

Pro wrestler seeing world, meeting legends

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
mhayakawa@yrmg.com

Matt Giunta vividly recalls watching wrestling on TV with his grandfather.

The Stouffville resident did not realize his boyhood entertainment would become his full-time profession.

Now 29 years of age, Giunta enters the squared circle under the stage name Matt Burns often joining forces with a partner known as Asylum to form a tag team known as the Flatliners.

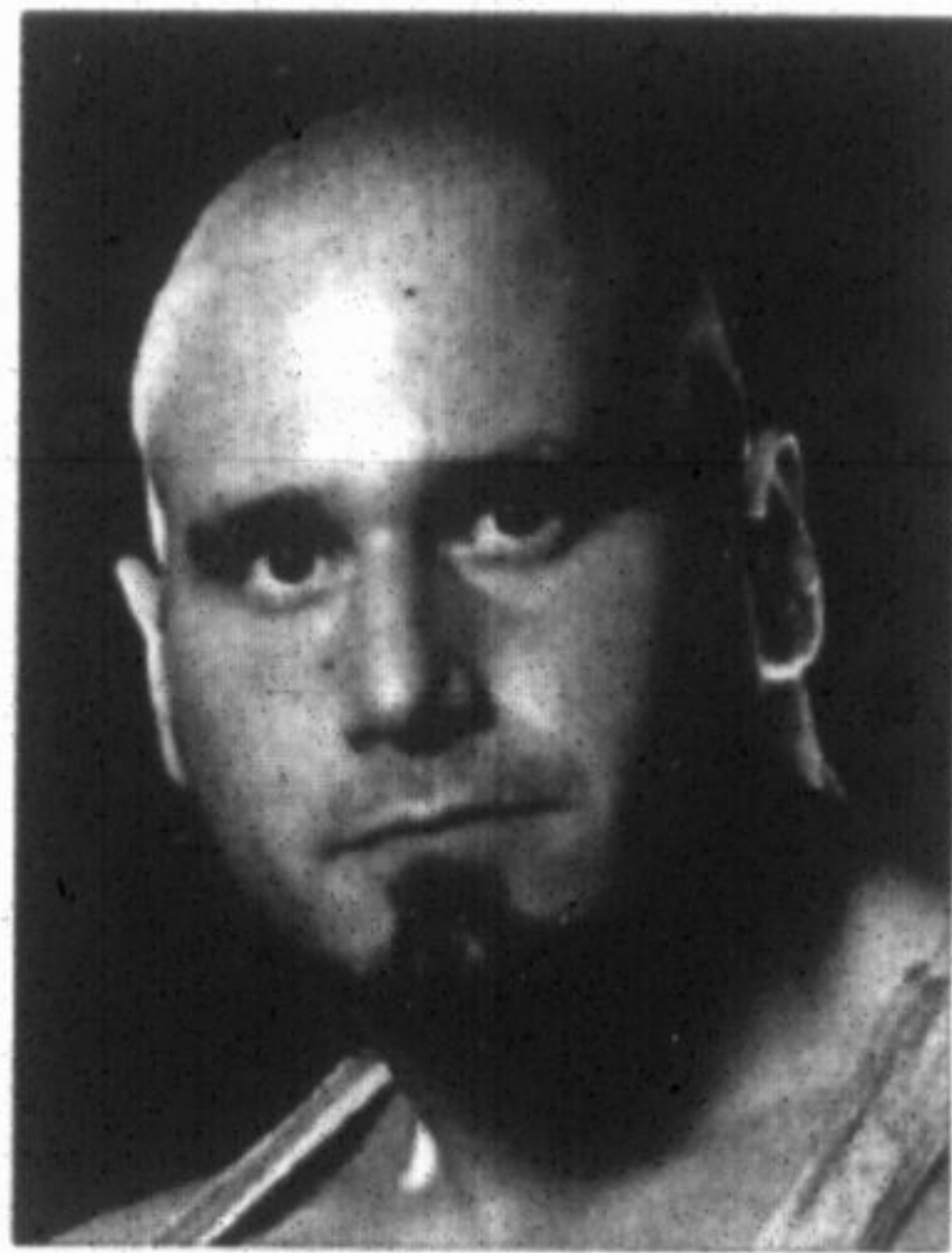
"I've been a fan for many years and I grew up loving the spectacle of it," Giunta said.

A former football and rugby player at Brother Andre Catholic High School who learned his craft at a wrestling school in Hamilton while attending college in London, Ont., Giunta made his professional grappling debut in 2002.

A Newmarket resident, Asylum, 30, declined to give his real name to keep his wrestling career separate from his private life.

"There is no exclusive company that we work for," Giunta said. "We will be contacted by a promoter and be asked to work a show. We iron out the details and go from there."

While Giunta and Asylum have been in recruitment seminars with agents from the renowned WWE



MATT GIUNTA: Stouffville man wrestles as Matt Burns on professional grappling circuits.

(World Wrestling Entertainment) and TNA (Total Nonstop Action), they've worked with Ring of Honor circuit and most lately, a Canadian company known as Championship Wrestling International.

"Championship Wrestling International is a great Canadian company because they bring in a lot of stars and really know how to entertain the fans," Giunta said. "On top of that, the proceeds from their shows go to cancer research."

A show he was on in Brantford this month included renowned per-

formers including Hulk Hogan, Ted DiBiase, Kevin Cash and Brutus "the Barber" Beefcake.

Wrestling in Japan has been a highlight.

"Japan is a very respectful culture and the fans loved us," he recalled.

