

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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DOUBLE-FACED REFLECTOR, measuring $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, can be attached to trees, posts, mailboxes and similar objects. By reflecting an oncoming car's headlights, the reflectors warn motorists that the road turns or ends, thereby helping to protect your property. Made of plastic lucite, this offset reflector is visible from either side.

Science News Letter, October 3, 1959

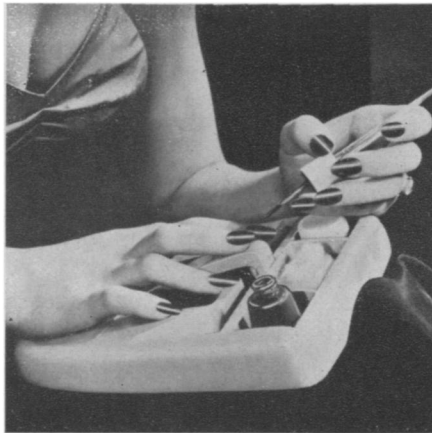
MORTISE PANIC EXIT DEVICE for use on fire doors permits a door to be opened at light pressure on the horizontal bar. The assembly is designed to prevent fire doors from springing open in an emergency, perhaps abetting the spread of fire. Its screws, springs and other critical parts are protected from heat by the door itself.

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DRY SHAVER works on a rechargeable storage cell and consequently needs no batteries or electric cords. It gives from 14 to 18 shaves on one charge from any 110V or 220V AC electric outlet. Two bulbs within the shaver's translucent rim light the face of the user.

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HAND REST for home manicures, shown in the photograph, fits on lap or



chair arm. Its handle doubles as the finger rise. Box-like compartments in front hold bottles while unit is in use. A long narrow trough stores nail files, emery boards and orange sticks. The device is made of ivory plastic.

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CONSTRUCTION KIT consists of colored wooden sticks of various lengths and rubber joints. Designed for children, home craftsmen, and amateur scientists, the kit can be used to make three dimensional

models of anything from solar systems to molecular structures.

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POWER DRILL SERIES of seven units feature pistol-grip or spade-grip handles at buyer's preference. The new line of home, farm and industrial drills come in $1/4$ -, $3/8$ -, and $5/16$ -inch sizes. Standard features include aluminum case, 3-conductor cord (for grounding case) plus adapter, momentary contact switch with locking pin for continuous duty and AC-DC motor.

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LEATHER-COVERED TV, with 17-inch tube, is compact and portable. Measuring about $14\frac{1}{2}$ by $21\frac{1}{2}$ by 8 inches, the television cabinet is cloaked in tan-colored California saddle leather attractively saddle stitched. A light shield is said to enhance viewing under all light conditions.

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SPORTSMAN'S KNIFE is an adaptation of a Swiss army officer's knife. Made of stainless steel, the knife has a sharp spike, a regular and an Allen-head screwdriver, a large and small blade, a bottle opener, a can opener, and means for scraping, stripping and bending wire.

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Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

THE COACHWHIP snake slithered at full speed across the pavement, but the young man was catching up. The race was over, as he grabbed the six-foot serpent by the tail to sling it between his legs where he caught it as in a vice. He pulled the snake back through his legs until only its neck appeared. This he caught in his free hand and the snake was his!

This is a picture of the amateur herpetologist at his hobby. While the means of capturing specimens is not always so dramatic, the thrill of the hunt and capture is a very special part of the fun of reptile and amphibian study. Equally as exciting to the "herp" is the finding of reptiles and amphibians not seen by him before or the establishing of new records of species for his home region. The collector also always has the chance of learning new things about the habits of his favorite creatures by watching them in captivity.

Technically, herpetology is the study of

Herp Talk



reptiles, snakes, lizards, crocodilians and turtles. In time, however, the term has come to include the amphibians as well such as the frogs, toads, salamanders. To make matters simpler, the experts coined the word "herptile" for both kinds of animal, and this of course was soon shortened to "herps." It was not long before the herpetologists began calling one another "herps" too.

An amateur "herp" is as excited by his cold-blooded creatures as any bird watcher is by his feathered favorites. The "herp" is

quick to rise in their defense. Unless he is a bird trapper and bander, the bird student rarely has an opportunity to hold his bird, examine it at close range for a long period of time, or to perform simple experiments on its behavior.

The insect and the shell collectors rarely are able to keep their specimens alive for long.

On the other hand, the "herp" almost always takes his specimens alive for close examination. If he chooses to, he can easily keep them for weeks or months in simple cages under almost natural conditions.

The amateur has long ago learned that the vast majority of snakes are quite harmless. Lizards, frogs and the like are seen for what they are: beautiful creatures which fit into the pattern of living things and are worthy of attention and study. The amateur's curiosity is attracted by their habits; his competitive spirit is challenged by their variety and numbers. In seeking out his favorite animals, the "herp" comes to know more about the world of nature in general.

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