Randy Roach has written a remarkable book that provides a new dimension to our understanding of the history of physical culture by focusing on nutrition. Though it sprang to life outside of normal academic channels, *Muscle, Smoke & Mirrors* (in 527 pages and notes) exhibits some of the most important qualities of scholarship—extensive research, comprehensive coverage, ample contextualization, and sound judgments. It is also intelligently written with an engaging conversational tone. Most amazingly, this account was generated despite the almost total loss of the author’s eyesight. How he was able to do it owes much to the assistance of a sympathetic editor and some close associates. The account also draws largely on the previous research endeavors of a considerable cadre of physical culture scholars, all of whom Randy graciously acknowledges throughout the text. But by far the most important ingredient to this Iron Game tour de force is the author’s passion for the subject. It strongly reminds one of other selfless iron game enterprises over the years, most notably Osmo Kiiha’s *Iron Master*, Denis Reno’s *Weightlifter’s Newsletter*, and the late Gary Cleveland’s *Avian Movement Advocate*—as coming straight from the heart.

In seeking to explain the development of modern bodybuilding, Roach shows how it evolved from an emphasis on “health, inner balance, and harmony” in ancient times to the “win at all cost” agenda that emerged by the late twentieth century (p. 6). Such familiar Iron Game icons as Hippolyte Triat, Eugen Sandow, Professor Attila (Louis Durlacher), and Bernarr Macfadden figure prominently in the early portions of this story. Even at this stage, however, the author displays a preference for pioneers, underdogs, and unsung heroes of the game—the “diehards” of “decades past” who “trudged for miles to remote, dingy, and often hard-to-find gyms” (p. xiii), for homeopathic over allopathic medicine, and for practitioners who displayed integrity rather than avarice. Few current bodybuilders have heard of Weston Price or Francis Pottenger or the amazing Hunza of Northern India, “a people unsurpassed in physique, endurance, health, and athletic ability” (p. 60), but they are voices from the past whose ideas are no less relevant to the construction of our current views on nutrition. The story Roach reveals, from the simplicity of the Greeks to the advent of the mega-fitness industry, is full of fits and starts and “smoke and mirrors,” but the author remains hopeful that eventually some of the more destructive behaviors in the sport, which in some cases
are deep and systemic, will eventually be eradicated.

A notable feature of this account is the attention paid to dietary regimens and their relation to the development strategies of successive physical culturists. Roach distinguishes between the Heavy Protein Fat (HPF) model utilized by many early strongmen and the Lacto-Vegetarian (LV) template applied by Macfadden and the Hunza. So for their daily breakfast the three relatively normal-sized but powerful Saxon brothers reportedly consumed 24 eggs, 3 pounds of bacon, porridge with cream and honey, and tea with plenty of sugar, while a generation later the slim and shapely Tony Sansone moderated the HPF model by having just fresh fruit, a serving of whole grain cereal with cream and sugar, 2 eggs, 2 pieces of whole grain buttered toast, and a glass of milk. Armand Tanny never followed a set meal plan, but included raw fish, meat, clams, nuts, and vegetables, to which he attributed the major physique titles that he won in the late 1940s and early 1950s. When I interviewed him in 2005, Tanny was still experimenting with raw chicken! John Grimek, arguably the greatest bodybuilder of the twentieth century, had no special diet and allegedly ate anything his wife Angela placed in front of him. Dubbed by Angela as the “hog,” John could not only consume large quantities of food while remaining trim and muscular but could drastically alter his bodyweight at will. Roach could also note Rick Wayne’s observation that three-time Mr. Olympia Sergio Oliva, one of the strongest and most muscular bodybuilders of all time, was notorious for “his penchant for pizza and Coke” (Muscle Wars, p. 226), leading one to speculate on the relative importance of genetics vis-a-vis nutrition.

Another leitmotif is food supplements, especially milk which, as “nature’s most perfect food,” receives 99 index entries in 24 categories (from alpha-lactalbumin to whey), more than either Bob Hoffman or the Weider brothers. Roach cites the cow as “the bodybuilder’s best friend,” noting that “this domesticated and docile animal has contributed everything from beef, blood, glands, milk, kefir, whey, yogurt, cheese, buttermilk, butter, ghee, cream, colostrums, milk protein powders, and even leather lifting straps, gloves, and belts” (p. 178). Roach devotes much attention to the virtues of raw milk and the pioneering efforts of nutritionist Irvin Johnson (Rheo Blair). The depth of this coverage is most evident in his discussion of the development in 1966 of Mother’s Milk, a non-commercial protein blend that supposedly duplicated the biological content of human breast milk. Even Johnson’s commercial milk and egg product was regarded by “the vast majority of bodybuilders . . . as the best, both in taste and effectiveness. Whether they endorsed other products through advertisements or sold their own, they would use Blair’s supplements in their personal regimens. . . . While the majority of the bigger players were primarily merchandising, Blair was constantly pushing to produce legitimate supplements that really worked” (pp. 414-15). Like Paul Bragg, another progenitor, Johnson represented a lay scientific practitioner with integrity.

