

RHS grad makes top 20 in NYC film fest

By Monica Crowe

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Matthew Ramsaur, a burgeoning cinematographer from Ruston, recently had his film *Drunk Driving* accepted as one of the top 20 entries in New York City's Independent Features Film Festival, which he will attend with his father. *Drunk Driving* will be screened at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Tribeca Cinema in lower Manhattan.

To be ranked as an Eagle Scout, Ramsaur was required by the organization to do something to benefit the community. With a tripod, a microphone for voice-overs and a high definition, 24 p (24 frames per second) cinema mode camera, Ramsaur filmed the top-20 entry as a service project.

A three-day enterprise turned out the 11-minute film about the dangers of drinking and driving, which was shown to the public at Lincoln Parish

Library in June 2007 and was attended by many including Mayor Dan Hollingsworth, Ramsaur said.

The film, which he wrote, organized and filmed, was given to a local drivers education coordinator for use in the program.

Ramsaur said his film should affect teens and drivers ed students more than the videos he was made to watch during his driver's education. While those films never showed the aftermath of a wreck, he said, his version depicts a body flying through a shattering windshield, a special effect that was staged with the help of a friend. *Drunk Driving* also depicts each of the bloody victims of the crash, he said.

Ramsaur has made several films over the last four years when he began experimenting with a camera and video editing.

"He always did (Ruston High



Leader photo by JESSICA WETHINGTON

Matthew Ramsaur edits his latest film on his computer at home Wednesday. His film on the dangers of drunk driving was accepted to a New York film festival.

School's cross country) end-of-the-year highlight video," his father, James Ramsaur, said. "He did an overview video for the library and did Cedar Creek's football banquet high-

light video."

In 2007, Matthew Ramsaur entered three of his original films into the Louisiana Film Festival competition, all of which were accepted. While he didn't think

he had a chance of making it into the IFF, he said he entered just to do it.

"There were so many other films," Matthew Ramsaur said. "I had a little bit of hope that maybe it would (rank) in the 20s. I never got a top selection at a big festival. It was really new to me."

Matthew Ramsaur, who has never been to New York, said he is looking forward to attending the festival.

"I'm expecting to meet people, talk to critics, get critiques on the film and just experience a bigger film festival than the previous one," he said.

Ramsaur is currently shooting an action film, which is rounding out to be 50 minutes long, he said, and will qualify as a feature film in the next festival he plans to enter. A 2008 graduate of Ruston High School, Ramsaur is considering which of three film schools he will attend.