Tropical Region
Odyssey of the Mind

Intro Package
2014-2015

http://tropicalodyssey.org
Region Director: Erik Veiga
emveiga@tropicalodyssey.org
Introduction

The Florida Odyssey of the Mind organization invites K–12 and college students to participate in the Odyssey of the Mind program. In 1978, Odyssey of the Mind helped pioneer the idea of creative problem solving as an educational tool. From our modest beginnings as a local organization we have grown to one positively impacting the lives of millions of students around the world. Odyssey provides learning opportunities that encourage students to apply their talents and strengths to solving “problems” that develop their divergent thinking skills. Educators like the program because it brings creative problem solving into the school environment, offering opportunities to extend lessons beyond the classroom. More than being a learning tool, the benefits of participation are innumerable.

Odyssey of the Mind:

• Improves brainstorming and critical thinking skills.

• Builds teamwork skills such as cooperation and creative problem solving.

• Builds confidence and self-reliance leading to increased self-esteem.

• Develops respect for individual’s strengths

• Provides an environment where students can learn to express and implement their ideas in a collaborative setting.

• Challenges students to become more detail-oriented and inclined to do their best.

• Leads to unique, unforgettable experiences that will serve them in every aspect of their lives now and in the future.

Over 500 schools in Florida are already taking advantage of the learning opportunities provided by our program. While it is common for Gifted and Talented programs to integrate Odyssey of the Mind problem solving into their curriculum, we believe that all students can benefit from participation. In this time of budget cuts for many districts, you can retain arts education, technology, and other subjects by incorporating them into Odyssey of the Mind problem solutions.

The Odyssey of the Mind conforms to National educational standards as well as those of the State of Florida.

The cost of only $135 per year allows you to have as many students participate as you wish, and to send teams to competition if you choose. For regional competition there is a $95 registration fee per team for Divisions I – III and a $20 per Primary team registration fee. This fits easily into almost any budget. Often, parents’ associations are more than willing to support the program once they learn how it can benefit their children.

It is the perfect time to join for the 2014 - 2015 school year. For more information, go to the international Web site, www.odysseyofthemind.com, or visit our regional website at www.tropicalodyssey.org. Please visit our website to sign-up for our e-mail newsletter and to obtain additional information about Odyssey of the Mind in Miami-Dade County.
Competing teams participate in both a Long-Term and Spontaneous problem.

Teams of five to seven students develop solutions to one of six Long-Term Problems over several months, while also practicing for a Spontaneous Problem.

In the Long Term Problem teams develop a theatrical and engineering solution to a situational problem over several months. Just as much fun, are the Spontaneous Problems where the students develop brainstorming skills to solve problems given at the competition.

Teams, problems and competitions are organized into five divisions by age groups (Primary, I, II, III, IV). The Primary division problem is a demonstration problem that is not judged competitively.

In Florida we have Regional competitions where teams advance to State Finals. Top teams from the State Finals go on to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

The Florida Odyssey of the Mind program is made possible by the participation of volunteers. Volunteers include teachers, parents and other community members who serve as Coaches, Coordinators, Judges, Tournament Assistants, Trainers, Problem Captains and Board Members.

For more information, visit our websites at:

**Tropical Region:**
http://tropicalodyssey.org

**Florida Odyssey:**
http://www.floridaodysseyofthemind.org

**National Organization:**
http://www.odysseyofthemind.com

### Odyssey of the Mind Division Table

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<td>Grade on May 1, 2015</td>
<td>Age on May 1, 2015</td>
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**Note:** Primary teams consist of Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students.

Division IV- Collegiate: All team members must have a high school diploma or its equivalent and be enrolled in at least one course at a two-or four-year college or university.
Calendar of Events and Important Dates

November 22, 2014
Spontaneous Fair and Coach’s Training
Team members will have the opportunity to try a variety of sample problems to become familiar with the Spontaneous portion of the competition. Coaches will meet with the region director to get important information about the program, strategies for team building, and Spontaneous materials.

December 15, 2014
Deadline for team registration.

January 24, 2015
Advanced Coach’s Training
Coaches will get more information about the tournament and competition venue.

