by David King
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Photo by John Wardell Round and round it goes.

A number of our pundits made some big bets last year , pushing all their chips into the center of the table, only to see them swept up by the dealer. Perhaps the best example of gambling on the wrong outcome was Sen. Ruben Diaz, Sr., whose prediction was short and to the point .

"There will be a fight in the senate for gay marriage and it will fail to pass again. So my prediction is there will be no gay marriage in 2011," Diaz told us by phone from his holiday party last year. There was a fight in the Senate but little did Diaz know that Gov. Andrew Cuomo would craft a deal with both sides of the aisle, a deal that saw same-sex marriage become the law of the land . It doesn't seem many people knew the kind of political force Albany was dealing with before Cuomo took the reins of power in 2011.

Going with his heart over his better judgment, Terry O'Neill, founder of the Constantine

Institute , misread the cards for his friend Albany County District Attorney David Soares and said he expected, “Andrew Cuomo to appoint Albany County D.A. David Soares as commissioner of criminal justice services.” Soares very publically earned the ire of the Cuomo administration this year when he refused to prosecute peaceful protestors at Occupy Albany.

Roberto Perez, keeper of The Perez Notes Blog , nearly hit the nail on the head last year when he predicted embattled NYC Schools Chancellor Cathie Black would resign. But he sacrificed a safe bet for the sake of snark by adding that Black would join, "the Cuomo administration, after realizing that there is more dysfunction within the New York City school system than there is in Albany."

That isn’t to say no one got it right. A number of our pundits foresaw, as BronxTalk host Gary Axelbank put it, "The bloom will come off the rose or, more accurately, the rose will come off the bloom as the truth will begin to emerge about the Bloomberg administration." Whether the "truth" emerged or not, Axelbank wasn’t alone in foretelling the declining popularity of the Bloomberg administration through missteps and scandal during 2011.

Perhaps the most telling comments came from John Petro of the Drum Major Institute . Petro focused on the income disparity in the city, foreshadowing the major rallying cry of Occupy Wall Street. "In the city, where the wealthiest one percent takes home 44 percent of all income, the gap between the rich and the poor will widen. Jobs will be created, but largely in low-paying sectors like retail and home health care. No one will point out the obvious: a $7.25 minimum wage is completely insufficient for New York City." Petro got it wrong, however, when he predicted that the living wage bill would pass the Council. That is a battle that will continue to play out in 2012 .

Who would our political pundits put their money on in 2012, what trends will pay off, what is a sure bet for the new year? What would make a good parlay? Read on dear reader, our political tip sheet is yours to peruse.

Councilman Ydanis Rodriquez

Once the weather warms up, I think we're going to see a huge surge in activity from the Occupy Wall Street movement. My prediction is that by working together with elected officials, OWS will influence the budget process. Organizing with thousands of city residents, the movement will stop the Mayor's pattern of balancing the budget on the backs of working and middle class New Yorkers. Apart from Occupy Wall Street, I also predict that State Senator Adriano Espaillat will soon be changing his title to Congressman Adriano Espaillat, taking his long history of great work for Northern Manhattan and the Bronx to Washington, D.C."

City Comptroller John Liu

With tough budget decisions ahead in 2012 our office will maintain its focus on paring dollars from unnecessary outside contracting, saving pension cost with investment reforms, and finding waste with thorough auditing of city agencies.

Councilman Jumaane Williams

1. The Mayor will wake up sometime near the middle of the year and say, "Wait, you mean I'm the Mayor of the entire NYC and not just the 1%? Why didn't anyone tell me?”

2. My favorite sports team, the Knicks, will continue to trade for the oldest and most injured among us.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

This year, we have taken major steps to market The Bronx, attract new businesses, support our existing businesses, and grow the overall economy of our borough, and in the coming year my office will continue fighting for the economic development of our borough. Although we face

challenges in our education, economy, among other things, it is time to let the world know once again that the Bronx is a place of success. In addition I, along with all 1.4 million Bronxites, have World Series number 28 in sight this new year and feel confident that our Bronx Bombers will repeat their 2009 performance.

