



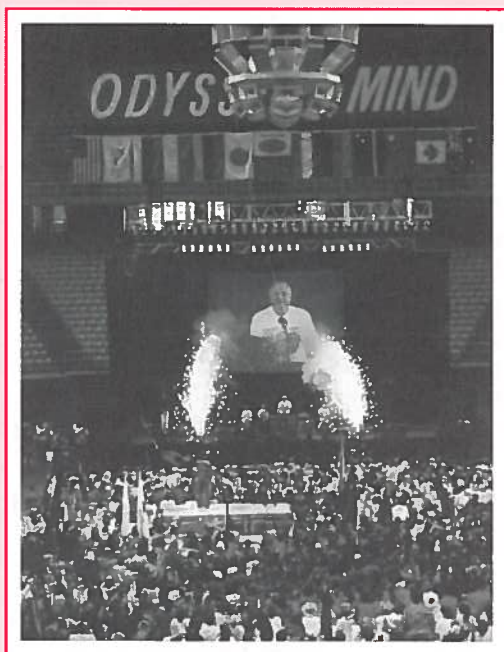
Odyssey of the Mind

Newsletter

VOLUME 17

SUMMER 1995

NUMBER 5



OM World Finals— A Sparkling Event

Let the games begin! With these four words Dr. Sam Micklus, OM's founder, kicked off the 1995 OM World Finals. He gave this directive following his remarks at the Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday evening, May 24, 1995.

The 16th Odyssey of the Mind World Finals welcomed 724 teams representing 15 countries. When it was all over 58 championship teams, five of which hailed from countries outside of the U.S. received special trophies. The top finishers in each division of *A New Twist* held 703 pounds in Division I, 733 pounds in Division II, 983 pounds in Division III and 673 pounds in the Collegiate Division.

At the outset no one dreamed that the team from Oklahoma City would nominate *all* World Finals participants for an Outstanding OMer Award . . . or that Vermont OM would be leaving with its first-ever OM World Finals trophy. No one guessed that the weather would consist of three glorious sun-filled days . . . and, *no one* could possibly anticipate all the positive feelings and evident energy that was in the mind and spirit of every participant. It was, as they say, a wonderful and unforgettable OM World Finals in 1995!



Letter From The Executive Director

Dear Fellow OMers and Longtime Friends:



It is with great pleasure and pride that I pen this letter and realize a dream. As the successor to OM's first executive director, I now lead an organization that has grown and prospered under the direction of Carole Micklus. My sixteen-year involvement with OM has allowed me to be touched by many emotions as I have helped children develop their creativity. Like you, I have carried "OM props," inclusive of vehicles, scenery and weights. I have coached, judged and directed a state organization for ten of these years.

We have all done these things not because we are crazy (although I am sure that our collective sanity has been questioned) but because we believe that the OM program is good for kids. Our OMers, as we affectionately call them, return as adults to tell us that OM has prepared them to better deal with a world layered with both long-term and spontaneous problems. They know the process of brainstorming and working collaboratively can help them achieve goals; they are thankful that the OM program has provided them with useful and relevant life-long skills.

You might be wondering, Where do we go from here? My answer is, In the same direction, but on a different level. OM's commitment is to further develop its community-based program pilot. A new OM graduate course has been prepared. An OM magnet school pilot has been proposed. International expansion continues, and we entertain corporate sponsorship interests to promote and develop creativity.

As we go about the process of further developing the OM program, I ask for your continued help and support. I have known and come to respect many of you for years, and hope to gain the respect and confidence of those of you new to OM. Please know and understand that I have walked in your shoes and will always understand what it is to be an OMer. I am sure we can all continue, as our pledge so eloquently states, ". . . to help to make the world a better place in which to live."

Sincerely,

Robert T. Purifico
OM Executive Director



We're Not Burned Out – We're Fired Up!

*By Michael and Susan Major, OM Coaches,
Scientific Safari Division II
Classen School of Advanced Studies*




Spotlight on... Pam Okland MT OM Association Director

An OM volunteer since 1985, Pam Okland has provided leadership as MT OM's Association Director since 1990. Previous to this, Pam participated as an OM parent, coach, school coordinator, board member, treasurer, executive board member and MT OM Regional Director for Region I. During this last phase, Pam was responsible for setting up regional competitions in Montana. This involvement eventually led to her standardizing and writing guidelines for MT OM regional competitions.

