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Eyeing the view from the top

Challenge: Some say state Sen. Thomas L. Bromwell turned down a lucrative job elsewhere because he plans to run for Senate president.

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Trouble is brewing at the top ranks of the Maryland Senate.

It springs from the increasingly strained relationship between Thomas V. Mike Miller, the Senate's longtime president, and Sen. Thomas L. Bromwell, the chairman of the Finance Committee.

During the weekend, Bromwell decided to remain a senator, turning down the lucrative top job at the state's Injured Workers' Insurance Fund.

But while he debated whether to resign from the legislature, Bromwell butted heads with Miller over who would finish out the last two years of Bromwell's term.

Bromwell wanted his longtime aide, John R. Schneider, to take the seat. Miller lobbied publicly and privately against Schneider, saying he was vulnerable to a Republican challenge in 2002.

By several accounts, Bromwell, a Baltimore County Democrat, was furious that the Senate president was, in effect, meddling in Bromwell's district affairs. Some people close to Bromwell have suggested that his decision to stay in the Senate might have been due, in part, to his anger with Miller.

Now that Bromwell is staying, some political insiders wonder how long it will be before he makes a run to become Senate president, a prospect he has relished for years.

For his part, Bromwell won't even discuss the issue. "All I want to be is the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee," he said.

But some of his associates say the main reason he opted to stay in Annapolis was his belief that he is on track to eventually win the presidency, one of the most powerful posts in Maryland government.

"If Tommy didn't have a chance to be president of the Senate, he'd probably be in a dimly lit room at IWIF right now," said one veteran State House player.

Might Bromwell attempt to take down Miller when the legislature's annual

session begins next month? Such a bloody coup attempt - the likes of which Annapolis has not seen in years - is unlikely, at least for now.

"I don't think he could pull it off," says one prominent lawmaker.

But Bromwell might challenge for the Senate presidency next year, or after the 2002 election.

And what are his prospects?

After almost 15 years running the Senate, Miller has lots of friends. But the Senate also has plenty of disgruntled back-benchers who might cast their lot with Bromwell.

Iannucci might be tapped for development post

Don't be surprised if Gov. Parris N. Glendening picks from within when he chooses his next economic development czar.

Sources say that David S. Iannucci, acting secretary of the state Department of Business and Economic Development, is the front-runner to become the permanent secretary.

Iannucci is a veteran state official who has held ranking positions with both Glendening and his predecessor, William Donald Schaefer. He has been deputy secretary of the department since late 1998 and has served as acting secretary since the resignation of Richard C. Mike Lewin this fall.

With Lewin's backing, Iannucci appears to have the inside track with Glendening and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who oversees the state's economic development effort.

Although the soft-spoken Iannucci would offer a change of pace from the outspoken Lewin, he would bring long experience to the job, having served as Schaefer's chief lobbyist and as a deputy chief of staff for Glendening.

Iannucci did not respond to a request for comment.

Possible downside of being Baltimore mayor's wife

For the second time this year, Catherine Curran O'Malley, the wife of Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, is up for a judgeship on the Baltimore District Court. And again, Glendening will decide.

That's the same Glendening whom O'Malley has rather pointedly been criticizing in recent months for what the mayor believes is lackluster financial support for the city's needs.