

## *Open Letter to OM Members From RI OM Board of Directors*

To the OM Newsletter Editor:

In the past several years, we have observed an increasing trend among schools which we believe is counter to the philosophies of OM. Rhode Island is a relative newcomer to OM, having had a program for only the past 5 years. The first teams consisted of kids who thought the program might be fun.

RIOM has grown steadily in the intervening years largely because other kids wanted to join the fun. Perhaps the longer one participates in OM, the harder it is to remember why OM exists or what the proper focus should be. We maintain the philosophy that *every* child should be encouraged to participate in this exciting program and all children who do are champions. However, we have noticed that a few members in different states (and also some programs in Rhode Island) limit the participation in OM to children who have been identified as “gifted.” Memberships with limited resources in both money and coaches must choose among students who wish to participate. Rather than using academic achievement as the sole criterion, perhaps having the students complete a project on their own or even drawing names from a hat could be alternative methods of selecting team members. Other teams and schools have placed their emphasis on doing well, i.e., winning the state [association] tournament and going to Worlds. For this reason, these schools have limited the participation in OM to “gifted” students at the expense of the involvement of others. However, such limitations have not necessarily led to winning teams.

Gifted and creative are not synonyms. Scores of children in our public and private schools are incredibly creative but are not part of a gifted program. Other children have not had an avenue to develop creativity. The OM program develops creative thinking and problem solving as well as teamwork, responsibility and self-esteem. All children deserve this opportunity. All children bring unique talents to a team. Some of these talents may not be part of the testing and identification process for gifted programs but are important qualities for an OM team. Children can contribute artistic, musical and mechanical skills, leadership, enthusiasm and the ability to be a good team member.

Teams should be a microcosm of the real world. Adults deal with a variety of talents to accomplish their goals. Often the most successful are those who can share ideas, listen and compromise to produce the optimum solution. This is also the recipe for an ideal OM team. The ideal teams are not composed of “gifted” children but of kids who would have fun participating. OM is, above all, for the children and by the children. Adult outside assistance diminishes the process as well as being contrary to

OM policy. Our role as coaches and parents is not to produce the product. We provide the environment where challenges can be made and risks can be taken and where failure is only another way of learning.

Diversity of thought is encouraged and may best be reflected in a diversity of skills brought together by teamwork. The spirit of OM encompasses the inclusion of all students and views the competitions as a means to share the wonderful and exciting accomplishments of each team. We hope that this spirit will be firmly embraced by not only the RIOM community but the international OM community as well.

*On behalf of the Rhode Island OM Board of Directors,  
Gina C. and Judi Israel*

**Editor's note: See the article in this issue, *An OM Team Member's Moment*, an essay on Odyssey of the Mind by Annika Moe, for an OM team members perspective on this same subject.**

## **Italy on Board as OM's Newest Chartered Association**

OM Association welcomes the country of Italy as its newest chartered association. Participation in Odyssey of the Mind began there in the 1994-95 membership year, with over 200 children involved. Thanks in part to the efforts of Association Director Donna Aubell, it is now an officially chartered organization.

Italy is a country only slightly larger than Arizona in size. It is often referred to as the “boot” of Europe because of the shape of its mainland, which extends into the Mediterranean Sea. It also includes several islands most notably Sicily and Sardinia. Italy is legendary for its contributions to the arts, the preservation of its history, the joyful ways of its people, and its excellent cuisine.

Italy's most famous cities include *Roma* (Rome), the “Eternal City” and the heart of the country; *Firenze* (Florence), revered as the city of art, claiming such treasures as Michelangelo's “David” and Brunelleschi's dome; *Venezia* (Venice), famous for its gondolas, canals, and Murano glass; *Napoli* (Naples), remembered for its rich heritage and history, and *Milano* (Milan), a world center of high fashion.

Italy: the land of da Vinci, Pavarotti, Fellini, and now, Odyssey of the Mind!

## Odyssey of the Mind and National Dairy Council® Partnership for Children

**“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a person healthy, wealthy, and wise.”**

(Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac*, Oct. 1735)

Who could ask for more than health and wisdom? That's where the Odyssey of the Mind (OM) and National Dairy Council® (NDC) share common ground. OM works to develop wisdom, while NDC works to develop good health. Together, we share a common goal to help children reach and realize their potential.

Since its founding in 1915, NDC has earned a reputation as a leader in producing high-quality nutrition education materials. Research has formed the basis of all materials from the beginning. Since that time, hundreds of materials have been developed for many audiences, but chief among these audiences are educators.

