

# Securing a Leadership Position for a Pro-fragrance Future

IFRANA annual business meeting focuses on communication and advocacy.

The past year has been a challenging one for the fragrance industry, noted Kim Bleimann (Berjé) during his president's address at the International Fragrance Association North America (IFRANA) 2012 annual business meeting. Between legislation and anti-fragrance sentiment among NGOs and the media, it is necessary for industry organizations to take on an expanded role in advocacy.

The business meeting marked the one-year anniversary of IFRANA's establishment of a separate office and staff in the wake of IFRA's global reorganization. The move, said Bleimann, has strengthened the group's pro-fragrance advocacy. Fighting chemophobia and anti-fragrance activists solely with science has not been sufficiently successful, he noted. To cite just two high-profile anti-industry examples in the past year, television personality Dr. Oz has warned the public of the "dangers" of dryer sheets, and television news magazine *60 Minutes* ran a negatively slanted exposé on the flavor industry. And so, amid a lack of clarity on labeling issues, IFRANA is taking a stronger leadership position on the issues that impact ingredient suppliers, manufacturers and finished goods houses.

Even as IFRANA faces negative messaging, there remains a lack of a unified positioning on labeling issues among industry trade groups. At the same time,

**Ironically, Ross explained, rising chemophobia in society has accompanied falling cancer incidence rates.**

the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety is proposing an expansion of its "26 well-recognized fragrance allergens" list to at least 82 materials, including 28 naturals (see Page 10).

The range of domestic challenges to the US fragrance industry are legion, noted Jane Wishneff, IFRANA's director of government affairs, including the Lacey Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs' Pesticide Fragrance Notification Pilot Program, and the EPA's Toxic Substances Control Act prioritization. (IFRANA's positions and policies are posted at [www.ifrana.org/issues-policy/positions-and-policies](http://www.ifrana.org/issues-policy/positions-and-policies) and include notes on ongoing legislation.) In addressing these and other challenges, IFRANA is building relationships with EPA's Design for the Environment and Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, federal legislative offices, state-level policy makers, the Consumer Products Association, American Cleaning Institute,

## IFRANA 2012 Board of Directors

During the IFRANA annual business meeting, its new board was elected. Back row, from left (seated and standing): John Cox (Verto Solutions), David Ellison (IFF), Jennifer Abril (IFRANA), James Heinz (Bell Flavors & Fragrances), Edward Gotch (Emerald Kalama Chemical), Fred Kritzer (Symrise), Peter Lombardo (Robertet), Robert Bedoukian (Bedoukian Research), Jean-Paul Benveniste (Phoenix Aromas & Essential Oils), Richard Pisano Jr. (Citrus and Allied Essences), Karen Manheimer (Kerry Ingredients and Flavours), Robert Amaducci (Flaroma), Joy Atkinson (Firmenich) and Michel Mane (Mane). Seated, from left: Ted Kesten (Belmay), Steve Tanner (Arylessence), Kim Bleimann (Berjé) and John Vernieri (Givaudan). Not pictured: Sean Traynor (Takasago).





*Jim Kavanaugh, left, and Izzy Heller (both Bedoukian Research)*



*Tara Lermond (John D. Walsh), left, and Melanie Williamson (Robertet)*



*Michael Klamm (Renessenz), left, and Scott Van Why (Prinova)*



*Glenn Sabat (Firmenich), left, and Peter Serafini (John D. Walsh)*

Personal Care Products Council and Canadian trade groups. Echoing Bleimann's comments, Wishneff noted that these partnerships will foster IFRANA's goal of assuming a leadership position on key fragrance industry issues. IFRANA executive director Jennifer Abril added that these partnerships are crucial given the huge budgets of NGOs. Meanwhile, in the year ahead, the US industry will face little federal legislation due to election year stagnation; however, Wishneff warned that much state legislation affecting industry interests is possible.

### **Common Sense in Fragrance Messaging**

Last year the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) listed fragrance among its "Top Ten Unfounded Health Scares of 2011," concluding, "There is no evidence that exposure to the chemicals in fragrances is harmful. In recent years, cancer rates have been declining, despite our continued use of these products—a clear contradiction to the claim that toxic chemicals in fragrances cause cancer and harm human health. The fact that fragrances are ubiquitous in products that we all use, and have been using for many years without evidence of any harm to our health, suggests that there are more important health risks to worry about<sup>a</sup>."

Gilbert Ross, executive director and medical director of ACSH, addressed the IFRANA meeting, decrying the lack of sound scientific bases for public health and environmental public policy in the United States. Ross highlighted the alarmist research surrounding endocrine disruptors and cancer clusters, which overlooks basic and proven actions that can actually improve public welfare—seatbelts, balanced nutrition, vaccines, etc. The culprits, as those in the fragrance industry know, are the well-funded Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Working Group. Ironically, Ross explained, rising chemophobia in society has accompanied falling cancer incidence rates.

Meanwhile, the precautionary principle rules in Europe and has growing impacts on the United States—today, the burden of proof of safety is extremely difficult to address. And environmentalism—which Ross likened to a pseudo religion—is difficult to combat solely with reason.

### **Engaging the Press**

Sometimes reporters seize on bad news, said journalist and keynote speaker Rita Cosby. On the other hand, she said, sometimes all they hear is bad news. Cosby's talk focused on strategies for the fragrance industry to break through the noise of busy newsrooms to ensure more than one side of a story is heard.

In particular, Cosby encouraged the industry to not stop at speaking with a reporter—why not speak to his or her boss? Aside from providing correct information, it is crucial for news pitches to be interesting, provocative and have an effect on consumers. This will make it easy for industries to break through the clutter. Showing a reporter that one is familiar with his or her work is another way to create rapport and a sense that the

<sup>a</sup> [www.acsh.org/news/newsID.1969/news\\_detail.asp](http://www.acsh.org/news/newsID.1969/news_detail.asp)



Zyla Vucetovic (Berjé) and Rich Winter (Symrise)



From left, Arnaud Adrian (Robertet), Benoit Ramet (Elemental Container) and Michel Mane (Mane)



Robert Bedoukian, left, and Greg Pignone (both Bedoukian Research)



Kim Bleimann (Berjé), left, and Richard Pisano Jr. (Citrus and Allied Essences)



Gilbert Ross, executive director and medical director of ACSH, addressed the IFRANA meeting, decrying the lack of sound scientific bases for public health and environmental public policy in the United States.



Kim Bleimann (Berjé), left, and keynote speaker Rita Cosby



Paige Crist (Perfumer & Flavorist magazine) and Morry Seidel

reporter hasn't been targeted at random—or, as Cosby put it, industry should find reporters who have some sort of connection with the subject matter.

Finally, she said, the media can be guilty of embracing blaring headlines or of being lazy. And so, the industry should not shy away from getting ahead of negative stories.

For future events, visit [www.perfumerflavorist.com/events/calendar/](http://www.perfumerflavorist.com/events/calendar/).

To purchase a copy of this article or others, visit [www.PerfumerFlavorist.com/magazine](http://www.PerfumerFlavorist.com/magazine). 