

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 IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LA Harbor International Film Festival™ Sets Sail on 5th Voyage April 24-27
Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute Academy Award® Winner *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*
Honors Film's Star Oscar® & Golden Globe Nominee Debbie Reynolds and Co-Stars
Friday April 25 "A Short Opening Night" UK Director Winging in from London
"Read the Book, See the Movie" (RBSM) Disney's *Swiss Family Robinson*

ILWU Locals 13, 63 & 94 On Board As "Contributing Sponsor"
April 27th DocSunday sponsored by ILWU, IDA, & Councilwoman Janice Hahn
Blue Ice - great American vodka™ - "Elite Sponsor"
Free Admission for U.S. Veterans & Those Currently Serving In Military

March 13, 2008 - San Pedro (SP), CA., The Port of Los Angeles (POLA) -- Programming and sponsors were announced for the fifth annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) at the Seafarin' Reception and Press Launch, Thursday March 13 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 24-27 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 International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) - Locals 13, 63 & 94 - is the new sole Contributing Sponsor. "This support is a huge boost to our effort because gaining recognition and support from this significant worldwide organization with such a high profile in the Port of Los Angeles demonstrates their commitment to community, culture and education that is at the heart of the festival's mission," stated Mardesich.

"After five years of effort to forge a relationship, this was the year to make DocSunday – the closing day of the festival - truly 'Dock' related with the film content reflecting labor and worker issues. It leads the way for others in the maritime industry to follow and support our endeavor to 'create a cinematic bridge between the people of the region and the people of the world' and within our own locale.

Partnerships between business and individuals in supporting cultural events is fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens, and its significance can never be underestimated."

"There is a movie that appeals to every sector of society. Enjoying and celebrating the art of cinema in the atmosphere of one of the treasures of San Pedro, the Warner Grand Theatre, is part of our goal to educate, enlighten and entertain audiences of all ages and backgrounds."

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Key art “The Unsinkable Cinematic Bridge” for the official LAHIFF poster, painted by third generation San Pedran Anthony (Tony) Podue, was unveiled by Los Angeles Councilwoman for the 15th District Janice Hahn and Lady Austin Knight, long time colleague and friend of the late Violet Parkhurst who painted the key art for LAHIFF 2007. Podue is known for his penetrating vistas that include many bridge scenes and is one of the four artists featured in San Pedro - Faces and Places pictorial table top book.

Valued at \$2500, the painting will be on display until the festival opens at the POLA- Harbor Department, the Crowne Plaza Hotel Los Angeles Harbor lobby, and finally the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM) for silent auction bidding. The painting will be in the WGT lobby throughout the festival with bidding closing April 27.

The festival line-up was summarized by Mardesich. Opening day April 24 is the RBSM culmination program featuring the book by Johann Wyss, and 1960 Walt Disney film version of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Penguin Classics donated 910 books that have been distributed to students from second grade to post high school, and community readers. Film is shown with the compliments of Disney Studios. The 93 year old director Ken Annakin is scheduled to attend the program that begins at 10:30 a.m. James MacArthur who starred in the film is also expected. A Q&A with Annakin and MacArtrhur will take place after the screening.

The RBSM program is a key component of the LAHIFF promoting literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film, while encouraging family involvement and attendance Sponsored by Supervisor Don Knabe and Penguin Classics, other RBSM sponsors include Mary Star of the Sea High School; and Williams Book Store, and Los Angeles Maritime Museum (LAMM) who help distribute the complimentary books. Robert’s American Gourmet is donating the healthy and delicious snack food “Pirate’s Booty” and juice from Minute Maid. Schools participating include Mary Star of the Sea, Port of Los Angeles Charter, and San Pedro High Schools; Dana Middle School; Barton Hill and Seventh Street Elementary Schools; Rolling Hills Prep and Renaissance Schools; and the San Pedro Adult Learning Center.

Friday April 25 is “A Short Opening Night” at 7 p.m. with a program of internationally produced short films from Belgium, Canada, Poland, the United Kingdom and U.S.A. Main sponsor for that evening is Ponte Vista At San Pedro (PVAP) honoring Earth Day and the Good Green Life. A private Green Carpet Reception at the WGT will precede the program. Vicki Psarias, director of *Broken* (UK; 2007; 18 min.) will be flying in from London for the event and Q&A after her film is screened.

Saturday April 26 is an old-fashioned matinee beginning at noon with a cartoon and reprise screening of *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

Highlight Saturday evening is the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) featuring *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, starring Oscar® and Golden Globe nominated Debbie Reynolds who will be honored at the 7 p.m. screening.