In order to reach students, National Dairy Council has programs that target children at different age levels. . .from pre-school to teens.

### Pre-School

**CHEF COMBO'S™ Fantastic Adventures in Tasting and Nutrition** is a program for 4- and 5-year-olds. This participatory program gives children the opportunity to taste nutritious foods and learn basic nutrition concepts through stories, songs, and other activities.

### Elementary School

**SNACK STARS: Personal Exploration into Nutritious Snacking®** opens up a whole new world of healthy snacking for primary grade students. They experiment their way through the Five Food Groups with the help of finger puppets and easy-to-make costumes. Along the same vein, **SNACK TREKS: Adventures in Healthy Eating®** lets intermediate students become junior archaeologists who collect and analyze snack artifacts, test their senses, and compile their own snack almanac.

With **Eat the Five Food Group Way!®**, students in first



through fifth grade learn key nutrition concepts. Younger students learn about the food groups through activities such as reciting cheers, drawing, painting, and playing Food Group Simon Says. Older students do research, act out skits, and play word games as they learn about variety, balance, combination foods, and nutrients. This health education material has been reviewed favorably by the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation.

**Milk From Cow to You** is an educational kit that teaches students in third through fifth grades how milk is made and delivered to them fresh and cold to help them grow and stay healthy.

### Junior/Senior High School

NDC has developed an exciting brochure for teens — **POWER UP: From the Inside Out**. This brochure spotlights the fact that young people are not meeting their calcium needs and thus are risking not reaching their full genetic potential for bone mass development. Suggestions are provided for consuming dairy foods — the preferred way to get calcium.

### School Food Service

In 1929 NDC laid the groundwork for what was to become known as the Type A lunch program. Research showed that children learn better when they are not hungry — a fact that still underlies the school meals programs. Today NDC continues its involvement with school food service through materials and programs that support the nutrition - learning connection.

For example, **TASTE...Your Choice,™ ADVENTURES IN GOOD EATING** is a program which uses easy-to-implement cafeteria “adventures” designed to make meal participation soar; **SMART STARTS: Breakfast Adventures for Kids**, is a brochure of breakfast recipes for kids and parents to try at home that also provides information on the importance of breakfast to learning; and **BREAKFAST MAKES IT HAPPEN**, is a video that discusses the benefits of school breakfast for the administrator, the students, and the community.

NDC is proud of its long-standing tradition of excellence in nutrition education, particularly in its efforts to provide sound classroom education materials for America's children. NDC is pleased to be associated with the Odyssey of the Mind in a partnership to help children achieve their full potential — both intellectually and nutritionally.

For more information or to obtain a catalog of nutrition education materials, contact your local Dairy Council or call 1-800-426-8271 for the Dairy Council nearest you.

### **Call for Problem Solutions...**

Often, OM is asked to describe the amazing solutions that teams bring to competition. We now extend that challenge to you! If your team created a solution to one of last year's problems, describe it to us in 200 words or less. Be sure to name the problem. Send to 1996 Problems, Newsletter Editor, OM Association, P.O. Box 547, Glassboro, NJ 08028.

## REGIONAL DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT

### Nina Price-Regional Director, CAOM

Nina Price, a CA OM Regional Director, was introduced to OM in 1991, through 10-year-old Jason Hosford. Jason's Division I, structure team won first place in the New Hampshire Association Finals, and he wrote to Nina asking for a donation to fund his trip to World Finals.

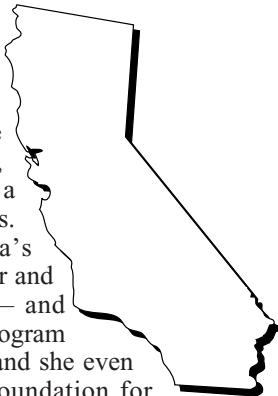
Interested, Nina contacted the area's Regional Director — seasoned educator and long-time OMer, J.P. van Ettinger — and began her OM "career." Selling the program to her local schools was not difficult, and she even landed a grant from the Palo Alto Foundation for Education for an OM pilot.

The OM program has grown in the greater San Francisco Bay Area to the point that four regions now exist in what was once a single region. Nina is now in her fourth year as Director of the original Region XI — the Silicon Valley Region.

As Regional Director, Nina has nurtured many innovative uses of the Internet. A Region XI coach, Stephen Kwan, was responsible for initiating the CA OM mailing list — a worldwide way for adult OM volunteers to help each other. A regional board member, Doug DeFrees, working closely with OM Association, Inc., initiated a home page for Odyssey of the Mind. Now OMers can share information quickly and efficiently, diminishing the geographic distance that separates us.