February 28, 2015
Regional Tournament
Miami Springs Senior High

April 11, 2015
State Finals Tournament
University of Central Florida

May 20-23, 2015
World Finals Tournament
Michigan State University
Problem 1: Runaway ‘Train’
The team’s problem is to design, build and operate one or more vehicles that will travel on tracks and make stops at different stations without touching the floor. While traveling between stations, the vehicles must overcome obstacles — moving uphill, towing something, and more. The theme of the performance will explain the vehicle’s difficulties on the track and will include a ‘conductor’ character. Once the vehicle reaches its final destination it will display a flag or banner during a victory lap!

*DIVISIONS I, II & III. Cost limit: $145 USD.*

Problem 2: Experiencing Technical Difficulties
The problem is to design, build, and demonstrate various devices that complete specific tasks. The team will create a theme where technical failures must be resolved through completing the tasks. There will be a list of tasks to choose from including ring a bell, change the wording on something, sound an alarm, move an object, etc. There will also be a mysterious engineer character. Of course, there’s a twist — all of the devices must be powered by rubber bands!

*DIVISIONS I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: $145 USD.*

Problem 3: Classics... Pandora’s Box
In this classics problem, teams will put a video game spin on the story of Pandora’s Box. A gamer character will take on this multi-level game inspired by the Greek myth. The game will include a prologue that depicts the original story of Pandora’s Box, three characters representing different evils that escaped the box, and a power meter that represents the gamer character’s health. To beat the game, the player will advance to the final level where it will release hope into the world.

*DIVISIONS I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: $125 USD.*

Problem 4: Lose Your Marbles
This problem requires teams to design, build, and test a structure, made only of balsa wood and glue, that will balance and support as much weight as possible. The structure will also hold five marbles that will be released during weight placement as a result of a team-created device removing a piece of the structure. After the crusher board and one additional weight are placed on top of the structure, the first marble will be released. After the next weight is supported, the team will use its device to release another marble, and so on. The team will incorporate weight placement and “losing your marbles” into the theme of the performance.

*DIVISIONS I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: $125 USD.*

Problem 5: Silent Movie
Lights, camera...action! In this problem teams will create and present a performance depicting a Director character that produces and presents a silent movie featuring a humorous villain character that commits three silly acts of “villainy.” Characters that are in the movie may not speak as part of the presentation of the movie. Instead, like classic silent films, the team will use music played on a team-created instrument and creatively displayed subtitles to convey its story to the audience and judges. Also, teams will use a signal to indicate when the movie begins and ends.

*DIVISIONS I, II, III & IV. Cost limit: $125 USD.*

Primary: Wacky Weather Warning
Teams will create and present a humorous performance where a meteorologist makes three predictions of “wacky weather”. The meteorologist will speak in rhymes and use a team-created forecasting device and a backdrop that serves as a weather map. The community will “tune in” to get the weather report in any creative way the team wishes.

*Cost limit: $125 USD.*

All problems copyright Creative Competitions, Inc. — 2014
What is Odyssey of the Mind?

The Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program whose mission is to provide creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Through solving open-ended problems, students develop creative-thinking skills that can be applied to real-life situations. Teams from throughout the U.S. and more than 20 other countries participate in the program.

How does it work?

Schools or community groups purchase a membership and form teams of up to seven students. Each team chooses one of five competitive problems to solve. The problems appeal to a wide range of interests; some are technical in nature, while others are artistic or performance-oriented. Under the guidance of an adult coach, teams work on their solutions throughout the school year and, if they choose, present them in organized competitions in the spring. The “friendly” competitive aspect encourages students to be the best that they can be.

What are the competition levels?

In the U.S., the first level of competition is usually within a region of a state. Teams who place are invited to compete at the state level. These championship teams are then invited to participate in the annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, where they compete with teams from countries around the world, including Canada, China, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Poland, Singapore, and Uzbekistan. New countries join the program each year.

How are teams judged in competition?

Thousands of volunteers from around the world judge the competitions and serve in various positions to help make the tournaments a success. Teams are scored for their long-term problem solution, how well they solve a “spontaneous” problem on the spot, and “Style” -- the elaboration of their long-term problem solution.

Who runs the Odyssey of the Mind?

