



# Odyssey of the Mind

# Newsletter

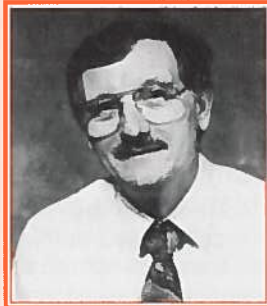
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## DAN SEMENZA MOUNTS NEW POSITION: OM STRUCTURE PROBLEM CAPTAIN

When seasoned OMers think of the OM balsa wood structure problem, Dr. Fred Bradley's name comes to mind immediately. The sole person to serve in this capacity, Dr. Bradley assumed this position when it was created in 1983. His attention to detail and love of working with students at all levels set this particular Odyssey of the Mind problem as a showcase event at many tournaments.



Dr. Bradley retired this year. While we lament his departure, we are pleased that we can fill his (rather large) shoes with our newest OM Problem Captain, Dan Semenza. Dan, a graduate of Trenton State College in New Jersey, currently teaches middle school computer science and is a long-time coach of OM teams.

Dan first became interested in OM when his wife Josephine took him to see the Leonardo da Vinci spring car at a regional tournament in 1983. Like most folks, he has been "hooked" on OM ever since.

He judged and worked as an assistant coach at Woodrow Wilson Middle School until 1987, when he became the OM coach. In Dan's seven years at Woodrow Wilson, he has coached almost two hundred teams. Dan's teams won thirteen NJ OM association championships—with different teams winning first-place positions in each of the five OM problems.

In the past five years, Dan's Woodrow Wilson teams have placed seven times at the OM World Finals,

*continued on page 2*

## OM HONORED WITH CREATIVITY AWARD

On November 5, 1993, the Creativity Division of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) will bestow the 1993 E. Paul Torrance Award for Creativity on Odyssey of the Mind. Dr. Sam Micklus will accept the honor on behalf of Odyssey of the Mind. This prestigious award represents the organization's commendation and admiration for the important contributions that the Odyssey of the Mind program has made to the field of creativity.



## OM BEGINS THIRD YEAR IN GERMANY

As the 1993-94 membership year unfolds, OM marks its third year in Germany. From its humble beginnings in May, 1991, when the first German team of Helmholtz and Humbolt-Helmholtz attended the World Finals competition in Knoxville, to its presence as Germany International, Germany has fostered a greater OM presence in Europe.

What sparked this growth? In 1991, an OM team from Germany attended the 12th Annual OM World Finals with little time to prepare its presentation. There was no regional or national competition in Germany in that year, as OM was just getting underway.

However, at that same time, other interested German schools from Potsdam, Frankfurt/Oder and Dortmund decided to join the Odyssey of the Mind for the 1991-92 school year. In addition, OMers from the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) in Southern Germany indicated that they were interested in competing with their German friends.

In April, 1992, a few teams representing these memberships competed in an OM Potsdam "Festival." Even a team from Dallas, Texas, attended this "tournament" as did a team from a Polish college in Raziborz.

Through the efforts of the festival organizers, Germany OM began to establish its presence on the European continent. In September, 1992, a new OM association was chartered: Germany OM International. This newly chartered OM association was open to both national and international schools operating in Germany.

A short time later, an OM European Organizing Committee (OMEOC) was established to provide support and services to OM participants in Europe. This group had substantial financial and logistical support from the Berlin-Brandenburg Association for International Affairs (BBAG) in Potsdam.

The first OM European Festival in March, 1992, was sponsored by the Russians in Chelyabinsk. Teams from Poland and Germany joined the Russian teams. In April, 1993, OMEOC sponsored a European Festival in Potsdam, Germany. Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan,

*continued on page 4*

## ***FIND YOURSELF IN THE 1993 OM WORLD FINALS VIDEO YEARBOOK!!!***

"I challenge anybody who was there to prove they aren't in the current, sixty-minute 1993 *OM World Finals Video Yearbook*," says OM Video Producer, Ned Eckhardt. "You might only be a cheering speck in the audience in a wide shot of Cole Fieldhouse, or trading pins in the background while a team was being interviewed during check-in at Tyser Tower, or standing with your team in the half-mile-long line waiting to march in the Hat, Float and Banner Contest, or waiting in the staging area while an OM video crew was taping another performance, but you're in there, somewhere!"

This year, OM had two official video crews documenting the four days of competition. The crews shot 32 hours of videotape, interviewed over 60 teams, recorded portions of 53 problem solutions, and even spent a day in Washington, D.C., taping OMer and some of his D.C. friends as they took in the historic sights.

OM's video crews are full-time video professionals who shoot with state-of-the-art equipment. They love their annual challenge of recording all of the excitement and fun of the World Finals. One crew has been covering the World Finals since 1986! If you saw one of the video crews in their black T-shirts, then the chances are great you were captured on tape.

This year's *World Finals Video Yearbook* has over 1400 edits in it. Jennifer Devine, OM's "official" video tour guide, hosts her fourth World Finals "video yearbook" and manages to pop up in some of the strangest places. OM uses special music, recorded just for *Odyssey of the Mind* by composer Dan Lessner. There is an excerpt from the *NBC Nightly News With Jane Pauly* report that featured a story on this year's World Finals.

Besides enjoying the *1993 OM World Finals Video Yearbook* as a living documentation of a spectacular event, you might also be able to use the tape—or excerpts from the tape—in a number of ways that can help you and others learn more about OM. Often, the video yearbook is used to:

- recruit new OMers
- help convince a potential sponsor to get involved
- provide a school with an interesting assembly program
- be the centerpiece of an OM party!
- help explain the OM World Finals to school administrators and supporters

The *1993 OM World Finals Video Yearbook* captures all of the scheduled events, as well as showcasing the wide variety of people, teams, competitions, and off-beat happenings that make the World Finals so unique. For all the OMers who attended the World Finals, you now have the memory preserved in pictures and sound forever.

*continued on page 5*

## **PROBLEM CLARIFICATIONS FOR ALL PROBLEMS**

Coaches and non-performing long-term team members are encouraged to take items not required for the presentation of the team's solution with them when leaving the pre-staging/staging area. If the team leaves ANY items in the pre-staging/staging area for more than 3 minutes after the team has been told to move props from pre-staging to the staging area or after time begins, no penalty will be assessed. However, if necessary, after three minutes judges will move items out of the pre-staging/staging area. Although they will take care in doing so, no allowances will be made for any damage that occurs as a result.

