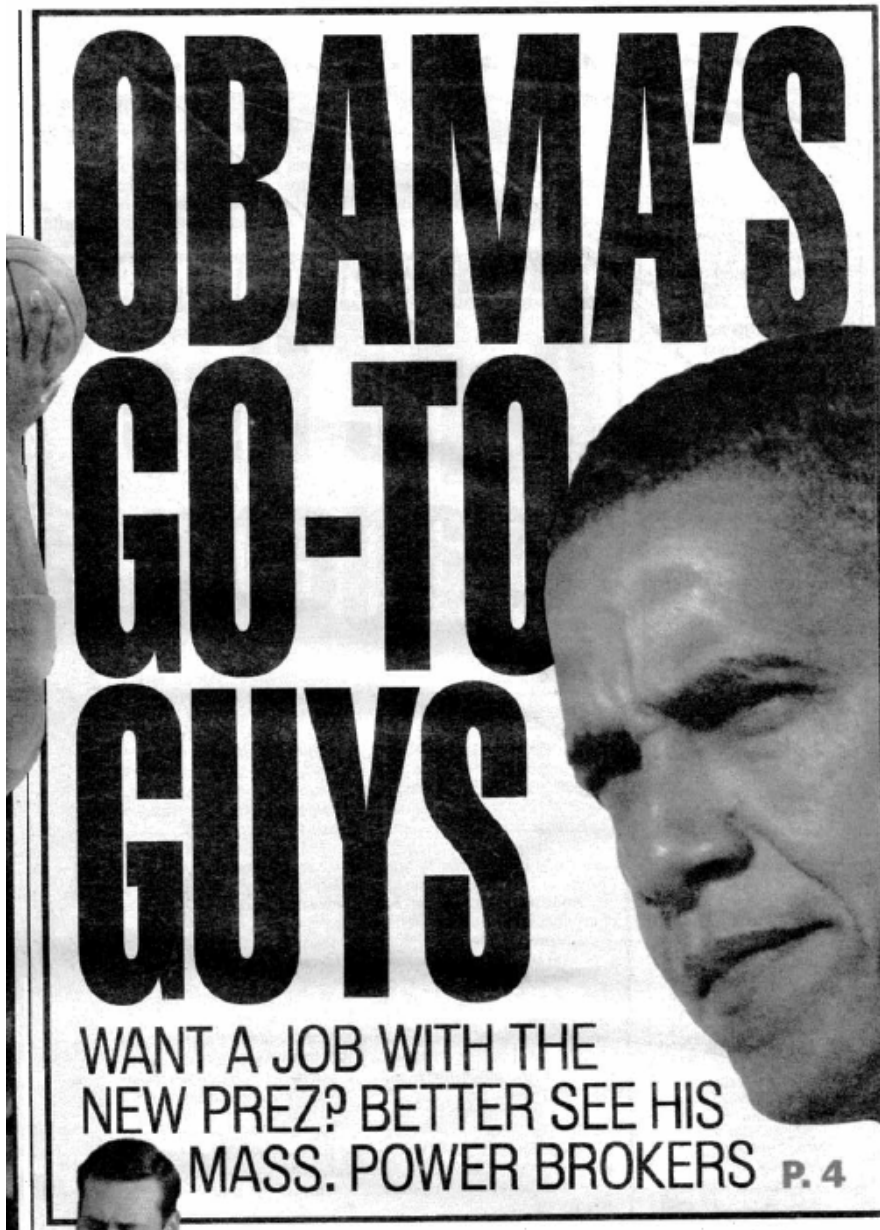



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2008



OBAMA'S GO-TO GUYS

WANT A JOB WITH THE
NEW PREZ? BETTER SEE HIS
MASS. POWER BROKERS **P. 4**



Crowning achievement

Mass. Dems have influence over Obama's picks

By HILLARY CHABOT

Local Democrats drooling over sugarplum federal posts around New England already have begun whispering their Christmas wishes to a quiet group of local kingmakers who have President-elect Barack Obama's ear.

"I have a list that's bigger than Santa Claus, and I know exactly who's been naughty and nice," joked Alan Solomont, a political power broker who was a big Bay State fund-raiser for Obama.

Solomont, who's worked for Democrats on six presidential campaigns, confirmed he's chatted with Obama staffers about the highly sought-after positions, which begin at a generous \$115,000 a year.

Only two of the local posts, U.S. attorney for Massachusetts and U.S. marshal for Massachusetts, must go to someone from the Bay State. Regional directors for the Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Human Services, Educational Quality Assistance, Housing and Urban Development and Small Business Administration could come from anywhere in New England.

"I'm trying to help people from Massachusetts

Sugarplum positions

These regional positions are up for grabs when President-elect Barack Obama takes office.

U.S. attorney	Michael Sullivan
U.S. marshal	vacant
Health and Human Services	Brian P. Golden
Education	Michael Sentence
Housing and Urban Development	Taylor Caswell
Small Business Administration	Sanford Blitz
Environmental Protection Agency	Robert Varney

who have talent and are strong Obama supporters," Solomont said.

Jockeying across New England is intense because local Democrats haven't been up for the well-paid federal posts since 1992. Early Obama support from the state's top politicians — Gov. Deval Patrick and Sens. Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry — means Massachusetts will have more clout than usual, Solomont said.

Other behind-the-scenes elves in the federal jobs sweepstakes include politically wired PR gurus such as Larry Rasky and Tom O'Neill, son of U.S. House

Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr., observers say.

"Larry Rasky is in a unique position, he's very close to (Vice President-elect) Joe Biden. Certainly Larry is someone whose voice will be heard," Solomont said.

Kennedy and Kerry will have a strong say as to who is the next U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal, but members of the congressional delegation also will weigh in.

"I've submitted a handful of names for specific positions," said U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Somerville), who stayed mum on whom he's backing. "I think every member of the delegation will have something to say."

U.S. Rep. William Delahunt (D-Quincy) said the dire economic picture means competition will be

fiercer for the pension-fat posts, and having one's name dropped will be a highly sought-after favor.

"There's going to be a lot of demand. The economy is in a tailspin. I'm sure there'll be more resumes floated than there would be in a better economy," Delahunt said.

Patrick's close ties to Obama, along with his chief of staff Doug Rubin's frequent chats with top Obama adviser David Axelrod, means the governor will have a lot of sway in the king-making.

"Deval will be very important because he's close to Obama and if he cares about a particular candidate his advice will be taken very seriously by the Obama staff," said Phil Johnston, who served as a Health and Human Services regional director under former President Bill Clinton.

"I'm not interested in going back, so we have the luxury of not being interested ourselves, instead we can push the candidacies of young people," Johnston said.

He said locals who helped the Obama campaign have become close. "We all have our friends. We're sort of an informal network at this point," he said.



MICHAEL CAPUANO



WILLIAM DELAHUNT



JOHN KERRY



TOM O'NEILL



DEVAL PATRICK



LARRY RASKY



DOUG RUBIN



ALAN SOLOMONT