A more indiscriminate example of the utilization of milk is the extreme weight gain/loss record of bodybuilder Bruce Randall who, in a matter of two and a half years, increased his bodyweight from 203 to 401, then in just seven months dropped to 183, a loss of 218 pounds. In addition to a restrictive diet, Randall adopted a Spartan training routine during which he once worked out 81 hours in one week and did 5,000 sit-ups daily for fifteen days. His extreme pre-contest training and eating regimen enabled him to claim the 1959 NABBA Mr. Universe title at a bodyweight at 222. Critical to Randall’s bulking up routine was the “good morning” exercise, in which he eventually hoisted 685 pounds, and his consumption of large quantities of milk. He averaged over two gallons of milk per day. It was “not uncommon for him to drink 2 quarts (1.82L) of milk for breakfast, along with 28 fried eggs and a loaf and a half of bread” (pp. 306-7). Randall once drank 19 quarts of milk in a day. Milk products also served as the basis for John McCallum’s “Get Big Drink,” immortalized in his highly popular “Keys to Progress” series that appeared in Strength & Health from 1965 to 1972. He shared with Hoffman and Iron Man editor Peary Rader the philosophy that bodybuilders should not only look strong, but be strong. Like Rader, but contrary to the ideas of Blair and California trainer Vince Gironda, McCallum also believed in the efficacy of the squat, especially the breathing squat (the brainchild of J. C. Hise, an eccentric strongman from the 1930s who believed that high repetition squats done while taking several breaths between each rep would produce quick bodyweight gains), as a natural complement to milk. The importance of milk was underscored by the late Reg Park, winner of multiple Mr. Universe contests, when I asked him at a recent Arnold Clas-
sic how he developed such a muscular physique in early 1950s when Britain was still under rationing. He replied that he grew up on a farm in Yorkshire and there was always plenty of milk.

Subjects that deserve more extensive coverage are relatively few, but they would include the effects of alcohol and tobacco on health, fitness, and nutrition. While such notables as Mark Berry, Sieg Klein, and Jim Park figure prominently in other contexts, no mention is made of their smoking, a popular indulgence for most of the twentieth century, and there is little on Bob Hoffman’s lifelong crusade against it. Alcohol use, of course, was likely more widespread among bodybuilders. Though Jack LaLanne was and is a social drinker, alcohol nearly took the life of Dave Draper and no doubt contributed to the early deaths of Gerd Venables, Harry Paschall, and Dave Sheppard. Roach speculates that it also fueled the destructive anger of Vince Gironda, which counteracted his otherwise heroic contributions to the game. The murky issue of recreational drugs and their impact on bodybuilders, which suddenly surfaced in the 1960s, receives no more than passing mention. Major physical culturists deserving more attention include Charles Atlas (Angelo Siciliano) and his erstwhile publicist Dr. Frederick Tilney. The extent to which the former adhered to a special diet or employed weights in his training regimen remains unaddressed as does the precise nature of the latter’s involvement in the development of dynamic tension and the Atlas courses. Tilney, like his English compatriot George F. Jowett, was a self-made physical culturist who was regarded by some as a phony, but he played an important role in the success of some of bodybuilding’s greatest promoters. Regrettably, upon his death in Florida in 1977, no one had the foresight or opportunity to retrieve his personal papers. Thus Fred Tilney, despite a 1968 autobiography, remains one of the mysterious behind-the-scenes figures of the Iron Game.