### **MINI TERRAIN VEHICLE**

1. The vehicles must run one at a time.
2. B. Limitations, 4a, must travel on the competition surface, prohibits the use of a hovercraft.
3. Teams may not dim the lights for their presentations.
4. Items to be scored for style that judges have determined as having outside assistance connected to them will not receive a penalty, but will not be scored.
5. In Task #8, the Tipper board will be approximately ½" thick, 2 feet wide and 4 feet long. The fulcrum will be made of a rod approximately ½" in diameter and the top of the fulcrum will stand approximately 5 and ½ inches high.

### **OM-BELIEVABLE MUSIC**

1. Items to be scored for style that judges have determined as having outside assistance connected to them will not receive a penalty, but will not be scored.
2. There is no set amount of space required surrounding the concert area. If you must know the dimensions, contact your tournament director. Be aware that the amount of space may change from tournament to tournament.
3. For OM purposes, a commercially produced instrument is one which is not made by the team members.

### **SET IT FREE**

1. Teams may not dim the lights for their presentations.

### **DAN SEMENZA** *(continued from page 1)*

capturing four third-place and three second-place positions. (The trophies sit proudly in the overflowing Woodrow Wilson Middle School showcase.)

In addition to OM tournaments, Dan enters teams that compete in several other national and state contests. Woodrow Wilson student competitors in these meets won twelve state championships and a national title as well.

Another OM activity includes a two-year commitment as NJ OM's co-director from 1991-93. Under his leadership, NJ OM membership increased by 22 percent and developed a strong bond with local IBM personnel.

Josephine Weber Semenza, a math teacher at J.P. Stevens High School in Edison, NJ, has coached and judged OM since 1982. In the last six years, J.P. Stevens has won seven OM state championships. Like Dan, Josephine also has captured numerous state championships in other academic competitions. Both Jo and Dan plan to retire and move to sunny Florida in the coming year.



## “Inside Assistance”

Rich Safris, a long-term, dedicated OM coach, has coached many teams that moved up to compete in the OM World Finals. These teams have placed as second- and third-place champions. Rich is particularly proud of the one team he coached that won a Ranatra Fusca Award at World.

With this experience, Rich developed some tools for coaching that this editor feels might be useful for new—and veteran—OM coaches. One of these is called an “inside assistance” form

Rich’s inside assistance form *supplements* the existing—and official—OM Outside Assistance Form. He uses it with his OM team when he discusses outside assistance. It states, in part:

*When this team is finished with this problem, we will be able to proudly say, “This solution is ours!” Because, during the process of solving the problem, we will rely totally on brain power. We do not need outside assistance from anyone. We may become frustrated with the problem, we may become angry with one another, and because the problem is difficult, we may have to start over if our solutions don’t work. But through it all, we will stay a team, we will do our own work, and we will use inside assistance to the fullest.*

*We may ask our coaches for help in learning how to brainstorm. We may ask our fathers, mothers, or others how to use certain tools. We may learn how to act from workshops, mentors or books. And we will certainly fix any parts of our solutions that break, by ourselves. And, because we are using inside assistance, no one will need to brainstorm solutions for us, build our props or equipment for us, or run tools for us that we are unable to use. No one will help us, not our teachers, not our coaches, not our parents, and not even our friends. We will use our own inside brain power to write our script or skit and design our solutions. When we finish, it will be all ours. And it will be great.*

*Yes. We can do it by ourselves because we are a GREAT TEAM, and as a team we will reject any outside assistance if it is offered. Instead, we will use only inside assistance in solving this problem.*

**The team members would all sign this form. Then, it is the coach’s (or the parents’) turn to verify that s/he will stand by the same rules:**

*I, as a coach (parent), understand that this team is proud to problem solve themselves, and that I am not a member of this team when it comes to actually solving the problem. I know that this team is a proud, skilled team that is going to rely only on **inside assistance** to reach a solution.*

In addition, Rich provides some guidance for “team building”—tips for both coaches and team members:

### For Coaches:

- Respect is the key element of team building: your team members do not have to like each other but they must respect each other.
- Teach methods of positive criticism.

- Work every session on spontaneous problem solving. Keep score. Try to engender pride in their increasing skill level.
- Find reasons to celebrate together—birthdays, finishing a portion of the problem, Grandmother’s Day, Ground Hog Day. It doesn’t matter what the subject is, it does matter that they have fun together.
- Allow them time to be children. If the team is not having fun working on the problem, then there is probably something wrong. Find it and fix it. Be very careful that it is not you.
- Decompress at the beginning or end of each session. What went well, and what we need to accomplish next.
- Understand and expect that some work sessions just aren’t going to work as expected, so go with the flow. You may be surprised at what’s down the stream in some of these sessions.
- Discipline? Let the team do it themselves whenever possible.
- Get some kind of team shirt, hat, mascot.
- Picnics, dumpster raids, buying trips, pizza parties, joys and sorrows are to be shared by all team members.
- Remember that kids are people too. Give them their space to have good and bad days.

### For team members:

Teamwork is...

- Recognizing your own capabilities.
- Recognizing that often, silence is not golden.
- Making your communications sincere.
- Asking for help when you need it.
- Accepting what cannot be changed.
- Being honest with yourself and others.
- Being sensitive to others’ feelings.
- Respecting the skills and opinions of others.
- Learning from the past, working in the present, thinking about the future.

Finally, Rich reminds his team that there are certain definitions\* that need reminding, not redefining:

**TEAM** (tēm) 1. one or more animals harnessed to the same vehicle. 2. A group of people working and/or playing together. 3. To harness the power of multiple elements. 4. To bring forth. 5. To join in cooperative activity. 6. To harness or yoke together. 7. To pull or draw out.

**TEAMWORK** (tēm wūrĕk) 1. a joint action by a group of people, in which each person subordinates his or her individual interests and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group. 2. Coordinated effort. 3. Work done by or with a team.

**WORK** (wūrĕk) 1. Bodily or mental effort. 2. Purposeful activity. 3. To exert oneself in order to do or make something. 4. To bring about. 5. To mold, shape or form. 6. To draw, paint, or carve. 7. To cause. 8. To ferment.

