



ARMY'S LUNAR PROBE FAILS — Dr. Werner von Braun (right), the Army's chief missile scientist, is all smiles in Washington at press conference on the firing of the Juno II lunar probe rocket. Later it was announced the rocket, shown at left blasting off from Cape Canaveral, Fla., was too slow and too off course to reach the moon. It was expected to reach a peak altitude of 64,830 miles before falling back to the Earth.

Is That So?

By OLGA BURNS

If you happen to see a magpie, which is as big as a small crow, tearing away at the bark of a tree, the chances are he is hunting an insect. And if it is in pear or apple raising country, the insect is probably the codling moth which has spun itself into a cocoon to sleep away the winter.

Since the codling moth is a pest that has cost the country millions of dollars a year in fruit crop damage, the magpie's work is a valuable service. There are others he performs, too. He eats vast quantities of harmful insects during the spring and summer months, kills many rodents and turns in an outstanding performance in disposing of carrion. Nonetheless, many people maintain his good deeds don't make up for the bad ones.

Certainly some of the damage magpies do is spectacular. These members of the crow family are so fond of carrion they sometimes help to make it by attacking branded or injured livestock, driving their beaks into the wound. They have also been known to tear holes in the backs of uninjured animals much as the kea parrots of New Zealand or the ox-peckers of Africa.

They are thieves also. For a time they seriously hampered coyote-control efforts by stealing the bait out of the traps, becoming so skillful at it that they were largely responsible for use of poison bait in many areas.

Probably Invader
Since the magpie would find excellent opportunities for food in the eastern and southern parts of the country it seems strange that he is primarily a western bird. He is found mainly from central Alaska south through the eleven western states, a fact that suggests that he is probably an invader from Siberia.

Despite a strong preference for animal food, during the winter months the magpie

will switch to a largely vegetable diet. His hunting ability in the snow is nowhere near that of the owls and hawks, and so he will concentrate on grains, seeds and berries.

Though they occasionally assemble in roosts like crows, and sometimes roost with crows, they are wanderers rather than migrants. Cold weather seems to mean little to them in itself. Their principal problem is the food supply, and so long as they can fly to a place where that is adequate, they have no reason for going farther.

(Released by McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

Sorry, I simply cannot answer your many friendly letters individually, but I will be glad to answer letters of general interest through the column. Please address your letters to: Is That So? c/o Medford Mail Tribune, Box 1069, San Francisco, Calif.

Three Appear in Circuit Court, Plead Guilty

Three men entered pleas of guilty in circuit court Wednesday afternoon before Judge Edward C. Kelly. A fourth man had previously entered a plea of guilty to charges and was sentenced. Jack Kenneth Lytle, 25, of Willow Tree court, Central Point, was sentenced to three years in the Oregon state penitentiary on a charge of grand larceny following his plea of guilty.

Lytle was one of two men who were charged with the theft of more than \$800 from a safe at the Jacksonville school last month.

Kenneth Henry Marnell, 23, general delivery, Medford, was sentenced to 20 months in the state penitentiary on a charge of uttering and publishing a false check. He had previously entered a plea of guilty and sentencing had been postponed pending completion of pre-sentence report. Carl Oswald Teller, 41, of Miner motel, Ashland, had imposition of sentence suspended for two years. He pleaded guilty to uttering and publishing a false check and full restitution was ordered by the court within 60 days.

Also appearing was Charles Leo Dworak, 35, of Hood River, who was charged with using a motor vehicle without permission of the owner. He pleaded guilty to district attorney information and was fined \$100 by the court to be paid within 60 days.

Some Special Christmas Gift Gadgets Claimed 'Real Gassers' by Sales Minds

By DOC QUIGG
New York —(UPI)— Christmas is coming and we shall have snow-jobs from all the sales departments from here on out. Some of the gadgets that sprout from fertile sales minds at this season are — as the Broadway set would say — real gassers.

Take, for instance, the lucite cocktail stirrer with an electric bulb on the stirring

end — for stirring cocktails in blackouts. Despite the fact that practically nobody ever has occasion to stir cocktails in the dark, this thing sold right out shortly after it went on sale in a New York store.

The real stroke of genius in the liquor line, however, is not on the market yet because of tax and licensing difficulties. This is the port-

able martini, in the handy vest-pocket or handbag size, clothed in a transparent, sealed plastic envelope.

The brainwave for thus packaging cocktails for portage between cases came from the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co., which makes the polyester film that encloses the drink without imparting any flavor to it.

Liquor companies are said to be investigating the possibility of marketing the pocket cocktails (they're only being distributed to friends as gifts by the Minnesota company now). One difficulty in marketing is law requirement that a tax stamp must be destroyed on opening. At present, the bag can be scissored or bitten open anywhere on its surface.

