

# • 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 1129. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **PORTABLE SOLAR RADIO** for fall-out shelters with a cable that doubles as an antenna is powered by a solar pack attached to the roof of the shelter. Ready for installation, the unit includes an extra solar cell power pack, cable, earphone, carrying case and batteries for operation at night.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

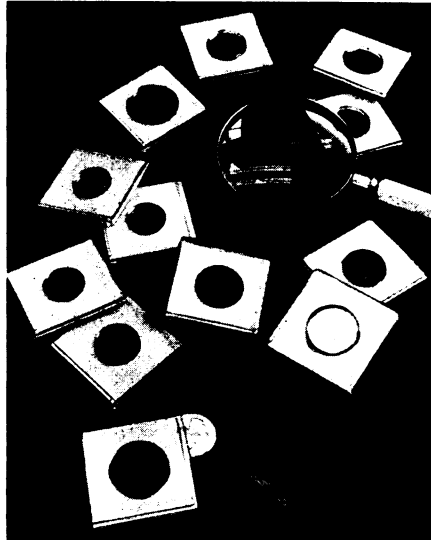
☛ **HOME PORTABLE GYM** provides a quick and easy way to exercise. Compact and economical, containing no springs, weights or elastics, it consists of a chrome-plated steel rod with handle attached to a footrest. A cable instantly adjusts the mechanism to match exactly the strength requirements of any individual.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **AUTOMATIC CAN PUNCHER** is designed to open any standard 12-ounce can of tomato juice, dietary drinks or even motor oil. By placing a can on the base of the 10-pound device that needs no bolting, a solenoid-operated punch is triggered, which punches two holes at once. The blades retract the moment the can is open.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **INDIVIDUAL COIN HOLDER** for displaying coins is made of highly impact- and breakage-resistant, window-clear plastic. The coin is shielded from dust, humidity and tarnish, and it can be inspected closely with-



out fingering. Of slide-box construction, two inches square and one-quarter inch thick, holders, shown in the photograph, are available for six different coin sizes.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **PRE-BUILT SHOWER STALL** is made of white or colored reinforced plastic and can be installed at low cost by the home-maker. Easy to clean, the one-piece stall is

leak-proof and resistant to corrosion and mold. Plumbing fixtures can be installed on either side of the stall.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **PERSONALIZED RAIN UMBRELLA** to delight little girls is made of solid red acetate fabric with requested name inscribed in script. The valance-style umbrella is bound with plaid and has a crook-type easy-to-carry handle. A special transparent rain hood is included.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **QUARTZ LAMP HEATER** with aluminum reflector provides spot heating for basements, garages, gymnasiums or loading docks. The heaters, varying in length from 16 to 44 inches, are available with lamps that also give light, or with solid quartz tubes that provide heat only. Additional mounting brackets and guards are available accessories.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

☛ **ALPHA COUNTER** useful to science classes, prospectors or laboratories, instantly detects radioactivity in any material. Scintillations from alpha particles appear greatly magnified on a screen and are viewed directly through an eyepiece. The unit includes the 2½-inch-long counter, red filter and safe alpha source.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

## ☛ Nature Ramblings ☛ Do You Know?

► ONE OF THE BIRDS that makes winter in the Middle Atlantic states more cheerful is the tree sparrow (*Spizella arborea*). A migrant, this sparrow winters as far south as South Carolina—a long way from its summer breeding grounds below the tundra along the Arctic coast.

Distinguished by a chestnut cap, gray throat and white wing bars, the tree sparrow often pays for its feeding-station meals by a somewhat canary-like song. During the winter months this song is most often heard on sunny afternoons. The melody starts with several long, high notes, followed by a rapid warble. Sometimes the call is a thin "tseet," and when the tree sparrow is in the company of a flock, the call is a clear double whistle.

On its wintering grounds the tree sparrow is often in the company of juncos. A mixed flock of these birds regularly frequents brushy hillsides and river bottoms. In such areas, these tiny birds, weighing less than one ounce, search for fallen seeds and those in weeds for their daily rations.

### Tree Sparrow



And when the tree sparrow moves into a feeding station, it seems at times nearly as tame as the black-capped chickadee.

Shortly after it is heard in February, the tree sparrow works its way north to summer breeding grounds. Here it builds a bulky nest on or near the ground, well protected by low vegetation. The female lays four or five pale green eggs dotted with brown—the source of another generation of winter singers in the United States.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962

*Lysimeters*, electric weighing devices developed to measure minute weight changes in the soil, will measure changes of one-half ounce in 7,000-pound blocks of soil.

Galvanized steel strand fences are now being used on farms and ranches.

About 15% of women are Rh negative and 85% of their husbands, Rh positive.

The majority of adults with no history of mumps are immune to the disease, a recent survey indicated.

A new technique for making and casting a solid rocket propellant that is safe and can be made easily available for use by amateur rocketeers has been reported.

The potato is about 75% to 80% water and contains only about 12% to 20% starch.

On the average there is a birth every 7½ seconds and a death every 19 seconds in the U. S.

• Science News Letter, 81:80 February 3, 1962