

Sept. 14, 1965

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3,205,897

BINDER MEANS

Filed Nov. 13, 1962

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.

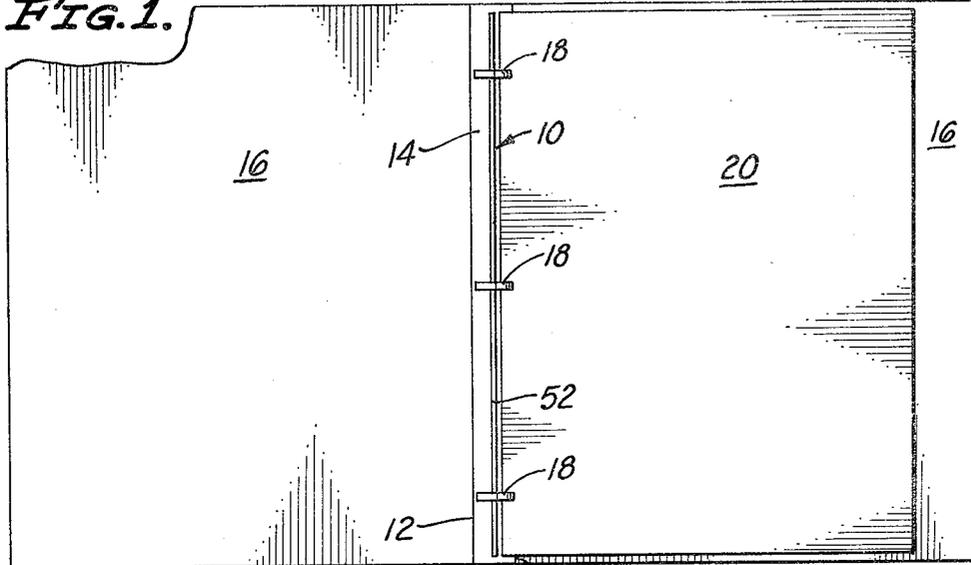


FIG. 2.

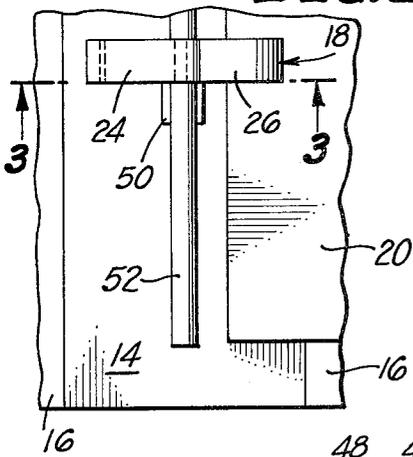


FIG. 3.

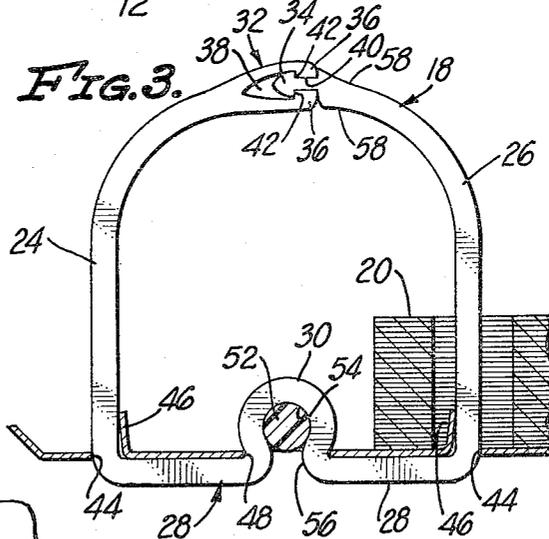
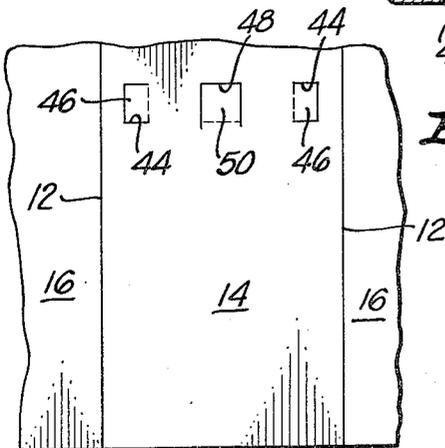


FIG. 4.



