

Jest in time: Paul Anthony, with help from 15 of his pals, brings some comic relief to Bay Shore this weekend.

No joke: They'll be lining up for Long Island Comedy Festival



The longest smile



BY DANIEL BUBBEO
STAFF WRITER

A funny thing happened to Paul Anthony when he tried taking his act on the Long Island comedy-club circuit a few years ago.

There no longer was a circuit here.

"There's only one full-time comedy club on Long Island, and that's Governor's" in Levittown, Anthony said. "Back in the '80s and '90s, there were clubs everywhere, and now they're all gone. A lot of that has to do with changes taking place with Cablevision and the programming on Comedy Central, where you can see stand-up all the time."

But here's the punch line: Anthony, by day a local sales

manager for WALK radio and by night a stand-up who even won the 2005 Huntington Arts Council's Laff-Off, got in touch with 15 of his comedian pals and organized the first Long Island Comedy Festival. The laughfest opens tonight at the Boulton Center for the Performing Arts in Bay Shore and runs through Sept. 2 at various venues in Nassau and Suffolk.

Some of those slated to take the mike are this year's Laff-

Off champ, Veronica Mosey; Stevie GB, "the world's funniest accountant," who took the Audience Choice Award at Laff-Off; John Larocchia, chosen the funniest fireman on ABC's "The View"; and Joe DeVito, who describes himself as "a guy who just likes to stand there and talk." For DeVito, a regular at Manhattan clubs, playing on Long Island is a welcome change.

"The audiences here are down-to-earth," says DeVito of East Rockaway. "When you're working clubs below 14th Street and in the Village, it's a different story. You get

the hipper crowds, but they're more jaded. And if you try to do the same things performing in Pennsylvania, people may get mad. Audiences on Long Island are pretty savvy, and they're out for a good time."

He may be right. Tonight's show is already a sellout, but tickets are still available for tomorrow's show at Boulton as well as the remaining performances at Theatre Three in Port Jefferson; Governor's; The Brokerage, a comedy and entertainment club in Bellmore; Northport Theatre, and Vail-Leavitt Hall in Riverhead.

"There hasn't been a show like this at Vail-Leavitt since 1912, when Will Rogers performed there. I like to tell people Will Rogers opened for us," Anthony says.

And like Rogers, expect the humor to be topical and, above all, good, clean fun. "The comedians who'll be appearing are really not known for blue humor," Anthony says. "That doesn't mean we won't be talking about adult topics. For instance, I talk about the Purple Pill. But the people attending will not hear any profanity. That's one of the guidelines for the comics. We just want everyone to have a

WHEN&WHERE But seriously, folks, if you want to attend the Long Island Comedy Festival, here's the schedule. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at www.theatermania.com. For more details, visit www.licomedyfest.com.

■ **Boulton Center for the Performing Arts**, Bay Shore — 8 p.m. tonight (sold out); 7 and 9 p.m. tomorrow

■ **Theatre Three**, Port Jefferson — 8 p.m. June 30; 7 and 9 p.m. July 1; 8 p.m. Sept. 1; 7 and 9 p.m. Sept. 2
■ **Governor's Comedy Club**, Levittown — 8 p.m. July 13
■ **Vail-Leavitt Music Hall**, Riverhead — 8 p.m. July 21, 7 and 9 p.m. July 22
■ **Northport Theater** — 8 p.m. Aug. 12
■ **The Brokerage**, Bellmore — 8 p.m. Aug. 24