

• SCIENCE SHORTS •

A miscellany of happenings and information in various fields the world over

Beer is probably the oldest *beverage* known to man.

The *Columbia Icefield* lies on the hydrographic apex of North America, with its outlet glaciers draining eventually into three oceans.

Elisha Otis installed the world's first passenger *elevator* in a New York store in 1857.

The Columbia Icefield, center of the largest known accumulation of *ice* in the Rocky mountains, covers an area of nearly 150 square miles, of which fully 50 square miles are more than 8,500 feet above sea level.

The optical microscope was the first instrument used in the art of *metallography*.

Chemicals and *bacteria* can be removed from polluted water, by passing it through a bed of wicker reeds, rendering it safe for drinking.

By using an electrically charged plate to remove a thin layer from *papyrus* which is so charred as to be unreadable the writing can be made visible.

The mean *radius* of the earth has been valued at 6,378.169 kilometers (3,963.203 miles), a measurement accurate within eight meters one way or the other.

Three-fourths of all families in the United States were covered by voluntary health insurance in 1963.

Beryllium, employed because of its lightness and strength, is used in a mirror of extreme dimensional accuracy which is a vital component in the star-tracking device of an orbiting astronomical observation platform.

The Tower of Trumpets in Medias, Rumania is a leaning *tower* dating from 1450.

Venezuela has the highest per capita production of *electric power* in Latin America.

The *oral cavity*, like other organ systems, is influenced by variations in a person's psychological state.

Canada's Lake Louise, like all glacier-fed lakes, derives its beautiful emerald *color* from tiny particles of glacial silt held in suspension, causing refraction of the light's rays as they fall on the lake's surface.

Explosive-formed *domes* could provide one-piece ends for the fuel cells of Titan missiles, replacing the eight welded pieces presently in use.

The people of Angoram, New Guinea, have perfect *teeth*, but the people in surrounding villages suffer from normal dental decay.

There are more than 500 annual days, weeks and months of special *observance* listed every year, ranging from National Procrastination week, to the fourth of July.

A fine grain, high-resolution *film* with extended red sensitivity and unusual contrast characteristics is important in solar flare photography for development of a radiation warning system for the Apollo spacecraft.

A machine has been developed to extract edible *protein* from tropical leaves.

The first group of unattended *elevators* was installed in the Atlantic Refining Building in Dallas in 1950.

By 1975 the number of *persons* earning less than \$3,000 is expected to decrease by 10%.

A high-resolution, infrared scanning *camera*, carried on the Nimbus satellite, produced the first night-time picture of cloud cover.

Sixteen *supernovae* and 10 comets were discovered during 1965.

Jupiter, the largest planet of our solar system, radiates two and a half times as much *heat* as it receives from the sun.

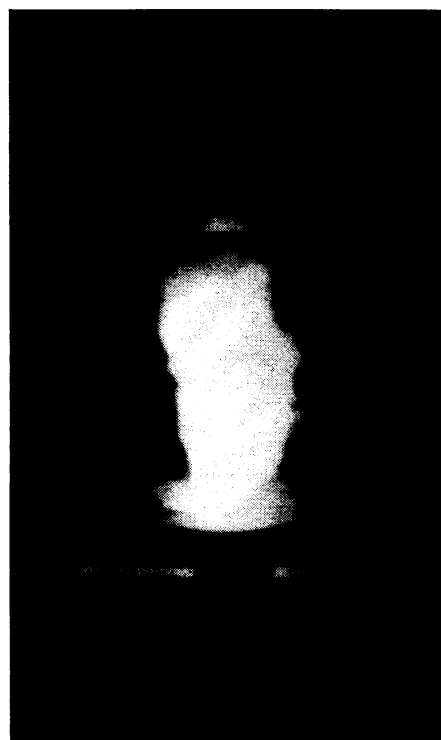
The first *escalator* in public use was introduced at the Paris Exposition in 1900.

The first regular product trial of *Picturephone* telephone service on a customer's premises is now underway.

A *bell tower* built in 1573 in St. Moritz, Switzerland, has been leaning for at least 165 years, probably as the result of an earthquake.

Well preserved Babylonian *tablets* prove that as far back as 8,000 years ago, monarchs drank beer through golden "straws" from kegs placed beside the throne.

• *Science News*, 89:272 April 16, 1966



Western Electric

LASER FLAME—A technique for piercing diamond dies with a laser beam for fine wire drawing has been developed in the first known application of the *laser* for mass production purposes.

Nature Note

Walking Sticks

► THE THREE-INCH TWIG seemed to twitch, then jerk, then slowly move itself forward among the other twigs on the tree. Awkwardly it stretched its thin, knobby legs, took a few steps then stood still, pointed in an angular position as if growing from the branch.

This is the walking stick, so beautifully camouflaged it seems truly a part of the oak or wild cherry tree on which it rests. By day this insect may not even move at all. It stays in a cataleptic pose until night falls, when it is safe from enemies and can eat its fill of nearby leaves.

Walking sticks, members of the Phasmidae family of the order Orthoptera, have smooth slender bodies. In the tropics they are equipped with knobs, spines and flaky appendages to blend in better with thorny vegetation. Some of the Asiatic stick insects, such as *Palophus titan*, are the longest of living insects measuring 12 inches.

After two summer months of eating leaves, the walking sticks are full-sized. In late summer, each female lays as many as a hundred eggs, dropping them to the ground where they remain all winter. They look like seeds with hard, shiny black coats with a white stripe around the edges.

• *Science News*, 89:272 April 16, 1966