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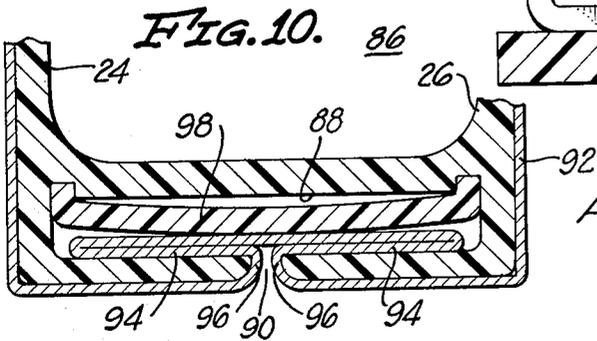
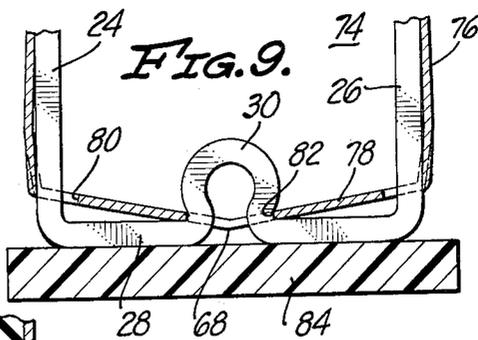
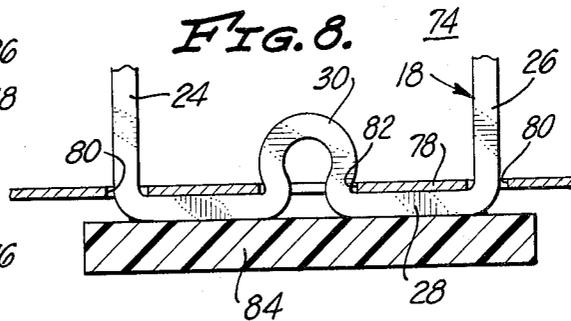
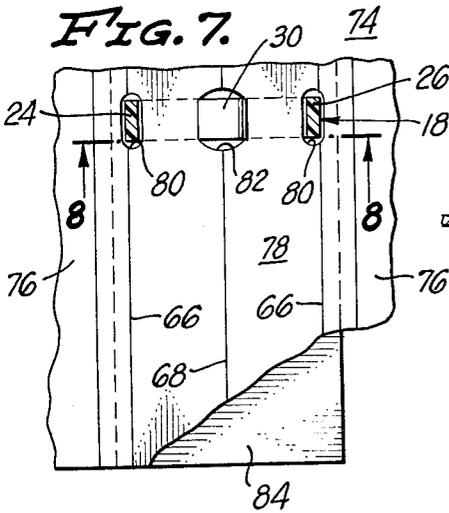
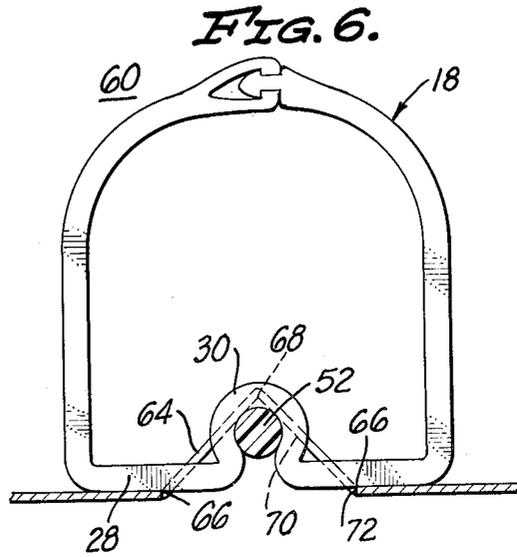
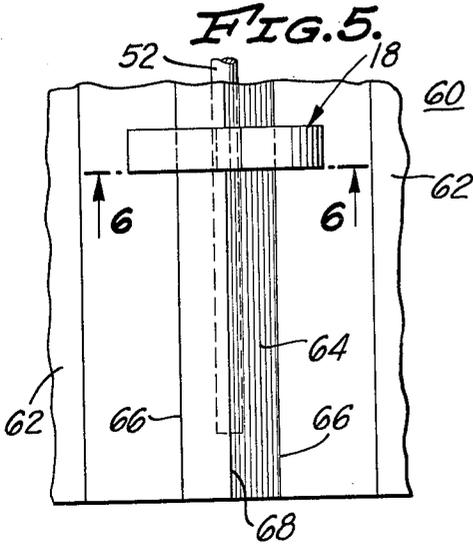
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3 Sheets-Sheet 2



