

For Immediate Release

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LA Harbor International Film Festival Sets Sail May 5-7
Port Town Premieres Opening Night & Running Dry Closes Fest
The Poseidon Adventure & Film's Stars at Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute
Disney's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea "Sundays Are Fundays"
ABSOLUT® World's Premiere Vodka "Elite Sponsor"
Programming & Other Sponsors Announced at Seafarin' Reception & Press Launch
Honorary Mayor Unveils Key Art "Through the Cinematic Bridge" by Muriel Olguin

March 9, 2006 - San Pedro (SP), CA., The Port of Los Angeles (POLA) -- Programming and sponsors were announced for the third annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin' Reception and Press Launch, Thursday March 9 at 5:00 p.m., held at and hosted by the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM). Members of the media, sponsors, civic and business leaders were among guests at the invitation only event.

The three day LAHIFF is a non-competitive, non-juried festival with films selected by invitation or referral taking place May 5-7, at the Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), 478 W. 6th Street, in historic downtown San Pedro – The POLA.

Attendees enjoyed appetizers provided by J.Trani Ristorante, Whale & Ale, Think Café, Raffaello's, Paradise, WIENERSCHNITZEL San Pedro and wine courtesy of Vineyards International. Chanteuse Rosie Brand set the mood for the evening and coming festival with her rendition of the Oscar® winning song "The Morning After" and entertained guests with favorite ballads from the 1940's-50's.

Standing beside the model of the ship used in the 1972 Academy Award® winning film *The Poseidon Adventure* Stephanie Mardesich festival director and co-founder revealed the programming and sponsors for this year. "The festival's inspiration is all the harbor embraces – shipping, commerce, fishing, sailing, water sports, sea life and the cultural and ethnic influences of the area," stated Mardesich,

"We aim to 'create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world' and within our own locale, celebrating movies in the atmosphere of the superlative Warner Grand Theatre a true 'movie palace', one of the three only original Warner Brothers movie theatres erected in 1931, with programming of documentary and 'vintage' films. Movies appeal to everyone of all ages and socio economic status and we try to consider that in our programming."

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Fest's opening night headliner May 5 is the world premiere of *Port Town* directed by Jack Baric and co-produced by Baric and Ralph Galante, both native San Pedrans, under the banner of recently launched Pirate Town Productions. As Baric stated the film is "set against the thriving Port and San Pedro's

gorgeous coastline, and tells seven dramatic stories about San Pedro's tough men and women who found the soaring promise of American greatness on the multicultural town's gritty docks and seaside streets."

Saturday May 6 highlight is the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) and Green Room Gala, featuring the original *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972). The LAHIFF is partnering with the Poseidon Adventure Fan Club Reunion (PAFC) and founder Jak Castro. "We've had several reunions aboard the Queen Mary and this will be the seventh reunion with fans already signing on," commented Castro. "There is such enthusiasm and curiosity about the Warner Grand Theatre and its superb art deco setting. We anticipate a tremendous turn out of fans and have members booking flights from as far as Florida and New York, who are also delighted to have the Crown Plaza Los Angeles Harbor Hotel so close to the theatre and the harbor."

Several of the film's stars including Ernest Borgnine are expected, with Stella Stevens and Carol Lynley confirmed, to attend and walk the Red Carpet. Director Ronald Neame has also been invited and attended past reunions. Preceding the film presentation at 5:30 p.m. is a showcase of memorabilia from the film and a silent auction. The actors will be on stage after the screening for a Q&A and sign autographs in the lobby as the evening concludes. "Partnering with the PAFC will be a tremendous boost to our audience and we are excited to welcome a new contingency of cultured and appreciative patrons to see San Pedro, the Port and Waterfront Promenade, and the WG," adds Mardesich.

