

You'd never guess who is buried here

Among the more interesting grave sites in Oakwood Cemetery is that of actor Peter Deuel.

By **AMY CAVALIER**

Messenger Post Staff

Jackie Poslusny has met people from various places throughout Europe and even the United States thanks to an actor she's never met. Peter Deuel grew up in Penfield and went on to become a movie star in Hollywood. Growing up, he lived in the house at 2160 Penfield Road. His father ran a doctor's office out of half the house.

Poslusny operated her own business, Northfield Coffee, in that house from 1998-2002. She had never heard of Deuel until some members of his fan club came in to visit his childhood home.

"The television series is still playing in Europe," she said, "so he's still a movie star – even though he's dead – in Europe."

Deuel had a small guest appearance on "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.," as well as on "Gidget." He is better known for his role as outlaw Hannibal Heyes in "Alias Smith and Jones," a Western TV series about two outlaws trying to earn amnesty.

Deuel died in 1971 and he was buried in Penfield's Oakwood Cemetery alongside several family members.

He is not the only interesting character buried among the more than 10,000 graves in Penfield's largest cemetery. According to town historian Kathy Kanauer, Oakwood Cemetery was founded in 1812. The town's cemetery originally was located on the southwest corner of the Four Corners. When a church was built on that land, graves were removed and relocated to Oakwood Cemetery.

On Sunday, June 17, Kanauer

Upcoming cemetery tour

Join town historian Kathy Kanauer for a tour of Oakwood Cemetery at 7 p.m. Friday, June 15. The tour is free and open to the public. This annual event sponsored by the Penfield Heritage Association will highlight the graves of some of Penfield's founding fathers in honor of Father's Day.

will lead a guided tour of the burial ground. In honor of Father's Day, Kanauer will point out the graves of Penfield's founding fathers, such as Daniel Penfield and Samuel Rich, who came to what was then Northfield in 1799 to visit two sisters in Pittsford.

"He walked here from Massachusetts, slept out in the open and hunted what he ate," said Kanauer.

While here, Rich spotted some land he wanted to buy.

"He walked back to Massachusetts to ask for his father's permission and then walked all the way back to buy it," she said.

Rich built a small gristmill with Andrew Lincoln just over the Perinton border.

Another plot of interest at Oakwood is that of Timothy Bush. A blacksmith, Bush is a relative of President George W. Bush. Kanauer said Timothy Bush does not have a headstone, but his wife and daughter do. He is buried with them.

As for Deuel's grave, Kanauer said, fans still send flowers.

She said it reminds her of the grave of Doors lead singer Jim Morrison, with people making vigils to the grave year-round.

While Deuel's death was ruled a suicide, Poslusny said, some fans believe it might have been accidental. He died at the height of his career at age 31.

She said many local people with a connection to Deuel have also shared their stories with her. A daughter of the Nulton



STAFF PHOTOS/JACK HALEY

Penfield town historian Kathy Kanauer looks for some of the more notable headstones in Oakwood Cemetery on Wednesday, June 6. She will lead a hike of the cemetery, pointing out Penfield's founding fathers, on Friday, June 15. The hike starts at the flagpole at 7 p.m.



Among the more interesting folks buried in Oakwood Cemetery is former Hollywood actor Peter Deuel. He was raised in the house at 2160 Penfield Road.

family, which owned Nulton funeral home at the time of Deuel's death, told Poslusny that when Deuel was laid to rest, many famous movie stars showed up to pay their respects.

Poslusny never met Deuel but she said she is "enthralled by his

story" and thinks more should be done to recognize the once-famous actor who put Penfield on the map. She said she is fascinated by the number of people who remember Deuel.

"I guess I'm a fan of the fans in a way," she said. "There must be a really good spirit in there."