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## ARTICLES

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July 5, 2010

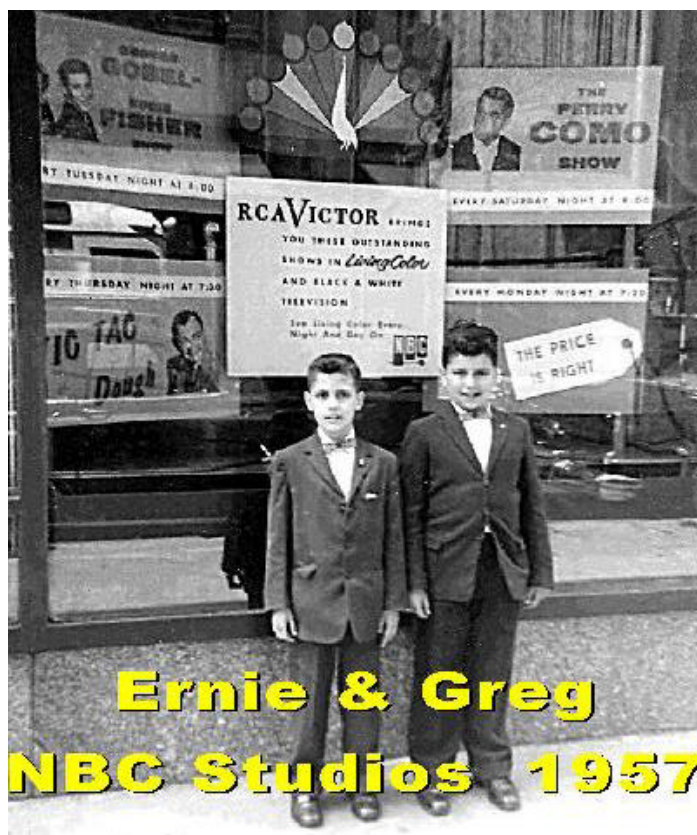
– Larry Goodman

Based on the stereotypes associated with its fan base, the Hamptons on Long Island is an improbable location for a television station that airs six and ½ hours of pro wrestling content per week.

Suffolk County is among the 25 most affluent communities in the United States. 42% of the residents have annual incomes of over \$350,000 with an average home value of over \$1,300,000. 70% own luxury vehicles. 80% are college educated.

To the owners of [WVH Hamptons Television](#), Greg and Ernie Schimizzi, it's only natural. Growing up in Brooklyn during the 1950s and 1960s, the brothers became fans and have fond memories of stars from that era such as Bruno Sammartino, Haystacks Calhoun, Antonio Rocca, Killer Kowalski, and the Fabulous Kangaroos.

The programming on WVH is beyond eclectic. "Our programming cuts across all ages and all demographics", said Greg Schimizzi – "something for everyone 24/7" is their motto. Along with multiple weekly airings of [Showtime All-Star Wrestling](#), [WFX Overload](#), and [Wrestlelicious Takedown](#), WVH is the official television home of the Hampton Classic Horse Show and the Hamptons International Film Festival.



The Schimizzi Bros. as children at NBC Studios in 1957

WVH is the largest FCC licensed station in Suffolk County, which isn't saying much in terms of signal range. It is a Class A LPTV (low power) station. Although the FCC does not require cable operators to carry low power stations, WVH is on Cablevision of Easthampton, and the combination of cable and over-the-air signal gives WVH access to 1.5 million residents in Suffolk County alone. By taking advantage of a one time opportunity to obtain Class A status, WVH was able to preserve a desirable broadcast channel (50) during the transition to digital.

Schimizzi estimated that WVH is available to 3 million homes in the New York City area, which makes it the flagship affiliate for the America One network. He described their relationship with the network as "a great partnership".

According to its website, America One provides sports and entertainment programming to 35 millions homes through 170 stations, primarily of the low power variety. Among other things, the network's programming includes an oddball mix of sports including Professional Arm Wrestling, Yachting, Rugby, Equestrian, and Bull Riding.

However, the pro wrestling content does not air on all of the America One affiliates, as only a fraction of those stations run America One programming 24/7. WVH supplements America One with offerings from Outside Television and their original programming.

A key element in WVVH's recent expansion has been it's availability on FiOS TV, Verizon's 100% fiber optic network that is available in parts of New York and New Jersey. WVVH also streams on the Internet at [HamptonsTV.com](http://HamptonsTV.com).

How the Schimizzis ended up in the television business is a story unto itself. As children, their father would take the boys to the NBC production facilities at Rockefeller Center, where the live broadcasts of *The Today Show* were open to the public. They gained an appreciation for television as an art form, through the stars of television's Golden Age, such as Jackie Gleason, Ernie Kovacs, and Steve Allen. While in college, the brothers patented an anti-theft trunk lock device that was put into production by Chrysler. The royalties helped to fund their future ventures. In 1977, Greg resigned from his job as a psychologist with the Veterans Administration, and the brothers formed Video Voice, a television production and distribution company. In 1994, the Schimizzis founded WVVH after obtaining the last FCC license on Long Island.

WVVH became one of the first stations to carry ECW based on a suggestion by one of the Schmizzi's children that their grittier style was gaining popularity.



The Schmizzi Brothers

WVVH has much in common with the indie wrestling promotions the station features. It's a place to gain experience for little to no financial reward. "These are the inventive guys. You need a place to start", said Schimizzi. "It gives us great satisfaction to train and develop talent." He pointed out that Countess LuAnn de Lesseps on BRAVO's *Real Housewives of New York City* got her start as an on-air personality with WVVH.

Schimizzi said WVVH is competing against the broadcast giants, much like the indie wrestling promotions are in comparison with WWE – "like using a hydraulic press to crack a walnut".

Schimizzi said they are proud to feature pro wrestling. He sees it as a legitimate art form, and compared episodic pro wrestling television to a Greek tragedy, noting that fans live vicariously through the characters. Viewer feedback has been uniformly positive. Surprisingly, the only complaints have come when the wrestling programming was preempted.

At the present time, the WVVH webstream is the only way to view SAW television on the Internet streaming at 10 pm Friday, 3 pm Sunday, and 2 am Tuesday.

WFX Overload airs at 3 am Tuesday and 9 pm Friday.

Wrestlelicious Takedown airs at 11:30 pm Tuesday, 11:30 pm Saturday, and 4:30 am Sunday.