

Giant Undertaking

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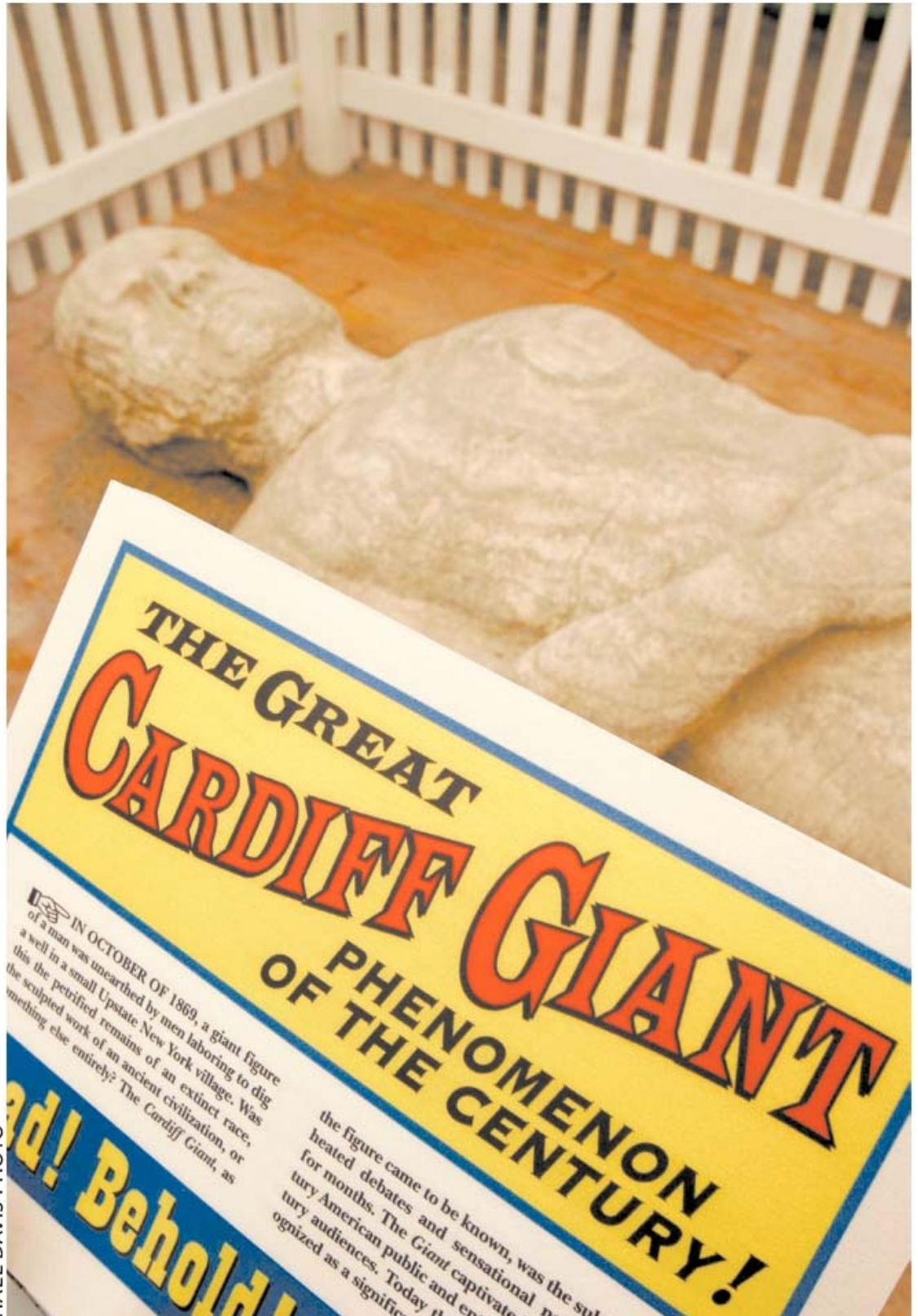
WHAT'S SHAKIN'

It's the moment of truth for local artist Ty Marshal. If he can't raise nearly \$1,300 over the next seven days, his planned endeavor will hit a major SANITY stumbling FAIR block. Marshal is attempting to re-create one of the most famous con jobs in U.S. history: the Cardiff Giant.

The 1869 fraud was the brainchild of LETTERS New York businessman George Hull, who hired workers to carve a 10-foot-tall man out of a block of gypsum. He then arranged for it to be buried in Cardiff, just south of Syracuse, dug up and "found," MUSIC leading thousands of people to believe it was the petrified remains of an ancient giant man. It took months for the lie to be unmasked, and by that time Hull and others FILM had already made tens of thousands of dollars off his trickery.

