



Odyssey of the Mind®

Newsletter

Volume 34

Spring 2012

Number 3

THE ODYSSEY IMPACT

Whether you are getting ready for World Finals or simply planning to renew your membership, spring is an important time to remember that all of the work done over the year has been valuable. Being involved in OotM leaves a lasting impact as evidenced by the many inspiring stories we have received over the years.

Below is one of these instances. It is a college application essay written by Zach Ford of Springdale, Arizona. He wrote his

Fifteen Grams — How much can a fifteen gram balsa wood structure hold? If you asked me that question prior to Odyssey of the Mind, I would have said ten pounds, maximum. Today my guess would be 1,000 pounds or more! This is because of an academic competition called Odyssey of the Mind, a creative problem solving competition. Our problem required a team to create a fifteen gram balsa wood structure that held weights. Little did I know that this competition would lead to the development of the leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills I have today.

Building my first structure was laughable. Imagine a clumsy eleven-year-old attempting to put together flimsy pieces of wood with super adhesive glue and accidentally gluing his fingers together instead.

As the weeks passed, I became the lead builder and the captain of our team. My first competition arrived and I expected the structure to fall flat after ten pounds. My teammates began placing forty-five-pound weights on the structure and, to my surprise, it held.

How that structure could hold 720 pounds, or 20,000 times its weight, was baffling, but it opened up my eyes to how great things can be accomplished with so little. As I saw these fifteen gram structures defy expectations, I began to see what endless opportunities I had in life.

Two years later my team qualified for World Finals. I learned keeping a structure under fif-

teen grams is difficult when you want to make sure the structure has the greatest potential. I blow-dried the structure to take all the moisture out of the wood, but I could not manage to get enough weight out of the structure.

Good luck to Zach and all participants that are starting a new journey in the coming months. Remember: you are a winner just by solving an Odyssey of the Mind problem. The lessons you learn and the friendships you form during your Odyssey years will stay with you throughout your life.

I normally thrive under pressure, but for the first time in Odyssey of the Mind, I doubted. I lost all hope that we would be able to compete and looked at the worst in the situation. Eventually, I ended up getting the structure underweight and we

placed sixth in the world that year. Since that day I have looked at stressful situations as a chance to be a leader.

Where many people perceive an insurmountable problem placed before them, I now see an opportunity. I have learned innovative approaches lead to innovative solutions. There was never a structure that looked exactly like mine, but there were some that held as much or even more than

mine. Life, like OotM, has no perfect answer.

I never broke any OotM records or became World Champion, but I took away a greater prize than a trophy. I became a thinker. Using knowledge in unconventional ways is the key to solving difficult problems in life. Odyssey of the Mind taught me this with fifteen grams.

~ Zach Ford
Har-Ber High School

“I never broke any OotM records or became World Champion, but I took away a greater prize than a trophy.”
I BECAME A THINKER.”



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Max Mansfield Memorial Award Winner Announced

Maine is this year's award winner for membership growth. They have added new teams in the hundreds this year.

Association Director Fern Brown believes the value of Odyssey is indescribable, "I cannot tell you how many students have been transformed by the experience of being part of this remarkable program. For us, extending the benefits of Odyssey to more students is imperative, especially in light of current educational initiatives that can sometimes leave creative kids without adequate outlets."

Fern credits these inspired participants for helping to grow the program, "We offer an awareness session to those who ask about Odyssey, and send a current or former team member along for it – they are the best ambassadors!"

She believes being diligent about following up on leads from current and past years is important as well, "We continue to offer our support after the initial contact and pride ourselves on being great communicators."

Maintaining good communication with current and past interested parties has led to a 36% increase in membership growth for this program year and a 70% growth from the previous year.

"If I ask someone who taught them the Pythagorean theorem, they might not know, but the Odyssey 'alums' always tell you the name of their problem, the character they portrayed, and what

Odyssey meant to them. We attribute this growth to parents and teachers who now want to share their treasured Odyssey memories with their kids or students."

