



# Odyssey of the Mind<sup>®</sup>

## Newsletter

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Number 2

### University of Maryland, College Park, Gearing Up for 2001 World Finals: A Creative Odyssey!

**T**hey've done it before -- in fact, this will be the fifth time the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), hosts the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. The first time was in 1985, then 1988, 1993, and 1997, and now in 2001. With that kind of experience behind them, we can only expect another successful event.

Since that first time in 1985, the University has grown to become a much sought-after location for large events. It's even in the running as the site for the Olympic Village in 2012. A new addition for 2001 includes the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, a performing arts "village," comprised of ten interconnected structures. Odyssey of the Mind will be the first organization to make use of the building, where *Ody-SEE-ing Sounds* teams will showcase their solutions. The center occupies 318,000 square feet of a 17-acre site at the northwest end of the campus and is the only full-service performing arts center along the Baltimore-Washington corridor.

The UMCP campus sits on 1,350 acres of land with 350 buildings. Most all of the competition venues, cafeterias and housing units are within walking distance of

each other. Of course, a shuttle will be available to transport teams to places that are off the beaten track.

The city of College Park has many restaurants, fast food venues and retail stores to choose from. If teams can find time to venture off campus, they're only a short distance away from many important areas of interest, including historical Annapolis, picturesque Baltimore and the Inner Harbor, and cosmopolitan Washington, D.C., one of the most visited cities in the U.S.



Pat Peretto, Director of UM Conferences and Visitor Services, says, "The quality of the problem solving that takes place in Odyssey never ceases to amaze me. I've seen many programs geared toward young people, but I seldom see anything close to the caliber of experience that Odyssey provides. It covers such a wide range of topics and exposes kids to so many different things.

"It has been a privilege to host the program and to meet so many bright young people. In Odyssey of the Mind, everyone's a winner, including the University. To have so much brain power gathered in one place, and to be a part of that, is certainly something to be proud of."

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### New Association Forms in Chile

**A**dd to our list of international associations the country of Chile, who will start the program in March of this year. Seven schools in Pudahuel, a large community in Santiago, and one in another part of Santiago will pilot the program. The program has the support of the Mayor of Pudahuel, a generous educational foundation, and a host of educators, scientists, consultants, teachers, and enthusiastic parents friends and students, all of whom are eager to make the program a success. Thanks to Diane Greenstein for her efforts in organizing the association.

The Odyssey family continues to grow with first-time teams from Croatia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Italy is also participating again after a short hiatus. We hope to see representation from all these countries at the Odyssey of the Mind 2001 World Finals.

**Editor's Note:** The Odyssey of the Mind has chosen Dr.sc. Karl-Ernst Plagemann as the recipient of its Spirit Award for 2000-2001. The award is presented to a member of the Odyssey family each year at World Finals. Dr. Plagemann has been instrumental in organizing the program in Germany, developing it into one of the strongest associations in the world. The following is Dr. Plagemann's response upon learning that he had been chosen for the award.

## What I Am Proud Of

When I received the letter from Dr. C. Samuel Micklus, stating that I had been selected for the Odyssey of the Mind Spirit Award for 2000-2001, I was overwhelmed. I feel very much honored. It will be the most important award I have ever received.

More than ten years ago, at a private meeting at San Francisco State University, Bill Jones introduced me to the Odyssey of the Mind program. At the end of our conversation, he asked whether I could bring a German team to the 1991 World Finals at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In a time of changes in Germany, I tried very hard and finally succeeded. At the 1991 World Finals, a team of students from Humboldt-Highschool and a team from Helmholtz-Highschool introduced Germany to the international community of the Odyssey of the Mind. One girl on the team received the German banner out of the hands of a smart parachooter, who jumped down from the heavens with the flag.

The following year we established Germany International as the organization offering the Odyssey of the Mind in Germany and, at the same time, the Odyssey of the Mind European Organizing Committee, offering the pro-

gram all over Europe. Reviewing the past ten years, I am especially proud of :

- having a board of Germany International that includes teachers, students and sponsors as active volunteers;
- having engaged from the beginning German and American (DoDDS) and international schools in Germany;
- having contributed to implementing the international dimension of the Odyssey of the Mind program by starting international exchanges with participants around the world and organizing annual European Festivals with increasing attraction to participants around the world;
- having added the ideas of tolerance and international cooperation to the Odyssey of the Mind program, in the way of offering special problems for mixed international teams at European Festivals and supplying judges, interpreters and officials for events and competitions in other countries including World Finals in the United States;
- having Christine Rößler, Thomas Off and Tina Gütthling (married Bielig) honored with a stipend by the Odyssey of



Dr.sc Karl-Ernst Plagemann

*continued on page 4*



It was a great invention and most of us couldn't imagine life without it, but not many people know who *really* invented television. Why, Philo T. Farnsworth, of course. And he got the idea when he was only 14 years old.

