

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 1085. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **WATER SKI INTERCOM** is a tow rope and audio signaling system providing communication between boat pilot and skier. Clear beep signal may come from pilot by push-button on instrument panel or from skier using waterproof switch on tow bar handle. If skier loses grip on tow bar, alarm sounds instantly.

• Science News Letter, 79:208 April 1, 1961

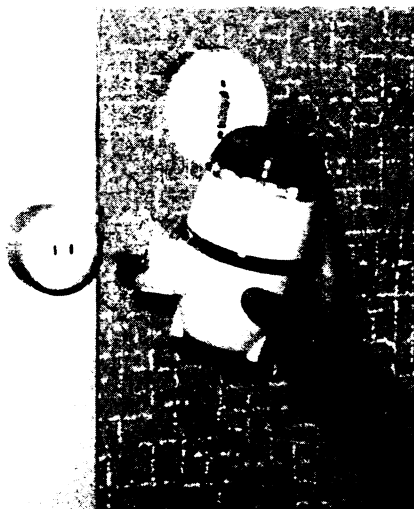
⚙️ **HI-FI SPEAKER SEMI-KIT** takes less than an hour to assemble and provides listeners with unusually lifelike response throughout the range of 50 to 14,000 cps. It weighs 12 pounds and its dimensions are 15¼ by 9¼ by 8½ inches. Unit comes with assembly-instruction manual.

• Science News Letter, 79:208 April 1, 1961

⚙️ **PUBLIC ADDRESS UNIT** built into a standard 12- by 18-inch attache case will reach an audience of 200 persons and give up to a year of normal service on one set of batteries. The case also has space for documents and a writing platform for use while traveling. Unit comes complete with lavalier microphone and 25 feet of cord.

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⚙️ **ELECTRIC COFFEE-GRINDER** with built-in plug, shown in the photograph, can be plugged into any wall socket to grind enough coffee for 8 to 10 cups in 10 seconds. Available for 110 or 220 volts, the grinder



has a clear plastic, see-through cover. A press-button switch turns it off when the coffee is ground.

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⚙️ **ALUMINUM COATING** protects aluminum, stainless steel and other non-ferrous metals against acids, alkali and outdoor exposure. The coating is easily applied by dip, brush or spray and forms a non-yellowing, tough, glossy film that dries tack-

free in two to three minutes at room temperature and 50% relative humidity.

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⚙️ **SEPTIC TANK GAUGE** tells when septic tank needs cleaning. Electronic sensing unit is checked by the press of a button in the home. Manufacturer claims gauge will save money on needless premature cleaning as well as by warning of sewage problems.

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⚙️ **LUMINOUS CEILINGS** for home use provide a soft, glare-free light. Types and designs of the vinyl plastic panels are virtually unlimited. Panels are lightweight, durable, easily cleaned and will not support combustion.

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⚙️ **MAGNETIC MATHBOARD** provides visual mathematics instruction by means of white and black plastic geometric figures magnetized to the board. They can be manipulated to illustrate scores of mathematical functions. The three- by four-foot board is also a regular blackboard on which chalk can be used. It can be set on its easel or on chalk tray of classroom blackboard. Illustrated manual provides selection of demonstrations.

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Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

➤ **THE WARMING-UP** weeks soon will bring the insects out of their winter quarters very numerous, and none more so than the young grasshoppers.

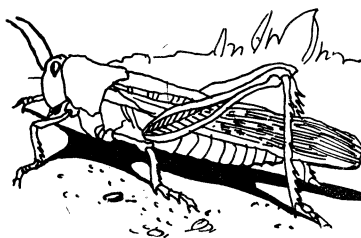
When the frosts of last fall closed down on the land and their parents perished, their mothers did at least make provision for the perpetuation of the race by laying clusters of eggs in the soil in out-of-the-way corners and fallow fields.

So the young ones will emerge as tiny creatures, which entomologists have named "nymphs." "Imps" would seem a much more appropriate title.

However that may be, these grasshopper nymphs are immature, unfinished-looking things, with stubby wings that cannot yet be used for flying, but with appetites already perfectly developed. After they have cracked and shed their skins a few times, their wings will have grown to full size, and their appetites to a hundred percent plus.

One of the aims of the constant searching of government entomologists, those un-

Grasshoppers



relenting enemies of insect pests, is to find a fungus disease or effective spraying program that will diminish the number of grasshoppers.

Last year concerted efforts of specialists and landowners knocked a million acres of grasshopper-plagued rangeland off the "heavily infested" list.

These voracious nibblers are now at their lowest ebb in years, and an all-out effort this spring could deal the grasshopper a telling blow.

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Scientists have packaged substances in capsules one twenty-five-thousands of an inch in diameter, which is smaller than some bacteria.

There are twice as many automobiles in Los Angeles as in all South America.

There are about 250,000 physicians in the United States.

Money spent on building homes in the United States dropped \$2.7 billion in 1960 from that spent in 1959.

A new chemical prevents ice from forming in aircraft jet fuel systems while flying at high altitudes.

The birth rate in the United States reaches a peak in the summer months of July, August and September, and in the winter month of December.

Nearly 11,350 persons died from fires in the United States during 1960.

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