\* **Note:** Definitions taken from Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1962. These are not the complete definitions. Portions are excerpted.





# SPOTLIGHT




*Spotlight on...*  
**Patricia Swanson**  
**Maryland OM**  
**Association Director**

Who is Pat Swanson? A teacher/administrator in Prince George's County who has looked at education from many vantage points. For 23 years Pat instructed students in grades 5-12. In the last five years, the position of Talented and Gifted Specialist/Interdisciplinary Studies for Middle Schools has kept her very busy. In this same time period, she has led Maryland OM as Association Director. This past year she was also elected secretary to the OM Association Directors' Advisory Board

Pat was well prepared for the job of Association Director, since she held a position on the MD OM Board of Directors since the organization received its OM charter in September, 1982. Under her leadership, the Maryland Odyssey of the Mind program has grown from 215 members to 310—a steady, manageable growth for this "eastern shore" state.

Prior to assuming the position at Maryland OM's helm, Pat worked with OM teams as a coach (three first-place balsa wood teams at state), served as a judge for many levels of competition—including World Finals—and managed the responsibilities of an MD OM regional director.

"An ongoing concern of mine has been the quality and level of coaching and judging," Pat says. "One of my goals has been to work with our board and judging coordinators to improve both the level of consistency and fairness of judges. Yearly, we have refined the judges training and made believers of the full-day training school-of-thought."

MD OM offers both basic and advanced coaches training workshops to its members, teaching brainstorming as an integral part of the process.

Pat compliments her co-workers declaring, "The board's commitment to an excellent program is evident by the number of years they continue to serve and by the level of involvement and their attendance record at our board meetings. We have run a program with as few costs to students as possible in order to reach as many of Maryland's young people as possible with OM's life-long, usable skills. It's gratifying—and downright fun—to work with these good people who give so much of themselves."

Pat is married to her husband of 35 years, Roland, a retired instrumental music teacher. His new careers include stained glass artisan and OM judge. Pat is also a mother to three talented children, now grown, and two wonderful grandchildren. When she finds the time, Pat enjoys gardening, reading and traveling. She recently returned from a trip to Scotland, Wales and England.

## *Briefly Speaking*

The Board of Directors met on June 27, 1993. At that meeting, the minutes from the meeting on June 6 were approved. Highlights of that meeting follow:

- The membership report showed OM membership totals for 1992-93 at 11,511. Total US memberships were 11,123; Canada's share was 172; other associations claimed 193; and there were 18 unaffiliated members—not part of a chartered association.
- Activities of the Friends of OM, directed towards soliciting new members outside the country, are now focusing on identifying potential OM members outside of Europe. The Odyssey of the Mind European Organizing Committee (OMEOC) will concentrate on growth in Europe.
- An OMEOC spokesperson reported that 180 OM teams competed at various levels in 1992-93. Twenty-five teams participated in the European Festival.
- The Odyssey of the Mind Association Directors' Advisory Board (OMADAB) President, Nancy Wingenbach, gave a report to the board on OMADAB activities and presented recommendations to the board.

### **GERMANY BEGINS** *(Continued from page 1)*

Poland and Russia took part in a memorable event and social gathering in Potsdam, a town celebrating its millennium.

In 1993-94, Germany International expects the number of OM member schools—from both the German and American pool—to increase. New members from Berlin, the capital, are expected to join OM. With this anticipated increase in membership, for the first time, Germany International will host two regional competitions. One will be held near the Germany-Poland border, giving Germany International the opportunity to invite Polish friends to this competition and to spread the idea of OM throughout the Western regions of Poland. To continue its promotion of OM, Germany International is preparing an exhibition of the Odyssey of the Mind and its development in Germany. It will be shown this fall at the regional parliament in Potsdam and at the International Children's Center in Berlin.

OMEOC invites teams from the United States to participate in the European Festival, currently scheduled for April 18-22, 1994, in Berlin, Germany. Although American teams must pay their own transportation, room and board will be provided by their German hosts. Participation of Americans in this festival — with an added week of educational programming in Germany — will allow the German teams to receive support from their government to attend the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in June, 1994. Interested teams should write to OM Headquarters, PO Box 547, Glassboro, NJ 08028, for more information.

## WHERE'S THE CREATIVITY?

"There's nothing creative about solving that problem; it's all luck," said the despondent OMer about his spontaneous problem.

"Nothing but luck? How can you say that?" responded his cunning counterpart after the competition.

"Are you saying that you had no control over your score?" Her stare compelled him to answer.

"Well... That's not what I meant to say, but... yeah. There was no creativity involved. I didn't have to think."

"That's strange because when I first heard the problem a thousand ideas crossed my mind."

"Name one!" he demanded.

She took a deep breath and responded in the rapid style of a spontaneous problem-solver. "Okay. Where should I place the ramp? How high should I make it? Where should I start the ball on the ramp? When should I roll the bonus ball? Should I take easy points of a low value or take a chance and go for the higher scores even though they are harder? Which team member would..."

"Okay, okay, I just asked for one."

"I'm sorry, I just couldn't understand your point of view."

"I guess I meant that there was no 'back door' solution to give me a high score" he said.

"All I know is no-one told our team how to solve the problem and we did. In fact we did it very well. Maybe what happened was that you were trying to use creativity to avoid the challenge rather than to develop a system to produce a good score. Remember, OM is about creative **problem-solving**. Without trying to solve the problem you aren't properly using your creativity."

Where is the creativity? Sometimes team members have difficulty recognizing how to apply it in a particular problem. Hands-on spontaneous problems provide the most confusion in this area.

At the 1993 World Finals, a hands-on problem required one team member to position an object while team members used materials to make ramps. They then rolled various balls down the ramps so they ricocheted off an object and into scoring areas. This was the problem the two competitors discussed above. A team member was allowed to reposition the object after each of the other team members rolled a ball from their particular area. The problem developers designed the scoring areas and shape of the object to provide many options to a team. Placing the object in one particular position might enable one or two team members to easily receive a high score, while the other team members would have difficulty getting a good score. Moving the object slightly provides everyone the possibility of a high score, but the risk is far greater. By using different balls at different times a team could maximize its success because some rolled farther and some ricocheted harder. By adjusting the ramps and placement of the balls on them the velocity and angle of each ball's travel could be manipulated.

