

Tapping the Fountain of Youth

Games Continued from Page 1



Photo by Martin Thiel

Dick Larkin, another Aussie from Adelaide, enjoyed "all the signs around town that say 'Welcome to us,' and all the bright, smiling people that said 'How are you?' It's been a terrific town. It couldn't have been more pleasant. I think my only regret is that we haven't seen more of it."

"The enthusiasm for the older people was great," added Larkin's wife Julie. "You can really feel that they love them, and it's so genuine."

Padget and the group from Adelaide took advantage of the many tours being offered to the visiting athletes. "We went to Crater Lake on the bus, and Monday we went whitewater rafting on the McKenzie — that was good," he said. "On Wednesday our American friends took us to the coast to see the sea lions, so we got a fair look."

Competitors (top left) in the men's 10,000 provided a close race.

Opening Day ceremonies brought out many athletes in their native dress.

A Canadian high jumper gives her best shot at clearing 1.46 meters.

Long jumping provided the young at heart the thrill of flight.

The master of the discus Al Oerter threw for 205-10, earning one of the many world records set at the World Veterans Championship.



Photo by Tony Peck

The Australians, however, refrained from any partying the week of the games.

"No, the South Australian boys are usually very steady," said Bob Ansell. "They're not mean or anything, just miserably careful."

A big hit with the Aussies was the food served on campus, which is why, they said, the local restaurants probably didn't do as good as they expected.

"We have to apologize to the local restaurants," said Aussie Frand Rogers. "We haven't been eating there. The food at the University's too good."

"We didn't get the big hordes of people that we expected, but we got a little more than usual," said Alberto Salazar, owner of the Oregon Electric Station and a running legend in his own right. "There were a lot of athletes coming to the restaurant, though."

"The cafeteria of your school (at the EMU) is wonderful," Padget said. "The students, if that's what they get, they'd live like lords wouldn't they?"

"The meals at the University have been spot on. Excellent," added Freeman.

The closing ceremonies Sunday afternoon were "spot on" as well. World Association of Veteran Athletes President Cosare Beccalli of Italy spoke to the crowd, thanking the citizens of Eugene and Springfield, meet Executive Director Tom Jordan and Executive Secretary Barbara Kousky, and organizers of the event.

Eugene Mayor Jeff Miller also spoke, thanking the fans and athletes for their participation.

"It's been a lot greater than we anticipated," Jordan said. "It was the largest audience for a masters event in history and they just kept coming back day after day."

"We got the biggest crowd (Saturday) night — 7,500 — and that was a real testimony as to how this event's been received," he said. "There's always going to be a few glitches — it's the largest track meet in the world. But it went very well. I'm very relieved."

The event was expected to raise approximately \$10 million for the local economy. At one point, that figure seemed unattainable, but Jordan said on Sunday that he expects the final total to be somewhere in the \$10 million range.

The meet also received a fair amount of national recognition as well, which pleased Jordan.

"Sports Illustrated will be doing a long feature in their next issue," he said. He added that the CBS television show "48 Hours" had

planned to come but canceled before the meet started.

"They were very excited about coming, but they found out that the CBS documentary division is doing a big series on aging, and they didn't want 48 Hours to do a story on aging athletes at the same time," Jordan said.

"We're not disappointed, though," he said. "We've gotten a lot of national and international attention, and I feel the event has gotten what it deserves. It can only help us for (drawing) Olympic Trials and other meets. It's definitely enhanced our reputation for being able to put on major meets."

The final total on the number of athletes that attended the meet was 4,951 — a little short of the projected 6,000.



Photo by Mark Ylen

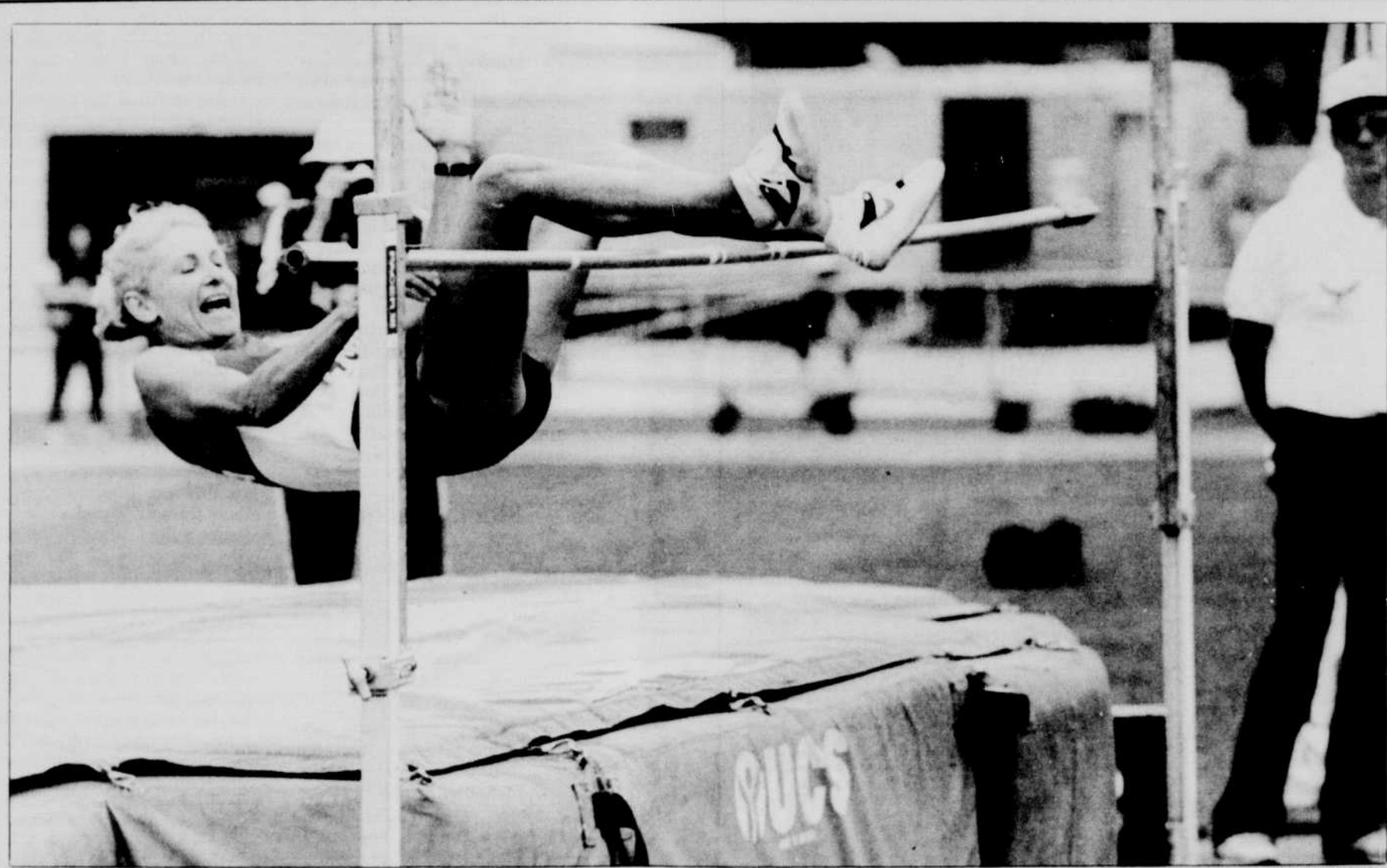


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