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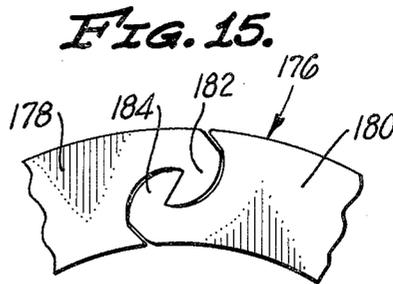
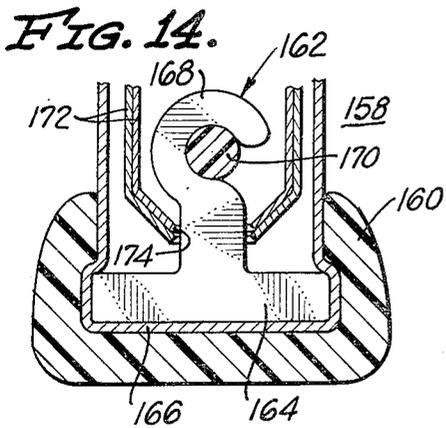
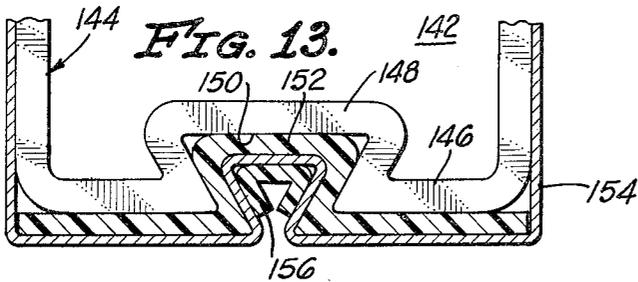
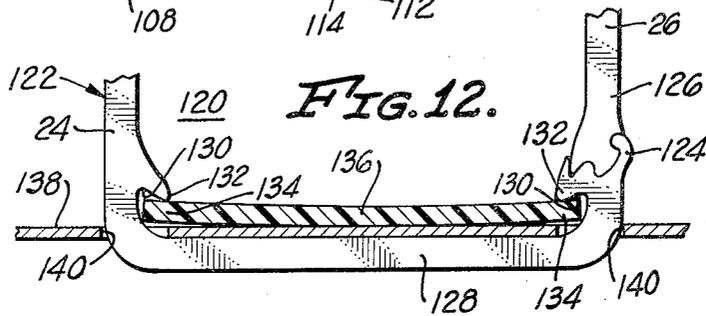
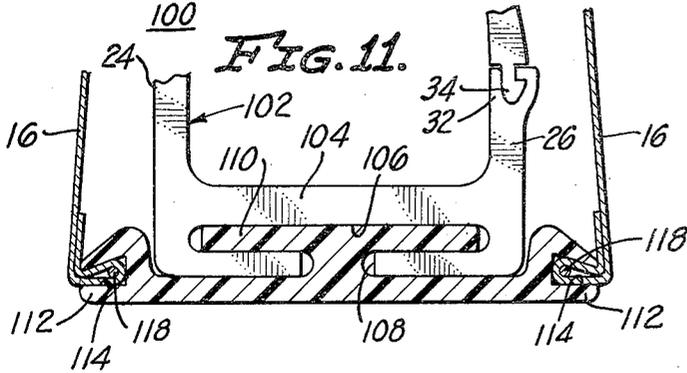
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BINDER MEANS

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3 Sheets-Sheet 3



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**BINDER MEANS**

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3 Claims. (Cl. 129—24)

The present invention relates to binder means, and more particularly to means for binding or fastening together a plurality of loose leaves of paper or similar material.

A great amount of material is published or otherwise disseminated in the form of periodicals, pamphlets, catalogs, price lists, brochures, calendars, and reports and the like, constituted of a relatively small number of sheets of paper or similar material. This material is not ordinarily circulated to the extent that a bound book would be, and is customarily intended to satisfy a relatively short term need. Consequently, collections of such material do not merit expenditure of much more than a nominal amount of money for their binding. Nevertheless, even though the binding means must be relatively inexpensive, the binding means should permit the bound pages to be turned over upon themselves, while maintaining their flat condition, the means must be relatively strong to withstand abuse, must be easily operated by users thereof, must be easily assemblable, and must not interfere with the smooth turning of the bound pages. In addition, the binding means must be capable of operation to permit the easy insertion and removal of separate pages when, for example, it is necessary to bring a brochure up to date by substituting new pages for old pages.

