

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **JUMBO BAG HOLDER** is a rolling cart with a frame that holds a 30-gallon plastic bag. Useful for collecting litter from hotel rooms, hospitals and restaurants, the cart keeps the top of the bag open and its length fully extended. The disposable bag, available in transparent or black opaque plastic, eliminates the need for lining, washing and handling garbage cans.

• Science News Letter, 82:246 October 13, 1962

⚙️ **FOLDING GLASSWARE CARRIER** for use in laboratories, warehouses or store-rooms folds flat in seconds for convenient storage. Equipped with heavy gauge aluminum drip trays to catch liquid spillage from glassware, the unit is constructed of zinc plated heavy gauge wire and has five-inch diameter rubber wheels. It is available in three sizes with either 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch- or four-inch-deep baskets.

• Science News Letter, 82:246 October 13, 1962

⚙️ **MAGNETIC RECORDING TAPE** is so thin that it will make possible tape recorders the size of a wrist watch. The tape is only .25 mil in thickness and .246 or .075 inch in width. A reel the size of a half dollar contains 180 feet of the tape, providing 40 minutes recording time. Kits available to engineering laboratories contain a reel of tape, empty reel and specification sheet.

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⚙️ **SLIDE VIEWING SCREEN**, shown in the photograph, allows color slides to be viewed without moving furniture, setting up a screen or darkening the room. Consisting of a 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -pound portable cabinet with a nine-by-nine-inch, wide-angle screen, the viewer is placed in front of any slide projector on a table or other convenient spot, indoors or outdoors. A control knob elevates the screen to the correct position.

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⚙️ **FISHING ROD CASE** combines a high impact plastic case with a ruled scale to measure each catch. Rustproof and crack resistant, the case is well-ventilated through a specially designed cap which prevents condensation of moisture within the case. It is available in green or brown.

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⚙️ **BIMETAL POCKET THERMOMETER** for spot checking temperatures of chemical and oil baths, molten asphalt and meats, as well as baked goods and frozen foods, is accurate within plus or minus 0.5%. The thermometer has an external adjustment nut for recalibration and a one-inch circular dial face available in a wide range of temperature scales. It is conveniently encased in a hard rubber case with a pocket clip.

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⚙️ **ELECTROMAGNETIC DOOR HOLDER** for fire protection in schools, hospitals and factories instantly releases self-closing fire and smoke barrier doors in a circuit on signal from a fire detection system or power failure. Consisting of a magnet unit mounted on the wall or floor and a round metal plate on the door, the door closer is held together by an electric current. Individual doors can be easily closed manually.

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Nature Ramblings



Muskrat

▶ **THE MUSKRAT**, *Ondatra*, is the most valuable fur-bearing animal in North America for the total number of skins used. Nearly 4.5 million muskrat pelts were taken last year at 40¢ to 75¢ per pelt to trappers.

Despite this income from the small rodent, the muskrat is regarded as a public enemy in Europe and many parts of the United States. It burrows into dams, railroad embankments, farm ponds, irrigation projects and fish hatcheries, and causes havoc by undermining and drainage.

Originally distributed throughout much of North America, the muskrat has been introduced into parts of Europe, and even China. It is about the size of a small house cat, though it is really related to the small meadow mouse. It weighs two or three pounds and is about 15 inches long from nose to tail tip. Its five-inch scaly flattened tail acts as a rudder in water.

The dense, dark, shiny fur has been exotically known in the past as electric seal, Hudson seal, Russian otter, red seal, river mink or sable, Loutrine and several other descriptions just as elegant. Such misleading names are now forbidden in the fur trade in the United States.

By some people the meat of the muskrat is as prized as the fur. The flesh is dark but fine-grained, requiring only a minimum of cooking.

The rodent is mainly a vegetarian, occasionally enjoying shellfish, frogs and small fish. Cattails and water lily roots are its main delicacies.

The muskrat's house is made of rushes and reeds piled high above the water line. The inside walls of the house serve as winter meals when everything else is frozen and food is scarce.

In the south, the muskrat breeds all year round, while in the north it breeds in the warmer months.

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U. S. Fish and Wildlife