



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!

LA Harbor International Film Festival Concludes 16th Voyage

Warner Grand Theatre – Historic Downtown San Pedro – Port of Los Angeles

Sheriffs On Horseback At “Read the Book, See the Movie”

Sixteen Candles and Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute Gentlemen Prefer Blondes In 35mm

DocSunday Premieres With Rave Reviews

17th LAHIFF On Course For March 12-15, 2020

March 20, 2019, San Pedro (SP), CA - the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) The 16th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) held March 14-17 at the vintage art deco Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), in historic downtown SP concluded March 17 for another record breaking “Sweet 16” year.

The LAHIFF opened March 14 with the Culmination Program free “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM), education outreach program, that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film. Over 600 copies of the classic tome Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (never out of publication since its debut in 1877) were distributed to local students and community who began reading early this year. Eager and excited they arrive at the WGT greeted by bagpiper Chrissy Orcholski and this year to complement the story of the stallion the Los Angeles County Sheriff Mounted Enforcement three sheriffs on horseback stationed next to the WGT marquee., the first time ever in SP. “It was truly our pleasure to have been invited to your event. Even though our schedules may be very hectic at times, we will always try to accommodate any request from the Board of Supervisors and any local schools. It is our duty to bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement and it all starts with connecting with them at an early age,” stated Catarino F. Gonzales, who participated in the event. Fellow officers Ken Saylor and Tiffany Mercer joined Mardesich on stage to speak to the students about their work in law enforcement inspiring them for future career consideration.

Another “first” was the presence of San Pedro Library children’s librarian Ednita Kelly on her “book mobile” who gave away free (used) library books to the students. “It was a dream come true to have the sheriffs on horseback with the students able to pet the elegant equines and speak with the officers,” commented Mardesich, adding, “The ‘book mobile’ was a highlight and as I often state to have a book in hand is to have a friend for life and the students came away with many new friends.”

RBSM is a program of enrichment expanding erudition and instilling the joy of reading. Thanks to generous publishing sponsorship of Random House-Penguin Publishing the LAHIFF has distributed nearly 16,000 free books since the inception of RBSM in 2004 to readers who are truly enjoying classic literature and will be reading far into the future.

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Additional RBSM sponsors are Contributing Sponsor Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4 with refreshments provided by The Popcorn Man, Mary Star of the Sea High Schools, 7-Eleven (Pacific Ave., SP store) and “Juice Sponsor” Arlene (Dickey) and Myron Lockrem. Schools participating included: Mary Star of the Sea and San Pedro High Schools (SPHS) Holy Trinity, Leland Street (SP) and Gulf Avenue (Wilmington) Elementary Schools, and Christ Lutheran School.

Friday’s opening night *Sixteen Candles* commemorated the LAHIFF turning “Sweet 16” replete with a huge birthday cake from Pollyann Bakery courtesy of Sustaining Sponsor Rancho LPG for the audience to enjoy after the movie. The teen angst “dromedy” appealed to the LAHIFF classic film theme and introduced a new generation to the beloved movie.

Saturday matinee showcased for the seventh year the *New Filmmakers L.A. On Location Project* screening 26 short (1-5 min.) films that won the 2018 competition sponsored by City of Los Angeles, KTLA, Sunset Las Palmas Studios, and L.A. City Council members Bob Blumenfield and Mitch O’Farrell. Since 2007 New Filmmakers L.A. (NFMLA), under the leadership of co-founders Larry Laboe and Susie Kim, has established itself as a strong gathering place for independent cinema with over 30,000 constituents in the Los Angeles community, screening nearly 1000 films from over 59 countries. According to Laboe, “NFMLA is a vital organization that encourages the advancement of filmmakers with on-going screenings and events during a calendar year to promote the economic, educational, social, and cultural advancement of filmmaking, arts and culture. Through our online connections NFMLA gets the word out to over 50,000.” Adds Mardesich, “New Filmmakers L.A. attracts a ‘cool, hip crowd’ I call ‘Generation X,Y,Z’ to view the films on the big screen, and explore and enjoy San Pedro - dining, shopping, visiting Los Angeles Maritime Museum, Battleship Iowa, Lane Victory, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and all the interesting attractions of our seaside town.” The local Boys & Girls Clubs and South Bay Youth Clubs were invited as guests for opening night and NFMLA program to meet the filmmakers and be inspired in their own cinematic endeavors.