Accordingly, it is an object of my invention to provide binding means that includes the foregoing objects and features, and which is constituted by a plurality of connector elements or rings which are maintained in proper relationship with respect to a cover by connector clamp means which takes the form of a flat or round connecting rod, and which, depending upon the particular application therefor, also includes or receives a spine for holding the cover, or for disposition over a portion of the cover to provide a pleasing and aesthetically attractive shelf display or the like. The connector elements are preferably characterized by a configuration which permits extrusion of the elements, so that the extruded sections can be inexpensively cut or sliced into the connector element components.

Another object of the invention is to provide binder means of the aforementioned character in which the connector clamp means may be disposed either inside or outside of the cover, depending upon the manner in which the cover is punched, and in which the connector clamp means in either of these positions is adapted to disconnectably mount the connector element.

Another object of the invention is the provision of binder means of the aforementioned character, and in which the connector elements are characterized by rings having mating ends which snap together to secure a plurality of sheets of paper in position, and which twist apart along an axis different from the axis along which the sheets of paper stress the rings. With this arrangement, the connector elements are easily separable to receive looseleaf sheets, and are adapted to be quickly snapped together to secure the sheets in position, but are for all practical purposes incapable of being opened by pulling upon the sheets of paper.

A further object of the invention is the provision of binder means of the aforementioned character, and in which the connector elements need not be disposed through punched openings provided therefor in the cover. Instead, in one embodiment of the invention the binder means is adapted to fit almost completely within the

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cover, the cover being secured to the binder means by an elongated locking element which forms a part of the connector clamp means.

Another object of the invention is to provide binder means of the aforementioned character having a plurality of connector elements which include portions adapted to be received within openings provided therefor in the cover. The portions receivable in such openings are made approximately the same in size as the openings, when the cover is laid flat, so that when the cover is folded the openings will be effectively reduced in size so as to prevent the connector element portions from dropping out of the cover. The same size relationship is provided between the connector element portions and the pages to be bound together thus preventing inadvertent separation therebetween.

Other objects and features of the invention will become apparent from consideration of the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of the binder means of the present invention, illustrated in a looseleaf binder arrangement;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary view of a portion of the binder means illustrated in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a view taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged, fragmentary view of a portion of the cover illustrated in FIG. 1, and particularly showing the manner in which the openings are formed therein;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged fragmentary view similar to that of FIG. 2, but illustrating another embodiment of the binder means, in which the connecting rod which clamps together the connector elements is disposed externally of the cover;

FIG. 6 is a view taken along the line 6—6 of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary view similar to that of FIG. 2, and illustrating another embodiment of the invention in which the connector rod is omitted;

FIG. 8 is a view taken along the line 8—8 of FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is a view similar to that of FIG. 8, and particularly illustrating the effective reduction in the size of the punched openings in the cover when it is closed;

FIG. 10 is an enlarged, fragmentary, and transverse cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 11 is an enlarged, fragmentary, and transverse cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 12 is an enlarged, fragmentary, and transverse cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 13 is an enlarged, fragmentary, and transverse cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 14 is an enlarged, fragmentary, and transverse cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. 15 is an enlarged, fragmentary, elevational view of a connector element provided with mating ends of a configuration different from that illustrated, for example, in FIG. 3.

Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to FIGS. 1 through 4 thereof, the binder means of the present invention, generally designated 10, is illustrated in association with a rectangular sheet of material which is scored and folded along a pair of parallel lines 12 to form a looseleaf assembly constituted by a back 14 and a pair of covers 16. As will be described in greater detail hereinafter, the back 14 is provided with openings to accommodate a plurality of connector elements 18, usually three in number, for mounting and securing in position a

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plurality of rectangular looseleaf sheets 20 of paper or similar material. As will be apparent, the openings provided in the back 14 and the openings provided in the looseleaf sheets 20 for the connector elements 18 are arranged in complementary juxtaposition so that the sheets 20 fit within the covers 16.

