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INVENTION

Current U. S. Patents

► A ROCKET ABLE TO RETURN to earth under its own flying power earned a patent for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The rocket will maintain the outer cylindrical shape now used but will be arranged differently inside.

Inventor Dr. Hans F. Wuenscher of NASA's Huntsville, Ala., complex said the new design has inner components that are aerodynamically stable by themselves and capable of flying to earth in sections.

Eighty percent of a rocket's cost can be saved if fuel tanks and engine are recovered in good shape.

Basically, the innovation consists of at least two fuel tanks divided lengthwise and fitted together into a cylinder for blast-off. In space the outer cover will peel off, allowing the tanks to separate and assume their fly-back shape. A small tail stabilizes each section.

Dr. Wuenscher, who received patent 3,202,381 for the design, said reentry speed at 50,000 feet would probably not exceed 400 miles per hour.

In fact, unless the sections have a small jet engine, they will not make it back to the launching pads but will glide to nearest land.

No increase in weight, space or apparatus is envisioned for the rocket, which NASA is analyzing for future use.

Car Incinerator

Litterbugs can burn trash rather than toss it out the car window if an Ohio inventor's "fire chamber" ever reaches the market.

Joseph James Baldine of Hubbard received patent 3,202,118 for his automobile incinerator. The device, about one gallon in size, is to be mounted under the car with a tube running from the dashboard ashtray and an exhaust pipe extending out the back.

Papers and cigarette butts, sucked in with a fan, are burned to fine ash by hot electric heaters.

Mr. Baldine does not anticipate any smog problems. He said he tested the invention in his garage, and that with doors closed, there was no undue amount of smoke. However, the incinerator is only good for papers. Old sandwiches do not burn too well.

Ultrasonic Pencil

An ultrasonic pencil that can write under any atmospheric condition or at any temperature, that requires no maintenance or renewal, and that makes a permanent mark was granted patent 3,202,133.

The instrument is a basic invention in ultrasonics, said its inventor, Paul M. Platzman of New York's Ultrasonic Industries, Inc. Banks and the U.S. Geological Survey are among the many organizations interested in the device, Mr. Platzman said.

The pencil's marks are permanent because no fluids or substances of any kind are used in writing. The marks look as if they were

written with a soft pencil, but actually result from molecular reorganization of paper fibers.

A rod of metal, vibrating at 20,000 cycles a second, does the rearranging. The pencil, no bigger than a ballpoint pen, is powered by a three-watt transistorized generator and is the only known instrument capable of writing in space.

Commercial uses include permanent signatures on important documents and bank notes. The writing never wears out nor can it be altered.

Other Interesting Patents

A process for scrambling the signals for pay television programs so that those who have not subscribed cannot tune in on programs earned patent 3,202,758 for George Brownstein of Los Angeles, who assigned patent rights to Paramount Pictures Corporation. The scrambling signal does not affect the original quality of the program.

Bouyant underclothes, fitted close to the body, may help non-swimmers to float. Patent 3,201,808 was awarded to Muriel Henry Glass of New York. Rights are assigned to Marksway Enterprise A.G. of Zug, Switzerland.

A teaching device consisting of a control board for the teacher and yes-no indicators on each desk gives backsliding students no out. Robert W. Sylvester of Virginia and George W. Stinger, now in Korea, received patent 3,199,230.

• Science News Letter, 88:166 September 11, 1965

TECHNOLOGY

Echo Apparatus Treats Stutterers In Poland

► A POLISH DOCTOR who stuttered in his younger days has constructed an echo apparatus for the treatment of stammerers.

The idea came to Dr. Bogdan Adamchik of Lublin University, Lublin, Poland, when he bent over a well in his native village and heard the halting echo of his own words. As Dr. Adamchik listened, pronunciation became easier for him.

The artificial echo apparatus can be used in a clinic or it can be connected by telephone to the stutterer's home. It already has been connected with the line in Lublin, and is expected to be installed in Warsaw, Katowice and Gdansk, Nauka I Zhiznij (Science and Life) July 1965, reported.

The treatment, which lasts 20 minutes a day for four months, is both psychological and physical in its impact. On the one hand, the stammerer is relaxed with the machine, as he may not be in talking to a person. When he hears his voice in the receiver, the organs of hearing excite the speech center in his brain. The patient repeats what he has learned, and results show that the apparatus is helpful, even in the most difficult cases.

• Science News Letter, 88:166 September 11, 1965