

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONING OF THE TWIN BRIGANTINES – THE *EXY JOHNSON* and *IRVING JOHNSON*

SAN PEDRO, CA –Take part in history as the official tallships of the City of Los Angeles, the *Exy Johnson* and *Irving Johnson*, are commissioned on Friday, March 28, 2003. The ceremony will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the public landing near the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (corner of 6th Street and Harbor Boulevard in San Pedro). Mayor James Hahn and Councilwoman Janice Hahn will be present for the commissioning.

The twin 90-foot brigantines built by the Los Angeles Maritime Institute (LAMI) will also be available for public viewing and boarding on Saturday and Sunday, March 29 and 30 at the museum.

"The *Exy Johnson* and *Irving Johnson* are a great gift to both young and adult participants of the Top Sail Youth programs. This program is a positive learning experience for the community because it gives youth the opportunity to learn about on-water programs while building great relationships with their mentors," stated Mayor Hahn.

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Twin Brigantines – *Exy Johnson and Irving Johnson*

Primary construction of the vessels took place at the Los Angeles Maritime Museum and other Port of Los Angeles locations.

"Every day we see these tall ships in the Harbor, we will be reminded that they were built right here in San Pedro by volunteers, many of whom are members of the topsail Program" said Councilwoman Janice Hahn. "These ships are truly a part of our community and the opportunities that they provide to the kids of Los Angeles is priceless."

The ships are part of the TopSail Youth Program, which provides on-water, educational programs for at-risk and other youth.

Jim Gladson, TopSail founder with 27 years of experience in youth sail training programs stated, "These state-of-the-art vessels are purpose-built for the Los Angeles Maritime Institute making it possible for young people to have access to a life-changing opportunity."

Funding for the construction and operation of the vessels includes a \$1.4 million sponsorship from the Port of Los Angeles.

"The Port of Los Angeles is proud to be a partner and fully support this worthy program", stated Nicholas Tonsich, President Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners.

The *Exy Johnson and Irving Johnson* were launched on April 27, 2002. The brigantines are named in honor of the pioneering husband and wife team who had a lifelong commitment to character building, youth sail training programs.

For more information, please call LAMI at (310) 833-6055.

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