

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **FURNITURE COVER** has permanent pre-set folds. Handled easily by one person, the plastic waterproof cover snaps back into its folds with a gentle shake and folds compactly for storage. Available in three sizes to cover such things as bicycles, outdoor furniture or rowboats, it will withstand temperatures up to 220 degrees above or 72 degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

• Science News Letter, 81:412 June 30, 1962

⚙️ **PERISTALTIC PUMP** for safe, continuous transfer of fluids has a specially designed throttle that permits adjustment of the pump's delivery rate from 4.7 liters per minute down to a few drops per minute. A change from one liquid to another is made by changing the tubing, thus eliminating cleaning and contamination problems.

• Science News Letter, 81:412 June 30, 1962

⚙️ **NEW DRILL** for the home craftsman works on a new principle and replaces countersinks and counterbores in preparing wood for flush, recessed and angle-driven screws. The device does not mar or splinter wood and can be used with hand or electric drills. Non-clogging and with a built-in chip remover, the drill eliminates sanding.

• Science News Letter, 81:412 June 30, 1962

⚙️ **CONSTRUCTION TOY**, shown in the photograph, for children from four to ten years old includes large plastic planks, nuts, bolts and angles, all color-keyed. Structures

such as a doll swing or a launching pad gantry can be made with the giant size building set, available in two sizes. Instruction booklet is included.

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⚙️ **UMPIRE TALLY** for umpires, coaches and baseball fans, fits in the palm of the

hand and records balls, strikes and outs with a push of a button. Labeled windows show the number of each as recorded. The device quickly clears to zero when it is time for the next batter or inning.

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⚙️ **PLASTIC CLADDING** for the inside of a tumbling drum lasts twice as long as rubber lining. The plastic forms a uniform .020-inch-thick coating on the inner surface resistant to corrosive action of acids and abrasive action of metallic powders that swirl around within the drum as it rotates.

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⚙️ **STEEL CLIPS** that will prevent paper plates and napkins from flying off the picnic table are made of spring steel. The self-adjusting clips can be used on tables from one-half inch to two inches in thickness. Small and easy to carry, they are ideal for campers, backyard cookouts and on board yachts.

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⚙️ **DUAL ADAPTER BINDING POSTS** simplify line voltage connections from output receptacles to binding posts. For use where connections must be made to equipment lacking a parallel-blade plug and cord assembly, the adapters are rated for 15 amperes, 125 volts. They are useful in a wide range of laboratory and home workshop applications.

• Science News Letter, 81:412 June 30, 1962



Nature Ramblings



'Possum

Photograph by PETER J. VAN HUIZEN • Text by WILLIAM E. SMALL

► THE STRANGEST native of America is the famed opossum, a pouch-bearing animal around which much folklore has been spun.

Didelphis marsupialis, the common opossum, is found throughout the eastern and southern states, extending through the Midwest and California. It ranges far into Mexico, Central and South America and Canada.

A cousin of the kangaroo and other foreign marsupials, the 'possum uses its long scaly tail to climb trees, even hanging bottom-side-up at times. The slow creature possesses "thumbs" much like those of man, and its "big toe" is also capable of grasping.

In 1500 a 'possum was presented to the Spanish court, the first ever seen in Europe. Ferdinand and Isabella remarked it was a frightful beast, with a face like a fox, a tail of a monkey, ears like a bat and human hands.

The Spaniards were even more amazed that it was such an "incredible mother;" the pouch on its belly carried the young.

For centuries the 'possum was believed to abnormally produce young in the pouch. Some years ago, however, it was learned that they are born like other animals and quickly migrate to the pouch. Here the tiny, sightless infants remain for more than two months.

In the North and East the young emerge from the pouch in the spring or summer; in the South there are two litters. After leaving the pouch, they travel clinging to the mother's fur or hanging from her tail. They move about freely and begin the hard diet of insects, reptiles, eggs, garbage, fruits and berries or dead animals but suckle for another month.

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