AHOY!

THE LI MARITIME FILM FESTIVAL SETS SAIL

QUEST FOR JUSTICE ‘Lost Girls’ shines a new light on the Gilgo Beach murders newsday.com/movies
You might have noticed them while driving around the South Shore: little tumbledown homes perched on stilts poking out of the marshland. Known as bay houses, they’re the unlikely inspiration for a film festival that begins this week in Huntington and Patchogue. If you’ve ever wondered about these simple structures, the Maritime Film Festival, which opens Sunday, should answer all your questions and then some.

“Buildings really do tell stories about the people in a community,” says Nancy Solomon, executive director of Long Island Traditions, the Port Washington not-for-profit that is presenting the festival. “A lot of times, people will look at something and not know the backstory behind it. And that’s what we’re trying to do in this film series.”

The documentary film “A World Within a World: Long Island Bay Houses,” with Brian Warasila, will kick off the Maritime Film Festival on Sunday at Cinema Arts Centre.

**BY RAFA GUZMÁN**
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**WHEN WHERE** The Maritime Film Festival runs Sunday through May 3 at Cinema Arts Centre, 423 Park Ave, Huntington, 631-423-7611, cinemaartscentre.org; and the Plaza Cinema & Media Arts Center, 20 Terry St., Patchogue, 631-438-0083, plazamac.org.

**TICKETS** $9-$17

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**Maritime movie time**

From bay houses to beach bungalows, a festival explores LI’s nautical culture.
Long Island Traditions was founded in the early 1990s to document the history of local maritime and farming culture. The organization covers a wide range of subjects, from African-American quilting to klezmer music. Solomon, who grew up near a boatyard in Mamaroneck, developed a special affinity for the bay houses and eventually wrote a book on them. When he received a call from Barbara Weber, a first-time documentarian with plans to make a movie about the little houses, Solomon arranged for Long Island Traditions to assist with the production. The resulting film, “A World Within a World,” provides an anchor for the festival, whose five titles have an overarching maritime theme and, when possible, a local connection.

“I think there’s anything to take away, it’s to make people aware of them,” Weber says of the bay houses. “There are very few places in the world that have similar structures — maybe somewhere in Sweden or in Finland. Otherwise, you can’t find these kinds of things anywhere on the planet.”

Here are the five films playing at the festival:

A WORLD WITHIN A WORLD: LONG ISLAND BAY HOUSES (Sunday at 11 a.m. at Cinema Arts Centre, 423 Park Ave., Huntington; and March 31 at 7:30 p.m. and April 4 at 11 a.m. at Plaza Cinema & Media Arts Center, 20 Terry St., Patchogue) Barbara Weber and Greg Blank’s documentary looks at the centuries-old history of these uniquely ramshackle dwellings. Produced in partnership with Long Island Traditions, the film features interviews with homeowners and historians.

DIGGERS (April 18 at 10:30 a.m. at Plaza Cinema & Media Arts Center) West Islip’s Ken Marino wrote and starred in this 2006 comedy-drama, set in his hometown, about four friends who grow up as third-generation clam diggers. The top-notch cast includes Paul Rudd, Lauren Ambrose, Ron Eldard (another Long Island native), Sarah Paulson and Maura Tierney. Directed by Katherine Dieckmann.

MAIDEN (April 26 at 11 a.m. at Cinema Arts Centre) This critically acclaimed documentary from 2019 told the story of Tracy Edwards, a young skipper who in 1989 led the first all-female crew to compete in the Whitbread Round the World Race. Among the sailors was Dawn Riley, now executive director of Oakcliff Sailing, a not-for-profit training center in Oyster Bay. Directed by Alex Holmes.

CHARLOTTE: A WOODEN BOAT STORY (April 28 at 7:30 p.m. at Plaza Cinema & Media Arts Center) The only film in the festival without a strong local connection is a documentary about Nat Benjamin, a boat-builder on Martha's Vineyard, as he embarks on building a 50-foot gaff rigged schooner. The film will be presented by Chris Hale and Kevin Weeks, of Weeks Yacht Yard in Patchogue.

THE BUNGALOWS OF ROCKAWAY (May 3 at 11 a.m. at Cinema Arts Centre) Focusing on the humble vacation-home known as the bungalow, filmmaker Jennifer Callahan (raised in Westbury and Garden City) reveals a social history of the Rockaway neighborhood and, by extension, New York City. Callahan says she received so many written responses from nostalgic bungalow dwellers — nearly 100 — that she posted them to the film’s website, thebungalowsofrockaway.com. The film will be presented by Elizabeth Logan Harris, the film’s producer, herself a bungalow owner.

From left, Ken Marino, Josh Hamilton, Ron Eldard and Paul Rudd play clam diggers in 2006’s “Diggers,” which will be shown on April 18.

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