

March 12, 1963

R. C. TAYLOR
RURAL MAILBOX

3,081,023

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2 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1

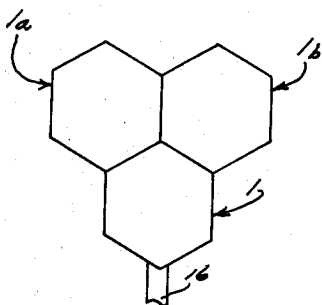


FIG. 2

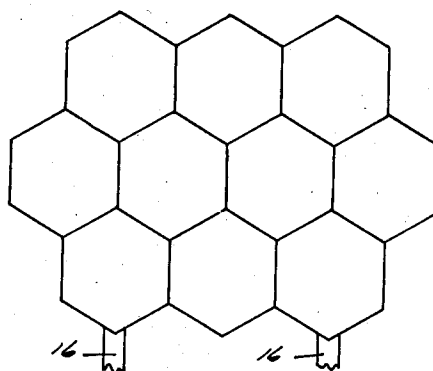


FIG. 3

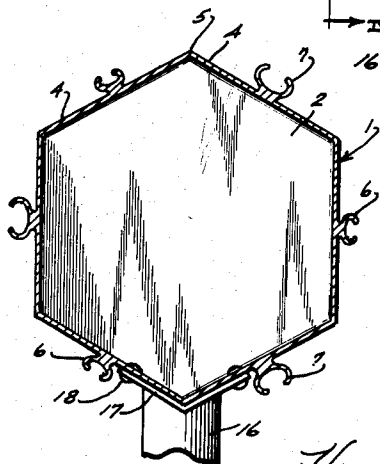
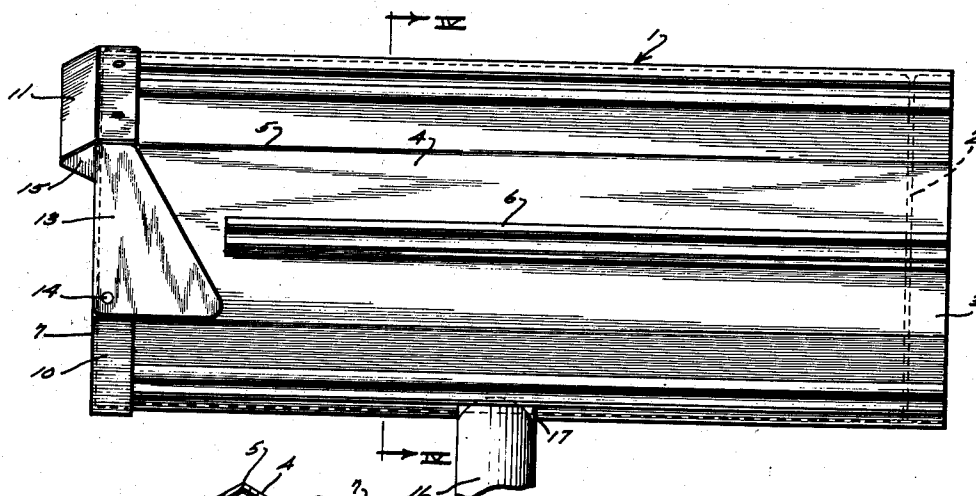


