republican platform," with no political experience.

Whoever wins the nomination will face an uphill battle unseating Schwartz, who easily won re-election in 2006 with 66 percent of the vote. Her opponent was former "Apprentice" contestant Raj Bhakta, who was fired by Donald Trump on TV and also failed to convince voters to hire him.

Still, the district that stretches from northeast Philadelphia to Pennsburg has been a tough sell for the GOP.

"The last couple of years haven't been particularly good to Republicans," said Montgomery County Republican Committee Chairman Ken Davis. But, he said, "we know what the challenges are."

Republicans hope that Kats, a Ukrainian immigrant who's lived in the area for 16 years, will siphon off Russian American votes, especially from the overwhelmingly Democratic piece of the district in Philadelphia. A wealthy law firm president, Kats said she planned to pay for part of her own campaign, and expected overall costs to top \$2 million.

Schwartz had more than \$1.3 cash on hand as of last September, according to finance reports.

On paper, Kats and Schwartz might match up well — both are female, Jewish and support abortion rights. "I am pro-choice but I am hoping that they will choose life," Kats said.

But Daniel McElhatton, a spokesman for Schwartz, said voters should look at both candidates' views on the war. Schwartz, who was on a trip to Iraq Thursday, thinks the war was mismanaged and the

troops should be brought home, he said. After a trip there last March, Schwartz said it was time for Iraq "to take responsibility militarily and move more aggressively politically."

Kats said "it is a mistake to set an official date for our withdrawal." That would be telling our enemies when they could expect to take over, she said, and a partially reduced force could leave remaining soldiers vulnerable. By imprudently moving to reduce troop levels, "I think we are creating our own Vietnam," Kats said.

Kats, who described herself as being the "first Russian-American candidate for any national district in the country," said that the economy, immigration and the war in Iraq would be her top issues. Kats also said that Sen. Arlen Specter would campaign with her, and added that her political views were in sync with his.

McElhatton said Schwartz' top priorities would include making sure all Americans have access to health care, and the intertwined issues of energy and environment.

As a business owner — she's president of the Feasterville law firm Kats, Jamison, van der Veen & Associates — Kats said lawmakers needed "to make sure that we have work visas rather than granting amnesty for the people who get here illegally."

Kats also said Schwartz' past years of support didn't mean automatic re-election. "The Congress' approval level is the lowest ever," she said, blaming Democratic obstructionism. "It's good to have a system of checks and balances, but they have to be checks and balances and not a roadblock."

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