



# 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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## **LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Turns Sweet 16** **Sets Sail On 16<sup>th</sup> Voyage March 14-17**

**Warner Grand Theatre – historic downtown San Pedro – Port of Los Angeles**  
**Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn Unveils Official Poster & Banner**

**Education Outreach Program “Read the Book, See the Movie” *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell**  
**Opening Night Brat Pack’s *Sixteen Candles* in 35 mm**

**New Filmmakers LA (NFMLA) - *On Location: The Los Angeles Video Project* Returns for 7<sup>th</sup> Year**

**Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute 35 mm Film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes***  
**DocSunday™ POLA Premieres *Concern Social Justice and Harbor History***  
***Veterans & Currently Serving In Military Free Admission***

**February 13, 2019 - San Pedro (SP), California. - Port of Los Angeles (POLA)** - Programming and sponsors were announced for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin’ Reception and Press Launch, held at and co-hosted/sponsored by the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM) and additional support from Elite Sponsor Spirit Cruises. Members of the media, festival sponsors, civic and business leaders were among those attending the invitation only event. The four day LAHIFF, a non-competitive, non-juried film festival with movies selected by research or referral and invited to be programmed, takes place March 14-17 at the vintage art deco Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), 478 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, historic downtown SP - POLA. The WGT is a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

LAHIFF founder Stephanie Mardesich welcomed all, introduced elected officials or their representatives, sponsors and special guests, then announced final programming (subject to change without notice). “The LA Harbor International Film Festival is ‘Sweet 16’ and celebrating with a big birthday cake for the audience to enjoy on opening night,” commented Mardesich. “We are grateful and proud to have a long and loyal list of sponsors, especially Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn (District 4) who as Council member of District 15 advocated for the film festival since it was founded and has continued as staunch supporter from the harbor to U.S. Congress and now back working vigorously for all constituents of the County of Los Angeles.”

Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates a sense of community awareness and support of the LAHIFF mission. “The commitment from LAHIFF sponsors to culture and education is strong. Partnerships between business and individuals in

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supporting cultural events is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens, and its significance can never be underestimated,” Mardesich continued.

After the program announcement Los Angeles County (LAC) District 4 Supervisor Hahn addressed the crowd prior to unveiling the official poster and street banner “*Diamonds Are The Cinematic Bridge’s Best Friend.*”

“Every year, the LA Harbor International Film Festival programming, including adaptations of great literature, ‘Hollywood classics’, and evocative and historic documentaries, attracts movie goers from near and far. This year’s festival promises to live up to the outstanding reputation built up the past 15 years,” stated Supervisor Hahn.

Key photograph for the iconic poster image, by eminent photographer and LAHIFF board member Peter Read Miller (Sports Illustrated, NFL, Associated Press), was introduced in 2009. The first five years of the festival paintings were commissioned by prominent local artists (Tom Phillips, Violet Parkhurst, Muriel Olguin and Tony Podue) to create their own version of the “*Cinematic Bridge*” that has become the LAHIFF brand and re-imagined each year. This year’s theme is inspired by the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Wellington Signs produced the banners with art direction by Seann Curry. Alchemy is poster printing sponsor, with local MJM Graphics the festival printer. Framing by Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery; the New Media & In-Kind Sponsor is SA Recycling.

LAHIFF begins Thursday, March 14 with the free education outreach program “Read the book, See the Movie” (RBSM) Culmination Program. RBSM promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film and the most successful and motivating aspect of the LAHIFF. Over 15,000 books have been distributed to students and community members since 2004. This year’s selection is Black Beauty by Anna Sewell with 600 books – Puffin Classic edition - provided by Random House-Penguin Publishing who have been the “publishing angel” Sponsor since 2005.