Fern, co-AD Elise Copeland, and the Maine board have worked hard to ensure that the association maintains high standards in growing the program, "Winning this award is validation of the efforts made over the past 12 years. We started with a handful of people committed to keeping Odyssey in Maine; their passion has resulted in our becoming the largest creative problem-solving program in the state. Being Max Mansfield Award winners puts us in the company of other successful recipients, all of whom exemplify teamwork at its finest."

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

Max 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. Max would also be proud that Maine is still growing, he owned a cabin in Maine for many years.



Great
Minds

THE TRAVELING MATHEMATICIAN

Paul Erdős dedicated his life to problem-solving. The subject that drove him was math; everything else was secondary: he had no home, no set job, and no property. Everything he owned could fit inside a suitcase, which stayed mostly packed, as he traveled around the world to solve and pose math problems. He was known to visit fellow mathematicians and, eager to work, say, "My mind is open."

Erdős was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1913. His parents were math teachers and they recognized his gift when he was very young. He received a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Budapest, entering at age 17 and graduating only four years later. He made his first important mathematical discovery at just 20 years old.

Erdős went on to become one of the most prolific mathematicians in the world, with over 1,400 published papers and hundreds of collaborators. He also created the field of discrete mathematics, which laid the foundation for today's computer technology.

Erdős, with all of his eccentricities, was easily accepted into colleagues' home because he offered them plenty of new and

challenging problems — and methods for solving them. Many were co-authors on his works because he emphasized teamwork and believed math should be a social subject.

The same goes for his work in universities around the world. Erdős was so respected that many prestigious universities allowed him to lecture for a few months, receive payment for his work, and move on. His appearances were irregular and he had no formal arrangements with any school.

He was known to fly to as many as 15 places in one month lecturing, attending math conferences, and visiting and working with fellow mathematicians. Even at 83, he still spent most of his time traveling and working on problems until his death in 1996.

Erdős touched the lives of so many mathematicians that they invented the term "Erdős number" to boast a connection with him. If someone co-authored a paper with Erdős, they would have an Erdős number of one. If they worked with someone else, that person would be a two, and so on.

According to his obituary published on the first page of the *New York Times*, 458 people had an Erdős number of one; an additional 4,500 had an Erdős number of two. The highest number is 12, but there are very few high numbers because Erdős worked with so many people around the world.

Paul Erdős understood that math was key to understanding the world around us. He also inspired others by encouraging teamwork, and he helped to financially support budding mathematicians in order to solve as many math problems as possible. A friend and fellow mathematician called him "the prince of problem solvers and the absolute monarch of problem posers."

2012-13 Long-Term Problem Synopses*

**Tentative as of April 20, 2012. All problems have an 8-minute time limit.*

Problem 1: Pet Project

The problem is to design, build, and run three vehicles that will deliver parts to an Assembly Area. The team will create a signal that lets the audience know which vehicle is about to travel and deliver a part. The parts will be assembled into a pet animal. Once assembly is completed, the animal will perform a trick. The theme of the presentation must include the delivery of the parts, the assembly, and the pet animal.

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

Problem 2: The Email Must Go Through

The team's problem is to create and present an original performance that includes a technical representation of messages being sent by email. A Sender character will send three emails: one that requires a return receipt, one with a work of art as an attachment, and one that goes through a SPAM filter. Two of the emails will go to a Receiver character and another will go to an offbeat location. Each email will pass through a central server before reaching its final destination. Team members are not allowed to touch the emails while the server is processing the messages.

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

Problem 3: Classics . . . ARTchitecture: The Musical

For this problem, teams will create and present an original performance that includes a replica of a documented architectural structure that was built between 1,000 AD and 1,600 AD. The performance will include three works of art that "disappear" and two characters that go on a quest to find them. When the works of art are found, they will be incorporated into the replica. The performance must also include two songs that are accompanied by some type of choreographed movement.

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

Problem 4: Tumble-wood

Teams will design and build a structure made of only balsa wood and glue that will balance and support as much weight as possible. Before weight placement begins, the team will present a commercial that includes the structure rolling down a ramp. The structure will be scored for how far it rolls and for how much weight it holds. The team will integrate the placement of the weights into the performance.