Not-for-profit organizations administer the Odyssey of the Mind program in each participating U.S. state and country. Each organization is run by a local Association Director. The organizations are licensed by Creative Competitions, Inc. (CCI), which provides all of the problems and materials necessary to run training sessions and tournaments.

How did Odyssey of the Mind get its start?

Odyssey of the Mind was created by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus, Professor Emeritus at Rowan University in New Jersey. In 1978, 28 New Jersey schools participated in the very first creative problem-solving competition ever. “Dr. Sam” still develops all problems for the program, along with his son, Sammy, President of CCI.
Dr. C. Samuel Micklus is the Founder of the Odyssey of the Mind program and a Professor Emeritus at Rowan University (formerly Glassboro State College) in New Jersey, where he taught technology courses from 1968 to 1991.

In his early years at Rowan, Professor Micklus experimented with creative problem-solving activities in his industrial design classes. He wrote challenging problems to set a creative framework for the course, oftentimes rewarding the risk-takers whose solutions may not have worked, but whose ideas were feasible and innovative.

Dr. Micklus' classes at Rowan grew in popularity, and before long his creative activities received media attention. High school students became interested in Dr. Micklus' "challenges" and, in 1978, teams from 28 New Jersey junior and senior high schools participated in the first creative problem-solving competition. Since then, millions of students around the world have solved problems written by Dr. Micklus.

"Dr. Sam," as the kids call him, loves watching teams solve his problems. He says, "Odyssey of the Mind teaches young people to think, create different possible solutions to problems, evaluate ideas, and then carry them out. The problems must be challenging and, at the same time, make learning fun."

Dr. Micklus earned his Ed.D. in 1975 at New York University, an M.A. in Education in 1968 from Trenton State College, and a B.S. in Industrial Design in 1966 from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

A recognized pioneer in bringing creative problem-solving into the classroom, Dr. Micklus has received many awards for his achievements. In 1997, he was presented with the NJ Association for Gifted Children's Hall of Fame Award. He and his wife Carole were also recipients of New Jersey's Pioneer Award. In 1985, Dr. Micklus was presented with Rowan University's Management Institute Leadership Award and, in 2000, received the University of the Arts' Silver Star Alumni Award for his work with Odyssey of the Mind.

Dr. Micklus has spoken at conferences about gifted education, and technology and curriculum development in nearly every U.S. state, Washington, D.C., Australia, Canada, Belgium, China, England, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland and Russia. He has also spoken at corporate meetings for Intel, Pepsi-Cola, and IBM, where he was a featured speaker at their prestigious Golden Circle. He has appeared on numerous radio and television newscasts, talk shows and documentaries; and he has written many books, articles and teachers' manuals on industrial design and creative problem solving.
In preparing to meet and exceed each student’s needs to the best of our abilities, educators look at learning styles, standards, and student performance. Leaving no child behind is a national decree. “If it’s not standard based it’s not happening during our class time,” is the cry. Educators have found that using Odyssey of the Mind is a way to extend creative experiences in a real work-world environment while aligning with national, state, and school standards.

The Odyssey of the Mind program is able to meld the state and national learning standards while extending academic challenges that employ the processing of thinking skills. Students are required to solve real-world problems in a creative venue designed to fulfill the requirements of the long-term problems offered each year.

The problems encompass the academic skills required by state and national curricula; they are cognizant of the academically talented and challenge students in a variety of genres. Without having to “learn through the seat of their pants,” students learn by doing, moving, and sharing. They practice social skills through working in teams, negotiation through validating their ideas, and assessment through the use of their own and problem rubrics.

Educators delight in the thought that they can capture students’ aha! as they discover new ideas, formulate hypotheses, test many solutions, and, as a team, decide on a final product based on an evaluation that keeps the target in focus.

Many school districts are experiencing serious cutbacks in fine arts and other classes for their special populations — both remedial and challenge groups. Odyssey of the Mind provides standard-based, goal-oriented curriculum experiences that are educationally solid in all subject areas while immersing students at various levels in the learning process.