Another influential figure of the same ilk was Emmanuel Orlick, who had bona fide academic credentials and receives longer shrift in Roach’s account. He left no memoir, but Orlick’s personal papers, which filled his Brandywine, Maryland, farmhouse and several adjacent tobacco barns, were so voluminous that Terry Todd once estimated that it would take the University of Texas powerlifting team a week to dislodge and haul them to the archives in Austin. They were eventually retrieved by Reuben Weaver who spent five weekends sorting through them and transporting the exercise-related items to his home in Strasburg, Virginia. These materials constitute a record of Orlick’s long career in physical culture, especially as a scholar who was intimately involved with the Weider organization. Randy Roach is the first researcher to take advantage of this resource. The most important revelations concern the origins of the International Federation of Body Builders (IFBB) in which Orlick claims to have played the original guiding role. In a letter to Jowett in March 1948, when the IFBB was in its embryonic state, Orlick states that he had “suggested such an organization to Joe” several years earlier when Weider was starting to have trouble with the Hoffman-dominated Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) in Canada. “Eventually Joe came back to me with HIS sensational idea of the International Body Builders Club or some such thing” (pp. 162-63). Roach shares Dan Lurie’s story (also revealed in his 2009 autobiography Heart of Steel) of his intimate association with the Weiders which, if true, provides a much-needed corrective to the impression conveyed by the Weiders in Brothers of Iron (2008) of Lurie’s unimportance and how he served merely as a nuisance and foil to their ambitions. One can only wonder how many more sources about the Weiders remain to be tapped from other early Iron Game figures, such as Barton Horvath, another Weider editor.

A no less significant Iron Game insider source revealed by Roach is the oral testimony of Ray Markunas, who was assisting Irvin Johnson at his Chicago health studio as early as 1948. Though best known for his later work with elite bodybuilders, many of Johnson’s early clients were neurasthenic adolescents for whom he provided “a total nutritional makeover . . . Markunas recalls the gym being a hub of activity at times, with various health care practitioners dropping in on a regular basis,” primarily from the alternative medical field (pp. 296-97). Use of weights seemed almost irrelevant to Johnson’s focus on what was going on inside the human body. Markunas speculates that by the time Johnson relocated to the West Coast in 1958, his internalization approach had led to some experimentation with the anabolic steroid Nilevar. Markunas’s recollections roughly coincide with the testimony of four-time Mr. Universe Bill Pearl (at least in the 1986 edition of Getting Stronger) that he had experimented with Nilevar in 1958 and had experienced quick gains. Roach concludes that while it would not be fair to accuse Johnson of “bringing drugs to West Coast bodybuilding,” it
would be “reasonable to suggest that he definitely expanded the steroid context upon his arrival” (p. 418). Whether this statement is an overreach cannot be determined, but it is based solely on Markunas’s recollections of long-ago events. Furthermore, it leads the author to conclude, in the face of the well-documented evidence relating to the uncontrolled experiments of Dr. John Ziegler on York Barbell athletes with testosterone in 1954 and steroids by 1960, that by the early 1960s “Ziegler and York may have been running a little behind the pack” and that he “did not single-handedly usher drugs into the arena of athletics” (p. 391). Whether it was the east coast weightlifters or the west coast bodybuilders who were most instrumental in introducing steroids to strength athletes remains uncertain, but we can be grateful to Roach for reopening the discussion and introducing new evidence. (Ed. Note: At this point, until considerably more evidence comes to light in support of the pre-1960 use by west coast bodybuilders of anabolic/androgenic steroids such as Testosterone, Dianabol, or Nilevar, it would seem prudent to conclude that the Ziegler/York connection had an earlier and more influential effect on the use in the Iron Game of these drugs than did the west coast bodybuilding culture. It should not be forgotten, of course, that Dr. Ziegler was following the lead of the U.S.S.R.)

His account is equally forthright in addressing the subject of race, including the controversial victories of Vern Weaver over Harold Poole and Bob Gajda over Sergio Oliva respectively in the 1963 and 1966 AAU Mr. America contests. But racial tensions paled in comparison to the homophobia of this era. Roach contends that the photographs in Irvin Johnson’s little magazine, Tomorrow’s Man, “shifted the emphasis or focus of physical aesthetics and athleticism to sexuality and eroticism” (p. 272). But Joe Weider also targeted this market with Adonis, Body Beautiful, Demi-Gods, and Young Physique, all of which allegedly outsold his three mainstream bodybuilding magazines. Indeed Hoffman’s bulldog, anti-Semitic editor Harry Paschall capitalized on this vulnerability with devastating attacks on the image and lifestyle conveyed by the Weider publications. Although Peary Rader took the moral high ground and never confronted Weider directly, his homophobia was even more deeply rooted for being ideological rather than commercial. He possessed a spirituality that was driven by his active Christian commitment which represented the feelings of the majority of Americans in the 1950s. Roach concludes that the subject of athletes and promoters “prostituting themselves for money or favour” has been “a taboo subject” and “most prefer to ignore it. Nevertheless, it has been a reality in the sport of bodybuilding from its inception.” But he lets Dan Lurie have the last word: “It’s the truth and that’s simply the way it was” (pp. 278-79).

