

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Sets Sail On 6th Voyage April 23-26!
Councilman Tom LaBonge Officiates Unveiling of Key Art
Port of Los Angeles (POLA) Premieres Oral History Documentaries on DocSunday
Opening Night U.S. A. Premiere Searching For A Storm

Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute Winner of Ten Academy Awards® West Side Story
Honors Film's Stars Oscar® & Golden Globe winner George Chakiris and
Oscar®winner Rita Moreno and Oscar®nominee Russ Tamblyn

"Read the Book, See the Movie" Education Outreach Program
Robertson Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped and Disney 1960 Film Starring James MacArthur
Free Admission to all programs for U.S. Veterans & Those Currently Serving In Military

March 12, 2009 - San Pedro (SP), CA., The Port of Los Angeles (POLA) -- Programming and sponsors were announced for the sixth annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin' Reception and Press Launch, Thursday March 12 held at and hosted by Ports O' Call Restaurant. Members of the media, sponsors, civic and business leaders were among guests at the invitation only event.

The four day LAHIFF, a non-competitive, non-juried festival with films selected by invitation or referral takes place April 23-26, at the Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), 478 W. 6th Street, in historic downtown San Pedro – the POLA.

Festival Director and Founder Stephanie Mardesich announced that the POLA is continuing as Associate Sponsor with U.S.A. premiere of the POLA four part documentary series based on the video oral history project completed in 2007 for the closing program on DocSunday. She also revealed details about a new concept "See the Movie, Stop the Violence" (SMSV) featuring the ten time Academy Award®winning film *West Side Story* as a free program for the youth of Los Angeles on Saturday April 25 that will introduce the film to a whole new audience of young people seeing the movie on the big screen in the vintage WGT movie palace as a "catalyst for change and lesson for humanity." SMSV is sponsored by 15th District Councilwoman Janice Hahn and in-kind sponsors Harbor Interfaith Services, the YWCA Harbor Area and South Bay, and Toberman Neighborhood Center.

The event will mark the debut of the new Watts Youth Choir and include a special dance presentation by the San Pedro City Ballet. The audience will enjoy a "positive rumble" of popcorn and soda and pizza provided by Niko's Pizzeria.

More.....

6th annual LAHIFF Sets Sail April 23-26.....
Page Two of Five

After the program announcements the key art for the official LAHIFF poster, “The West Side Cinematic Bridge”, by eminent photographer Peter Read Miller, was unveiled to a “wow” by the crowd. In the absence of Councilwoman Hahn (who is on official business in Washington, D.C.) Councilwoman Tom LaBonge (4th District) introduced Mr. Miller, recalling their long acquaintance when both worked for the NFL. Joining him in unveiling the key art was last year’s artist Anthony Podue and special celebrity guest, star of *West Side Story*, George Chakiris. Valued at \$1400, including framing by Distinctive Edge Framing and Gallery, the giclee print will be on silent auction bidding until the festival opens displayed in rotation at the POLA, L.A. Maritime Museum and Crowne Plaza L. A. Harbor Hotel lobby.

Festival program line-up was summarized by Mardesich as follows: Opening day April 23: “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) the free education outreach program that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film, features the classic novel Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson, with 1200 books donated by sponsor Penguin Classics and Puffin Classics; and the 1960 Disney film starring James MacArthur who is invited to attend the program and discuss the making of the film. Students will be greeted by a bagpiper playing traditional Scottish music and enjoy complimentary refreshments donated by sponsors Minute Maid and Robert’s American Gourmet Pirate’s Booty. Supervisor Don Knabe also sponsors RBSM.

Opening night Friday April 24 is U.S. A. premiere of feature documentary *Searching For A Storm* directed by local filmmaker Jack Baric, who will be present for Q&A after the screening.

Saturday April 25 is SMSV in a “new fashioned matinee” at 12 noon. The landmark musical *West Side Story* has been called a variation on *Romeo and Juliet* set in New York City in the 1950s with the core of the unrequited love story the turf war of the Jets and the Sharks. The underlying goal of the program is to convey the message that in spite of the beautiful music, poignant lyrics and dynamic dancing the ultimate moral of the story is that violence and fighting lead to death and tragedy. “There has to be a better way to get along and resolve conflicts,” states Councilwoman Hahn. “It begins with communication, compassion, and understanding, while learning to embrace the diversity and richness of experience that leads each of us has to offer and gain respect for individual similarities and differences.”

Saturday evening the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) honors the film’s stars at the gala “West Side Red Reception” prior to the screening, held at the elegant Arcade Building across the street from the WGT. Guests will enjoy a menu of American and Puerto Rican specialties and the “Jet Bar” and “Shark Bar” featuring Elite Sponsors Blue Ice – great American vodka – martinis and Cosmopolitans; DonQ Rum and Coca Cola. Catering is by Paradise Restaurant of Gardena, CA. tickets are \$65 before April 20; \$75 at the door if space permits, and include the screening, preferred seating, souvenir program and party bag.

More.....

