

Hanks fans in heaven with 'Perdition' filming

■ Tom Hanks visits West Dundee:

Hundreds turn out to greet star, see filming of scene for 1930s-era gangster film

By Peter Denk and Geneva White
STAFF WRITERS

WEST DUNDEE — After two days of standing behind barricades and yellow police tape struggling for a view of Tom Hanks, hundreds of people flooded the movie set shortly after filming ended late Tuesday afternoon.

While not everyone was able to see Hanks or the film's Oscar-winning director, Sam Mendes, onlookers still had fun taking photographs of the set and playing with the fake snow that had helped transform West Dundee's Main Street into 1930s Rock Island for filming of a part of the movie, which is based on the book, *The Road to Perdition*.

"To have something this big happen in this town and to walk around on the movie set right after they've finished filming is exhilarating," said Susan Walsh of West Dundee, who had her picture taken while she held a handful of fake snow.

Although officials with DreamWorks, the film's producers, were patient as residents trudged through the aftermath of the excitement that invaded their town, crews eventually asked people to move away so the cleanup could begin.

Despite the good-spirited but slightly unruly

end to filming, no one was arrested. Police escorted one young man away from the filming location Tuesday morning after he charged the set, saying he "just wanted to see a movie star" in broken Spanish. No charges were filed.

"The crowds have been real good," said West Dundee Police Chief Dick Lovett, whose officers have been working extra-long shifts Monday and Tuesday.

Screams for Hanks

While Monday's crowds were mesmerized by the fake snow, a fleet of 35 antique cars and dozens of extras dressed in 1930s-era clothing, Tuesday was all about Hanks.

While all the superstar actor's scenes took place inside a building, fans clamored to catch a glimpse of him as he walked back and forth from a trailer to the set, screaming every time he came into sight.

Hanks plays an Irish hit man in the movie, which is set in Depression-era Rock Island.

A few fans who were in the right place at the right time were able to talk with the actor and snap a few pictures. Lori Thorson of West Dundee was one of the lucky ones who got to pose with Hanks and shake his hand.

"The kids saw him and started running at him, and so did I. He was great. He said, 'Let the kids in,'" Thorson said, showing a booklet of freshly developed photos of Hanks posing with about a dozen children. "He was very, very friendly."

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Thorson, along with the members of Girl Scout Troop 98, baked 43 dozen cookies to give to the film crew.

"We wanted to do something to welcome them to the area," she said.

While hopes were high among local business owners that Hanks might pay them a visit, his time was too short, DreamWorks publicist Amanda Brand said.

"He has not got the time," she said. "Every minute he has is ours."

For lunch, Hanks dined on food provided by the Hollywood catering firm For-Stars, Brand said.

Great for business

Although Hanks did not eat at his restaurant, Michael Burns, manager at Emmett's Tavern & Brewing Co., said the actor signed a copy of his menu. Burns said the movie has been great for business.

DreamWorks officials have eaten at Emmett's on an almost daily basis, Burns said. He said he thinks the benefits of the movie will keep coming to downtown West Dundee.

"I think a lot of people will want to come and see where Tom Hanks was," Burns said. "When the movie comes out, there should be a resurgence of interest, too."

Ellen Meadows of West Dundee made a quilt for everyone on the movie crew to sign. Once the quilt is returned to her with the signatures, she plans to donate it to the village.

