



Odyssey of the Mind®

Newsletter

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Reflections of a First-Time Coach

How Odyssey of the Mind Helped to Put My Life In Perspective

As I entered into my first coaching experience with Odyssey of the Mind, I often asked myself what I could possibly have been thinking . . . I had a team that consisted of:

- Three children with parents who spoke no English (Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish)
- One child with severe ADHD
- One child who broke down in tears during EVERY practice
- Two children who were so painfully shy I did not hear their voices for one month
- Two children in the struggles of a bitter divorce
- One child who had a parent diagnosed with a life-threatening illness two days before a competition

Plus, my team fought non-stop for eight weeks. I did not know what I could possibly accomplish with these kids.

Well, the day of the competition, they pulled it all together and took 7th out of 14 teams. (They would have scored higher if it had not been for my misinterpreting part of the problem. Of course, that made me feel even worse!) I left the competition feeling pretty blue but thankful that it was over.

I always heard the little voice in the back of my head saying, "It's the process, not the outcome." It is hard for a coach to keep that in perspective. On the surface, I did not notice very much in the way of greatness during the process, and the outcome seemed disappointing. But, as I met with the kids at school on Monday and I

looked back over the past three months I realized that the following had happened:

- The kids whose parents did not speak English (and had not lived in the country very long) were picked up by the coaches and were transported to the performance to watch their kids – we broke down a lot of cultural barriers trying to communicate with each other.
- The child with ADHD learned to interact with a team.
- The child who cried at every practice gained confidence and performed beautifully.
- The painfully shy kids were running around the competition laughing and interacting with other children.
- The parents going through the bitter divorces were at the competition enjoying their children's performance – as a family.
- The child who had an ill parent spent the day with us and was thankful it took his mind off troubles at home.

The best part of the whole experience: On Monday morning, one of my shy kids asked, "Is this the end of Odyssey of the Mind? Am I really going to go the rest of the year without seeing you?"

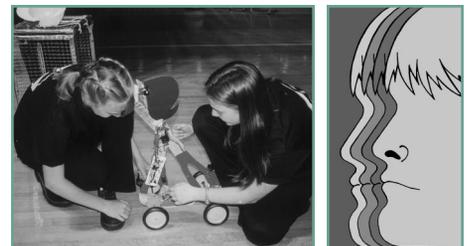
I realized then that Odyssey of the Mind had made a huge impact. It was not the scores, it was not the performance, it was the process of getting there. It was the POSITIVE changes that I saw in all the kids. It put my life in perspective.

Theresa Lundy
Sherwood Park Ele, MI



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New Book Available – *Creative Interaction*

Creative Competitions, Inc. has published a new book of practice problems. *Creative Interaction* features 10 long-term problems and 27 spontaneous problems, some used in past competitions and some that are new. The book features an opening chapter written by Dr. Sam on ways that teachers can provide opportunities for students to interact creatively. (See Order Form on page 5.)



Early Women Inventors in America

"A ship in port is safe, but that is not what ships are for. Sail out to sea and do new things." -- Grace Hopper, inventor of the computer language COBOL, the first user-friendly business software program.

Sybilla Masters: First American Woman Inventor

In early Colonial America, women had trouble adjusting to life because of the rugged undeveloped land. This led some to devise ways to improve their survival. In 1712, Sybilla Masters created a new way to make hominy meal from corn. Her mill used hammers instead of grinding wheels. Four years later, she patented a fabric made from palmetto and straw to make hats.

Mary Kies: First American Female Patent Holder

The Patent Act of 1790 opened the door for any male or female to patent an invention in America. In 1809, Mary Kies became the first woman to independently receive a U.S. patent for her method of weaving straw with silk.

Marjorie Joyner: 1st African-American Female Patent Holder

Marjorie Joyner's strong belief in pride led to an invention

that helped women feel better about themselves. It bothered Marjorie, a cosmetologist in Chicago, that the day after having their hair done, most women looked like "an accident going someplace to happen." Her dome-shaped device applied electrical current to hair, allowing a hairdo to stay set for days. In 1926, she received a patent for her invention.

Beulah Henry: Prolific Inventor of the 1920's

Beulah Henry is responsible for 110 inventions and 49 patents in the fields of business, childcare and the home. She patented her first invention, a vacuum ice freezer, at age 25. Other inventions include a bobbinless sewing machine, continuously attached envelopes for mass mailings, and a form of "photocopying" that made four copies of a document without using carbon paper. Her biggest success was an umbrella with changeable snap-on covers. She was told it would never catch on, but sold the rights for \$50,000 -- quite a large sum for her day.

