



Odyssey of the Mind™

Newsletter

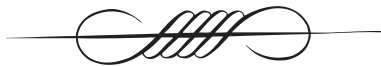
Volume 23

Fall 2000

Number 1

A New Pledge for Odyssey of the Mind!

A call for entries in last year's newsletter resulted in many submissions of a new pledge. While all were outstanding, and creative, one stood out from the rest. It was written by a team from Humboldt-Gymnasium, Potsdam, Germany, with the last line adapted from another submission. The new pledge was introduced, and recited by the audience, at the Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals. It is as follows:



*Odyssey of the Mind is in the air,
In my heart and everywhere.
My team and I will reach together
To find solutions now and forever.
We are the Odyssey of the Mind.*



WANTED

Creative People to Write Curriculum In Creativity

Creative Competitions, Inc. plans on continuing the Odyssey of the Mind Curriculum Project -- activities developed to incorporate creative problem solving into the regular classroom. The activities will encompass several disciplines, including math, technology, the arts, and history, and will be included with each membership.

We're looking for talented writers to help us with the project. Those interested should have a professional or educational background and experience in teaching and/or curriculum/activity writing.

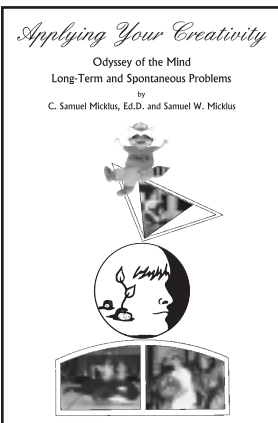
To be considered for the project please submit three sample activities. The activities should meet three criteria: (1) they should be divergent in nature, that is, allow for more than one solution; (2) they should include some hands-on application (this includes creative writing); and, (3) they should make learning fun.

All activities should be one-half to one page in length. State the discipline for which each applies, the estimated time it takes to complete the activity, materials needed and, most important, what students should expect to gain by participating in the activity.

Send activities to Curriculum Project, 1325 Route 130 S, Suite F, Gloucester City, NJ 08030.



Hot Off the Press — Another Problem Book



Creative Competition's latest publication, *Applying Your Creativity*, is a compilation of problems used in past Odyssey of the Mind competitions. With 11 long-term problems – including *Amusin' Cruisin'*, *Great Impressions*, *Crunch*, and *Heroic Proportions* – and 34 spontaneous problems, it makes a great resource for practice sessions in creative problem solving.

The book also includes an introductory chapter written by Dr. Sam, in which he discusses the different applications of human creativity. (See Order Form on page 7 for more info.)

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Oklahoma Governor Honors World Champions

On September 9, three World Finals championship teams from Oklahoma City were honored at a special celebration organized by Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating and his wife Cathy. Two of the teams were from the same 5th-grade class at Westminster School. One team placed third in *Pest-Aside*, Division I; the other came in third for *The Genie*, Division I. The third team, from Classen School of Advanced Studies and Performing Arts, claimed third place for *King Arthur*, Division II, as well as a Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award for its long-term solution.

In honor of their accomplishments, Governor Keating invited the teams to attend an outdoor festival at the Governor's Mansion. In full Odyssey regalia, proudly sporting their World Finals medals and various Odyssey of the Mind tee-shirts, the teams took center stage for their part of the celebration. They proudly showed off their World Finals trophies

as they explained their achievements to the audience.

The Keatings presented each team member with a special commendation for their outstanding achievement in Odyssey of the Mind. The Governor said the teams "represent the best and brightest of Oklahoma's future." The honorable couple also gave each student a hand-made ceramic star representing the history of the state, noting that the symbol is appropriate because "these kids are now the stars of Oklahoma." The coaches were recognized, too, for giving their time to make participation possible.

The Westminster School has been involved in Odyssey of the Mind since 1985. Classen became involved six years ago as a result of team members moving on there after graduating from 8th grade at Westminster. This is the first time teams from these schools were honored at such a momentous occasion. Congratulations!



