



Odyssey of the Mind®

Newsletter

Volume 30

Spring 2008

Number 3

BREAKING NEWS! OotM & NASA: Five More Years

As teams around the globe begin renewing their Odyssey of the Mind memberships, another important team has renewed its commitment to the program. We are proud to announce that NASA has agreed to continue its sponsorship and will support the program for another five years!

NASA official **Steven Graham** believes the NASA/OotM partnership is beneficial for all involved, "We view our continued involvement as one of the best ways to reach such a vast and extremely talented audience. We consider the kids involved with OotM the 'cream of the crop' when it comes to creative problem solving, teamwork, and thinking outside of the box."

This renewed partnership means countless students around the world will benefit from five more years of creative problem solving involving earth science.

NASA has provided invaluable information about our planet for the past nine years. We have been fortunate to get amazing glimpses of our earth from space through NASA technology. It has also generously provided a web portal for Odyssey participants that helps them explore the earth and space, along with the

many interesting materials it generously provides in membership packets and at World finals.

NASA also has always re-invented its Creativity Festival booth each year in order to provide thousands of participants, coaches, and supporters with a unique World Finals experience that is creative and fun. Another important part of World Finals is the E-Theater Presentations and Classroom Activities provided by NASA.

Many people look forward to experiencing them each year. We are fortunate to have all of this and more for at least another five years.

NASA is an important part of the Odyssey family. It has helped shape many minds around the world and has helped provide our future scientists and innovators with a creative outlet. This is just part of what makes NASA and Odyssey of the Mind a perfect match.

We look forward to many more years of camaraderie and creativity. Thanks NASA!

NASA/OotM Web Portal:

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/odysseyofthemind>

"We view our continued involvement as one of the best ways to reach such a vast and extremely talented audience."



"A Scene From Above"



"The Jungle Bloke"

Past NASA-Sponsored Problems



"Strategy Sphere"



Also in this issue . . . 2. MAX MANSFIELD AWARD * GREAT MINDS * 3. 2008-2009 PROBLEM SYNOPSES

4. WORLD FINALS COACHES PROBLEM * 5. 2008-2009 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION * 6. FAMILY ALBUM

Max Mansfield Memorial Award Winner Announced

This year's Max Mansfield Memorial Award goes to Creativity Unlimited in Michigan for the 2007-08 Program Year.

With a membership growth of 15%, even more students will get to express their creativity, make new friends, and learn many new things in Michigan.

Association Director Karen Neilson credits Michigan's increased membership with its new creative thinking workshop that helps expose more kids, parents, and educators to OotM. She also believes it was the work of Michigan's many volunteers who, among other duties, give awareness presentations to interested groups throughout the state.

"It is important to grow Odyssey of the Mind memberships so that more kids can participate. Odyssey of the Mind is a program that is good for kids," said Neilson.

World Finals was also held in Michigan last year. All of the excitement and activity must've made an impact.

The volunteers also left a great impression on participants and supporters from around the world by helping so many during the event.

Neilson said it felt great to win the Award, "We are honored to have Michigan's hard-working volunteers recognized!"

Creative Competitions, Inc created this award in honor of Max Mansfield and rewards membership growth.

He will always be remembered as someone who selflessly volunteered for Odyssey so that as many people as possible could experience creative problem solving. This award is CCI's way to honor his years of dedication and hard work as well as all Odyssey associations attempting to do the same.



Great
Minds

Isaac Asimov: From Science Fiction to Fact

Some authors feel compelled to reinvent the past while others choose to create futuristic landscapes in their stories. Isaac Asimov had a passion for the possibilities of futuristic technology and authored many science fiction works that in a way became true. Many of his books featured high-speed super computers, robots, and other automated devices not yet in existence.

Asimov was not only a science fiction writer, he was a biochemist with a Ph.D and a member and vice president of **Mensa International**. Asimov was called a "twentieth-century Renaissance man" and the "Great Explainer."

However, his achievements did not come without hard work. He took a creative writing class while in college, and it almost convinced him to give up writing all together!

Fortunately, Asimov did not give up. In fact his works have been published in nine of the ten major categories of the Dewey Decimal System (all but Philosophy). The diversity of information covered in Asimov's writings once prompted fellow author **Kurt Vonnegut** to ask, "How does it feel to know everything?" Asimov replied that he only knew how it felt to have the reputation of omniscience — "Uneasy."

During his 50-year writing career, Asimov wrote over 500 books, essays and short stories. He won four **Hugo Awards** and one **Nebular Award** along with many other awards. Aside from fiction, he also wrote many popular science books and even textbooks that were known to explain scientific concepts in simplistic ways using historical data.