Immediately after she assumed her position as Association Director, MT OM increased its number of regions from five to six. This was due primarily to a strong growth spurt in MT OM. Between the 1988-89 and the 1990-91 membership years, Montana's OM memberships doubled. (At the end of the 1994-95 membership year, Montana's members totaled 129.)

Pam is especially proud of her efforts to raise funds for MT OM. Her work has yielded some unique corporate partnerships. For instance, sponsorship has included contributions from the Dennis Washington Foundation, the Montana Power and Light Company, and Northwest Airlines. This past year Northwest Airlines provided two coach class tickets—for travel anywhere in the U.S.—to MT OM. These were donated to help raise money for Montana teams eligible to attend World Finals. Over \$6,000 was raised as a result. The airline only asked that, in return, MT OM include Northwest in its state-wide advertising.

Pam teaches 5th grade at Lone Rock School. This year she was selected to participate in the Reach for the Sky project. The project, sponsored by the Annenberg/CPB Math and Science Project and the US West Foundation, was funded to allow teachers in rural areas to access expanded resources via electronic telecomputing. It recruited an on-line group of 22 mentor teachers across the state. The project challenged them to create math and science curricula using telecommunications. These teachers were to learn to navigate and glean information from the Internet and use these skills and information to develop a library of problem-based math and science lessons. Project materials were to be made within an on-line community of teachers. These would later be available for national dissemination.

Pam's family includes husband, Leonard Pfau, and her daughter, Megan, 13, who has been an OM participant since she was seven years old.

Our bus burned up! On May 22, 1995, en route to the 1995 Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, the *Scientific Safari*, Division II team from the Classen School of Advanced Studies, Oklahoma City, OK, met another challenge. Five hours into the trip from Oklahoma to Tennessee, a bus tire went flat. The driver was advised to proceed to the closest truck stop—only a mile and a half away.

With its occupants inside, the bus progressed slowly. After traveling about one-half mile, it began to fill with smoke. The smell of burning rubber was evident also. So, the OM team and its coaches decided that it would be best to disembark and walk the remaining mile toward the rest stop. A short time later, as the bus limped along the shoulder, the smoke increased. Within a matter of minutes the bus was engulfed in flames.

Several OMers ran toward the truck stop to get help. A few remained behind to capture the event on film. Within the fifteen minutes that followed, local firemen and police were able to bring the fire under control, but the damage had been done. All of the carry-on belongings—including purses, treasured pin collections, new pins, video equipment, cash and luggage—were destroyed. The safari animals, the vehicle and the Oklahoma State float were severely damaged, or ruined beyond recognition or use.

So the Oklahoma team faced a challenging decision. It could return to Oklahoma, or it could continue to follow the road to the OM World Finals. The team's decision was unanimous. There was no turning back. The burned bus was towed to a junk yard and a new bus was loaded with what was still salvageable.

The team placed a desperate call to OM officials. The support from OMers was overwhelming. When the team arrived in Knoxville, it was greeted with offers of help as well as donations of pins, shirts and cash. Help from Tennessee OM Association Director Becky Reeves and countless others further aided the team. Oklahoma officials—Ruthie Christy, Marianne Zamor and John Kee—worked with the Owasso and Hugo teams (representing Oklahoma OM) to help the team rebuild Oklahoma's entry in the Hat, Float and Banner Contest. The five team members worked diligently and remade their animals, props and vehicle for the *Scientific Safari* problem.

The bus problems did not end with the fire. On competition day, while loading props and scenery, the wheelchair access lift jammed, making the bus inoperable. Another Oklahoma team from Jenks High School came to the rescue, transporting the *Safari* team to the staging area with only minutes to spare. The officials relaxed the performing team members who were now finally able to compete at the 16th OM World Finals.

The Odyssey of the Mind *Scientific Safari*, Division II team from Oklahoma City would like to express its gratitude for all of the help, support, donations and love it received from OMers all over the world. The true spirit of Odyssey of the Mind captured the hearts of all the team members and will never be forgotten!



