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BY BRIGITTE RUTHMAN  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

LITCHFIELD — Fearing for his life, Peter Brown said he was terrified when three men confronted him at gunpoint at the door to his New Hartford home four years ago. He repeated the words, "I was terrified," three times on the witness stand under questioning by Senior Assistant

State's Attorney David Shannon on Wednesday at Litchfield Superior Court.

Two men already have admitted their roles in the crime. Andre White, the third, denied he has ever been to New Hartford and elected to have a jury of six decide his fate. He has been held on \$900,000 bond since his arrest in 2013.

"I thought it was a joke,"

said Brown, who was arriving home in his BMW from a trip to Boston at 11:30 p.m. on April 7, 2013. He saw two figures emerging from the darkness, walking toward him, and then a third. Their faces were concealed. "They wanted money."

They ripped a phone from the wall and sat him down at his kitchen table at gunpoint. They demanded money and

safe was. Brown handed over the \$30 he had in his wallet. An ATM bank card was used to withdraw \$1,300 more from his account.

"Someone said, 'If he tries anything, shoot him,'" Brown testified.

The men took turns ransacking the house, pulling

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# JOURNEY OF THE MIND



JACQUELINE STOUGHTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Lewis Mills High School student Lucy Gottfried, 15, of Harwinton, helped create the scenery and props used during her Odyssey of the Mind group's long-term challenge, where they had to write and perform a skit about inspiring the work of famous artists.

## Region 10 students tap into creativity to reach world finals

BY JACQUELINE STOUGHTON  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**J**oining Odyssey of the Mind, a creative thinking program at Region 10 schools, fittingly requires a statement of creativity.

Lewis Mills High School student Alisha Petrosky recalled wearing hers.

"I wasn't recommended to

join the program in third grade like everyone else," said Petrosky, a 14-year-old from Burlington. "It wasn't until I wore a dress and boots I made entirely out of duct tape and cardboard that I got to join the following year."

Petrosky and her teammates will return to the Odyssey of the Mind world finals for the third time after placing second in the state competition on March 18 at

Southern Connecticut State University.

"It's an amazing experience to grow, work together and stand for what the Odyssey stands for, which is innovative and creative thinking," said Petrosky, a four-year veteran of the group of Harwinton and Burlington teens. "It develops skills beyond what we do here in school. The way you think in Odyssey fills in the gaps of

what school doesn't teach."

Odyssey of the Mind is an international program that promotes creative problem solving during competitions. Students must complete long-term projects that require them to build something, or write and perform a skit that follows specific guidelines, all while staying under a strict \$125 budget for materials.

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JACQUELINE STOUGHTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Lewis Mills High School students, from left, Alisha Petrosky, 14, of Burlington, Tanya Weingart, 16, of Harwinton, and Lucy Gottfried, 15, of Harwinton, stand with their Odyssey of the Mind 'creativtree' prop made out of recycled household items. They had to stay within their assigned \$125 budget.

## ODYSSEY: Team effort pays off

*Continued from 1B*

Students also participate in a spontaneous challenge that requires verbal answers to questions. Each answer must be a more creative, play-on-words response rather than the obvious.

"The challenges focus on topics like the arts, building and technology, and different ways of using it creatively," said Lucy Gottfried, 15, of Harwinton. "They focus on creativity and team work."

In addition to Petrosky and Gottfried, the Region 10 group includes Tanya Weingart, 16, of Harwinton; Aidan O'Connor, 14, of Harwinton, and Sasha Ahmed, 15, of Burlington. They performed a skit for their long-term challenge in which they traveled in time and witnessed

Omar the raccoon — the Odyssey of the Mind mascot — inspire the artwork of famous artists such as Vincent van Gogh. The group received a perfect score at the state competition.

The Lewis Mills squad will perform the same skit again at the upcoming world finals on May 24-28 at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

"It's an opportunity to meet other people from different parts of the country and from all over the world," Gottfried said.

Nancy Gottfried, Lucy's mother and Lewis Mills' volunteer coach, noted that her team will be competing against students from countries such as Poland, China and Korea, where Odyssey of the Mind is part of the school

curriculum, not an extracurricular activity like it is in Region 10.

She said her team's success is the result of their complementary talents and strong relationships.

"I call them my dream team," Gottfried said. "I really marvel at their different strengths. Their teamwork and friendships with each other really makes them more like a family."

Despite their busy extracurricular schedules, the students value participating in the competitions each year and recognize the benefits Odyssey has had in other areas of their studies.

"It's a creative, positive and free-form environment," Petrosky said. "There's no limitations on our minds when we put them together."

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