The HNT Green Room Gala, to be held at The Arcade Building directly across the street from the WGT, is sponsored in part by Star Fisheries, and catered by Paradise Restaurant with a New Year's Eve theme inspired by the setting of *The Poseidon Adventure*, includes light buffet supper, champagne, and the ABSOLUT® Martini Bar with keyboard entertainment by Craig Hernandez. Tickets include the screening at \$55 per person pre-paid, or \$65 at the door if space permits.

"We are thrilled this year to have ABSOLUT® Vodka, the premiere Swedish vodka and the number one selling vodka in the world as our 'Elite Sponsor' for the festival," Mardesich revealed. "This distinguished brand, well known for supporting the arts, reflected in their sponsorship of similar cultural events, and renowned for its provocative advertisements lends a sophistication and cachet to the festival and is a very generous donation."

The Walt Disney classic Academy Award® winning film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) is the "SUNdays Are FUN Days" matinee feature on May 7 at 2 p.m. Sponsored by Cinema Grand, Art to Grow On, and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA), this screening encourages family attendance and is part of the "Read the Book, See the Movie" (RBSM) education outreach program.

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Running Dry, the award winning documentary narrated by Jane Seymour that focuses on the world water crisis, closes the festival Sunday May 7 with a 5 p.m. screening followed by a Q&A session with director/ James Thebaut. Film's producer, The Chronicles group, will hold the closing "Awareness Event"

fundraising party immediately following the screening at nearby Media Gallery, 445 W. 7th Street. Reception tickets are \$35 and include screening. Admission to the party only is \$35 at the door, space permitting. Celebrities, political figures and representatives of agencies concerned with the world's fresh water supply are expected and available for discussion on an informal basis.

A key component of the LAHIFF is the RBSM education outreach program that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a movie. Participants in the free program are students from Mary Star of the Sea High School, San Pedro High School, the San Pedro Adult Learning Center, with more schools being added, as well as members of the community. Penguin-Signet Books has donated 500 copies that are distributed two months prior to the culmination program held the afternoon of May 4 at the WGT. Books are available for free at the LAMM, the CMA, and Williams Book Store, downtown San Pedro, as long as supply lasts.

Disney is generously providing a print of the film that starred Kirk Douglas along with the late James Mason, Paul Lucas and Peter Lorre. (Mr. Douglas has been invited to attend, however no confirmation if he will at time of press). The film screening is followed by a discussion among participants and seasoned diver and frequent film crew member Steve Denapoli of American Diving, Lomita, CA., will be on hand to discuss the film with the readers. The new education coordinator Madeleine Drake was introduced. Drake will act as liaison with the schools and community (contact information on page five). Those who cannot attend the culmination program are admitted to the SUNdays Are FUNdays screening for free (plus one).

Key art "Through The Cinematic Bridge", commissioned for the official LAHIFF poster, was painted by the esteemed Muriel Olguin, known for her abstract expressionist style and use of vibrant color, and unveiled to immense applause by Honorary Mayor of San Pedro Anthony Misetich and renowned artist Tom Phillips (painter of previous key art). "The painting captures the essence of this year's programming with Muriel's vivid use of color and the suggestion of the Poseidon in the background," commented Mardesich. Valued at \$2500, it will remain on display at the LAMM through the run of the LAHIFF on silent auction bid.

Since its inception in 2003 LAHIFF has rapidly gained momentum and support from civic and business leaders throughout the entire metropolitan area. "Creativity abounds in the City of Los Angeles – on the Westside, on the Eastside, in the Valley, in South Los Angeles, and at The Port of Los Angeles," states Mayor Antonio R. Villariagosa. "Within its programming The LA Harbor International Film

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Festival of 2006 will showcase films inspired by life at the Port, celebrating the people and the diversity of the area, while drawing film lovers and tourists from around the country to this region. I commend the

festival for contributing to the cultural and artistic landscape of Los Angeles and to the economic vitality of the City.”