Mary Anderson: Inventor of the Windshield Wiper

Alabama belle Mary Anderson took a trip to New York City in 1903, and was amazed that the motorman of the streetcar she was touring in kept getting out to wipe off the snow and ice that collected on the windshield. Mary made a quick drawing in her sketchbook. The following year, she patented a device that allowed drivers to manipulate a lever from the inside to activate a swinging arm that mechanically swept off ice and snow. While she never sold her invention, it caught on and by 1913 windshield wipers became standard equipment on American cars.

Information from www.inventorsmuseum.com.

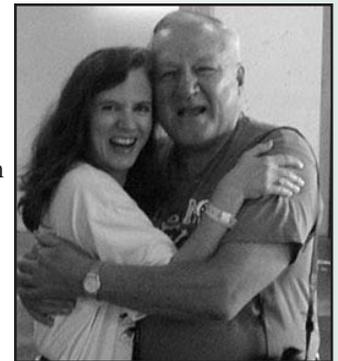
Odyssey of the Mind Family Album

- **Dr. Michael King**, senior project scientist for NASA's Earth Observing System at Goddard Space Flight Center, was elected to the National Academy of Engineering. Dr. King was an important presence at the 2002 World Finals, where he presented trophies to the award winners in the NASA-sponsored problem, *OMER's Earthly Adventures*. Dr. King was cited "for advancing our understanding of the effects of aerosols and clouds on Earth's radiation and for leading programs to improve climate prediction."
- Congratulations to **Joy Kurtz**, International Spontaneous Problem Captain, for being named Pennsylvania Middle School Principal of the Year!
- Rowan University senior **Erin O'Kelly** is our intern for the spring semester. She is helping out with public relations for the 2003 World Finals.

Visit our Photo Gallery at
www.odysseyofthemind.com
to see images from this year's
Association Finals!

In Memory . . .

We're sad to report the passing of Odyssey of the Mind volunteer Mimi Bernard, MI. Mimi got involved in 1988 as a coach in Kentucky. After moving to Michigan, she served as Regional Director and Problem Captain there. For the past three years she was the Buddy Team Coordinator for World Finals. Mimi has touched many people with her kindness, and she will be missed by many of us in the Odyssey of the Mind family, especially the international teams she worked so closely with and the WF International Crew.



Mimi Bernard with Dr. Sam Micklus at the 2000 World Finals.

Bill Jones, a long-time friend and supporter, passed away earlier this year. Bill's international travels brought teams from many different countries into the program. Through his employment at Chevron Corporation, he was responsible for a series of exhibitions and Emmy Award-winning TV programs produced by journalist **Bill Moyers** about creativity. Mr. Jones was integral in securing Chevron scholarships for program participants. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Marina.

2003-2004 Long-Term Problem Synopses

ENVIROVER

The team's problem is to build and drive a human-powered Envirover vehicle that will collect trash and deliver it to a Factory, where it will be used to manufacture a product of the team's design. The team will present an original prototype of the product then use the trash to produce five replicas of the product. The team will also create and present a humorous sales pitch for its product.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV Cost limit: \$135

STRATEGY SPHERE

This technical problem requires teams to design and build two devices that will mechanically propel balls through a circular rim. The location of the devices will determine the value of the points scored when the ball passes through the rim. Teams will also design a way to retrieve balls once they are launched. The propelling of the balls will be integrated into a theme about how change in the Earth's geosphere affects the Earth's atmosphere.



This problem is sponsored by NASA.

Divisions: II, III & IV Cost limit: \$135

Classics . . . FANTASTIC ART

In this problem, teams will create and present a performance that includes works of art that come alive when no one can see them and return to their original state when others are around. The team will make four works of art: two will be replicas of works by artists on a list, and two will be original works created by the team. The performance must include at least one scene where the works of art come to life and interact with each other. The performance will also include a character that is not part of the works of art.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV Cost limit: \$125

BALANCING ACT

This problem calls for the team to design, build and test an asymmetrical structure made of balsa wood and glue. The structure will be wider at its top than at its base. The structure will be tested by balancing and supporting as much weight as possible. The team will also create a container to protect its structure and transport it a maximum distance of 15 feet. The container and structure may not be touched while they are traveling.

Divisions: I, II, III & IV Cost limit: \$135

FEATURED CREATURE

The problem is to create and present an original performance about mythological animals. The team will show a mythological creature chosen from a list, making the audience aware of its characteristics and/or powers. The team will also create its own "mythological" animal and present a story that includes that animal and its characteristics and/or powers. The performance will include a stage set that changes.

