



Odyssey of the Mind™

Newsletter

Volume 22

Fall 1999

Number 1

A Nostalgic Look at the Odyssey of the Mind™ for the Millennium's Last Newsletter

by Dr. Sam Micklus, Founder

The Odyssey of the Mind has its roots in my Industrial Design classes at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) in New Jersey. In these classes I challenged my students to solve a problem at the beginning of each course. The problems included running vehicles without wheels, creating mechanical pie throwers, and designing and using a flotation device to take them across a lake.

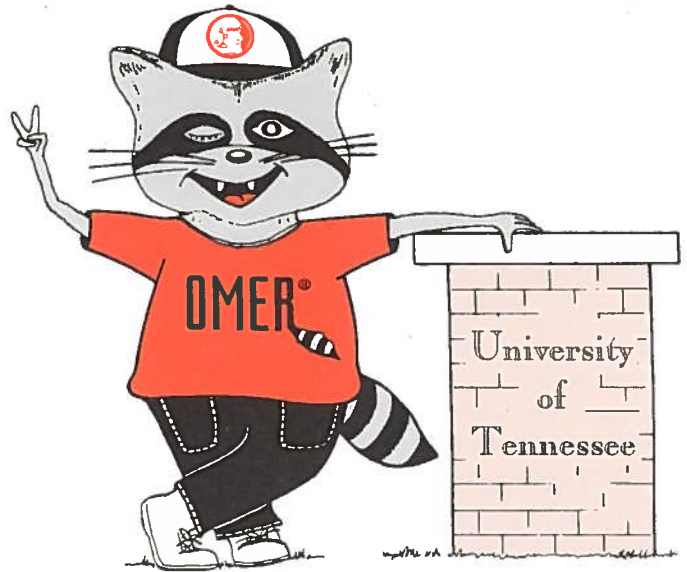
Why not give design problems to younger kids in a competition? So, in 1978, 28 New Jersey junior and senior high schools came to Glassboro. That first year I wrote two problems, one was a mechanical, very miniature golf problem with nine fairways with sand and water. The other required teams to develop an audio guidance system. Here, four team members guided a blindfolded fifth team member around an irregular course, without talking or touching. The blindfolded member had to try to break balloon targets with a "blowgun" while on the journey.

It was a memorable moment when the first team took its position. A young boy, perspiring above the lip, was blindfolded and turned around a few times. Then the team began shaking chains, clapping wood and making various kinds of noises. It all made sense to the shooter. When he approached the first balloon target, the sounds turned him, raised and lowered his blowgun, and at a certain signal, he shot. When he broke the first target, as they say in show business, "The house came down."

Everyone enjoyed the event and wanted to do it again the following year. Some paperwork was necessary, so I said to my wife Carole, "Here - handle this stuff." Those four words were the most important in the history of the Odyssey of the Mind. Working in the unfinished basement of our home, her organizational skills eventually led the Odyssey of the Mind to become a creative problem-solving program known around the world.

In the beginning, team members would call our home for problem clarifications. One problem, the *Windy Cool Rod*, required team members to build and ride a vehicle while using the air from two stationary window fans. One boy called Carole and asked if one of his team members could be a gerbil. Carole said, "I know what you want to do. You want the gerbil to ride your vehicle." The boy replied, "Well, we didn't want him to build it for us, lady!"

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Odyssey of the Mind Returns to Tennessee for World Finals 2000

Odyssey of the Mind World Finals 2000 will be held at the magnificent University of Tennessee, Knoxville, from May 31 to June 3. The university has hosted the World Finals several times in the past. Participants ranked it as one of, if not the best, competition facility.

The university is located in Tennessee Valley and surrounded by the Great Smoky Mountains. Carole Micklus, the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals Tournament Director for eighteen years, is returning as this year's director. It is always a pleasure being the guests of the university with Robert Gibbs in charge of the event!

An International Extravaganza

The Odyssey of the Mind is extremely proud of its international flavor. We welcome our associations and members in Australia, Benelux (Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands), Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Hong Kong, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, the United States and West Africa. Other countries are in the process of developing associations and adding members. This year's Odyssey of the Mind World Finals will be one of the most internationally diverse ever!

