



# Odyssey of the Mind™

## Newsletter

Volume 22

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Number 2

### **RANATRA FUSCA winners invited to compete at World Finals!**

In the Odyssey of the Mind program, there may be no greater accomplishment than to receive the coveted Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award. This award embodies the spirit of creativity and is awarded to teams or individuals whose creativity stands out among all of the many other highly creative solutions.

This year, for the first time ever, teams that win the Odyssey of the Mind Ranatra Fusca Award for their long-term problem solution at the association level will be invited to compete at World Finals. This is in addition to the teams that place first at their association finals. This change was enacted to re-emphasize the value placed on creativity and risk taking, which truly are the spirit of the Odyssey of the Mind.

Each association will be able to invite up to thirteen Ranatra Fusca winners to World Finals, that is, one team per long-term problem per division. If an individual receives a Ranatra Fusca for some aspect of the long-term problem solution, the entire team will be invited. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we are not able to invite the Ranatra Fusca winners in spontaneous.

This year may see more teams than usual at World Finals, but all who attend can expect an even greater level of excitement. Imagine witnessing both the teams chosen for scoring the highest for their solutions and those chosen for having outstanding ideas!

The Ranatra Fusca Award represents the values on which the Odyssey of the Mind was founded. In creating

the program, Dr. Sam set out on a mission to recognize, teach, nurture and reward creativity. He knew that creative problem solving allowed for a vast potential of solutions to problems. Though most educators resisted creative approaches to problem solving, Dr. Sam taught his students how to use creativity as a tool.

The award is named for a solution built by Dr. Sam's college students. Their problem was to build a flotation device to get them across a lake. One group's solution was a water strider-like contraption kept afloat by inner tubes on long legs that moved back and forth. The students did not achieve what the problem asked for, in fact, they ended up in the lake, but they went to great lengths and took great risks to come up with something innovative and imaginative.

Literally, *Ranatra Fusca* is the term for a water scorpion; in Odyssey of the Mind, it stands for creativity!



*This flotation device, created by one of Dr. Sam's college students, was the inspiration for the Ranatra Fusca Creativity Award.*

### **COLORADO HOSTS CREATIVITY DAY!**

Dr. Sam Micklus presented two half-day workshops for Colorado's First Creativity Day on January 28. Odyssey of the Mind teams of all ages heard Dr. Micklus' exciting stories about creativity. Teams also enjoyed fine tuning their spontaneous problem solving with Dr. Sam. Teddy Goldman, co-author of the book *Mindpoppers*, taught the teams improv techniques, which had them rolling in the aisles. The teams left feeling quite excited and enthusiastic to practice what they had learned!

This event proved to be fun for the teams as well as a good fund raiser for the Colorado Odyssey of the Mind. If anyone is interested in more details, contact Marilen Reimer at [co4odyssey@aol.com](mailto:co4odyssey@aol.com).

# ODYSSEY 4 EVER

by  
Brandon McNerlin

This is a message for anyone who has ever fixed a prop with duct tape, written out a Style Form on the bus to competition, used aluminum foil as a costume, had 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond, or crammed an entire skit into a mere 8 minutes. For all of you team members out there, I have an exciting message for you: Odyssey of the Mind never ends. The friends and skills you develop during competitions will be remembered for the rest of your life.

I began the Odyssey of the Mind in the fourth grade when our team, the Procrastinators, tackled a Rube Goldberg problem. From that competition until the day I graduated from high school, I competed six more times, mainly in the vehicle problem. Over the years, some of my costumes have included a helpless maiden, caveman, mad scientist, and Egyptian. Our team vehicles have been built out of plastic, PVC, plywood, rat traps, Legos, and Styrofoam. For one competition, I even taught myself to ride a unicycle so I could be a court jester in the skit! During college I became a judge for the vehicle problem so I could immerse myself in the limitless creativity flowing like electricity during Odyssey of the Mind competitions.

Today, I am a graduate of the University of Colorado and will soon head up to Alaska to be a drilling engineer.

The vehicle problems helped me realize that I wanted to build things that no one had ever seen before, so I became an engineer. Now, instead of building battery-powered cars with a \$100 budget, I am building medical catheters, pressure vessels, and flow tanks with a nearly bottomless budget.