Divisions: I, II & III Cost limit: \$125

REWIND WITH HUMOR

The team will create a performance that tells a story in reverse – from the end to the beginning. The story will have a beginning, a middle, and an end, but the team will present it in reverse. Therefore, the performance will start out with the ending of the story, then show the middle, and end with the beginning. The team will tell at least three jokes during its performance.

Primary: Grades K-2 Cost limit: \$50

*Problem descriptions are tentative as of April 21, 2003.
Finalized versions of the problems will be available by August 1.
Please check www.odysseyofthemind.com for updates.
© All problems copyright Creative Competitions, Inc. – 2003*



COACHES & OFFICIALS PROBLEM

Tug o' Car

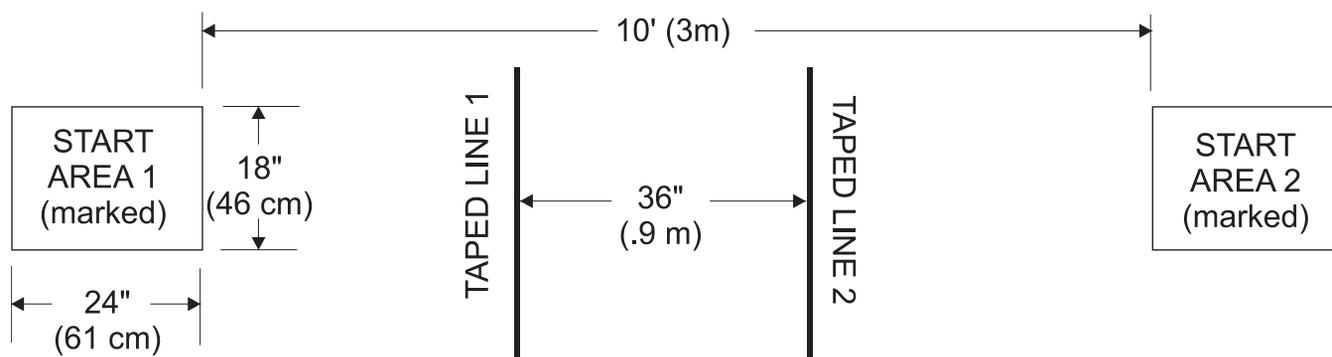
A. The Problem

Your problem is to design and build a vehicle that will participate in a tug-of-war with another vehicle. The vehicles will each be connected to opposite ends of a cord, then travel in opposite directions until a flag on the cord crosses a taped line.

B. Limitations

1. The vehicle must be original, however, it may include commercially produced parts.
2. The vehicle must have wheels. The wheels must be designed to prevent damage to the floor. Only the vehicle's wheels may touch the floor.
3. The vehicle must weigh less than 10 pounds (4.5 kg) and fit completely within the boundaries of an 18" x 24" Start Area when time begins.
4. You may provide your own surface for your vehicle. Your surface must rest on the floor and it may not be designed to prevent your vehicle from being pulled backwards.
5. The vehicle must carry its power supply and propulsion system. Only the surface may enhance the vehicle's ability to travel.
6. The cord will be 10-feet long and have an "S" hook on each end to connect it to the vehicles. Only the hook may touch your vehicle while it is being tested. You may not alter the cord or hook.
7. A flag will be connected to the center of the cord and will be at the mid-point between the taped lines when time begins.
8. Your vehicle and surface, if used, must be completely within the boundaries of the Start Area when time begins.

Diagram of Competition Site



C. The Competition

1. You will be assigned a number when you register at the competition site. Numbers will be used to pair competitors.
2. When your number is announced you must bring your vehicle and your surface, if used, to the Start Area. You will be instructed where to set up.
3. When all vehicles are in place a judge will say, "Ready, set," then blow a whistle. You are to start and/or release your vehicle at the sound of the whistle.
4. For each pair of competitors, the vehicle that pulls the flag across its line first will advance to the next round. If neither vehicle pulls the flag across its line before the end of a 3-minute period, the vehicle that advances will be determined by the location of the flag at that time.
5. Multiple pairs of competitors will compete simultaneously. After all the vehicles compete in a first round, the winners will advance to the next round.

D. Scoring

1. The vehicle that wins in the final round will be the 1st-place winner.
2. The vehicle that loses in the final round will be the 2nd-place winner.
3. The vehicles that lose in the semifinals will compete to determine the 3rd-place winner.

