

Actor narrates short film about boat that carried Steinbeck, Ricketts

By CHRIS COUNTS

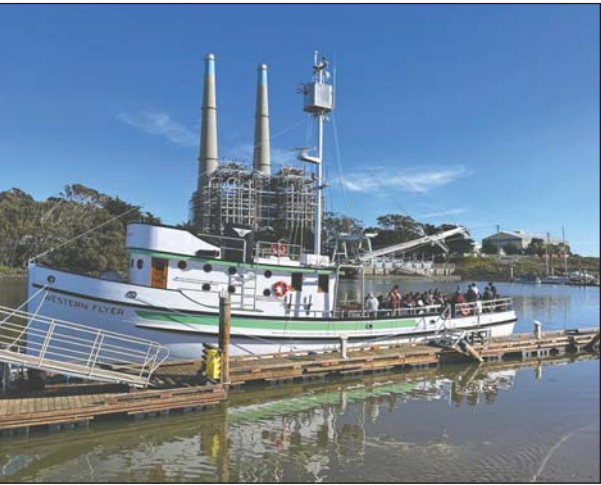
BEST KNOWN for his award-winning role as a bureaucracy-hating bureaucrat in the hit television series, “Parks and Recreation,” actor Nick Offerman narrates a new short film that chronicles the history of the Western Flyer, which some consider to be the world’s most famous fishing boat. Offerman, it turns out, is a master woodworker who builds boats in his spare time — just like his character, Ron Swanson, did in “Parks and Recreation.”

In early November, the Western Flyer — which carried writer John Steinbeck and marine biologist Ed “Doc” Ricketts on their historic voyage to the Sea of Cortez in 1940 — made its long-awaited return to Monterey, where it was greeted by hundreds of jubilant residents.

The Flyer floats again

The nine-minute film follows the boat’s journey over eight decades — from its heyday as a research vessel in the mid-20th century, to its less than dignified role as a sinking channel marker in the early 2010s, to the sparkling renovation that preceded its homecoming journey to Monterey five months ago. The makeover cost \$6 million and took eight years to complete.

Built in Tacoma in 1937, the Western Flyer was



PHOTO/WESTERN FLYER FOUNDATION

Considered by some to be the world’s most famous fishing boat, the Western Flyer made its long-awaited return to Monterey in November.

launched the same year. In 1940, Ricketts and Steinbeck chartered the 77-foot-long purse seiner for a six-week trip to the Gulf of California. The journey to collect samples of marine life led to two books by Steinbeck: “Sea of Cortez” came out in 1941, while “The Log from the Sea of Cortez” was published in 1951.

The film was released Feb. 27 — on what would have been Steinbeck’s 122nd birthday.

The executive director of the Western Flyer Foundation, which played a key role in making the boat seaworthy again, Sherry Flumerfelt said she was “thrilled” by Offerman’s offer to narrate the film and share the boat’s story

with a wider audience. Besides the acclaim he’s received for “Parks and Recreation,” he won an Emmy Award in January for his work in the film, “The Last of Us.”

“Not only is Nick a hilarious and much-loved celebrity, but he also happens to be an incredible writer, a

woodworker, and even a boat builder,” Flumerfelt said. “He’s the perfect fit for this project, and we had so much fun making this film with him.”

To watch the movie, which is free, visit westernflyer.org/nick-offerman-film.




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