Saturday evening’s Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) at 7 p.m. featured the mind condition 35mm print – looking fabulous on the big screen - *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), preceded by the “Diamonds On The Red Carpet Gala” held in the WGT mezzanine. On arrival guests were greeted and escorted from the red carpet by the SPHS JROTC cadets and enjoyed SVEDKA vodka “French 53” cocktail created by LAHIFF official bartender Michael Caccavalla and Americana buffet supper provided by Epicurean Sponsors including Niko’s Pizzeria, Wienerschnitzel, San Pedro Brewing Company, The Sandwich Saloon., and San Pedro Fish Market contributing the cuisine and Elite Sponsor Spirit Cruises event support.

Chanteuse Rosie Brand entertained with popular tunes from HNT honored films and other vintage favorites. Mardesich announced this would be the gala culmination thanking “Rosie” for 14 years of entertaining with her nostalgic repertoire. As guests exited they received a party bag with signature chocolate chip cookie from Hospitality Sponsor DoubleTree by Hilton (Cabrillo Marina, SP) and other treats.

The HNT honored Academy Award® winning actor George Chakiris, who dances in the dazzling “*Diamonds Are A Girl’s Best Friend*” number behind star Marilyn Monroe. In 2009 when *West Side Story* (WSS) was the HNT feature he and co-star Russ Tamblyn graced the red carpet and he has returned for other galas. Since 2004 the HNT has had many true “movie stars” grace the Red Carpet including Mitzi Gaynor/John Kerr/France Nuyen (*South Pacific*) Chakiris and Tamblyn (*WSS*), Nancy Kwan (*Flower Drum Song*), Pat Boone (*April Love*) to name a few; and Betty Garret (*Neptune’s Daughter*) at the first HNT when Tom

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Hatten, who recently passed away, was the emcee. In recent with “talent” not available there have been special presentations before the film (burlesque dancers for *Gypsy*, Louis Mannick playing his singing saw for *Can Can*, Dana Middle School Marching Band for *The Music Man*, and last year the SPSHS Jazz Ensemble for *Bye Bye Birdie*. Before the 7 pm film screening virtuoso Mannick returned to the WGT stage to perform *Somewhere* (WSS) and *Til There Was You* (*Music Man*) adding more vitality to the evening.

LAHIFF last day known as DocSunday - devoted to non-fiction film - presented by Associate Sponsor Marathon Petroleum featured POLA premieres began with the heroic *Rebel With A Cause: The Story of Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga* continuing the theme of social justice presented in past programs. Director Janice D. Tanaka and Lisa (Abe) Furutani, Aiko’s daughter, were present for “Conversation and Q&A” and received special commendations from Supervisor Hahn and L.A. City Councilman Joe Buscaino, District 15.

Closing program was debut of *Stories Of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow – The Movie* (SOLAHA). Prior to the film continuing the 16 year tradition Veterans of the Foreign Wars, Wilmington Post # 2967 presented the Flag of the United States of America leading the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the audience singing *The Star Spangled Banner*. “It is with deep respect that the LAHIFF honors veterans and those currently serving in the military with reverence for all for their service to the U.S.A., as we also express appreciation and gratitude for our wonderful country,” stated Stephanie Mardesich.