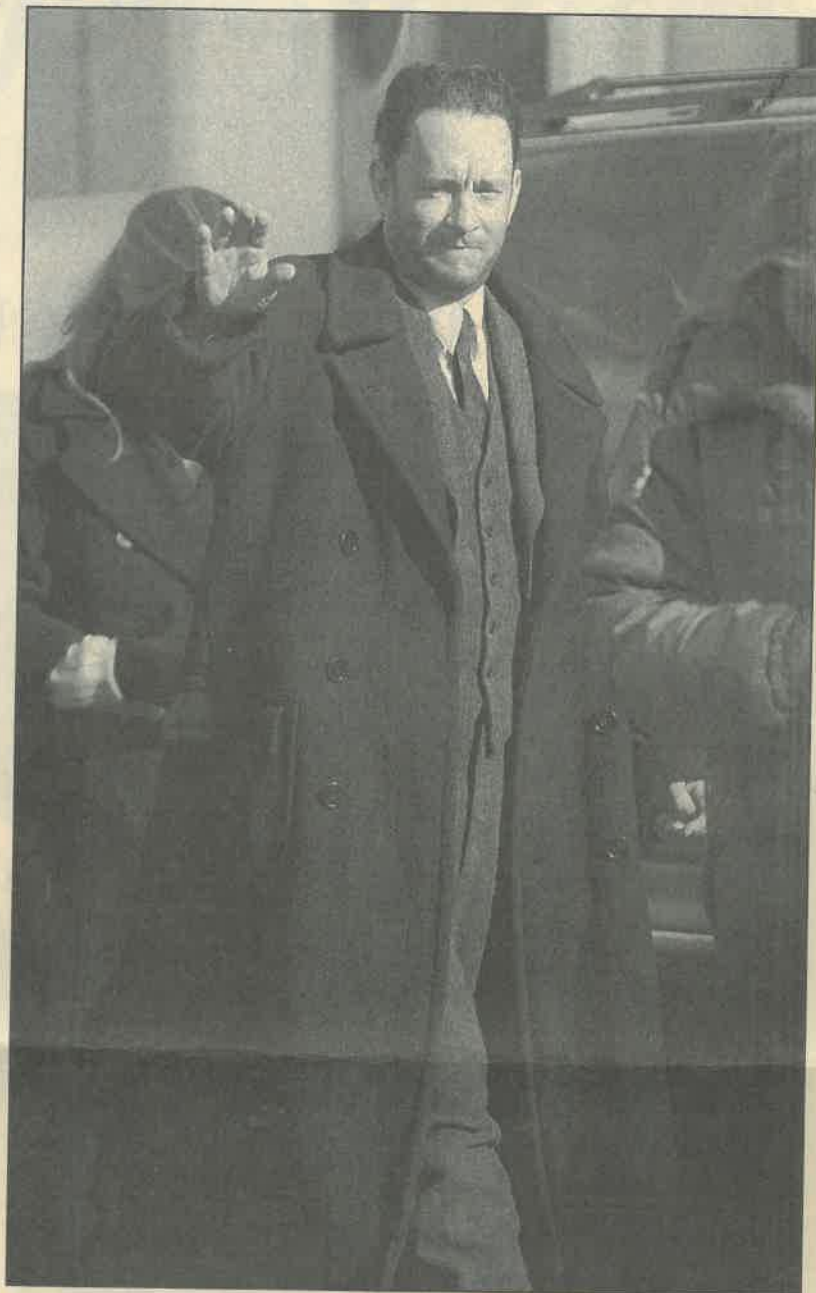
"I thought, 'What a good idea to have a remembrance for the village of this great opportunity we're allowed to have,'" she said.

Dave Fellberg of East Dundee, who had been watching the filming since about 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, showed off some of the snapshots of Hanks he'd taken. Fellberg said Hanks took the time to talk to a few people.

"Somebody asked him if he liked the weather," Fellberg said. "He said he liked the city and he liked the weather."

Rosanna DiChristafano of West Dundee said she didn't expect to be able to see Hanks on Tuesday and was a little surprised when she did.

"I just kind of turned my head



MICHAEL SMART / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tom Hanks waves to fans in West Dundee as he leaves his trailer to shoot another scene for the movie based on the book *The Road to Perdition*. Portions of the movie were filmed in West Dundee, and Hanks, the film's star, was in town Tuesday to film a scene. Hundreds of Hanks' fans lined up to get a peek at the star and watch the last day of shooting in West Dundee.

and I saw a guy in coat and all the kids were running and he just said, 'Hi,'" she said.

When filming was completed about 4:30 p.m., anticipation of seeing Hanks one more time spread through the crowd. He eventually appeared, waved at the crowd one last time and jumped in a black sport utility vehicle.

Elizabeth Burchfield, 12, of Elgin, was beaming with excitement as she walked away from the set after seeing Hanks leave.

"Everybody kept saying, 'Here he comes.' Then he just drove by," said Elizabeth's mom, Caroline Burchfield.

And just like that, Hollywood left West Dundee.