

# • New Ideas and Gadgets •

Ask for Gadget Bulletin 1364 for source information. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

☼ **BOARDING LADDERS** for pleasure boats and cruisers are made of lightweight plastic and will float if accidentally dropped into the water. The tubing for the framework of the ladder is filled with foamed plastic and the steps are made of vinyl plastic. The ladders are available in five different types ranging from 25 to 48 inches in height.

☼ **CUP HOLDERS** for hanging cups in cupboards and on shelves are made so that the cups cannot be accidentally knocked off. The loop-spring design is so constructed that the two ends of the holders come together to form a closure holding the cup handle securely within the loop. Made with a steel screw and bronze wire finished in a silvery tone, the holders are corrosion resistant.

☼ **ELECTRODE KIT** designed for school laboratories is useful in industrial laboratories as well. The kit contains components for the construction of platinum plate, hydrogen, platinum and many base metal electrodes. Also included in the kit are a magnetic stirrer, wire, storage tubes and double arm reaction vessel. Packaged in a permanent wooden case, the kit comes with a 24-page instruction manual.



☼ **RUG PROTECTORS**, shown in photograph, are transparent strips of tough, strong plastic that fit over the edge of a carpeted stairway. Inconspicuous and durable, the protectors are easily installed by the homeowner, with small wire brads packaged with each strip. The strips, approximately two inches deep by 24 inches in length are packaged in units of one, seven or 13.

☼ **RUST REMOVING JELLY** for home and industry dissolves rust from iron and steel. Containing no muriatic acid, the jelly is fumeless and safe to use. Brushed on rusted iron or steel, it dissolves the rust but does not attack the metal, leaving a clean rust-inhibited surface with a good bonding surface for painting. Readily soluble in either hot or cold water, it is safe to store and nonflammable.

☼ **HUBODOMETER** can be readily mounted on automobiles and small pick-up trucks without a variety of expensive mountings. The new odometer has three adjustable legs so that any bolt circle can be accommodated on axles having five studs, as in most automobiles, eliminating the need for special welded hubcap assemblies. The odometer is centered automatically upon installation.

☼ **FOUR-IN-ONE TOOL** can be used for forming, riveting, shearing and punching. Useful in industrial plants as well as in small shops, the lightweight tool, weighing about six pounds, makes smooth sharp bends up to 90 degrees in either rod or flat stock. The tool rivets up to one inch from the edge and cuts and punches holes in metals of 16 gauge thickness.

# • Doctors Are Reading •

## Contact Lenses Safe for Most Teen-Agers

► **THE DANGERS** of contact lenses were minimized by a Rochester, Minn., ophthalmologist who said that a teenage girl with normal eyes, or even with some pathological condition, should be able to wear them safely.

Dr. John A. Dyer referred in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 197:230, 1966, to a report earlier this year of 14 cases of eye loss or blindness and 157 cases of permanent eye damage within one year among 50,000 contact lens wearers.

The report concerned a series of patients in a survey made prior to 1960, and stated that only three accounts of permanently damaged eyes had been received since that time.

"If we consider that there are probably three million eyes on which contact lenses have been placed, the proportions of permanent injury is infinitely small," said Dr. Dyer.

## Radiation Accident Reported

► **A FREAK** combination of circumstances led to an overdose of radiation for three hospital patients from an 8,000,000-volt linear accelerator in London.

The patients were being treated with electron-beam therapy at Hammersmith Hospital when an "irregularity" in the current through the electron gun triggered the overdose. The current boost "occurred about once a year for a few days," and would have been a signal to shut off the machine, except that the dosimeter, which monitors radiation dosage, happened to fail just at the same time.

The dosimeter failure was an unusual one, such as neither Hammersmith nor any of the other hospitals later checked had ever seen before, with the exception of one "trivial" case a decade before.

On two of the patients the effects were "severe," on a third they were "slight." The accident was reported in the *British Medical Journal*, July 23, 1966.

## Animals Stretch, Yawn After ACTH

► **SYNTHETIC ACTH** causes dogs, cats and vervet monkeys to yawn and stretch as though awakening from sleep, three Italian scientists have reported.

Cats stretched more than they yawned. Monkeys yawned repeatedly but the researchers pointed out that these animals may be exhibiting emotional rather than physiological behavior. All the animals had been fasting for 12 hours.

The experiments were undertaken to find out whether or not the synthetic hormone Beta 1-24-ACTH would act the same as the natural Alpha 8 ACTH. Injections were made in the upper spinal region without anesthetic. There was no difference.

The investigators said in *Nature*, 211:426, 1966, that they do not know whether the results have any physiological meaning. At present, they are testing the effect of micro-injections of ACTH in different areas of the nervous system. Drs. G. L. Gessa, L. Vargiu and W. Ferrari of the department of pharmacology, University of Cagliari, Italy, reported the findings.