Left: The Westminster School teams with their coaches and gifted coordinator, Cynthia Brindley (2nd from left).

Right: Classen School of Advanced Studies team with Coach Betsy Brunsteter (top right), Kathy Keating (front left) and Governor Frank Keating (bottom right).



Great Minds

When you visit your favorite amusement park, do you ever wonder how some of the rides came to be? Following is correspondence that we received from an Odyssey of the Mind team member about an all-time favorite, the Ferris Wheel.

George Washington Gale Ferris, inventor of the Ferris Wheel, was a man of design and creativity. He was in a meeting when he got the idea for the wheel and made some quick sketches on his napkin. It later developed into a huge project . . . the construction of the wheel for the World's Columbian Exposition of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The original wheel was taller than the Eiffel Tower and held up to 60 people in each of its 36 cars.

Some critics of the Ferris Wheel felt that the wheel would not move, that architecturally it was not feasible, and so on. Untested, Ferris built his wheel, which was the attraction of the fair. It worked without any problems.

Other critics claimed that Ferris hadn't done much in creating his monstrous ride. They said that he had only

recreated the wheel, or took the idea from industrial water wheels.

There were rides in Asia and Europe, even the U.S. that somewhat resembled a Ferris Wheel on a much smaller scale, although they were a lot more primitive. Yet, George was the only one to actually build such a structure, under great adversity. His design, which was untested and criticized as unconceptual, proved to be one of the fixtures of today's theme parks.

Unfortunately, Ferris made very little money from his invention and died three years later, broke and alone. After having been moved several times, including to another World's Fair, his great wheel was blown up. The iron was melted down and used to make a bridge. Eventually, the bridge, too, was destroyed.

Nothing remains of the Great Wheel other than its legacy. And nobody knows that better than Ferris' descendants. I am one of them.

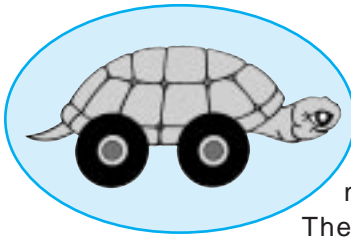
Jillian Ferris

Jillian Ferris has participated in Odyssey of the Mind since 1995. Apparently, she inherited the creative gene that runs in her family.

"Great Minds" will appear regularly in future issues of this newsletter, and we're looking for creative people to write about. Please send suggestions to Great Minds, 1325 Rte 130 S, Ste F, Gloucester City, NJ 08030.

LONG-TERM PROBLEM PROCEDURES

Problem 1: Techno-Pets



Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, a Staging Area Judge meets all team members and the coaches.

Then, the Staging Area Judge directs them with their Techno-Pets (TPVs), props and membership sign to enter the staging area.

The team presents all of its forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two Style Forms (three at World Finals), two TPV/task lists (three at World Finals), the Cost Form and any Problem Clarifications. The Staging Area Judge inspects the membership sign. The team is then asked to review the TPVs and task list with the judge, who will check the planned operation, the floor contact points for potential floor damage and safety hazards. The Staging Area Judge will explain the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score and penalties. The team members are given an opportunity to ask questions. The Staging Area Judge will dismiss the non-performing team members (remember, all seven team members may perform) and the coaches who may sit in designated chairs if provided. After this, no one may assist the team in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper is introduced to the team and then introduces the team to the audience.

When the Timekeeper says "Begin," time begins and the team removes everything from the staging area and proceeds with the problem solution, including any setup required and Style. The team must remove all of its materials from the staging area within the first 3 minutes of its 8-minute competition time. The team will then attempt each of the eight tasks, preferably in the order listed on the TPV/task list.

Either at the end of 8 minutes, or before if the team notifies the judges, the competition ends. Usually the judges will then meet with ALL team members to discuss their solution. The team is responsible for bringing materials to clean up any mess so that the competition area is left clean and dry for the next team. The team and any assistants should quickly clear the area.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the coach or the Division III/IV team captain the team's long-term raw score and penalties, but NOT Style, after it is compiled. The coach will have 30 minutes to return if additional questions or concerns arise. The score room will produce the final percentaged score. The final score will be the percentaged long-term plus the percentaged Style plus the percentaged spontaneous. Penalties will then be subtracted, resulting in the final score.

