



IRON GAME HISTORY



THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

Volume 11 Number 1

September 2009

The State of The Stark Center

We decided to use the editorial pages and “The Iron Grapevine” letters section of *Iron Game History* to provide subscribers with a construction update and a progress report related to The H.J. Lucher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports at The University of Texas, since *IGH* is published under auspices of The Stark Center. In the next issue, we’ll return to our regular use of an editorial as well as to our letters to the editor in “Grapevine.” As always, we welcome your thoughts and comments. Please note our new mailing address: *Iron Game History*, The H.J. Lucher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports, 403 23rd Street, NEZ 5.700, Mailcode: D3600, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. Or, you can email us at the addresses on page two.

Final Phase of Stark Center Construction Now Underway

In April of 2009, the Nelda C. and H.J. Lucher Stark Foundation of Orange, Texas, formally awarded an additional \$2 million to The H.J. Lucher Stark Center to assist with the Center’s burgeoning construction budget. This grant was in addition to the \$3.5 million given to The Stark Center by the Stark Foundation in 2006, a gift which allowed Phase One of The Center’s two-phased construction plan to begin. However, as

the total costs of the construction of Phase One exceeded the Stark Foundation’s initial 3.5 million dollar gift, additional funding was needed to offset those expenditures and to allow the construction to begin on the museum and gallery areas of The Stark Center. In appreciation of this second gift, The Center’s just-completed conference room has been named in honor of W.H.



A replica of the Farnese Hercules was recently installed on a rotating dais in the Stark Center lobby. To assemble and finish the statue, we brought to Texas Jan Swartenbroekx (pictured) and Hughes Dubuisson of the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels. They made the statue in the museum’s plaster cast workshop and it was shipped to Texas in four pieces. For scale, Jan is approximately 5’8” tall and weighs about 175 pounds. The statue is 10’6” tall and weighs approximately 2000 pounds.

Stark, Lutch Stark's father, who expanded the family holdings of timberland to a remarkable—even for Texas—600,000 acres. So extensive was their property in Louisiana and East Texas that it was said a person could drive from Orange, Texas, across the Sabine River from Louisiana, to New Orleans without losing sight of Stark land. W.H. was also a former member of the U.T. Board of Regents.

In any case, because it was not possible for us to begin Phase Two of our building program before completing Phase One, it will probably be early in 2010 before we are able to officially open the Sports Gallery and the Joe and Betty Weider Museum of Physical Culture. However, construction of the 11 galleries in Phase

Two is now underway, and the museum design and final finishes have all been chosen. As the construction moves forward, watch our website at www.starkcenter.org for news on the progress of the museum/gallery project. We will also use the website—and a future issue of *IGH*—to announce the date of the formal opening we plan to hold when the entire facility is finished.

The Library is Open

On November 4, 2008, our contractors began work on Phase One of the Stark Center construction project. Phase One began after we were given access to the 4.5 million dollar concrete and metal shell on the

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Iron Game History is published by the McLean Sports History Fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin, under the auspices of THE H.J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER FOR PHYSICAL CULTURE & SPORTS. U.S. subscription rate: \$25.00 per four issues, \$40.00 per eight issues. McLean Fellowship subscriptions \$55.00 per eight issues; Patron subscriptions \$100.00 per eight issues. Canada & overseas subscriptions: \$30.00 per four issues and \$45.00 per eight issues. U.S. funds only. See page 36 for further details.

Address all correspondence and subscription requests to: *Iron Game History*, The H.J. Lutch Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, NEZ 5.700, D3600, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 78712. For back issues or subscription queries, please contact Associate Editor Kim Beckwith at: beckfish@peoplepc.com. Phone: 512-471-3205.

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Iron Game History is a non-profit enterprise.

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(ISSN 1069-7276)

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The reading room of the Stark Center library is filled with comfortable chairs and two long, antique walnut tables at which researchers can work. The statues in this room are part of the Battle Cast Collection and are on loan from the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas. The statues date from the late 1890s and first two decades of the 20th century and were purchased by Dr. William Battle of UT's Classics Department. A fourth statue, of the huntress Artemis, will soon reside on the dark wall at the far end of the reading room. The three figures currently on display include the "Discobolus," at the far end of the room, the larger-than-life reclining Herakles figure in the center, and the "Idolino," a physique study of a young male athlete. Other athletic statues from the Battle Cast Collection will be used in the art gallery of the Stark Center. To learn more about the statues, go to the Director's Blog at: www.starkcenter.org.

second level of the north end of the university's football stadium. Phase One involved building nine staff offices, our 6500 square-foot archival storage area and processing rooms, our lobby and information center, the W.H. Stark Conference Room, the public reading room, a small photography gallery, the rare books research room, the art gallery, the staff kitchen and break room, and several other storage areas. Phase Two will involve the construction and installation of exhibits in the Joe and Betty Weider Museum of Physical Culture, and in the Sports Gallery.