6th annual LAHIFF Sets Sail April 23-26.....
Page Three of Five

April 26 is “DocSunday” beginning at noon with *S.S. United States: Lady In Waiting*; 2 p.m. *Chasing Ghosts*, directed by local resident Lincoln Ruchti; with filmmakers present for Q&A after the screenings.

Closing program at 4 p.m. is the POLA documentary series including; Episode One: *From Mudflats to Modern Port: 1542-1920*; Episode Two: *The Birth of An International Port: 1921-41*; Episode Three: *War, Peace and Prosperity: 1941-1960*; and Episode Four: *The Past Is Prologue: 1960-2008*. Directed and produced by Jon Wilkman who will participate with his co-producer Nancy Wilkman and representative from the POLA, moderated by Dr. Betsy A. McLane, Ph.D. after Episode Three. Program concludes by 7:30 p.m. A complete program flyer with screening times and descriptions is attached.

Since its inception in 2003 LAHIFF has rapidly gained momentum and support from civic and business leaders throughout the entire metropolitan area as echoed by Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa. “Creativity abounds throughout the City of Los Angeles and particularly at the Port in San Pedro,” states the Mayor. “Within the programming of the LA Harbor International Film Festival of 2007 are films that reflect the historical and contemporary culture, 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.”

Significant sponsors other than those already mentioned include City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), Grand Vision Foundation (GVF); Ponte Vista at San Pedro; Cullen Maritime Services, Inc.; the Arcade Building; and Star Fisheries. “Epicurean Sponsors” include Niko’s Pizzeria, S.P. Fish Market, Wienerschnitzel, S.P. Brewing Company, The Whale and Ale, Think Café, Bistro, and Prime, Papadakis Taverna, and Starbucks,

The Crown Plaza L.A. Harbor Hotel is Accommodation Sponsor with a special room rate for the festival. Contact the hotel reservations office at (310) 519-8200 and request the LAHIFF rate during the festival dates.

Other in-kind sponsors and supporters include Los Angeles LAMM, Cinema Grand, Helen Grace Chocolates, International Documentary Association, Distinctive Edge Gallery & Framing, Sacred Grounds, and the Maritime Research Center and Nautical Shop.

Media Sponsors San Pedro Today, Random Lengths News, and Time Warner Cable, website sponsor is Live Office, Torrance, CA.

Print sponsor is National Promotions & Advertising, Inc. (NPA) of West Los Angeles, for poster and design; and Instant Print King, souvenir program.

More.....

The iconoclastic WGT, is one of the three only original Warner Brothers theatres built in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. In the past several years it has had a major renovation including the “Save Your Seat” campaign spearheaded by the GVF support group for the WGT dedicated to preserving and restoring it to its original glory.

“There is a movie that appeals to every sector of society and enjoying and celebrating the art of cinema in the atmosphere of one of the treasures of San Pedro, the Warner Grand Theatre, is part the festival’s goal to educate, enlighten and entertain the audience of all ages and backgrounds”, states Mardesich. “The collective experience that the audience shares from enjoying the smell of fresh popcorn to the range of emotions a movie invokes is powerful as a catharsis or for pure enjoyment. Though we must also embrace new technology and project some films in DVD format, as long as we can show real movies on the big screen that’s our first preference, and we hope that occurs for many years to come.”

The LAHIFF is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, with contributions tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Sponsorship opportunities are available at a variety of benefit levels, from Presenting Sponsor (\$35,000 donation) to Friend of the Festival (\$100 donation). The organization is volunteer driven and service hours can be attributed to school or community service.

LAHIFF board members include Dr. McLane, author and educator and director emerita of the IDA; Sports Illustrated photographer Peter Read Miller; community liaison Andrea Hegybeli; real estate broker Linda D’Ambrosi; and east coast representative Nancy McCutchan Nottingham.

General admission for festival programs is \$10; \$8 with discounts for affiliations with GVF, LAMM, IDA, seniors and students. DocSunday all day pass is \$20. No discounts for the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute.

Free Admission for U.S.Veterans and those currently serving in military forces as long as space permits on first come first seated basis.

Tickets for programs and the receptions will be sold online from April 1st at www.warnergrand.org and Williams Book Store located at 443 6th Street, downtown SP, and at the box office (cash only) during the festival one hour before program times.

“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
at stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com or telephone (310) 519-0756
See www.laharborfilmfest.com for updates on programming and to purchase tickets

#

6th annual LAHIFF Sets Sail April 23-26.....
Page Five of Five

More about.....

LAHIFF: www.laharborfilmfest.com

Tickets & Warner Grand Theatre: www.warnergrand.org

The Port of Los Angeles: www.portofla.org

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

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

International Documentary Association (IDA): www.documentary.org

Dr. Betsy A. McLane, *A New History of Documentary Film*: www.documentarydiva.com

Peter Read Miller, photographer: www.peterreadmiller.com

Films/filmmakers:

Searching For A Storm www.searchingforastorm.com

Lady In Waiting www.bigshipfilms.com

Chasing Ghosts www.chasingghosts.com

Wilkman Productions, Inc. www.wilkman.com