In Memory



Mr. Takayuki Otsuka with Carole Micklus

We are deeply saddened by the death of Mr. Takayuki Otsuka. It was through his efforts that the Odyssey of the Mind was brought to the children of Japan. Mr. Otsuka was the Chairman of the Boys and Girls Invention Club at the Toyota Industry and Culture Center, Toyota, Japan. He was always a gentleman, and a sincere and wonderful friend.

Save on Problem Books!

For a limited time, you can take advantage of a special offer on CCI problem books. All books are a compilation of long-term and spontaneous problems used in past competitions. Each contains a special chapter written by Dr. Sam. See the back page for details.

This offer is good only for current members of the Odyssey of the Mind program. Orders must be postmarked by March 1, 2000, to receive this rate.

Announcing a Pledge-Writing Contest

The Odyssey of the Mind is seeking a new pledge for the 21st Century. Anyone may submit a pledge for consideration. The pledge may be any length and written in any style. It is recommended that it be approximately 35 words or less. Send all entries to:

Odyssey of the Mind Pledge
1325 Rt. 130 So., Suite F
Gloucester City, NJ 08030
e-mail: pledge@odysseyofthemind.com
Fax 856/ 456-7008

The winner will receive an Odyssey of the Mind tee-shirt and pin. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 10, 2000, to be considered. All entries will become the property of Creative Competitions, Inc.

Share Your Experiences

If you have something that might be of interest to the readers of the **Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter**, please send it to Dr. Sam, CCI, 1325 Route 130 South, Suite F, Gloucester City, New Jersey 08030, Fax 856/456-7008, or e-mail cmicklus@worldnet.att.net.

"Life is one big spontaneous problem!"

- Natasha Rimm, former Odyssey of the Mind team member

The Odyssey of the Mind's

"Magnificent 7" Problem Captains

The Odyssey of the Mind welcomes these International Problem Captains back for another year. These experienced folks will help make this year's program the best ever.

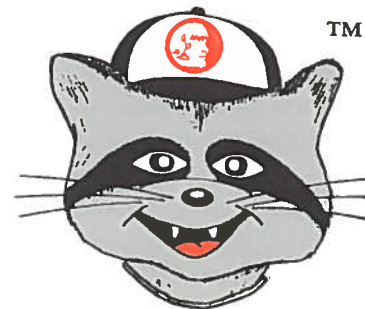


Rita Sleeman Dan Semenza Alice McRae



Joy Kurtz Marietta Kehler Wayne Kehrli

Not shown - Jimmie Jones, Scorekeeping



I love these folks

Dr. Sam Honored

Dr. Sam Micklus was recently honored by the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children when he received its Hall of Fame Award. The Award was presented at the organization's annual meeting.

Problem Procedures



Problem 1 - Elasti-Pumper Wayne Kehrl, International Problem Captain

Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the team and greet all team members and the coach(es). The Staging Area Judge will direct them with their Elasti-pumper, trailer, any other items needed for their long-term problem solution and Style, membership sign(s) and paperwork to enter the Staging Area. The team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Material Values Form and any specific Problem Clarifications it has received. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time.

The team is then asked to review the Elasti-Pumper with the judge who will check the propulsion system, the wheels for potential floor damage and safety hazards. The judge will check the trailer's wheels for potential floor damage. The team will then be requested to move the vehicle to the Start Area. Once placed, the team will return to the Staging Area. The Staging Area Judge will give a final explanation about the competition site and explain the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score and penalties. The team members are given an opportunity to ask questions. The Staging Area Judge will dismiss any non-performing team members and the coaches who are invited to sit in designated chairs, if provided. After this, no one may assist the long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper is introduced to the team and determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announcing whether or not the team has given permission for video taping or photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin", time begins and the team has eight minutes for setup, Style and problem solution. The team must remove all of its materials from the Staging Area within the first three minutes of its eight-minute competition time. The team must provide any extension cords or adapters.

The team will then attempt the First Journey, the First Changing Journey, the Second Changing Journey, the Third Changing Journey, and the Final Journey.

Either at the end of eight minutes, or before, if the team notifies the judges, the competition ends. The judges will then meet with the team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its solution. Others may help with the cleanup. 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 and penalties but not Style, after it is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach will have 30 minutes in which to return if additional questions or concerns arise.