At the same time though, Giunta said they've enjoyed the opportunity to perform in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal before family and close friends.

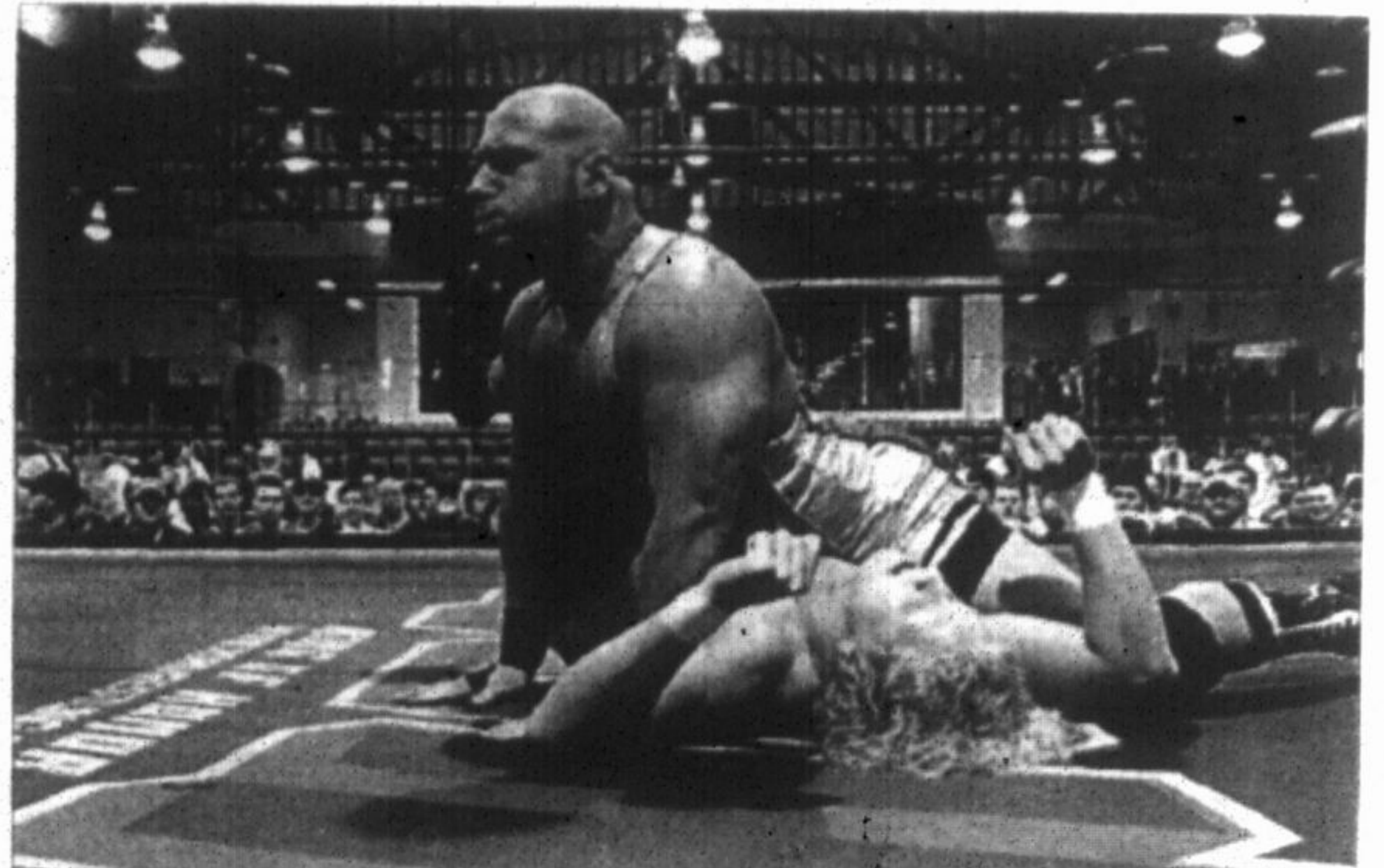
While the pair have logged countless miles in entertaining fans and in trying to gain notoriety with their mat skills, Giunta said their biggest highlight to date was their most recent performance on a Championship Wrestling International card in which they won the CWI tag team title after defeating the New Age Outlaws from the popular D-Generation X of WWE.

"That was a great experience," he said.

Not to mention the honour of being on the same card with a number of wrestling greats and even have some fans donning their T-shirts.

"Being able to perform on shows with legends like Bret Hart, Ric Flair and Jake 'The Snake' Roberts, all great experiences that I'll always have with me."

Looking up to legends as Randy "Macho Man" Savage, Mick Foley and Ric Flair and current performers such as Chris Jericho and Shawn



Matt Giunta attended wrestling school in Hamilton after playing football and rugby at Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham.

Michaels, Giunta said there's many elements of the game that keep him going at full tilt at his profession with the hope of someday being regulars on big time circuits such as the WWE or TNA circuits.

"It's an outlet to be over the top and be an extreme representation of myself," he said. "It's the joy of creating emotion from the fans who either want me dead or are behind me 100 per cent."

"It's an amazing feeling to have people on the edge of their seats believing in you, and excited to

see what happens next. And then there's the pursuit of making it to the next level.

"When I first started wrestling I would have never dreamed of getting as far as I have. My partner and I... have been on our in Japan, all throughout the U.S. and we've been looked at by the WWE and TNA trainers and are in constant contact with them. We're too close to quit, and as long as we can still deliver a good performance every time we step in the ring, we will continue to do so," he said.



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