

**From Hollywood**

# Peter the Hermit dies in Hollywood

By BOB THOMAS  
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HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Years ago, he was the resident eccentric, a curiosity for tourists to stare at and natives to shake their heads over.

But when Peter the Hermit died last week at the age of 90, the event was scarcely noticed. Peculiar characters had become so profuse on Hollywood Boulevard that few paid attention to the spindly legged codger with the flowing beard.

For almost 50 years, Peter Howard—that was his real name—plodded up and down the Boulevard ignoring the taunts of Philistines. Unlike the younger bearded types who now frequent the area, Peter was immaculate. He wore freshly laundered white duck pants and a white T-shirt, sometimes a white robe.

As a lad I had often seen Peter the Hermit on his daily

prowls. I had only one encounter with him: five years ago when I sought him out for an interview. It was not easy to do, for Peter resisted the nonsense of the so-called civilized world, and that included publicity.

Finally a meeting was arranged in his one-room home on Ivar Avenue, a short distance from the roaring Hollywood Freeway.

"I'm ageless," he snapped when I inquired of his age. And indeed, with pink face and patriarchal white hair and beard, he might have been 65 or 105. He admitted to having been born in Limerick, sailing the seven seas as a young man and studying the religions of the world—"They're all stepping stones."

He claimed to have come to Hollywood because of its promise. But he was soon disillusioned by what he found.

"I never call it Hollywood," he railed. "I call it Follywood! The movies could have created the coming church, the universal language, but that promise was never realized.

"Follywood! It has ruined more homes than siege guns. The movies show nothing but war, crime and sex. Follywood never gave anything to anybody. All the moviemakers do is fool the people. Well, movie people mean nothing to me.

They're shysters, all of them!"

Peter's bitterness may have stemmed from the fact that the movies had passed him by. In his early years in Hollywood he had earned a fair living as an atmosphere actor in films, especially Biblical epics like "The King of Kings." He lived as a squatter on land in the nearby hills, where he tended goats and chickens.

The hills filled with houses, and Peter the Hermit was

forced to live in the city, occupying one rented room after another. Movie jobs dried up, and he subsisted on government pensions.

In his last years, Peter the Hermit spent less time strolling the Boulevard. He seemed appalled by the scruffy young hedonists who crowded the sidewalks. Peter spent more and more of his time high in his beloved hills, where he contemplated the follies of Hollywood and of mankind.

Last Friday he was once again slodding down Hollywood Boulevard as he had done thousands of days before. He collapsed on the sidewalk and died of a cerebral hemorrhage at a county hospital.

"This is my prophecy," Peter the Hermit had told me when I visited his room. He pointed to a framed, typewritten passage from Zeph. 1:14. "The great day of the Lord is near . . ."

## Wiretap authority to prevent crime

WASHINGTON (AP) — Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell revealed Friday in sketching plans for a stepped-up attack on organized crime that new wiretap authority has been used in less than a dozen instances so far.

He also testified that the growth of organized crime "probably has not been arrested" in the last decade but that he hopes this situation will be turned around with the program the Justice Department is developing.

Mitchell told a Senate judiciary subcommittee on criminal laws and procedure that in general existing laws appear adequate, that the need is for more funds and more manpower.

He said he now is nearing completion of a top priority

study of the federal program to combat organized crime and expects to submit recommendations to President Nixon within three weeks.

Sen. John L. McClellan, D-Ark., the subcommittee chairman, asked if he could count on the department's study being completed within 30 days.

"If we don't," Mitchell replied, "we're likely to incur the wrath of the gentleman in the White House."

Mitchell's predecessor, former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, refused to make use of the authority to wiretap under court orders. He and former President Lyndon B. Johnson opposed this part of last year's crime control legislation.

## Sam Snead to play in Azalea open

WILMINGTON (AP) — The 21st annual Azalea Open Golf Tournament field at Wilmington next month will include Sam Snead, sponsors announced Wednesday.

Snead has not competed at Wilmington since he withdrew on the eve of the tournament several years ago, complaining of a back injury.

The veteran has played only a limited number of tournaments annually since reaching senior pro status.

The Wilmington tournament is scheduled April 17-20 at the Cape Fear Country Club, with a purse of \$35,000.

## Police would have more authority

RALEIGH (AP) — A police officer would have the right to halt and question persons they encounter under suspicious circumstances under a bill introduced in the North Carolina House Tuesday.

Rep. Thomas Strickland, D-Wayne, sponsored the measure which he said is similar to the "stop and frisk" laws in effect in New York and Illinois.

The bill also provides that if

an officer has stopped a person to question him and the officer has reason to believe that he is in danger of life or limb he may



Engaged to GM executive

Kelly Harmon (above), 21, daughter of former Michigan All-American halfback Tom Harmon, is engaged to John Z. De Lorean, 41, a General Motors vice president, his office has revealed. No date has been set for the wedding. Harmon is now a sportscaster for ABC. (AP Wirephoto)

## Negro GI found innocent of charges by court-martial

By AL LANIER  
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COLUMBIA (AP) — An Army major, acting as judge and jury, found a teen-age Negro soldier innocent Tuesday of distributing propaganda against the Vietnam War among fellow recruits at Ft. Jackson.

Pvt. Tommy Woodfin, 19, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was acquitted by Maj. Edgar M. Peters following a summary court martial.

Woodfin, a native of Petersburg, Va., was charged with violating an order by circulating without permission a petition requesting that soldiers be allowed to hold an open discussion on legal and moral aspects of the Vietnam conflict.

Maj. Peters returned the inno-

cent verdict after denying motions by defense attorney Howard Moore of Atlanta to dismiss the charges against Woodfin on constitutional grounds.

Woodfin could have received a maximum of 30 days at hard labor and forfeiture of two-thirds of one months pay, or \$41, if he had been convicted. A summary court martial is the lowest ranked of three military tribunals, corresponding to magistrate's court in civilian life.

A group known as "GI's United Against The War in Vietnam" has spearheaded an anti-war movement at Ft. Jackson, the sprawling recruit training depot where about 20,000 military personnel are assigned. An unsuccessful effort was made to

present a petition calling for an open discussion on the war to Brig. Gen. James F. Hollingsworth, the post commander.

Two soldiers were ordered to return to their barracks when they showed up at post headquarters with a petition containing about 300 names. An Army spokesman read a statement saying the Army did not recognize "collective bargaining" procedures.

Testifying as prosecution witnesses against Woodfin were Capt. John Walter Blackwood of Columbia, commander of Woodfin's training company, and Pfc. Wayne Hampton McDowell of Charlotte, N.C., and John E. Ridgeway of Atlanta.



Singer's daughter and husband

Melissa Ann Montgomery, daughter of singer Dinah Shore poses with her husband, actor-producer David Lee Shore, following their wedding in Beverly Hills, Calif. The ceremony was performed at the home of Miss Shore with Supreme Court Justice Stanley Mosk reading the vows.