Students are consumers of education. They are developing not only academically but also socially and skillfully. Specific tasks designed to practice their newly acquired skills are measurable; growth is observable and can be accurately reported through the use of rubric (evaluation). Students learn the real work-world skills of defining the problem, developing many possible solutions, and establishing criteria to evaluate the process. They then decide, as a group, how to implement their solution in a creative way. Not only do they learn what is required, they learn to budget time, resources, and materials to complete and “market” their “product” (solution).

While students across many grade levels receive the same long-term problems, the end product is always unique, and age and academically appropriate. The application of standard-based learning at each age and skill level validates the educational value of the Odyssey of the Mind’s creative, social, and interactive learning. Bringing standards to this program or bringing this program to the standards isn’t the issue. In standards-based education we have goals. In Odyssey of the Mind, we have fun while learning and meeting those goals.

This article was written by a long-time educator and Odyssey of the Mind director. It first appeared in the Spring 2003 issue of the Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter.

Educational Standards? They Don’t Come Higher Than In Odyssey of the Mind

by Joanne Rompel, Illinois Association Director and Educator of Gifted & Talented

Odyssey of the Mind provides standard-based, goal-oriented curriculum experiences that are educationally solid in all subject areas...
Reflections of a First-Time Coach

How Odyssey of the Mind Helped to Put My Life In Perspective

As I entered into my first coaching experience with Odyssey of the Mind, I often asked myself what I could possibly have been thinking . . . I had a team that consisted of:

- Three children with parents who spoke no English (Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish)
- One child with severe ADHD
- One child who broke down in tears during EVERY practice
- Two children who were so painfully shy I did not hear their voices for one month
- Two children in the struggles of a bitter divorce
- One child who had a parent diagnosed with a life-threatening illness two days before a competition

Plus, my team fought non-stop for eight weeks. I did not know what I could possibly accomplish with these kids.

Well, the day of the competition, they pulled it all together and took 7th out of 14 teams. (They would have scored higher if it had not been for my misinterpreting part of the problem. Of course, that made me feel even worse!) I left the competition feeling pretty blue but thankful that it was over.

I always heard the little voice in the back of my head saying, “It’s the process, not the outcome.” It is hard for a coach to keep that in perspective. On the surface, I did not notice very much in the way of greatness during the process, and the outcome seemed disappointing. But, as I met with the kids at school on Monday and I looked back over the past three months I realized that the following had happened:

- The kids whose parents did not speak English (and had not lived in the country very long) were picked up by the coaches and were transported to the performance to watch their kids - we broke down a lot of cultural barriers trying to communicate with each other.
- The child with ADHD learned to interact with a team.
- The child who cried at every performance gained confidence and performed beautifully.
- The painfully shy kids were running around the competition laughing and interacting with other children.
- The parents going through the bitter divorces were at the competition enjoying their children’s performance – as a family.
- The child who had an ill parent spent the day with us and was thankful it took his mind off troubles at home.

The best part of the whole experience: On Monday morning, one of my shy kids asked, “Is this the end of Odyssey of the Mind? Am I really going to go the rest of the year without seeing you?”

I realized then that Odyssey of the Mind had made a huge impact. It was not the scores, it was not the performance, it was the process of getting there. It was the POSITIVE changes that I saw in all the kids. It put my life in perspective.