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The Red Carpet Gala Reception, at the Arcade Building across from the WGT, precedes the screening from 5:15-6:45 p.m., featuring the “Belly Up to the Bar” Blue Ice martinis and cosmopolitans, tray passed appetizers and the “Tribute to the Titanic” buffet supper catered by Critic’s Choice. The Gala is sponsored in- part by Star Fisheries. Tickets are \$65 pre-paid before April 20; or \$75 at the door if space permits.

Final day April 27 is “DocSunday” sponsored by ILWU, International Documentary Association (IDA), and Councilwoman Hahn, beginning at noon with *Eye of The Storm*; at 2 p.m., *In Search of A Legend*, fom Poland and sponsored by Polish Film Festival Los Angeles (PFFLA) and the L.A. Maritime Institute TOPSail (sic) Youth Program (LAMI); at 3:10 pm. *Shipbreakers*, from Canada and sponsored by Canadian Consulate General of Los Angeles; and at 5 p.m. closing with the POLA premiere of *Made In L.A. (U.S.A.)*, the story of the struggle and triumph of L.A. garment workers in their battle with Forever 21 clothing manufacturer. There will be a Q&A and panel including filmmakers and union reps after the screening, moderated by Dr. Betsy McLane, Ph.D., film scholar, author ([A New History of Documentary Film](#)) and Director Emeritus of the IDA; and key festival advisor and LAHIFF board member.

Key sponsors for the LAHIFF include the Associate Sponsors POLA, Councilwoman Hahn, L.A. Dept. of Cultural Affairs, PVAP; Cultural and Education sponsor L.A. County Supervisor 4th District Don Knabe; Contributing sponsors Cullen Maritime Services, Inc., Grand Vision Foundation (GVF) and Charles Gasper.

The new Epicurean Sponsor category includes: Juanita’s Foods, Niko’s Pizzeria, Papadakis Taverna, Ports O’Call Restaurant, S.P. Brewing Company, S.P. Fish Market, The Whale and Ale and STARBUCKS.

Accommodation Sponsor is the Crowne Plaza Los Angeles Harbor Hotel, with a special room rate for the festival of \$99 per night that includes a bottle of wine. Contact the hotel reservations office at (310) 519-8200 and request the LAHIFF rate during the festival dates.

Other in-kind sponsors include LAMM, Cinema Grand, Clean San Pedro “Hot Pedro Nites”, Beacon House, American Hellenic Council, Canadian Consulate General of Los Angeles (AHC), PFFLA, LAMI, The Arcade Building, IDA, Distinctive Edge Gallery & Framing, Sacred Grounds. Print sponsor is National Promotions & Advertising, Inc. (NPA) of West Los Angeles, for poster and design.

Media Sponsors are Press-Telegram’s *San Pedro Magazine*, and Time Warner Cable. Website sponsor is Live Office located in Torrance, CA.

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

The iconoclastic WGT is a vintage 1931 “movie palace” and 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.

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 to Friend of the Festival. There is no paid staff, organization is volunteer driven and service hours can be earned for school or community service. Volunteer coordinator is Joe Caccavalla (contact information on last page).

Besides McLane other LAHIFF board members include real estate broker Linda D’Ambrosi; Sports Illustrated photographer Peter Read Miller; community liaison Andrea Hegybeli; east coast representative Nancy McCutchan Nottingham. Festival Co-founder is Jack Baric.

General admission for festival programs is \$10 general; \$8 with discounts for affiliations with ILWU, GVF, LAMM, IDA, LAMI, BAFTA LA, seniors and students. Saturday matinees are \$5. No discounts for the Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute. DocSunday all day pass is \$20.

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

Tickets for programs and the HNT Gala will be sold online from April 1st at www.warnergrand.org and Williams Book Store located at 443 6th Street, downtown S.P. and at the box office (cash only) during the festival one hour before program times. DocSunday box office will be open from 11 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

“Now in its fifth year, we all know that the LA Harbor International Film Festival is part of the Harbor area that is here to stay. The commitment of the local community is apparent in this year’s sponsorships by our working men and women on the docks, as well as local Wilmington business and national brand Juanita’s Foods,” stated Councilwoman Hahn. “We are all proud of the film festival and look forward to welcoming visitors from all over Los Angeles and beyond for this year’s events.”

More.....

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 www.warnergrand.org

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More about.....

LAHIFF: www.laharborfilmfest.com

Tickets & Warner Grand Theatre: www.warnergrand.org

Port of Los Angeles (POLA): www.portofla.org

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

International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU): www.ILWU.org

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

Polish Film Festival Los Angeles (PFFLA): www.polishfilmfestivalLA.org

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

L.A. Maritime Institute (LAMI): www.lamitopsail.org

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

Anthony Podue, artist: www.poduestudio.com

Film links on LAHIFF website

To Volunteer: Contact coordinator Joe Caccavalla: cjoeca@aol.com or telephone (310) 831-0168