

The stars came out in Guilford

Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones film movie at food center, book store

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By Lisa Reisman
Special to the Times

GUILFORD - It was just an ordinary Tuesday morning in Guilford. Except it wasn't. At approximately 10:45 a.m., a hush fell over the crowd congregated on the southeast corner of Guilford Green, in front of Page Hardware, and along Whitfield Street, some of whom had been around since early morning. The doors of Guilford Food Center had just opened. The lights set up on a filming truck seemed to shine brighter on the overcast day.

Someone whispered something about Tommy Lee Jones, the Academy Award-winning actor best known for his starring roles in "Coal Miner's Daughter," "The Fugitive," and "No Country for Old Men" who also happened to have been former Vice President Al Gore's Harvard College roommate. Reportedly, he had just slipped into the grocery store from the alley.

"But where's Meryl?" another asked.

As if on cue, a white van drew up, the passenger door opened, and a trim, blonde woman with porcelain skin emerged. If she hadn't been wearing a casual pants suit and waving to rounds of applause and cheers, she might have been long-suffering factory worker Karen Silkwood. Add six inches to her medium height and she could pass for the

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The movie "Great Hope Springs" with Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones and Steve Carell filmed in Guilford Tuesday. Meryl Streep can be seen filming inside the Guilford Food Market. Photo below, lighting technicians work outside the Guilford Food Market. Photos by Mara Lavitt.

famed chef Julia Child. Replace her warm smile with a sour grimace and her outfit with a sleek Prada suit and Hermes black suede pumps and she would be Miranda Priestly, icy editor-in-chief of Runway fashion magazine.

Even after just a glimpse of the woman widely regarded as one of the most talented and respected actresses of the modern era and renowned for her chameleon-like genius, most lingered. Sure, it was a Tuesday morning and there were things to do. And yes, there were the

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squash, gourds, and apples on the outside vegetable stand: the one constant on a film set is waiting and more waiting.

But there was star power in the heavy, autumn air. There were, specifically, a total of 19 Academy Award nomina-

tions and three Academy Awards filming a scene for "Great Hope Springs," also starring the actor and comedian Steve Carell, in the very aisles where many of the onlookers did their shopping.

"Meryl Streep, she's larger than life," said

Ben Kuropat, who was encamped on the Green, camera in hand. His wife Cathy, having staked out a front-row view in front of Village Chocolatier, was still shaking her head in awe. "We don't go to the theater much anymore, but if it's Meryl

Streep, it has to be on the big screen," she said. "And to see her filming a movie in our own town—wow."

For Betsy Sterzel, who sat on a bench across Page Hardware, Tommy Lee Jones was the draw. "He's just an amazing

actor," she said, citing in particular "The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada" and "In the Valley of Elah."

Jean Johnson for her part put it simply. "I'm just here to get an ice cream cone and check out two of my favorite

actors," she said, before heading in the direction of Breakwater Books, where the next scene would be shot.

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