When she's not working as an OM Regional Director, Nina is Marketing Manager at Cisco Systems. Like most Silicon Valley professionals, she works very long days (and often nights). Nina is the mother of daughters Amy, 18, and Gwendolyn, 8. Her husband Rod, also a Silicon Valley professional, judges for Region XI's tournament every year.

Early every Wednesday morning you can hear Nina as "Ann Arbor," radio disc jockey and reader of "Unbedtime Stories" on her show "Dancin' in the Fast Lane." She has recruited some of her listeners to be OM judges, and even encouraged one to coach a high school *MTV* team that placed 2nd at CA OM Association Finals! In her spare time, Nina also serves as a member of the California OM State Board.



### WI OM Joe Warren

Since 1994, Joe Warren, with co-director Pat Morrissey, has managed the Southeast Region in WI (Milwaukee area). Joe became involved in OM when his daughter joined an OM team in the 6th grade. Joe recalls, "The more she told me [that] I couldn't help her build a structure, the more I got hooked. The school had a great information meeting with the parents and had family nights with spontaneous problem solving. I became a coach of the structure team the following year." In '94-'95 Joe helped involve his son's elementary school in the OM program and co-coached his daughter's team. That spring, his daughter's team went on to compete at the 1995 World Finals in Knoxville, TN, in Division II, *The Mail Must Go Through*.

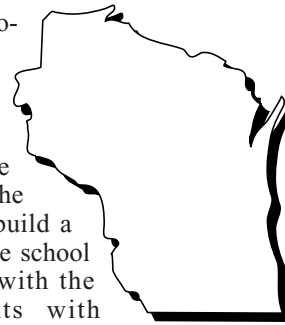
Joe's OM involvement continued to grow. When the regionals formed a consortium, Joe volunteered to serve as a representative. His focus was on tournament setup. He judged other regional tournaments and WI OM Association Finals. On other occasions he served as Head Judge and Problem Captain for structure at the Association Finals.

In "real life" Joe works as a mechanical engineer. He is chief engineer and designs the material handling equipment and systems for Hevi-Haul International, Ltd. and Lange Lift Corp. in Menomonee Falls, WI. In addition to this full-time job, Joe spends anywhere from 3 to 20 hours per week with OM. He estimates that he spends 300-500 hours annually as an OM volunteer.

In 1995 Joe received an Outstanding OMer Award from WI OM for his efforts in coaching and regional tournament work. But he has been recognized for his accomplishments in other arenas as well. A creative person, Joe was a Wisconsin Area Music Industry (WAMI) nominee in the category of Children's Music in both 1994 and 1995. He received honorable mention for the children's song, "Pumpkin's Fright" in the 1994 song competition.

Leisure? Joe says, "I do song-writing and performing as a solo act." Joe performs adult and children's contemporary folk, acoustic music on guitar, banjo, harmonica and hammered

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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

### OM Official Named Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor

On November 22, 1996, James R. Whiteman was presented the prestigious Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor Award in Washington, D.C. The award was presented by the National Social Studies Supervisors Association. As an affiliate of the National Council for the Social Studies, NSSSA is comprised of educators who have supervisory responsibilities for the social studies curriculum and instructional program pre-kindergarten through grade twelve throughout the United States.



For the past 20 years, Jim has been the Social Studies Supervisor for Fulton County Educational Service Center based in Wauseon, Ohio. In this capacity, he works with local school districts to provide staff development. Programs he has been involved with include Ohio's proficiency testing program, Ohio's new social studies model, multiple intelligences, technology, and Inclusion of special education students. In Ohio Jim is well-known and referred to with respect as "Mr. Social Studies."

Jim is presently serving his OM family as a Trustee for OH OM Association. In the past 15 years, Jim has volunteered as OM Regional Director and Problem Captain at local, regional and state levels. He has judged many World Finals competitions. (Most recently, Jim was an official at the 1996 OM World Finals in Ames, Iowa.) Currently, Jim is part of the team responsible for writing OM curriculum activities.



# COACHES CORNER

## HANDS-ON DINNER

by Betsy Menson Sio, OM Coach, NY

"This is a hands-on problem. Your problem is to create a dinner with the food that you have brought. You will have as much time as you need to complete the problem. Your team is to work together. Every dish you need is on the counter. . . ."

