

• 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 1055. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **TIMED EXTENSION CORD** will automatically turn off electric appliances at end of a preset time. The portable time switch can be set for up to four hours. As many as three appliances can be simultaneously controlled from this device.

• Science News Letter, 78:160 September 3, 1960

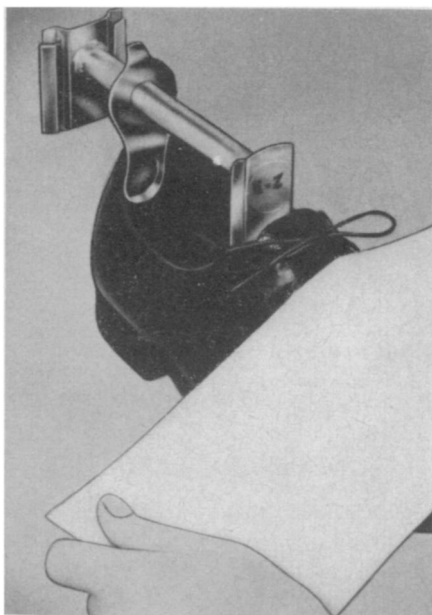
⚙️ **ILLUMINATED MAGNIFYING VIEWER** for work benches allows full three-dimensional perception through a large, 6-by-6-inch plastic lens. The large-size lens eliminates eyestrain. The 4½-inch universal mounting base permits attachment to any work surface. Viewer can be swung back out of way by means of a 360-degree swivel collar.

• Science News Letter, 78:160 September 3, 1960

⚙️ **FISHERMAN'S KNIFE** has a handle of compressed cork so it will not sink if dropped overboard. The knife has two stainless steel blades: a 3½-inch cutting blade on one side, and a 3½-inch combination fish scaler, hook disgorging and cap lifter on the other. The scaler is slightly curved, making it easier to clean fish.

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⚙️ **SHOE HOLDER**, shown in the photograph, enables every member of the family to have professional-looking shoe shines quickly, easily, conveniently at home. The device consists of a wall attachment, a shoe



holder and an adjustable bracket that adjusts the holder to fit any size shoe.

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⚙️ **BABY BOTTLE THERMOMETER** accurately records correct temperature of the milk in baby's bottle by transmitting heat through a copper band to the sensitive bi-

metal element. The pliable band readily fits any bottle and is held securely by an elastic cord. The thermometer prevents overheated bottles or scalded wrists.

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⚙️ **MITER BOX** has a rugged one-piece aluminum casting with heavy guides and posts and adjustable stock holders. It accurately cuts 0, 7½, 15, 22½, 30 and 45 degrees, with a slotted opening for any degree setting from 0 to 45 degrees. Wood, metal, plastics, etc., can be cut with an ordinary hacksaw.

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⚙️ **TOY CAR** is designed primarily for crippled children. Only arms are needed to propel and steer it. Fiberglass cowl and foot support is recessed to keep feet from slipping off. The three-wheeled car has a strong welded steel tube frame. It can be used by polio or cerebral palsy victims, paraplegics and other handicapped children with the use of at least one arm, since it requires very little strength.

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⚙️ **CHLORINE FILTER** takes the chlorine out of tap water, by filtering the water as it comes out of the faucet, yet the water retains all the natural minerals. It is said to eliminate the disagreeable chemical tang of chlorine.

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Nature Ramblings



By GLORIA BALL

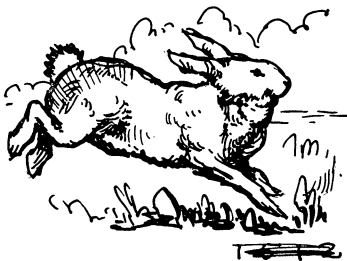
➤ WITH THE SEASONS REVERSED "down under," it will soon be spring in Australia. And spring in Australia means—more rabbits.

All winter long these furry animals have gone about their business, paying little attention to each other. But as spring and the breeding season approach, a definite social order takes shape.

With much chasing and challenging, the males vie for top position in the community. They often resort to "fisticuffs," which means, in the rabbit world, thumping the opponent with the hind feet and getting in a scratch or bite if possible.

Eventually the rabbits in a given area divide up into groups of about half a dozen individuals and set up a common territory that is vigorously defended against intruders. Within the group there is a graded social order similar to the "peck order" in chickens. Separate peck orders are estab-

Rabbit Sociology



lished for does and bucks, with the highest-ranking buck ultimately dominating the group.

The dominant buck goes where he pleases in the group territory. The other rabbits keep to their own areas during the day, but late in the afternoon they all move toward the "warren" inhabited by the dominant male and female for what appears to be a daily "check in."

The dominant buck's freedom also al-

lows him access to the greatest number of females. Bucks of lesser stature mate only when the attention of the clan ruler is diverted elsewhere.

Adult females have a strong desire to associate in small groups during breeding periods and show a remarkable tendency to bear their litters within one or two days of each other. Thus they are all capable of mating again at the same time, and paternity spreads further down the peck order than it might otherwise.

Among the does, high social status is associated with a high reproductive rate. The dominant doe bears offspring most frequently; her "kittens" grow faster and have a higher rate of survival. These advantages stem from the better living conditions commanded by their social status.

When the breeding season ends and summer draws to a close, the rabbits' rigid social structure weakens and finally breaks down—until next spring.

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