Outstanding OMER Awards

Individual: Tom Freels and the University of Tennessee Police

Citation: Tom is head of campus security. Working quietly behind the scenes, he and his officers ensured a wonderful, secure competition. Their outstanding creativity and understanding of the spirit of OM was evident as well as they provided the Spontaneous Holding Room Officials with a pool, used to ceremoniously dunk the coaches after their teams competed in spontaneous.

Individual: Bob Filardo, Spontaneous Official who greeted each team

Citation: Bob helped us relax, he entertained us, and he's just plain fun!!

Team: Scientific Safari, Division I
Lincoln School, Anoka, Minnesota

Citation: This team grabbed the attention of the judges and audience immediately with the energy it generated. The team's solution included a non-stop, busy, song-filled presentation. Everything, including pieces of the backdrops, were in motion. Every person who had the privilege of watching this solution was left "open-mouthed" at the end of "time." In addition, the songs were composed entirely by the team, and contained humorous problem-related lyrics.

Team: Scientific Safari, Division II
Classen School for Advanced Studies, Team B
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Citation: This team award is for showing the true spirit of OM and persistence in the face of adversity. The team bus burned, destroying all their props, scenery, and vehicle. Instead of giving up, they recreated their solution. The team exhibited an out-

standing attitude about the whole situation. When the judges asked, "Are you ready?" they proclaimed, "We're not burned out— we're all fired up!"

Team: The Mail Must Go Through, Division II
Eli Whitney Museum, Hamden, Connecticut

Citation: A Scientific Safari's team drill malfunctioned so the Eli Whitney Museum team members loaned theirs—regardless of the potential risk of damage to it and their need for it less than an hour later. Their response was, "That is what OM is about. Don't worry, someday you'll help someone else."

Individual: Brad Kean, A New Twist, Division III
Oviedo High School, Oviedo, Florida

Citation: Brad Kean made a promise to his teammates that if they made it to World Finals he would let them cut off his rather long pony tail. In the highest tradition of OM risk-taking, the skit's last scene was in a military recruiting barber shop where the culminating act was cutting off the pony tail. The audience was left breathless.

The last Outstanding OMER Award presented at the 1995 OM World Finals was a commendation to the masses gathered together in the Thompson-Boling Arena. It was expressed as follows: *The OM team from Oklahoma City's Classen School of Advanced Studies recognizes all the Outstanding OMERS who have helped turn a tragic event into a positive adventure! The team thanked all those who contributed money, t-shirts, pins, props, time, and good wishes. They all not only helped to make the team's OM experience possible, but also created an experience the team will always cherish.*



Ranatra Fusca Awards

Long-Term Team Award: Scientific Safari, Division I
Durant Road Elementary School, Team A
Raleigh, North Carolina

Citation: The team took a great risk in creating a unique tagging system. This system required that the team make its own litmus paper and use a squirt gun with lemon juice to tag the animal from a distance. Had any part of the system not worked, the task could not have been completed.

Long-Term Team Award: Scientific Safari, Division II
Grace Episcopal School, Monroe, Louisiana

Citation: The team showed exceptional creativity in its use of a hover craft in the problem solution. Their design was unique and displayed risk-taking in the true spirit of OM!

Long-Term Team Award: Scientific Safari, Division III
Wayzata High School, Plymouth, Minnesota

Citation: This team effectively portrayed the feeling and atmosphere inside an aquarium. There were snails, including a "live"

snail in a creative costume, live "fish" in unforgettable costumes, a treasure chest which bubbled, and assorted aquarium-flora and fauna. The team even recreated the sounds of an aquarium.

Long-Term Team Award: The Mail Must Go Through, Division II

Nike Middle School, Gardner, Kansas

Citation: This team used a uniquely creative system to transport their mail via aqueducts. The mail itself was equally creative in that it incorporated the use of articulated soda bottles. This was a most creative solution to the problem.

Long-Term Team Award: Vaudeville, Division III

Beaverton High School

Beaverton, Oregon

Citation: This team showed exceptional creativity in using art to create magical illusions. Their use of comedy and the artistic quality of their props helped communicate "teamwork" as their positive aspect of society.