



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

LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Sets Sail On 23rd Voyage March 5-8 Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn Unveils Official Poster & Banner February 12

Education Outreach Program “Read the Book, See the Movie” *The Swiss Family Robinson*
Opening Night Happy Hour + SOLAHA Premiere at Dalmatian American Club
Stories of L.A. Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow (SOLAHA The Movie)

Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute *Skirts Ahoy Aboard Battleship IOWA*
Closing Day DocSunday™ POLA Premieres at YWCA Harbor Area

February 12, 2026 - San Pedro (SP), California - Port of Los Angeles (POLA) - Programming and sponsors were announced, and official poster and street banner unveiled, for the 23rd annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin’ Reception & Press Launch, held at Port Town Brewing Company, historic downtown San Pedro, (HDSP) hosted by proprietor James Brown. Guests for the invitation only event included media, LAHIFF sponsors, civic and business leaders, and other supporters who enjoyed light refreshments, door prize raffle, and received media packet program information and a party favor as they exited.

LAHIFF takes place March 5-8 at four different locations since the Warner Grant Theatre (WGT), HDSP, the traditional movie palace” venue where festival has been held since 2004 is closed for renovations. When the WGT will reopen is to be determined.

Festival Director Stephanie Mardesich welcomed guests before announcing programming. “We are delighted to return to Port Town Brewing Company to announce programming as we have past two years. With its landmark location, and support of proprietor James Brown since the inception of the film festival, it is the perfect setting for our guests to convene and later enjoy dining at one of our ‘Epicurean Sponsor’ venues after the event.” Mardesich lamented the closing of the WGT as “a huge loss to the downtown business and cultural community; and anchor for the LAHIFF and so many organizations, and significant events. We are grateful that sponsors have again committed to host programs in four alternate venues that has been a great challenge to choreograph.”

In a more solemn note Mardesich declared this year’s LAHIFF is dedicated to the memory of (late)Wendy (Madison/Trujillo) Kostrencich, patron of LAHIFF since 2003; and (late) Peter Read Miller, eminent photographer (e.g. Sports Illustrated, NFL, Associated Press, Canon spokesman) and LAHIFF board member who passed away January 11. Miller photographed key art for the iconic “*Cinematic Bridge*” that was introduced in 2009.

More.....

After introductions, sponsors acknowledged, and programs announced the official poster and street banner “*Eyes On The Cinematic Bridge*” were unveiled by Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, District 4. She has been staunch advocate and supporter for LAHIFF since its inception in 2003.

This year’s design is inspired by the DocSunday POLA feature documentary film *The Eyes Of Ghana*. The first five years of LAHIFF original paintings were commissioned by local artists beginning with Tom Phillips, continuing with Muriel Olguin, Violet Parkhurst, and Tony Podue, to create their own rendering of the “*Cinematic Bridge*”, manifesting the image envisioned by Mardesich that became the iconic LAHIFF brand re-imagined each year. Art direction again by Alison Tomerlin of Wellington Signs, MJM Graphics festival printer, Alchemy poster printing sponsor, and framing by Distinctive Edge Framing & Gallery.

“The LAHIFF is grateful for loyalty of longstanding and new sponsors and supporters, especially Contributing & Education Sponsor Supervisor Hahn who as Los Angeles City Council member for District 15 advocated for the film festival since it was founded through her tenure as Congresswoman in the USA House of Representatives, and currently as she continues working vigorously for District 4 and all constituents of Los Angeles County.”

LAHIFF begins Thursday March 5 with education outreach Program A “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) culmination program, featuring the classic novel *The Swis Family Robinson* by Johann Wyss, and acclaimed Disney 1960 film *Swiss Family Robinson* that boasts a star quality cast. RBSM is by invitation only, sponsored in part and takes place at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CAM) John Olguin Auditorium. The free education outreach program of enrichment promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film; and the most successful motivating aspect of the LAHIFF. Over 21,000 books have been distributed to students and community members since 2003. Participants this year include: Van Deene Steam Academy and Arts Magnate elementary school and Rudicinda Dodson Middle School, and more schools being added.

Students read and discuss the book prior to the event. They arrive enthused and excited welcomed by an authentic bagpiper, a tradition that began in 2009, inspired by another classic book *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson. The readers enjoy complimentary snacks and after the movie participate in lively “Conversation and Q&A.” Over the years many filmmakers, actors and crew have participated. RBSM sponsors include: Supervisor Hahn, in-kind sponsor Penguin Random House Young Readers, The Popcorn Man, Mary Star Of The Sea High School, 7-Eleven and Arlene (Dickey) and Myron Lockrem.

