

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! For 13th Voyage of the LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) □ **Warner Grand Theatre – historic downtown San Pedro – Port of Los Angeles** **13th LAHIFF Set for March 9-12, 2017 ***

San Pedro (SP), CA. The Port of Los Angeles - the 13th annual LA Harbor International Film Festival (LAHIFF) held March 3-6 at the vintage art deco Warner Grand Theatre (WGT), a facility of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), historic downtown SP – the Port of Los Angeles - concluded March 6 with the Veterans of the Foreign Wars, Wilmington Post # 2967 tradition of presenting the Flag of the United States of America at the final program on “DocSunday” featuring *Bridging The Divide: Tom Bradley And The Politics Of Race*. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by local vocalist Albert Alcala leading the *The Star Spangled Banner*.

“The closing ceremony is a proud tradition to honor veterans and those currently serving in the military for their service, as we express appreciation and gratitude for our wonderful country,” stated Stephanie Mardesich, festival director/founder.

The LAHIFF opened March 3 with the free education outreach program “Read the Book, See the Movie” (RBSM) that promotes literacy and a more thoughtful way to view a film “Culmination Program.” Bagpiper Chrissy Orcholski greeted hundreds of students who arrived at the WGT to view the musical film adaptation (*Tom Sawyer*, 1973) of Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Over 700 copies of the book were distributed to local students from elementary to high school, and community members.

“This year was one of the best group of students ever. They were very alert and observant during the discussion following the film and the essential meaning of the story that’s about friendship, loyalty, courage and anti-slavery; and the differences between life in rural ante-bellum Missouri and now, “ Mardesich commented. “Thanks to our generous publishing sponsor Penguin Publishing we have been able to distribute thousands of books to students since the inception of RBSM to readers who are truly enjoying classic literature and will be reading far into the future. As I tell the students ‘ To have a book in hand is to have a friend for life.’ The RBSM inspires the joy and pleasure of reading.”

Additional RBSM sponsors are Supervisor Don Knabe Employees Community Fund of Boeing California and Rancho LPG Holdings. Refreshments provided The Popcorn Man, Mary Star of the Sea High School and 7-Eleven (Pacific Ave., SP store).

For the fifth year Friday’s opening night was in association with the DCA sponsored The Big Read L.A. (TBRLA) screening the film version of the selected book by Ray Bradbury (published in 1951) *Fahrenheit 451* (dir. by Francois Truffaut, 1966). “Conversation and Q&A” with the audience preceded and concluded the screening.

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***2017 dates subject to change**

13th annual LAHIFF “It’s a wrap!”

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Saturday’s matinee showcased the *New Filmmakers L.A. On Location Project* returning for the fifth year, screening 20 short (1-5 min.) films that won the 2015 competition sponsored by L.A. Weekly and the City of Los Angeles. “New Filmmakers L.A. co-founder producer Larry Laboe gets to the word out to over 9,000 and brings in a great crowd to enjoy the films, and explore San Pedro’s dining, shopping and attractions like Battleship Iowa, Los Angeles Maritime Museum and Ports O’Call,” commented Mardesich.

Saturday night’s Hollywood Nostalgia Tribute (HNT) presented *Can-Can* (1962, starring Shirley MacLaine and Frank Sinatra), the film version of the Cole Porter Broadway musical (1953) preceded by the “Rouge Carpet Gala” held in the WGT mezzanine. On arrival guests were greeted and escorted by the JROTC cadets of San Pedro High School.

HNT Gala guests enjoyed French themed cuisine provided by LAHIFF Epicurean Sponsors Ports O’Call Restaurant, San Pedro Brewing Company, San Pedro Fish Market, Think Prime while chanteuse Rosie Brand entertained with popular tunes of days gone by and songs from previous HNT honored films. As they exited the Gala guests received a special party bag featuring Leonard Maltin’s *Classic Movie Guide* (published by Plume, div. of Penguin/Random House). Prior to the movie Louis Mannick serenaded the audience playing his “singing saw” with one of *Can-Can*’s best known songs “I Love Paris” followed by “Till There Was You” from *The Music Man*, that might be next year’s HNT feature film. Since 2004 the HNT has honored true talent and classic filmmaking beginning with *Neptune’s Daughter* (2004), and in subsequent years *South Pacific* (Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr, France Nuyen), *West Side Story* (George Chakiris & Russ Tamblyn), *Flower Drum Song* (Nancy Kwan) and *April Love* (Pat Boone) to name some of the movies and “stars” who have walked the LAHIFF Red Carpet.