Team members thinking, *how can we change the problem?* would have been frustrated because the

challenge required the use of a specific method to solve the problem. Some felt it did not allow them to use their creativity. Because it emphasized the use of strategy, the type of creativity involved might have been unfamiliar. The creativity was in strategy, risk-taking, teamwork and use of practice time. Ignoring the possibilities and strategy, a team would not produce the best possible solutions to that problem.

In this problem's limitations, there was no loophole that would allow a team to alter the challenge. Due to an increased need to eliminate loopholes through limitations, spontaneous problems are becoming more difficult to write, harder for the teams to understand and, ultimately, to solve.

An example of what can occur was recently displayed in a long-term problem, *Pit Stop*, where teams were to make a vehicle propelled by a jack. Believe it or not, OM actually had to make a clarification stating that a kid named Jack could not be the power source. I'm sure most teams thought of that possibility but realized that was not the **Spirit of the Problem**. For long-term problems, OM has the ability to respond to questions through clarifications. There is no such thing for a spontaneous problem.

All OM can rely upon to regulate spontaneous problems are limitations and the opinion of judges. Teams and coaches must realize that creativity does not have to be spectacular. If a person drops a paper behind a refrigerator and uses a wire to retrieve it, isn't that as good as or better than taking time and using unnecessary materials to build a device that would retrieve that same paper? In both cases creative problem solving took place. The quality of creativity may be questioned and because of that OM usually does not score for the level of creativity in hands-on spontaneous problems. In fact, if that were a spontaneous problem a team would receive score for retrieving the paper and not for the method it used.

OM wants to enhance creativity. However, creativity takes many forms. From developing systems that accomplish tasks to creating stories, OM tries to challenge participants to solve unique problems. Odyssey of the Mind should be fun and educational. It attempts to build a foundation in each person it touches that will lead him or her to recognize and solve problems while learning how to work with others within specific parameters. In OM, as in real life, solving the problem is the goal.



### YEARBOOK (Continued from page 2)

So, if you were there, you're in the video yearbook somewhere! In fact, you're probably in it twice... or three times...!! Think how much fun you'll have finding yourself.

Thank goodness for "pause" controls.

NOTE: The Odyssey of the Mind 1993 World Finals Yearbook costs \$50.00. It can be purchased from OM headquarters by sending a PO or check to World Finals Video Yearbook, OM Association, PO Box 547, Glassboro, NJ 08028. There are no shipping and handling charges for this item.



# FROM THE COACH'S CORNER

## RICK'S STORY

By Janet Jones, World Finals Judge  
and OM Feature Writer

Let's be frank. Just what have YOU heard about OM coaching? If you've heard anything at all, that's a plus! But you may have heard the same kinds of horror stories that plague expectant mothers. It is likely that you have been told how HARD coaching is, and how many hours it takes. Like the stories of giving birth and alligators in the sewers, there's some truth in the tales.

Why, with so many other demands on your time, should you consider letting your kid be on an OM team, let alone coaching one yourself? Why would a mature adult with a calendar full of other interests need that kind of self-inflicted abuse? Why, indeed?

Let me tell you a story, a true story. Rick's story. (Names changed to protect the creative.)

Once upon a time, there was a young man, fairly new in town. Despite obvious academic skills, he was very private and kept to himself both in school and out. One day, his "best acquaintance" was asked to be part of an Odyssey of the Mind team. A couple of additional students were needed to fill the remaining slots. And so the team, through the boy's friend, invited him on board.

During team meetings, he sat slightly apart from the others. (He might have moved his chair to a remote corner, except that would have been rude.) When spoken to, he responded, mostly in monosyllables and monotones. The coach, on more than one occasion, interrupted the rapidfire brainstorming of six team members to make sure the ideas of the seventh were drawn out. "Drawn out" was an understatement. The coach privately likened the boy to a ketchup bottle. You turn him upside down, shake, shake, shake — nothing. With a final "Thunk" at last, out plops an idea, and a very good one at that!

His ideas were good. His artwork was innovative. His spontaneous responses were above average. Yet he was overshadowed (and allowed himself to be) by his teammates. He flatly refused to be on the spontaneous team; therefore, he concentrated on improving his performance skills.

Throughout the months, Rick was dependable, cooperative and, largely, quiet. The team had successful competitions. Summer came, and soon, another OM season.

The coach committed (or should have been committed). Her own child brought home word from school: some team members would return, some would not. What about Rick? The coach ran into him at a neighbor's. So. What do you think? Want to do OM again?

To her amazement, the boy's eyes lit up and his voice became emphatic. "Oh, YES," he grinned. "I see how much I missed out on last year. And I want to do spontaneous!"

Rick did spontaneous that year. He also wrote the script for the team's long-term performance, and played the leading role. He produced dramatic, stylized artwork which became the team's insignia, featured on the membership sign and team shirts. For the second time in succession, his team went to the World Finals.

At the close of that season, Rick's mother spoke to the coach and expressed her gratitude to the OM program, which had been instrumental in building her son's confidence in his own abilities. "We can't believe how much he's changed!" she told the coach. "We can't believe how much he's changed."

Rick did not join an OM team the following year, choosing to concentrate on his academics. He went on to be a Student Council officer, graduated from high school with honors and is currently pursuing an architecture degree at an excellent university.

The coach, who had any number of good reasons to field OM teams, and any number of rewards, knew this: Any time she was asked why she invested the hours and energy that OM coaching demands, she thought of one child. The Ketchup-Bottle Kid. Rick.