-- Wayne Kehrl, International Problem Captain

Problem 2: Ody-SEE-ing Sounds



At some tournaments a pre-staging area may be designated outside the performance room. Approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled time, the team is called by the Staging Area

Judge. All team members and the coach will proceed to the designated area with all problem solutions, props, background scenery, membership sign, and any team-provided equipment. The team will present two copies of its Style Form, a Material Values Form, Outside Assistance Form, Problem Clarifications (if any), and two copies of the list asked for in B,10 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge will check for clarity then pass the paperwork on to the Timekeeper, who will pass it on to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the devices for safety and potential floor damage, complete the Staging Area Checklist and indicate any penalties on the checklist. All team questions will be answered at this time. The team members and coach will be given 3 minutes to clear the pre-staging area and proceed to the staging area adjacent to the competition site. Anyone may assist in this movement. At this time, the judge will give a final explanation about the competition site, answer additional questions and explain the procedure for obtaining the team's long-term raw score. Then the Staging Area Judge will ask the coach to sit in the designated seat. After this, no one may assist the team members in any way until their presentation is completed. Once the Timekeeper is introduced to the team, he/she will introduce the team to the audience, ask that pagers, cellular phones and other electronic devices be turned off and announce if the team will allow videotaping and/or flash photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin," time begins and the team has 8 minutes for setup, Style and the problem solution. If no pre-staging area was used, the team must clear the staging area within 3 minutes after time begins. The competition site will be a 6' x 10' taped area (SEE) within a 10' x 14' (minimum) area. There will be a three-prong electrical outlet available, but the team will provide any extension cords or adapters needed. The Timekeeper will call time at the end of the 8 minutes and the team must stop. Judges will meet with team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or for demonstrations, then indicate to the team that it must quickly remove its solution. The team is responsible for bringing materials to clean up any mess so the area is clean and dry for the next team. Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the coach or Division III/IV team captain the team's long-term raw score, including penalties but NOT Style, as soon as the score is compiled. The coach/team captain then has 30 minutes to return if any additional questions or concerns arise.

-- Alice McRae, International Problem Captain



Problem 3: Wild.Winged.Wonders.

At some tournaments a pre-staging area is designated outside the performance site.

Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the team and greet all team members and the coaches. The Staging Area Judges will direct them with the materials needed for their long-term problem solution and Style, membership sign(s) and paperwork to enter the pre-staging area (if used). The team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two Style Forms (three at World Finals), the Material Values Form, any specific Problem Clarifications it has received, and two copies of the list asked for in B, 14 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time. When the Staging Area Judge has completed the checklist and answered team questions, the team and coach will be given 3 minutes to clear the pre-staging area and proceed to the staging area adjacent to the 7' x 10' (minimum) competition site. Anyone may assist in this movement.

At this time the Timekeeper greets the team, gives a final explanation of the performance area, if needed, answers any team questions and asks the team how it will signal the judges when its performance is finished. The Timekeeper explains the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score, including penalties. Any non-performing team members and the coaches are then dismissed and invited to sit in designated chairs, if provided. After this, no one may assist the long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announces whether or not the team has given permission for videotaping and/or flash photography. When the Timekeeper says, "Begin," time begins and the team proceeds with its setup, Style and problem solution. If a pre-staging area was used, the team must clear the staging area within 3 minutes after time begins.

The Timekeeper will not call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team takes more than 8 minutes. When the team is finished, it must signal the judges. The judges will then meet with team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The three required works of art, the commemorative memento, the costume scored in Style, 2 and any other

items scored in Style should be available for the judges to view. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its solution. Others may help with the cleanup. The team is responsible for bringing materials to clean up any mess so the area is clean and dry for the next team.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the coach or Division III/IV team captain the team's long-term raw score, including penalties but not Style, after the score is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when the scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach/team captain then has 30 minutes to return if any additional questions or concerns arise.

