



LA Harbor International Film Festival

P.O. Box 5202 - San Pedro, CA 90733

Telephone: (310) 519-0756 ~ www.laharborfilmfest.com

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



For Immediate Release

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

It's A Wrap!

LA Harbor International Film Festival Concludes 21st Voyage

Education Outreach Program "Read the Book, See the Movie" *Journey To The Center Of The Earth*

Opening Night Happy Hour + at Dalmatian American Club Premiere

Stories of L.A. Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow (The Movie-Volume V)

Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute *Anchors Aweigh* Aboard Battleship IOWA

Closing Day DocSunday™ World Premieres At Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

22nd LAHIFF On Course For 2025 Venues To Be Announced

March 18, 2024 - San Pedro (SP) , CA - the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) The 20th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) held March 14-17 concluded on closing DocSunday March 17 at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium with two world premiere films. The four day event was held in four different venues since the art deco movie palace Warner Grand Theatre (WGT) closed January 1 for renovations. WGT has been the anchor edifice for LAHIFF for 20 years; and the festival hopes be held there again c.2026-27. All LAHIFF programs this year were "free" of charge with reservations requested for programs.

Opening day March 14 began with the free education outreach "Read the Book, See the Movie" (RBSM) Culmination Program (by invitation) hosted by and held on the campus of Mary Star Of The Sea High School (MSOTSHS). RBSM promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film. Over 300 copies of the great adventure classic tome *Journey To The Center Of The Earth*, by Jules Verne, with books distributed to students and some community residents weeks in advance. The excited students arrived at the campus greeted by a traditional bagpiper (Glen Thompson) then entered the gym/auditorium and enjoyed fun healthy snacks and the 1959 film adaptation of the great novel. Festival Director/Founder Stephanie Mardesich welcomed the students, educators and parents stating "We are grateful that MSOTSHS, who have supported RBSM since its inception, invited the program to take place at their impressive campus" encouraging students to be respectful and observant.

After the screening the readers participated in brief discussion about the book and movie. The conversation continued on the bus rides back to various schools. RBSM is a program of enrichment expanding upon erudition and instilling the joy of reading. As Mardesich proffered: "When you have a book in hand, you have a friend for life." Participating schools included Leland Street, Crestwood Avenue, Van Deene Steam Academy elementary schools, Dodson Middle School and MSOTSHS.

More.....

21st annual LAHIFF “It’s a Wrap!”
Page Two of Five

Thanks to generous sponsorship since the inception of LAHIFF over 20,000 books since its inception in 2004. RBSM refreshment sponsors included MSOTSHS 7-Eleven (19th St. & Pacific Ave., SP store), Arlene (Dickey) and Myron Lockrem.

Opening night March 15 “Happy Hour +” at the Dalmation American Club (DAC), was premiere of the *Stories of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (SOLAHA) The Movie, composite film of SOLAHA Vol. V, with one story from each of the participants. The mission of SOLAHA is to preserve local history that “If we don’t save our history today it’s gone tomorrow,” comments Mardesich. The DAC was the appropriate space to host the evening since it is approaching the 100th anniversary of the club’s founding in 1926. Prior to the movie there was a brief video presentation by Julie Anderson, publisher about The Golden Age of Hollywood: Through the Lens of Joe Ackerman “coffee table” book representing the exceptional photos of actors/celebrities her photographer father took from 1940s to c. 2000. Anderson was on hand to sell and sign the anthology. Many SOLAHA participants were present. Elected officials or representatives attending included Sean Kearns deputy for Congresswoman Nanette Barragan, Senator Steven Bradford State, Assemblymember Mike Gipson, Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4 and Los Angeles Councilman Tim McOsker, District 15 “One-Five”. Assemblyman Gipson presented Mardesich with commendation certificate for LAHIFF; Supervisor Hahn and Councilman McOsker presented the Honorable Rudy Svorinich with special scroll and certificate commemorating the DAC hosting LAHIFF opening night.

Saturday March 16 the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) took place aboard Battleship IOWA with Academy Award® nominated *Anchors Aweigh* (USA, MGM, 1945) starring Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, and Gene Kelly, featuring the famous sequence when Kelly dances with animated Jerry the mouse that merges live action and animation. “It was magical being in the ‘movie theatre on the water’ to view the charming movie in such a starry setting,” observes Mardesich.