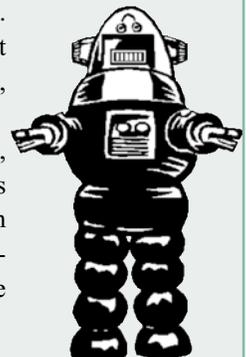
Although he wrote in many different genres including history books, memoir, and even limericks, Asimov is most widely known for his science fiction.

He was first exposed to science fiction magazines while working in his parent's store in 1929. A few years later he submitted his own stories to the magazine, but was rejected. Finally a few years and stories later, Asimov's first science fiction story was published in 1939. This started his prolific career as a writer.

Asimov revealed in his memoir that he thought his greatest contribution to society was his writings dealing with robot ethics and his "Three Laws of Robotics." His laws of robots were a theme unifying many of his science fiction works and are also referenced by many other science fiction authors.

Also, when scientists use the term "**robotics**" it is because of Asimov's writings. *The Oxford English Dictionary* credits his science fiction for introducing this word as well as **positronic** and **psychohistory** into the English language. He created these terms in his writings that often revealed interstellar empires, robots, futuristic computers, and much more.

A truly original great mind of our time, Asimov dared to create fictional worlds thought impossible, however we are soon finding out they may not be so far-reaching. His blend of science fact and science fiction are gradually blurring together.



2008-09 Long-Term Problem Synopses*

**Tentative as of April 11, 2008. All problems have an 8-minute time limit.*

Problem 1: Earth Trek

This problem requires teams to design and build a small vehicle that will visit four locations. The locations will be different places within one or more team-determined environments. Each time the vehicle leaves a location it will look different in appearance, and after leaving one of the locations it will appear to be a group of vehicles that are traveling together. The team's performance will incorporate the visits to the locations, the environments, and the changes in appearance of the vehicle. Sponsored by NASA.

Divisions I, II, III & IV Cost limit: \$145.

Problem 2: Teach Yer Creature

Teams will create a humorous performance about a mechanical creature that acts like a real mammal or bird and learns lessons. The creature will act like the real animal by performing tasks the way it would, including traveling, eating, or turning its head. It will be taught two lessons by a Creature Teacher and will "accidentally" learn a behavior by observing others. During the performance the creature will surprise the audience by demonstrating the "accidental" behavior it learned.

Divisions I, II & III Cost limit: \$145.

Problem 3: Classics . . . The Lost Labor of Heracles

Teams will create and present an original performance about the ancient Greek hero Heracles. (Romans called him Hercules.) In Greek Mythology, King Eurytheus ordered Heracles to perform 12 labors. The team will reenact Heracles performing one of the 12 labors, as well as a Lost Labor — a team-created thirteenth labor forgotten in history. The performance will also include a god or goddess from Greek Mythology, an original mythological creature that plays a role in the Lost Labor, and the team's version of why the Lost Labor was forgotten in history.

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

Problem 4: Shock Waves

The problem is to design and build a structure out of balsa wood and glue that will balance and support as much weight as possible while absorbing shockwaves. The team will test its structure by placing weights onto it. During specific intervals the team will place one or two spacers on the top weight and will then place a weight on them. The team will remove the spacers so the top weight falls onto the stack causing a shockwave. The team will add weight until its structure breaks or time ends. The team will also create and use an original method to place its structure onto the tester and will incorporate the testing of the structure into a performance.

Divisions I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$140.

Problem 5: Superstition

The problem is to create and present a performance that includes two documented superstitions, an original superstition created by the team, and the events that caused the original superstition to come to be. The performance will also include a funny narrator, a costume that is worn by two or more team members at the same time, and a stage set. During the performance the same stage set items will be used to change from one setting to another.

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

Primary: Candy Factory

In this problem teams will create and present a performance about a Candy Maker and her/his factory. The twist is that the primary ingredient for each type of candy has to be something that is healthy. The team will create a setting that looks like the inside of its candy factory and have five samples of candies. During the performance the Candy Maker will present the candies to customers and explain how each is made.

Grades K-2. Cost limit: \$125.



COACHES & OFFICIALS PROBLEM

HANG 'EM HIGH

A. The Problem

Your problem is to design, build, and use a device that will attach three tags to a target.

B. Limitations

1. The device must:
 - a. be original, however, it may include commercially produced parts.
 - b. be self contained. All components that make the device function must be interconnected.
 - c. fit within a box measuring 36" x 24" x 12" when checked in at the competition site.
 - d. must be powered by only human power. You are allowed to have one person help provide power used to operate the device. They must not help in any other way.
 - e. be safe in its design and the way it operates. If it is judged to pose potential harm to people or the competition site it will be prohibited.
2. The three tags:
 - a. may be anything you choose. However, all three must be recognizably similar in size, shape and appearance.
 - b. must have no dimension longer than 4" at any time. This includes any material that is used to help connect the tag to the target.
 - c. must be transported by only the device. They may not travel through the air. That is, they must be touching the device at all times until it is connected to the target.
 - d. must have your name, state or country, and role at World Finals (e.g. coach, Problem 1 judge).
 - e. must be safe in their design, the way they are transported, and how they are connected to the target. If they are judged to pose potential harm to people or the competition site they will be prohibited.
3. The target:
 - a. will be a bed sheet material.
 - b. may not be rigid over its entire surface.
 - c. must not be damaged by your tag.
 - d. will have a goal line on it.

