

# For Fitness Build Health

► THE UNITED STATES should not aim to be a nation of weight lifters but should build up physical fitness on a layer of good health that will carry through adult life, a Tufts University doctor told the American Medical Association meeting in Atlantic City.

The President's Council on Youth Fitness needs to re-evaluate its tests so they will be aimed at normal activities and not at training to do four squat thrusts or push-ups in ten seconds, Dr. Harold M. Sterling said.

After tests given to first and second grade children in Weston and Needham, Mass., Dr. Sterling said nearly two-thirds passed the youth fitness requirements.

"But 70% of these children have had some informal training such as swimming," he explained. "Trained high school athletes did no better."

These tests do not give the measure of health that is needed, he said, pointing out that they have not been precise enough in questions of efficiency, muscle tone and heart-lung capacity.

Doctors in many cases have been lax in following up reports from schools, Dr. Sterling said.

"The school doctor or nurse sends a note home about some physical problem and a lot of busy family doctors say the child will outgrow it. Several years later the same doctor will send a note back saying the child should not participate in sports because the condition has grown worse."

The same persons this busy doctor is treating for heart attacks might not be having them if their cardiovascular condition had been recognized and treated at a younger age, Dr. Sterling warned.

Asking the question "fitness for what?" the Tufts professor of medicine and rehabilitation answered "normal adult activities and a more satisfactory life span."

"People engaged in heavy athletics tend to have degenerative diseases early," he said, adding that many parents are to blame for pushing their children to be successful athletes.

Dr. Sterling does not agree with the viewpoint that American boys and girls are dangerously unfit. He put the burden of keeping them in good health on the home and the family doctor in cooperation with the school health program.

• Science News Letter, 84:11 July 6, 1963

COMMUNICATIONS

# Radio Hams Tune Up

► MORE THAN 15,000 American and Canadian radio amateurs set up tents and antennas in woods, deserts, on beaches and river rafts for their annual "Field Day" drill for a general disaster.

Many of those who took part are veterans at helping people in real emergencies.

A man from Silver Spring, Md., for example, once tuned his homemade radio set in on a call from a freighter in the South Atlantic.

A crewman was sick and nobody on the ship knew what to do for him. The nearest doctor was more than 1,000 miles away. The amateur radio operator jotted down the crewman's symptoms and phoned the information to a doctor in a nearby hospital. He then relayed to the men on the freighter the doctor's diagnosis and suggested treatment.

On the West Coast another "ham" operator warned people living in the coastal town of Naknek, Alaska, that a 90-foot-high tidal wave was roaring toward them. The townsfolk fled in time.

Ham operators have served people in hundreds of emergencies when normal communications were knocked out. They were the main contact with victims of the recent typhoon in Guam, the great fire at Galveston, Tex., the earthquake in Chile and countless floods and blizzards.

They have helped victims of war, too. To the hams the weekend's drill was just a "QSO party."

QSO is their code for "contact." Each team of hams tried to contact as many other teams as it could.

Teams got points for the number of

QSO's they made and the type of power they used. Extra credit was given for using off-beat sources such as batteries or gasoline-driven or hand-cranked generators. At least one member of each team was posted at the radio set during the entire drill.

Most sets are built by the hams themselves, at an average cost of about \$800. The amateurs, however, are forbidden to take money for anything they transmit or receive.

"We help out whenever we can, simply for the love of it," said George Hart, national emergency coordinator for the American Radio Relay League, Inc., which sponsored the field day.

Sometimes, however, hams use their radios in small, personal emergencies.

The daughter of a Minnesota ham, for instance, was nearly in tears because her teacher had asked her to write a paper on strange animals. She could not think of anything original to write.

Her father twisted dials and reached another ham near Sydney, Australia. The Australian regaled the girl with stories about koalas and kangaroos, and, we heard, the girl got an "A" on her paper.

A Mississippi ham, driving through a desolate section of the state on his way to his field day site, got stuck in mud. He unwrapped his radio and sent out a "Mayday" call.

No nearby station picked up his message, but a ham in Panama did. The information was then relayed from Central America back to Mississippi. Help came within an hour.

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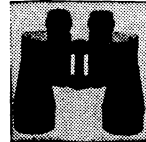
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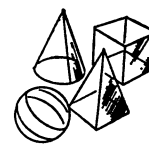
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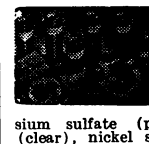
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