Theresa Lundy
Sherwood Park Ele, MI
### Future Role

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>How Odyssey Teams Practice for This Role</th>
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</table>
| 1. Information Managers      | • Interpret a complex set of problem specifications & rubrics.  
• Identify & research appropriate resources.  
• Interpret and evaluate that research.  
• Synthesize research and resources from many areas to design the solution and presentation. |
| 2. Effective Communicators    | • Use visual, symbolic, dramatic & literary elements.  
• Include creative style components.  
• Communicate the solution within a specific time limit.  
• Assure absolute clarity in the explanation of the solution.  
• Include original elements such as dialogue, music, poetry and art in various media.  
• Prepare & submit written descriptions of the solution. |
| 3. Numeric Problem Solvers    | • All problems require teams to budget materials and money and solutions must be created within designated cost limits.  
• In the structure problem:  
  o Use technology, data, measurement and advanced concepts of physics and motion.  
  o Construct balsa wood and glue towers to support weight and meet a physical requirement that is changed annually,  
  o Comply with impact, torque, weight and specific design limitations.  
• In the vehicle problem analyze data about the design of specified propulsion systems and execute intricate courses and tasks.  
• In the technical problem develop and execute mechanical systems that will trigger a set of reactions and complete specified tasks. |
| 4. Critical and Creative Thinkers | • Generate imaginative and original strategies for designing a solution.  
• Exchange and evaluate various options in terms of their uniqueness and creativity.  
• Develop the most unusual and innovative solution possible in addition to assuring technical accuracy.  
• Devise creative presentation elements to gain judging credit for Style.  
• Predict and plan for what to do when the solution presentation does not go according to plan. |
| 5. Ethical and Responsible Workers | • Seven-member teams cannot be changed once work on the problem has begun.  
• No outside assistance is permitted from anyone not officially listed as a team member.  
• Assign each member’s role and tasks based on an evaluation of his/her strengths and limitations. |
• Set personal goals, follow-through on tasks, complete action plans and meet all deadlines.
• Practice open and respectful exchange of ideas and opinions among all individual members.

6. **Resource Managers**
   • Observe the problem-specific cost limitations.
   • Maintain records to verify all expenditures.
   • Locate, obtain and allocate materials used.
   • Manage time and personnel resources economically.
   • Locate space to work and ways to store and preserve a project-in-progress over several months.
   • Arrange for transporting presentation materials to competition sites, including breakdown, packaging and re-assembling the parts.

7. **Systems Managers**
   • Analyze different systems with their parts and functions.
   • Design or modify a system to solve the problem such as propulsion systems in a vehicle problem or communication systems in a theatrical problem.
   • Analyze complex scoring systems to set priorities and time-lines for meeting the goals.

8. **Cooperative Workers**
   • Individually contribute to team goals; motivate/energize each other; constantly work to improve group processes.
   • Demonstrate teamwork, not only when the solution goes according to plan, but especially when it does not.
   • Develop such effective group awareness that members can work together almost intuitively.
   • Display consistent dedication to “the good of the group.”
   • Exceed personal expectations by harnessing the power of the team.

9. **Effective Leaders**
   • Use initiative and demonstrate leadership in fulfilling one’s individual role.
   • Share personal ideas, beliefs, feelings and values with other team members and encourage them to do the same.
   • Listen effectively to all ideas.
   • Explore and negotiate resolution to team conflicts.
   • Strive to bring out the best each team member has to offer.

10. **Culturally Sensitive Learners**
    • Recognize that **Long-Term Problems** are written from diverse perspectives to include a variety of cultural, social and academic influences.
    • Participate on teams composed of students from different cultural, social, academic, ethnic and economic backgrounds.
    • Respect the ideas and contributions of each person.
    • Interact with and appreciate the talents of students from other regions, states and countries at various levels of Odyssey competition.
The Odyssey Angels program wants to challenge you to use your unique creative problem-solving abilities to help some aspect of your community that would otherwise be overlooked. In return, one team will be selected to attend World Finals to present how it helped its community.

Who can participate?
Anyone can participate! The only limitation is that one person in the Odyssey Angel group is on an Odyssey of the Mind team. The group can be of any size and made up of any individuals with no age limitations. It can be a family, a class, a team, a group of friends—anyone who wants to help their community. In Odyssey Angels “Outside Assistance” is a good thing!

Who does Odyssey Angels benefit?
The focus of an Odyssey Angel group can be anything within the neighborhood they live in. Groups should look for anything that could use creative problem-solving. This is the chance for students to utilize their strengths and help others. Aside from communities around the world that will benefit, participants that form an Odyssey Angels team will also learn important lessons in teamwork, creative problem-solving, compassion, and more.

How is it a competition?
Each group will register with the program. Odyssey Angel teams will explain their charity project and results. Then CCI will choose one that it considers to be not only creative, but beneficial to the community. Up to five representatives of that group will be invited to World Finals as special guests and be able to present its experiences at the Creativity Festival.

How much does it cost?
There is no charge to become an Odyssey Angel. The only responsibility is to find creative ways to help solve a problem within your local community and attempt to do it.

