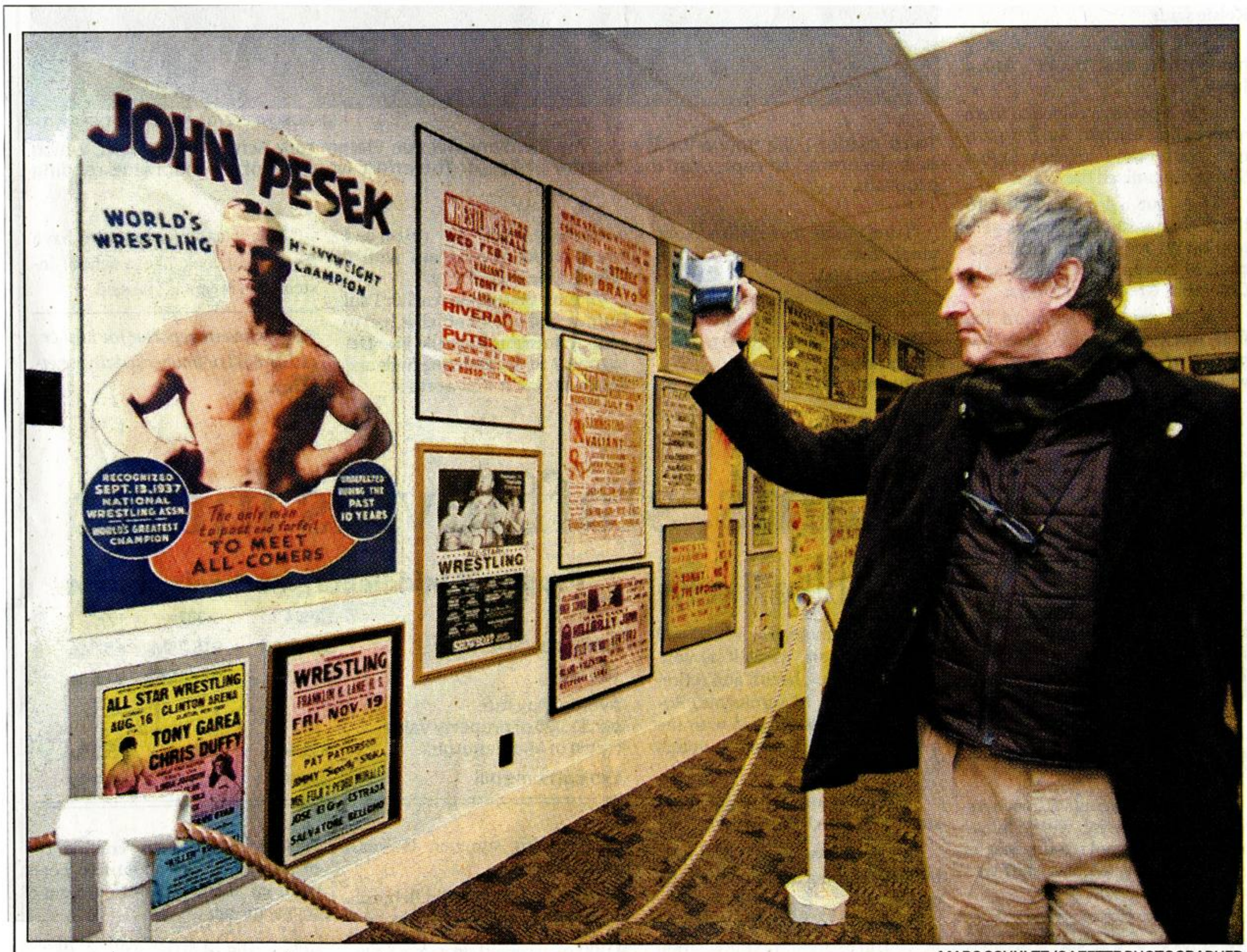


MARC SCHULTZ/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Dutch filmmaker Roger Van Eck uses a small video camera at the Wrestling Hall of Fame in Amsterdam on Thursday. Van Eck and fellow filmmaker Rob Rombout are shooting footage of the city for a film about four cities named Amsterdam on four continents.

AMSTERDAM

Bridging cities oceans apart

Filmmaker looks for similarities in four Amsterdams around world

BY DANIEL DeVRIES
Gazette Reporter

A pair of independent filmmakers from Holland visited the city this week to shoot preliminary footage for a film about four cities with the same namesake on four continents.

"It's to show completely different towns with their own history, culture and problems," said co-director Rob Rombout. "To put them together in one film and possibly find some parallels."

Rombout and co-director Roger VanEck, along with a film student from Syracuse University, toured and filmed several locations in the Rug City this week.

On Thursday, they filmed the interior of the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame and the Noteworthy Indian Museum. Earlier in the week, they interviewed Assemblyman Paul D. Tonko, D-Amsterdam, other local residents and paid a visit to Amsterdam High School.

What started with a scouting visit in September last year is now a fledgling project with potential, Rombout said, adding that he didn't know what to film during his first visit. Now he has too much footage.

"We try to find a relationship between the past, of the mills and its inhabitants, and the future," Rombout said. "Some say in 1958 the city went downhill. . . . Others, they talk about the future and are just positive."

He said they try to interview people from various economic and cultural backgrounds. Rombout said he has an appointment with a family that purchased the old armory on the South Side last year.



MARC SCHULTZ/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Dutch filmmaker Roger Van Eck, left, and Syracuse University film student Colin Bannon shoot footage of filmmaker Rob Rombout at the Wrestling Hall of Fame Thursday.

"It's the new inhabitants, the old ones and after just a few days, we've got an impression of what [Amsterdam] it's about," Rombout said.

With 25 years of experience as an independent filmmaker, Rombout previously made a documentary about the luxury cruse ship, Queen Mary 2.

His most recent film, Amsterdam via Amsterdam, explores two small uninhabited islands named Amsterdam, one near the North

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Pole and the other in the Indian Ocean.

Rombout's work has been shown on television in Holland, France and Belgium and he showed one of his documentaries at a film festival in Syracuse last week before returning to New York's Amsterdam.

VanEck explained that the footage shot in the city this week will be used to piece together a 15-minute short film to give potential investors a glimpse of a final project.

Included in the film will be other Amsterdam locations, including a small place in Holland with the big-city name, a town in South Africa called New Amsterdam and another in the South American country of Guyana.

In Rombout's last visit to the city, he said the final film will cost about $100,000 to $200,000 depending on its length. They intend to return to the city for actual production in October if financial backing is gained.

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