-- Rita Sleeman, International Problem Captain

Problem 4: Achilles' Heel



Prior to the scheduled time of competition, one or more team members will

bring their structures and vehicle to the weigh-in site. A Weigh-In Judge will weigh the structure and confirm that a 2-inch opening exists through its entire length. The Judge will make the appropriate measurements for height of the structure, check the thickness of wood and examine it for artificial strengthening. The vehicle will make the required number of runs down the ramp to meet the specifications of the problem. Penalties, if any, will be noted at this time. If time permits, the team may make corrections. After filling out the weigh-in check lists, the Weigh-In Judge will seal, mark, and store the structure and vehicle in team-supplied containers or paper bags until approximately 25 minutes before the scheduled competition time. Stored structures and vehicles may be picked up only by a team member(s) and carried to the competition site. The coach and remaining team members will report to the competition site 20 minutes before the team's scheduled time with the props, membership sign and anything else needed for the long-term problem solution.

At the staging area, the Staging Area Judge will remove the weigh-in checklists and direct the team to take the structure and vehicle from the containers. The Material Values Form, Outside Assistance Form and team clarifications will be collected and given to the Problem Judges. Two Style Forms (three at World Finals) are given to the Style Judges. The team informs them whether Style will continue after the structure is crushed. The coach and all seven team members should be present in the staging area while the Staging Area Judge goes through a list of procedures and answers any questions the team may have. The team is reminded that it has 3 minutes to clear the staging area of all items after time begins. After this is completed, the coach and non-performing team members (if any) will

be directed to leave the staging area and informed if any special seating has been arranged for them.

If an **adult assistant** is used in Division I or II, he or she must be identified in the staging area and will remain with the team throughout the long-term solution. When all is ready, the Staging Area Judge will direct the team's attention to the Timekeeper. After the Timekeeper says "Begin," the team will have 8 minutes for site setup, Style and weight placement.

In Division I, the adult may assist in placing individual weights in **excess of 20 pounds**. At least one team member must be physically involved in the placement of these weights. In Division II, the adult may assist in placing individual weights in **excess of 40 pounds**.

The only people allowed inside the testing area during the competition are the team members and the Judges. In Division I and II, the adult assistant may also be present. Style may take place before, during and/or after the structure breaks.

Competition will end when (1) Style has been completed and the structure has broken or (2) the 8-minute time limit has expired. All wood from the broken structure and the vehicle must be placed in paper bags and returned to the weigh-in site by a designated judge. The team must clean up the testing site.

The Judges will meet with the coach and all team members to discuss the solution to the problem. The structure and vehicle may be inspected again at the weigh-in site. Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge will present the coach with the long-term scoresheet and review any penalties. The coach then has 30 minutes from the time posted on the sheet to question any technical aspect of the long-term score.

-- Dan Semenza, *International Problem Captain*



Problem 5: Idiom Inspiration

Approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will meet all team members and the coach in the pre-staging area (if a pre-staging area is used, otherwise in the staging area) to review all pre-competition requirements. At this time, team members will bring props, scenery, the membership sign, and present two copies of a list as described in B, 10 of the long-term problem.

The Staging Area Judge will also check for non-penetrable foot coverings and require team members to put on shoes/sneakers if they do not comply with requirements; answer any team questions; identify the Head Judge for the coach so that they can meet for scores at a designated time after the team performance; and introduce them to the Timekeeper/Staging Area Judge.

The staging area will be the team's designated starting point for its timed performance. Adults may assist the team in carrying equipment to the staging area, which will be adjacent to the performance area. However, after props, etc. are placed in the staging area, no one may assist the performing long-term members in any way until the performance is completed. Each team will have 3 minutes to clear the pre-staging area. The 3 minutes are in addition to the 8-minute presentation time. If no pre-staging area is used, the team must remove its props, scenery, etc. from the staging area within 3 minutes after its competition time begins.

