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INVENTION

Current U.S. Patents

The process for making plutonium, an intensely radioactive metallic element and a major ingredient in A- and H-bombs, has been patented 24 years after its discovery.

► THE PROCESS for making plutonium, a major ingredient in atomic and hydrogen bombs, has been patented 24 years after its discovery.

Nobelist Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Arthur C. Wahl, Berkeley, Calif., and the late Dr. Joseph W. Kennedy, Santa Fe, N. Mex., were awarded patent 3,190,804 for the method of producing, separating and purifying element 94, also known as plutonium (Pu). They assigned patent rights to the Government through the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

This intensely radioactive metallic element is made by interacting neutrons with uranium. In the early experiments in 1941 uranium was bombarded with neutrons in a cyclotron and it was found possible to make microgram amounts by stacking uranium near the cyclotron target.

Ski Park

Water ski enthusiasts may soon be able to ski without boats in an all-electric ski park.

The ski park's inventor, Arnold H. Forsman, Danville, Calif., reported that he hopes to have the first one in operation before next summer. Present plans call for the park to be built on a man-made lake, with a skier being towed by a motor unit that rides around an overhead monorail cable struc-

ture. The course will be more than 6,000 feet long, featuring jumping ramps, obstacles, twists, turns and even spectator stands. The motor units will go from two to 40 mph, depending upon the ability of the individual skier.

Mr. Forsman was awarded patent 3,190,646 for the park, which will be known as the Jetow Water Ski system.

Floating Service Station

A coin-operated service station floating out in the water will let boat owners "gas up" without going all the way back to shore.

The station, connected to a shoreline supply tank, would be constructed so that small boats could temporarily tie up to refuel.

Jerome H. Mandel, Forest Hills, N.Y., was awarded patent 3,190,495 for the floating fuel station.

Other Interesting Patents

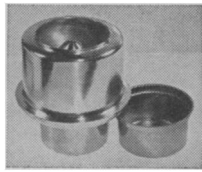
An anti-theft device for autos earned patent 3,190,090 for Kitty Zaidener, London, England. The device consists of a rod running from the gas pedal to the steering wheel, where it is locked in place so that the steering wheel cannot be turned.

A method of navigation by satellite earned patent 3,191,176 for William H. Guier, Silver Spring, Md. By using the satellite the system would have world-wide capabilities and unlimited traffic handling capacity, reported Mr. Guier, who assigned patent rights to the Government through the Secretary of the Navy.

A pea piercer pops holes in peas so that they can be prepared for dehydration more easily. It earned patent 3,190,331 for Edison Lowe, El Cerrito, Calif., and Everett L. Durkee, El Sobrante, Calif. Patent rights were assigned to the Government through the Secretary of Agriculture.

• Science News Letter, 88:30 July 10, 1965

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Approximately one out of ten persons in the United States, among them three million children, suffer from ear disorders.

• Science News Letter, 88:30 July 10, 1965