The SOLAHA film was the outcome of the oral history project filmed in May 2018 produced by Jack Baric (also director) and Stephanie Mardesich, made possible through Los Angeles County grant funding authorized by Supervisor Hahn. The movie opens with an introduction by Supervisor Hahn eloquently declaring, “It is so important that we preserve the stories of the people that helped shape the harbor into what it is today. That’s why I chose to be the inaugural sponsor of *Stories Of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*, L.A. County’s first ever oral history project. If we don’t capture these stories now we lose them forever. There is so much remarkable history in this movie that it might inspire you to share your own memories and anecdotes and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to share.” Several of the participants were on hand for the screening and joined in “Conversation and Q&A” afterward.

A surprise guest was actor Joseph Bottoms who among other stellar credits starred as Robin Lee Graham in *The Dove* (1974) feature film about 16-year-old Graham who in 1965 began a solo around-the-world voyage from San Pedro in a 24-foot sloop. Five years and 33,000 miles later he returned to home port with a wife and daughter and enough extraordinary experiences retold in his bestselling book *Dove*. Bottoms who resides in Santa Barbara drove down for the day excited to be back in SP. He has been on hiatus from screen and stage launching several art galleries and is considering reviving his thespian career. Long time friend and producing partner of Mardesich he was excited about the SOLAHA content enthusiastically encouraging the audience to support and participate.

Key art for the official LAHIFF posters and banners “Diamonds On The Cinematic Bridge” derived from the original photo by eminent photographer and LAHIFF board member Peter Read Miller; art direction by Seann Curry, produced by Wellington Signs, printing by Alchemy. Souvenir program and collateral printing by MJM Graphics; official LAHIFF t-shirts produced by Boca Activewear. LAHIFF makes every effort to utilize and support and promote local business and vendors.

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A 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2003 with no paid employees LAHIFF is a non-juried, non-competitive film festival 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 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 intrinsic value of the WGT and makes its own effort toward continuing restoration. Other LAHIFF board members are Carla Contestable, Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli, and Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham; festival advisor is Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D.

The LAHIFF is made possible through fiscal and in-kind sponsorship, and the help of volunteers including the Fred Brown Recovery Service, Gala Gals and other support help. Complete list at end of the press release. AT&T Mobility unit came in as a new in-kind sponsor added just in time for the event with a display under the WGT marquee to inform about new technology, give away “treats” and product for purchase. “The national brand of AT&T adds great prestige to the LAHIFF. They are eager to have a greater presence at events in the area, and LAHIFF is pleased to help launch their effort,” noted Mardesich.

“Being a sponsor demonstrates community awareness and support of the LAHIFF 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 essential to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens. Its significance can never be underestimated, and we are immensely grateful.” A complete list of LAHIFF sponsors included at end of the press release.

As Supervisor Hahn observed, “The LA Harbor International Film Festival is a valued cultural event for all ages; educational, informing, entertaining, and celebrating the cinematic arts. We encourage residents, visitors, and tourists in and around Los Angeles County and beyond to enjoy the diversity of programs and also discover and appreciate everything San Pedro and the harbor area has to offer.”

The 17th annual LAHIFF is on calendar for March 12-15, 2020 at the WGT. Sponsorship opportunities available; categories and benefits vary depending on the designated level. Programming will be announced early next year.

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

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

See www.laharborfilmfest.com for this year’s complete schedule, current and historical photos, and more about LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF).

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More about 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

Stories Of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow – The Movie: www.storieslaharborarea.com

More about:

Warner Grand Theatre: www.warnergrand.org

ClearSteps: www.clearsteps.com

Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com

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

New Filmmakers L.A.: www.NFMLA.org

Hollywood Heritage (HH): www.hollywoodheritage.org

Spirit Cruises: www.spiritmarine.com

Visit San Pedro: www.visitsp.com

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

Wellington Signs: www.wellingtonsigns.com

Bagpiper: surfcitypiper@hotmail.com

Complete LAHIFF 2019 Sponsor List

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DocSunday Presenting Sponsor

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Alchemy (poster printing) ~ MJM Graphics (souvenir program & card printing) ~ Wellington Signs (Seann Curry, art director; poster design & banner production) ~ Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery (custom framing of official poster)

Promotion & In-Kind Sponsors & Volunteers

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