## Membership Cut-Off Dates:

(as of 9/30/93)

AB 1/30/94	NC 12/15/93
AL 12/15/93	ND 12/10/93
AR 12/17/93	NE 12/1/93
AUSTRALIA (OPEN)	NH TBD
AZ 1/1/94	NJ 12/31/93
BC 1/1/94	NM 2/4/94
CA 1/10/94	NV 2/1/94
CHINA 12/31/93	NY 1/15/94
CO 2/15/94	OH 1/15/94
CT 1/15/94	OK 2/1/94
DC 1/10/94	OR 12/17/93
DODDS (OPEN)	PA 1/15/94
FL 1/30/94	RI 1/1/94
GERMANY INT'L (OPEN)	RUSSIA (OPEN)
IL 1/31/94	SC 3/1/94
IN 12/20/93	SD 12/15/93
KS 2/1/94	TN 12/0/93
MA 12/15/93	UT 2/5/94
MD 3/1/94	VA 2/15/94
ME 2/1/94	VT 1/15/94
MI 2/1/94	WA 1/21/94
MO 1/15/94	WI 12/20/93
MS 1/15/94	WV 1/15/94
MT 1/15/94	WY 1/15/94

## OM NOTES

- \* **Amy De Nike**, coach of Kingsville Elementary School in Kingsville, MD notes that the old saying, "life imitates art" is true in OM. She tells why:

*My team began their journey into 1993 OM by reading Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea. To read, understand, and come up with an analogy of the story seemed like an impossible task for seven 5th and 6th graders—just as catching that marlin seemed impossible for that fisherman in the novel.*

*As the weeks and months passed, the team felt nibbles and tugs on their creativity lines. Ideas flowed, the team struggled at points, but they never gave up. My team "reeled" in first-place wins at the county and state levels—even winning an Outstanding OMer Award along the way. They finally caught that "marlin."*

*As we traveled with excitement to the 1993 World Finals competition, we worked hard to hold on to that marlin. Along the way we developed a closeness as a team—the team not only being the seven team members and myself, but our families and friends as well. Our four-day stay at the World Finals was an experience we will treasure forever.*

*At the conclusion of the World Finals competition, that first marlin got away from us—but we fared as well as the fisherman in the book. We gained so much more—placing an outstanding 6th out of 51 teams and bringing back to our hometown something even more important. We brought self-respect, commitment, friendships—that will be in our hearts for a long time—and memories of a fabulous year in OM. The blisters on fingers from painting and hot gluing, the paint and glitter in hair, the hours of working on scenery and costumes, and the warmth in our hearts will serve as reminders of our very own journey with The Old Man and the Sea! Long live Hemingway!!!!*

- \* The Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, NJ, proudly displays a "Hoberdome" constructed by seniors from Delaware Valley High School in Milford, PA. Needless to say, these students were OMers who constructed the expandable dome from 1200 paint-stirring sticks.

The dome, which stretches from four to fourteen feet in diameter, was reviewed by Liberty Science Center personnel via videotape. After the PA OM association finals, the team sent the Center a tape of its performance. The result was that the president of LSC pronounced this as "the epitome of what kids can do."

The kids will be featured in the Center's fall publication called *Sphere*, which is sent to all Center members. Coaches **Susan Sewall** and **Scott Palermo** note that this was a wonderful way to mark the end of working with this OM group for the past seven years. (They all graduated in June 1993.) We agree.

- \* The *Bucks County Courier Times* and the *Yardley News* both published stories about the Russian OM teams and their post-World Finals visit with four OM host

families in Pennsylvania. No matter that the host families spoke no Russian and the Russians spoke no English, the language of hospitality was universal.

**Carol Biros**, a regional director from PA, who was instrumental in identifying the host families, also housed several Russian team members. Instead of stocking her pantry with foods she thought they might enjoy, she chose to take her company on a field trip to the local grocery store. There she asked them to select foods they wanted. (This would be a dangerous activity for most American moms! However, unlike their American counterparts, these students selected items like cauliflower, a vegetable available in Russia only two months of the year!)

Other group excursions included trips to the Oxford Valley and the Quaker Bridge Malls. Merchants there presented the OMers with some special gifts. Local owners of fast food chains also donated dinners for the special OM guests.

- \* Last April, **Dr. Sam Micklus** attend the Nebraska OM Association Finals to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of that association. Shortly after, the 93rd Legislators "recognized OM as a worthwhile, challenging educational competition to be encouraged and fostered in the future."



## NEW HIRE, JEFF WHITE, FILLS POSITION AT OM HEADQUARTERS



In August, 1993, a new employee joined the ranks of our OM Association Headquarters staff. Jeff White from Woodstown, NJ, is on board to help us more effectively manage the distribution of OM products and materials to members and directors.

In the true OM spirit, Jeff has helped in many ways—in areas that go well beyond his job description. (Just ask

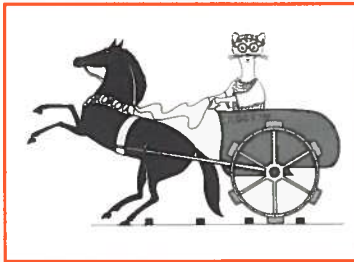
him about flood control, if you happen to speak to him on the telephone.) His willingness to tackle problems is best evidenced by his attitude and TNTT response—"There's nothing to this—just watch me!"

When Jeff is not helping to streamline inventory activities, he's coaching baseball or officiating midget football. His wife of eighteen years, Cathy, and his sons Mark, age 8, Stephen, age 11, and Daniel, age 14, keep him busy with their varied activities. When he finds some free time, he enjoys fishing, hunting and golf.



**Problem #1 (Divisions II, III and IV)****MTV (MINI TERRAIN VEHICLES)**

by Wayne R. Kehrli, International Problem Captain



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

with their vehicles, props and membership sign to enter the staging area. The team presents all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Cost Form (Divisions II and III), and any Problem Clarifications. The Staging Area Judge inspects the membership sign. The team is then asked to review each vehicle with the judge who will check the vehicle's size, the pins, and that the vehicle is self-contained. The judge will also check for potential floor damage and safety hazards. The team will identify which three vehicles will be scored in D.2 - "Creativity of the engineering of any three vehicles used." Additionally, the Staging Area Judge points out specific areas that relate to the task segments and answers any questions that the team may have. The Staging Area Judge will explain the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score and penalties. The Staging Area Judge will dismiss the non-performing team members and the coaches who may sit in designated chairs if provided. After this, no one may assist the five long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper is introduced to the team and then introduces the team to the audience.

When the Timekeeper says, "BEGIN," time begins and the team removes everything from the staging area and proceeds with the problem solution, including any setup required and Style. When the Timekeeper calls "TIME" at the end of eight minutes, the team must stop.

The team will attempt the tasks in order, one at a time. Style may be occurring before, during or after the tasks. Tasks that are not completed will receive zero points. Scoring of the long-term solution includes: creativity of the theme, creativity of the engineering of three vehicles, successfully finishing each segment, a bonus for the Curve, and a bonus for the Close Call.