Seven pairs of hungry eight- and nine-year-old ears listened to the instructions eagerly. On the table in front of them lay two loaves of Italian bread, a large jar of spaghetti sauce, a half gallon of both fruit punch and milk, salad dressing, lettuce, spaghetti, a package of pre-cooked meatballs, and cookies. Each team member had been given instructions to bring one of the food items to our OM team meeting. Since snacks had played an important role in our first meetings, I felt a problem about food would be right up their alley.

The first hand went up. "Do you mean that if we do something wrong and it tastes really bad we have to eat it?" My co-coach and I said we would clean our plates if they would.

This was our fourth team meeting. Only two of our members had any experience on an OM team. There are three third-graders and four fourth-graders on the team, with three girls and four boys. Our goal for this activity was to learn to work as a team.

"If we do something wrong that means we can't eat our dinner?" asked another team member. It was beginning to sink in, the stakes for this problem were pretty high for 6:30 at night. Also, this was a perfect lead in to a short talk about safety in the kitchen with glass bottles of sauce, knives to cut bread with, and boiling water.

A third hand went up. "So our problem is to make a dish of spaghetti for dinner?"

"Nine plates," a fourth member chimed in.

"Do we have to clean up?" a fifth team member asked. She, along with the rest of the team, were told yes, this too was part of the problem.

The last question the team asked before starting to make the meal was whether they could eat the cookies first, for energy to cook the rest of the meal. We told them it was the team's decision. The cookies went untouched before the meal.

The team members went to work. In less than two minutes they had divided the labor equitably. One made a salad, two sliced bread, two filled a large pot with water and placed it on the stove, one set the table, and the last person poured all of the sauce in a large bowl to heat it in the microwave oven. They read the back of packages to find out how to cook all of the ingredients. It was true teamwork in action.

My co-coach and I observed all of the preparations ready to step in if a dangerous situation were to arise. Mostly we chuckled over their attempts to follow the wording of the directions on the back of packages (pronouncing the word *liter* as *litter*), the slightly inappropriate order in which they accomplished their tasks (breaking the spaghetti in two before the pot had been filled with water and placed on the stove), and trying to decide whether the spaghetti should be placed in cold or hot water or whether the water was hot or boiling.

One boy perched on the counter next to the stove and watched the spaghetti pot incredibly carefully for the entire time — giving a play-by-play account of the water and its activities. The two in the bread group figured out that 275° must be that little black dot between 250° and 300° on the heat control knob of the oven. Halfway through preparations, a team member discovered the pre-packaged meatballs were frozen and they, too, would have to be heated. Our table setter asked the team to see if she had forgotten anything. A conversation ensued about which side the

fork went on while one team member announced, "Only the spaghetti."

We noticed the two eight-year-olds dumping water into the spaghetti pot after they had put the spaghetti in to boil. When questioned about this activity, they informed us that they had put in only enough water to cook one package of spaghetti not two, realized their mistake and were now fixing the problem. It took slightly longer to cook using this technique.

"The spaghetti is ready," came the long-awaited announcement. Under the very watchful eyes of the coaches, the spaghetti was drained, and the bread (still lukewarm) was placed in a basket. Both joined the bowls of salad, sauce, and warmed meatballs on the table after about 40 minutes of work.

My co-coach and I were escorted to our seats and told to enjoy our meal. The table looked great and the food looked very good, edible indeed. The spaghetti did not crunch in my mouth as I half expected. Aside from the lukewarm bread and one spilled glass of milk, the dinner gave us an opportunity, albeit a short one, to get to know one another better.

Before the main attraction, the cookies, the team cleaned up as efficiently as they had made the dinner. Some sponged the table and counters, others washed pots and silverware (we did use paper plates and cups) in cold water I noticed later, and two swept the floor. As a bonus, they sang during the whole process.

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## THE NAME GAME

by Joe Warren, WI OM Regional Director

It had been a long, busy day, as regional tournaments usually are, for the **Longfellow Middle School Set it Free** team. An 11:45 long-term performance slot, a quick lunch, time to watch the school's *Iliad* team perform at 12:45, and then off to spontaneous at 2:00.

I was now relaxing in the cafeteria, discussing the day's events with parents, when our school's OM coordinator, who was an OM Official, came in and asked, "Did your team perform in spontaneous?"


"Yes," I replied, "We finished about an hour ago." The response was, "We have your team listed as a no show." So, off we went to sort out the dilemma.

In the scoring room, I met the Spontaneous Head Judge and we went to speak with the spontaneous judges about the team. Yes, the judges remembered our team's distinctive orange shirts, but where was the score sheet? We looked over the schedule and I pointed out that Erin Elementary, the team scheduled before my team in long-term, had not performed as scheduled in the slot allotted for them. I thought perhaps the team missed spontaneous as well, but it had a spontaneous score. The judges indicated that the team after us, George Washington Middle School, was asked to identify itself as it entered the room.