The Odyssey of the Mind has also helped another one of my teammates realize his career goals as well. He would always compile the soundtracks for our skits. Now, he is studying to be a professional orchestra conductor and has even conducted the scores to several movies.

The skills and experiences we have gained from Odyssey of the Mind have shaped who we are and who we want to become. I still try to think of creative solutions to all of my difficult problems. I am very confident speaking in front of an audience, a quality I attribute to Odyssey of the Mind. I mean, when I think that I have stood in front of a crowd wearing my caveman costume, a potato sack and leopard print boxers, it's hard to be embarrassed about anything by comparison.

So my message again for all of you out there is this: If a Ranatra Fusca or first-place ribbon slips out of your hands, don't worry. Everyone in Odyssey of the Mind wins in the long run.



## CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED, INC.

What's in a name? Sometimes everything. **Creative Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. (COU)** is an independent non-profit organization with a mission to provide creative problem-solving opportunities to children around the world. Its goals include awarding scholarships and making programs such as the Odyssey of the Mind available to everyone.

"Those of us in COU believe in the benefits of creative problem solving and want to help open the door of opportunity for people of all cultures," said William Cook, of Oklahoma, one of the directors of COU. Unlike most charitable organizations, COU is run entirely by volunteers, so all donations received go to the people for whom they were intended.

COU welcomes contributions of all sizes. They also accept directed funds that fit within their goals.

The Odyssey of the Mind supports COU's efforts and wishes them great success in meeting their mission. Why? Their name says it all.

For more information about Creative Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., write to Dan Semenza, 1204 La Poloma Place, Lady Lake, FL 32159, or email Dr. Harold Kurtz at [HKurtz2929@aol.com](mailto:HKurtz2929@aol.com).

Hi, Coaches, Team Members and Officials,

Remember to use the correct address for all Odyssey of the Mind correspondence, including World Finals registration, information requests and problem clarifications. If you use the wrong address, your correspondence may not be forwarded to us!

The correct address is:  
**Odyssey of the Mind**  
1325 Route 130 South  
Suite F  
Gloucester City, NJ 08030

Phone, fax and e-mail are:  
Phone: (856) 456-7776  
Fax: (856) 456-7008 or  
(856) 456-3889  
E-mail: [cci@jersey.net](mailto:cci@jersey.net)

## Odyssey of the Mind Eurofest – A Celebration of Creativity

by

Dennis Yemma, Eurofest Director

Since 1993, I have been involved in the Odyssey of the Mind European Festival, more commonly known as *Eurofest*. The festival brings together students from Europe, Asia, and the U.S. in an event similar to World Finals, only at Eurofest, while we do score teams, we do not rank them. At Eurofest, we recognize every team for its achievements.

This event is a festival in every sense of the word, as teams showcase their solutions to the long-term problems. To promote cultural exchange and activity, each team is paired with a team from another country and given a special problem to solve and present before closing ceremonies. Language and cultural differences do not stand in the way of children working together to solve this special problem, but make each solution unique and creative.

The first Eurofests were held in Potsdam and Berlin, Germany. We were in Potsdam to help celebrate its millennium in 1993. Over the next three years, we met at the FEZ in the former East Berlin. In 1997 we helped Gdansk, Poland, celebrate its millennium as they welcomed us to their beautiful city. The following year the Eurofest was held at an old monastery in the Netherlands. Last year, we celebrated in Klaipeda, Lithuania. We paraded down the main street of the city, as Odyssey of the Mind founder Dr. Sam Micklus and his wife Carole led the group from the backseat of a horse-drawn carriage.

This year we will hold the first Eurofest of the new millennium at the Hambachtal Ferienpark, a resort complex in west central Germany. All participants will stay in furnished cabins with fully equipped kitchens. This presents an added challenge – we'll be preparing our own meals.

This year's Eurofest will take place on May 1-5. We expect approximately 400 students to attend. This includes teams from China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Moldova, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom and, of course, Germany. We hope to have other countries participate as well.

The festival, a partnership between countries with a common goal of providing opportunities that challenge students to be divergent thinkers and creative problem solvers, has opened the door to a different kind of European Union. This union was built by teachers, parents, friends, and most important, by students. As a result, many exchange programs between countries have been built, and many new friendships have developed across cultural lines – at all age levels.