The Judge will introduce the team to the audience, request silence from the audience, and indicate if the team will allow videotaping and/or flash photography without special permission of the team. The Timekeeper will ask if the Judges and the team are ready to start and will then say "Begin." The team members then move their props for the timed performance without assistance.

It is the team's responsibility to complete the problem within the 8-minute time limit. Judges will not call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team takes more than 8 minutes.

After the performance, the Judges will meet with the team to discuss its solution, ask questions or request a demonstration. The team will then quickly remove its solution from the performance area. The team is responsible for bringing materials to clean up the area to make sure it is left clean and dry for the next team. Adults may assist in this cleanup.

After the team's competition, if not previously informed, the coach should inquire of the Head Judge when to check back for the team's long-term raw scores. The Head Judge will identify the specific area and time to meet. When the Head Judge meets with the coach the Judge will note the time on the scoresheet. The coach will have 30 minutes to return if additional questions or concerns arise.

-- Marietta Kehler, *International Problem Captain*

Spontaneous Problem Procedures

It is recommended that tournaments use a holding room where spontaneous teams should report 10 minutes before their scheduled competition time. (If there is no holding room, teams should report to the competition site 10 minutes before the scheduled time and wait quietly for further instructions.) Only one adult should accompany the team into the holding room. One team member should register the team, giving the team's long-term problem and division, the team membership number and name, and demographic information. The team will wait in the holding room until it is called to compete. Only the seven team members will be accompanied to the spontaneous problem room by the Problem Judge. The adult will remain in the designated area and wait for the team to return. Where possible, this

should be a different area so the holding room does not get congested.

All seven team members will be allowed (and are encouraged) to enter the spontaneous room. The Judges will then identify the type of problem: verbal, verbal hands-on, or hands-on. The team will then have 1 minute to decide among themselves which five team members will compete. The other two team members may remain and watch, but they must not talk, signal, or intervene in any way. If they wish, the two non-competing team members may leave the room; however, this practice is discouraged. Watching the team compete allows all team members to feel valued and allows them to know the problem their team members have solved without having to discuss it outside the competition site. Remember, spontaneous problems must be kept secret until after the competition, because all teams in the same long-term problem and division have the same spontaneous problem.

Once the team has chosen the five competing team members, the Judge will read the problem to the team. A copy of the problem will be placed in front of the team to refer to as needed. It is recommended that coaches remind team members to listen carefully and look at the judges, who often point and use gestures to help clarify the intent of the problem. In a verbal and/or verbal hands-on problem, the judges will use the following language:

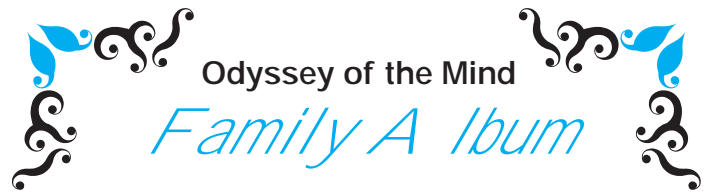
- If a team member speaks too fast or mumbles and the Judges can't understand, they will say, "UNCLEAR. Please say it again."
- If the response doesn't make sense to the Judges or is not acceptable, they will say, "INAPPROPRIATE. Please clarify or give another response."
- If the response is a repeat of what another team member has said, the Judges will say, "DUPLICATE. Please give another response."

Once the team has competed it should leave the room quietly and meet the coach at the designated area. Team members should be reminded not to discuss the problem. Although spontaneous problems are generally not subject to the grievance procedure, if a team has a concern, one team member should ask to speak to the Spontaneous Problem Captain, who will then speak with the Judges and the entire team if necessary.

-- Joy Kurtz, International Spontaneous Problem Captain

CORRECTION

In the summer issue of the *Odyssey of Mind Newsletter*, the names of the team members for the 1st-place *Elasti-Pumper* Division III team from Ho Fung College, Hong Kong, were listed incorrectly. The team members are Tse Chit-ming, Lau Shun-chee, Ng Yeuk, Chiao Wing-shing, Tsui Man-kit, Yip Ying-chi and Chan Ho-fung.



