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The Art of Debate? NY State Comptroller, Thomas Dinapoli stated earlier in the week that his preliminary review of the 2009 / 10 budget “does not adequately respond to today’s economic realities.” He went on to say ... “The budget is not a long-term solution to New York’s propensity to spend more than the state can afford. While the budget proposes to close an unprecedented gap, it does so by an over reliance on non-recurring federal stimulus funds and new tax revenues projected to materialize at a time of declining tax receipts. This is essentially a buy-time budget, based on a hope that the economy recovers quickly. It’s a very fragile basket to place all the taxpayers’ eggs in.” Meanwhile, back at the OK Corral, Senate Republicans vehemently opposed budget bill after budget bill and though they were powerless to stop passage of the Democrats spending plan, they certainly slowed the momentum to a crawl through a protracted debate and questioning process on each of the bills. According to reports, Democrats were, for the most part conciliatory in answering the questions but occasionally displayed some frustration with the pace (which, btw...continues this morning). At one point, Manhattan Democrat Tom Duane suggested they turn it into a game...“maybe we can have a contest, on answering budget questions.” Insiders are hopeful they’ll wrap up later today...how much later is anyone’s guess.

Paper, Scissors Rock ... In a press Release Titled “Stone Hammers Steele” (I kid you not folks) Republican operative, Roger Stone, who you may remember as the self proclaimed Spitzer sex scandal whistle blower, is calling on Michael Steele to resign his post as GOP Chairman for losing the 20th congressional district race earlier this week; the seat vacated when Kirsten Gillibrand was appointed as New York’s junior Senator. The only glitch...the race has yet to be decided! And is not expected to wrap up anytime soon as absentee ballots won’t be counted until mid April and each of the candidates (Scott Murphy - D and James Tedisco - R) are said to be lawyering up for what will probably be a series of appeals and disputes. Currently, the democratic challenger is ahead by 25 votes.

Glad we live in NY! Illinois ousted Governor, Rod Blagojevich came under federal indictment yesterday for “allegedly” attempting to auction off President Obama's vacant U.S. Senate seat. The 19 count indictment “alleges that Blagojevich discussed with aides the possibility of getting a Cabinet post in the new president's administration, substantial fundraising assistance or a high-paying job in exchange for the Senate seat.”