Problem 2 - Pest-aside Alice McRae, International Problem Captain

At some tournaments a Pre-staging Area is designated outside the performance room. Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the team and greet all team members and the coach(es). The Staging Area Judge will direct them with their contraptions, any other items needed for their long-term problem solution and Style, membership sign(s), and paperwork to enter the Pre-staging Area (if used). The team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Material Values Form, any specific Problem Clarifications it has received and two copies of the list asked for in B.10 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time.

The Staging Area Judge will ask the team to place all materials comprising their three contraptions into the 4'x4' taped area. If they do not fit, he/she will try to give the team a few moments to fit them in; if they still do not fit, the team will be given team the appropriate penalty (E.9 of the problem). This will be indicated on the Staging Area Checklist. The Staging Area Judge will check the contraptions for safety and potential floor damage. When the Staging Area Judge has completed his/her checklist and answered team questions, the team and coach will be given three minutes to clear the Pre-staging Area, and proceed to the Staging Area adjacent to the competition site. Anyone may assist in this movement.

In the Staging Area the team will be given a final explanation about the competition site and be explained the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score, including penalties. The team members are given an opportunity to ask questions. Any non-performing team members and the coaches are dismissed and invited to sit in designated chairs, if provided. After this, no one may assist the long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announcing whether or not the team has given permission for video taping or photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin", time begins and the team has eight minutes for setup, Style and problem solution. If no Pre-staging Area was used, the team

must clear the Staging Area within 3 minutes after time begins. The competition site will be a minimum of 12'x12' with a 6'x12' taped area as a part of it for the Pest-be-gone area. The Pest-be-gone area will **not** be against a wall. The team must provide any extension cords or adapters.

The Timekeeper will **not** call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team has taken more than eight minutes. When the team has finished, it must signal the judges. The judges will then meet with team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its solution. Others may help with the cleanup. It is the team's responsibility to bring materials to clean up any mess in order to leave the area clean and dry for the next team. 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, after the score is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach/captain then has one half hour in which to return if any additional questions or concerns arise.

Note: In the problem, E. 9 should be -5 to -20 points.



Problem 3 - Classics...King Arthur
Rita Sleeman,
 International Problem Captain

At some tournaments a Pre-staging Area is designated outside the performance site. Approximately fifteen minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the team and greet all team members and the coach(es). The Staging Area Judge will direct them with the materials needed for their long-term problem solution and Style, membership sign(s) and paperwork to enter the Pre-staging Area (if used). The team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including

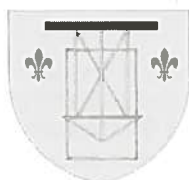
the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Material Values Form, any specific Problem Clarifications it has received and two copies of the list asked for in B.13 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time. At this time the team must wear or support all materials used in the presentation of its solution. The judge may ask team members to move while the palms of their hands are face down and open. Refer to B.13 and C.4 in the problem for further clarification. Once it is determined that the team is wearing or supporting all materials, and the Staging Area Judge has completed his/her checklist and answered team questions, the team and coach will be given three minutes to clear the

Pre-staging Area, and proceed to the Staging Area adjacent to the Staging Area adjacent to the 7' x 10' (minimum) competition site. Anyone may assist in this movement.

At this time the Timekeeper greets the team, gives a final explanation of the performance area, if needed, answers any team questions and asks the team how it will signal the judges when its performance is finished. At the Timekeeper's request the team prepares for its presentation by wearing or supporting all materials used in its presentation until time begins.

In the Staging Area the team will be given a final explanation about the competition site and be explained the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score, including penalties. The team members are given an opportunity to ask questions. Any non-performing team members and the coaches are dismissed and invited to sit in designated chairs, if provided. After this, no one may assist the long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announcing whether or not the team has given permission for video taping or photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin", time begins and the team has eight minutes for setup, Style and problem solution. If no Pre-staging Area was used, the team must clear the Staging Area within 3 minutes after time begins.

The Timekeeper will **not** call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team has taken more than eight minutes. When the team has finished, it must signal the judges. The judges will then meet with team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The tapestry, coat of arms and flag, the prop scored in number 2 Style and any other items scored in Style should be available for the judges to review. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its solution. Others may help with the cleanup. It is the team's responsibility to bring materials to clean up any mess in order to leave the area clean and dry for the next team. 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, after the score is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach/captain then has one half hour in which to return if any additional questions or concerns arise.



