

THAT'S A WRAP: John Mark Nail (top left in the red hat) directed and wrote the film, *The Fire That Sweeps The Pine*. Above are photos taken from the set.

Delta State alum looking to make a 'Mark' in the film industry

Jon Mark Nail has a film entered in Oscars

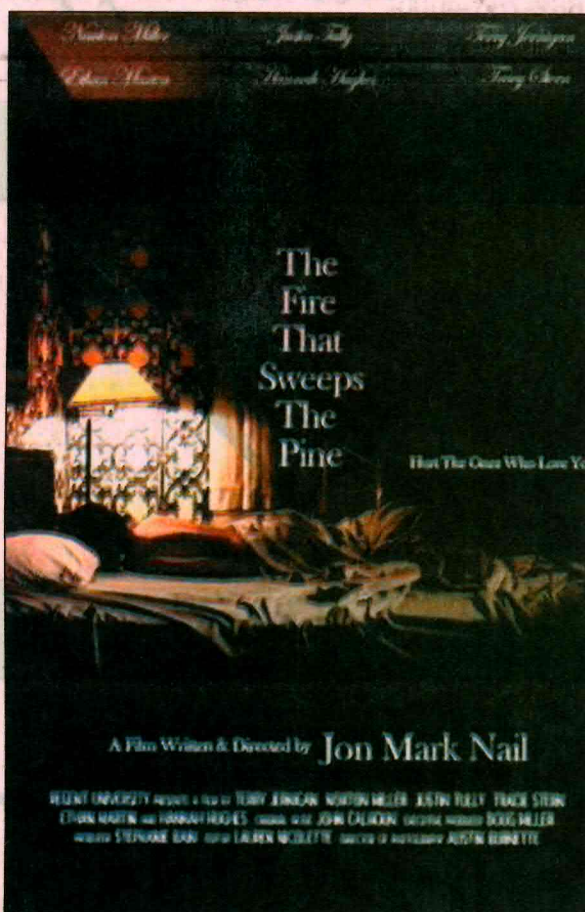
BY MARK H. STOWERS
 The Cleveland Current

Mississippi has long produced artistic talent. Writers, musicians, painters and more seem to pour out of the Magnolia State and the Delta area like a Texas oil well. From William Faulkner to Muddy Waters to Eudora Welty and B.B. King and many, many others. And the well runs deep with talent that seems endless. One new "gushing" talent is New Albany native and Delta State University graduate Jon Mark Nail. He secured a Criminal Justice degree to help appease his parents' desire that he find some kind of stable and concrete career but the son of a Baptist preacher knew at a young age that he wanted to do something artistic with his life.

"From the time I was eight years old I knew I wanted to be in the movie business," he said. "(My father) wanted me to do anything but the movie business."

Nail was recently en route to Los Angeles to interview with the William Morris Agency for a low-level job so he could "learn how things are getting made then I can get something made." But he understands the duties that go along with just getting his foot in the door.

"It would be a starting position and I think



what I'd be doing is learning how to sweep floors and put a nice polish on some countertops," he said jokingly. "But I think it would be an assistant position to an agent and hopefully work my way up from there."

With his upcoming graduation from Regents University in Virginia where he's been working on his Masters of Fine Art in Directing, Nail is hoping to springboard into the film industry. As a student he has written and or directed five films and his latest short film, *The Fire That Sweeps The Pine*, has been submitted to the Academy Awards in the Short Film category. Nail hopes to learn in the coming month whether or not the 40-minute film will be in the running. His other films have garnered awards. His first film, *The Gravedigger*, won two awards, Best Redemptive Film at the Regent MFA Showcase and a Gold Remi at World-fest Houston. His third film, *Sad Sarajevo* won Third Best Film at the Otis Film Festival and his fourth, *The Walk*, won an excellence in Writing award at Regent University's Film School Showcase that featured 15 films. Each of his films are set in the Deep South and he classifies them as "southern gothic." But he knows that the film industry and world is constantly changing and he has competition from plenty of sources.

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