"Did you ask the preceding team to identify itself?" I asked. "Yes," the judge replied, "We asked, 'Are you Erin?' And 'yes' was the answer we received."

The "OM lightning" struck! "One of our team members is Aaron!" I said.

"Did he have dark hair and sit as one of the two observers?" asked the judge.

"Yes," I said, "That's Aaron." He was the first to enter the room and answered the judge's question correctly. It was now clear to everyone. He was Aaron, not Erin, and our score was submitted as Erin Elementary. Another OM problem solved. Later, we all laughed about the error, but it's true: "Murphy" works overtime! 

# 1996-97 Problem Clarifications

These clarifications are current as of 2/13/97. Please check the OM Bulletin Board (609) 881-0562 or the World Wide Web <http://www.odyssey.org/> for the current list of problem clarifications.

## BALLOONACY CARS

1. C.4.b refers to successful runs. A SUCCESSFUL RUN is one where a Car begins IN A START AREA and ENTERS or PASSES THROUGH A START AREA whether or not a balloon is broken. C.5.c. applies to unsuccessful runs; that is, a run where the car begins in a Start Area, is considered finished but has not entered or passed through another Start Area during that run."
2. Items may be removed from the Cars. However, if replaced, they must be replaced with like items and returned to the original position on the Cars.
3. Since there is not a specific penalty for CARDS not conforming to Limitation B.6, CARDS that do not meet limitation B.6 must either be brought into conformance if time permits or will not be allowed to be used. The number of runs will be limited by the number of legal CARDS as defined in B.6.
4. B.4.g (2) Elastic: according to the World Book Encyclopedia, elasticity is the ability of a solid to return to its original shape and size after it has been deformed by force.
5. Ref: Limitations B.7.d. Loose balloons may not be broken for score. If a balloon comes loose in any way other than as described in the last sentence of this paragraph in the problem, the judges will replace the balloon as quickly as possible while time continues.
6. Procedure Limitation C.7 Towing a Balloon C.7.b: There are three ways for a CAR to be IN A START AREA
  - 1) Initial Start Positions as defined in C.3.
  - 2) C.4.b and General Clarification #1
  - 3) C.5.c and General Clarification #1
 Therefore, if a CAR did not ENTER A START AREA (C.4.b.) and there are no CARDS remaining (C.5.c) and the CAR has not Towed a Balloon, then the CAR must be left where it is and it will not be able to Tow a balloon.
7. B.4.b - The length of a CAR is measured with respect to the direction of travel of the CAR and the width is measured perpendicular to the direction of travel. Both length and the width are measured perpendicular to the direction of travel. Both length and width are measured parallel to the floor when the CAR's wheels are touching the floor. The height of the CAR is measured perpendicular to the floor. The simplest way to verify this is to place a box with inside dimensions of 7" wide x 16" long x 12" high over the CAR. If the CAR fits within the box, then it is legal. If the CAR does not fit within the box, then Penalty 7 will be applied. A ruler may be used instead of the box.
8. B.4.g. (1) & (2) Although we recommend that teams not force materials beyond the material's elastic limit, judges will allow for materials not returning completely to their original form. There is also no requirement that a material be completely freed from a distorting or constraining force.
9. Since C.7.f allows for a collision of the TOW Car and the CAR attempting to break the TOWED balloon, Penalty 9 will

not apply in this case. In addition to those events listed in C.4.g, a TOW RUN will be considered finished upon collision between the TOW CAR and the colliding CAR.

10. If the Carrier fails to deliver either or both CARS to their Start Areas, the team may place the CARS in their proper Start Areas in order to begin their balloon breaking and towing runs. They will receive whatever score they earn in E. Scoring 4, but they will be assessed a Spirit of the Problem penalty for having to carry one (-15), two (-30) or all three (-50) Cars to their Initial Start Positions. In addition, the Carrier will most likely receive a low score in D.2.a because it has failed to perform one or more of its most basic functions.

## OMERDROID

1. A sitting position is defined as: A weight transfer from feet to rear end or on the feet with knees and waist bent (such as in squatting).
2. Bowing will be considered going from an upright position to a less than upright position, but still standing.



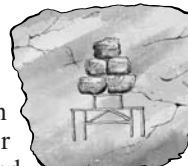
## Classics...CAN YOU DIG IT?

