1997 ACM Mid-Central Regional Programming Contest

Notes to Judges

Read the *Error Messages* and *Notes to Teams* right now. . . . Done? OK.

The judges' diskette contains one subdirectory for each problem, which includes the description in PostScript, the source file, the input and output files, and an MS-DOS executable. The diskette also contains a subdirectory called `JUDGE` that includes some batch files and utilities that I have used in the past as a local head judge. If you do not already have a tried-and-true method for judging, you might want to take a look at them. Instructions are in the `read.me` file.

Regardless of what judging method you use, remember:

- If a program is correct, the team's output file will match the correct output file exactly. If the match is not exact, you will have to do a visual inspection to tell whether the problem is a wrong answer or a presentation error.
- Remove a team's diskette or write-protect it before judging to ensure that nothing is written to it.
- Always copy a fresh set of correct input and output files before judging a run, because teams' programs have been known to trash files.

There are no problem-specific notes as in previous years. If there is an error or ambiguity, let me know immediately.

I have made four changes from previous contests that I hope will both enhance competition and simplify judging. First, problem solutions are unique and must be formatted exactly, so output can be judged using a file comparison utility. Second, all problems will be judged with one test file (which of course will include multiple test cases). Third, all input files have sentinels that signal the end of the input, so it is not necessary for teams to detect end-of-file. (End-of-file handling differs between languages and sometimes between different compilers for the same language. It can cause problems for teams using tools that they're not used to.) Fourth, the problems are easier this year.

From easiest to hardest, I rank the problems as follows: *The Snail*, *Skew Binary*, *Sum It Up*, *Haiku Review*, *Oil Deposits*, *WIMP*.

I expect you to be busier than usual this year. Hopefully all teams will be able to solve at least one problem. It would not surprise me if strong teams solve the first five problems in three hours or less. *WIMP* may slow teams down a bit; the solution is not conceptually difficult, but there are a lot of cases to keep track of.

I'd like to thank John Cigas from Rockhurst for *WIMP*, and Andy Harrington from Loyola for *Sum It Up*. I wrote the other four problems.

If you have any questions email me at `ACM97@cnas.smsu.edu`. If it's an emergency call me at 417–836–4944.

Best of luck,

Eric Shade
Regional Chief Judge