Each connector element 18 is substantially ring-like in configuration, and includes a pair of substantially vertically disposed sides 24 and 26 and a base 28 integral with the lower extremities of the sides 24 and 26, and including an annular clamp receiver 30 located intermediate the sides 24 and 26. The upper extremities of the sides 24 and 26 are separably securable together by means of a receptacle 32 provided at the upper extremity of the side 24, and a protuberance 34 provided at the upper extremity of the side 26, and receivable within the receptacle 32.

The connector element 18 is preferably made of a resilient plastic material such as polyvinylchloride which is deformable, but which tends to quickly return to its original, undeformed state, although it will be apparent that certain other materials may also satisfy this requirement. However, plastic material is generally less expensive and is much easier to fabricate, being inexpensively extrudable in long lengths which can be subsequently cut or sliced into thin sections, each of which then constitutes one of the connector elements 18 illustrated. The resilience of the material of each connector element 18 is required in order to effect rapid mating or joining of the free ends 32 and 34 of the connector element 18 to form a closed ring for mounting and securing in position the plurality of looseleaf sheets 20. For this purpose, the receptacle 32 is constituted by bifurcations 36 which are integral with the side 24, and spaced apart to define a cavity 38, the extremities of the bifurcations 36 terminating in rounded portions which extend toward each other to define a neck or entry passage 40 which is of lesser vertical dimension than the cavity 38, so that the protuberance 34 is easily received within the cavity 38, but receivable therein only after deforming or forcing apart the confronting extremities of the bifurcations 36. The protuberance 34 is prevented from being pulled out of the cavity 38 along the axis of its entry by the provision of a pair of slots or detents 42 inwardly of the protuberance 34 and in opposite faces of the side 26. The protuberance 34 constitutes a form of bayonet which can be forced into the cavity 38 along an entry axis lying in the plane of the connector element 18, but which can be easily removed only by relative sliding of the receptacle 32 and protuberance 34 along an exit axis which intercepts the plane within which the connector element 18 lies.

This provides a highly desirable characteristic in that any pulling upon the looseleaf sheets 20 tending to pull apart the sides 24 and 26 will be ineffective to separate the receptacle 32 and the protuberance 34. Instead, the user of the looseleaf binder must make a conscious effort to slide the receptacle 32 and protuberance 34 relative to each other to effect separation.

Each connector element 18 is mounted to the back 14 by inserting the separated sides 24 and 26 of the element 18 through a pair of mounting openings 44 which are generally rectangular in configuration and are cut along three sides and scored along the remaining side to form flaps 46 extending upwardly of the back 14 immediately adjacent the openings 44. Simultaneously, the clamp receiver 30 of the base 28 is disposed through a similar, substantially rectangular mounting opening 48, which is cut and scored like the mounting openings 44 to provide a flap 50 which is reversely bent along the scored side thereof into a position underlying a connector clamp means constituted by an elongated connector rod 52, as best viewed in FIG. 2.

The annular configuration of each of the clamp receivers 30 defines a substantially circular recess 54 which communicates with a neck or entry 56 which is smaller

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than the recess 54. With this arrangement the connector rod 52 is disposable through the recesses 54 of the several connector elements 18 and retained in this position by reason of the constraint imposed by the confining walls of the entry 56. The diameter of the connector rods 52 is preferably made the same as or slightly larger than the size of the recesses 54 so that the clamp receivers 30 provide frictional resistance against axial removal of the connector rod 52. In this regard it is noted that the reversely bent flaps 50 underlying the connector rod 52, and along the axis thereof, also offer frictional resistance against the axial removal of the rod 52 by reason of the tendency of the flaps 50 to return to their original, planar positions. Moreover, by cutting and scoring the mounting openings 44 and 48 which provide the flaps 46 and the flaps 50, a considerable savings in manufacture of the present binder means is effected, since completely punching out the openings 44 and 48 requires more ponderous and expensive equipment. Of course, if it is desired to punch out the openings 44 and 48, the binder means 10 is substantially equally effective in performing the described functions.

Mating openings, (not shown) are provided in the looseleaf sheets 20 so that the sheets 20 may be mounted upon the connector elements 18 for turning about the periphery of the connector elements 18. To facilitate such turning, the protuberances 34 are rounded as illustrated, and the side 26 of each connector element 18 is provided with fillets 58 adjacent the detents 42 to provide a smooth, faired continuation of the protuberances 34 when the connector element is closed.

