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**TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE FOR NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S 'REAL PIRATES' EXHIBITION  
OPENING AT THE FRANKLIN ON MAY 31**

***Interactive Exhibition Will Showcase Treasure and Artifacts from First Fully Authenticated  
Pirate Ship Discovered in U.S. Waters***

**PHILADELPHIA** (May 5, 2008) — Tickets go on sale today for “Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the *Whydah* from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship,” a touring exhibition organized by National Geographic and Arts and Exhibitions International (AEI) LLC that will make its northeast debut Saturday, May 31, at The Franklin in Philadelphia. From the organizers of the recent blockbuster exhibition “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs,” the exhibition will explore early 18<sup>th</sup>-century piracy with more than 200 artifacts recovered from the ocean floor.

“Real Pirates” will relate the true story of the *Whydah* — a real pirate ship that sank off the coast of Cape Cod nearly 300 years ago — and will showcase treasure chests of jewelry, coins and gold, weaponry such as cannons, pistols, and knives, and a partial replica of the ship that visitors can board. “Real Pirates” will provide visitors with an unprecedented glimpse into the unique economic, political and social circumstances of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Caribbean. The exhibition will be highlighted by the compelling stories of the diverse people whose lives converged on the vessel during its journeys as a slave ship and then a pirate ship before it sank in a fierce storm off the coast of Cape Cod, Mass. on April 26, 1717.

When the *Whydah* was located by underwater explorer Barry Clifford in 1984, it became the first fully authenticated pirate ship to be discovered in American waters. Clifford continues to actively excavate the wreck site and brings more treasures to the surface every year.

“Discovering the *Whydah* was the most exciting moment in my career,” said Clifford. “The sheer volume of artifacts the *Whydah* carried, from more than 50 other ships captured by the pirate captain Sam Bellamy and his men, provides a rare window into the otherwise mysterious world of 18<sup>th</sup>-century pirates. I see this exhibition as the culmination of my many years of work. Most importantly, it is a chance to bring the real story of pirates to the public as it's never been told before — through real objects last touched by real pirates.”

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“Real Pirates” will relate the stories of four members of the *Whydah* crew — real people who ended up on the same pirate ship for very different reasons — such as John King, the youngest known pirate on board the *Whydah*, who was believed to be younger than 11 at the time of the shipwreck. John insisted on taking up with the pirate crew despite his mother’s objections after Bellamy seized the ship they were traveling on.

A dozen multimedia galleries will showcase the reality of the slave trade in West Africa and the economic prosperity in the Caribbean in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *Whydah*’s journey, the ship’s capture by Bellamy, the violent storm that sank the ship, its discovery by Clifford, and the recovery and conservation of its artifacts.

“Real Pirates brings to life the stories, adventure and hardships of an era in American history in a way that captivates the imagination of the whole family,” said Dr. Dennis Wint, president and CEO of The Franklin. “We’re excited to bring to Philadelphia another treasure of an exhibit that provides an intersection between history and science.”

Artifacts on display will include pirate dress items, daily objects used aboard the ship, weaponry, jewelry and treasure from all over the world, including authentic coins that visitors can touch. One of the most striking artifacts that will be on view is the ship’s bell, inscribed “Whydah Galley 1716,” which was used to authenticate the shipwreck site as that of the *Whydah*.

Philadelphia is the second of 10 cities the exhibition will visit. The exhibition began its five-and-a-half-year U.S. tour at Cincinnati Museum Center last summer.

### ***Whydah* History**

The three-masted, 300-ton galley *Whydah* was built as a slave ship in London in 1715 and represented the most advanced technology of her day. She was easy to maneuver, unusually fast and, to protect her cargo, heavily armed. She was built to transport human captives from the West Coast of Africa to the Caribbean, but only made one such voyage before being captured by pirates.

In February 1717, after the slaves were sold in the Caribbean, the *Whydah* was captured off the Bahamas by Sam Bellamy, one of the boldest and most successful pirates of his day. Bellamy and his crew hoisted the Jolly Roger — the slave ship was now a pirate ship.

Just two months later, on April 26, 1717, in one of the worst nor’easters ever recorded, the *Whydah*, packed with plunder from more than 50 captured ships, sank off the Massachusetts coast. All but two of the 146 people on board drowned.

“This was a unique period in our history,” said Jeffrey Bolster, professor of early American and Caribbean history at the University of New Hampshire. “Through the cache of artifacts brought to the surface by Clifford and his team, we see a world generally undisclosed, one in which the Caribbean was the economic center and values were very different, an era before civil rights, before individual liberties and before democracy was institutionalized. Without the slave trade and the wealth of the region, piracy would not have existed. This is a story of the making of America — a true story more powerful than fiction.”

Bolster is a member of an advisory panel composed of academic and other scholarly experts that was created by exhibition organizers to review and provide feedback on proposed content for the exhibition.

In 1984, nearly 270 years after the *Whydah* sank, Clifford found the first remains of the ship. In a recovery operation that spanned more than two decades, Clifford and his team have brought up thousands of artifacts, not only gold and silver, but everyday objects that shed light on this tumultuous period of American and world history.

#### **Ticket Information**

The exhibit will be open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays; 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays; and 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Sundays.

Tickets are \$23.25, with drastically discounted rates for museum members (\$7/adult and \$6/child). Tickets and exhibition information are available at 1-877-TFI-TIXS, [www.piratesexhibit.com](http://www.piratesexhibit.com) or [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu). Tickets for groups of 15 or more are available at discounted rates at 1-800.285.0684. Advance tickets are timed and dated, and advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended.

#### **About National Geographic**

The National Geographic Society is one of the world’s largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to “increase and diffuse geographic knowledge,” the Society works to inspire people to care about the planet. It reaches more than 300 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, National Geographic, and four other magazines; National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; radio programs; films; books; DVDs; maps; and interactive media. National Geographic has funded more than 8,700 scientific research projects and supports an education program combating geographic illiteracy. For more information, visit [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com).

#### **About Arts and Exhibitions International**

A division of Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), AEI was founded in 2003 by president John Norman and international vice president Andres Numhauser. AEI currently produces the award-winning exhibition “Diana: A Celebration” in association with the Althorp Estate in the United Kingdom as well as the traveling blockbuster exhibition “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs.” Norman and Numhauser have nearly 40 years’ combined experience in the entertainment and exhibition business, working over the years on such projects as “Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit” and “Saint Peter and the Vatican: The Legacy of the Popes.” The company has relationships with the most important museums in the world and has presented traveling exhibitions on four continents. For more information, log onto [www.artsandexhibitions.com](http://www.artsandexhibitions.com).

AEG is one of the leading sports and entertainment presenters in the world. AEG, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Anschutz Corporation, owns or controls a collection of companies including facilities such as STAPLES Center, Kodak THEATRE (as operator) and The Home Depot Center, numerous sports franchises throughout the world including the NHL’s Los Angeles Kings in addition to AEG LIVE and its live entertainment affiliates and subsidiaries. The company recently was selected to fully develop the 28-acre Millennium Dome and adjacent property located in the eastern part of London along the Thames River and will create new arenas within the Millennium Dome, on a 50-acre site in the heart of Berlin and in Kansas City, Mo., as well as stadium projects in Bridgeview, Ill., and New Jersey.

#### **About The Franklin**

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania’s most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology. One of only four cities in the U.S. chosen to host “*Tutankhamun and The Golden Age of Pharaohs*,” The Franklin Institute has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years, welcoming over 1.75 million visitors in 2007. For more information: [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).

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