A holiday pitch thought up by one purveyor of spirits, Schenley by name, is a fancy Christmas-time vodka decanter aimed directly at deadbeats who stop by to cadge drinks. The base of the bottle is a metal bank with slots labeled "coins," "tips," and "I.O.U.s." Attached is an automatic pencil and a pad of I.O.U. blanks.

Vicuna, a soft-touch fabric of growing reputation, apparently has zoomed to record popularity in Christmas buying. One store reports vicuna sales to be three times as high as they were in the 1957 Christmas season. Vicuna smoking jackets run as high as \$500; lounging robes, \$750.

One attractive item that has just been announced, though not necessarily as a Christmas gift idea, is a telephone with a built-in sanitizing system. According to the Dance Telephone Co., of New York, which developed the phone, an automatic radiation unit emits ultra-violet rays that kill bacteria and

Mountain Sheep Dam Favored Over Other Proposals

Portland —(UPI)— Army engineers said Thursday they recommended a \$226 million high Mountain Sheep dam on the Snake river because the proposal showed "the highest measure of accomplishment at a small increase in cost" over other proposals.

The revised version of the engineers' "308" report, a massive plan, for development of the Columbia Basin, was discussed at a meeting of the Columbia Basin Inter-Agency Committee, held in conjunction with the Inland Empire Waterways Association convention here. Highlight of the later meeting will be a speech tonight by Army Secretary Wilber M. Brucker.

A high Mountain Sheep dam was one of 13 suggested projects costing some \$1.8 billion recommended for present or future authorization in the report.

Alternates Considered
G. H. Fernald, chief of planning for the North Pacific division engineers, explained that several alternatives were considered before a decision was arrived at on middle Snake river development.

One alternative was a Nez Perce dam downstream from the Mountain Sheep site, favored by the Federal Power Commission but opposed by fish interests. Fernald said Nez Perce would be located below the mouth of the Salmon river which accommodates about 29 per cent of the anadromous fish above McNary. He said a high Mountain Sheep dam would threaten only the small fish runs entering the Imnaha river. Only about three per cent of the fish above McNary dam use the Imnaha, he said.

The revised report also asked that Lower Canyon dam, proposed for the Salmon river, be held up until the fish problem is solved.

Pleasant Valley Rejected
Another plan involved construction of two low dams at

The Homestake Mine in Lead, S.D., is the largest producing gold mine in the United States. About \$16,000,000 in gold is taken out annually.

Franklin is the name of 27 U. S. towns and 27 others are Clinton.

Background Music Firm Formed Here

The Williams Sound company, Medford, has been granted a franchise by the R. F. Jones company, San Francisco, to operate Seeburg wired music equipment in Medford.

John F. Williams Jr., Medford, head of the company, said a studio has been established in Snider's Dairy building. The company will provide background music for Medford area stores and

buildings. Telephone lines from the studio, Williams said, will distribute background music to other parts of Medford. Some valley firms now have "on location" Seeburg equipment to provide background music.

Donald Lunday of the R. F. Jones company has been in Medford assisting in setting up the operation, Williams said.

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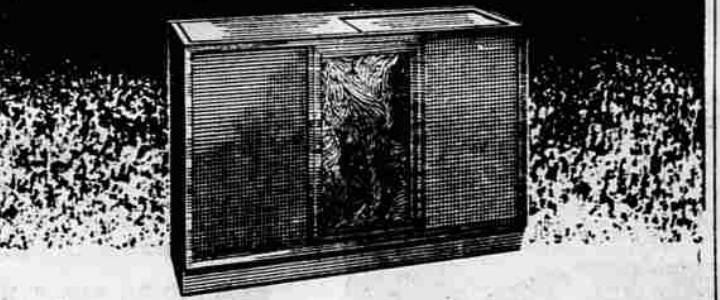
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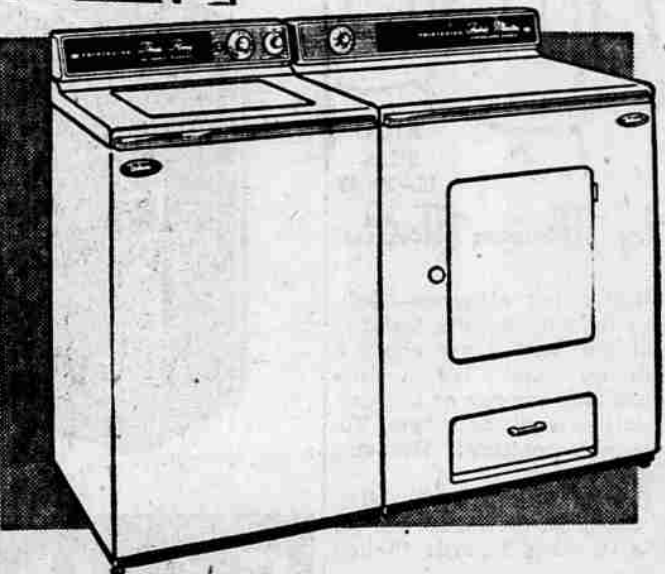
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