

NINTH ANNUAL PRPLI AWARDS DINNER

Boerner, Gergela, Brinka & Cline: LI leaders to be honored on May 4

by Jane Thaler

The ballots have been cast and the winners announced as the Public Relations Professionals of Long Island has chosen three individuals to be honored for life-long dedication to their field, and one person to be recognized as one of public relations' rising stars, at the Ninth Annual PRPLI Awards Dinner. The awards dinner will be held on Tuesday, May 4, 1999 at Fox Hollow Inn in Woodbury at 6:00 p.m. beginning with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner and the awards presentation at 7:00 p.m.

Hank Boerner, senior vice president of Rowan and Blewitt Inc., will receive the 1999 Jack Rettaliata Memorial Award for lifetime achievement; Joseph M. Gergela III, executive director of the Long Island Farm Bureau, is being granted the LI Achievement Award for promoting a regional cause; Frank Brinka, news director of WHLI and WKJY, will be given the LI Media Award; and Jennifer A. Cline, account executive at Ryan & Ryan Public Relations, will be recognized as someone to watch with the bestowal of the Rising Star Award.

The awardees were selected by a PRPLI committee chaired by Stephen Koenigsberg. The committee consisted of members Maria Cinque, Jeffrey Morosoff, Norman Spizz,

Marjorie Borell, Mitchel Shapiro, Louise Cassano and Dianne Baumert.

Hank Boerner, senior vice president of Rowan and Blewitt, has a long and storied career. He began working in communications more than three decades ago as a reporter for Long Island Business News, then known as Long Island Commercial Review. Hank left journalism for a job as public relations manager for American Airlines. In 1969, he became PR director for the Long Island Rail Road and the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Hank later became senior communications manager for the New York Stock Exchange, and then briefly worked as senior vice president for Burson-Marsteller, handling corporate communications. In 1975, Hank established his own PR agency with his wife Mary Ann, with offices in New York City and on Long Island. His Long Island clients included Cablevision and Grumman. In 1992, Hank became New York region manager of Rowan & Blewitt, an issue management, crisis response and corporate communications organization where he boasts Kodak and General Motors among his clients. In 1993, Mary Ann Boerner launched R&B Communications Services, the PR arm of the company.

Hank Boerner is a member of PRPLI, Public Relations Society of America, PRSA Counselor's Section, Panel of Arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the American Bar Association.

Joseph M. Gergela III knows what it's like to feel the soil run between his fingers; farming is in his blood. He owned, operated and managed his own farm in Riverhead for 11 years, where he grew vegetables. It is only logical that as executive director of the Long Island Farm Bureau since 1988, he lobbies on legislation for farmers, fishermen and agribusinesses at the local, county, state and federal levels.

Joseph received his bachelor's degree in business administration and computer science from Southridge State University in South Carolina. Among his many accomplishments are his contributions to legislation for the Breast Cancer Pesticide Registry in New York State. He was also a contributor to the drafting and passage of the Long Island Pine Barrens laws. In addition, Joseph participated in the establishment of the Peconic Region Community Preservation Fund. Gergela has been an active member of many organizations. He serves on the NYS Farmland Preservation Committee and on the LI Pine Barrens Advisory Board.



Hank Boerner



Joseph Gergela



Frank Brinka



Jennifer Cline

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PRPLI Awards... CONTINUED

Frank Brinka is a long-time veteran of radio news, first widely associated with WALK, and now news director for WHLI and WKJY. With the exception of a brief turn at operating a restaurant/bed & breakfast in the late '80s, Frank has been in radio news for 27 years. In 1991, he returned to radio part-time and was vice president/general manager of American Helicopter Corporation. In 1997 Frank went to work at WHLI/WKJY. His other radio stints includes B-103 (WBZO), WALK, where he was news director for 14 years, WGBB and WLIX.

Frank Brinka was named Journalist of the Year by the Press Club of Long Island in 1987. Other awards include those from the Associated Press, the New York State Broadcasters and several FOLIO Awards. Brinka is past president of the New York State Associated Press Broadcasters Association. He has served on the AP Board of Directors for the past 12 years.

Jennifer A. Cline's star is on the rise. An account executive at Ryan & Ryan Public Relations in Farmingdale for over two years, she uses her talents as a writer and her strong creative skills to handle media relations, publicity, promotions, design and copy, writing for several of the agency's clients including Farmingdale Village, LI Water Conference and the Long Island Aquarium in Bay Shore. Before joining Ryan & Ryan, Jennifer was director of communications for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Suffolk County.

Jennifer Cline graduated with honors from the New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury with a BFA and an MA in communications arts, with concentrations in radio and public relations. As a member of the NYIT Alumni Federation, she mentors students who are pursuing careers in PR. Jennifer's professional affiliations include membership on the board of directors for PRPLI and the March of Dimes, Long Island Chapter, where she serves as chairperson of the communications committee. She devotes her time to various youth programs as well as providing public relations assistance to St. John Lutheran Church in Bellmore.

