



Westinghouse

**TELESCOPE TRUSS**—The steel truss shown here is part of a huge metal fabricating project underway at Westinghouse Electric Corporation's Sunnyvale, Calif., plant. The completed structure will support a 130-foot radio telescope dish at the California Institute of Technology that will be used to receive radio signals from deep space.

**PUBLIC HEALTH**

## Snakebite Accidents Higher Than Believed

➤ **SNAKEBITE** accidents are much more common in the United States than most people realize.

Instead of only 1,000 or 2,000 a year, as some recent estimates have shown, there have been almost 6,700 poisonous bites during at least one 12-month period.

By sending questionnaires to 5,535 hospitals and 36,627 physicians, Dr. Henry M. Parrish of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, Columbia, made what he called the first systematic, nationwide snakebite study.

He found that during 1959, the year covered by the questionnaire, there were 6,680 poisonous snakebites of which 52% were to people under age 20.

More persons in North Carolina were affected than in any other state, with 18.79 poisonous bites per 100,000 population. In Maine, however, not a single person was bitten.

Rattlesnakes were apparently the worst offenders, accounting for more than a third of the 2,836 victims who were actually hospitalized. Next in line were copperheads (28.6%) and cottonmouth moccasins (7.3%).

Dr. Parrish's study appeared in *Public Health Reports*, published by the U.S. Public Health Service.

• *Science News*, 89:212 April 2, 1966

**GENERAL SCIENCE**

## Easter Rabbits Are Symbol of Renewed Life See Front Cover

➤ **BABY RABBITS**, symbols of renewed life and fertility, have long been associated with the Easter season and the coming of spring as are the budding trees and bushes.

Seen on this week's front cover is the red maple showing the beginnings of new life as spring brings life again to a winter barren earth. (Cover photograph by Fremont Davis.)

Bright eyed Easter bunnies are delightful to see hopping across the garden in the early morning—but they cause much damage by nibbling young tulip, crocus or other flower shoots, or by munching tender lettuce and other tasty vegetables in gardens and farms.

Rabbits, along with hares, are members of the Lagomorpha order in the animal kingdom—animals which eat no meat, only grasses and plant shoots, and sometimes the bark of young trees.

Originating in western Europe, around the Mediterranean Sea, rabbits spread throughout Europe, transported by man who values them as prolific sources of food and fur. Some were taken in early sailing vessels to islands where they would breed and be a source of food for sailors arriving in later ships. Carried into Australia, New Zealand and other islands where there were no natural enemies such as hawks, foxes, minks or wolves, rabbits multiplied so rapidly that they became harmful pests indirectly damaging the domestic cattle and sheep by destroying pasture land. Only in the past few years have Australians finally been able to check the fantastic, exploding rabbit population by means of myxomatosis, a virus disease deadly to rabbits.

The domesticated rabbit of today can be found in more varieties than any other mammal except the dog. The Angora rabbit has soft white fur that grows up to four inches long, the silver gray is prized for its skin, and the Flemish giant is the largest of all breeds.

• *Science News*, 89:212 April 2, 1966

**ENTOMOLOGY**

## Water Insects Shy When Moon Shines

➤ **CERTAIN** aquatic insects that live in streams or rivers are more active at night in their wingless immature stages, eating and drifting leisurely downstream in the cool dark hours. As soon as dawn breaks, they end their night of wandering and settle down to rest.

On dark nights, as many as 1,100 larvae of mayflies, stoneflies and blackflies have been counted in a three-hour period drifting in the waters of Berry Creek near Corvallis, Oreg., reported Dr. N. H. Anderson of Oregon State University, in *Nature*, 209:319, 1966.

• *Science News*, 89:212 April 2, 1966

## Questions

How do satellites aid scientists studying the size and shape of the earth? p. 213.

What evidence do geologists have of a volcanic flood in Antarctica centuries ago? p. 219.

How may thymus tissue help in the treatment of Hodgkin's disease? p. 227.

## SCIENCE NEWS

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