E. Awards

1. Trophies will be awarded for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-place in both divisions (Coaches and Officials).
2. A trophy will be awarded to the person with most outstanding STYLE. Every contestant is eligible even those who place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND® 2003-2004 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Questions? Email info@odysseyofthemind.com or call 856.456.7776.

For new memberships or renewals, complete this form and return it with a check, purchase order, or credit card information (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:** May not be an organization established solely for the purpose of participating in Odyssey of the Mind. May enter one team per problem in competition. Please submit by-laws if this is a new membership.

Division IV: All team members must be high school graduates and registered for at least one class at a college or university. May enter one team per problem. Proceeds directly to World Finals, but may compete at the Association level.

Membership name _____ Membership number (for renewal, if known) _____

Grades covered by membership _____ School district _____ County _____

Contact person (may be a coach) _____

Mailing address (for newsletter delivery and correspondence) _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Daytime phone _____ FAX _____ Email _____

**Each individual membership costs \$135, but you will receive discounts if you purchase more than one membership. For each membership purchased, you get five competitive long-term problems, one primary problem, one copy of the Program Guide, Odyssey of the Mind and NASA curriculum activities, one newsletter subscription, and more!*

- Individual 2003-2004 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



- **Creative Interaction @ \$19** Discusses the importance of interaction between students
- **Applying Your Creativity @ \$18** Discusses different types of human creativity
- **Creativity + Teamwork = Solutions! @ \$18** Includes tips on building effective teams
- **Odysseymania! @ \$17** Includes a chapter on humor and creativity
- **Make Learning Fun @ \$17** Provides a history of the program
- Spontaneous Problem Competitions @ \$7.50** (32 pages of spontaneous tips and practice problems).....
- Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ \$7.50** (one is included with membership)
- Coaches Training Video @ \$20** Tips and techniques for coaches
- packs of **Balsa Wood** (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ \$20 per 100 pieces.....

Shipping & handling is \$3.50 for the first item, \$1 for each additional item.
Contact CCI for shipping costs outside of the U.S.

***There are no shipping & handling charges for membership packets.**

***These books are a collection of long-term and spontaneous problems from past competition years.*

Subtotal _____

S & H _____

TOTAL _____

Payment Method:

- **U.S. Mail:** Send this completed form along with a check, money order or purchase order, payable to CCI, or with your credit card info to: CCI, 1325 Route 130 S, Suite F, Gloucester City, NJ 08030
 - **FAX:** Send this form along with a copy of your purchase order, or include your credit card information and fax to 856.456.7008.
 - **On-line:** If paying by credit card, go to www.odysseyofthemind.com to access this form.
- VISA MasterCard American Express Discover
- Acct. no. _____ Exp. _____
- Signature of cardholder _____

SHIPPING ADDRESS (For UPS Delivery)

Is this a residence? yes no

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____

Zip _____ Country _____



Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

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*Hey Gang,
Check out next year's
long-term problems!
Your Friend,
OMER*

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

Out & About in the Odyssey International Community

- **Dr. Sam** and **Carole Micklus** traveled to Gdynia, Poland, in March to attend the Polish Odyssey of the Mind National Tournament. They also visited with the German Association.
- In January, **Rita Sleeman** (MI), International Problem Captain for Problem 3, conducted a Judges Training Workshop in Shanghai, China. **Mr. Weixen Chen**, China's Association Director, hosted the two-day training. The fifty judges who attended, some traveling from as far away as Beijing, were very enthusiastic and dedicated to their roles as judges. The Association's Board of Directors and the judges were extremely hospitable to Rita and her daughter **Christine**, a former Odyssey participant.
- **Adam Rusilowski** (Poland) represented CCI on a trip to Uzbekistan to help **Feruzha Rashidova** organize the Odyssey of the Mind Association there. They held a conference to introduce the program to educators in Uzbekistan and in the neighboring countries of Kirgistan and Tadjikstan. Adam presented workshops for coaches and judges there. Adam also represented CCI in April at the European Festival in Korman, Slovakia.
- Program Director **Sammy Micklus** presented at the Texas Association for Gifted Children Conference, where he spoke about integrating creative problem solving into regular school curriculum.



Dr. Sam Micklus (l.) was a special guest at the Polish Finals in March. With him is Adam Rusilowski, Poland's AD and CCI International Representative.



Rita Sleeman reviews program rules with Association Director Mr. Weixen Chen (left), translator Mr. Shengze Cai (2nd from left), and two unidentified judges at the Judges Training Workshop in Shanghai.