What are the deadlines to participate?
While your project could start and end any time you wish, in order to be in the running to attend World Finals you must enroll in the program by January 15, 2015. You can work on your project whenever you wish, however, you must report on your results by April 1, 2015. If you have enrolled in the program before the deadline, you will receive a "Progress Report" form that must be returned by the April 1 in order to be considered to attend World Finals.

Learn more at odysseyangels.org
The Tropical region will feature Odyssey Angels service projects completed by registered teams in Miami-Dade County at the regional tournament as well as on the website.
ODYSSEY OF THE MIND
2014-15 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Questions? Email info@odysseyofthemind.com or call 856.256.2797

For new memberships or renewals, complete this form and return it with a check, purchase order, or credit card information below.

Check one:

Divisions I, II, and III:

______ Individual school: Must register in the school name. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.

______ Two or more schools: Must share the same principal to be under the same membership. Use school district name on application. May enter one team per problem per division in competition.

______ Home-schooled students: Must include at least four home-schooled students. May also include up to three members from one school. May enter one team per problem in competition.

______ Community Group: May enter one team per problem per division in competition. May not be an organization established solely for the purpose of participating in Odyssey of the Mind. Please submit by-laws if this is a new membership.

Division IV:

______ All team members must be high school graduates and registered for at least one class at a college or university. They do not have to attend the same institution. May enter one team per problem. May proceed directly to World Finals.

Membership name ____________________________ Membership number (for renewal, if known) __________________

Grades covered by membership __________ School district __________ County __________

Contact person (may be a coach) __________________ Mailing address (for correspondence) ________________________

City ____________________________ State/Prov __________ Zip __________ Country ____________________________

Daytime phone ____________________________ Email __________________ FAX __________________

*Each individual membership costs $135, but you will receive discounts if you purchase more than one membership. For each membership purchased, you get five competitive long-term problems, one primary problem, one copy of the Program Guide, and more!

______ Individual 2014-15 Odyssey of the Mind Membership @ $135 ________________________________

______ Additional membership(s) for the same school or community group @ $100 ______________________

______ 6-10 memberships for the same school district (must register at the same time) @ $120 ______________

______ 11 or more memberships from the same school district (registered at the same time) @ $100 ________

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND SUPPORT MATERIALS

______ A Creative Experience @ $9.95 Odyssey of the Mind promotional DVD _____________________________

** Lots of Problems... And Tips to Make You More Creative @ $17 Tips on problem-solving ______________________

** Creative Interaction @ $17 Discusses the importance of interaction between students ________________

** Applying Your Creativity @ $15 Discusses different types of human creativity ________________________

The Spirit of Creativity @ $15 Anecdotes about OotM written by Dr. Sam _________________________________

** Spontaneous Combustion @ $7.50 Booklet of spontaneous problems and tips __________________________

Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide @ $7.50 (one is automatically included with membership) __________

Coaches Training Video @ $20 DVD with tips and techniques for coaches ________________________________

packs of Balsa Wood (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ $20 per bundle (50 pieces) ________________

Spend $40 or more and get free Shipping & Handling! Contact CCI for international S&H.

Orders under $40 add $7.50 for S&H. There is no S&H charge for membership packets.

** These are books with a collection of long-term and/or spontaneous problems from past years.

Payment Methods (Sorry we do not accept phone orders.)

• U.S. Mail: Send this completed form along with a check or Purchase Order, payable to CCI, or with your credit card info to: CCI: 406 Ganttown Road Sewell, NJ 08080

• FAX: Send this form along with a copy of your Purchase Order or credit card information and fax to (856) 256.2798.

• Online: Pay by credit card at www.odysseyofthemind.com.

______ VISA ______ Master Card ______ American Express ______ Discover

Acct # ____________________________________________

Exp. ______________________ CSV (security code) __________________

Signature of cardholder ____________________________________________

Shipping Address (For UPS Delivery)

Is this a residence? ______ yes ______ no

Name __________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________

City ____________________________ State/Prov ______________________

Zip ____________________________ Country _______________________

Phone # ____________________________

Subtotal ____________________________

S&H _________

Total ____________________________

** These are books with a collection of long-term and/or spontaneous problems from past years.