



**Small Worlds Around Us**

By Lynn M. Watkins

Imagine having a complete set of dentures, two uppers and one lower plate, and in the throat at that instead of in the mouth where teeth normally belong.

As if this wasn't silly enough in itself, Nature nearly went overboard by making these teeth strong enough to crush oyster shells, and doing it as easily as we would eat a handful of salted peanuts.

Crushing oyster shells with "throat-teeth" is just a natural thing with the common "sea-drum," a fish whose range extends along the eastern seaboard, up as far as New Jersey at least, and south as far as Argentina. It's life history, is little-known; the fish is what we might call a "familiar stranger."

Along the extreme northern section of its range the drum may be almost red in body color and rather slim, while farther south the body color is dark gray. Usually there are vertical stripes of black on the body, causing many fishermen to think it is a sheephead. The drum may reach a weight of 100 or more pounds, but the average is much smaller.

Fishermen, and many students say the drum has more and stranger habits than any other fish that swims. In fact just about everything about the drum is queer. Even its name, "drum," comes about because of the noise the fish makes. And justly so, for the scientists say this fish has the most elaborate sound producing apparatus of any fish.

The noise does resemble the sound of a drum as the fish goes booming along the bottom of the sea. These are the characters that just about drove the "sonar" machine crazy until the men operating the gadgets understood that the booming sound was really that of a drum.

This fish likes oysters on the half-shell, or the whole-shell, so much that he is considered to be about the greatest enemy the oyster farmer has.

Often a school of drum will completely wreck an oyster bed, leaving behind only a pile of empty shells. The fish grabs large mouthfuls of oysters, partly swallows them and shuts down with its powerful "throat-teeth."

When he shells are crushed, the soft parts of the oyster are swallowed and the shells blown out of the mouth. Regardless of how hard the fish bites down, it never hurts, for none of the teeth have enclosed nerves. They are merely set in little sockets in the "dentures." When the teeth are worn down, they fall out and new teeth grow in their place.

No dental laboratory ever made these dentures, yet they look strangely like real dental plates. The teeth of the drum are actually set in the "plates" rather than the fish's jaw and, of course, down the fish's throat.

(Released by The Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1960)

**Three Cars Involved In Ashland Accident**

Ashland - A car operated by Richard Elroy Roper, 36, of 72 Dewey st., Ashland, was struck by another car here Sunday morning, and was forced into a third vehicle operated by Fred Sneecce, 151 Nursery st.

The Mail Tribune incorrectly reported that a vehicle operated by Mary Elizabeth Miller, 119 Seventh st., was forced into the Speece vehicle. The Miller auto did collide, however, with the Roper car. No citations were issued.

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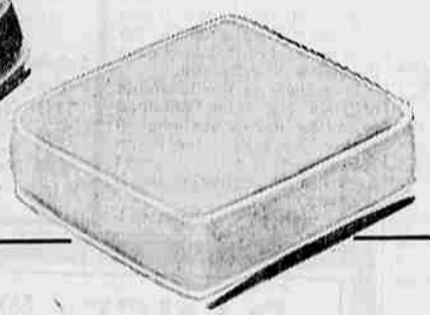
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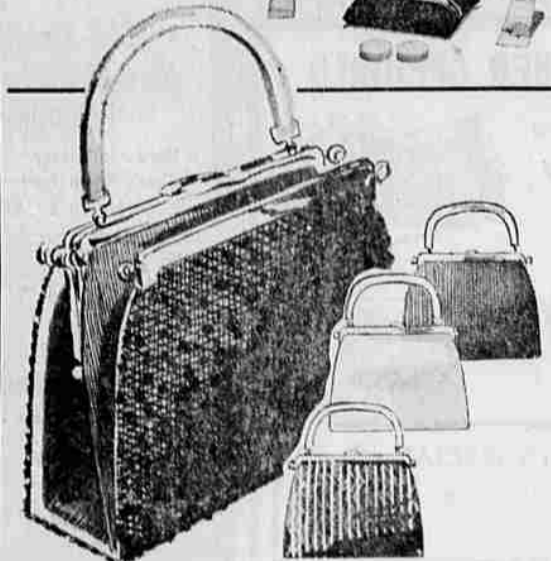
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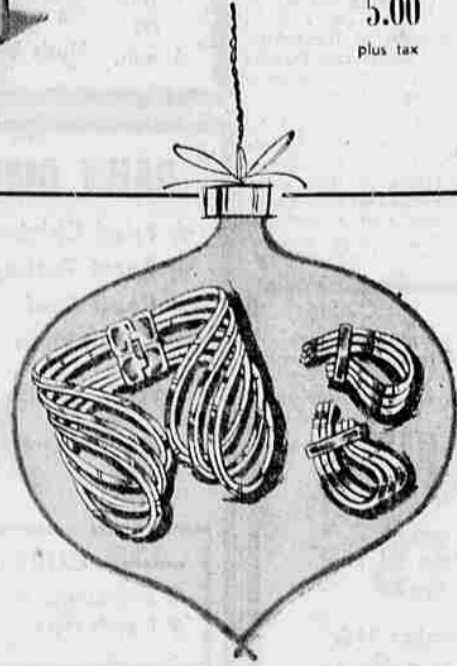
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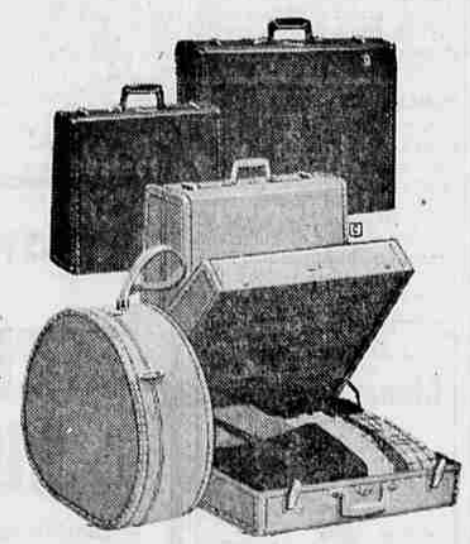
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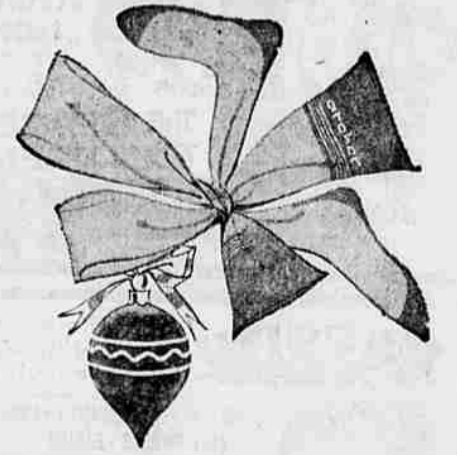


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