C. The Competition

1. Your device and tags will be measured and you will be assigned a number when you register at the competition site. You are not allowed to practice on the competition site.

2. When your number is announced you must bring your device (as it was measured) and tags to the Foul Line. You will be given three minutes to set up your device.
3. After the setup time, a judge will blow a whistle. You will have 90 seconds to place your three tags on the target. Only the tag resting the highest on the target will be scored. However, you will receive a bonus of 2' (.6m) for the other two tags if they are attached to the target.
4. Each round the target will be raised higher. All tags over the goal line will be eligible for advancing to the next round.

D. Awards

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

E. Frequently Asked Questions

In order for each coach and official to have a clearer idea of what is expected at the Coaches/Officials problem, we have added this list of frequently asked questions.

- Q.** How far is the target from the foul line?
A. A minimum of 15 feet (you may move a little behind the line).
- Q.** How high and low are the goals on the target for the first round?
A. Bottom line is 8' from the floor, top is 10' floor.
- Q.** How high is the target moved up between rounds?
A. To Be Determined
- Q.** Can the coach or the device cross the foul line?
A. Device can and will cross the line. No person is allowed to cross the line once a round starts until that round ends and the judges say you may cross the line.
- Q.** Will we have access to our tags after the first round?
A. Yes. The judges will remove the tags from the target and competitors may retrieve their tag.
- Q.** If there is a non-target-harming adhesive on the tag will we have access to the tag to check or reapply said adhesive between rounds?
A. Yes.
- Q.** Do the rules of outside assistance apply to the coach's competition as they do for the children?
A. No. You may get all the help before the competition you want. During the competition only you may use your device.



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND® 2008-09 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Questions? Email info@odysseyofthemind.com or call 856.256.2797.

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 to be under the same membership. Use school district name on application. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.
- Home-schooled students:** Must include at least four home-schooled students. May also include up to three members from one school. May enter one team per problem in competition.
- Community Group:** May enter one team per problem in competition. May not be an organization established solely for the purpose of participating in Odyssey of the Mind. 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. They do not have to attend the same institution. May enter one team per problem. May proceed directly to World Finals.

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 2008-2009 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

A Creative Experience — Odyssey of the Mind promotional video DVD @ \$9.95

***Lots of Problems . . . And Tips to Make You More Creative @ \$19** tips on problem-solving.

****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.....

Spontaneous Problem Competitions @ \$7.50 Booklet of problems and tips.....

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.....

** Spend \$40 or more and get free Shipping & Handling. Orders under \$40, add \$6 Shipping & Handling.
Contact CCI for S & H 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, 406 Ganttown Road, Sewell, NJ, 08080**
 - **FAX:** Send this form along with a copy of your purchase order, or include your credit card information and fax to **856.256.2798**
 - **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.

406 Ganttown Road • Sewell, NJ, 08080

www.odysseyofthemind.com

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 58
Bellmawr, NJ



*Hey Teams,
It's that time again! Renew your membership now and be one of the first to get next year's long-term problems.*

*Your friend,
OMER*

The Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter is published by Creative Competitions, Inc.

Odyssey of the Mind Family Album



Tony Birkmeier, new Assistant Tournament Director.

Creative Competitions Inc. would like to welcome **Tony Birkmeier** as the new Assistant Tournament Director for World Finals.

As the Assistant TD, Tony will be working hard to help ensure every WF team and official has a rewarding, positive experience.

Not only did he help bring World Finals to Michigan State University last year, but is also an Odyssey of the Mind alumni. He's sure to be using those problem solving skills for Odyssey again!

Jo Weber, former Assistant Tournament Director, will be taking on an entirely new role at World Finals by being the on-site team problem solver and will be helping Odyssey in many capacities. Thanks and good luck goes to Tony and Jo!



Michael King, NASA Senior Project Scientist

In other news, NASA's EOS Senior Project Scientist **Dr. Michael King** will be leaving after many years of service.

He has not only been utilizing his creative problem solving skills with NASA, but has helped countless students around the world by helping make the NASA/Odyssey of the Mind sponsorship such a success.

Dr. King will be undertaking an exciting new role as Senior Research Scientist at the University of Colorado's Laboratory for Atmosphere and Space Physics (LASP). He is sure to be successful in continuing to help the planet by solving global problems.

CCI extends its sincere thanks and wishes for continued success at his new post.