When construction began last fall, the contractors told us that barring problems they would be finished in late May and that we could move into the space in early June. Throughout the spring the construction project moved along almost exactly on schedule, and on June 10th and 11th, after packing and sorting the Todd-McLean Collection for several months prior to the move, we watched happily as 30 men, using five trucks, moved our collection across campus over a two day peri-

od and into its new home.

Then, trouble came calling. In the week after the big move—as we moved our furniture into our offices and began settling in and using our kitchen—we noticed that there was a problem with the recently-stained concrete floors. Whenever water dropped on the floor, white spots developed in the floor finish, and they did not wipe away. So, to our great disappointment, we had to move back out of the offices and into the unfinished part of our space, remove all the furniture that had been put in place, and wait while the contractors searched for a solution to this unexpected problem. We hoped to have a quick fix, but our hope was in vain. For reasons too complicated and sorrowful to explain, it took eight attempts and more than two months before the floor was more or less acceptable and we were able to move back into our offices and begin fully using our new facility. So, as we go to press with this issue of *Iron Game History*, the first from our new facility, we've

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actually only been able to occupy our offices for the past three weeks—and consequently we still have much that needs to be done before we're fully settled and running smoothly. However, we wanted very badly to get this issue of *IGH* out so that we could explain what has happened since our last 2009 issue. We apologize for its lateness, but now that we are in our new offices we expect to publish four issues of *IGH* every year.

Although we had to camp out for two months in an unfinished work room while we waited for the floor, the Stark Center staff was able to make considerable progress in unpacking parts of the collection, sorting and organizing materials, and getting things on shelves so that we can begin to assist researchers. Our goal, before the floor debacle, had been to have the library part of The Stark Center fully operational by the time the fall semester started on August 26th. We missed that deadline, obviously, but we're pleased to report that as of mid-September we began taking research requests from visitors to The Stark Center who want to use the collections. We are also now able to assist researchers with magazine and journal queries, although our efficiency will improve as our holdings are more properly organized and housed. Please visit our website for more information on library use and visitation.

New Staff Organizes the Collections

In May of 2009, we hired Cindy Slater—formerly the director of the USOC library in Colorado Springs, Colorado—as the Assistant Director for Library Operations at The Stark Center. Slater spent more than 20 years building and overseeing the operations of the USOC's library and we feel very fortunate that she is now directing the organization and daily operations of The Center's library. In addition, archivist Geoffrey Schmalz, a recent graduate of the UT School of Information Science, has just joined our staff. Schmalz will be creating finding aids for our various archival collections, and *Iron Game History* readers will no doubt be pleased to know that the first collection he's tackled is that of Pudgy and Les Stockton.

In addition to our two full-time librarians, The Stark Center also employs recent Texas A&M graduate Stacy Metzler, who oversees our student volunteers and serves as our office manager. We also have two half-time student employees, one of whom is UT graduate and football letterman Peter Ullmann, who's working on

our museum exhibits related to the history of strength and conditioning through grants from the National Strength and Conditioning Association. Our other student employee, also working under the NSCA grant, is web designer Andy Miller, who will be helping us add content to our website and keep it up to date. In fact, if you haven't checked out www.starkcenter.org in a while, you should take a look, as Andy has dramatically improved the site, which contains a regular blog.

The Stark Center wouldn't exist, however, were it not for the many, many volunteers who've contributed to the project over the years. Foremost in that group is *IGH* editorial board member Dr. Kim Beckwith, who for many years has handled our subscription list and worked tirelessly helping us keep up with the Collection. Beckwith spent the better part of the spring and summer helping to oversee several dozen student volunteers as we prepared for—and made—the big move, and then jumped into the indexing of all our serial publications with Slater, Metzler, Schmalz, and other volunteers. Thanks to their hard work, we now have a full and complete index of all our serial publications and we've begun cataloguing the book collection, which Slater estimates to be approximately 25,000 volumes. Also, a new Kinesiology faculty member, Dr. Thomas Hunt, who's just recovering from becoming the father of a pair of twin boys, is also part of our team, and will be helping the Stark Center with its educational initiatives.

So, although we're still years away from having all aspects of our collection fully catalogued and properly archived, we expect that by the end of the fall semester of 2009 the library side of our operation will be basically organized. In the interim, we'll handle research requests by appointment as we're able to fulfill them. Just now we're currently installing new shelving in the archives and so some portions of the collection are currently inaccessible.

