

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **RULER SQUARE** has a prism for drawing 90-degree angles optically. The ruler can also be used for drawing squares, rectangles, parallel lines and exact right angle lines without the need of a triangle or T-square. The transparent, plastic prism runs along the top edge of the ruler.

Science News Letter, April 5, 1958

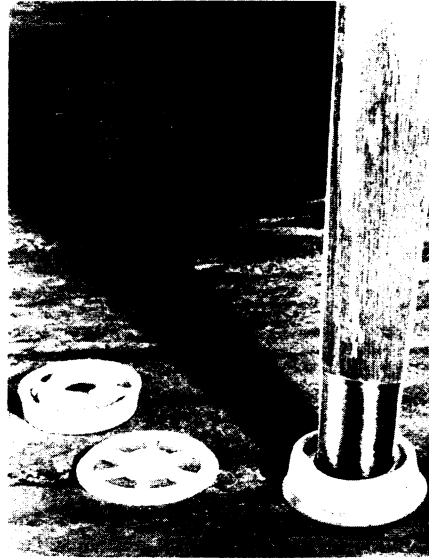
⚙️ **DEEP-HOLE LOCATOR** for fishermen is a combination depth gauge and thermometer. About the size of a fountain pen, the gauge can be cast like a plug or used on a hand line. Made of clear plastic, it houses a depth scale and temperature readings.

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⚙️ **SLED AND SCOOTER COMBINATION** is powered by a two and three-quarters-horsepower engine. With the wheels on, it is a motor scooter. With skis on, it is a motor sled. The combination traveler weighs 196 pounds and is capable of cruising along at speeds up to 20 miles per hour.

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⚙️ **TWO-PIECE CASTERS** to reduce clattering of furniture on hard-surface floors and make it possible to slide the furniture about without scratching the floor are made of plastic. The top section of each caster, shown in the photograph, is a cup molded



of one kind of plastic, and the base is molded of another. They are available in blond, brown or clear colors and round or square shapes.

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⚙️ **STATION WAGON SLEEPING PORCH** is a canvas car cover. The porch has an insectproof window that can be

closed or opened from the inside. The window is protected by a canvas storm flap. Elastic shock cords hold the porch in place. Weighing seven pounds, the canvas wagon converter is available for different makes and models.

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⚙️ **GARDEN WATERER** consists of a small diameter polyvinyl hose with slot and pin hole discharge. It can be used for a long-term soaking or gentle spraying. The waterer permits slide valve control of water delivery to individual plants. It also has a pressure reducer to prevent loss by bursting.

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⚙️ **PENCIL HOLDER** for desks can also be used to keep rubber bands, paper clips and other needs at your fingertips. The wooden desk aid holds up to ten pencils or pens and has three front compartments. It measures three by three by nine inches.

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⚙️ **ROLLER SKATES** are described as adaptable to any type of shoe, even sneakers and ballet slippers. Made largely of a nylon resin, the skates roll along on quieting plastic. Available in a choice of colors, the roller skates can be extended to a length of ten and one-quarter inches.

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## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► IT IS HARD to believe, with a very cold winter just behind us, that the earth is apparently in a "warming up" period. Over the years, however, gradually increasing average temperatures and other signs, such as the receding of some glaciers, have indicated that temperatures may be on the upswing.

At the same time, some of our fishes, reptiles, birds and mammals have been found farther north than previously recorded. The mocking bird, for example, seems to be extending its range farther and farther above the Mason-Dixon line.

Some or all of this northward migration may be due to the general rise in average temperature.

On the other hand, it may be that man-made changes in the environment, population increases, evolving habits or some other unknown factors play a large part in this movement. Until more facts are accumu-

### Exotic Mammals



lated, the real answers to this puzzle are anybody's reasonable guess.

One of the United States' most tropical and exotic forms of life, the armadillo, has been actively spreading its range lately. It has marched in a few years from Mexico and a restricted area in Texas into several nearby southern states. Is the armadillo moving with the weather?

Among the armadillo's close kin are the sloths and the anteaters. All three are mem-

bers of the order of mammals called the Xenarthra. This group is characterized by cylindrical teeth that lack the hardening substance, enamel, common in the other orders.

A quick exception to this rule is the anteater, which is toothless, feeding on ants and other insects by picking them up on its long sticky tongue. Can we look, then, for some of these creatures to "invade" the United States?

The answer is "possible but hardly probable." Sloths, anteaters and other species of armadillos are found throughout South and Central America and into Mexico, but the ecological barriers keeping them from the U.S. border will likely remain intact.

Our particular species of armadillo already had its foot in the door, so to speak, by living habits and a range that carried it to and past our border. The other Xenarthra have too far to travel and too many changes of habits and needs to make before the animals can become successful immigrants.

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