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

Problem 5: It's How You Look at It



The problem is to create and present an original humorous performance that includes two characters that act naturally — to them — but odd to those around them. One scene will establish the "normal" behavior of one character that, at some point in the performance, finds itself among others who react to the out-of-place behavior. The other character's behavior will stand out too, but this character will end up in a setting where its odd behavior is considered normal. The performance will also include a meter that indicates the degree of odd/normal behavior and a creative scene change. **Sponsored by NASA.**

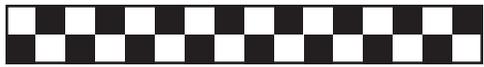
Divisions: I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: \$125.

Primary Problem: Top Sea-cret Discoveries

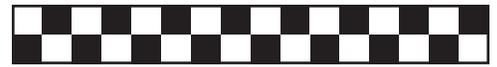
The problem is to create and present a performance that includes exploring the ocean and making discoveries. Along the way, they will encounter three different types of sea life and a humorous Captain character. Teams will also create an original reason for the ocean's waves and make a silly discovery that they have to help keep secret.

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

COACHES & OFFICIALS PROBLEM



Pit Crew



A. The Problem

Your problem is to build a vehicle that will travel a course and return to where it started to break a balloon as quickly as possible. During its trip, the vehicle will be stopped by a Pit Crew where it will change its tires, add a balloon-breaking device, and send it to the balloon.

B. Limitations

1. The vehicle must:
 - a. be original, however, it may include commercially produced parts.
 - b. not run on electricity (AC or DC).
 - c. be self-contained (nothing external to the vehicle can be used to help it travel in any way at any time).
 - d. fit within a taped 8" x 16" area when measured from any orientation (front, side, upside down, etc.).
 - e. have at least four wheels.
 - f. travel with its wheels touching the floor at all times.
 - g. have two different sets of wheels. Each set must be identifiably different (color, size, etc).
 - h. carry a breaking device added by the Pit Crew.
 - i. be safe in its design and use. It must not include anything that can harm yourself or others and must not be able to damage the floor. If it is judged to pose potential harm to anyone or the competition site, it will be prohibited. See *2011-12 Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide* pages 39-40.
2. The team must:
 - a. have one "driver" that will release the vehicle from the behind the Start Line.
 - b. have one or two "pit crew" members that will be in the Pit Area and perform the Pit Crew's duties.
3. The Pit Crew's duties include:
 - a. stopping the vehicle once it crosses the Pit Area line.
 - b. replacing the vehicle's wheels. All of the wheels on the vehicle must be replaced by the second set. The wheels are the only part of the vehicle that can be removed.
 - c. adding the breaking device that will pop the balloon. The only sharp objects allowed on the device are pins, nails and/or screws. It can include a **maximum** of 3 of these combined. The balloon-breaking device is the only thing that may be added to the vehicle other than the new tires.
 - d. releasing the vehicle back to the finish line.

C. The Competition*

1. You will be assigned a number and have your vehicle measured when you register at the competition site.
2. After you receive your number, you will take a seat until the judges direct you otherwise.
3. Then, you will line up according to number and place your vehicle behind the taped Start Line. The Pit Crew will stand inside the Pit Area across from the Start Line.
4. There will be a balloon taped to the floor next to your taped Start Line. This is the balloon the vehicle will try to break on its return.
5. The race:
 - a. A judge will blow a whistle to indicate when to release the vehicles. The vehicle must be released behind the Start Line next to the balloon. Once the vehicle is released, the drivers will move behind the wood barrier behind the Start Line.
 - b. When the vehicle crosses the Pit Area line, the Pit Crew will stop the vehicle, change its wheels, add the balloon-popping device, and release it back to the Finish Line. The Pit Crew is allowed to prepare the vehicle for travel (for example wind springs, turn a crank, etc.)
 - c. The vehicle will travel back to the Finish Line and attempt to pop the balloon.
 - d. The race ends when the first three balloons are broken in the final heat. If no balloons are broken, the first three cars that cross the Start Area line on the return will win.