Problem 4 - Shrinking Structure
Dan Semenza,
 International Problem Captain

Prior to their scheduled time of competition, one or more team members will bring their "Shrinking Structure" to the weigh-in site. A Weigh-in Judge will weigh the structure and confirm that a two-inch opening exists through its entire length. The Judge will make the appropriate measurements for height of the structure, check the thickness of wood and examine it for artificial

strengthening. Penalties will be noted at that time. If time permits, the team may make corrections. After filling out the Weigh-in Checklist, the Weigh-in Judge will **seal, mark and store** the structure in a team-supplied container or paper bag until approximately 25 minutes prior to the schedule time of competition. Stored structures may only be picked up by a team member(s) and carried to the competition site,

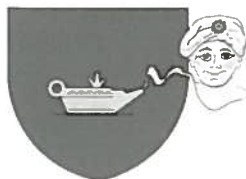
Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the entire team (with its structure) and greet all team members and the coach(es). The Staging Area Judge will direct them with their structure, any items needed for Style, membership sign(s) and paperwork to enter the Staging Area. In 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 team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Material Values Form and any specific Problem Clarifications it has received. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time. The team informs the Staging Area Judge style if will continue after the structure is crushed. If an **Adult Assistant** is used in Division I or II, at least one team member must be physically involved in the placement of these weights. In Division I, the Adult Assistant may place weights in excess of **20 POUNDS**. In Division II, the Adult Assistant may place weights in excess of **40 POUNDS**. The Adult Assistant must be identified in the Staging Area and will remain with the team throughout the long-term solution. The Staging Area Judge will dismiss any non-performing team members and invite the coaches (if not assisting in weight placement) to sit in designated chairs, if provided. The Timekeeper is introduced to the team and determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announcing whether or not the team has given permission for video taping or photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin", time begins and the team has eight minutes for setup, Style and problem solution. The team must remove all of its materials from the Staging Area within the first three minutes of its eight-minute competition time. The team must provide any extension cords or adapters. Style may take place before, during and/or after the structure breaks.

Competition will end when (1) style has been completed and the structure has broken or (2) the eight-minute time limit for the competition has expired. The Timekeeper will call time at the end of the eight minutes.

The judges will then meet with the team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. All wood from the broken structure must be placed in a paper bag and returned to the weigh-in site by a designated judge. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The structure may be returned to the Weigh-in Site for further inspection. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its materials. Others may help with the cleanup. 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 and penalties but not Style, after it is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach will have 30 minutes in which to return if additional questions or concerns arise.



Problem 5 - The Genie

Dr. Marietta Kehler,

International Problem Captain

At some tournaments a Pre-staging Area is designated outside the performance site.

Approximately 15 minutes before the team's scheduled competition time, the Staging Area Judge will call for the team and greet all team members and the coach(es). The Staging Area Judge will direct them with the materials needed for their long-term problem solution and Style, membership sign(s) and paperwork to enter the Pre-staging Area (if used). The team gives the Staging Area Judge all of the forms, including the Outside Assistance Form, two (three at World Finals) Style Forms, the Material Values Form, any specific Problem Clarifications it has received and two copies of the list asked for in B.13 of the problem. The Staging Area Judge reviews the paperwork for clarity, then passes it to the Timekeeper, who will give it to the Problem and Style Judges. The Staging Area Judge will check the team's foot coverings and will inspect the membership sign(s), if available at that time. When the Staging Area Judge has completed his/her checklist and answered team questions, the team and coach will be given three minutes to clear the Pre-staging Area, and proceed to the Staging Area adjacent to the Staging Area adjacent to the 7' x 10' (minimum) competition site. Anyone may assist in this movement.

At this time the Timekeeper greets the team, gives a final explanation of the performance area, if needed, answers any team questions and asks the team how it will signal the judges when its performance is finished. In the Staging Area the team will be given a final explanation about the competition site and be explained the procedure for picking up the long-term raw score, including penalties. The team members are given an opportunity to ask questions. Any non-performing team members and the coaches who may sit in designated chairs, if provided. After this, no one may assist the long-term members in any way until the presentation is completed. The Timekeeper determines that the judges and team are ready. The Timekeeper then introduces the team to the audience, asking for cell phones, pagers, and other such devices to be turned off and announcing whether or not the team has given permission for video taping or photography. When the Timekeeper says "Begin", time begins and the team has eight minutes for setup, Style and problem solution. If no Pre-staging Area was used, the team must clear the Staging Area within 3 minutes after time begins.