Though the program was a free community event attendees were encouraged to bring a donation of non-perishable food items and new clothing in spirit of benevolence and community support to be distributed to three local organizations that help families in challenging circumstances: Harbor Interfaith Services (HIS) and YWCA Harbor Area and Toberman Neighborhood Center. A special menu for HNT along with concessions (beer, wine, popcorn and snacks) were available at Vicky’s Doghouse Café located port side of the ship with a special menu for the event. Attendees of LAHIFF programs are always encouraged to dine before or after the screening at LAHIFF Epicurean Sponsor establishments.

Since the first HNT in 2004 many true “movie stars” graced the many “Red Carpet” receptions preceding film screenings, in the Arcade Building and WGT, including Betty Garret (*Neptune’s Daughter*), Mitzi Gaynor, (late) John Kerr, France Nuyen (*South Pacific*), George Chakiris and Russ Tamblyn (*West Side Story*), Nancy Kwan (*Flower Drum Song*), Stella Stevens and (late) Carol Linley (*The Poseidon Adventure*), Pat Boone (*April Love*) to name a few. In addition to HNT many other “stars” attended LAHIFF programs including “golden age” Hollywood star (late) Marsha Hunt, who passed away in 2022 at age 104; (late) James MacArthur (RBSM *Swiss Family Robison* and *Kidnapped*); Joe Mantegna (*Uncle Nino*) all duly honored with scrolls and certificates

LAHIFF closing day March 17 known as DocSunday - devoted to non-fiction films - took place at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA) with world premieres of documentary films beginning at 3:15 pm with *Longline*, about commercial fishing in Croatia, Isle of Vis, where many San Pedrans hail from. Followed by *The Smell Of Money*, about the local fishing and canning

More.....

industry, directed by native son Jack Baric. “It’s serendipity to present the films about commercial fishing in the aquatic setting of the CMA. The LAHIFF has been to the center of the earth and edge of the sea this year.” noted Mardesich, who has family heritage in the fish canning industry and appears in *The Smell Of Money*.”

\ Produced by POLA the film is a tribute to the historic industry and commerce well remembered and preserved for posterity in the Los Angeles Maritime Museum permanent exhibit “Caught, Canned and Eaten: The History of San Pedro’s Tuna & Canning Industry” that opened in December 2007. Preceding the film there was a special appearance by Croatian Vocal Ensemble “Izvor” singing native folk songs; followed by a short video about LAHIFF associate sponsor SA Recycling facility on Terminal Island. Consul General from the Republic of Croatia Renee Pea spoke to the audience about the propinquity between San Pedro and Croatia (Dalmatia) and especially acknowledged director Dinko Bozanic who had hoped to travel to the U.S.A from Vis.

Preceding the second film there was a special tribute to the late Annette (Kaloper) Ciketic who passed away March 1. She was esteemed citizen of San Pedro, educator, advocate for arts and women, co-founder of findings Arte Center & Gallery; and one hundred percent Croatian heritage with “tuna legacy.” As a participant of SOLAHA Vol. III she shared two stories connected to the fishing industry that were relevant to *The Smell Of Money*. At the conclusion Eugene Seroka, POLA executive director gave accolades. There were also tributes to the filmmakers and CMA with scrolls and certificates from County and City of Los Angeles, historic photographs of local scenes donated by ACE Hardware (South Shores) and a special can of albacore tuna packed in olive oil donated by associate sponsor Cal Marine Fisheries.

The LAHIFF is known for its outstanding poster artwork this year inspired by the HNT program. Photo for key art for the iconic “*Cinematic Bridge*” image by eminent photographer, and LAHIFF board member, Peter Read Miller (Sports Illustrated, NFL, Associated Press, Canon spokesman), was introduced in 2009 and each year is the “palette” for the new poster. The first five years of the LAHIFF paintings were commissioned by prominent local artists Tom Phillips, Muriel Olguin, Violet Parkhurst, and Tony Podue to create their own version of the “*Cinematic Bridge*” originated by Phillips that became the LAHIFF brand re-imagined each year. This year’s theme is inspired by the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) feature and Battleship IOWA. Art direction by Alison Robertson of Wellington Signs, MJM Graphics festival printer, Alchemy poster printing sponsor. Framing by Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery.

LAHIFF is a non-juried, non-competitive entity celebrating the cinematic arts that aims to entertain, enlighten and educate the 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 program RRBSM - *to create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world*. Additionally the LAHIFF promotes the inherent merits of the WGT and makes its own effort toward continuing restoration. LAHIF board members are Carla Contestable, R.N., retired court reporter Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli, businesswoman Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham, and Peter Read Miller. Festival advisor is Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D. A 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2003, with no paid employees, LAHIFF is made possible through fiscal and in-kind sponsorship. Volunteer assistance during the festival provided by recently founded San Pedro Recovery Alliance (SPRA), under leadership of founder Catalina Hinojosa. A complete list of sponsors is included last page of this press release.