Farnsworth was born in 1906 in a log cabin near Beaver City, Utah, a community settled by his grandfather under instructions by Brigham Young. At the age of 12, his family moved to a farm in Idaho. The fact that the farm was wired for electricity piqued young Philo's curiosity. Within a year he became a self-taught electrical engineer, and was fixing the farm's generator and building motors out of spare parts in his back yard.

One day Philo read an article about a new idea — the transmission of electronic pictures — and studied everything he could find on the subject. Amazingly, while tilling a potato field with a horse-drawn harrow, he realized that an electron beam could scan images the same way as tilling a field, line by line. Philo presented the idea to his high school

teacher Justin Tolman, who provided him with key knowledge and encouraged him to follow his dreams.

In 1927, at the age of 21, Philo astounded many by creating the first all-electronic television picture ever transmitted. The image consisted of 60 horizontal lines, which formed a dollar sign. After the image was received, Philo simply exclaimed, "There you are, electronic television."

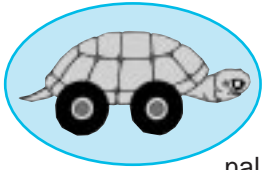
Philo patented his invention, the Image Dissector, but it just so happens that a Russian, Vladimir Zworykin, made a patent application in 1923 for a camera tube he called the Iconoscope. He was also connected to RCA, whose chief, David Sarnoff, had no intention of paying royalties to Farnsworth for the rights to manufacture televisions. A legal battle ensued, but RCA could not prove that Zworykin had produced an operable television transmitter in 1923.

On the other side, Philo's former teacher, Tolman, testified that Philo conceived the idea as a student. He even produced the original sketch of an electronic tube by Philo at the time. It was almost an exact replica of the Image Dissector. In 1934, the U.S. Patent Office awarded priority of invention to Philo.

Philo T. Farnsworth may have been one of the earliest critics of his own invention. He is known to have said to his children about it, "There's nothing on it worthwhile, and we're not going to watch it in this household, and I don't want it in your intellectual diet." Truly, a man ahead of his time.

# LONG-TERM PROBLEM CLARIFICATIONS

These clarifications are based on the questions and answers shown on the Odyssey of the Mind Web site ([www.odyssey-of-themind.com](http://www.odyssey-of-themind.com)). All questions and answers are not necessarily clarifications of the problem. Many are a confirmation of a team's understanding of the problem. Listed below are statements that confirm or clarify those things about which the most questions have been asked. This list is complete as of February 5, 2001.



## Problem 1: Techno-Pets

1. TPVs may not be guided by laying tracks on the floor, by using a remote control, or by any other external method unless whatever is used to guide or control it is contained or carried on the other TPV. The TPVs may be pre-programmed vehicles and the chip that is used is considered part of a computer system and, therefore, not counted in the cost or value of the materials used to solve the problem.

2. TPVs may not be computer animations.
3. For the task of reacting to a sound, the sound itself does not have to cause the TPV to move. However, the TPV must appear to react to the sound being made.
4. A TPV will be considered stopped when a team member touches it. If it has not completed a task at that time, the task must be repeated in its entirety in order to receive credit.
5. Something may be placed in the Safe Place to assist the TPV in depositing the retrieved object. However, it may not touch the TPV when doing this. This may not be a team member. The object may be thrown by a TPV into the Safe Place, but may only touch the floor after entry into the Safe Place.
6. Things may be added to or removed from the TPV provided they have been approved in the Staging Area.

## Problem 2: Ody-SEE-ing Sounds



1. The parts of a device may be connected by something such as a piece of wood, a string or a cord. Separate parts, within one container, are also considered connected.
2. Extension cords to provide an electrical source may go out of the SEE in order to be connected to an electrical supply.
3. Separate actions may be taken to initiate the various sounds a device makes.
4. Nothing may be added to a device, once it has produced a sound, in order to have it make another sound. However, parts may be removed from a device between sounds. Once removed, they may not be added to that device again in order for it to produce additional sounds.
5. Team members may initiate (that is, start) the sounds being made by the devices. However, the action of the team member may not be ongoing or continued through when the sound is made. For example, a team member may push a pole that knocks a block of wood off of a ledge and the block of wood falls and makes a noise. The noise made after the

block of wood falls is okay. However, if the noise being asked to be scored is the sound of the pole hitting the block of wood, this would not be scored as one of the device-produced sounds since the team member directly caused the sound. There must be an intermediate action between when the team member performs the action and when the sound is made.