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The Timekeeper will **not** call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team has taken more than eight minutes. When the team has finished, it must signal the judges. The judges will then meet with team members to discuss their solution, ask questions or ask for a demonstration. At this time the team may point out any special aspects of its solution. The judges will then indicate that the team should quickly remove its solution. Others may help with the cleanup. It is the team's responsibility to bring materials to clean up any mess in order to leave the area clean and dry for the next team. 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, after the score is compiled. The Head Judge may have a sign indicating when scores are ready for each team. If this is not available, the coach should inquire when and where this review will take place. The coach/captain then has one half hour in which to return if any additional questions or concerns arise.



Spontaneous Procedures
Joy Kurtz,
 Spontaneous Problem Captain

It is recommended that tournaments use a holding room where spontaneous teams should report ten minutes before their scheduled competition time. (If there is no holding room, teams should report to the competition site ten minutes before the scheduled time and wait quietly for further instructions.)


Only one adult should accompany the team into the holding room. One team member should register the team, giving the team's long term problem and division, as well as the team registration number and name and demographic information. The team will wait in the holding room until it is called to compete. Only the seven team members will be accompanied to the spontaneous problem room by the problem judge. The adult will remain in the designated area and wait for the team to return. Where possible, it is suggested that this be a different area so that the holding room does not get congested.

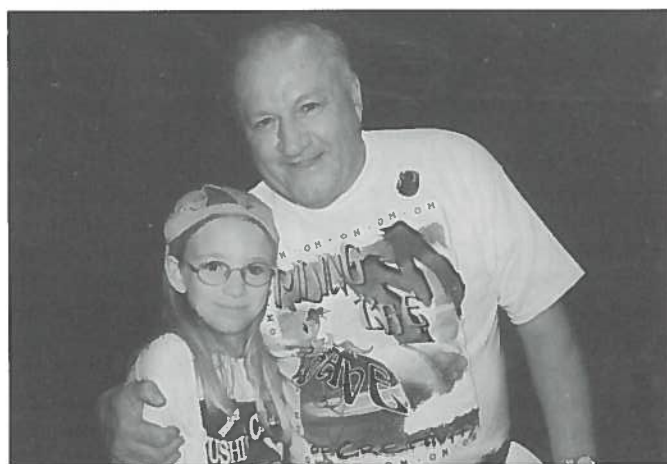
All seven team members will be allowed (and are encouraged) to enter the spontaneous room. The judges will then identify the type of problem, verbal, verbal hands-on, or hands-on. The team will then have 1 minute to decide among themselves which 5 team members will compete. The other two team members may remain and watch, but must not talk, signal, or intervene in any way. If they wish, the two non-competing team members may leave the room, however this practice is discouraged. Watching the team compete allows all team members to feel valued and allows them to know the problem their team members have solved without having to discuss it outside the competition site. Remember, spontaneous problems must be kept secret until after the competition, because all teams in the same long term problem and division have the same spontaneous problem.

Once the team has chosen the 5 competing team members the judges will read the problem to the team. A copy of the problem will be placed in front of the team so they may refer to it as needed. It is recommended that coaches remind team members to listen carefully and look at the

judges who often point and use gestures to help clarify the intent of the problem. In a verbal, and or verbal hands-on problem, the judges will use the following language:

1. If a team member speaks too fast, or mumbles and the judges can't understand, they will say, "UNCLEAR - please say it again."
2. If the response doesn't make sense to the judges, or is not acceptable, they will say - "INAPPROPRIATE - please clarify or give another response."
3. If the response is a repeat of what another team member has said, the judges will say - "DUPLICATE- please give another response."


Once the team has competed it should leave the room quietly and meet the coach at the designated area. Team members should be reminded not to discuss the problem. Although spontaneous problems are generally not subject to the grievance procedure, if a team has a concern, one team member should ask to speak to the Spontaneous Problem Captain who will then speak with the judges and the entire team if necessary. 



Jennifer Whitehead with Dr. Sam

**Nine-year-old girl wins \$1,000
 in Titan I strength contest**

Jennifer Whitehead of Merritt Island, Florida won the \$1,000 annual prize for designing and building the winning structure in Dr. Sam's Hercules Games® Titan I project. Her balsa wood structure weighed 12.369 grams and held 225.5 pounds. This translates into a structure that held 8,629 times its own weight. Her mother said that Jennifer built her structure on the kitchen counter all by herself. Jennifer's parents are thrilled and proud of her. Jennifer is in the fourth grade at Port Malabar Elementary School and has already started to save money for college. She puts aside a portion of her allowance each week. The Titan I prize money will give her college account a great boost.