For more information about Eurofest, e-mail Dennis at [Dyemma@compuserve.com](mailto:Dyemma@compuserve.com), or Dr. Karl-Ernst Plagemann at [KPlage1180@aol.com](mailto:KPlage1180@aol.com).



We warmly welcome Anthony Travel as the official travel provider for the Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals. Anthony Travel specializes in travel arrangements for college and university groups. Their experience includes serving as the official travel agency for the 1999 U.S. Youth Soccer Association National Championships and the 1999 National Senior Games. Our friends at Anthony Travel are widely experienced in international travel, as well as domestic travel.

From its offices in Dallas, Texas, and South Bend, Indiana, Anthony Travel will handle such World Finals travel services as discounted air fare, airport transfers, daily tours, and spectator hotel accommodations. During the event, staff representatives will be on-site, at the University of Tennessee, to assist with all your travel needs.

To help serve their customers efficiently and professionally, Anthony Travel offers 24-hour assistance from their knowledgeable, experienced staff. You may contact them through their toll-free number, 1-800-736-6377, or visit their Web site, [www.anthonyttravel.com](http://www.anthonyttravel.com).

The folks at Anthony Travel pride themselves for living up to the agency's mission statement, "Treat others as you want to be treated." They ask that you put them to the test.



### ***A New Pledge for the New Millennium***

In our last issue, we inadvertently listed the deadline for entries to our pledge-writing contest as January 10. What we really meant to say was that all entries must be postmarked by **May 1, 2000**, to be considered. Now you've got plenty of time to think of something witty, creative and meaningful. The pledge may be written in any style and should be about 25 words or 4-6 lines long; however, this is not a requirement. We will consider entries of any length. Submit entries to:

#### **Odyssey of the Mind Pledge**

1325 Route 130 South

Suite F

Gloucester City, NJ 08030

e-mail: [pledge@odysseyofthemind.com](mailto:pledge@odysseyofthemind.com)

Fax: 856/456-7008

The contest winner will receive an Odyssey of the Mind tee-shirt and pin AND will be invited to attend the World Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee. The pledge will be recited at the event and will appear in the official program.

All entries will become the property of Creative Competitions, Inc.

# Having Fun Raising Funds!

This time of year, Odyssey of the Mind teams from around the world are finalizing scripts, fine-tuning props, and practicing, practicing, practicing, getting ready for their competitions. In fact, they are probably so engrossed in perfecting their solutions that they're forgetting to get serious about a serious matter: raising funds. Not all teams have to do this; some receive financial support from their schools or other organizations. But for those teams who find themselves counting pennies most of the year, now is the time to start thinking about how they'll pay for travel expenses and other competition-related costs. For them fund-raising is a necessity.

There are so many organizations out there trying to raise money that, to be successful, your group has to stand out from the competition. This program is based on CREATIVITY, so use your imagination to come up with events that are new and different. Here are some examples of the things you could do:

- Practically every organization holds bake sales, but how about selling hot dogs or hoagies, or even popcorn? These items are easy to make and don't require much equipment. Get permission to set up at a store or a school event. And don't forget the soda.
  - A car wash can be a fruitful money-maker, but why not go one step further and hold a car wax? Most people would rather pay than do it themselves but they don't want to pay professional rates. Just get a safe site near a busy intersection. A gas station would work well if you can get permission. Post easy-to-read signs, leading drivers to your site. In the weeks before the event hand out discount coupons.
  - Offer your services for a fee, such as yard work, tutoring and babysitting. Be sure to let people know they're hiring you for a good cause.
  - Raffles. Get a local business to donate a nice item that you can raffle off. Or, have a 50/50, where the winner gets half of the money collected through ticket sales.
  - Fairs. Set up an area with lots of different booths. Sell food, beverages and tickets. Have events like "dunk the coach," where people pay to throw balls at a target that causes the coach to drop into a tank of water. (Sorry coaches.) If that's not possible, try a teacher/coach pie toss. Keep it safe – only custard and whipped cream – but make it challenging so not every pie tossed ends up in (or on) their face. Other ideas are coin tosses and spinning wheels for prizes. For incentive, offer rewards for the booth that sells the most tickets.
  - Get a local business or organization to sponsor your team. Solicit them with a letter and flyer describing the program, the problem you're solving and your solution. Offer to perform your solution at one of their events or meetings. And don't stop at one — the more support you can get, the better.
- Use your creativity to come up with new twists to old ideas. For example, think about the number of computer users in your area. Why not offer to clean computers and keyboards for individuals and businesses. Remind them that this is a necessary, but often neglected, task and you'll be glad to do it for a small fee. *Be sure you are trained for anything like this.*
  - Ask others for ideas and don't rule anything out. Here's a creative one used by an Odyssey of the Mind team some years ago: The team sent a baby goat to deliver baskets of candy (actually, a cup with one piece of candy in it) to people. A pet store owner took requests to send a "May Day Goat" to an unknowing person. Wearing a diaper, a baby goat delivered a 'basket' to someone who had the choice of either keeping the goat for 30 minutes or paying to have it deliver a basket to someone else. Most people paid, just to get the goat out of their hair. In one day alone, with two goats, the team raised \$1,000. They charged \$5 to anyone who ordered a delivery and \$10 to ensure that the goat would not be delivered back to them. If a baby goat is not available in your area, seek out other delivery critters. You might want to check with the SPCA first.

To make sure your event is successful, PLAN way ahead of time. Think of every angle that needs covering and cover it. Be sure to advertise. Communicate your cause. Post signs (get permission first) and hand-out flyers. Call your neighbors and friends and your parents' neighbors and friends and your friends' neighbors and friends and your . . . I'm sure you get the idea by now.

If you have to go door-to-door, NEVER go by yourself. Better yet, go as a team. Give a mini-performance of your problem solution if you can. And invite people you talk with to attend the local competition.

Remember, raising funds CAN be fun if you allow it to be. There are no limits to what you can do. (Remember the May Day Goat?) However, whatever you do, make sure that you comply with the law in your area. When planning your strategy, just do what you do best – use your imagination!



## Welcome Malaysia!

The Odyssey of the Mind continues its worldwide expansion with a new association in Malaysia. Teams from that country join teams from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore as part of our rapidly growing Pacific delegation. We hope to meet them at the Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals at the University of Tennessee.

# Problem Clarifications

## ALL PROBLEMS

1. Helium balloons may not be used.
2. If a team has five or more members, then five team members must participate in spontaneous.



## ELASTI - PUMPER

1. D. Scoring, 6 shows 0, 5, 10, or 15 points. It should read 3 to 30 points.
2. D. Scoring 1, c. pertains to the altered appearance of the Elasti-pumper and E. Style 2, pertains to the original appearance of the Elasti-pumper.
3. B. 12 refers to D. Scoring, 8, not D. Scoring, 7.
4. The Elasti-pumper and/or the Trailer may be temporarily moved for the purpose of repair or removing something from under them as long as they are repositioned close to their original position such that no propulsion or steering advantage is gained. For example:

The Elasti-pumper needs repair, the team turns the Elasti-pumper over and repairs it. They then reposition it close to where it failed and keep it pointed in the approximate direction of travel prior to the problem. This is OK.

5. The Elasti-pumper may have wheels that only occasionally touch the floor in addition to the three required to touch the floor. Raising and lowering them in any manner is legal; however, moving them in a direction beyond the perimeter of the Elasti-pumper must be done within B. Limitations, 4, c. This means that putting a wheel on the end of a mechanical arm that is positioned beyond the perimeter of the Elasti-pumper by a team member without using the elastic material & pumping motion would receive penalty #6 since the perimeter of the Elasti-pumper would be moving without using a legal propulsion system.



## PEST-ASIDE

1. In E. Penalties 9, it should read -5, -10, or -20 points.
2. The materials for the contraptions must fit in the 4' x 4' area only until time begins. Once time begins, the team should move its materials to the 6' x 12' Pest-Be-Gone Area.
3. Extension cords, used for the purpose of providing electricity to the contraptions, may extend beyond the 6' x 12' Pest-Be-Gone Area.



## Classics...KING ARTHUR

1. Teams need to be prepared to wear or support all materials used in the presentation ONLY when asked by the Staging Area and/or the Timekeeper prior to the time beginning. After time begins, team members may touch, hold or carry props or put them on the floor. (See problem procedures in Fall issue of the Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter.)