FIG. 4

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FIG. 5

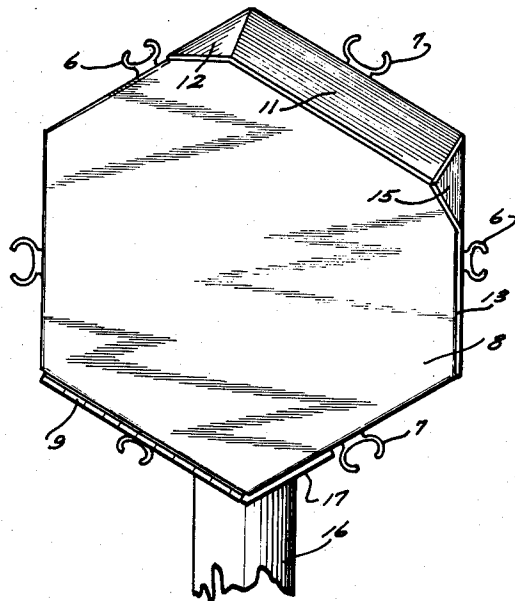


FIG. 6

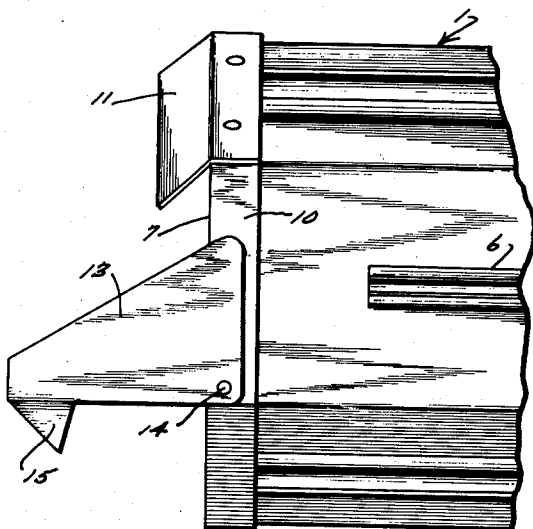
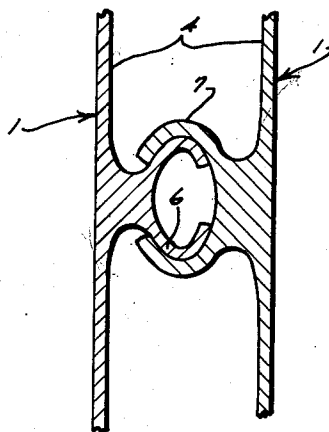


FIG. 7



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RURAL MAILBOX

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This invention relates to improvements in a rural mailbox and an assembly of similar mailboxes, and more particularly to a rural mailbox of a type designed for combination or connection with similar mailboxes so that a group of such mailboxes may be established in one particular location, the invention being highly desirable for use in rural areas where mail is delivered to boxes along the roadside, suburban motels, and in similar locations, although the invention may have other uses and purposes as well be apparent to one skilled in the art.

In the past, many and various types of outdoor mailboxes particularly desirable for rural usage have been developed, but these formerly known mailboxes did not possess what now may be considered desirable if not needed advantages. These formerly known mailboxes, therefore, are now objectionable for a number of reasons, including their unsymmetrical shape and resultant unattractive appearance, the fact that they are made in various sizes, the fact that they are usually of galvanized metal and therefore subject to corrosion, and the further fact that they cannot be stacked or connected directly with other mailboxes, whereby when it is necessary to provide a group of individual mailboxes at a particular location, it is necessary for the mailman to stop his vehicle several times in order to service the boxes, or leave the vehicle in order to serve the entire group. The individual mounting essential for outdoor mailboxes heretofore made also added to the expense of such mountings, the space required for a plurality of mailboxes in a specific location and gave the general landscape in the vicinity an unsightly appearance.

With the foregoing in mind, it is an important object of the instant invention to provide an outdoor mailbox carrying means for supporting connection with similar mailboxes, whereby a plurality of like mailboxes may be carried or supported by a single mounted mailbox.

It is also an object of this invention to provide an outdoor mailbox so designed that it may be connected with other similar mailboxes to form a compact group in a single location, such group necessitating only a single stop by a mailman in order to serve a plurality of boxes.

Another desideratum of this invention is the provision of an outdoor mailbox constructed for ready connection with similar mailboxes thus permitting the boxes to be arranged in attractive groups and permitting a plurality of boxes to be supported on a single mounting post.

It is also an object of this invention to provide an outdoor mailbox having simple means on the exterior of the body thereof for easy telescopic connection with similar boxes.

A further object of the instant invention is the provision of an outdoor mailbox that is symmetrical in shape and attractive in appearance when used singly or when structurally connected with a plurality of like mailboxes.