Titan I is an ongoing competition. A \$1,000 grand prize is awarded annually. To be eligible for this year's prize, structure must be submitted by January 31, 2000. This makes Titan I a good holiday gift idea. 

Continued from page 1

The *Cruppets* required teams to make and produce five creative puppets. One team member asked, "Are talking Siamese cabbages one puppet or two?" Of course, this required a meeting.... Finally, after an unbelievable discussion, we determined that each voice box belonged to a separate puppet.

Bill Moyers produced a television series entitled, "Creativity with Bill Moyers." He selected the *Odyssey of the Mind* Program to do a documentary and filmed some of it at the World Finals. I felt confident that all the details were taken care of. As I walked across the parking lot to the event, a high school student asked how high the ceiling was at the competition site. Since it was in the college cafeteria, I said not to worry about it. He said, "Our vehicle needs 15 feet of space." My eyes glazed over. I quickly checked and found we had a few feet to spare. His vehicle was perhaps the ugliest, yet one of the most creative ever. It had a crude box with a large plastic bag inside supported by two heavy boards. The bottom had a very crude box, also lined with plastic and filled with perhaps 20 gallons of water. The wheels were wooden cable spools with a tree as an axle. When time began, a washing machine water pump took the water from the reservoir and pumped it into the overhead "bucket." When the bucket got enough water, it began to lower and in turn, pulled the ropes that were wound around the tree axle. The very heavy vehicle moved very slowly. Although this vehicle didn't place, it deserved some type of award. You guessed it -- the Ranatra Fusca Award was born! And, the Bill Moyers series won an Emmy.



The New Hampshire "Nerds"

One of the most popular teams ever to win the Ranatra Fusca Award was from New Hampshire. Coming to World Finals, the team's Style was based on being "Nerds." From the parade at the beginning of World Finals to the Award Ceremony, the Nerds never changed character. The all-male team wore outlandish clothes that didn't fit, had taped eyeglasses, pocket pen holders, etc. Even the coaches posed as bag ladies with old flowered dresses and droopy stockings. When the awards were announced, the Nerds received a standing ovation.

One of my favorite problems was the LDSC (Leonardo de Vinci Spring Car). Teams had to design, build and drive a vehicle that had to start, travel 150 feet, stop and reverse. Paul Frischman, a high school student in Connecticut, came home from school and told his father about the *Odyssey of the Mind*. His project was to build a LDSC. His father, Don, was the manager of corporate advertising at IBM and was involved in an upcoming CBS special entitled, *I Leonardo -- A Journey of the Mind*. IBM was looking to use its commercial time to bring a message about Education to America. We were a natural for this show. So, in a commercial message from IBM delivered by Walter Cronkite, homes across America heard about the *Odyssey of the Mind* and watched a number of LDSC's in an actual *Odyssey of the Mind* tournament.

Lots of other good things happened.

- President Reagan sent personal representatives to the *Odyssey of the Mind* World Finals.
- President George Bush sent a wonderful videotaped message welcoming the World Finals' participants and citing the *Odyssey of the Mind* volunteers as one of his thousand points of light.
- President Clinton sent a letter congratulating the World Finals' teams.
- Governor Lamm of Colorado coached a team.
- Ranatra Fusca trophy was displayed at Explorer's Hall in the National Geographic Society building in Washington, D.C.

The 1999 Eurofest that Carole and I attended holds a special place in my heart. Three of my grandparents came from Lithuania, so that country is special to me. Carole and I were privileged to sit in a horse-drawn carriage, leading a parade of *Odyssey of the Mind* kids from all over Europe down the streets of Klaipeda, Lithuania. For me, it was an experience of a lifetime. What a great way to end this millennium! 🐻



Hey, Structure Builders! I have great news for you. Now you can buy premium quality balsa wood from Creative Competitions, Inc. The 1/8" x 1/8" x 36" strips are sold in bundles of 100. You know, 100, 200, 300! Look at the order form on the back page.

Good Luck,
Chipper



Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.

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