Gene Russianoff, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

1. Sadly, the fare will go up at the end of 2012. That's the MTA plan. Last time, in December 2010, the 30-day unlimited MetroCard went up 17%. If that happens again â€“ and there are fare hikes, as planned, for every two years â€“ be prepared for a $167 30-day card in 2017. A good time to be in the 1%.

2. There will be some good news for long-suffering bus riders: You will soon be able to use your cell or smart phone to tell how far your bus is from your stop in real time. A new "Bus Time" program goes Staten Island-wide in January 2012--and then around the city.

3. "Poetry in Motion" â€“ subway car ads featuring works from Shakespeare to Frost â€“ will return from retirement. You may get stuck in a subway tunnel, but it will be your chance to catch up on the likes of Langston Hughes or Emily Dickinson.

Colin Campbell keeper of The Brooklyn Politics and reporter for The Politicker .

1. All hope for independent redistricting will turn out to be mere naive wishfulness -- redistricting will be just as partisan next year as it's always been.

2. Andrew Cuomo will schedule the special election to replace former State Senator Carl Kruger this Spring, and the race between Democratic Councilman Lew Fidler and Republican attorney David Storobin will be a close one, won by single digits (I'm clueless as to who will win it though!)

3. The Republicans will draw a new majority-Asian State Senate district in Queens. While they'll have a shot at winning it if Republican Councilman Peter Koo runs, the more important reason for drawing this district will be to provide the argument that the Republican map better protects minority representation when the inevitable lawsuits come a knockin'.

4. Mitt Romney wins New York's Republican primary next April. This is a pretty easy prediction so I can say I got at least one right should the other ones go awry haha.

Bill Mahoney, NYPIRG

The new ethics law required the Board of Elections to establish new rules for the disclosure of independent expenditures on state races by January 1st. The Board will start the year off on the wrong foot by failing to meet this deadline. Two weeks later, the January filings will reveal that hundreds of donors gave more than the legal limit in 2011. The Board will take no action. They will also fail to do anything when these filings reveal that several elected officials used their campaign coffers for personal purposes, such as funding their legal defenses.

Councilman Stephen Levin

I predict we will have really good legislation coming out of the Council. Two bills I look forward to having hearings on involve street vendors. They receive thousand dollar fines for minimal violations. Hopefully it will come to a vote. Small things like having their cart over a subway grate, or not properly displaying their license can get them a thousand dollar fine, and these guys only make $15,000 a year. It is outrageous.

Sen. Liz Krueger

I predict the governor follows through on his commitment to veto LATFOR's lines if they don't meet independent standards.

I hope the Governor will make as passionate a commitment to moving on public financing of elections as he did to same-sex marriage last year.

I was told my official response should be that I will run [for mayor] if I am drafted, and up until this point it has been working.

Barbara Bartoletti League of Women voters

I predict Gov. Andrew Cuomo will have yet another session that by his terms will be successful. It might not be successful by our terms, but he will have a successful session one way or another.

Deputy Minority Leader Sen. Neil Breslin

I have two predictions—the courts will decide the lines and give us fair redistricting maps and the N.Y. Giants will win the Super Bowl

Sen. Gustavo Rivera

I predict... I will have several new Democratic colleagues in the New York State Senate.

I predict... We will pass a real health exchange for the state of New York.

I predict... The Occupy Wall Street movement will stay strong and continue to influence national dialogue on issues of economic inequality.

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Adam Lisberg, editor City & State

At the risk of looking like more of a fool than usual twelve months from now, here are a few thoughts on the year to come. Despite all the turmoil and change of the last year, the one common theme is I expect the status quo to stay the status quo:

- The mayoral race will stay largely quiet. Just as the rumors always swirl about a business-backed would-be Bloomberg jumping in as a Republican, rumors will also swirl about a black or Latino challenger to try to undercut Bill Thompson among Democrat primary voters. Neither will happen. The existing major candidates have worked too hard, scrubbed their records too clean and raised too much money to let an interloper disturb their grim dance. You will hear names popping up. Don't waste your time worrying too much about them.

