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## NEWS

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# Naked City

## Southwest Showdown

BY ROB D'AMICO, FRI., MARCH 3, 2000



Austin-area residents will get 30-second glimpses of the two Democratic contenders for the Texas House District 48 seat being vacated by **Sherri Greenberg** over the next two weeks, as both contenders have bought TV time heading into the primary showdown March 14.

**Mandy Dealey** and **Ann Kitchen** are both airing commercials locally to promote their efforts to win the district, which covers a swath of West Austin and much of South Austin. "My knuckles are bruised," says Dealey, adding that it's from knocking on doors to talk to voters, not from any conflict with her opponent.

Dealey is a former head of the **Austin Area Mental Health Association** and **Planned Parenthood** who is working toward a master's degree in public affairs. Kitchen is a manager with **PricewaterhouseCoopers** who formerly worked as a policy analyst with the **Texas Dept. of Health and Human Services** and as an assistant attorney general. Both candidates are progressives who stress the need for more health care coverage, more money for education, and a cleaner environment.

Because the two candidates hold such similar positions on the issues, each has focused her campaign on trying to differentiate herself from her opponent. Dealey's ads profile her work on health and education issues, such as the Teen Parent Program she helped form at Crockett High School to offer child care and other resources so that pregnant students and those with children could graduate. Kitchen's ads highlight her experience in developing policy for health care legislation, and her role as an assistant attorney general in a lawsuit against a hospital accused of abusing public funds earmarked for charity. That role put Kitchen in the media spotlight, landing her an appearance on ABC's *Prime Time*.

Since both are spending big bucks on ads that will be viewed by audiences outside their district boundaries, both will need the sizable contributions that came in during January and February. As of the Feb. 3 cutoff date for the last reporting period, Dealey had taken in \$62,951 in contributions and spent \$40,198. Kitchen took in \$43,650 and spent \$55,894, but says she has now amassed over \$145,000 in contributions, pledges, and loans.

Regardless of how much money she spends, Kitchen says she is delighted with the 20-plus endorsements she has garnered. Her commercials and literature note that she has received the endorsement of "every local community organization and Democratic club that has endorsed in this race," while Dealey has won support from only a few statewide groups.

"The Democratic community is coalescing around me," Kitchen says. In particular, the former **Save Our Springs Alliance** steering committee member has the strong support of many longtime environmentalists such as Electric Utility Commission member **Shudde Fath**, SOS Alliance chair **Robin Rather**, and SOS board member **Mary Arnold**. She also got the endorsement of SOS Action (the political action committee arm of the SOS Alliance).

Dealey -- who has been active in the arts and various community groups for years -- has the support of many prominent Democrats in state and national political circles, like **Lowell Lebermann**, **Ben Barnes**, and **Liz Carpenter**.

"I think I have a broader Democratic view of my role in the Legislature," Dealey says. That broader view would give her the advantage, she says, during actual negotiations in the House. "You represent your constituencies, but you also have to work together with the other 149 representatives."

Meanwhile, the GOP pack is sorting itself out, somewhat. Three attorneys -- **Joe Anderson**, **Scott Loras**, and **Jill Warren** - are seen as the most viable contenders. As of Feb. 3, Warren had \$21,208 in contributions (she estimates that she has at least \$35,000 by now), Anderson had \$15,250, and Loras \$3,940.

Also running are UT student **Robert Wyckoff** and businesswoman **Maria Gavilan Burbridge**. Wyckoff -- who had no contributions as of the last reporting period but does have some bumper stickers and business cards -- has said he is running to get involved in the political process and gain experience. Burbridge, meanwhile, does have the advantage of being able to produce her own signs (she owns a sign company in Oak Hill), but has taken in less than \$1,000 in contributions.

With the primary still over a week away, Kitchen is already worrying about the general election, after hearing discussions about abortion among the Republican candidates. "Jill Warren, who appears to be the leading Republican, is clearly pro-life," she says, noting that this has the potential to be a defining issue. Loras, meanwhile, called the abortion question "a non-issue." But last week on KLRU-TV's *Austin at Issue*, all the Republican candidates (with the exception of Anderson, who did not attend) said they were against abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

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