The Compact-Shelf Project

Thanks to the generosity of a law firm in Dallas, we installed a donated set of "high density compact shelves" in our work room during Phase One of construction to hold some of our books and magazines. High density shelving units are metal shelves, set on rails in the floor, which move apart at the push of a button or the turn of a mechanical handle and allow staff to access materials. Because the shelves normally stand touching each other you can store twice the material in the same space as you can with regular library shelving.



Thanks to the generosity of the Southwest Solutions Company and Scott & White Hospital in Temple, Texas, we are currently installing approximately two linear miles of high-density compact shelving in our archival storage areas. The project will be finished in early October. This state of the art system will dramatically enhance the operation of the Stark Center Library as we will, at last, have room to get everything unpacked.

Late this summer, however, we realized that our regular bookcases simply couldn't hold all of our books and other materials. We needed more compact shelves. But they're very expensive and we had no budget for them. So we contacted Troy Menchofer, a former student of ours who now runs the Southwest Solutions Office in Austin, and explained our situation. Troy, a serious weight trainer, told us that our timing could not have been better as Scott & White, a huge medical complex in central Texas, had digitized its medical records and no longer needed their eight linear miles (!) of high density shelving. Troy then contacted the hospital, donated \$10,000 to Scott & White and convinced them to donate two miles of their almost-new shelving to us. So as we go to press, more than 11,000 linear feet of shelving is being installed. However, we're still having to pay approximately \$75,000 for the installation and the extra electrical outlets to power the units. Had we purchased these compact shelves, they would have cost approximately \$400,000.

Hercules

Finally, we want to let readers know that if they ever come to visit The Stark Center they'll be able to see a full-size copy of the most famous statue in the Iron Game—the Farnese Hercules (See Jan Todd's article in Vol. 9 (1), August 2005, issue of *IGH*). To our knowl-

edge, this is the only such copy in the United States. Our copy was made in Brussels at the *Atelier de Moulage*, a division of the Royal Museum for Art and History. To make it, the artisans there used a mold—more than 100 years old—taken from the original Farnese Hercules at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, Italy.

We ordered the statue last year and it arrived by boat and truck in Austin late last spring. In early August, the two artisans who supervised the construction of our Hercules in Brussels came to Texas and spent almost a week with us reuniting its four sections and placing it on the low pedestal we had built to hold it. This was quite a job, and at times we had 12 to 15 people there helping the Belgians put the pieces in place. The Farnese Hercules is 10'6" high and weighs approximately 2,000 pounds.

Our idea had always been to place the statue on a turntable of some sort so that it would rotate slowly in our most prominent north-facing window as a sort of symbol of The Stark Center. This was easier said than done, and when we first pulled the switch that controlled the electric motor the turntable listed slightly to one side, made a noise that we knew meant trouble, moved around unsteadily in fits and starts, and then stopped altogether. But the firm that ordered the turntable and installed it came back and, after two days of considered effort, strengthened the wheels of the turntable enough so that the immense work of art now makes one full, level turn every three minutes. It is quite a thing to see.

Although the statue is lit now so that it can be seen at night, a longtime friend of ours, Mike Graham, who has promoted dozens of bodybuilding contests, will come to the Center soon and adjust the lights so that the giant figure will have the maximum impact. Standing at the end of our elevator lobby, Hercules is clearly too tall for the space as his head is only inches from the ceiling, but perhaps for this reason he looks considerably larger than the Naples original looks in a hall 30' high. The artisans from Brussels worked very hard to make the Hercules come to life and we don't begrudge a penny we spent on him; he is our personal gift to the Stark Center.

We invite you all to come to Austin, stand in our elevator lobby, and watch him for at least three minutes as he turns slowly on his base. And we invite you to then come back at night and stand on the sidewalk across the street and watch him move, lit from above and from the sides. See for yourselves why the Farnese Hercules—carved from marble almost 2000 years ago for the Baths of Caracalla in Rome—is considered a work of real genius.

—Jan and Terry Todd

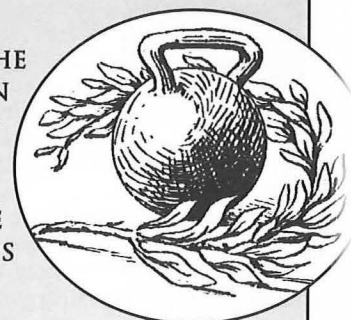
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THE H.J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER
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AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712.

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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 391
AUSTIN, TEXAS

IRON GAME HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

IRON GAME HISTORY IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE H.J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER FOR PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORTS, A DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.

ALL PROFITS FROM THE SALE OF THIS JOURNAL WILL BE USED TOWARD THE IMPROVEMENT OF *IRON GAME HISTORY* AND THE SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF THIS FIELD.
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