## SHRINKING STRUCTURE

1. In B. Limitations, eliminate 5. g, as a limitation for this problem.
2. The structure must shrink at some point between when it is placed on the tester and before the second metal weight is placed on it. If the team members are touching the structure and/or the crusher board or metal weight when this occurs, the judges will make a determination as to whether the team members contributed to the shrinking and assess a Spirit of the Problem penalty if they determine that one or more teams contributed to the shrinking.



## The GENIE

1. In B. 5. a., the individual that finds the Genie must be played as an actor/actress by one of the team members. It cannot be a puppet or some other type of device that is operated by a team member.



# Odyssey of the Mind 2000 World Finals

## Coaches and Officials Problem: Action Contraption

- Purist Division (Coach must solve the problem alone.)
- Poetic License Division (Coach may get help from others.)
- Officials Division

### A. The Problem

Your problem is to design and build a contraption that will propel a tennis ball so it comes to rest in a Target Area as close to the end of a time limit as possible. There will be a whistle signal, a 5-second Start Interval, and a second whistle signal. During the Start Interval you must activate your contraption.

After the second whistle signal will be a 4 minute Travel Period. At the end of the Travel Period a final whistle will signal the end of the competition. The last tennis ball that enters the Target Area within the time limit and remains in the Target Area when it stops, will be the champion in that division.

### B. Limitations

1. You must use only one tennis ball.
2. You must supply your own tennis ball. It may not be altered, although it must have the name of the coach or official, member number (if a coach), your city, state/province and country written on it.
3. There is no cost or size limitation.
4. No explosions are allowed.
5. No household electricity may be used.
6. Your contraption must be entirely behind the foul line during the competition.
7. You may activate your contraption in any way you choose. However, your contraption must be activated during the Start Interval.
8. After the Start Interval ends you may not touch, guide or assist your contraption or tennis ball in any way.
9. If the officials feel that any damage could occur to the floor, or anyone could be injured, your solution will not be allowed to compete.
10. You may not alter the competition site.
11. If something is not prohibited in the limitations, and is within the Spirit of the Problem, it is allowed.
12. No clarifications will be issued for this problem.

### C. The Competition

1. The competition site is shown in Figure A.
2. The Target Area will be approximately 3 feet (one meter), front to back, and will extend as far as necessary to accommodate participants.

3. The Target Area will be outlined with duct tape that will cover a rope or clothesline, giving the tape a slight rise in its center.
4. The Foul Lines will be 25 feet (7.6m) from the front edge of the Target Area.
5. You will place your contraption behind the Foul Line. It is possible that other contestants may set up behind another foul line. If so, the Target Area will be between you and them.
6. Your device must be activated from behind the Foul Line during the Start Interval. The ball may be released from the contraption at any time after it has been activated during the competition time.
7. The last ball entering the Target Area before the end of the Travel Period will be declared the champion. However, the ball will be allowed to finish moving even if time ends to make sure it stays in the Target Area.
8. In the event that tennis balls collide, or one knocks another out of the Target Area. . . Sorry!