More.....

“The many sponsors who have come forward to host programs in alternate venues has been wonderful. It has been a great challenge to choreograph in new and stimulating environments,” states Mardesich.

Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates community awareness and appreciation of the LAHIFF Mission. The commitment to support culture and education is vital as partnerships between business and individuals is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits valued by constituents and its significance can never be underestimated.

LAHIFF is 501(c)3 non-profit organizations with no paid employees. Over the past 21 years LAHIFF has continued to grow and gain support. In 2013 the Coastal SP Neighborhood Council presented LAHIFF with a special Proclamation for ten years of outstanding contribution to culture and education leadership. Volunteer hours can also be accrued for school or community service. Donations to the LAHIFF are welcome. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various benefit levels. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Checks or m.o. to P.O. Box 5202, San Pedro, CA 90733 USA

“The LA Harbor International Film Festival is a local tradition we have enjoyed for over two decades,” said Supervisor Hahn. “With the historic Warner Grand Theatre closed for renovation this year’s festival is going to feel different though I am glad there this opportunity to enjoy movies in other venues in town and showcase San Pedro and the harbor. As always, the lineup has something for everyone.”

The 22nd LAHIFF will take place March 13-16, 2024. Venues to be announced.

Media relations, information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities” contact: Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756. See www.laharborfilmfest.com for updates on programming.

(3/2024)

#

More about:

SOLAHA oral history project: www.storieslaharborarea.com

ClearSteps: www.clearsteps.com

Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM): www.lamaritimemuseum.org

Grand Vision Foundation (GVF): www.grandvision.org

NewFilmmakers LA: www.newfilmmakersla.com

The Golden Age of Hollywood: Through The Lens of Joe Ackerman: <https://www.palosverdespulse.com/blog/2022/9/30/joe-ackermans-journey-through-the-golden-age-of-hollywood-by-julie-ackerman-anderson>

Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com

Wellington Signs: www.wellingtonsigns.com

Complete LAHIFF 2024 Sponsor List

Contributing Sponsor ~ Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4

Associate Sponsors ~ Marathon Petroleum Corporation Los Angeles Refinery ~ Cal Marine Fish Company ~ SA Recycling
Rancho LPG Holdings

Sustaining Sponsors City of L.A. Council District 15 ~ ILWU Foremen’s Union Local #94 ~ Joseph & Lee (Sher) Mardesich Family Trust

Education Outreach Program “Read the Book, See the Movie”™

Mary Star of the Sea High School ~ 7-Eleven ~ Arlene (Dickey) & Myron Lockrem ~ Penguin-Random House Young Readers

Elite Sponsor ~ Spirit Cruises

Media Sponsors ~ San Pedro Today ~ PalosVerdesPulse.com ~ Random Lengths News ~ NewFilmmakers LA (social media)

Print & Art Sponsors ~ Wellington Signs ~ Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery ~ MJM Graphics ~ Alchemy

Promotion & In-Kind Sponsors & Volunteers

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium ~ Port of Los Angeles ~ Los Angeles Maritime Museum ~ City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

SP Art Association ~ Grand Vision Foundation ~ fINDings Art Center & Gallery ~ SP Recovery Alliance

Website Sponsor ~ ClearSteps (Alyssa Marks, Designer/Manager)

Epicurean Sponsors (websites /contact tel. listed for “indoor/outdoor dining/ordering to go/curbside pick up”)

Niko’s Pizzeria www.nikospizzeria.com

San Pedro Brewing Company <https://sanpedrobrewing.com/>

Sacred Grounds (telephone) (310)514-0800

Big Nick’s <https://bignickspizza.com/>

J. Trani’s Ristorante <https://www.sacredgrounds.coffee/>

Raffaello’s Ristorante <https://www.raffaelloristorante.com/>

The Sandwich Saloon <https://www.sandwichsaloondeli.com/>

Think Café <https://www.thinkcafesanpedro.com/>

Wienerschnitzel www.wienerschnitzel.com/location/59-north-gaffey-west-sepulveda-san-pedro-230-north-gaffey-san-pedro-ca-90731/

Omelet & Waffle Shop (telephone) (310) 831-3277

Think Prime (telephone) (310) 221-0415

Vicky’s Doghouse Café: <https://pacificbattleship.com/doghouse/>