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Chair of the Host  
Organizing  
Committee of the  
XXI International  
Olympiad in  
Informatics



## Casting for champions

to which the outstanding students in each age group from 6th to 10th class, were involved in the network of camps and workshops. There were three camps and workshops a year and we had 11 altogether. Since the very beginning, there was a core of some 50 students, with still some 60-70 orbiting around them. The teams who took part in big

dates. Even now, on the national teams there are people who demonstrated their abilities at the very beginning. There are also others who grew up during all these years and developed their talents. A methodology was elaborated for conducting the sessions in the camps and workshops, as sport, excursions and interesting activities were provided for the kids in parallel. Another important aspect was the teachers who worked with them and their professional development.

A leading role in the organization of this process was played by Silvia Kantcheva - Chief Expert

### The Awards

The medals for the winners - gold, silver, and bronze, have already arrived at the IOI venue in Plovdiv. They are custom made by the Mint of Bulgaria.

The International Information Processing Association will give a special award to the youngest medalist.

The contestant with most points will be the winner of the National Award of Egypt. This award was initiated in 2008.

A new insignia of honor for this competition is the John Atanasov - Junior Award, initiated as a counterpart of the President's John Atanasov prize given for scientific achievements in the field of Information Technology. The Junior version will be awarded for the most ingenious solution of the competition tasks. The prize winners will receive statuettes made by sculptor Tsvyatko Siromashki featuring elements of computer keyboard and a mask of John Atanasov.

When the decision was made in 2005 that the twenty-first Olympiad be held in Bulgaria, we felt a surge of elation. However, immediately after that, we buckled down to hard work considering how we should prepare the

teams in order to perform to expectations. There have always been special expectations of us - yet we initiated the international competitions in Informatics in 1989. Furthermore, 2009 would celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first international Olympiad. During all that time, our teams were always among the top performers, and our contestants came back home with medals.

We arrived at the conclusion that in the selection and preparation of the teams we had to apply an approach that was novel to us. It is well known that Bulgaria has a well developed system of competitions for school students in a number of subjects, including Informatics. The system was good and it worked, but we wanted to do something more. We elaborated a program according

### ANNIVERSARY

In addition to the traditional format of the competition, our forum includes the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the first IOI. Veterans from the first competition - team leaders, organizers, and Jury will be presented with special plaques. There will also be a commemoration spot featuring the first personal computers PRAVETS used by the team members of the 13 countries that took part in the first IOI in Bulgaria. The 21st IOI is attended by 83 participating countries.

competitions were selected based on the students' performance in the local competitions for a certain period of time, and there was a permanent competition among the candi-

in Informatics and Information Technology at the Ministry of Education and Science, under that name at the time. The academic managers of these 7-day camps and workshops had special assignments to elaborate the curricula and syllabi. I cannot, but name the person who had the most substantial input - Professor Stoyan Kapralov from the Technical University in Gabrovo. The

first camp and workshop was held on his ground, as the university contributed a lot in finetuning the underlying idea. We did our best to make sure that this model and the high level be maintained throughout the following „editions“ of the schools hosted by the Mathematical School in Smolyan, the Varna Free University, the Mathematical School in Blagoevgrad, the University of Ruse, the Mathematical School in Haskovo, the Burgas State University and last, but not least, by the newly founded National Centre for Gifted Children in Sofia. The Ministry of Education financed two camps and workshops a year, and the United States Agency for International Development covered the expenses for the third one.