Closing day DocSunday - devoted to non-fiction film - sponsored by Tesoro Foundation, featured POLA premiers beginning at with *Marsha Hunt’s Sweet Adversity* the completed documentary about the esteemed actress/activist that previewed as a work in progress at LAHIFF 2010. The reveals how the actress who was wrongly accused and “black listed” during the “red scare” of Hollywood overcame unfortunate circumstances devoting her life to humanitarian efforts and reviving her career on stage, radio and eventual film and television. Miss Hunt (98 years old) was present to present and sign her book *The Way We Wore*, a fashion chronicle of her days at Paramount and MGM, and converse with the audience.

The segue to the closing program at was the return of director/producer Jon Walkman with a preview of his latest documentary film in progress *Floodpath: The Untold Story Of The St. Francis Dam Disaster* based on his recently published book of the same title (Bloomsbury Press, 2016) that was available in the WGT lobby. The subject delves into the story of the deluge that claimed nearly five hundred lives and considers the reality behind L.A. noir fictions such as the classic film *Chinatown*. Wilkman directed and produced (with his late wife Nancy Walkman) the acclaimed PBS four part oral history landmark documentary series *The Port of Los Angeles* that had its theatrical premiere at the LAHIFF in 2009.

The final film presentation *Bridging The Divide: Tom Bradley And The Politics Of Race*, sponsored by Los Angeles City Council District 15, was a high point of the LAHIFF with the acclaimed film about Los Angeles’s beloved and longest serving Mayor Tom Bradley. Filmmakers Lyn Goldbarb (director/producer) and Alison Sotomayor (research director/producer) were joined by former City of Los Angeles Councilman, the Honorable Robert Farrell (who served on the Mayor’s staff for 17 years) for “Conversation and Q&A” moderated by Dr. Betsy McLane, Ph.D.

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Along with Miss Hunt filmmakers present at DocSunday were presented with certificates of commendation from the U.S. Congress, California State Senate and Assembly, and the County and City of Los Angeles.

For the second year a unique addition to the festival was the “pop up” gallery presented by the San Pedro Art Association (SPAA) - “Art On the Edge of L.A” - with display art in various mediums created by their members on view in The Arcade Building directly across the street from the WGT. For more about SPAA see spaa@sanpedroart.org The LAHIFF, a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2003, is a non-juried, non-competitive film festival that aims to entertain, enlighten and educate the cinematic 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 inherent value of the WGT and efforts its continuing restoration.

“The LAHIFF is made possible through fiscal and in-kind sponsorship, and the help of volunteers, especially the men of Beacon House,” stated Mardesich. “Being a sponsor of the LAHIFF demonstrates community awareness and support of the 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 fundamental to perpetuate the humanity, creativity, and traits we value as citizens. Its significance can never be underestimated, and we are immensely grateful.”

As noted by Congresswoman Janice Hahn (44th District) “ The LAHIFF showcase of films that embody the spirit, diversity, and vitality of the populace and Los Angeles harbor is entertaining and inspiring. The education outreach program ‘Read the Book, See the Movie’ adds a dimension that encourages an appreciation of art, culture, and literature in our community. Thank you to all the sponsors for their continued support and commitment to making this unique festival possible.”

The 14th annual LAHIFF is on calendar for March 9-12, 2017 at the WGT. Sponsorship categories and benefits vary depending on the designated level. Programming will be announced earl next year. The website has this year’s complete schedule, current and historical photos, and more about LAHIFF at www.laharborfilmfest.com .

For Sponsor Opportunities Guidelines or to obtain a souvenir program contact festival director Stephanie Mardesich at (310) 518-0756 or email: stephaniemardesich@yahoo.com

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