

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⊗ **BABY BATH SEAT** provides safety for babies six to 18 months old. The sturdy bath seat is form-fitted and cushioned with polyvinyl chloride foam. An adjustable safety belt holds the baby securely and prevents him from standing up or toppling over into the bath water, freeing the mother's hands for bathing or shampooing the baby. Suction cups under the seat firmly anchor the seat to the bathtub.

• Science News Letter, 87:367 June 5, 1965

⊗ **ANCHOR REEL** allows an anchor to be lowered quickly and smoothly by a turn of a button and stows the line when not in use, keeping the rope free of tangles and off the bottom of the boat. The free spooling reel stops only when the anchor reaches the bottom or pressure is removed from the button. A handle that will not spin if accidentally released is used to reel in the anchor, which is stored on a mount away from the hull to prevent damage.

• Science News Letter, 87:367 June 5, 1965

⊗ **CORN POPPER** makes popcorn over the burner and allows the corn to be seen as it is being popped. The popper, which consists of a pan with a strainer-shaped top, has a lock handle that can be released for emptying without touching the hot pan. The versatile unit, eight inches in diameter, can be used also as a frying pan and strainer.

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⊗ **ALUMINUM PANELS** available in four bright decorator colors can be used as roofing, siding panels for buildings or as fencing as shown in photograph. Lightweight, yet durable, the maintenance-free aluminum panels can be cut to size and erected readily with aluminum nails and ordinary tools. No drilling, bolting or welding is required. Aluminum nails come in the basic colors to match the panels.

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⊗ **HANDBAG HOLDER** that can be mounted on the dashboard keeps a lady's handbag out of the way while driving, but readily accessible and visible at all times. Easily installed, the holder consists of a flat strip of chrome metal with a hook attached, and is backed with a permanent mastic that will adhere to any painted or chrome surface of the car. It is also useful for hanging litter bags, diaper bags and similar items.

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⊗ **ENVELOPE SEALER/OPENER** is a time-saving compact desk accessory for office or home that combines a sealer and slitter. Outgoing mail is automatically sealed and incoming mail automatically slit by just passing the envelopes through the device. Finished in chrome plate, the mailer measures only 5½ inches long and is ready for instant use.

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⊗ **METAL ENGRAVER** that writes like a pencil is a heavy duty, compact tool for permanently engraving names or other identification on metal, glass, plastic, ceramics and other solid materials. Useful in home, industry or laboratory for marking tools, equipment, glassware and other items, the electric device, six inches long and weighing seven ounces, can be used for fine detailed lines as well as for deep engraving.

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• Doctors Are Reading •

Artificial Heart Valves May Give Trouble

► **ARTIFICIAL HEART VALVES** have to be replaced in rare cases, and some materials have been suspected of injuring the red blood cells. Teflon and lucite especially have given trouble.

Dacron cloth, a resilient fiber, impregnated with silicone rubber, is the material now used in valve replacement by Dr. Charles A. Hufnagel, research professor of surgery, Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C. Among 150 patients who had one or more aortic valves replaced by this substitute, only six have been associated in any way with hemolytic anemia, in which red blood cells are affected.

Three cases are described in *The New England Journal of Medicine* 272:1045, 1965 by Dr. Hufnagel and Drs. William DeCesare and Charles Rath, of the medical faculty at Georgetown.

They attribute the anemia to increased turbulence of the blood about the defective prosthetic-valve cusp instead of to the Dacron-silicone rubber cusps.

Researchers using Teflon, which they feared was the cause of a few cases of hemolytic anemia, improved the material by covering an exposed area of the Teflon with endocardium, a serum membrane.

Safety of Wonder Drug Needs Further Study

The "wonder drug" DMSO, short for dimethyl sulfoxide, needs further research to prove its safety, doctors are warned.

The *Medical Letter* 7:42, 1965, which evaluates drugs critically for physicians, pointed out that DMSO has been approved by the

U.S. Food and Drug Administration for experimental use only. Only one controlled experiment has been reported, and it indicates that the chief value of the drug may be in increasing the penetration and absorption of other drugs.

DMSO is primarily an industrial solvent and antifreeze, but in experimental use during the past two years it has been claimed to be effective when used on the skin as a pain-killer, tranquilizer, and as an anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial agent.

Side effects have included skin burning and itching, dryness and flaking. DMSO produces a peculiar taste and "malodorous breath" 15 to 20 minutes after application.

Sphagnum Moss Might Give Fungus Disease

Fourteen foresters in Vermont caught a fungus disease on their arms from handling spongy sphagnum moss used to pack tree seedlings for shipment, reported Drs. D. J. D'Alessio, Communicable Disease Center, Kansas City, Kans.; L. J. Leavens and G. B. Strumpf, both of the Department of Health, State of Vermont, Burlington, and C. D. Smith, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

The fungus, *Sporotrichum*, was found in sphagnum moss shipped from a commercial Wisconsin supplier to the Vermont State Tree Nursery, the scientists reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine* 272:1054, 1965. A questionnaire survey of 34 nurseries in 16 states uncovered no other disease outbreaks, said the scientists who believe physicians should be alerted to this source of fungus.

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