Students read and discuss the book over several weeks then attend the Culmination Program arriving at the WGT welcomed by an authentic bagpiper (Chrissy Orcholski). They enjoy fun healthy snacks, watch the movie version of the book followed by a lively discussion. LAHIFF chose to show the 1994 film adaptation of the English story, directed by Caroline Thompson, produced by Warner Brothers, with the voice of the noble stallion “Black Beauty” (narration) by popular Scottish born actor Alan Cumming. “It’s a beautifully composed film that’s ‘timeless’ with respect to the production values, lovely score by Danny Elfman, and superb scenes with all of the horses,” observed Mardesich. The Los County County Sheriff mounted patrol with officers on horseback (subject to availability) will add to the delight as students arrive along with SP Children’s Librarian Ednita Kelly cycling on her Los Angeles Public Library “Book Bike”, that she rides all over the district, giving away free books to all.

RBSM sponsors include Contributing Sponsor Supervisor Hahn with refreshments provided by The Popcorn Man, 7-Eleven, Mary Star of the Sea High School; and “Juice Sponsor” Arlene (Dickey) and Myron Lockrem.

Opening Night Friday evening March 15 at 7:30 pm is the “Sweet 16” motif featuring the beloved *Sixteen Candles* (in 35 mm) directed by the late John Hughes. Sustaining Sponsor Rancho LPG is providing a huge birthday cake with candles for the audience to enjoy after the movie.

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Saturday March 16 begins at high noon, for the seventh year featuring *NewFilmmakers LA "On Location Program" Showcase of Short Films* (26 films, one to five minutes in length) made by finalists of the annual community engagement program sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, KTLA, Sunset Las Palmas Studios, and L.A. City Council members Bob Blumenfield and Mitch O'Farrell. Founded in 2007 New Filmmakers L.A. (NFMLA) has established itself as a significant advocate for independent cinema with over 20,000 constituents in the Los Angeles community. In addition NFMLA's promotes the economic, educational, social, and cultural advancement of filmmaking, arts, and culture in the community. LAHIFF has invited the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Pedro and Wilmington, and South Bay Youth Clubs to attend as guests to meet the filmmakers and be inspired in their pursuit of film and video interests and increase their knowledge of the craft.

Saturday evening at 7 p.m. the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) features the screen adaptation of the hit Broadway musical *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Warner Bros., 1953, 91 min., 35 mm, not rated) starring Marilyn Monroe (*Lorelei Lee*) and Jane Russell (*Dorothy Shaw*), directed by one of Hollywood legend Howard Hawks. Anyone who arrives dressed like the main characters Lorelei or Dorothy will be admitted for free and be invited for a promenade on stage. In addition continuing what began in 2016 members of the San Pedro High School and Richard Henry Dana Middle School bands and their families are invited to attend as guests of the LAHIFF.

Among the memorable tunes from the score is "*Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend*" that inspired the theme for the "Diamonds On The Red Carpet Gala" reception, preceding the screening at 5-6:45 p.m. in the mezzanine lobby of the WGT, honoring Academy Award® winning actor George Chakiris. One of the (uncredited) male dancers featured in the iconic number, Chakiris eight years later would garner the Oscar® for Best Supporting Actor at the 34th Academy Awards for his role as Bernardo in *West Side Story* (featured at LAHIFF in 2009 when he was honored at the HNT "West Side Red Carpet Gala").

Guests will enjoy tray passed appetizers and Americana buffet supported with cuisine provided by Epicurean Sponsors Wienerschnitzel, Niko's Pizzeria, Sandwich Saloon, San Pedro Fish Market, Big Nick's, and San Pedro Brewing Company (SPBC). Bar service includes Libation Sponsor SVEDKA Vodka "French 53" cocktails, wine, Port Town Beer from SPBC, and non-alcoholic beverage. Other sponsors include Elite Sponsor Spirit Cruises, Double Tree by Hilton, and LAMM. Tickets for the HNT Gala are \$65 before February 28<sup>th</sup>; \$85 after that date or at the door space permitting. Also included in the price are film screening, souvenir program and party bag. Guests are encouraged to wear vintage or cocktail attire. General admission for film program only is \$10; no discounts.

