

Markham film buff hangs out with the stars at Cannes

BY CHRISSIE O'BRIEN
Special

The Toronto Film Festival is good, but nothing like Cannes. And Markham film buff Wade Raymer should know; he recently returned from the annual star-studded gathering in France.

Mr. Raymer, 21, was able to go after winning an online contest through Showcase TV. Top prize was an all-expenses junket.

The University of Toronto film student took his parents along.

"It still hasn't registered I was in Cannes for 11 days," said Mr. Raymer, who says his interest in film began in the early 1990s when he saw Pulp Fiction.

"A woman phoned and asked me if I'd like to go to the festival, and being a right-minded person I thought this was a joke."

At Cannes the Raymers attended gala premieres, mingled with stars and cinema executives and walked the red carpet.

"If I do get into the industry it will be from the creative side. So I tried to see films I knew would be good, and the ones I knew I would never see in North America."

Mr. Raymer says he is a fan of the Toronto Film Festival, which he has been attending for at least five years. But he says it's not the same as the larger Cannes extravaganza, where he took in

close to 30 movies.

"I saw crazy Japanese films and weird Western films. I saw the movie that won the Palme d'Or (the festival's biggest prize), called The Pianist, directed by Roman Polanski.

"The Cannes trip was inspiring because no one I meet in school will ever have the experience I've had.

"The Toronto festival is about the love of cinema. Cannes is about the business of cinema."

Mr. Raymer's dream is to make films, and says his former high school teachers declared the planets were aligned right when they heard he won the prize.

"Even people in Cannes, when they heard what my interests were, said they were impressed that the right person had won."

Ruth Anne Raymer, says she was thrilled with the opportunity the adventure in France had provided for her son.

"He got to see everything he wanted to see," she said. "It was so wonderful that the person who went to Cannes has aspirations to one day be there (as part of the industry)."

Blending in on the red carpet was the trip's only challenge.

"My son had to wear a tuxedo to the premieres and we had to find one for him," said Mrs. Raymer.



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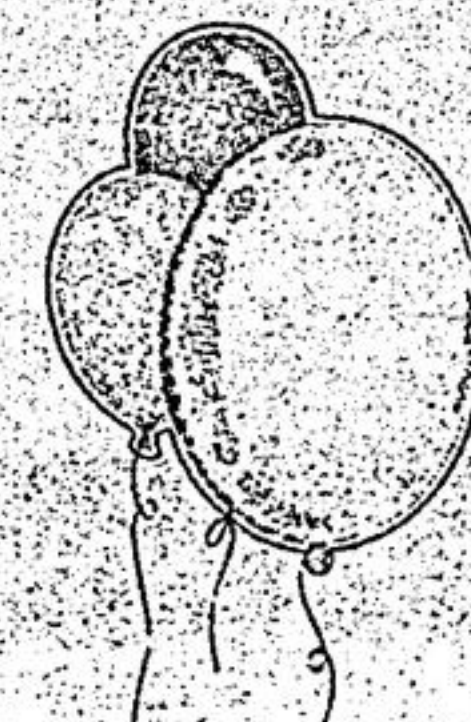
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