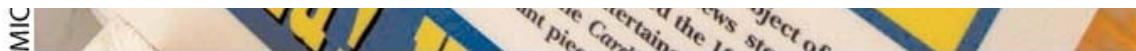
Marshal will be constructing a replica of the Cardiff Giant in time for the 142nd anniversary of its discovery this October. To raise the money for the undertaking, EATShe turned to the online fundraising service Kickstarter.

Kickstarter allows users to set a specific goal amount and a time limit in which to reach it. Marshal's goal is to



HAEL DAVIS PHOTO

earn \$3,000 by Aug. 18. He has currently STAGE received nearly \$1,700 pledged from more than 60 backers. But Kickstarter is an all-or-nothing service: if he can raise enough money, it's his; but if he fails to meet his goal all the currently pledged BOOKS money will be returned to its donors.



Big plans: Ty Marshal is raising funds to re-create the greatest hoax Onondaga County has ever seen—the Cardiff Giant. Marshal intends for his version to be as large as the original (pictured), on permanent display at Cooperstown's Farmers' Museum.

"I wanted to see if I could challenge myself in that way," Marshal said. "It's nerve-wracking, because ART you're watching your project being supported by people and you're not sure if you're going to make your goal."

Kickstarter uses a model of fundraising known as "crowdfunding" that allows anybody who is part of the network to start a fundraising venture or contribute financially to projects of their choice. People who wish to donate to a Kickstarter project can decide exactly how much they would like to pledge, starting from as little as a single dollar.

One of the benefits of fundraising online, Marshal claims, is that it allows "citizen investors" to pledge a given amount with the click of a button rather than having to go through the trouble of mailing a check. The simplicity could be helpful in persuading people to donate during tough economic times.

"Some people spend \$10 a week on cigarettes or at the movies," Marshal said. "With this, you can donate as little as a dollar, and that says, 'Hey, I know we're in a recession and the economy isn't great, but I support you.'" Backers of the project can earn rewards in exchange for their support, depending on how much they donate. Any gift of \$5 or more, for example, earns the donor an invitation to a preview reception at bc Restaurant in Armory Square the evening before the big reveal. Higher pledges can earn people Cardiff Giant posters, T-shirts, bottles of wine and even a producer credit.

Marshal is forgoing an artist's fee, so all funds raised will be applied to the re-creation project, with the majority of money used to purchase the necessary components to build the 10-foot-4-inch replica.

If he can reach his fundraising goal, he plans on re-creating the hoax down to the last detail. After the official unveiling on Oct. 16, his Giant will be pulled by horse and buggy from Lipe Art Park, along West Fayette Street, to the Atrium at City Hall Commons, 201 E. Washington St., where it will be put on display. He also plans on hiring people to wear 19th-century garb while assisting at the event.

"The objective is to have as factual a re-creation of this hoax as possible. It's kind of like taking people back in a time machine to this event on this date to experience how it might have felt," Marshal said. "I'm not asking them to believe it's a real giant, just to allow themselves to be swept away in the theater of it all."

Another important theme the artist hopes to emphasize is the role arts and culture can play in revitalizing a community. The original Cardiff Giant was such a sensation that showman P.T. Barnum offered to buy it from George Hull for \$50,000. When Hull refused, Barnum built his own version, displayed in New York City, and managed to attract large crowds of people who weren't aware they were paying to see a fake of a fake.

"The trolley stopped across the street from the exhibition hall for 10 minutes so people could get off, see the giant and be on their way. People came by the wagonload, and each of those people were paying a dollar to see the Giant. There was this whole spur in the economy during the months it was on display," Marshal said of Hull's hoax.

In an effort to translate past economic growth to the present, Marshal is also pursuing more traditional fundraising routes and attempting to find corporate sponsors. He's working with several local businesses in an effort to drive the local economy. Establishments such as Syracuse Soapworks, the Speech Family Candy Shoppe and Lakeland Winery are manufacturing special Cardiff Giant lines of products that will be available for purchase during exhibitions.

"Arts and culture are a major driving source in our local economy. It's an economic engine and a tool to better ourselves," Marshal said. "This project is about defining a lineage to our history as a creative community. I hope people support it, but more importantly, I'm hoping that people support the local arts in general."

All the money earned from admissions, donations and merchandise sales will go to local organizations that are event partners, including the Onondaga Historical Association, West Side Arts Council and Lipe Art Park. This means they will be providing resources, but not funds, to the effort.

Even if his Kickstarter campaign is unsuccessful, Marshal plans on moving forward with the project but in a limited capacity. "If I don't reach it, some of my lofty ideas will have to be subdued. Still, to know there are more than 60 people in the community that are backing the project gives me hope and shows that there's faith in it."