Referring now to FIGS. 5 and 6, another embodiment of the invention is illustrated, being constituted by a binder means 60. The binder means 60 includes a plurality of connector elements 18, identical to the elements 18 of the embodiment of FIGS. 1 through 4, which are arranged in spaced relationship and connected together by a connector rod 52, similar to the arrangement illustrated in FIG. 1. However the binder means 60 includes a rectangular sheet which is scored and bent to provide a pair of covers 62 and a back 64 intermediate the covers 62, it being noted that the back 64 is characterized by parallel scoring lines 66 and a scoring line 68 between the lines 66. The back 64 is then bent upwardly in the form of an inverted "V" to define an axially extending groove 70. The groove portion of the back 64 is then transversely cut away or slotted to provide axially spaced apart openings 72 which each receive the clamp receiver 30 and the adjacent portions of the base 28 of a connector element 18. With this arrangement, the binder means 60 may be assembled by first disposing the connector rod 52 within the grooved portion of the back 64, adjacent the scored line 68, and thereafter forcing the plurality of connector elements 18 through the openings 72 and upon the connector rod 52, the entry 56 opening up to receive the connector rod 52 by reason of the deformation of the material of the connector element base 28. In contrast, the connector rod 52 in the embodiments of FIGS. 1 through 4 was disposed inwardly of the back 14, whereas the connector rod 52 of the embodiment of FIGS. 5 and 6 is disposed externally of the back 64. Obviously, the binder means 60 of FIGS. 5 and 6 greatly facilitates the rapid assembly of the connector elements 18 upon the connector rod 52.

In FIGS. 7, 8, and 9 there is illustrated a binder means 74 constituting another embodiment of the present invention, and characterized by the utilization of connector elements 18 disposed in spaced relationship in the same manner illustrated in FIG. 1, the binder means 74, however, being associated with a pair of covers 76 and a back 78 which are cut and scored in a manner identical to the covers 62 and back 64 of the binder means 60 illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6.

To accommodate each connector element 18, the back 78 is provided with a pair of transversely spaced apart

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openings 80 and an opening 82 intermediate the openings 80, the openings 80 and 82 being identical to the openings 44 and 48 of the binder means 10 of FIGS. 1 through 4, except that the openings 80 and 82 are completely punched out. The connector clamp means which secure together the plurality of connector elements 18 is constituted by a flat, elongated spine 84, to which the bases 28 of the connector elements 18 are rigidly secured, as by adhesives, for example. With this arrangement, the spine 84 and the connector elements 18 constitute an integral unit which may be quickly associated with the covers 76 or other covers when the original covers are obsolete or worn out. The spine 84 is preferably made of an attractive plastic material, and imparts a look of permanence, as well as affording a means for displaying in an attractive manner the identity of the contents of the particular looseleaf with which the binder means 74 is associated.

The integral unit constituted by the connector elements 18 and the spine 84 is associated with the covers 76 by insertion of the sides 24 and 26 of the connector elements 18 through the openings 80, the clamp receivers 30 being receivable within the openings 82. Each opening 82 is characterized by a transverse width which is equal to or slightly less than the transverse width of the clamp receiver 30 associated therewith, as illustrated in FIG. 8, so that when the covers 76 are normally closed, as illustrated in FIG. 9, the transverse width of the opening 82 is effectively reduced by folding of the back 78 along the score line 68. This binds against the clamp receivers 30, and constrains the receivers 30 against falling out of the openings 82. Accordingly, if desired, the connector rod 52, which is normally utilized to prevent separation between the cover and the connector elements, may be omitted.

In FIG. 10 there is illustrated another form of connector element, generally designated 86, which is identical to the connector element 18 except for the lower or base portion thereof. This base portion is integral with the sides 24 and 26, and includes a transversely extending slot 88 which opens to the underside of the connector element 86 through a narrow, centrally located cover passage 90. A rectangular sheet of material constituting a cover 92 is folded intermediate its side margins to provide a pair of reversely bent portions 94 which are slidable within the slot 88, with the cover passage 90 accommodating the cover folds 96 which join the reversely bent portions 94 to the cover proper.

The reversely bent portions 94 of the cover 92 are maintained within the slot 88 by connector clamp means constituted by an axially extending connector plate 98 which is transversely bowed to resiliently exert a bias against the adjacent cover portions 94. With this arrangement, it is necessary that the connector elements 86 be arranged in proper axial position with respect to the associated cover 92, prior to the insertion of the connector plate 98, so that the elements 86 will be properly juxtaposed to the punched openings in the looseleaf sheets to be bound.