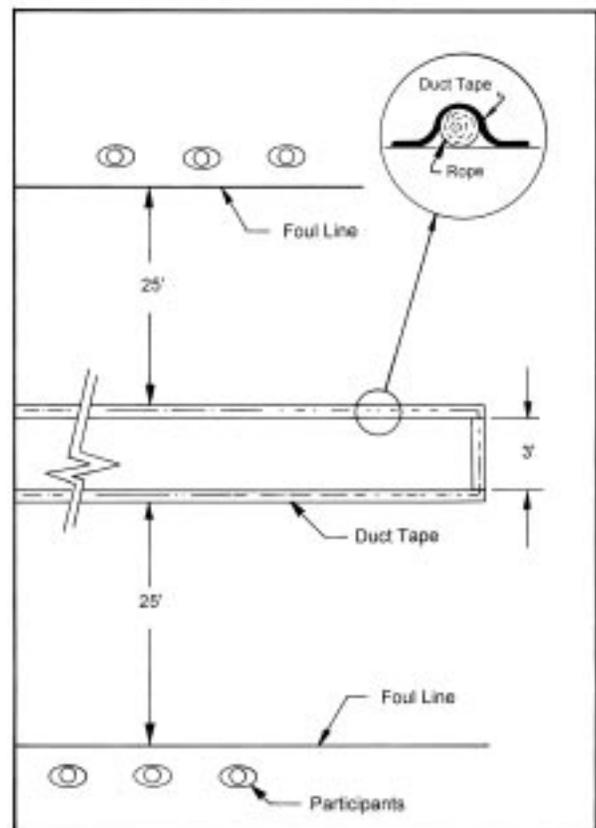


Figure A

## 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:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **School Membership:** Must register in the school name. May enter one team per problem per division in competition. This also applies to two or more schools headed by the same principal. Teams may include home-schooled students.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Community Group Membership:** Must be an established organization within the community. May enter one team per problem in competition.

\_\_\_\_\_ **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 \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

*Each individual membership costs \$135, but you'll receive discounts if you purchase more than one membership. \*You will also receive **ONE FREE BOOK** per membership ordered. Please indicate selection(s) below.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **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**..... \_\_\_\_\_

### ODYSSEY OF THE MIND SUPPORT MATERIALS

\_\_\_\_\_ \*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 **Competition Stimulates Creativity @ \$16** Discusses the benefits of competition..... \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*All of the above books are a collection of long-term and spontaneous problems from past competition years. **If ordering additional books, add \$3 shipping & handling for the first book, \$1 for each additional book.***

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of **Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ \$5**..... \_\_\_\_\_

*Contains basic competition information and membership rules.*

\_\_\_\_\_ subscriptions to **Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter @ \$10**..... \_\_\_\_\_

*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](mailto:cci@jersey.net) • fax: 856/456-7008

[www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com)

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**Shipping & Handling** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**To submit payment:**

- 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.
- If paying by p.o., you may FAX your order to **856/456-7008**.
- If paying by credit card, you may FAX your order, order by phone by calling **856/456-7776** or e-mail **cci@jersey.net**.

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Acct. no. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of cardholder \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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# Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

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## Texas Spontaneous Problem Captain Named Teacher of the Year

Peggy Patterson, Odyssey of the Mind Spontaneous Problem Captain for the state of Texas, was named Teacher of the Year for 1998-1999 by the Texas Association of Gifted and Talented (TAGT).

Peggy first got involved in the Odyssey of the Mind as a judge in Aldine, Texas. In the mid '80's, she and her friend and fellow judge Nell Feedman decided they wanted to bring the program to their school district, Deer Park. It took a few years to get the program in full motion, but they both knew how Odyssey of the Mind reinforced kids' creativity and critical thinking skills, so they willfully pursued the issue. Shortly afterwards, when Nell became the G/T itinerant for Deer Park, Peggy assisted her with forming teams throughout the district.

While at first their emphasis was with G/T students, the program progressed to involve as many kids as possible. In 1990, when Peggy became a teacher in a pilot program of multi-grade students, she and Nell made sure that Odyssey of the Mind was factored in immediately as a central focus of the curriculum. They wrote activities related to the long-term problem themes as a way to incorporate the program's philosophy into their curriculum. Now, the Texas Education Agency recognizes Odyssey of the Mind as one of two components essential for gifted education.

Peggy earned her certification in the field of G/T in the 1980's, which led her to teach in the multi-grade (K-5) pilot program. When that program lost its funding, she returned to Deer Park as a G/T itinerant teacher for grades K-8. After 2fi years, she decided to move upward to junior high, where she's remained for the past three years.

A result of Peggy's passion for Odyssey of the Mind includes incorporating the program whenever and wherever she moves on to other assignments in her career. Peggy promises, "I will continue to advocate Odyssey of the Mind for kids of all intellectual ability. I see the program as a key to opening new realms of thinking for kids who often spend days in classrooms filling in blanks and reciting textbooks."

For the TAGT Teacher of the Year Award, Peggy received nominations from several sources, including that of friends, administrators, students and parents of students. Considering there are 20 educational regions in Texas and each had their own nominee, when Peggy found out in July that she had been chosen, she felt that it was truly an accomplishment. After all, she was chosen the best in her state — and Texas is a BIG state!