The cost for the PRPLI Awards Dinner is \$65 per person for members, \$80 for guests and \$650 for reserved tables of 10. Please RSVP by April 30 by calling (516) 293-5700.



VERYNEWSWORTHY-Fox 5 News' General Manager Michael Wach talked about the local news business - present and future - at the PRPLI March program meeting at the Milleridge Inn in Jericho. He spoke frankly about the business aspects of news policy, conceding that many decisions are ratings-driven. Wach was joined by Fox 5's Long Island Correspondent **Andrea Day** (right).



PR UNDER A MICROSCOPE-PRPLI Charter Member Brad O'Hearn (right), president of Brad O'Hearn Associates, grills NY State Senator **Charles Fuschillo's** Director of Public Relations **Michael Arens**, as he led a gathering of the group's members and guests in a lively discussion about the public relations industry, focusing on ethics, effective management and techniques that work. The program was held at the Weeping Willow restaurant in East Farmingdale on April 6.

WELCOME NEW PRPLI MEMBERS!

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PRPLI MEMBER NEWS

VALERIEZURBLIS, formerly of the LIA and Hofstra, and immediate past president of PRPLI, has been named Director of Public Relations and Marketing at Meltzer, Lippe, Goldstein & Schlissel, P.C. of Mineola... **LAURIE BLOOM** has moved from LIBOR to Rivkin Radler & Kremer of Uniondale... PRPLI President **MARIA CINQUE** is writing a weekly column for *This Week's Pennysaver*, a Times Mirror Newspaper, entitled "In The Garden"... The Cable Television and Telecommunications Association of NY has named PRPLI corporate member **CABLEVISION** of Hauppauge the winner of the 1998 Gilbert Community Service Award for its substance abuse education campaign, "Partners in Prevention." PRPLI members **JOAN GILROY** and **LYNN ZAWICKI** were involved in implementing the campaign... **PAT NOLAN**, formerly of the LI Children's Museum, is now Director of Corporate Giving at St. John's University.



PRPLI Board Member Hilary Hartung was recently awarded the Pathfinder Award for excellence in business in the Town of Hempstead. Hilary, director of marketing for the Education and Assistance Corp. (EAC), is shown with Lance Elder, CEO of EAC and former general manager of the Nassau Coliseum.

PRPLI: One decade old and counting!

by Maria Cinque

As PRPLI is approaching the end of its first decade, we now have 278 members and are the largest public relations organization on Long Island. This year our general meetings and educational programs focused on your needs and getting you the kind of information that can make your job a little easier, and provide you with networking opportunities and knowledge of what's happening on Long Island.

We hope you will attend and support the PRPLI Annual Awards Banquet on Tuesday evening, May 4th at the Fox Hollow Inn in Woodbury at 6 pm. We have four very deserving and exciting honorees and it promises to be a special evening for them and their families, friends and colleagues.

Our annual meeting is June 1st, where you vote on our officers and directors for 1999-2000. If you've attended the last few annual meetings, you know that it is also an evening of fun, games and a lot of networking. This year we will follow that tradition. How



fast you can think on your feet may be tested and the winner will be handsomely rewarded. We'll be at the Weeping Willow Restaurant in Farmingdale at 6 pm. This is a MEMBERS ONLY event!

PRPLI committees have been hard at work to bring you the best programs and events possible. If you have some time and would like to be on one of our many committees, please give the appropriate committee chair a call. Their names and phone numbers are listed in this newsletter.

Be sure to check our website (www.prpli.org) for upcoming programs, job listings and recent program highlights. If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding the website, please contact Valerie Zurblis or me.

Enjoy the rest of this programming year and we look forward to seeing you at our monthly programs, Awards Dinner, and the PRPLI Annual Membership Meeting.



PLAYING GAMES - 1999 Empire State Games Chairman Mitchell Pally of the LIA was PRPLI's featured speaker in February, joined by Wendy Parr, games organizer for the Long Island Region. Pally and Parr spoke about plans for the major summerevent, to be held throughout Long Island.

PRPLI MOURNS CHARTER MEMBER FRANK BECHER



Colleagues of Frank Becher were saddened by the news of his passing on January 12, 1999 after a long battle with cancer.

Frank spent nearly 30 years with Olympus, first as a sales manager and then in various positions

in sales, marketing and PR. A Korean War veteran, he began working as an X-ray technician and later sold X-ray equipment, and was also a part-time reporter for the *Daily News* before joining Olympus. According to his family, he was most recently working on a book on historic roadside markers, which his son hopes to publish. His hometown of East Northport will be including Frank Becher's name on its historic markers.

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