Key sponsors for the LAHIFF are The Port of Los Angeles, Contributing Sponsor; Los Angeles Board of Supervisors President Don Knabe, Education and Culture Sponsor; Councilwoman Janice Hahn, and Charles Gasper, Sustaining Sponsors; and Supporting Sponsor the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA); and significant in-kind sponsors the Grand Vision Foundation (GVF) – the support group that is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the WGT, Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM), Cinema Grand and Signet Classics – a division of Penguin Group (U.S.A.).

Other sponsors include The Arcade Building, International Documentary Association (IDA), The Whale and Ale (San Pedro’s British pub and restaurant), Mary Star of the Sea High School, Think Café, Boca Activewear, Distinctive Edge Gallery & Framing, McCune Audio Video Lighting, Sacred Grounds, Godmother’s, Williams Book Store, and Vineyards International.

National Printing Associates Inc. (NPA), West Los Angeles sponsors the poster printing; and website sponsor is Live Office located in Torrance, CA.

Crown Plaza L.A. Harbor Hotel, located at 601 S. Palos Verdes Street, SP, is the accommodation sponsor with a special room rate for the festival of \$99 per night that includes a bottle of wine. Contact the hotel reservations office at (310) 519-8200 and request the LAHIFF rate during the festival dates.

New additions to the esteemed sponsor list are Ponte Vista at San Pedro as Sustaining sponsor; Wienerschnitzel San Pedro - Tom and Wendy Truillo - t-shirt sponsor; the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA); and Godmother’s, the popular downtown San Pedro watering hole who will have Godmother’s at the WG no host bar service at the evening events, featuring ABSOLUT, wines and some other spirits.

“Ponte Vista at San Pedro is developing the abandoned and blighted former military housing on north Western Avenue with intentions to enhance the surrounding community, and taking a serious interest in promoting education, culture and the overall welfare of local residents,” commented Rochelle Gonzales, Director of Community Relations as she handed over the check for their contribution to Mardesich.

Media Sponsors are Press-Telegram’s *San Pedro Magazine*, Comcast, +the Daily Breeze and Random Lengths.

The LAHIFF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, with contributions tax-deductible to the extent of the law. Sponsorship opportunities are available at a variety of benefit levels, from Presenting Sponsor

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(\$20,000 donation) to Friend of the Festival (\$100 donation). There is no paid staff and the org is volunteer driven. Volunteer ours can be attributed to school or community service for responsible individuals who would like to help. Volunteer coordinator is Joe Caccavalla (contact info below).

Along with Mardesich festival Co-founder is Jack Baric. Festival advisor is Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D., film scholar, author and Director Emeritus of the IDA. Board members include: McLane; former general manager of DCA Adolfo Nodal; real estate broker Linda D'Ambrosi; and Sports Illustrated photographer Peter Read Miller.

Tickets for the HNT Poseidon Adventure Reunion Fan Club screening are \$15 for PAFC members, \$20 for general audience - no discounts - and available only through the website at www.poseidonadventurefanclub.com or at the door the day of the screening.

Tickets for the Friday and Sunday evening programs are \$10 with discounts for affiliations with GVF, LAMM, IDA, CMA and for seniors and students. SUNDays Are FUNdays tickets are \$5 (\$2 for under 12 years old).

Tickets will be sold online from April 1 at www.warnergrand.org and Williams Book Store located at 443 6th Street, downtown SP, for all screenings other than HNT, and at the door at the time of the festival. There are no festival passes this year.

“This culturally rich event will encourage county residents and beyond to discover and appreciate everything San Pedro has to offer while enjoying film and video that brings the world to The Port of Los Angeles,” states Supervisor Knabe. “I am happy to continue to support such a valued and creative endeavor.”

For media relations, more information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities” guidelines

Contact Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director

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See www.laharborfilmfest.com

for updates on programming and to purchase tickets

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More about:

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Tickets & Warner Grand Theatre

www.warnergrand.org

Grand Vision Foundation

www.grandvision.org

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