This is a non-linguistic problem. (Division IV may use language.) Either at the end of eight minutes or before, if the team notifies the judges, the competition ends. Usually the judges will then meet with ALL team members to discuss their solution. It is the team's responsibility to bring materials to clean up any mess in order to leave the competition area clean and dry for the next team. The team and any assistants should quickly clear the area.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the Coach or the Division III or IV Team Captain the team's long-term raw score, including penalties but not Style, as soon as it is compiled.

**Problem #2 (Divisions I, II and III)****OM-BELIEVABLE MUSIC**

by Alice McRae, International Problem Captain



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

team members and the coach will proceed to the designated pre-staging area with all problem solutions, props, background scenery, membership sign, and any team-provided equipment. The team will present: two copies of its Style Form; a Cost Form; Outside Assistance Form; Problem Clarifications (if any); membership sign; two copies of a labeled drawing or diagram of its Concert Section layout identifying the five items cited in B.15 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge will check for clarity, pass the paperwork on to the rest of the judging team, and then answer any team questions. The Staging Area Judge will check for potential floor damage and safety hazards.

When the Staging Area Judge has completed his/her responsibilities and answered all team questions, the team and coach will be given three minutes to clear the pre-staging area, if used, and proceed to the staging area adjacent to the 10' x 10' Concert Section. Anyone may assist in this movement.

At this time a judge, in most cases the Timekeeper, will give a final explanation about the performance area, answer any additional questions, and then ask the non-performing team members and coach to leave the staging area. They may sit in their designated seats, if provided. After this, no one may assist the five performing long-term team members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Staging Area Judge will explain the procedures for obtaining the raw long-term score.

The Timekeeper will introduce the team to the audience. When the Timekeeper says, "BEGIN," time begins and the team moves everything to the competition site. The team then has eight minutes for set-up, Style, and problem solution. If no pre-staging area is used, the team must clear the staging area within three minutes after time begins.

Both the 10' x 10' Concert Section and the 3' x 3' Conductor Area will be taped. While both the recital and illustrations must occur inside the Concert Section, attachments, guides, etc. connected to, or near, the musical devices and/or illustrations may extend outside the Section. The Conductor may not touch the floor outside the 3' x 3' area, although electrical cords may. For Division I, the illustrations may appear at any time during the performance, while for Divisions II and III, they must appear during the recital time.



At the end of eight minutes, the Timekeeper will call "TIME" and the team must stop. When time is called, or before, if the team indicates completion of presentation the judges will meet with ALL team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or for demonstrations, then indicate to the team to quickly remove their solution. It is the team's responsibility to bring materials to clean up the competition area in order to leave it clean and dry for the next team.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the Coach or Division III Team Captain the team's long-term raw score, including penalties, but not Style, as soon as it is compiled.

### Problem #3 (Divisions I, II, III and IV)

#### **THE ILIAD**

by Rita Sleeman, International Problem Captain



At some tournaments a pre-staging area may be designated outside the performance room. When the team is called by the Staging Area Judge, approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled time, all team members and the coach will proceed to the designated pre-staging area with all problem solutions, props, background scenery,

membership sign and any team-provided equipment. The team will present two copies of its Style Form, A Cost Form, Outside Assistance Form and Problem Clarifications(s), if any. The team will also inform the Staging Area Judge (1) which scene (B.4.a.-h.) they have selected, (2) which god or goddess is to be scored in D.7. and (3) which work of art is to be scored in D.5. and 6. The Staging Area Judge will also verify the name of the god or goddess to be scored in the mandatory style category #1. The Staging Area Judge will check for potential floor damage and safety hazards. The Staging Area Judge will explain the procedure for receiving the raw long-term score.

When the Staging Area Judge has completed his/her responsibilities and answered all team questions, the team and coach will be given three minutes to clear the pre-staging area, if used, and proceed to the staging area adjacent to the 7' x 10' performance area. Anyone may assist in this movement.

At this time a judge, in most cases the Timekeeper, will give a final explanation about the performance area, answer any additional questions and then ask the non-performing team members and coach to leave the staging area. They may sit in their designated seats, if provided. After this, no one may assist the five performing long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed.

The Timekeeper will introduce the team to the

audience. When the Timekeeper says "BEGIN," the eight-minute time limit will begin and the team will proceed with its setup, Style and long-term presentation. If a team wants the 4' x 5' panels moved or removed, the five long-term team members must do so during the eight-minute time limit. In Division I, if the panels are determined to be too heavy for team members to move, the Staging Area Judge will explain the procedure that is being used for their movement, generally by a judge prior to the timed performance. Plugging in an extension cord and, if available at the facility, turning lights on and off are part of the time limit.

If no pre-staging area is used the team must clear the staging area within three minutes after time begins.

The team should be prepared to indicate to the judge when its performance is finished. If the team requires more than eight minutes, judges will assess a penalty, however, time will not be called. The Timekeeper's time is the official time and no other time will be considered.

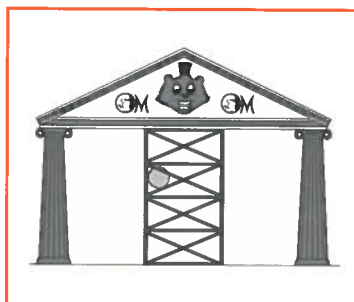
At the conclusion of the performance, the judges will look at the background scenery, works of art, and/or props and ask ALL the team members questions about their solution. The judges will inform the team members when they may move out of the presentation area. The team must replace the two 4' x 5' panels to their original position (unless Division I and the judges moved them) and clean up all remaining debris.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the coach or Division III or IV Team Captain the team's long-term raw score including penalties, but not Style, as soon as it is compiled.

### Problem #4 (Divisions I, II, III and IV)

#### **SET IT FREE**

by Dan Semenza, International Problem Captain



Prior to the scheduled time to compete, one or more team members will bring their structure to the weigh-in site. A Weigh-in Judge will weigh the structure, make appropriate measurements for thickness of wood, and check for artificial

strengthening. Penalties will be noted at that time. A team member will place the ping-pong ball inside the structure and a judge will measure it to assure it is at least five inches above the base of the structure and not touching the test cylinder. If appropriate, the team may make corrections at this time. After filling out the weigh-in sheet, the Weigh-in Judge may tag and store the structure until approximately 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time of competition. If structures are stored, only team members(s) can pick up the structure and carry it to the testing site. The coach and remaining team members will report to the test site 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time with the props, membership sign, and anything else

needed for the long-term solution.

