



Extras file down a stairwell in the Capitol after a morning rehearsal. The extras were able to watch as Sally Fields rehearsed her lines wearing curlers.

Springfield goes HOLLYWOOD

Photos and story by
MATT STENSLAND
The Daily Illini

Springfield met Tinsel Town during finals week as Metro Goldwyn Mayer Studios took over the state Capitol to film the end of *Legally Blonde 2: Red White and Blonde*.

On Dec. 18, the second of a three-day shoot, *Legally Blonde 2* star Reese Witherspoon pleaded with Congress in a 4 1/2 minute speech to pass legislation banning the testing

of cosmetics on animals.

Location Manager Kristi Frankeneimer arrives at 5:30 a.m. Standing outside for a cigarette, she looks nervously at the sky. It has been raining all night and the winds are starting to pick up.

"Fifty-eight degrees with tornado warnings," she hears over her radio. It's a mild Midwest December, something the Los Angeles-based crew seems thankful for.

Today will be the busiest day of shooting with 425 extras arriving

to play the roles of Congressmen, the media, and police officers.

Open auditions for the extras were held the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Bob Hudgins of the Illinois Film Office said 1,600 people showed up for the auditions and were cast based on "just looks."

As Frankeneimer places bets with a lighting technician on when the first shoot will be, the extras start arriving. Crew members hand out paperwork

more **MOVIE** on 16

Springfield goes Hollywood with *Legally Blonde 2*

MOVIE from 14

as the extras are herded through wardrobe into a holding area.

Extras, and Springfield natives, Gary Kerr and George Fairchild sit down to fill out their forms and await orders from the crew. Kerr is expecting another long day.

Kerr was cast for the first day of shooting and said 80 percent of the time he spent waiting. He has a book ready to read while Fairchild scrambles to find a newspaper to keep himself entertained.

Kerr said his daughter scammed him into trying out for a role. The hourly rate as an extra — \$6.75 — is

nowhere near the pay scale for his day job, practicing law.

But if extras are lucky enough to snag a speaking role, the pay jumps to a \$675 bonus. Frankeneimer said many people in Los Angeles make their living playing extras in movies and television.

Kerr said curiosity did him in; it's "really just a fun experience."

"The irony is that I ran for State Rep. in Illinois and now I get selected for this thing," he said.

Fairchild likens the role of an extra — and the hours of sitting around — to his days in the military.

"You hurry up and wait," he said. Long air-conditioning tubes snake

up the side of the Capitol building into the main gallery where the shoot takes place. Frankeneimer said the temperature inside the gallery can become unbearable with all the lights. A spectator fainted while watching the shoot Dec. 17, she said, giving her little choice but to close the set for liability reasons.

It is the first time the Capitol building has been used for a movie shoot. According to Frankeneimer, a movie production can kick a city's econo-

my through the roof, and all of the lower 48 states wanted the movie shot in their capitol.

"We bring in a lot of money ... they want us," she said.

Illinois's capitol was chosen because of its beauty and its interior resemblance to the U.S. Capitol she added.

"It was kind of like a beauty pageant with the entire 48 states," Frankeneimer said.

"It was kind of like a beauty pageant with the entire 48 states,"

— **Kristi Frankeneimer**
location manager

Jan Slingsby of Riverton, one of the more qualified extras working on set, has minor acting experience, as well as commercials and voiceovers. She said the film is a good thing for the city, and she wanted to make sure they had all the help they needed.

Secretary of State's office employee Edie Long says being an extra allows her to "check it off the list of life goals to do."

Katy Stratton, a Springfield State Board of Education employee, was hired as a production assistant to help herd the extras.

"I haven't decided — taking care of elementary school kids or 400 adults — which is harder," she said.