

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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**INSECT ELECTROCUTOR** has a special black light that attracts insects to a high-voltage grid where they are killed instantly. It operates at the same cost as that for an ordinary light bulb. A metal mesh guard protects birds, pets and people against a non-lethal but unpleasant shock from touching the grid.

Science News Letter, February 6, 1960

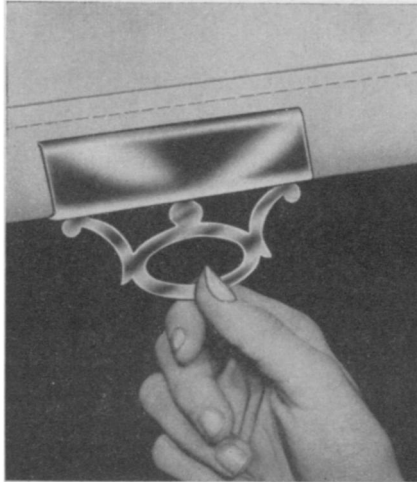
**DISTANCE METER** for rapid and direct distance measuring in precision grinding processes operates in conjunction with non-contacting probes to provide a basically linear method of measuring distances from 50-micro-inches to one-half.

Science News Letter, February 6, 1960

**UNDERWATER LIGHTS** for swimming pools are designed to eliminate dangers of electric shock. A 12-volt type produces illumination equivalent to ordinary 400-watt, 110-volt lights, while a 24-volt type is equal to ordinary 750-watt, 110-volt models.

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**SHADE PULLS**, shown in the photograph, of plastic measure 4½ inches in width and 2½ inches in height. They are



quickly and easily slipped onto any window shade, eliminating the need for shade cords. The pulls are available in lustrous brass or silver plating that is easily cleaned.

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**STEREO MICROPHONE** for non-professionals consists of two microphone elements set at right angles and mounted in a single housing of strong, blue and gray

plastic. Its ruggedness makes it suitable for recording in the open air as well as indoors.

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**DESK ACCESSORY** consists of a gold-plated iron lamp post with personalized name shingle and a ball-point pen on a walnut-stained wooden base. Name is gold-stamped on black shingle.

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**MILKMAN'S REMINDER** is a weather-resistant plastic pegboard on which a housewife may indicate her dairy needs to the milkman. Several quantities may be designated in ten different categories of milk, cream, cheese and butter. A tilted slot on the back of the four-by-eight-inch board holds coins, milk tickets or notes.

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**FURNACE FILTER** features a double wall of polyurethane foam and a zipper opening to permit easy removal of the retaining frame. When "loaded" with dust, the filter may be cleaned safely and quickly by washing it by hand or machine with common household soaps or detergents.

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## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

BARE, GRAY FIELDS lay on either side of the roadway. Telephone poles and wire only added to the bleakness of the scene. An automobile appeared in the distance, noticeably slowing in speed as it reached the spot. Though the car did not halt, a door was opened and a metallic object tossed on the shoulder of the road; then the car moved on.

Two sharp eyes saw all of this, regarding it with deep suspicion. But there was that object to be examined. What was that moving there? Yes! It was what he had been searching for. Caution to the wind, he rushed to the object, poked his finger greedily toward it—and he was caught!

Thus another sparrow hawk was captured by members of that small but growing group of sportsmen-naturalists, the bird banders.

The metallic object was, in this case, an ingenious trap called the "bal chatri," based on an ancient device used by East Indians to catch falcons for hunting. It is a simple pillbox-shaped frame covered in hardware cloth. Within the box is

### Trapping Birds of Prey



placed a mouse, English sparrow or other prey attractive to hawks. The "bait" moves about naturally and is completely unharmed. On top of the wire box there are placed a good number of one-inch nooses made of nylon fishing line.

When the sparrow hawk or other bird of prey sees the live animal in the trap from his perch on the telephone wire or nearby tree, he flies to the trap and tries to grasp the animal through the wire. His feet almost always enter one or more of the nooses which close on him and he is trapped. Neither bait nor hawk are harmed by this method, which is extremely efficient for catching birds of prey.

The purpose of this and other traps and nets used to snare birds is to place serially numbered aluminum bands on their legs, from which information on their migratory habits, age and other activities may be obtained. There are some other reasons besides scientific ones why sportsmen, housewives, lawyers and a host of others spend their free moments at this business of bird banding. The chief of these is obvious enough: it is a great sport. Unlike hunting with a gun, hunting with snares is not limited to a few species and there is no season on the hunt nor game limit. For those who have tried the sport, there is no thrill that compares with outwitting a wild bird, taking him captive harmlessly, putting your band on him and sending him on his way.

Bird banding is not for the raw amateur, however. Care must be taken in trapping birds, properly marking and identifying them. Local experts are usually glad to help a beginner on his way. After a period of "apprenticeship," banding permits (and also bands) can be obtained from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.

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