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WINTER OLYMPICS

POSTCARDS FROM VANCOUVER

Patrick Garrity is covering the Games for the Free Press. Follow him at <http://blogs.burlingtonfreepress.com/vancouver2010/> and on Twitter @patrickgarrity.



Kelly Clark
26, snowboarding



Results: 3rd, women's halfpipe
Clark won her second Olympic medal, a bronze behind Australia's Torah Bright and fellow Vermonter Hannah Teter. The 26-year-old from West Dover said it meant more to her than the gold she won in Salt Lake City eight years ago — and did not rule a fourth Olympics in 2014.

She said: "I see so much more in this medal than I did in Salt Lake because I know how hard I had to worked to get here."

Hannah Teter
24, snowboarding



Results: 2nd, women's halfpipe
The Belmont native couldn't bump Torah Bright off the podium's top spot, but Teter was genuinely satisfied with silver. Her true motivation is to win money for charity, and her silver will mean thousands from the U.S. Olympic Committee and her deep-pocketed endorsers for her charity, "Hannah's Gold."

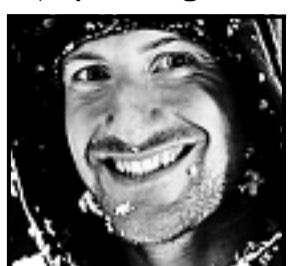
She said: "It was amazing, such a crazy event. It was crazy to be part of such a good show."

Nolan Kasper
20, Alpine skiing



Result: 24th mens slalom
Two solid runs completed Kasper's Olympic debut. He reached his goal of a top-30 finish in his first run to earn a coveted seeded spot for the second. The Warren 20-year-old looks to wrap up the Nor-Am slalom title next month.

Jimmy Cochran
28, Alpine skiing



Result: DNF mens slalom
A spinout on his first run and an out-and-out crash on his second weren't in Cochran's plans. After finishing 12th in Torino, he expected better. Now, he heads back to finish up the season at U.S. Nationals.

Louie Vito
21, snowboarding



Results: 5th, men's halfpipe
An Ohioan trained at Stratton Mountain School and now living in Utah, Vito has seen plenty in his first 21 years, including a guest run on "Dancing with the Stars." He fared about the same in Vancouver, never putting together his best run.

He said (on Twitter): "Stoked I landed, stoked I bypassed semis, stoked to be an Olympian, stoked to be top 5 but sooo bummed no podium! Thanks everyone for ur support n love. Now just gotta bottle this feelin n make sure next time around I won't ever feel it again!"

Lindsey Jacobellis
24, snowboarding



Results: 5th, women's snowboard cross
Jacobellis did not win an expected medal, but at least this time her finish wasn't marked by histrionics that tainted her Torino silver. A crash in the semifinals left her out of the final and off the podium, testifying to the unpredictability of her sport.

She said: "It's unfortunate the rest of the world only sees this race every

four years, and four years ago, so I guess I don't have a very good track record to the general public."

Hannah Kearney
24, freestyle skiing



Results: 1st, women's moguls
Vermont's newest gold-medal winner, Kearney joins Andrea Mead Lawrence, Barbara Cochran, Ross Powers, Kelly Clark and Hannah Teter as Olympic champions. Her clutch, flawless finals run stunned defending champ Jennifer Heil and atoned for a flub four years ago.

She said: "I'm going to savor every single moment, because I know this is going to go by faster than I can possibly imagine."

Mike Morse
28, freestyle skiing



Results: 15th, men's moguls
The Killington Mountain School graduate eked into the finals in 19th place but crashed on his finals run while young teammate Bryon Wilson claimed the bronze medal.

He said: "My qualifying run was not what I wanted, so I had to come out and give it everything I had. I'd like to say there will be a next time, but who knows?"

Daron Rahlves
36, freestyle skiing

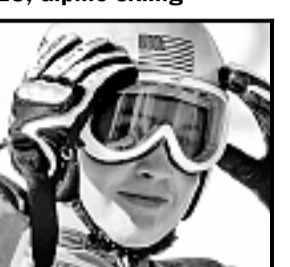


Results: 28th, men's ski cross
A Green Mountain Valley School graduate, Rahlves continued his Olympic disappointments. His fourth Games ended quickly with a crash in the first round

of elimination races. He effectively retired after the race.

He said: "It's part of it, but I'm still disappointed because it was an error on my part."

Chelsea Marshall
23, alpine skiing



Results: DNF, women's Super G
Franz's Run jumped up and bit the young Pittsfield racer. Marshall was among 15 competitors who crashed on the tricky "Frog Bank" part of the course. Marshall was not selected by U.S. Ski Team bosses to race the downhill in spite of a good day of training that included the 12th-best time in the second run.

