

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 954. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **FAST-DRYING ENAMEL** designed for the homeowner dries in 15 minutes. It can be used for interior and exterior surfaces. The paint is also described as being non-toxic. It is available in 18 colors, including aluminum and a crystal clear product, in half pints through five-gallon sizes.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **POCKET ADDING MACHINE** imported from Germany adds and subtracts up to 9,999.99. The adding device measures five inches by two and one-half inches. It comes in a lizard grain case and has a metal stylus.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **PORTABLE NAVIGATION SYSTEM** employs transistorized, miniaturized base stations, as well as position indicators. The system is probably the smallest electronic navigation and radiolocation system in the world. It can be set up in less than one-half hour and does not require line-of-sight operation.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **GOLFING GLOVE** is made of leather and processed with a chrome complex. It sheds rain and keeps moisture off hands and grips, but is easily washed, drying soft



and pliable. The glove, shown in the photograph, covers the entire hand and has holes for ventilation.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **LIGHT DIFFUSERS** for the do-it-yourself homeowner are designed to cover bare fluorescent light fixtures. The prefabricated light-diffusing material is made of a

rigid vinyl plastic. Several types of diffusers are available for different applications.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **PORTABLE MIRROR** has a suction cup for mounting it on glass, tile or plastic. Contained in an all rubber housing, the magnifying mirror has a swivel neck so it can be placed in almost any position. Measuring four inches in diameter, the mirror can also be used in an automobile.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **RADIO-INTERCOM UNIT** provides radio music or two-way inter-communication to children's room, patio, workshop or garage. The radio is a five-tube, AC-DC super-hetrodyne with self-contained speaker. The external speaker is equipped with 50 feet of wire with plug inserts.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958

⚙️ **DISPOSABLE SHAVING KIT** the size of a cigarette package contains a throw-away razor and enough brushless cream for one shave. The razor is made of a styrene plastic and has a built-in precision blade. The razor is available for use in vending machines, hospitals and home guest rooms.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ THERE IS NO question why a woodpecker is called a woodpecker. The mockingbird, yellow-legs, warbler, thrasher, chickadee and blackbird are likewise aptly named for songs, habits or plumage. But what about some of the less obvious names? Why, for instance, is a plover called a plover?

This takes a little field work in the dictionary to resolve. Plover, we find, comes from the Old French word "plovier," meaning the rain bird. For this bird which visits the fields of Europe at plowing time, plover then is a happy choice of name.

The petrel has a picturesque origin for its name. The word comes from the diminutive form of "Peter." No doubt this dainty seabird's name is an allusion to its apparent ability to walk on the water as it skims the surface of the sea.

### Stories Behind Names



The jaeger, a large predatory seabird, is well-named too. Its title comes from a Germanic word for "hunter," in keeping with its habits as a bird of prey. Another name befitting the power and skill of its possessor is that of the osprey, or fish hawk. "Osprey" is an altered, anglicized form of a Latin term meaning "the bone breaker."

The grackle gets its name from the Latin "graculus," which can be translated as "jackdaw." The real jackdaw, however, can claim an old English heritage for its appellation if it wants to claim it. You see, the word "daw" means "simpleton."

The egret's name is derived from the typical tuft of long, graceful plumes ("aigrettes" in French) which the bird dons during the breeding season. Another water bird, the merganser, earns its name by its habits. In Latin, the word "mergus" means a diver, while "anser" is a goose. Put together, this adds up to "diving goose," a fit description of the merganser.

These are examples of names the meanings of which are easily discovered. More numerous perhaps are those names so ancient that their original significance is totally lost, reflecting the age-old relationship between man and birds.

Science News Letter, September 27, 1958