D. Awards

1. Trophies will be awarded to the teams that finish the race 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.
2. In the event of a tie, the audience will choose the winner through applause. Bring your cheering section!
3. A trophy will be awarded to the person with the most outstanding STYLE. In this problem, Style will be the appearance of the vehicle, driver, and Pit Crew.

*For course layout visit:

www.odysseyofthemind.com/wf2012





ODYSSEY OF THE MIND® 2012-13 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 per division 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, one newsletter subscription, and more!*

- _____ **Individual 2012-2013 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 @ \$17** tips on problem-solving
- _____ ****Creative Interaction @ \$17** Discusses the importance of interaction between students.....
- _____ ****Applying Your Creativity @ \$15** Discusses different types of human creativity
- _____ ****The Spirit of Creativity @ \$15** Anecdotes about OotM written by Dr. Sam.
- _____ **Spontaneous Combustion @ \$7.50** Booklet of problems and tips
- _____ **Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ \$7.50** (one is included with membership)
- _____ **Coaches Training Video @ \$20** DVD with tips and techniques for coaches
- _____ **packs of Balsa Wood** (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ \$20 per 50 pieces

Subtotal _____

S & H _____

Total _____

** Spend \$40 or more and get free Shipping & Handling. Orders under \$40, add \$7.50 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.*

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**

____ VISA ____ MasterCard ____ American Express ____ Discover

Acct. no. _____

Exp. _____ CVV (security) Code _____

Signature of cardholder _____

SHIPPING ADDRESS (For UPS Delivery)

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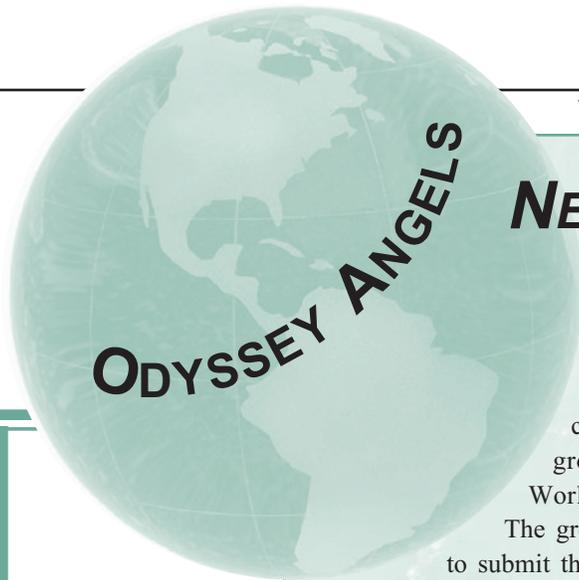
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*Hey Teams,
It's that time again! Renew your
membership now and be one of the first
to get next year's long-term problems.
Your friend,
OMER*

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



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

The Odyssey Angels program is in its final, and most difficult, stage: selecting the group that will attend World Finals.

The groups had until April 1st to submit their project details. They were asked to explain their idea, detail what they did to achieve their goal, and the overall progress. They were also asked to list a reference from the community.

Of course, the groups can continue their work after the deadline—the date is in place simply to give the Odyssey

Angel panel time to read about all of the great work that has been done in communities worldwide.

During this time, it will choose one group that it considers to be not only creative, but beneficial to the community. Up to five representatives of that group will be invited to World Finals as special guests and be able to present its experiences at the Creativity Festival.

The panel will be looking for projects that:

- Found something to fix within their community that others may not have noticed.
- Devised a creative way to attempt to fix it.
- Used teamwork.
- Helped others!

And much like judging in Odyssey of the Mind, those projects that utilize creative thinking will be given more weight than simply the best outcome. We hope that teams will continue their projects after the deadline to help those in need.

Anyone interested in forming a group can start now for next program year. Enrollment will begin July 1, 2012 and continue until the end of the year. Be on



the lookout for areas in need!

Visit www.odysseyangels.org in the coming months to see the results or to learn more.

Good luck to all groups! Everyone that participated in the program is truly a champion, however, the communities that were helped because of your good deeds are the ultimate winners.



There's
a way to do it
better —

FIND IT."

~ Thomas Edison
American Inventor