Referring now to FIG. 11, another binder means 100 is illustrated, and which is constituted by a plurality of connector elements 102, each of which is characterized by a configuration substantially identical to that of the connector element 18 of the first embodiment. However, it is noted that the receptacle 32 and protuberance 34 are provided in the side 26 of the connector element 102, adjacent the base portion 104 thereof. This permits the looseleaf sheets 20 which are mounted by the connector elements 102 to be easily turned over with no possibility whatever of catching upon the mating extremities of the connector elements 102. This embodiment is particularly adapted to looseleaf binders in which there are a limited number of looseleaf sheets 20 to be bound.

The base portion 104 of each of the connector elements

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102 is characterized by a transversely disposed slot 106 which opens outwardly through a cover passage 108, substantially similar to the arrangement of the slot 88 and the cover passage 90 of the previous embodiment illustrated in FIG. 10. Within the slot 106 and the cover passage 108 is axially disposed a longitudinally extending connector clamp means constituted by an I-shaped connector anchor 110. The upper portion of the connector anchor 110 is slidably and frictionally retained within the slot 106, and the lower portion of the anchor 110 rests upon the base portion 104, and includes a pair of cover clamp sections 112 in its side extremities. Each of the cover clamp sections 112 is characterized by a cover slot 114 which extends axially, coextensive with the connector anchor 110, and which diminishes in size to an entry passage 116. The extremities of the pair of covers 16 are reversely bent back upon themselves and slidably disposed in the cover slots 114 and entry passages 116, and an elongated rod or retaining element 118 is disposed through the reversely bent portion of each of the covers 16, and within the associated cover slot 114 to retain the cover 16 in position. The particular binder means 100 is thus characterized by a comparatively easy means for associating the pair of covers 16 with the connector clamp means constituted by the connector anchor 110. In contrast, it is somewhat more time consuming to form the cover so as to be receivable within the spine 84 of the embodiment of FIG. 10.

In FIG. 12 there is illustrated yet another embodiment of the present invention, constituted by a binder means 120 which includes a connector element 122 characterized by a slightly different structure for accommodating the connector clamp means, and a slightly different arrangement of the mating ends of the connector element.

The connector element 122 is provided with a receptacle 124 and a protuberance 126 provided in the side 26 of the element 122, and located immediately adjacent the base portion 128 of the element 122.

The base portion 128 is characterized by axially extending clamp grooves 130 at opposite sides of the base portion 128, the upper flanges 132 which define the upper portion of the grooves 130 each depending toward the base portion 128 to define a reduced entry passage 134 for receiving the connector clamp means which in this embodiment is constituted by an axially extending connector plate 136 which is engaged by the flanges 132 adjacent its side margins.

The connector elements 122 are assembled to an associated cover 138 by disposition of the sides 24 and 26 of the connector element 122 through punched openings 140 provided therefor in the cover 138, the connector plate 136 thereafter being slidably disposed in position to retain the cover 138 and the connector elements 122 in proper operative association.

Another binder means 142 is illustrated in FIG. 13, and is constituted by a connector element 144 which is substantially identical to the connector element 18 of the first embodiment except that the connector element 144 is characterized by a base portion 146 which includes an axially extending clamp receiver 148 having a trapezoidal configuration rather than a circular configuration. The clamp receiver 148 includes a similarly configured clamp groove 150 which axially slidably receives, and frictionally retains, a similarly configured portion of a connector clamp means constituted by a connector element 152, the connector element 152 serving to anchor the connector elements 144 in desired position for receiving and mating with the complementary openings in the looseleaf sheets 20 to be bound.

A cover 154 is retained in position over the connector elements 152 and the clamp receiver 148 by folding the middle portion of the cover 154 into the configuration of the clamp groove 150, and thereafter axially inserting a retainer element 156 which is frictionally retained within the clamp groove 150 and prevents the cover 154 from

being pulled out of the clamp groove 150 through the narrower neck portion of the groove 150. It will be apparent that with this arrangement all of the connector elements 152 are disposed inside the cover 154 so that the back of the cover 154 is unbroken by any protruding portions of the connector elements 144.