With regard to insights, there is so much to savor in this account that it is impossible to do them full justice. A few examples, however, should suffice. The first relates to the early impact of the industrial and societal changes that were ushered in during the age of Sandow. Notwithstanding revelations by physical culturists on soil, diet, and disease, prevention was quickly taking a back seat to medication and surgery. The essential feature of this “new medical paradigm” which virtually eliminated “alternative health care options” for the public was marketing potential. “Large sums of philanthropic money played a huge role in the reformation of health care into a symptom-treating protocol using drugs only. This channeled money had ties to the manufacturing of these drugs.” At the same time agriculture, owing to the growing empowerment of the food processing industry, was “taking a chemical over nature route,” further jeopardizing the well-being of an innocent and uninformed citizenry. (p. 69) The early advocacy by Bernarr Macfadden and other physical culturists of a healthy diet and exercise, including weight training and muscle building, as well as their strictures against the American Medical Association came to seem increasingly out of step.

This new medical structure eventually, along with the general education and coaching fields, would come to see increased muscle mass as a threat to health and physical performance and would emphasize abstinence for the majority of the century. This of course would leave the burgeoning sport of bodybuilding in a precarious status amongst the educational and medical power structures. (p. 70)

Dietary and medical prejudices, thanks in part to the efforts of Hoffman, the Weiders, Jack LaLanne, Kenneth Cooper, and others, diminished somewhat in the late twentieth century. That they still remain is evidenced by the warnings of some football coaches, now convinced
of the efficacy of weight training, that their players should nevertheless safeguard their knees by avoiding full squats. Such warnings are of course ironic since football itself is responsible for almost all of the sport’s knee injuries.

Another residual prejudice remains in the public view of competitive bodybuilders who, despite the general acceptance of resistance training as the best way to become fit and buff, are still regarded as freaks (Ed. Note: Today, when pop culture icons like Sylvester Stallone, Brad Pitt, 50 Cent, Hugh Jackman, the trimmed-down Arnold of his Terminator days, and any number of pro football players and mixed martial artists have bodies which could have won some pre-1960 bodybuilding contests—and are certainly larger and more muscularly developed than many men who, although they don’t compete, still consider themselves as, and are, bodybuilders—the average North American under 40 would only view elite bodybuilders as “freaks”.) That this perception should persist into the twenty-first century owes much not only to muscle-building drugs but also to the departure from traditional AAU standards, set largely by Hoffman and Rader for the Mr. America Contest in the 1950s, that bodybuilders should be judged not just on their muscularity but their athleticism, character, education, morality, and public behavior. In other words, the criteria for choosing a Mr. America, as an “All American Boy,” should resemble those for selecting a Miss America as an “All American Girl.” But as the sport entered the 1960s it was becoming obvious that bodybuilding fans, encouraged by the Weiders, were more interested in “muscles simply for appearance sake.” To Rader, as Roach notes, “the voice of the times was demanding victory for the most muscular physique regardless of whether it could lift, run, jump, walk, or talk” (p. 248). This approach coincided with demands for racial equality, commercial aspirations, the professionalization of the sport, and an ego-driven desire of bodybuilders to get big and win at any price. (Ed. Note: Other main players with media outlets also had an eye on the bottom line, or they wouldn’t have used as consistently as they did photos of the top physiques.)

By surrendering their traditional, idealistic judging standards in order to fall in line with the new growing orthodoxy of competitive professional bodybuilding, the AAU was basically signaling an acknowledgement of the end of their dominant reign. Changing rules now had them playing catch-up to the competition and it was their stringent rules that helped protect bodybuilding from Hoffman and Rader’s greatest fears. The Mr. America would become simply just another pure physique show, unbridled, ripe, and open to the growing chemical invasion already on the horizon. (p. 264)

The days of Greek-inspired amateur idealism were numbered, according to Roach, as bodybuilding faced an uncertain future. Ironically, the president of the IFBB, Ben Weider, until his dying day (which arrived on October 17, 2008) harbored the notion that bodybuilding, despite its subjectivity, lack of athleticism, saturation with drugs, and negative public perception, would eventually become an Olympic sport.