At the staging area, the Staging Area Judge will remove the weigh-in check list and direct the team to take the structure from the container. The Cost Form, Outside Assistance Form and Problem Clarifications, if any, will be collected and sent to the scoring table. Two Style Forms go to the Style Judges. They are informed whether style will continue after the structure is crushed. The coach and all seven team members should be present in the staging area while the judge goes through a list of procedures and answers questions they may have. The props will be checked for possible safety hazards and to see if they may cause damage to the site. The team is reminded that they have three minutes to clear the staging area of all items after time begins. The coach is told where the score may be obtained after the long-term solution. After this is completed, the coach and non-performing team members will be directed to leave the staging area and will be informed if special seats have been placed for them. They may not assist in any way from this point on. In Division I, an adult may assist in the placement of weights of 25 pounds or more. At least one team member must be physically involved in the placement of these weights. If an adult assistant is used, he or she must be identified in the staging area and remain with the team throughout the long-term solution. When all is ready, the Staging Area Judge will direct the team's attention to the Timekeeper. The Timekeeper will introduce the team to the audience. When the Timekeeper says "BEGIN," the team will have eight minutes for site set-up, style presentation, and weight placement.

The only people allowed inside the testing area during the competition are the five team members and the judges, and in Division I, the adult assistant. Style may take place before, during, and after the structure breaks.

Weight placement will end if the weight stack COMES TO REST against the safety pipe; Style may continue. COMPETITION will end when (1) the team calls, "Time," or (2) the eight-minute time limit for the competition has expired. All wood from the broken structure must be placed back in the container and the team must clean up the testing site. The judges will meet ALL team members to discuss the solution to the problem. If a structure is to be tested for artificial strengthening, it may be returned to the weigh-in site. Penalty points may be assessed at this time.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Head Judge reviews with the coach or Division III or IV Team Captain the team's long-term raw score including penalties, but not Style, as soon as it is compiled.

### **Problem #5 (Divisions I and II)**

### ***FURS, FINS AND FEATHERS***

*by Marietta Kehler, International Problem Captain*



members will present their problem solutions, props, background scenery, membership sign, other equipment and their pre-competition forms in this area. The paperwork for this problem includes: Cost Form, Outside Assistance Form, Problem Clarifications

(if any), two copies of the Style Form and two copies of the listing of the animal to be scored and the selected feelings in the sequence they will be portrayed. The Staging Area Judge will identify the Head Judge for the coach so that the coach can later meet the Head Judge for scores. At this time the Staging Area Judge will answer any questions and check props and equipment for any potential floor damage and/or safety hazards.

The final staging area is the place which will be the team's designated starting point for their timed performance. Adults may assist the team in carrying equipment to this area. Each team will have three minutes to clear the pre-competition area that the next team will occupy. If this is a pre-staging area that is to be vacated before movement to a staging area, the three minutes are in addition to the eight-minute presentation time. If this is a staging area that the team is to vacate only after time begins, the three minutes are part of the team's eight-minute presentation time. When the team has assembled itself in the staging area, the Timekeeper will signal the team to begin by stating, "BEGIN." The team must then move its props and equipment for its timed performance without adult assistance.

Two 4' x 5' panels will be provided by the Tournament Director. These panels will stand on a pre-taped spot at the rear of the performance area. If the team chooses to use their own panels, they must move them during their eight minutes of competition. In Division I, if the panels are determined to be too heavy for team members to move, the Staging Area Judge will explain the procedure that is being used for their movement. Generally, this is done by a judge before the team's presentation. Plugging in an extension cord, and if possible, turning lights on and off are part of the time limit. Judges will not call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team has taken more than eight minutes. Prop disassembling may be done after time ends, and adults may assist the team. The team must leave the area clean and the panels in their original position on the designated tape.

The team should be prepared to indicate to the judge when its performance is finished. At the conclusion of the performance the judges will meet with ALL team members to talk with them about their solution. After the performance the Coach should inquire of the Head Judge when to check back for the team's raw long-term score and penalties. The Head Judge will identify the specific area and time they will discuss the scoring.

The Staging Area Judge will meet the team in the Staging Area or Pre-Staging Areas, if one is utilized, approximately 15 minutes before the teams' performance and review all pre-competition requirements. Team

## **SPONTANEOUS PROBLEMS**

by Joy Kurtz, International Problem Captain

### **Before Competition**

All team members, accompanied by one adult (usually the coach), report 10 to 15 minutes before their scheduled competition time to the Spontaneous Holding Room, if one is being used. If the competition is not using a holding room, the team members should report to the spontaneous room ten minutes before the scheduled time. **Do not knock** on the door or enter the room. **Wait quietly!**

When the team is called, **all** team members may go to the Spontaneous Problem Room. Upon entering the Spontaneous Problem Room, a judge will tell the team members whether the problem is verbal, hands-on or a combination (verbal hands-on). The team members will be given one minute to decide which five team members will participate. (If there are only five, then all must participate.) The non-participating team members may stay in special seats set aside for them in the room. If they choose to stay, they must remain quiet and serve as observers only.

Any interference from the non-participating team members will be penalized as follows:

**Minor Infraction** = -5 points (from raw spontaneous score) This will be given for inadvertent interference that does little or nothing to actually help the team. (This penalty may be given more than once.)

**Intermediate Infraction** = -15 points (from raw spontaneous score) This will be given one or more times for inadvertent interference that helps the team or one time for one instance of deliberate interference. If deliberate interference substantively helps the team or occurs more than once, a major penalty will be assessed in addition to this penalty.

**Major Infraction** = -35 points (from raw spontaneous score) or a spontaneous score of 0. (Cannot fall below 0.) This will be given for deliberate and repeated interference or for obvious help. (This penalty may be given more than once.)

These are all at the discretion of the judges.

