

successful accomplishments of the club members is reward beyond price for these adults.

To make the responsibilities of these adults (who are referred to as science club sponsors) easier, Science Clubs of America sends booklets, folders and materials of helps, aids and suggestions regularly to each club. There is no charge for this aid from headquarters. It not may makes direction of the club an easier matter for the sponsor but keeps each club acquainted with the activities of all clubs so that they can learn from one another in the true spirit of science.

There is no limit to the number of science clubs that can be formed in any locality. In areas where many are in existence they have exchange meetings and science congresses and conferences to demonstrate their experiments to one another and thus speed up their learning. Newspapers, industries, museums of science, colleges, etc., foster large numbers of science clubs and by helping these youngsters to achieve their goals are themselves making a major contribution to American science.

In many states where there are academies of science and similar groups, these bodies of professional scientists have taken over the responsibility of providing inspiration and assistance to the most promising of the science club members. This provides the youngsters help when they need it most and will in time profit those states by increasing the number of well-trained and competent scientists.

There is no charge for affiliation with Science Clubs of America. The administration of the organization is a contribution to science by Science Service.

*Science News Letter, October 16, 1943*

#### NAVAL SCIENCE

### Landing Ship Opens Jaws To Let Out Fighting Men

See Front Cover

► THE NAVY calls them "one of the most startling types of ship the war has produced," although they are known officially as LST, Landing Ship—Tank.

They have been built in shipyards located on inland rivers and at Great Lakes ports. Now they are operating in the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Mediterranean. Some of the way stations have been Attu, Rendova, Sicily, Kiska, Munda and New Guinea.

The picture on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is an official U. S. Navy photograph.

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#### Natural Inventions

► MAN'S invincible egotism is reflected in the names he gives to natural objects and structures which his own mechanical inventions chance to resemble. If someone mentions a pitcher-plant, or a hammerhead shark, or a shoebill stork, we all conjure up a vision of the fantastic creature at once, and think how aptly it was named—disregarding the fact that these things existed long before any human being had contrived a pitcher, or a hammer, or a shoe, or any other artifact; long before human beings were on the scene at all.

Fish and other sea creatures seem to have been especial victims of this tendency of man to play the part of a god and make things, not in his own image, but in the image of his handiwork. Thus we have such names as sawfish, swordfish, pipefish, filefish, ribbonfish, threadfish, swordtail, sailfish, gafftops' catfish, and a hundred others. Sometimes they are named not for their actual appearance but for the fancied resemblance of their activities to our own, as in the fiddler crab, angler-fish, archer-fish, drumfish. One such naming seems to be justified: inkfish. Men use the dark fluid secreted by this squid (which is not a real fish) for ink; its brown tint is known in the water-colorist's box by the mollusk's zoological name: *Sepia*.

Fish are not the only examples of this tendency to name natural things for artificial objects or activities. Plants, especially wildflowers, come in for a lot of it. Consider: bottle tree, barrel cactus, organ-pipe cactus, Indian paintbrush, Indian pipe, lady's slipper, Venus' fly-trap, Venus' mirror, Solomon's seal, Dutchman's breeches, trumpet-flower, pincushion flower, Spanish bayonet, silversword, swordgrass, sawgrass, chain

fern, shield fern, sword fern, cannon-ball tree, bellflower, screw palm, sword bean, knife bean, inkberry, telegraph plant.

Sometimes a shape will reflect itself in half-a-dozen names. There's a whole set of cups, for example: buttercup, creamcup, cupweed, leathercup, death-cup mushroom. Or a particular texture will sponsor several plants: silk-oak: satinwood, velvet-leaf.

In a few cases, the process has been reversed, and man acknowledges his debt. Such names may recognize merely chance or fanciful resemblances, such as a carpenter's horse or catheads on a ship or fire-dogs on the hearth or worm-gears in machinery. Or they may show a definite tendency for man to study the works of nature and profit thereby, as in gull-winged airplanes and beaver-tailed boats and caterpillar tractors. But such conscious honesty on our part is still rare.

*Science News Letter, October 16, 1943*

#### GENERAL SCIENCE

### Field Museum of Chicago Has Fiftieth Anniversary

► THE RAPIDLY growing youngster among the world's leading museums, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago celebrated its fiftieth birthday on September 16.

"It is probable," says Orr Goodson, acting director, "that founder Marshall Field and those other civic-minded men associated with the museum's birth never quite hoped that the museum could in such a short space of time achieve the outstanding position it holds today—one of the four leading natural history museums of the world."

Among the older museums are the 190-year-old British Museum, the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History.

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#### MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY

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#### THE JAMES MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY,

the only such book now published, provides standard definitions of the terms and phrases from arithmetic through elementary differential equations; the technical terms ordinarily used in the applications of these subjects, and more advanced basic terms. Easy examples, many illustrations and all sorts of formulas are included. The appendix contains tables of weights and measures, a list of mathematical symbols and the tables ordinarily used in handbooks. This dictionary is a great deal more than a collection of definitions. It explains, illustrates and correlates, stressing especially those operations that are hardest to understand. One reader has called it "Ten texts in one." Available in flexible or non-flexible binding, for \$3.00, from the Digest Press, Dept. 3-B, Van Nuys, California, or Science News Letter.