

• 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 1124. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **UNIVERSE MOBILE** will appeal to the space-minded child. Made of plastic-coated fiber-board sections colorfully illustrated on both sides, the nine-foot square mobile shows the relationship of the planets to the sun and illustrates the Milky Way, nebulae and a number of other heavenly bodies. An informative booklet is included.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **WRAP-AROUND EYE SHIELD** is a new design lightweight eye shield for industrial workers and mechanics that provides a larger area of protection than is usually offered. Fitting close against the temples, it provides maximum safety against slipping. A heavy duty opaque visor eliminates overhead glare.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **WEATHER INSTRUMENTS** for the home that give up-to-the-minute weather information permit individual weather forecasting. Available separately in attractive styling are an anemometer to measure wind velocity, a wind direction indicator, electronic thermometer, electronic humidity indicator and barometer.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **HEAVY DUTY PAPER WRAP** extrusion-coated with tough plastic for wrapping oiled automotive service replacement parts is less cumbersome to handle than two-sheet



assembly wrapping. The tough single-sheet wrap, shown in the photograph, has greater resistance to tears and rupture and prevents oil from soaking through the package.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **TAPE REEL CONTAINER** of tough molded plastic for computer tapes provides the magnetic tape with maximum protec-

tion from dust and moisture. With a snap-on cover, the compact container comes in two sizes.

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☛ **THERMOMETER DRINK STIRRER** of glass tells the temperature of a beverage. Special marking on the thermometer, which has a range of minus 10 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, indicates the 50-degree mark, said to be the correct temperature of iced drinks for bringing out the best flavor. Readings are accurate within two degrees.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **RADIO ANTENNA MOUNTS** for mobile two-way communication, made of tough weather-resistant plastic, are easily attached to fenders or rear decks of automobiles. The butyrate components that envelop and protect the joints and fittings also help prevent dissipation in signal reception and transmission.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961

☛ **THERMOSTAT TESTER**, a quick and easy device for testing car radiator thermostats, consists of a glass beaker in a frame with steel ribbon, built-in thermometer and an electric heating unit. The thermostat bites onto the steel ribbon of the instrument panel and, when being tested, opens at the exact temperature at which it is operating.

• Science News Letter, 80:436 December 30, 1961



Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

► THE TINY, FURRED BIT of fluff known as the pika is in a family of its own, the *Ochotonidae*. The family itself in North America contains only a single genus and but two species. Thus the pikas of the mountain areas of western North America have either the scientific name, *Ochotona princeps*, or *Ochotona collaris*.

The range of this chunky little animal with short, broad ears and short legs extends from the Mt. McKinley region in Alaska to northern Canada, where the *O. collaris* is found, and from the southern half of British Columbia southward to New Mexico for *O. princeps*. The pika, also known as the cony, can live at altitudes up to some 13,000 feet.

The pika makes its home in huge rock piles at the bases of sheer cliffs or on slopes strewn with broken boulders. Each rocky domain has numerous tunnel-ways used by the pika as it goes about the business of its day.

Toward the close of summer a pika is busy getting in its "hay." It cuts lengths from various mountain plants. These are

Pika



carried to the vicinity of its home and spread out to dry. As soon as the plants are cured, the pika lugs them beneath the shelter of an overhanging rock for its winter food supply.

To help it withstand winter, the pika has a dense coat of fur, soft in texture, and buff to reddish-brown in color. The rounded ears are brownish or nearly black, and it has no tail. As an adult, the animal is only about eight inches long and weighs about seven ounces.

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The average per capita use of water in the U.S., which was only 600 gallons per day in 1900, stands today at 1,500 gallons per day and by 1980 it is estimated this per capita will have doubled.

The world population grew faster than did its production of food in 1960-61.

A chemical additive to prevent ice formation in jet aircraft fuel systems has been developed.

In 1960 three-fourths of the 8,075 first-year medical students in the U.S. came from 23% of the 772 premedical schools.

Tests conducted in California from 1952 to 1960 showed a definite increase in the amounts of strontium-90 found in the jawbones of deer.

Phosphorus compounds used widely as insecticides contain some of the most toxic agents known, the "nerve gases."

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