1. The design options are not authentic designs from pre-1000 A.D. They are fictional. It is the artifacts that the team creates that must be from pre-1000 A.D. (Thus you may not have television sets, computers, cameras, etc. for your artifacts.)
2. The Ancient and Modern Acts are invented by the team. The acts may be based on cultures or civilizations that existed or still do exist or may be team-created. However, the team must convince the judges that the setting is Earth.
3. The four required (and substitute) artifacts are considered props.
4. Musical instruments or equipment from any time period may be used to play music or produce sounds as long as they are not used as props. If the instrument or equipment is to be considered an artifact or is used as a prop in addition to or instead of playing music, then that instrument or equipment will be considered a prop and rules for props will apply.
5. A team member may not be part of, nor may he/she represent, an artifact.



## DOUBLE TROUBLE

1. For B.7.a. (Figure C, Top View, LEGAL) the load-bearing structure must fit through a square frame with an open interior dimension of 6" x 6" (Divisions II, III and IV) or 8" x 8" (Division I). The frame for testing will be no greater than 1" in height.
2. The load-bearing structure must be sitting with the side that will be touching the crusher board lying flat on the weigh-in table. The Weigh-in Judge will pass the frame down the structure. The frame is intended to measure the horizontal plane of the structure.
3. The tester corner posts, as a matter of safety, should be attached in some way to the base of the tester to insure that they may not be accidentally dislodged. They should be glued, screwed, nailed, slotted, pinned, etc. not merely placed on each corner of the tester base.



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## **Problem Clarifications** (continued from page 5)

4. The structure may not be turned, nor may the 10" x 1½" measuring device be turned when the measuring device is passed under the beam structure.
5. Pencil marks may be used without penalty on the beam structure if used for the sole purpose of aligning it with the load-bearing structure.

## **HEROIC PROPORTIONS**

1. Costumes do NOT have to be in the 4' x 4' x 4' cubical area if they are worn by the team member(s) throughout the entire 8-minute presentation time. If any parts will be removed during the presentation, those parts must be in the cubical area.
2. The base of the 4' x 4' x 4' cube will be defined by a 4' x 4' taped square on the floor in the staging area. The height will be determined through the use of a device provided by the tournament director. There are no solid "sides" or "top" to the cube. However, teams may make a 4' x 4' x 4' (or smaller) container containing their props and scenery to place in the cubical area. If so, they may use the container in their presentation.
3. Please be aware that, in most facilities, a 4' x 4' x 4' container will NOT fit through the competition room doorway. It is the team's responsibility to have its props, etc. in a form that will allow them to fit through a standard door.
4. Props will be measured for the 4' x 4' x 4' compliance in the final staging area.
5. Reptiles, crustaceans and amphibians will be permitted.
6. Mollusks were inadvertently omitted from clarification #5. They are also permitted.
7. The 4' x 4' x 4' cubical measuring area will be set up in the STAGING, not pre-staging area. The team must place its props, etc., in the cubical area when in the Staging Area and may remove them after time begins.
8. The biological definition of Species will be used.
9. Referring to B.6.b, the other species may be within the out-of-proportion character's same class or order or from another class or order so long as it is not the same species.
10. Referring to B.4.a, portraying the out-of-proportion character means doing so as an actor or actress, not as a puppeteer.



## **An OM Team Member's Moment**

*By Annika Moe, OM team member, Apple Valley, MN*

A city within a petri dish is terrorized by a sinister villain until a microbe hero saves it from destruction. Blood cell entertainers rush to save a dying night club. After suffering a head injury, Mother Goose's rhymes have gone berserk! So . . . where is all this happening? Odyssey of the Mind (OM) is a program in which I have been involved for several years; I have found it to be one of the best programs available to students. It offers a wide variety of skills that will benefit you in the future as well as give you an opportunity to have the time of your life. Trying to describe OM is like describing the northern lights as "really pretty lights." It doesn't paint the complete picture. Although "a creative problem-solving competition" is the official definition of Odyssey of the Mind, it really is a whole lot more.

The OM season begins with seven students and a coach. A problem is picked out of five choices by the team; the problem may be to create and present a skit, build a vehicle or construct and introduce a new invention through theatrics. Regular meetings are scheduled by the coach and the team begins to collect information and ideas. After months of preparation, the team brings its final solution to competition.

The skills I have acquired from my years in OM have made it easier for me to do many things. Though I have learned how to do the obvious things like building scenery and props, writing scripts, and acting as multiple characters, I have also gained techniques in thinking. When I'm faced with a problem, I approach it from angles that I would have completely overlooked had I not been in OM. Odyssey of the Mind has provided intentional obstacles that have forced me to look at the obscure points of view. Resourcefulness becomes easy as well; I can now make something out of practically nothing. Working together in an OM team builds great team skills. By the end of the year, everyone knows each other's strengths and we combine them so that our weaknesses never affect us. After a problem arises, a solution is found quickly and a new way of problem-solving is developed.