Opening Night Program B, Friday March 6, in the Dalmatian American Club (DAC) “Happy Hour + main bar from 5-7 pm” features the oral history project *Stories of Los Angeles Harbor Area: For Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow (SOLAHA The Movie Vol. VII)* produced by Mardesich and Jack Baric, who also directed. “No host” bar service, appetizers and popcorn courtesy of the DAC. After welcome remarks and introductions at 5:45 pm the composite film (@30 min.) will be shown that includes one story from each of Volume VII participants. No entrance charge, however reservations requested (see p. 5). “The Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro is proud to once again sponsor the opening night evening, especially since our club hosted the location for filming SOLAHA Vol. VI (2024) & Vol. VII in December 2025,” stated

More.....

Honorable Rudy Svorinich, Jr. club president and former President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council and Harbor District 15 Councilman. “It is our continuing commitment to San Pedro’s community spirit and preserving local history as this year we celebrate our the 100th anniversary of the founding of our club in May 1926.”

Saturday March 7 Program C Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) takes place aboard Battleship IOWA, fantail-aft deck, at 4 pm (board and tour ship from 3 pm) with screening of *Skirts Ahoy* (MGM,1952), delightful musical film about WWII “Waves” starring lovely Esther Williams, preceded by videos about other LAHIFF sponsors SA Recycling and YWCA Harbor Area. It’s another “dream come true” for Mardesich following the MGM classic films *Anchors Aweigh* (2024) and *On The Town* (2025) HNT presentations the past two years. As Mardesich observed “ it’s magical to view the film with the sounds and sights of the harbor as the audience enjoys classic movie about WWII aboard an authentic battleship of the era.” Concessions will be sold at Vicky’s Doghouse Café located port side of the ship featuring their gourmet hot dogs, soda, wine, beer, popcorn and candy. HNT is long standing tradition that has brought countless movies and stars to walk the “Red Carpet” and continues to honor the best of Hollywood’s classic cinema.”

The “community event” is free with attendance limited to 200. Reservations requested at “Event Brite” (see p. 5). Donations of non-perishable food items and new clothing are appreciated in lieu of purchasing tickets to be distributed to and benefit non-profit organizations including the YWCA Harbor Area, Toberman Neighborhood Center and Harbor Interfaith Services who have similar missions to empower and aid program participants who have financial and housing challenges, nutrition challenges, need childcare aid and job assistance.

Closing day March 8 Program D, known as “DocSunday”, begin at 2 pm. at the YWCA Harbor Area “Julia Morgan Auditorium.” The historic edifice, that opened in c. 1917, is among several designed by renowned architect Julia Morgan (Hearst Castle). DocSunday is always devoted to non-fiction film. This year features the POLA premieres of short documentary *Cirilo, An Untold Legacy* that reveals the life of Cirilo McSween, native of Panama, who because respected civil rights leader in USA in 1960s; and *The Eyes Of Ghana* feature that Mardesich viewed when she was press delegate for the 69th BFI London Film Festival in October 2025. The content and aesthetic style of the film impressed her immensely, for its historical perspective and account of the country of the first African nation to be emancipated from European colonialism. Film reveals fascinating charismatic leader and first President Kwame Nkrumah engaged cinematographer Chris Emmes (now 93) who chronicled his and preserved rare archival footage that has been preserved in a vault in London, England.” Both films reflect concerns for social integrity, equity, and civil rights; evoking a mood of humanity,” commented Mardesich. “The ‘Oscar’ caliber film impressed me immensely with its engaging story and aesthetic style and a great choice programming the film at the YWCA whose mission includes advocacy through local programming creating real change to empower women, families, eradicating human trafficking and eliminating racism.”

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 in 2003 (with Jack Baric) and observes “the film festival is a way to offer a collective experience, to educate, enlighten and entertain augmenting the cultural landscape and promoting all San Pedro and surrounding areas have to offer residents, visitors, and tourists.”

More.....

Additional LAHIFF sponsors and supporters include Associate Sponsors: Employees Community Fund of Boeing, Marathon Petroleum, Athens Services Cal Marine Fish Company, SA Recycling, Rancho LPG Holdings. Sustaining Sponsors: City of Los Angeles District 15 (the One-Five), ILWU Foremen’s Local #94, Joseph & Lee (Sher) Mardesich Family Trust; Elite Sponsor Spirit Cruises; Media Sponsors Random Lengths News, San Pedro Today Magazine, PalosVerdesPulse.com (online magazine), and NewFilmmakers LA (social media). Website sponsor is Clear Steps.

