

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⊗ **INDUSTRIAL COUNTING MACHINE** marks and counts packages or parts. The package is lowered onto an upside-down porous rubber stamp and then moved on automatically. Operating on an ordinary 120-volt outlet, the machine has enough ink for stamping 500 units before refilling. Each count is announced by a "bell."

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **PLASTIC SILO** for storing extra supplies of winter feed can be placed in convenient spots around the farm. The silos consist of large, open-ended plastic sleeves .008 of an inch thick. They are available in two sizes, one holding 35 tons of silage and the other 70 tons.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **DOG GAME** for youngsters is an exciting battle to keep stray mutts a step ahead of the dogcatcher's net. Played on a three-dimensional board formed of a rigid plastic vinyl sheet, the game and its pieces can be washed. Game contains the board, a spinner, pieces and playing instructions.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **FIRE ALARM** in miniature is installed by plugging it into any standard AC outlet. At the first sign of fire or overheating, the tiny alarm begins to shriek. The portable, re-usable device, shown in the photograph,



draws no current except when signaling. Its thermostat triggers the alarm when heat reaches 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **RUBBER CEMENT** for the home will repair everything from a teacup to golf clubs. The adhesive is described as never

becoming brittle and will not dissolve in oil, water or gasoline. Cap of container has a spike on the top for forcing an opening in the cement.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **BAIT HOLDER** with a full day's supply of salmon eggs pins onto the fisherman's shirt. The eggs fill the top half of the styrene plastic dispenser, which measures two by two inches and one and one-half inches deep. A quick hand motion baits a hook without having to touch the slippery eggs. The eggs automatically roll into position.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **HOME DOORMAT** has a rubber well that collects dirt scraped from feet and can be emptied without sweeping or raising dust. Hard wearing, this British product can be used either inside or outside of a building.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956

⊗ **SLIPPER SOCKS** can now be made at home. Heavy wool or cotton socks are stitched to cowhide leather soles having pre-punched needle holes. For washing, the socks are removed and then sewn back on the soles. Available in sizes four to nine, the do-it-yourself slipper socks will fit men or women.

Science News Letter, September 8, 1956



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► THE SQUID is a creature that turns his back on the rest of the world and keeps his head toward the skies. The reason for this lies in his peculiar structure, though, and not in his outlook on life.

Most animals with a head end and a tail end (bilaterally symmetrical) are longest along a line running from head to tail. No, so the squid, for he is longest from back to belly. Thus, the squid usually swims with his back (dorsal) surface forward and his belly (ventral) surface to the rear. The "head" (anterior) end faces upward and the "tail" (posterior) end is downward.

Like his cousin, the octopus, the squid is a highly specialized mollusk, belonging to the same large group of animals as the oysters, clams and conchs.

Both of these tentacled sea creatures have abandoned the protection of an external shell in the course of evolution for speed and mobility. And for getting that speed,

### The Backward Squid



the squid anticipated the jet airplane by several million years.

Close to his head, the squid has a tubular funnel which acts as a jet tube. He takes in water through the fleshy mantle that covers his back, then forces it out through the funnel. The resulting jet stream of water pushes him through the water at a rapid rate.

When the squid want to move in the opposite direction, he merely bends the funnel backward and the water jet sends him full speed to the rear. While the squid

depends heavily on speed for protection, he also has another bag of tricks—an ink bag. When hotly pressed by an enemy, the squid squirts out a cloud of black ink which rapidly darkens the water.

Most people think this ink serves as a smoke screen to hide the squid while he makes his getaway. However, there is some evidence that the ink blot in the water simply distracts the enemy, perhaps making him think momentarily that even bigger fish is at hand.

In that brief moment, the jet-propelled squid must make his escape.

What is the quickest way to tell a squid from an octopus? Well, the scientific name of the squid gives the clue: It is a decapod, meaning ten-legged. The octopus, of course, has eight legs.

The extra pair of legs on the squid are quite different from those of his other eight legs and those of the octopus, since they have suckers only at the tips. The other squid and octopus legs are suckered all their length.

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