**If a coach does not choose to send all team members to spontaneous (either to the holding room or to the problem room), it is perfectly acceptable. There will be NO PENALTY for not sending more than five team members. However, if a team has only five or fewer team members, all must report.**

### **REMINDER**

To avoid congestion, only one adult may accompany the team members to the holding room.

### **During Competition**

Team members should listen very carefully to directions. A copy of the problem will be placed in front of the team members for their reference during competition.

During a verbal or verbal hands-on problem the following terms will be used by the judges: 1) if students repeat an answer which was already given, the judge will say, "Duplicate answer. Give another response." 2) if an answer is inappropriate or doesn't make sense to the judge, the judge will say, "Inappropriate. Explain or give another answer." and 3) if students can't be heard or mumble or can't be understood, the judge will say, "Unclear. Say it again."

If the problem is hands-on, unless the problem specifically states you may, a taped or marked course **may not** be altered.

Timing devices which beep or make a sound signifying an elapse of time may not be brought into the competition room.

### **REMINDER**

**If the problem is verbal or verbal hands-on and the turning cards' procedure is used, the team member responding MAY NOT** turn the card until he/she finishes responding. The judges will stop any team member who does so and make him/her repeat his/her answer. Repeated offenses may result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty.

### **After Competition**

The team is to leave quickly and quietly. Team members are not permitted to discuss the problem with anyone, not even their coach, until all teams compete. Revealing the problem can cause the team to be penalized. Remember—all teams in a problem and a division receive the same spontaneous problem, thus secrecy is essential!

Concerns, which can only be expressed by revealing the spontaneous problem should be addressed to the problem captain by one of the spontaneous team members. All other spontaneous problem concerns (generally procedural) should be addressed by the coach to the Problem Captain. In the absence of a Problem Captain, concerns should be addressed to the Tournament Director. Remember—judges' subjective decisions may not be challenged.



**Editor's Note:** The 1994 OM World Finals will be held at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Opening Ceremonies will kick off the event on Wednesday evening, June 1. Competition runs from June 2-4, with the Awards Ceremony—the culmination of the tournament—scheduled for Saturday evening.



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# Odyssey of the Mind

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**FORWARDING AND  
ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED**

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## ASSOCIATION ROUND UP

### COMPETITION DATES AND SITES

(AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1993):

AB	Provincial	3/12	Western Canada High School, Calgary	NJ	Regionals	3/4-5	Ramsey High School, Ramsey
AL	Regionals	3/12	Thompson High School	NJ	State	4/16	Pennsauken Public Schools, Pennsauken
AL	Regionals	3/12	Auburn	NM	State	4/9	West Mesa High School, Albuquerque
AL	Regionals	3/12	University of North Alabama	NY	Regionals	3/12	Ogdensburg Enlarged City Schs, Ogdensburg
AL	State	4/16	Hillcrest Middle School	NY	State	4/9	S U N Y at Binghamton, Binghamton
CT	State	3/12	Quinnipiac College, Hamden	OR	Regionals	3/5	Redmond
KS	Regionals	2/19	Hesston	OR	Regionals	3/5	Grants Pass
KS	Regionals	2/19	Atchison JHS, Atchison	OR	Regionals	3/5	Milwaukie
KS	Regionals	2/19	Derby High School, Derby	OR	Regionals	3/5	Salem
MD	State	4/23	Univ MD; Baltimore County, Baltimore	OR	Regionals	3/5	Pleasant Hill
MI	Regionals	2/19	Caledonia Middle School, Caledonia	OR	Regionals	3/5	Hillsboro
MI	Regionals	2/19	Alpena High School, Alpena	OR	State	4/9-10	Oregon State University, Corvallis
MI	Regionals	2/19	Caledonia High School, Caledonia	PA	State	4/24	Altoona Area Regional HS, Altoona
MI	Regionals	2/19	Lake Orion Jr/ Sr High School, Lake	RI	State	4/9	Winman Jr High School, Warwick
MI	Regionals	2/26	Spring Lake Jr/ Sr High School	SD	Regionals	3/5	SD Sch Mines/ Tech, Rapid City
MI	Regionals	2/26	Mott High School, Waterford	SD	Regionals	3/12	Dakota State University, Madison
MI	Regionals	2/27	Delta College, University Center	SD	Regionals	3/12	Black Hills State University
MI	Regionals	2/27	Traverse City West JHS, Traverse	SD	Regionals	3/19	Northern State Univ, Aberdeen
MI	Regionals	3/5	Otsego Mid Sch, Otsego,	SD	State	4/9	Riggs High School, Pierre
MI	Regionals	3/5	Otsego High School, Otsego	VA	Regionals	3/19	Menchville High School, Newport News
MI	Regionals	3/5	Grosse Pointe North High Sch, Grosse	VA	Regionals	3/19	Hayfield Secondary School
MI	Regionals	3/12	Marquette High School, Marquette	VA	Regionals	3/26	Lee High School, Jonesville
MI	Regionals	3/19	Bedford Jr High School, Temperance	VA	Regionals	3/26	Richard Bland College, Petersburg
MI	Regionals	3/19	Bedford Sr High School, Temperance	VA	Regionals	3/26	Blacksburg High School, Blacksburg
MI	Regionals	3/26	Waverly High School, Lansing	VA	Regionals	3/26	Lee Cty Voc-Tech School, Jonesville
MI	State	4/15-16	Central MI Univ, Mt Pleasant	VA	Regionals	3/26	Blacksburg Rec Center, Blacksburg
MO	Regionals	3/5	Eureka Sr High School, Eureka	VT	State	3/19	University of Vermont, Burlington
MO	Regionals	3/19	Paseo High School, Kansas City	WI	Regionals	3/5	Waupaca
NH	Regionals	3/12	Portsmouth	WI	Regionals	3/12	Beloit
NH	Regionals	3/12	Plymouth	WI	Regionals	3/12	Seymour
NH	Regionals	3/19	Merrimack	WI	Regionals	3/12	New Holstein
NH	Regionals	3/19	Wolfeboro	WI	Regionals	3/19	Baraboo
NH	Regionals	3/19	Derry	WI	Regionals	3/19	Pulaski
NH	Regionals	3/19	Berlin	WI	Regionals	3/19	Superior
NH	State	4/9	Nashua				
NJ	Regionals	2/26	Pennsauken Public Schools, Pennsauken				



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