

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **AUTOMATIC FEED FOUNTAIN PEN** for artists and letterers has an ink reservoir that eliminates the need to load the point with quills or droppers. The lightweight, plastic pen has a protective screw-on cap with a pocket clip and is filled by a plunger mechanism in the side of the barrel. It can be used with any size or style of Speedball point.

• Science News Letter, 82:48 July 21, 1962

⚙️ **COLLAPSIBLE WATER BOTTLE** made of transparent polyethylene plastic is suitable for transportation and storage of up to five gallons of liquids or flowable solids. Damage- and impact-resistant, it weighs only one-half pound and folds flat when not in use. A wide opening with a plastic screw-on cap makes filling easy.

• Science News Letter, 82:48 July 21, 1962

⚙️ **WATER SPRINKLER TIMER** is a precision-engineered faucet attachment that shuts itself off when sprinkling is completed. Five dial settings vary waterings from light sprinkling to heavy soaking. The device can also compensate for water pressure variations.

• Science News Letter, 82:48 July 21, 1962

⚙️ **PET DOORWAY**, shown in the photograph, is a circular passage for dogs and cats that eliminates the need to constantly open and close doors for pets. The flexible plastic shutters close automatically after pas-



sage of the animal, keeping out snow, rain and insects. Available in several sizes, they can be installed in the home, garage or other convenient location.

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⚙️ **RIGID-KNEE NAIL FASTENER** for applying roofing felts or asphalt shingles to lightweight roof decks has an automatic gripping action. Provided with a large self-

sealing round head and large shoulder, the fastener grips securely with a few hammer blows and has a holding power of 70 to 80 pounds.

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⚙️ **FLAT TIRE REPAIR KIT** that comes in an insulated burlap case makes changing a flat tire unnecessary. The kit contains a chemical sealant that seals the puncture and inflates the tire at the same time. Usable with both tube and tubeless tires, a puncture can be repaired in two minutes without a jack.

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⚙️ **BATTERY-POWERED ADDING MACHINE** is a 10-key portable unit that can be operated anywhere. Permitting on-the-job machine calculation, it is useful for inventory, timekeeping, listing and other figure work in office or field. The batteries in a small unit on the back of the machine can be recharged about 5,000 times by plugging into a 115-volt AC outlet.

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⚙️ **HYDROCARBON DETECTOR** for use in air pollution studies is a portable instrument that measures trace quantities of hydrocarbons and other organic carbon compounds in gases and atmospheres. It is completely free of interference from water vapor, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide and rare gases. It is also useful as a leak detector.

• Science News Letter, 82:48 July 21, 1962



Nature Ramblings



Raccoon

Photograph by REX GARY SCHMIDT • Text by WILLIAM E. SMALL

► THE RACCOON is a rogue, and his coal-black mask around his beady-bright eyes seems to prove it. Yet, like many rogues, he is a lovable creature, easily forgiven for his shortcomings.

'Coons are relatively primitive animals in the zoology family tree. But the raccoon has hands like those of monkeys and men; unspecialized, they can be used for a variety of purposes, and usually are. They can husk sweet corn, unlatch chicken coops, break open a mussel shell or crayfish or solve the marauder-proof lid of a garbage can.

These roly-poly animals actually get most of their food in the wilds. However, they are not considered harmful predators. The chief items in the diet are crayfish. But wild honey is a very special treat, for which—like their distant relatives, the bears—they are often rewarded with several stings.

On the prowl, the raccoon noses about wet places by choice, along the borders of streams and the paths of animals leading to their watering spots. He seems unable to resist running along every fallen tree that crosses his path.

As friendly as this chubby character may seem, when backed into a tight spot with his family or treed by dogs, the 'coon is a fierce and reckless fighter. Any hound that lives to an old age after a life of coon-hunting will show his scars from the slashing paws that he could not dodge.



If you chop down a 'coon tree, several of them are apt to come tumbling out, for they are family animals. Female raccoons usually give birth to three to six young some time in April or May. The infants are blind and helpless for a few weeks, staying at home through their first season. During the winter sleep, the entire family may curl up together in the same old hollow tree.

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