

## **Linda's Beijing Journal: Day Five**

**By Charles F. Gardner**

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*Editor's note: Linda McDonald will write a daily journal for JSOnline, tracking the progress of West Allis gymnast Chellsie Memmel and commenting on the Olympic scene in Beijing. Linda is a nationally rated gymnastics judge, clinician and choreographer and close friend of the Memmel family. Originally from Green Bay, Linda now lives in Aurora, Ill.*

**Beijing** - Today we went to the men's team finals for gymnastics, and the U.S. team was amazing.

The team was basically put together at the last minute, after the Hamm brothers had to withdraw due to injuries, and it was great to see it come together when it counted. Everyone was on fire. The U.S. won bronze, and the excitement in the arena was electric.

China won the gold, and being the home team, had quite a following. The Chinese fans were loud, but the U.S. fans were louder. Japan edged the U.S. on the last rotation to take the silver medal, but it was a great day for USA Gymnastics.

Today (Tuesday) was my birthday, so we needed to go out and celebrate. Bank of America has a house for the families of the athletes, and they provide Internet access, phone service, food and beverages, even massages. There are three floors, all equipped with TVs airing live Olympic coverage.

It's a gathering place for athletes and their families. We met swimmers, boxers, fencers and water polo athletes and families. There is such a great camaraderie between Olympic friends and families. We planned on only staying an hour and it turned into five hours.

We did not stay out too late as women's team finals are tomorrow morning (9:15 tonight Milwaukee time). The U.S. girls had a great training session today and they are ready to give China a run for their money. Go USA!