

Residents flock to film tryout here

By **ANTHONY GAREL-FRANTZEN**

Staff Writer

SKOKIE Hundreds of local residents showed up for a casting session held Monday, Nov. 7, at Centrest in hopes of landing a bit part in "Skokie," the CBS made-for-TV movie docudrama that will retell the village's efforts in 1977-78 to stop a neo-Nazi march.

The casting session drew more than 1,200 people, according to Debbie Rosen of Rosen-Knutsen Casting, 100 E. Ohio, Chicago. Rosen and her colleague, Susan Knutsen, spent seven hours Monday briefly interviewing each applicant, many of whom were lured to the audition by the glamour of appearing in a major television network film.

Rosen said early Tuesday, Nov. 11, that a final tally on the number of actors chosen from the audition had not yet been completed.

THE FILM, SCHEDULED to air next spring, will describe the experiences of a fictional family and Holocaust survivors living in Skokie during

1977-78. Filming is expected to begin Friday, Nov. 14 and last a month while crews from Titus Productions, Inc. shoot scenes in and around village hall.

The filming work could net local merchants \$500,000 worth of business, according to the Illinois Film Office. And for those lucky residents chosen to play such minor non-speaking roles as waiters, diners, court reporters and others, it means \$30 a day in cash, some fame and the chance to rub elbows with some Hollywood actors. But not all who came Monday were flirting with the fame and money.

"I think the movie will serve a good cause," said Irwin Becker of Lincolnwood, one of those lined up Monday. Becker, 70, served as a pharmacist in field hospitals during World War II and helped assist in liberating concentration camp victims. Like many at the casting session, Becker said he wants to help out in whatever way he can.

ANOTHER RESIDENT WHO came to support the movie's attempt to illustrate the village's fight against the

planned Nazi march was Frances Sales of Skokie.

"I'm here because I feel strongly about it," she said. "There isn't one family who wasn't touched by the whole Holocaust situation." But Sales, 51, also admitted she was "excited" by the prospect of grabbing a part in the movie.

Casting representatives Susan Knutsen and Debbie Rosen, who had said they were looking for a wide cross-section of people, got just what they wanted. Retired senior citizens, college students, housewives and even executives showed up. Applicants filled out a card for background information, included a photograph and then spent only a couple minutes talking to Rosen or Knutsen. A few applicants were told to return for an interview later, but most were told the casting company would phone those chosen, by mid-week.

SOME APPLICANTS didn't take the audition too seriously. Ethel Boroff of Lincolnwood seemed quite relaxed

about it. "We were sitting and talking about it (the audition) while having coffee at the 'Y' and it was on my way home so I decided to come in," Boroff said. Boroff said she hopes to get a "part in a mob scene."

Eva Burgher, 22 of Skokie, also thought "it would be fun." Burgher, whose parents were in concentration camps during World War II, thinks the movie is an "excellent idea."

Although the film will air about three years after the Nazis abandoned plans to march in Skokie, feelings about the incident still simmer among residents.

"I'm Jewish and I feel this (movie) is very important," said Beverly Goodman of Skokie. "It's very offensive that the Nazis wanted to come and cause trouble," Goodman said. Still, the glamour of cameras, lights and celebrities was the final attraction for many applicants.

"I love movies," said Lenore Bernstein of Skokie, a substitute teacher. "I've always fantasized about being in



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movies or knowing people who are in the movies," she said.

By the time filming is over, perhaps some local budding talent will have moved closer to a Hollywood career. More likely, though, those chosen will simply be \$30 or more richer for their efforts.



Hollywood hopefuls

AREA RESIDENTS TURNED OUT IN large numbers Monday, Nov. 10 to audition for minor roles in the CBS film 'Skokie', which will begin filming this week. (Photo by Jorie Gracen)