

Murphy, Schwartz may have eyes on Senate seat

The race for Arlen Specter's senate seat could have a strong Bucks and Montgomery County flavor.

According to Roll Call, a well respected news source in Capitol Hill coverage, 8th District Congressman Patrick Murphy "is considering the race very strongly."

The words belong to Daren Berringer, a top adviser to Murphy. "He's certainly weighing a lot of his options for the future, and the U.S. Senate race is very attractive, and he's looking at it very strongly

right now," said Berringer, national field director for John Edwards' 2008 presidential campaign and Montgomery County Commissioner Joe Hoeffel's chief of staff for his 2004 Senate campaign.

Murphy spokesman Adam Abrams had no comment on a potential Senate run by the congressman or on Berringer's comments.

Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz of the 13th District is

another thought to be strongly considering a run for Specter's seat.

"She loves her job in Congress, especially the work that she'll be able to do in 2009 on health care," Schwartz spokeswoman Rachel Magnuson said. "But she's not going to shut that door."

The two locals would local receive strong competition for the nomination from MSNBC's Chris Matthews, the host of "Hardball," who has discussed a bid with Pennsylvania Democratic officials.

Matthews is a former speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter and top aide to the late Speaker Tip O'Neill.

Murphy's advisers stress that his biggest strength could be his fundraising prowess. In his first term in Congress, Murphy raised \$3.7 million, and reported having \$1.5 million in his bank account in mid-October. Schwartz had \$3.1 million in the bank on that date.

Another plus for Murphy, according to Berringer, could be

his ties to President-elect Barack Obama. Murphy was one of the first members of Congress outside of Illinois to endorse Obama in the presidential primary.

"Patrick having been on Barack Obama's presidential team from very early on, I think shows Patrick as a real agent of change and someone as Pennsylvanians are looking at the future, they can see good contrast in our current Senator," Berringer said.

— Gary Weckselblatt, 215-345-3169

'A magnificent young man'

1st Lt. Travis Manion, who was killed in Iraq in April 2007, was honored posthumously with a Silver Star and Bronze Star with Valor awards.

When a Marine major chokes up during his remarks about a fallen comrade, you understand how special that serviceman was.

"He was one of a kind," Maj. Joel Poudrier, USMC, said after Friday's posthumous medal ceremony in Doylestown where the parents of 1st Lt. Travis Manion were given the nation's third highest military award.

The emotional ceremony in the Bucks County Courthouse courtyard, where banners hang with pictures of 17 county residents who died serving in Iraq, was viewed by more than 600 people on the chilly afternoon.

Marine Lt. Gen. John Allen presented the Silver Star and the Bronze Star with Valor awards to Manion's parents, Tom and Janet, of Doylestown Township.

"He was a magnificent young man," Allen said. "His sacrifice will never be forgotten. I am deeply honored to have been with him along the way."

He described Manion as "strong, power-



Janet and Tom Manion receive the Silver Star and Bronze Star with Valor awards Friday from Lt. Gen. John Allen, USMC, as their daughter Ryan looks on Friday during a posthumous ceremony for their son 1st Lt. Travis Manion, who was killed in action in Iraq. The event was held at the Bucks County Courthouse.

GIAN LUISO / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ful, athletic, handsome and witty." He said Manion was an "intellectual, but that embarrassed him."

Manion, 26, was shot by a sniper April 29, 2007, while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. After his medic and lance corporal were wounded by a sniper, Manion moved forward, placing him-

self in between the wounded and enemy snipers.

"He made himself the sole focal point of the enemy attack," Poudrier said.

"He selflessly exposed himself to enemy fire so others could be rescued," Allen said.

Manion's Silver Star was only the 91st awarded by the Marines since Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2002. It is awarded for extraordinary heroism.

Capt. Anthony Guess-Johnson presented the Manions items from Combat Outpost Manion, one of only two in Iraq named for an American.

"Of all of the team members that came before me, one echoes more than any other," he said, adding that was the case among the Iraqis Manion was training as well as Marines.

"As a kid growing up, you always wonder what a hero is like," Poudrier said, slowing his words to avoid sobbing. "When other men fail, they step up."

He then recounted Manion's favorite saying: "If not me, then who."

"Travis moved forward so someone else wouldn't have to," Poudrier said. "I promise to pass his legacy to my own children. They will know Travis Manion."

— Gary Weckselblatt, 215-345-3169

QUAKERTOWN

Hoagie shop worker admits to dealing drugs

Irving Fleming doesn't want to die in jail.

That's why the 69-year-old accused of dealing cocaine in a Quakertown hoagie shop has cut a deal with prosecutors that calls for him to plead guilty in exchange for facing fewer counts of drug dealing and other charges, which could ultimately result in him serving less time in jail, authorities said Friday.

Fleming, of Philadelphia, waived a preliminary hearing in Quakertown district court Friday. The case against him now goes to Bucks County Court.

Despite the deal, Ellis B. Klein, Fleming's attorney, said his client still faces mandatory three-year minimum prison stints on the remaining three drug dealing counts.

Klein will request that Fleming serve the sentences concurrently. Indications are prosecutors will press for Fleming to serve consecutive sentences, keeping him behind bars substantially longer.

"He's a nice man. He got caught up in something that spun out of control," said Klein. "I don't want him to die in prison."

Nonetheless, court papers say a police informant purchased hundreds of dollars worth of cocaine from Fleming at Lee's Hoagie House on Route 309 during an undercover investigation dubbed "Operation Italian Hoagie" that ran from late July through September.

The sandwich shop employee wrapped cocaine in a church pamphlet for the informant on one occasion, records say. On another, he asked the informant how many "fries" the person wanted — code for how much cocaine did the informant wish to buy.

— Christopher Ruvo, 215-345-3147.

Truck dumps heating oil in Plumstead

A deer dashed into the roadway, the truck swerved to avoid it and a few seconds later 3,000 gallons of home heating oil were spilling onto a Plumstead road.

That, say police, is the long and short of what happened about 3 p.m. on Stump Road near the intersection with Blueberry Lane on Friday.

Plumstead Police Chief Duane Hasenauer said it appeared as if much of 3,000-plus gallons of oil had spilled, though he couldn't say if all of it was on the road. A large spill area was visible and oil was in ditches along the rural roadway.

Crews were working into the night to clean up the fuel.



A home heating oil truck overturned, spilling its contents Friday on Swamp Road in Plumstead.

DAVID GARRETT / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bucks County health officials were notified and are investigating. The

Department of Environmental Protection will be notified so it can assess the impact to surrounding natural areas, Hasenauer said.

According to police, a trucker for Reit Fuel Oil Co. of Warminster was eastbound on Stump Road when a deer ran out into the roadway. Trucker Dan Conden of Trevoise cut the wheel hard to avoid a collision, but lost control of the oil truck, which crashed onto its side, Hasenauer said.

The chief said Conden was not injured. The driver is not facing any charges in connection with the crash.

— Christopher Ruvo, 215-345-3147.