



WATCHFUL PELICANS—Two pelicans, "Pete" and "Repeat," watch a porpoise cavort at the Marine Studios in Florida. The birds have learned that play for the porpoises might include nibbling their tail feathers.

MEDICINE

Stopping Useless Coughs

► A NEW kind of medicine for stopping unproductive or useless coughs is being developed.

Success with two of these cough medicines of the future in trials with dogs has been reported. Another is known to be undergoing extensive trials, but results are not yet ready to report.

The ones now reported are close relatives of the synthetic pain-killer, methadone. They are the dextro isomers of methadone and isomethadone.

The great advantage of these chemicals is that, unlike morphine, ethyl-morphine, codeine, dihydrocodeinone and methadone itself, they do not depress breathing, stop pain or cause addiction.

The success with the chemicals in dog trials is reported by Drs. Charles A. Winter and Lars Flataker of the Merck Institute for Therapeutic Research at Rahway, N. J., in *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine* (Nov., 1952).

The trials were made by exposing the dogs for five minutes to a mist of sulfuric acid. The mist made the dogs cough, but did not harm them in any way. By counting the coughs before and after giving the drugs, the scientists were able to find that the dextro isomers of the methadones were about as good as codeine in suppressing coughs.

Scientists have heretofore assumed that

the cough-stopping action of narcotic drugs was related to the pain-killing action of these drugs. Within the past year, this assumption has been upset. Doctors may in future have safer effective drugs to give to stop coughs, but medical scientists will do a lot of studying now to learn more about the cough-stopping mechanism of narcotic drugs.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1953

AERONAUTICS

Jet Pilots Learn Protective Positions

► THE ROYAL Air Force is using a 45-foot mobile tower to teach its pilots how to position themselves for protection should they have to get out of a doomed jet airplane.

In addition to getting a "pretty good idea" of how it feels to be ejected from a speeding jet plane, the pilot also learns how to position his head so that his backbone will not snap under the forces that eject him.

The towers are equipped with special ejection seats attached to guide rails. The pilot is fired up the tower by a cartridge under the seat. A ratchet device catches him at the top and lowers him safely to the ground.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Urges Drastic Action For Drinking Drivers

► "AUTOMATIC PERMANENT loss of driving licenses upon conviction of a traffic offense involving the use of alcohol," was one of the recommendations offered by Dr. Robert V. Seliger in a report for the National Committee on Alcohol Hygiene, Inc. He is executive director of the committee.

Pointing out that a few drinks make a driver react more slowly in emergencies, incline him to be less cautious, take more chances and generally drive at a greater speed, Dr. Seliger said that the only conclusion to be drawn is that a driver should not drink and a drinker should not drive.

The problem is becoming more urgent, he said, in the light of the tremendous increase in the number of automobiles and drivers. Police records show, he went on, that the drinking driver, not necessarily the drunken driver, is more accident-prone than the driver in full control of his faculties.

"In the drinking driver," Dr. Seliger pointed out, "we have a potential killer loose in every city, and capable of taking thousands of lives. Yet toward this situation the general public is apathetic."

In addition to automatic suspension of licenses, Dr. Seliger urged the passage of stronger laws, more vigorous enforcement of those laws, compulsory tests for the detection of alcohol in every fatal accident, and provision for the use and acceptance in court of the evidence of drunk-driving tests.

"Any legal step that can be taken to cut down the toll of death and injuries caused by alcohol is not too much to ask for," Dr. Seliger declared.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1953

AERONAUTICS

Navy Reveals New Plane That Hunts, "Kills" Subs

► A CLOSE-MOUTHED Navy has revealed that its newest "hunter-killer" submarine-spotting airplane successfully tried out its wings Dec. 4, 1952, at the airport of the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corp., Bethpage, N. Y.

Although for security reasons many details were not disclosed, it was learned that the Grumman S2F-1 is a carrier-based plane and does the job formerly requiring two planes—a hunter plane and a sub-destroying plane.

The "most modern" detection gear and the "latest submarine destruction devices" permit the plane's four-man crew to coordinate their efforts into an effective anti-submarine mission. This simplifies considerably the present process of coordinating two sub-chasing planes.

The latest navigational and weather equipment combines with up-to-date aeronautical design to produce a rugged two-engined craft that can operate under severe weather conditions.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1953