## Problem 3: Wild.Winged.Wonders.



1. Birds such as gryphons and hippogriffs are permitted. However, teams must follow copyright laws if they choose to use copyrighted bird characters. Teams may use the same species of bird shown in any classic work of art or in any classic piece of literature. Nursery rhymes, folk tales, mythology and Dr. Seuss are considered as classic pieces of literature, but may be copyrighted. It is intended that teams will use the same species of bird, but not necessarily the same bird character as presented. It is not against the rules to use a bird character, however.

2. The merits presented for each bird are those that the team deems to give it. They would address the qualities being considered for the special recognition. Those are also up to the team.

3. A prop may be attached to a bird if it is not attached to anything else. For example, it may have a bug on it. For the bird to fly for full score, it may not be attached to a string, pole, etc. that is held by someone or attached to something. If so, it would receive points for appearing to fly. The feet must leave the floor in order to appear to fly. You may not use helium.

## Problem 4: Achilles' Heel



1. The vehicle must run in the same configuration for qualifying and testing. It may be made of any material, so long as the bumper with the impact edge is wooden. The bumper must be 5" to 6" wide, however, the rest of the vehicle may be less than 5".

2. Although the Achilles' Heel may be slightly slanted, it may not be a diagonal brace as shown by Figures B and C in the problem. It may be composed of laminated pieces, however, they must all meet the specifications for the Achilles' Heel. If the part of the structure designated as the Achilles' Heel is made up of laminated pieces, it will not be considered broken unless all pieces are broken. The Achilles' Heel may

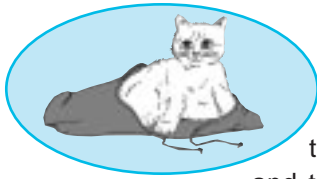


have cross pieces touching it. If spacers are used on upright pieces, only the one that the vehicle hits will be considered the Achilles' Heel. When it breaks, weight placement is over.

3. The ramp will be elevated 7" from the floor for the qualifying run(s) and 10" from the floor for testing in order to compensate for the tester base.

4. The contact of the vehicle's impact edge must be the force that moves the soda can when qualifying. This same impact edge with the same force must be what impacts the Achilles' Heel during testing.

5. The only contact the vehicle makes with the ramp should be its wheels.



### Problem 5: Idiom Inspiration

1. The team's initial information as to the idioms it has selected and their meaning must be done after time begins, but before the skit actually begins. Team members may be setting up while this is being done. This is done to inform the audience of the idioms the team has selected.

2. The team does not have to present the figurative nor the literal meaning of the idiom selected for the poem in any way but in its opening presentation.

3. The team-created idiom should be one that the team makes up, not one that is found in popular use.

4. Definition of presentation: Demonstrated or acted out in some manner.

5. After time begins, the team is permitted to hand out information in the form of a flyer or playbill to the judges and/or audience.

6. More than one person can recite the team-created poem.

#### **Dr.sc Karl-Ernst Plagemann** (cont. from page 2)

the Mind Organization and Dr. Carola Gnadl recognized at the Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals with an Outstanding OMER Award;

- having a team from Kleinmachnow Highschool as the first German World Champions in 1996, and German as well as DoDDS teams honored with Ranatra Fusca Awards at World Finals;

- finally getting recognition for the Odyssey of the Mind program in 1999 by the Ministry for Youth, Education and Sports in the State of Brandenburg.

Reviewing all these achievements, it is quite obvious that I am proud to have been an initiator and stimulator, but the success and growth of Germany International is the result of many volunteering enthusiasts fascinated by the unique program in creativity, tolerance and international cooperation called *Odyssey of the Mind* – students, teachers, parents and sponsors alike.

## Odyssey of the Mind *Family Album*

- Please join us in welcoming our newest employee **Joanne Pulaski** to the Odyssey of the Mind family. She'll be answering phones and helping us to improve our services to you. Joanne has a B.A. in music from Rowan University and certification in computerized office technology. A person of many talents, Joanne has been singing since she was three years old and playing the flute since fourth grade. Give her a warm "hello" the next time you call our office!

- Condolences are in order for **Carole Micklus**, who lost her mother **Mildred Lutz** on February 3 after a long illness.

- **Vytautas Krutulis** is stepping down as Association Director for Lithuania. Stepping in is **Auksuole Jackunaite**, also known as the manager of **SMILE**, the popular singing group. Thanks to Vytautas for establishing Odyssey of the Mind in Lithuania.

- This year, **Delaware Odyssey of the Mind** celebrates its 20th year. They'll be throwing a big bash at their state tournament on March 23. **Dr. Sam Micklus** will attend in honor of the occasion.

- In April, Dr. Sam will travel to Debrecen, Hungary, to attend the Odyssey of the Mind European Festival, commonly known as **Eurofest** -- a showcase of international creativity!

- How's this for perseverance? In December, **Diane Rynders**, Arkansas Association Director, went eight days without electricity due to ice storms.