Andy Newell
26, cross-country skiing



Results: 45th, men's 1.6K sprint; 9th, men's team sprint; 13th, men's 4x10 relay
Newell's crash midway through the sprint qualification race symbolized the American fortnight in cross-country skiing. High hopes did not produce good results, and the Shaftsbury native's surprising failure to advance was perhaps the worst of the shortfalls. He had qualified second in 2006.

He said (on Twitter): "Thanks for the support everyone! felt great today, so it's a bummer."

Caitlin Compton
29, cross-country skiing



Results: 30th, women's 10K freestyle; 43rd, women's pursuit; 6th, women's team sprint; 12th, women's 4x5K relay team
Beyond Kikkan Randall,

Compton was perhaps the bright spot of a tough Games for the U.S. cross-country team. The former Warren resident teamed with Randall to push the U.S. to sixth place in the sprint, and her 30th-place effort in the 10K was the top American finish.

She said: "Thirtieth isn't bad considering this is my first Olympics."

Simi Hamilton
23, cross-country skiing



Results: 54th, men's 15K freestyle; 29th, men's sprint; 13th, men's 4x10K relay

Hamilton introduced himself as U.S. cross-country skiing's next generation. The Middlebury College graduate was the last selection to the U.S. Olympic team — and the lone American to qualify for the sprint finals. A struggle with his commitment to the sport is well behind him; Hamilton is the future.

He said: "Hopefully, I'll win a medal in Sochi in four years. I have a long and hopefully prosperous ski career ahead."

Garrott Kuzzy
27, cross-country skiing



Results: 58th, men's 15K freestyle; 47th, men's sprint; 13th, men's 4x10K relay

Kuzzy's workman-like effort got him on the U.S. Olympic team, and he put in the same effort in Vancouver. Like Simi Hamilton, he is a Middlebury College graduate; unlike Hamilton, his passion for skiing has never wavered.

He said: "It was a lot of fun. I thought we had a good team going into it. I think everyone stepped up to the plate and gave it our best."

Kris Freeman
29, cross-country skiing



Results: 59th, men's 15K freestyle; 30th, men's 30K pursuit
Freeman's third Olympic Games started with the highest hopes and ended in the greatest disappointment. Diagnosed in 2000 with diabetes, the disease bit the former UVM skier on course in the pursuit race when Freeman miscalculated his blood-sugar level. On top of a dismal freestyle race, Freeman's Games were a struggle.

He said: "All of a sudden, my body wasn't working. I thought that was going to be it. If the coach hadn't come over, I thought I was going to have to walk back to the finish line."

Liz Stephen
23, cross-country skiing



Results: 50th, women's 10K freestyle; 58th, women's 15K pursuit
Sochi 2014. That will be Stephen's focus the next four years after getting an Olympic Games under her belt. The East Montpelier native's initiation will work wonders for her training and her preparation for Russia.

She said: "There's people who don't even get to be here, so you can't quit. And if you're not having (a good day) out there, you have to realize what you can do to fight for not being last on a certain day."

Laura Spector
22, biathlon



Results: 77th, women's 7.5K sprint; 65th, women's 15K; 17th, women's 4x6K relay
Spector and the U.S. women's team brought

modest expectations into Vancouver and struggled to reach them. The Europeans flexed their depth and talent, and the Americans were not in the same league. Just 22, the Green Mountain Valley School graduate has four years to hone her skills for Sochi 2014.

Tim Thomas
35, ice hockey



Result: Playing in gold-medal game today

A semifinal blowout of Finland allowed Tim Thomas to make his first Olympic appearance. The former UVM star has spent the Games backing up star goalie Ryan Miller. Thomas surrendered a tipped goal and made six saves in the final 11½ minutes of the U.S. victory.

He said: "The Olympics is a whole new stage for representing your country. World Championships, Olympic festivals and other tournaments is one thing, but the Olympics is the pinnacle."

Lowell Bailey
28, biathlon



Results: 36th, men's 10K; 57th, men's 20K; 36th, men's 12.5K pursuit; 13th, men's relay

A busy week for Bailey showed improvements for him but a step backward for U.S. biathlon. The team's 13th-place finish in the relay Friday was four spots in the wrong direction from four years ago. Bailey, meanwhile, moved up 12 places in the 10K and 14 places in the pursuit.

— Compiled by Patrick Garrity

CANADA: Nation found American-like hunger for gold

Continued from Page 1A
crying now, they're crowing. Alexandre Bilodeau struck a vein when he won the men's moguls for the nation's first gold medal. Few days were ended without another.

