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**UW OSHKOSH MASTERS PROGRAM • COBA EARNS MAXIMUM REACCREDITATION
ENTREPRENEURSHIP • THE WORLD'S CHILDREN • HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE**

equine retail store in Green Bay. I have lots of (growth) options: lessons, hiring other trainers, giving classes, mail order, internet and addition retail locations."

Despite the long hours and hard work, Otto doesn't regret taking the entrepreneur path.

"I'm not sorry at all," she said. "I like my job and I don't have to deal with corporate red tape when making decisions."

WILLIAM SOLBOE

It's all in the game we know as
MUSIC MAYHEM!

William Solboe tapped into the universality of music, drew on his broad interests, work experiences and diverse educational background to create Music Mayhem, a lively musical board game.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus nurtured the Music Mayhem concept for more than a decade as it evolved from a simple road trip pastime he and his University friends played to a sophisticated, professionally structured contest of music knowledge and recall.

Music Mayhem is billed as a wildly competitive board game for music lovers. It is an inclusive game that can involve an entire roomful of people—up to six players or teams—and caters to a variety of interests. It requires a designated DJ and the objective is to guess the artist or title.

During the past six months Solboe introduced the game at Toy Fair 2000—the world's largest toy show—in New York, made television appearances, gave sales demonstrations in Chicago, was host at a Music Mayhem night at the University's Reeve Memorial Union, and took his first orders—the initial order was through the University Bookstore—for the game. It retails for \$35.

While Solboe was an undergraduate at UW Oshkosh majoring in biology and French, the game only was a sketch of an idea. Elaboration developed during free time in the ensuing years. In his professional life he was employed at Grace Tec Systems in Green Bay and later at the firm's European headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany. Fluent in French and German, Solboe incorporated into the game project his varied business expertise and familiarity with trade shows.

Although a success as his company's representative in Frankfurt, there was another side of Solboe that clamored for attention. Along with extensive travel, the sales position with the Green Bay-based



Music Mayhem creator discusses the game.

firm allowed him to work with many individuals and develop working relationships.

"When I tired of the travel, I (considered) what I liked about the job...and decided to use those aspects in a career more suited to who I am," Solboe said.

He left what many would regard a dream career to earn a master's degree in counseling at UW Oshkosh. In graduate school he moved along on three fronts: business administration, counseling and The Game. He qualified for a graduate assistantship in the College of Business Administration, an internship at the Grand Avenue School in Milwaukee offered experience in personal and career counseling, and the campus setting provided an ideal testing arena for Music Mayhem.

"I left a very good sales job to go back to school to get a counseling degree," he said. "I took a leap with the promise of greater satisfaction in helping others and to be more of who I am. I can always go back. I know what I can do. It was (a matter of) discovering what I *could* do."

As a COBA graduate assistant he met faculty members such as David Hegedus and Stan Sibley and Brian Lilly.

"I bounced a lot of ideas off Brian. He was a helpful resource with contacts with key people to reach beyond the University," Solboe said. "I met Burk Tower through the entrepreneurship society on campus. I received good advice from him...very wise."

Solboe sees possibilities in everything. He sternly disciplined himself to concentrate and follow through on Music

Mayhem. It took nearly three years of play testing and feedback before he had a strong working model of a game that functioned well within a set of logical playing rules.

A born risk-taker, Solboe is open to trying new things, even things in which he may not excel. Since his paper route days when he became a model of efficiency—so he "wouldn't miss out on anything"—his parents "encouraged and warmly supported" his plans and ambitions.

"Dad (a retired Wisconsin Public Service Co. chemical engineer) knows and trusts that I can make the right decisions for myself," he said. "Mom was a fun person who truly enjoyed life, enjoyed getting to know and helping people."

His wife Robin, a doctoral candidate in school psychology at UW-Milwaukee, continues in the supportive role.

"It's been a struggle," he said. "Both of us in school. Student loans. Debts. Robin is not as much of a risk taker. She grounds me and gives me balance. I need to talk things out (to) come to conclusions. She listens to all my ideas and believes in me."

His dream to set up a company that employs people with disabilities and help them discover their abilities has qualified him for a small Wisconsin Department of Commerce grant for Music Mayhem.

"I want to do serious work with employees to allow people with disabilities to be more involved," he said. "They are often lost or not included in the work place."

Despite two university degrees and an experience-packed life, Solboe says he's not an expert at anything. Yet nothing has been wasted. It really is all in the game...