A final insight drawn by Roach relates to the manner in which Iron Game history shifted from a “Golden Age of Weightlifting” under the tutelage of Bob Hoffman on the east coast to a “Golden Era of Bodybuilding” symbolized by Joe Weider on the west coast. The groundwork for this transition was already laid, however, by the spontaneous gatherings in the 1930s and 1940s of free-spirited physical culturists, including such notables as George Eiferman, Armand Tanny, Russ Saunders, Harold Zinkin, Bert Goodrich, Steve Reeves, and Les and Pudgy Stockton, at a Santa Monica playground called “Muscle Beach.” Its closing in 1959, allegedly because it was also attracting undesirable characters, symbolized, according to Roach, a “changing of the guard” which coincided with the start of Dr. Ziegler’s administration of Dianabol to York weightlifters later the same year. While some of the West Coast lifters migrated to the “pen” in nearby Venice Beach, most of the hardcore lifters and equipment from Muscle Beach settled in “the dungeon,” the basement of an old five-story hotel at 4th and Broadway. Here the likes of Reeves, Eiferman, Irwin “Zabo” Koszewski, Arthur Jones, Don Howorth, Bill McCardle, Pat Casey, Chuck Ahrens, and other greats of the game “descended the stairwell” in the early 1960s. With much the same tone of reverence Harry Paschall once used to speak of the gym at 51 North Broad Street where so many of the old York gang trained to become world class weightlifters (Strength & Health,
Oct. 1950, p. 36), Dave Draper, quoted by Roach, speaks of the dungeon where so many future bodybuilding champions emerged.

A very long, steep, and unsure staircase took me to a cavernous hole in the ground with crumbling plastered walls and a ceiling that bulged and leaked diluted beer from the old-timers tavern above. Puddles of the stuff added charm to the dim atmosphere where 3 strategically placed 40 watt light bulbs gave art deco shadows to the rusting barbells, dumbbells, sagging milk crates, and splintered handcrafted 2x4 benches. Pulleys and twisted cable from a nearby Venice boatyard, a dozen Olympic bars, bent and rusty, and tons of plates were scattered throughout the twenty-five hundred square foot floor. Dumbbells up to 160s that rattled at broken welds added the final touch that completed what was unquestionably the greatest gym in the world. ...

Here bodybuilding began, embryonic: the original, not the imitation. Here exercises were invented, equipment improvised, muscle shape and size imagined and built, and the authentic atmosphere exuded like primal ooze. You were awash in fundamentals and honesty. I loved it then, the memory more now.

The magic didn’t come from the pharmacist; it came from the soul, the era, the history in the making, the presence of un-compromised originality yet to be imitated. [Dave Draper, Brother Iron Sister Steel (On Target Publications, 2001), 22-23]

The atmosphere of the dungeon—plus his hard training and use of anabolic steroids—not only enabled Draper to mold his 1965 IFBB Mr. America physique, but it served as an incubator for other bodybuilders who later migrated to the first Gold’s Gym on Pacific Avenue, which Roach calls “the first bodybuilding gym for strictly bodybuilders” (p. 376). What can be inferred from Draper’s remarks, as bodybuilding’s mecca moved west from the mid-Atlantic region (via Chicago) to California, is that both of these venues would serve as proving grounds for the “first wave” of steroids and would remain a vanguard for the drug-induced, hyper-physiques of the next several decades. Indeed the sport was “drifting from its origins” in physical culture and increasingly “confined to a limited number of men who strongly pursued a desired look not shared by the general public” (p. 456). It would soon mark the disappearance at the highest levels of competitive bodybuilding of natural bodybuilders whose reliance on supplements proved to be “no match for the growing drug arsenal” (p. 479).

These untoward developments obviously trouble the author, leading him to end his account by emphasizing the more principled designs of Johnson, Gironda, Robert Atkins, Bill Pearl, and Mauro Di Pasquale. The latter is represented as a “fulcrum or balancing factor between the old natural order of bodybuilding and the new chemical frontier.” Biochemistry, as viewed by Roach, is a two-edged sword which on the one hand “served up a compound that would mutate the sport both in its physical appearance and at the core of its essence.” What Di Pasquale did by his innovative dietary programs was “divert that same biochemistry into the corner of the natural bodybuilder in the way of understanding and manipulating the body’s hormones naturally” (pp. 507-8). Thus while “Smoke & Mirrors” does accurately reflect much of the development of bodybuilding in the past, it is not the course that Roach desires, nor does it reflect his own candid approach to the subject. Obviously Roach will have more to say about “smoke & mirrors” in his projected second volume. In the meantime this dose of honest research and straight talk should serve as a reminder of how far the Iron Game has advanced and the urgent need for redemption. Only by a restoration of the physical culture ideals of health, balance, and harmony will bodybuilding earn a greater degree of respect and public acceptance. This is a timely book which, in its homeopathic appeal, would bring a smile to the face of the late Vic Boff.
State of the Stark Center, From Page 3

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 knowledge, 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
IRON GAME HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

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