"When the audience exits the theatre commenting, 'that was terrific, why they don't make movies like that anymore?' it confirms our mission to promote and preserve the best of classic Hollywood filmmaking. It's the greatest compliment and tribute after seeing a film as intended, on the big screen, in the setting of a true 'movie palace' the WGT," noted Mardesich.

Closing day March 17, known as "DocSunday" - devoted to non-fiction film – are two POLA premieres presented by Associate Sponsor Marathon Petroleum Corporation Los Angeles Refinery, with additional sponsorship by LAMM. Corresponding to theme of "social justice" LAHIFF has promoted over the years the opening program at 1 p.m. is *Rebel With A Cause: The Life Of Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga*, directed by Janice D. Tanaka. The documentary film reveals the story of the

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tenacious and dedicated Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga and her role in the effort to gain retribution for unlawful imprisonment and confiscation of property and monies of Japanese Americans in World War II. There will be a special appeal to local faith based communities, philanthropic organizations, schools and all people of conscience to attend the screening that is a **free** event for all.

Tanaka will introduce the picture and be present for “conversation and Q&A” afterward with some participants from the movie including Aiko’s daughter Lisa Furuttani expected. LAHIFF is making a dedicated effort to reach out to the Japanese community and media outlets. Additional sponsorship for this program by LAMM who last year opened a new and permanent exhibit devoted to the Terminal Island Japanese colony that existed in the last century. The audience is encouraged to visit the LAMM located 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the Main Channel before or after the program.

DocSunday closing program at 4 p.m is the debut of *Stories Of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow – The Movie* (SOLAHA) derived from the oral history project filmed in 2018, produced by Jack Baric (also director) and Stephanie Mardesich, which included 20 participants from a multitude of backgrounds and age range that became 72 stories released weekly via Facebook and Utube, and at the dedicated website [www.storieslaharbor.com](http://www.storieslaharbor.com).

SOLAHA (Volume I) was supported by LAC grant funding through Supervisor Hahn, filmed under auspices of Baric’s production company Gopher Crow Entertainment. Additional LAC grant funding made it possible for the producers to create the feature length film version. Conversation and Q&A after the screening with the producers and some of the story tellers.

Additional LAHIFF supporters include Associate Sponsors Tri-Marine International and Community Fund of Boeing California; Sustaining Sponsors ILWU Foremen’s Local #94, BNSF Railway, Valero Wilmington Refinery, Joseph & Lee Mardesich Family Trust. Benefactor Sponsors Edward & Mona (Soderstrom) Sher Foundation, Los Angeles City Council District 15, and McNeerney’s Mortuary.

More “Epicurean Sponsors” include Sacred Grounds, J. Trani’s Ristorante, Think Café, Sonny’s Bistro, Think Prime, Omelet & Waffle Shop. Accommodation Sponsor Lux Marketing; Hospitality Sponsor Doubletree by Hilton Cabrillo Marina. Media Sponsor San Pedro Today Magazine. Promotion and other In-Kind Sponsors include: Visit San Pedro, New Filmmakers L.A., Grand Vision Foundation (GVF), Hollywood Heritage, Inc., Polish Film Festival L.A. and San Pedro Art Association. Security Sponsor is Black Knight Patrol. Courier Sponsor 247 Delivers. Website sponsor is Clear Steps. Official t-shirts produced by Boca Activewear. Volunteers from Fred Brown Recovery Services and the “Gala Gals.”

The WGT, dedicated in 1931 by Jack Warner who proclaimed “you’ll enter the palace of your dreams”, is one of the three Warner Brothers Theatres built in the Los Angeles metropolitan area known as “the triplets.” Considered a treasure of historic downtown SP, and the greater L.A. region, the WGT seats 1500 offering a variety of stage productions, live performances including annual San Pedro City Ballet production of “*The Nutcracker*”, graduation ceremonies, weddings, and community events throughout the year; also the setting for numerous film and commercial productions. With 35mm film projection capability the WGT is one of the only venues in the region to view films in the classic tradition that is becoming a rare experience. On going restoration projects include the GVF “Save Your Seat” campaign.