While OM is a great tool for problem-solving, it is also a great deal of fun. You get to be an actor, writer, director, tailor, artist, composer, construction worker and competitor all in one year. The teams not only work hard, but they have fun through overnights, parties and goofing around at practice. The friends I have made through OM in the past six years are still great friends, and they always will be. No one can go through a year of hard work, obstacles and success and not stay friends with the people involved.

Hard work, good friends and the will to try almost anything to reach a goal is all it takes to succeed in OM. The microbe hero, blood cell entertainers and Mother Goose are really OM team members dressed in team-made costumes, performing on a team-built set, reciting a team-written script, presenting a team-solved problem in an Odyssey. . . of the Mind.

## **Joe Warren** (continued from page 3)

dulcimer. He also enjoys the outdoors and camps, fishes for bass, and canoes with friends and family.

Claire Cruise Warren, Joe's wife, is currently "working" as a student to achieve a Masters of Divinity Degree. She also plans to judge this year at the Southeast Regional Competition. Daughter Anna, 15, and son, Philip, 13, are both OMers, so Dad can claim, "The whole family supports me in my OM efforts and I thank them for this."

*Editor's Note: For our readers' enjoyment, Joe related the OMecdote, The Name Game, featured on page 4. It occurred at a regional tournament.*

## **Hands-on Dinner** (continued from page 4)

While munching on the cookies, we watched an OM-produced tape on Style. Parents picked up fully sated children at the end of the meeting.

The evening was a success. The team worked very well together. As a coach, I felt I accomplished my goal. I can only hope the spirit of togetherness the team exhibited using the abilities of each team member will continue to be dominant as they work towards their competition date.

## ODYSSEY OF THE MIND SCHOOL PROGRAM 1997-98 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**(609) 881-1603 • Fax: (609) 881-3596**

Mailing Address (for U.S. Postal Service delivery):  
P.O. Box 547, Glassboro, NJ 08028-0547

Shipping Address (for delivery via alternate carrier):  
114 East High St., Glassboro, NJ 08028-2549

Please complete this form and return it with a check, U.S. Postal Money Order or purchase order (**payable in U.S. funds**) to Memberships, OM Association, Inc., P.O. Box 547, Glassboro, NJ 08028-0547. The Odyssey of the Mind membership fee is \$135 if the membership mailings go to a North American address. Outside North America the membership fee is \$150. Non-U.S. members must make payment in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank or via a U.S. Postal Money Order. All membership categories receive a subscription to the *OM Newsletter*.

Membership Name \_\_\_\_\_ School Classification (circle one): rural urban suburban

Member # (if renewal) \_\_\_\_\_ Grades Covered in Membership School \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please indicate your membership type by circling the appropriate category below.)*

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

**Divisions I, II and III only:**

- A Individual School.** In competition, may enter one team, per problem, per division, within the school. Must register as the school name.
- B Home-School students in a certified home-school program.** In competition, may enter one team per problem.
- C Two or more schools with the same principal.** One principal that serves two or more schools may join for the schools s/he heads. In competition, may enter one team, per problem, per division, for each division housed within the schools. Only this category uses the name of the school district, such as "Glassboro Schools."
- D Community Group.** An established community-based organization, housed within the community, with a mission to serve youth. In competition, may enter one team per problem. The president/director/leader must sign below to attest that this group falls within those parameters. Also, you must include the organization's by-laws with this application.

\_\_\_\_\_ signature typed or printed name

**Division IV:**

**E College and Military**

**OM Supporters:**

**F Associate Member** (Individual \$20; Alumni \$25; Family \$35)

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional subscriptions of **1997-98 OM Newsletter** (@ \$10 per year in USA, \$15 outside USA).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Published five times per year, it contains noteworthy and newsworthy information about the OM program, problems, events and participants.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **1997-98 Associate Membership** (Individual \$20; Alumni \$25; Family \$35).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Provides the subscriber with a newsletter subscription and a ticket(s) to the Coaches' Recovery Party at the 1997 World Finals.*

**If this is a new membership, please specify how you learned about the Odyssey of the Mind Program:**

- Recommended by a colleague/parent
- Read about OM in \_\_\_\_\_ publication
- Viewed your World Wide Web home page
- Received an unsolicited mailing
- Heard about it at \_\_\_\_\_ conference
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address (for newsletter delivery)**