When Canada won a gold, two silvers, a bronze and beat the Russians in men's hockey Wednesday, the headline across the front page of The Globe and Mail of Toronto boomed "THE BEST DAY YET."

The medal fixation of Canadian Olympic officials — and particularly the Canadian media — prompted one athlete to deliver a rebuke. "I think that these Olympics, and how excited Canadians are right now about being Canadian and celebrating excellence, I think that shows that there is value to sport, and I don't think that value lies in an overall medal count," bronze-medal-winning speedskater Clara Hughes said.

The people's Games

Hughes' not-so-gentle admonition notwithstanding, the hosts' success helped take the camera's lens off a stumbling start to the Games.

The death of a Georgian luger hours before opening ceremonies cast a somber mood, and lousy weather, problems with the ice at the speed-skating oval, an over-protected Olympic cauldron and thousands of canceled tickets had more than one commentator declaring Vancouver a catastrophe.

What was lost in that disaster declaration and in a breathless medals rush was that the thousands of people who flooded into

Vancouver in the past two weeks were blissfully oblivious. According to organizers, more than 135,000 people entered Canada at Vancouver International Airport between Feb. 12 and Feb. 22. More than 130,000 cars crossed into British Columbia during the same span. The party was on, rain, shine, gold medals or otherwise.

Kearney, fresh off winning her gold, was amazed by the 8,000 people who stood for hours in a chilling rain to watch it. Similar scenes played out at other venues — and beyond. The line at the Canadian mint downtown snaked around the corner just for the chance to touch an Olympic medal.

Whether Canadian athletes soared or sank, "the people's Games" raged. "I have never seen a city embrace the Games as Vancouver has done," said Jacques Rogge, head of the International Olympic Committee. "What we have seen here, in the streets of Vancouver, is absolutely extraordinary."

Olympic fever fueled the revelry. So did alcohol. For the first time in Vancouver history, liquor stores closed at 7 p.m. on weekend nights to curb refills. City police reported 1,600 "pour outs" on the night of Feb. 19 alone.

Then there was the Canadian women's hockey team. Minutes after collecting their gold medals, many players spilled back onto the ice at Canada Hockey Place, cigars and Molson Canadians in hand. Forward Rebecca Johnston even tried to drive the ice re-surfacer.

"We were enjoying the moment," Canada captain Hayley Wickenheiser told the indignant. Winning is fun.

Green and gold

America had more success than anyone. Its 37 total medals tie for the most won by any country at a Winter Olympics.

Among that haul are three medals made in Vermont. Kearney's gold was joined by the silver and bronze won by Hannah Teter of Belmont and Kelly Clark of West Dover in the halfpipe event.

As with nearly every medal winner here, each Vermonter had a great backstory.

Kearney, deflated by her Olympic failure in Torino, was ready to quit competitive skiing until a doctor's diagnosis of a blown-out knee reminded her how important it was to her. "I burst into tears," she recalled. "Maybe I really, really care about this sport."

She committed to her craft, and that commitment was rewarded with gold.

Her snowboarding cousins, Teter and Clark, already knew that reward. Teter was the gold medalist in Torino and parlayed that talent and fame into helping others. "People have all kinds of hobbies," she said. "Mine is charity."

All of her winnings the past three years have gone to relief work. This year's spoils are bound for Doctors Without Borders' efforts to help Haitian earthquake recovery. She said the thing she appreciated most about her silver medal was the cold cash it would

bring to help others.

Clark's story may be most poignant. She thrust herself into the spotlight in 2002 with a gold-medal ride at Salt Lake City. A high-flyer at 18, her golden formula that day in Utah included pumping Blink 182's anthem "This Is Growing Up" through her headphones.

She didn't know the half of it. An instant celebrity, she did Letterman and Leno and took congratulatory phone calls from the likes of Britney Spears. It was all a little too much for a kid who eight months earlier had played first doubles on Brattleboro High's girls tennis team.

Clark turned to Christianity, and it brought her peace. She still had the fire to compete, though, and after finishing fourth in Torino, she recognized she needed to start over as a snowboarder.

Her bronze, bound for a showcase at her parents' restaurant near Mount Snow, was the reward for that rededication. It outshines the Salt Lake gold in her heart.

"Medals are a really funny thing because when you see them, they're prestigious and you can stand in awe of them," Clark said. "But I think to the person who receives them, they mean so much more."

"I see so much more in this medal than I did in Salt Lake because I know how hard I had to work to get here."

See you in Sochi

Most of the athletes who competed here worked as hard as Clark and Teter and Kearney, but leave