Other In-Kind Sponsors include: Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM), San Pedro Bay Historical Society (SPBHS), and Grand Vision Foundation (GVF), Security Sponsor Black Knight Patrol, Volunteer support from YWCA Harbor Area, and San Pedro High School students.

LAHIFF board members are community liaison Andrea (Rukavina) Hegybeli, businesswoman Nancy (McCutchan) Nottingham, and Northern California rep Carla Contestable, R.N., and new member Sally Corkran Jarrett, East Coast rep.

LAHIFF always promotes dining in Epicurean Sponsor venues including Niko’s Pizzeria, San Pedro Brewing Company, Big Nick’s, Sacred Grounds, J. Trani’s Ristorante, Think Café, Rafaello’s Ristorante, Wienerschnitzel, Omelet & Waffle Shop, The Sandwich Saloon, Compagnon Wine Bistro, Whale & Ale Gastropub, Think Prime, and Vicky’s Doghouse Café.

“Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates community awareness and appreciation of our mission,” proffered Mardesich, “and fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens; and its significance can never be underestimated. We also thank community collaborators for helping us to promote the program schedule.”

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.

As Supervisor Hahn eloquently states: “For the past 22 years, the LA Harbor International Film Festival has brought the magic of cinema to the heart of San Pedro and the region. Its diverse programs bring Hollywood classics, promote literacy through “Read the Book, See the Movie”, present documentaries exploring pivotal issues, and share local stories. I am proud to have supported this event since its debut and I look forward to the cinematic experience LAHIFF will have in store for us this year.”

Media relations, information, and “Sponsorship Opportunities” contact: Stephanie Mardesich, Festival Director at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756. [See www.laharborfilmfest.com](http://www.laharborfilmfest.com) archives and more.

#

List of program venues and times: Free – Reservations requested

Program A - “RBSM “ (invitation only) Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

Program B Opening Night - venue DAC 5 pm, 1639 S. Palos Verdes St., SP 90731; **Reservations tel. 310/831-9821**

Program C **Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT)** - venue Battleship IOWA, 205 S. Harbor Blvd. SP 90731;

Reservations: Event Brite <https://pacificbattleship.com/events/lahiff-skirts-ahoy/>

Program D **DocSunday** venue YWCA Harbor Area, 437 W. 9th St., SP 90731 (street parking no \$ required on Sun.)

Reservations: Event Brite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/docsunday-the-eyes-of-ghana-la-harbor-international-film-festivallahiff-tickets-1982467176692?aff=oddtcreator>

More about:

SOLAHA oral history project: www.storieslaharborarea.com

Dalmatian American Club <https://www.dalmatianamericanclub.com/>

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium: <https://cma.recreation.parks.lacity.gov>

Battleship IOWA: <https://pacificbattleship.com>

YWCA Harbor Area <https://ywcaharbor.org/>

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

Bagpiper Glen Thompson: <https://www.piperdigitalusa.com/about>

ClearSteps: www.clearsteps.com

NewFilmmakers LA: www.newfilmmakersla.com

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

Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com

Wellington Signs: www.wellingtonsigns.com

Complete LAHIFF 2026 Sponsor List

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

Associate Sponsors Marathon Petroleum Corporation Los Angeles Refinery ~ Employees Community Fund of Boeing

Athens Services ~ 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

Elite Sponsor ~ Spirit Cruises

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

The Popcorn Man ~ Mary Star of the Sea High School ~ 7-Eleven ~ Arlene (Dickey) & Myron Lockrem

~ Penguin-Random House Young Readers

Media Sponsors ~ Random Lengths News ~ San Pedro Today ~ PalosVerdesPulse.com

NewFilmmakers LA (social media)

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

Promotion & In-Kind Sponsors

San Pedro Bay Historical Society ~ Cabrillo Marine Aquarium ~ Dalmatian American Club ~ Los Angeles Maritime Museum

San Pedro Art Association ~ Grand Vision Foundation

Security Sponsor ~ Black Knight Patrol

Volunteer Service ~ YWCA Harbor Area

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

Epicurean Sponsors (websites 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 <https://sacredgrounds.us/>

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

Omelet & Waffle Shop <https://omelette-waffle-shop.res-menu.com/>

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

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

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

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

Think Prime <https://thinkprime-steakhouse.com/>

Compagnon Wine Bistro <https://compagnonbistro.com>

Whale & Ale Gastropub <https://thewhaleandale.com/>

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

Wienerschnitzel

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