*We'd love to hear items of interest about anyone in the Odyssey of the Mind family. E-mail carolann@jersey.net.*



**FYI!** The next issue of the Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter will be our renewal issue. In it you'll find an application form for next year's membership, the synopses to next year's long-term problems, the World Finals Coaches Problem and announcements about changes in the program for 2001-2002. You should receive this some time in April. Don't miss it!

# For the Coaches . . .

Carole Micklus, World Finals Tournament Director and former Executive Director of Odyssey of the Mind, offers her insight on two much-misunderstood areas of the long-term problem: **Outside Assistance** and **Style**.

## But I Have a Great Idea!

So the team has been practicing for months to perfect its problem solution. Right? And, the parents and coaches and other folks who have seen the performance have their own ideas on what would make it "better." But, wait -- isn't Odyssey of the Mind supposed to be a learning experience for the kids? Isn't it supposed to teach them how to solve problems, think creatively, stick to a budget, follow through with ideas and work together as a team? So, before you present your great ideas to the team (which could get them a penalty in competition if they're used), remember the purpose of Odyssey of the Mind: It is a learning experience for *the kids*. Besides, what makes you think the judges would prefer your ideas?

What do team members do if they need something welded or sewn and no one on the team can do it? Can someone else do it for them? Not unless they want to receive an Outside Assistance penalty. Instead, they must think of another way to do whatever needs doing or learn how to do it themselves. Unfortunately, it is often only at this point that you realize how important the selection of team members is. The teams that have the most diverse skills are the teams that have more possibilities open to them.

Coaches and parents can ask questions of team members, so long as it is not done in a way that directs the team to an answer. For example, the coach could say, "Is there any other way to do this?" But the coach cannot say, "Could you use tape instead of sewing it?"

It is especially important to remember this at competition. Often, team supporters want to help comb hair, apply makeup and repair props -- all outside assistance. But there are other things supporters are allowed to do. They can help unload and load props. They may assist the team in moving props from the pre-staging area to the staging area (if both are used). They can help clean up after the team's performance. Of course, they can always provide transportation, snacks and, most important, moral support.

Let's make sure the kids get the full benefit of participation by allowing them to do all the work. Remember: Odyssey of the Mind is a hands-on experience for kids -- and hands-off for adults!

*This team member's costume is truly creative and would most likely score high as a free choice style category, provided the wording directed the judges to score the most creative aspects.*



## What Do We Do for Style?

You see a team that doesn't seem to have much of a skit, if any, and it scores high in Style. Why? Because judges are looking at the items the team has listed on its Style Form.

Suppose an *Achilles' Heel* team has the following listed for Style: the membership sign (fashioned after an announcement of a Roman Chariot race), the appearance of the vehicle (decorated as a chariot), and the appearance of two team members (both dressed in "Roman-style" costumes)? Suppose the team doesn't have a skit? Still, the four Style components all reflect a single theme, so they would combine for an integrated overall effect. How well each item looks to the judges is what will determine its score. The team could have a very clever skit, but if its Style categories are the sign, the vehicle, and two costumes, plus overall effect, the skit doesn't come into play for judging Style. Overall effect is determined by how the listed Style elements enhance the presentation.

So, what can we determine from this? That it is important to ask to be judged on your strengths for free choice Style items. Generally, the best way for the team to approach a long-term problem is to solve the problem, including the mandatory Style areas, then look at the problem solution and see what is not scored in long-term scoring. Determine what other aspects of the solution are exceptional and list those for the free choice Style categories. If you can't find anything that stands out, either redo something or add to the problem solution.

Make sure you word your free choice category to your advantage. For example, at the Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals, a *King Arthur* team member wore a suit of armor made of tabs from aluminum cans. Many teams had suits of armor, but none were constructed so creatively. The best choice of wording, had this been a free choice Style item, would be, "Creative use of materials in the suit of armor." If the wording were "Suit of armor," the judges would consider all factors of the suit. Since many other teams had suits of armor, judges would tend to score it lower than if the use of materials, which was truly unique, were the only aspect being judged.

Check your forms and make sure your free choice items are worded to your advantage. The judges want to award the highest scores you deserve. Make sure you bring to their attention the aspects of your solution that make you most proud -- and are the most creative!



# Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

1325 Rte 130 S ● Suite F ● Gloucester City, NJ 08030

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## 2001: A CREATIVE ODYSSEY share the excitement!

The *Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter* is published by Creative Competitions, Inc. Editor: Carol Ann DeSimine.

### ODYSSEY OF THE MIND PRODUCTS ORDER FORM

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**\*\*\* All books are a collection of long-term and spontaneous problems for students of all ages.\*\*\*  
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There are no shipping charges for the items listed below.**

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