

LA Harbor International Film Festival

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To create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world

FOR RELEASE IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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It's A Wrap! For 12th Voyage of the LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF)™ **Warner Grand Theatre – historic downtown San Pedro – Port of Los Angeles** **13th LAHIFF Set for April 7-10, 2016***

San Pedro (SP), CA. The Port of Los Angeles - the 12th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) held April 9-11 at the vintage art deco Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), historic downtown SP concluded with the Veterans of the Foreign Wars, Wilmington Post # 2967 presenting the Flag of the United States of America at the final program on “DocSunday” featuring *BECOMING CALIFORNIA*. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by local vocalist Albert Alcalá leading the *The Star Spangled Banner*.

“The closing ceremony presenting the flag has become a tradition we are proud to honor veterans and those currently serving in the military for their service, as we express appreciation and gratitude for our wonderful country” stated Stephanie Mardesich, festival Director.

The LAHIFF opened April 9 with the free “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film, Culmination Program with bagpiper Chrissy Orcholski greeting hundreds of students who arrive by bus, or walking from local schools who have read John Steinbeck’s *The Red Pony* and excited to view the 1949 film version of the book. Over 900 copies of the book were distributed to local students from elementary to high school, and community members. After viewing the movie there was a lively discussion about the “novella” and the film.

“This was another ‘record year’ of participation. Thanks to our generous publishing sponsor Penguin Publishing we have been able to distribute thousands of books to students over the past decade who are truly enjoying classic literature and will be reading far into the future,” commented Mardesich. “To have a book in hand is to have a friend for life.” Along with Penguin Classics, the RBSM is sponsored in part by Supervisor Don Knave Employees Community Fund of Boeing California. Refreshments provided The Popcorn Man, 7-Eleven and Mary Star of the Sea High School.

Opening night Friday, April 10 LAHIFF supported, for the fourth year, the DCA sponsored The Big Read L.A. (TBRLA) screening the seminal western film *The Magnificent Seven* (1960). TBRLA book selection *Into the Beautiful North* by Luis Alberto Urrea has not been adapted as a film, however the novel’s story is inspired by the movie and was a popular programming choice.

Saturday night *Gypsy* (1962), the film version of the Broadway musical (1959) based on the life of the renowned “queen of Burlesque” Gypsy Rose Lee, was the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) preceded by the “Let Us Entertain You” Red Carpet Gala held in the theatre mezzanine. Since 2004 the HNT has honored true talent and classic filmmaking beginning with *Neptune’s Daughter* (2004), and in subsequent years *South Pacific* (Mitzi Gaynor), *West Side Story* (George Chakiris & Russ Tamblyn), *Flower Drum Song* (Nancy Kwan) and *April Love* (Pat Boone) to name some of the movies, and “stars” who have walked the LAHIFF Red Carpet.

More.....

*2016 dates subject to change

The HNT Gala guests enjoyed tray passed appetizers, SVEDKA vodka “Gypsy-tinis” and buffet supper while chanteuse Rosie Brand entertained with popular tunes of days gone by and songs from previous HNT honored films. Prior to the movie a live Burlesque performance featured Ruby Champagne and Glama Sutra in an homage to Gypsy Rose Lee. Guests arrived and were escorted to the reception by the JROTC of San Pedro High School.

Closing day DocSunday began with the *Life On the Line* (2014), a short cinema verite documentary also in connection with TBRLA (see <http://finelinefilms.org/lifeontheline>), followed by (for the third year) New Filmmakers L.A. “On Location Project” Showcase of Short Films (19 one to five minute movies) that were winners of the 2014 competition sponsored by the City of Los Angeles and LA Weekly reflecting diverse views of the City of Los Angeles and metropolitan area. For more about NFMLA see website: www.nfmla.org. Q&A and conversation with filmmakers followed each program.

BECOMING CALIFORNIA (2014), the final program, was a tribute to Earth Month, The acclaimed feature documentary, narrated by Jane Fonda with original music by Pat Metheny, reveals the natural and cultural history of the “Golden State” emphasizing how mankind can be better stewards of the land and environment. The film debuted on PBS in September 2014. For more about the film, broadcast dates and how to obtain a copy see www.calegacy.org

A unique addition to this year’s festival was “pop up” gallery presented by the San Pedro Art Association (SPAA) - “Art On the Edge of L.A” - with display art in various mediums created by their members on view under the WGT marquee with rotating paintings in the lobby; and more on display directly across the street from the WGT in The Arcade Building. For more about SPAA see spaa@sanpedroart.org

The LAHIFF, a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2003, is a non-juried, non-competitive film festival that aims to entertain, enlighten and educate the cinematic audience by showcasing film and video that reflects the harbor and all it embraces – shipping and commerce, fishing, sailing, water sports, sea life and the area’s rich ethnic and cultural influences; and to promote literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film through the education outreach program “Read the Book, See the Movie” – *to create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world*. Additionally the LAHIFF promotes the inherent value of the WGT and efforts its continuing restoration.

“The LAHIFF is made possible through fiscal and in-kind sponsorship, and the help of volunteers, especially the men of Beacon House,” stated Mardesich. “Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates community awareness and support of the mission that extends beyond the four day film festival with a presence in the community throughout the year. Partnerships between business and individuals in supporting cultural events is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens. Its significance can never be underestimated, and we are immensely grateful.”

As noted by Congresswoman Janice Hahn (44th District) “the LAHIFF has become a hallmark of the San Pedro and Harbor communities. In addition to bringing a unique blend of fine films to the iconic Warner Grand Theatre the festival furthers appreciation for art, culture and education in people of all ages.”

The 13th annual LAHIFF is on calendar for April 7-10, 2015 at the WGT. Sponsorship categories and benefits vary depending on the designated level. Programming will be announced early next year. The website has this year’s complete schedule, current and historical photos, and more about LAHIFF at www.laharborfilmfest.com. For a copy of the souvenir program contact festival director Stephanie Mardesich.

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