

NASW-NYS Political Post

February 27, 2009

Karin Moran, MSW

Jeremy Darman, MSW, MA

Shakin ... Governor David Paterson is shaking things up on his own staff, only a week after enduring severe media scrutiny aimed at him and his administration. As reported by the NY Times “Mr. Paterson, acknowledged that he had made mistakes in recent months and said that overhauling his staff would be a first step toward righting his administration.” On Wednesday the Governor publicly announced that Larry S. Schwartz, “a hard-edged veteran of Westchester County politics” who recently joined the administration, was to become the new secretary to the governor, the highest-ranking staff job in state government. Mr. Schwartz is to succeed will succeed William J. Cunningham III, who was only in the job a few months, was often criticized for a lack of experience. Also new to Team Paterson, is Peter Kauffmann, a former Navy intelligence officer and later press secretary to then Senator Hillary Clinton. Kauffmann will serve as Paterson’s communications director. Actually, a number of Clinton vets will be joining the Governor’s staff...Stanley B. Greenberg and Al Quinlan of the firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner has been hired for polling. Paterson’s campaign will also add Tracy Sefl, a Washington-based Democratic media strategist. Democratic strategist George Arzt noted the new team is “battle-tested in national politics, it’s a team to be reckoned with, for the first time since David took over.”

Stirred ... New Senate Minority Leader, Long Island Republican, Dean Skelos reportedly requested more public leaders meeting for the purpose of briefing members on the stimulus and its potential impact on education, health care, and tax cuts. The Governor responded to Skelos’ request with “We’ll be having meetings all through ... and I am delighted that you have become such a fan of open government.” Skelos’ retort...“I’m delighted that you finally invited me to a meeting.” Ouch!

Obama, Barack Obama ... Our new Commander in Chief delivered his first prime-time address to the nation earlier this week where he promised “We will rebuild, we will recover and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before.” The speech took place before a joint session of Congress and outlined the President’s plan to reinvigorate job growth, stabilize the currently shaky credit system, provide our children with better schools, reform health care, create domestic sources of energy and an end the war in Iraq. Obama received loud cheers upon entrance and exit of the chamber as well as a number of outbursts during the speech.