The LAHIFF offers stimulating and entertaining programming that inspires the audience and respects the integrity of the silver screen. Mardesich, an alumna of the University of Southern California film school, founded the LAHIFF (with Baric)

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in 2003 and contends, “What the WGT represents historically with regard to film appreciation and preservation is exceptionally important for the art form and San Pedro’s identity as a frequent location for film production, as the medium continues to flourish and expand as a valued source of entertainment and erudition appealing to every segment of society; a source of joy or catharsis.” The LAHIFF honors the tradition of legendary Hollywood with a view to the current cinema committed to present films in 35mm on the ‘big screen’ as they were originally intended as often as possible.

Over the past 16 years the LAHIFF has continued to grow and gain support A 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with no paid employees, contributions are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various benefit levels. In 2013 the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council presented Mardesich and the LAHIFF with a Proclamation for ten years of outstanding contribution to culture, education, and leadership. Service hours can be accrued for school or community service. Other LAHIFF board members include community liaison Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli; east coast representative, native of San Pedro, businesswoman Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham; and Los Angeles County Board of Education member James Cross, M.A.

“Though we always need to boost box office sales so long as there are seats available no one will be turned away because they cannot afford a ticket. We have had a few SRO (standing room only) screenings over the years yet with 1500 seats in the WGT it is likely there will always be a place for a new audience member.. We are the ‘Statue of Liberty of film festivals’, and welcome all. We’ll even provide popcorn,” commented Mardesich.

General admission for festival programs is \$10; \$8 with discount for affiliations (LAMM, GVF, HH) seniors and students, except the HNT. **Free Admission for U.S. A. veterans and those currently serving in military forces on first come first seated basis.** Film program tickets only on sale from February 14 online **www.brownpapertickets.com**, or (800)838-3006; and at the box office (cash only) during the festival dates one hour before program times

As Supervisor Hahn concluded: “This festival is the perfect opportunity to visit the harbor area, enjoy a film at the historic Warner Grand Theater, and discover all that our waterfront communities have to offer.”

**For media relations, more information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities Guidelines”**

**Contact: Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756.**

See www.laharborfilmfest.com for updates on programming; Twitter twitter.com/laharborfilm

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#### More about.....

Warner Grand Theatre: [www.warnergrand.org](http://www.warnergrand.org)

ClearSteps: [www.clearsteps.com](http://www.clearsteps.com)

Peter Read Miller, photographer: [www.peterreadmiller.com](http://www.peterreadmiller.com)

Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM): [www.lamaritimemuseum.org](http://www.lamaritimemuseum.org)

Visit San Pedro: [www.visitsp.com](http://www.visitsp.com)

New Filmmakers L.A.: [www.NFMLA.org](http://www.NFMLA.org)

Spirit Cruises: [www.spiritmarine.com](http://www.spiritmarine.com)

Grand Vision Foundation (GVF): [www.grandvision.org](http://www.grandvision.org)

Hollywood Heritage (HH): [www.hollywoodheritage.org](http://www.hollywoodheritage.org)

Wellington Signs: [www.wellingtonsigns.com](http://www.wellingtonsigns.com)

Bagpiper: [surfcitypiper@hotmail.com](mailto:surfcitypiper@hotmail.com)

#### Films:

*Rebel With A Cause: The Life Of Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga*

[www.facebook.com/REBEL-WITH-A-CAUSE-The-Life-of-Aiko-Herzig-Yoshinaga-1664358677146582/?ref=bookmarks](http://www.facebook.com/REBEL-WITH-A-CAUSE-The-Life-of-Aiko-Herzig-Yoshinaga-1664358677146582/?ref=bookmarks)

*Stories Of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow – The Movie:* [www.storieslaharborarea.com](http://www.storieslaharborarea.com)

### Complete LAHIFF Sponsor List

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#### Promotion & In-Kind Sponsors & Volunteers

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