● Delaware teams and coaches were honored by state Senator Steven H. Amick on June 27. The DE WF banner was hung in Legislative Hall, and Amick recognized the Odyssey participants on the Senate floor during session that day.

● Congratulations to Odyssey of the Mind Program Director Sammy Micklus and his wife Cheryl on the September 1 birth of their son, William Walter. William is the younger brother of two-and-a-half-year-old Katarina.

● Double congrats go to June Kurtz Black (NJ) and husband Adam Black. The lucky couple are now the proud parents of twins sons, Evan and Harrison. June is a former team member/coach, and is now a WF Judge for Problem 3.

● Since we're on the subject of the Kurtz's, June's dad Harold recently retired as superintendent of the Pennsauken, NJ, school district. Harold is NJ co-director and WF Head Judge for Problem 3. Even though he now consults for an educational non-profit, he has plenty of time left for grandfathering. Grandmom is Joy Kurtz, International Spontaneous Problem Captain.

● Most of you know, or at least are familiar with the voice of, Kathy Cerino. Kathy has been answering the phones in our office and filling requests. Regretfully for us, Kathy has left Creative Competitions, but she's putting her creative talents to good use by starting her own craft party and catalog business. We'll miss Kathy, but we wish her much success!

● Billy Flenders is working part-time to help keep the operation organized and running smoothly. Billy's wife Katharine volunteers her time several days a week to lend a hand where needed.

● On May 18, 2000, Dr. Sam Micklus was presented with the University of the Arts' Silver Star Alumni Award for his work with Odyssey of the Mind. The award is presented each year by the University faculty to a distinguished alumnus from each of its two colleges. Dr. Sam was chosen to represent the Philadelphia College of Art and Design. He received the award at the University's first commencement ceremony of the millennium, after the showing of a video of Odyssey "activities." The College's Dean, Stephen Tarantal, wrote in a letter to Dr. Micklus, "Your work with young students represents the application of knowledge to doing and making . . . Your career, which has been dedicated to cultivating this educational experience for thousands of students around the world, will serve as an inspiration to this year's graduates."

We'd love to hear about teams, coaches, directors, officials, or anyone else in the Odyssey of the Mind family. Send items of interest to Family Album, 1325 Rte 130 S, Ste F, Gloucester City, NJ 08030, or e-mail items to carolann@jersey.net.

2000-2001 ODYSSEY OF THE MIND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For new memberships or renewals, complete this form and return it with a check, purchase order, or credit card number (see below).

Check one:

Divisions I, II and III:

- Individual school:** Must register in the school name. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.
- Two or more schools:** Must share the same principal. Use school district name on application. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.
- Home-schooled students:** All students on the team must be home-schooled. May enter one team per problem.
- Community Group:** Must be an established organization within the community. May enter one team per problem in competition. Please submit by-laws if this is a new membership.

Division IV: May enter one team per problem. Proceeds directly to World Finals for competition.

Membership name _____ Membership number (if renewal) _____

Grades covered by membership _____ School district _____

Contact person (may be a coach) _____

Mailing address (for newsletter delivery and correspondence) _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip _____

County _____ Country _____

Daytime phone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

Each individual membership costs \$135, but you'll receive discounts if you purchase more than one membership.

Individual 2000-2001 Odyssey of the Mind Membership @ \$135

Additional membership(s) for the same school or community group @ \$100

6-10 memberships for the same school district (registered at the same time) @ \$120

11 or more memberships from the same school district (registered at the same time) @ \$100

You will also receive **ONE FREE BOOK per membership ordered. Please select one title from list below. Additional copies may be purchased. All books are a collection of long-term and spontaneous problems.*

*copies of **Creativity + Teamwork = Solutions! @ \$18** Includes tips on building effective teams

*copies of **Odyssey Update @ \$17.50** The best problems from three earlier Odyssey of the Mind books.....