Referring now to FIG. 14, yet another embodiment of the invention is illustrated, taking the form of a binding means 158 constituted by an axially extending, channel shaped spine 160, and a plurality of connector elements 162 which fit within the channel of the spine 160. Each of the connector elements includes a horizontally disposed base portion 164 which is wedged or closely received within the channel of the spine 160, with the cover 166 of the looseleaf being secured in position therebetween.

The upper portion of the connector element 162 extends vertically from the portion 164 and terminates in an arcuate clamp receiver 168 having an arcuate recess for receiving a connector clamp means constituted by a connector rod 170.

A plurality of looseleaf sheets 172 of a size approximating that of the cover 166 are folded in the middle and provided with a plurality of axially spaced openings 174 disposed along the line of holes in the looseleaf sheets 172.

The sheets 172 are mounted upon the connector elements 162 by inserting the arcuate shaped portion of the connector elements 162 through the openings 174 and thereafter inserting the connector rod 170 to retain the sheets 172 in position. Thus, the structure of the binding means 158 requires only one series of punched openings 174 in each looseleaf sheet 172, each sheet 172 actually constituting a pair of sheets, as will be apparent.

In FIG. 15 there is illustrated another form of connector element 176, which is substantially identical to the connector element 18 of the first embodiment, except that the particular construction for joining the ends of the sides 178 and 180 of the element 176 differs from that of the element 18. More particularly, the sides 178 and 180 include mating extremities constituted by complementary hooked portions 182 and 184 which can be engaged and disengaged only by relative sliding thereof along an axis disposed substantially perpendicular to the transverse plane within which the connector element 176 lies. This, of course, is in contrast to the transverse engagement and axial disengagement which characterizes the connector element 18 of the first embodiment.

It is to be particularly noted that the abutting ends of the portions 182 and 184 abut along a plane which is inclined with respect to the vertical, longitudinally extending plane passing through the center of the connector element 176. This angular inclination of the abutting ends of the portions 182 and 184 resists any tendency of the portions 182 and 184 to separate upon experiencing a downwardly directed force against their upper surfaces, such as might occur if a book were laid upon the connector element 176. That is, the portions 182 and 184, under such a downward force, tend to more firmly grip and press against each other, rather than separate.

From the above description it will be apparent that a binder means has been provided which is relatively inexpensive to manufacture, simple to operate, and particularly well adapted to mass production. While the invention has been described by means of specific examples and specific embodiments, the invention is not limited thereto since obvious modifications and variations will occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In binder means, the combination of: an element having a plurality of sets of openings spaced apart along

a longitudinal axis, each said set including a pair of transversely spaced apart openings and an intermediate opening between said pair of openings; a plurality of one-piece substantially ring-like connector elements made of flexible material, each of which is discontinuous to provide a pair of mating ends having cross-sections enabling said extremities to each pass through said pair of openings, respectively, each said connector element further including a base portion having a clamp receiver disposed through said intermediate opening; and means cooperative with said clamp receivers to maintain said connector elements in operative relationship.

2. In binder means for mounting a plurality of looseleaf sheets, the combination of: a cover having a plurality of sets of openings formed therein and spaced apart along a longitudinal axis, each said set including a pair of transversely spaced apart openings and an intermediate opening between said pair of openings; a plurality of substantially ring-like connector elements, each of which includes a pair of mating extremities disposed through said pair of openings, each said connector element further including a base portion having a clamp receiver which includes a longitudinally oriented opening, said clamp receiver of each said connector element being disposed through said intermediate opening; and longitudinally extending clamp means disposed through each said opening in said clamp receiver to mount said connector elements, said clamp receivers being adapted to permit rapid separation of said connector elements from said connector clamp means for disassembly of said binder means, the formation of said cover to provide each pair of said openings defining a pair of flaps adjacent said pair of openings and engaging the associated connector element, the formation of said cover to provide said intermediate opening defining a flap adjacent said intermediate opening and underlying said connector clamp means in frictional engagement therewith to constrain said connector clamp means against removal.

3. In binder means, the combination of: a cover having a plurality of sets of openings spaced apart along a longitudinal axis, each said set including a pair of transversely spaced apart openings and an intermediate opening between said pair of openings; a plurality of substantially ring-like connector elements, each of which includes a pair of mating extremities disposed through said pair of openings, each said connector element further including a base portion having a clamp receiver which includes a longitudinally oriented, laterally opening channel, each said clamp receiver being disposed through one of said intermediate openings; and longitudinally extending clamp means laterally disposed through said channels for location therein to mount said connector elements.

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