- Comptroller John Liu will still be comptroller. And since he's never officially declared for mayor, he has no reason to drop out, despite the growing federal probe into his fundraising. His chances will shrink, not because he really fears the feds, but because the institutional and union supporters he needs will shy away from investing in a candidate with a target on his back. Liu is too single-minded and ambitious to rule out anything in his future just because the feds have a target on his back and are trying to get underlings to flip on him. Unless Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara caught Liu on a wiretap directing illegal fundraising in his own words, he is unlikely to get indicted. And I believe Liu is too smart to have done that.

- Gov. Andrew Cuomo will not fall to earth. He is too skilled a politician to believe his own press, and is too focused on the mechanics of governing to let his attention wander. He knows there are forces that hope he settles into a sophomore slump, so he will stay focused on getting results and keeping on top of every potential threat. Beginner's luck wears off, but he knows the finish line wasn't the budget, the tax deal or gay marriage -- it will be New York's economy and job market in 2014. Or 2016.

- New York's media will stay robust and vibrant, even as more and more New Yorkers shift from reading newspapers and watching TV. A new iPad model and other competing tablets will give more people a reason to get their news in mobile form, not in an old format they have to buy every morning or sit down to watch. Yet the profusion of emerging sources of credible and interesting media will continue to grow -- as Capital New York did, and BuzzFeed might, and other startups dream of -- giving everyone in New York an explosion of good options. That's good news for new media outlets, bad news for old media empires, and scary news for journalists who hope to one day have an employer that contributes to their 401(k).

John Petro, Drum Major Institute

Wall Street bankers may have breathed a sigh of relief upon the clearing of Zuccotti Park, but as warm weather returns to New York the Occupy movement--or some new variation of it--will once again take to the streets of New York City and the capitol to shed light on worsening inequality and the indefensible concentration of wealth among the state's wealthiest. New mass protests in 2012--routinely numbering in the tens of thousands--will dwarf this past Autumn's marches in Lower Manhattan, and Democrats all across the country will benefit from the national attention on issues of inequality, economic justice, and fairness.

With the passage of gay marriage last year, the city's stop and frisk policy will become the new prominent social justice issue in New York. Calls for a federal probe into New York City's unjust stop and frisk policy will intensify, though it is unclear whether the the U.S. Attorney General will actually undertake such an investigation. However, the increased scrutiny of the policy will put pressure on 2013 mayoral contenders to take a position on street stops.

New York City's living wage bill will be passed and promptly vetoed by Mayor Bloomberg. The City Council will then overturn this veto.

The state's minimum wage will get a boost later this year, with a higher wage set for New York City (San Francisco has a minimum wage of $10.24, New York City's is $7.25). This new wage will be indexed to inflation.

New housing construction will pick up in New York City by the middle of 2012, as the surplus of new condo units begins to dry up. Developers will begin to draw up plans for new residential towers, but the lack of financing will continue to be a problem.

Governor Cuomo will back down on his calls for independent redistricting as lawmakers draw up their own new maps.

The "fast-tracked" Tappan Zee bridge will come to a halt as concerned citizens rightly introduce lawsuits intended to ensure that mass transit is an integral part of the new bridge. In the end, federal grant money may appear to help make mass transit on the Tappan Zee a reality, once again making Cuomo look like a winner.

Finally, with the MTA set to lose about $320 million in revenue due to the partial repeal of the payroll mobility tax, congestion pricing will again emerge as a smart solution to funding the region's vital mass transit system. Governor Cuomo will drive to the capitol in one of his muscle cars to sign the bill allowing the city to set up a congestion zone.