*copies of **Odysseymania! @ \$17** Includes a chapter on humor and creativity

*copies of **Make Learning Fun @ \$17** Provides a history of the program

****No S & H for free book. If ordering additional books, add \$3 for the first book, \$1 for each additional book.**

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS



copies of **Applying Your Creativity @ \$18** 11 long-term and 34 spontaneous problems (**S&H rates apply).



Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals Video Yearbook @ \$19.95 (includes S & H) Highlights of event ..

Odyssey of the Mind Coaches Training Video @ \$18 (includes S & H) Tips and techniques for coaches....

additional copies **Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ \$5** (includes S&H. One copy comes w/membership)

additional subscriptions to **Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter @ \$10** (one comes with membership).....
Indicate mailing address _____

Titan I Kits @ \$24.95 (includes shipping & handling)

packs of **Balsa Wood** (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ \$20 per 100 pieces (includes S & H)

Contact CCI with any questions

phone: 856/456-7776 • email: cci@jersey.net • fax: 856/456-7008

www.odysseyofthemind.com

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- Complete this form and mail it to CCI, 1325 Rte 130 S, Suite F, Gloucester City, NJ 08030, along with a check, money order or p.o., payable to CCI, or with your credit card information.
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Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

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

Interview With Rick Kaletsky: Real-Life Application to Real-Life Problems

Rick Kaletsky, of Bethany, Connecticut, is a former Odyssey of the Mind judge and coach of a three-time state championship team. Professionally, he spent twenty years as a specialist for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and eight years as a private safety consultant. In his book, OSHA Inspections: Preparation and Response, he uses Odyssey of the Mind as an example of how creative problem-solving (CPS) principles can be incorporated into the workplace to ensure effective safety and health programs. Following is an interview with Rick about how Odyssey of the Mind has changed the way he thinks and the effect it has had on the way he conducts business.

Q: How did you get involved with Odyssey of the Mind?

RK: In 1992, when my daughter Amanda was in third grade at Bethany Community School, teacher Judy Olson introduced the program there and placed Amanda on a team. In 1993, Judy asked me to co-coach with her, which I did through the 1995-96 school year. The following year, we coached a team from Cornell University, of which Judy's daughter was a member. I judged that year in Connecticut, too, and continued to do so, in various capacities, until last year. Judy and I are now problem co-captains for *Idiom Inspiration*.

Q: In a nutshell, could you explain how Odyssey of the Mind has helped you in your line of work?

RK: I learned that flexibility is an important component of hazard analysis and that there is more than one way to view a problem. Worthwhile evaluation of a workplace risk should be not only from close examination, but also from a "big picture perspective."

Q: Can you provide a specific example where you've applied the lessons of Odyssey of the Mind?

RK: Teamwork is a great example. I consult my clients to seek the opinions of the person "on-the-line," who has a realistic understanding of day-to-day operations. I encourage managers to adopt the role of "coach" and listen to employees' ideas. When employees are involved in the problem solving, they are more likely to adopt a prosafety attitude and everyone benefits.

Q: Are your clients receptive to methods of CPS or do they want to do things as "they've always been done?"

RK: At times I have to convince them to accept change. I encourage them to keep an open mind and to not tolerate criticism of new ideas. I explain that a seemingly wild, often original, notion could result in a wonderful solution to a problem.

Q: What advice can you give to others to provide a more cooperative, productive work environment?

RK: Motivate employees to show initiative. Teach them the value of divergent thinking. Reward good teamwork. It's not enough to preach these values — management must follow through by seriously considering others' ideas.

Q: From what you've learned from Odyssey of the Mind, in what respects do you feel CPS is universal to all occupations and careers, and even to daily life?

RK: It teaches you to look at a problem from different angles. You're not so quick to eliminate unusual approaches simply because at first they seem to fall short of meeting all of the criteria for a reasonable solution. You learn that even an idea that has failed in the past can be tweaked to be a success now.