

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **WASHER-DRYER TOY** for the little miss actually washes and spin dries. It has a selector switch, automatic timer and on-off light. A topside window allows the action to be watched. The toy is  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide, 7 inches deep and 10 inches high.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **GLASS MARKER** combines a titanium marking stylus in an anodized-aluminum holder. Glass, quartz and ceramics can be marked with a layer of titanium that is described as not weakening the surface of the material. The titanium is impervious to solvents, heat, steam, and almost all laboratory and industrial processes.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **SHATTERPROOF MIRRORS** are made from plastic. They are described as resilient, lightweight, scratch resistant; they do not become brittle in cold weather. The plastic can be machined by almost any method used on metals. It is available in flat sheets of standard sizes up to 48 by 60 inches and in varying thicknesses.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS**, complete with leaves and stems, are molded from polyethylene plastic. The flowers and their parts can be turned or bent in any way



desired. Carnations, roses, jonquils, daisies, tulips, and even ferns, shown in the photograph, are available in different colors and sizes.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **BLACK-WALNUT CRACKER** resembles a vise with a crank handle. The nut is held between the thumb and the

forefinger of one hand, as the other turns a cranking screw. A cup at the screws' head cracks the nut. Interchangeable cracking cups make it possible to crack pecans, hickories and other nuts.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **MAGNETIC TICKTACKTOE** is a pocket-size game. A three and one-half by six-inch magnetic board holds 10 red and yellow magnetic buttons. The buttons may also be used to attach messages, notices, etc. to bulletin board, stove, dashboard, or other places.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **CHARCOAL IGNITER** does not use liquid fuels. It has a fire ring supported by a gold-anodized aluminum tube that is placed over charcoal and covered with more charcoal. The igniter is plugged into an electrical outlet and heats enough to fire the charcoal.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958

⚙️ **MAGNETIC NAIL HOLDER** helps avoid smashed fingers. It also permits hammering in tight spaces and out-of-the-way spots. A nail or tack is inserted between magnetized prongs. The tool can also be used to pick up loose pins, staples and paper clips.

Science News Letter, August 16, 1958



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► WEEK IN and week out, the year round, the same 30 miles of road had to be driven.

There was scrub oak, young pine stands, a few poor farms, and a bit of salt water marsh along the way, but this provided little of interest after a while. The drive was boring, 30 miles to be driven at 65 miles per hour.

This was the way it started out. Later this stretch of road and the weekly drive became a source of excitement.

The change occurred when the driver began to notice the birds on the telephone wires and shoulders of the road. At first he simply noted how many different kinds of birds he saw in one trip: 14 different species the first count, then 13, then 17, with some different kinds popping up each day.

At this point, his curiosity became aroused.

He began to keep simple records each trip of what species he saw and how many

### Roadside Adventure



of each. As the seasons changed, he began to note the rise or fall in abundance of certain birds, their sudden arrival or their straggling departure.

At the end of 12 months of these roadside observations, the driver had recorded 60 different species of birds along this strip of road.

Some of the birds he saw were relatively rare or spectacular: a flock of 500 white ibises, a Mississippi kite, a bald eagle and a wild turkey. But equally interesting were the lessons he learned about which birds

were summer or winter residents and which stayed there all year around.

He saw his first belted kingfisher perched over its private fishing pool on Aug. 20 and the last on March 11. Likewise, three wintering robins first appeared on Dec. 12 on this Florida roadside. A peak of 103 robins occurred on Jan. 24, with the last one seen on March 14.

Up from their tropical winter homes were the eastern kingbirds, which he first saw on April 3. These cocky birds ruled the telephone wires until the last one was seen on Sept. 9.

The driver found not only birds now, but from time to time a raccoon at the edge of the marsh, a fox squirrel in the scrub oaks, or a bull snake slithering off the highway.

Each of these drives, week in, week out, the year round, had become an eagerly anticipated field trip. There was no more boredom. And the 30 miles, now driven at 45 miles per hour, seemed to slip by many times faster than at the old breakneck velocity.

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