Coach/Contact's Name:
School Address:
City:
State/Province:
Zip: _____ Country:
School Phone No.:
Home Phone No.: _____ Fax No.:
County:

**Shipping Address (for UPS shipment of membership packet)**

Coach/Contact's Name:
School's Street Address:
City:
State/Province:
Zip: _____ Country:
School Phone No.:
Home Phone No.: _____ Fax No.:
School District:

*Note: If you have an APO/AE address please indicate location: City \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_.*

Enclosed is check # \_\_\_\_\_ payable in **U.S. FUNDS**, a purchase order or U.S. Postal Money Order payable to **OM Association, Inc.** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ membership(s) (\$135 North American, \$150 other).

*Please Note: Any customs and/or duty charges are the responsibility of the purchaser.*



Non-Profit  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
OM Association, Inc.

# Odyssey of the Mind

P.O. Box 547, Glassboro, New Jersey 08028

Web Address: <http://www.odyssey.org/>

ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

The Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter is published by OM Association, Inc., P.O. Box 547, Glassboro, N.J. 08028. Individual subscription yearly rate: North America \$10, outside of North America \$15. Executive editors, Dr. Samuel Micklus and Janet Vincz-D'Alessandro. Associate editor, Carol Ann Newlin.

## OM Coordinator:

Please route this newsletter to

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## MARKETING OM: A NEW OM VIDEO IS IN PRODUCTION!

An Odyssey of the Mind marketing video will soon be available for your fundraising efforts! In less than 8 minutes, a potential supporter/sponsor will see an OM video that:

- Describes today's kids
- Highlights the crucial need for them to be ready for the marketplace in which they are challenged to use creativity, logic and problem-solving in ways that traditional education does not prepare them
- Explains OM in a concise, easy-to-understand format
- Describes the kids that participate in OM
- Outlines marketing opportunities for potential sponsors
- Shows celebrity endorsements of OM

Ordering details will be in the next newsletter. Don't miss it!

## Briefly Speaking

The OM Association, Inc. Board of Directors met in January, 1997. At that time the minutes of the September 23, 1996, meeting were approved. Highlights of the September meeting follow:

- The Board appointed Linda Wayne as Director of Marketing.
- The Board accepted the Treasurer's report as presented by Maureen Donovan, Treasurer.
- Bob Purifico presented the Executive Director's report to the Board.
- The following committees presented reports to the Board: Special Publications, Awards and Scholarship, Research, Management, Marketing and Programs.

## Web's 7-11 Brain Freeze Links to OM Home Page

Recently, 7-Eleven's planned expansion on its web page targeted a number of entertaining and educational elements that would attract young people. Inspired by the Frozen Slurpee that kids describe as a "Brain Freeze," 7-Eleven's site links to "brain-related" programs, including Odyssey of the Mind. Check out the free advertising about OM by accessing 7-Eleven's web site at <http://www.ohthankheaven.com>.



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# EXTRA STUFF

## **Diamond Shamrock Rewards Perrin-Whitt OMers**

Each year, *Diamond Shamrock* sponsors its “Hooray for Excellence” competition. This gives schools an opportunity to submit an audio tape spotlighting a particular program the school feels encourages academic excellence. If selected, the tape airs on the radio during half-time at Texas high school state football championships. OMers at Perrin-Whitt CISD entered the contest with a tape describing the elements of *Odyssey of the Mind*.

Perrin-Whitt is a small, consolidated K-12 Texas school that can boast about many OM teams that have advanced to regionals, association finals and most recently, to World Finals in 1996. This year’s OM team members are dedicated OMers who felt compelled to tell the world just how OM incorporates many academic and real-world elements. The “Hooray for Excellence” competition gave them that opportunity.

The competition guidelines stated that the audio tape entry (which could be no longer than five minutes) must describe a particular academic program and must be creative enough to keep the audience’s interest. (Sound familiar?) Several Perrin-Whitt OMers from grades 3-12 wrote a script in a sportscast format, complete with interviews with OMers, music and sound effects. The students, working on their own time, recorded and edited the tape at a local radio station after school and submitted the tape entry.

A few weeks later, OM coaches Robin Cunningham and Ann Gregory were notified that the team’s entry was selected as the winner. The team received a check for \$500 and a promise that the tape would be broadcast to the entire state, as promised!

Being involved in OM prepared the kids to create a captivating product; the Diamond Shamrock “Hooray for Excellence” Program allowed the team members to communicate all that OM can lead you to do. Congratulations team!