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San Luis Obispo International Film Festival Announces 2012 Special Guests & Program

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA (February 23, 2012) - The [San Luis Obispo International Film Festival](#) (SLOIFF) has announced its slate of films and events for the 18th annual festival, taking place **Wednesday, March 7 to Sunday, March 11, 2012**. San Luis Obispo County will play host to thousands of visiting movie buffs, as well as filmmakers and celebrities during the festival's five days of films, special events, filmmaking panels and parties.

"The SLOIFF has blossomed into a full-fledged celebration of movies featuring a wide variety of new contemporary films from around the world, while continuing the tradition of screening older films, as well," explains Festival Director Wendy Eidson, "New venues, including Hearst Castle, and many special guests from around the world will combine to make the 2012 Festival more exciting than ever."

PRE-FESTIVAL: TUESDAY, MARCH 6

Three Pre-festival events are planned before the Festival actually begins. On Saturday, March 3, the City of Atascadero and Galaxy Theatres will host a **Red Carpet Event** reception and screening to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of *The Music Man*, complete with local singers and a barbershop quartet. On Tuesday, March 6 an ["Italian Dinner/Movie"](#) event will feature a screening of *Moonstruck* on the romantic back patio of Buona Tavola restaurant, paired with a five-course Italian meal; and the 50th anniversary celebration and screening of *To Kill A Mockingbird* at the Fremont Theatre.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

The festival will open on Wednesday, March 7 featuring a new documentary, [The Shot Felt 'Round the World](#), with special guests **Drs. Peter and Jonathan Salk** (sons of the late Dr. Jonas Salk), as well as the film's director and producers. Cuesta College's Cultural & Performing Arts Center will host and Rotary Clubs from San Luis Obispo County are sponsoring the event. Partial proceeds will go to Rotary International's "End Polio Now" program.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8

Non-stop festival [screenings](#) countywide will begin on Thursday, March 8, featuring quality independent cinema from many countries in a wide variety of genres including arts, sports, politics, and romantic comedies. The majority of these films have been submitted to the **George Sidney Independent Film Competition** and approximately 80 percent of the films' filmmakers will be in attendance. Premieres and pre-release screenings of feature-length and short films will include entertaining Q&As with filmmakers, cast and crew.

Another **Red Carpet Event**, ["Sports Nite,"](#) also happens on Thursday, March 8 at the Fremont Theatre. The exciting triple-header of extreme sports films includes a North American Premiere of *Finnsurf*, as well as a double-bill of bike and snowboard films: *3 Minute Gaps* and *The Art of Flight*. A pre-party will kick it off and the SLO Bucket Busters will entertain at a half-time show.

Also on Thursday evening, for musical fans, the Galaxy Theatres in Atascadero will host the ["South Pacific Sing Along."](#) The fun begins at 6 p.m. with a reception and costume contest, followed by the classic 1958 film at 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9

San Luis Obispo's Hearst Castle will relive its Hollywood heydays of the 1920s and '30s for one star-studded night during the "[Hollywood to Hearst Castle](#)" event on Friday, March 9. SLOIFF Spotlight Award honoree, Hollywood photographer **Timothy White**, will fly into Hearst Ranch's private airfield at 5 p.m. to participate in a private VIP tour of the castle with visiting celebrities, including comedian **Drew Carey**, and Hearst Castle dignitaries; indoor poolside cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; and an intimate conversation held in the Hearst Castle private movie theater.

Beginning at 7 p.m., the Hearst Castle Theatre at the Visitor Center will host a public event including an exhibit of White's work, a silent auction, the **Spotlight Award** tribute ceremony (created to highlight key figures involved in behind-the-scenes filmmaking) and a grand finale screening of *Citizen Kane*. (There will be a second screening of *Citizen Kane* on Sunday, March 11 at 6:30 p.m.)

SATURDAY, MARCH 10

On Saturday, March 10, the SLOIFF is thrilled to welcome **Sir Richard Taylor** as the **2012 King Vidor Award** recipient. Taylor is co-owner and creative lead at Weta Workshop, which he runs with his wife, Tania Rodger. He is a five-time Academy Award© winning design and effects supervisor who draws on 25 years of filmmaking experience. He is also a co-founder of the Weta companies, with partner **Peter Jackson**, and the Stone Street Studio complex in Wellington, New Zealand.

Taylor is best known for his work on award-winning film projects including the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *King Kong*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Avatar* and *District 9*. Taylor has also won four BAFTAs, two VES awards, and a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to film.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with the **2012 Independent Film Awards** at the Fremont Theatre, presenting cash awards in four categories, as well as three Audience Awards. Taylor will then be presented with the King Vidor Award, and joined by several well-known directors and celebrities (to be confirmed) for the presentation and tribute. They will discuss Weta's many fascinating past, current and future projects, and a Q&A session with his colleagues will explore how this cutting-edge motion capture technology used in filmmaking (*Avatar*, *Tintin*, *The Hobbit*), is now being repurposed in exciting new ways for use in medicine, government, business and education.

The evening will culminate with an after-party at the Warden Building in downtown San Luis Obispo, featuring wine, martinis and delicacies from Central Coast restaurants.

OTHER FESTIVAL EVENTS

On Saturday, March 10, amateur filmmakers will take to the streets in downtown San Luis Obispo for the 4th annual **Movie in a Day Marathon**, competing to make a short film in only seven hours, from start to finish. Completed films and prizes will be presented on Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m. at the Downtown Cinemas in San Luis Obispo.

On Saturday morning, the SLOIFF will celebrate young filmmakers at the **Filmmakers of Tomorrow Youth Filmmaking Competition**, with a screening of short films by kids from first grade through high school, and cash prizes for winning films from all over the country.

On Sunday, March 11, the **Central Coast Filmmakers Showcase** will again highlight some of the best films produced by local filmmakers, screened at venues all over San Luis Obispo County.

For the sixth year, SLOIFF will again give a portion of the festival proceeds to fund a scholarship for a promising young film student at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. The 2011/2012 recipient, set designer Kevin Houlihan, will be in attendance with his thesis film, *Bosco's Guitar*, screening on Saturday and Sunday.

SLOIFF TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION

The SLOIFF is headquartered in the Davidson's Furniture Building at 669 Higuera St. (next to Kreuzberg Cafe) and will host the **Closing Night reception** and **Central Coast Filmmaker Awards** on Sunday at 6:30 p.m. It will function as the Will Call/Ticket Office from February 14 until closing day. Film passes and tickets for special events are on sale now at sloiffest.org, and at the SLOIFF HQ beginning Tuesday, February 14. [Film lineup and schedule](#) are now online and Festival Guides are being distributed throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Press credentials will be available for approved media representatives. Please contact Jamie Relth at On the Horizon Communications for more information: Jamie@thepressroom.com; (805) 773-1000. Photos and copies of festival films are available upon request.

