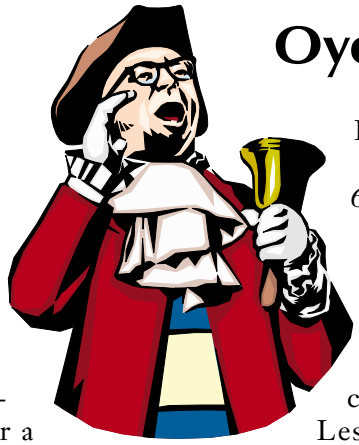
Hear ye, hear ye!



The CMA is notifying all members that its 1998 annual meeting will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, from Sept. 6–9, 1998, and that the business session is open to every member. This session, which will be held Sept. 9 after General Council's deliberations end, considers business and issues referred by General Council. It gives every member a chance to direct questions at the Board of Directors. Any bylaws or regulations made or revised by General Council become effective when adopted by a majority of members attending the business session. Further information is available from the CMA Meetings and Travel Department, 1867 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa ON K1G 3Y6; 800 267-9703.

Oyez! Oyez!

L'AMC avise les membres que son assemblée annuelle aura lieu à Whitehorse (Yukon), du 6 au 9 septembre 1998, et que la séance d'affaires est ouverte à tous les membres. Au cours de cette séance, qui aura lieu le 9 septembre à la fin du Conseil général, les membres étudient les affaires de l'AMC et les questions que lui soumet le Conseil général et ont l'occasion d'interroger le Conseil d'administration. Les sections des Règlements administratifs ajoutées ou modifiées par le Conseil général n'entrent en vigueur qu'une fois adoptées par une majorité des membres présents à la séance d'affaires. Pour obtenir des renseignements additionnels, veuillez communiquer avec le Service des conférences et voyages de l'AMC, 1867, promenade Alta Vista, Ottawa (Ontario) K1G 3Y6; tél. : 800 267-9703.

Childhood bone density studied at UBC

Researchers at the University of British Columbia are investigating the link between bone density and physical activity in more than 200 children aged 8 and 9. Richmond, a Vancouver suburb with a high proportion of Asian residents, was chosen as site for the unique project because the researchers want to look at cultural differences affecting diet and activity levels. About 25% of the children are Asian, 50% Caucasian and the rest are from other ethnic backgrounds.

Dr. Heather McKay, who is leading the study at UBC's School of Human Kinetics, says that recent literature is focusing more on younger children, based on the belief that children are becoming less physically active and more susceptible to osteoporosis later in life. The declining emphasis on physical education programs in elementary schools — most BC schools offer only 2 or 3 physical education classes weekly — may be a factor.

In the study, the children are being randomly divided into control and experimental groups, with the experimental group receiving an extra physical education class each week that involves weight-bearing exercises such as tuck jumps and hopping. This is the first project in Canada to test the effect of these high-impact activities on bone density. Dr. Jerilynn Prior, an endocrinologist and study adviser, has "high expectations that the study will show a significantly greater increase in bone density that appears to be related to the exercises, which gives us an opportunity to prevent osteoporosis."

Asians are generally thought to fracture bones less than Caucasians because of their smaller body build, a factor McKay describes as "geometric protection." This may not, however, be a factor with this generation. Height and weight measurements taken at the start of the study revealed no significant differences between the Asian and Caucasian participants.

Differences that do exist were determined through questionnaires on nutrition and physical activity that the participants completed. The Caucasian children consume significantly more calcium than the Asian youngsters, although the latter group still received the same number of calories in their diet. In terms of physical activity, the Caucasian children also rated much higher than the Asian children.

Bone densitometry testing was carried out last October, and retesting is scheduled for this month. McKay says results from the first test revealed "a trend toward lower bone mineral" in the lumbar spines and femurs of the Asian children.

McKay, who plans to continue the project for another year, wants to present her findings to the provincial Ministry of Education. Prior says that if the exercise intervention shows positive results, "then ideally the [elementary school] curriculum would be remodelled to include jumping kinds of activities." — © *Heather Kent*