Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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Former Belgium resident Scott Dahm has two Emmys under his Christmas tree in Madison.

Dahm, a Cedar Grove-Belgium High School graduate who has been shooting and editing videos since he was 14, won the two coveted prizes on Nov. 18.

“I never dreamed I would have two Emmys when I’m 20,” Dahm said as he showed off the statuettes, carefully removing them from black, satin-lined boxes.

Dahm, a video editor and producer for Discover Mediaworks in Madison, won individual and group Emmys for the Chicago-Midwest Region of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences. The awards ceremony was held at the Alhambra Palace in Chicago.

Dahm won his individual Emmy for best editing of children/teen series for the educational series “Into the Outdoors” and the group Emmy for best children/teen series as coproducer for the same series.

It was the first time he was nominated for an Emmy, and he was the only nominee in the editing category who wasn’t from Chicago.

“I honestly was not expecting it,” Dahm said. “It was surreal.”

The awards show was broadcast live over the Internet so his parents Lori and Gary of the Town of Belgium and other family members watched.

“Into the Outdoors,” which airs at 10:30 a.m. on Channel 6 in Milwaukee and is aimed at middle-school students, is fun to work on, said Dahm, who joined Discover Mediaworks a year ago.

"We toss in lots of fun animations, music and editing that rocks, and the show takes off with a life of its own," he said. "I think it was the graphics and animation that impressed people.

"When you mix kids with outdoor adventure and the discovery of nature and science, that gives us an interesting blend of elements to create programs that are highly entertaining, yet still educational."

Dahm also works on Discover Mediaworks' family-oriented "Discover Wisconsin," which won an Emmy for best magazine program and airs at 10 a.m. on Channel 6, as well as commercials and corporate videos.

"This is exactly what I want to do. It's what I dreamed of doing, and it's what I plan to be doing the rest of my life," Dahm said.

Dahm started working on his craft at Portview Christian Center in Port Washington when he was 14. Jon Link, a former parish member who owned Element Media, was his mentor until Link moved to Texas.

"I shot and edited videos with him," Dahm said. "When I was 16 or 17, I bought cameras and equipment and shot weddings throughout high school."

He also shot video for Wisconsin Special Olympics and corporate clients.

All his work has been with digital photography.

"I've never touched film in my life, but there has been a lot of changes in equipment just since I started," he said. "You never stop learning."

After graduating from Cedar Grove-Belgium, Dahm attended the Madison Media Institute, where he honed his editing and video skills.

Dahm became involved in the Madison film industry and did freelance work before joining Discover Mediaworks.

The production company was started 25 years ago by Dick Rose to produce “Discover Wisconsin.”

For a 23-minute show (the length of a half-hour program, not including commercials and credits), Dahm said he views about 10 hours of content, choosing the scenes to best tell the story. All the unused footage is kept. He often uses green screens, which allow him to place people or things wherever he wants.

“Sometimes I’m alone and sometimes there’s a producer behind me,” he said. “We always throw ideas back and forth. I like collaborating with producers and seeing the stories come together and mold in the editing suite.

“Before I see anything, producers are at their desks writing the scripts and logging stories.”

Only two “Into the Outdoors” shows aired during the time frame required for this year’s Emmy awards.

Programs on dairy science, shot on a Green Bay farm that has 3,000 dairy cows, and wetlands were submitted for the awards.

“It took two weeks to edit the dairy science show,” Dahm said. “It was really graphic intense, which is what you need to grab kids’ attention in an engaging way.”

Most of Dahm’s work is done in the editing room, but he went on five or six shoots during the year.

“It’s nice to get out of the office once in a while and get a camera in my hands again,” he said.

As much as he likes the company’s educational series, Dahm said, he most enjoys working on high-end commercials.

“It’s a lot more rewarding working on one project and making it look the best you can,” he said.

“People don’t understand the work that goes into commercials. I had a crew of 35 working on a 35-second commercial.”

A commercial for SureStart Herbicide for cornfields was shot on his parents’ farm and aired in some markets during a Super Bowl game.

“I see myself doing more high-end commercial work,” said Dahm, who pays more attention to TV commercials than the programs. “I think commercials are the best thing on TV.”

His biggest lament is people who skip over commercials

“My sister has a DVR and she passes up commercials,” he said. “I tell her, ‘That’s my livelihood you just passed over.’”

His image on the big screen, Scott Dahm accepted one of two Emmys in the elaborate Alhambra Palace in Chicago.

WITH HIS TWO EMMYS on the desk, Scott Dahm worked on the award-winning series “Into the Outdoors” in his editing suite at Discover Mediaworks in Madison.