Another feature of the invention resides in the provision of an outdoor mailbox that may readily and economically be manufactured of non-corrosive materials and, if desired, provided with a selected permanent color on at least a part thereof.

Still another feature of the instant invention resides in the provision of an outdoor mailbox which may have a single piece body of lightweight metal having integral means thereon for supporting connection with a plurality of like mailboxes.

While some of the more salient features, characteristics and advantages of the instant invention have been above pointed out, others will become apparent from the following disclosures, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a diagrammatic view indicating an arrangement of a plurality of mailboxes embodying principles of the instant invention;

FIGURE 2 is a diagrammatic view illustrating a different arrangement of a plurality of the mailboxes;

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary side elevational view of a mailbox embodying principles of the instant invention showing the same on a mounting post;

FIGURE 4 is a transverse vertical sectional view through the structure of FIGURE 3 taken substantially as indicated by the line IV-IV of FIGURE 3, looking in the direction of the arrows;

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary end view of the structure of FIGURE 3;

FIGURE 6 is a fragmentary side elevational view of the mailbox of FIGURE 3 showing the flag in signal position; and

FIGURE 7 is a fragmentary magnified view illustrating a connection between two like mailboxes.

As shown on the drawings:

The instant invention may be fabricated from sheet metal, but consistent with the desired qualities of strength, lightness, and durability, as well as economical commercial production, the mailbox is preferably formed with a minimum number of parts. To this end, the body of the mailbox may be a one-piece extrusion of aluminum, aluminum alloy, or some equivalently light and non-corrosive metal. The mailbox may have substantially any desirable configuration in cross-section, but is preferably polygonal to afford easier and more intimate connection with similar mailboxes when an assembly is made at a particular site. For illustrative purposes a hexagonal cross-section has been selected, whereby a plurality of the mailboxes may be assembled in honeycomb style thereby affording a pleasant appearance, full utilization of space, and more than adequate strength for the entire assembly.

With reference now more particularly to FIGURES 3 and 4, it will be seen that the mailbox comprises a tubular body portion 1 closed at one end by an integral end piece 2, the side walls of the body projecting slightly beyond the end piece 2 as indicated at 3, if so desired, for additional strength and protection against rough handling of the box. Externally, as well as internally, the box has a plurality of flat faces 4, and there will be a longitudinal apical line 5 between each pair of adjacent faces which are obviously disposed at an angle to each other, there obviously being six faces and six apical lines with a box hexagonal in cross-section.

Extruded integrally with each flat face of the body 1 is a longitudinally extending rib for connection with a complementary rib on another box in order to combine such boxes in an assembly. The ribs alternate in size around the body 1, there being a male rib 6 on one face 4, and a female rib 7 on each of the adjacent faces, and so on around the box. All ribs may be of the same general contour, but the female rib 7 is larger than a male rib 6, and of a size so receive a male rib telescopically therewithin as seen clearly in FIGURE 7. Each rib is preferably centrally disposed of the respective face 4 and terminates short of the front of the box, as seen best in FIGURES 3 and 6 so as not to interfere with the operation of the door of the box which will be later described. The shape of the ribs as illustrated, namely in the form of an open sided hollow oval, is not essential but the ribs may be of substantially any desirable shape as long as they will telescopically interlock with complementary ribs.

Over the open end of the body 1 a door 8 is disposed, the door being hinged to the body 1 along the edge of one of the faces 4 thereof, preferably by a piano type hinge 9 as seen in FIGURE 5. The door is preferably provided with a circumscribing inwardly extending flange 10 thereon to embrace the open end of the body 1 when the door is in closed position as seen in FIGURES 3 and 6. The door will remain in closed position by frictional contact with the body, but, of course, if so desired a suitable form of lock may be provided by the user of the mailbox. Riveted or equivalently secured to the upper portion of the door is a handle 11 for opening and closing the door, this handle extending across the end of one of the faces 4 of the body, and being provided with an angularly disposed portion 12 extending to the adjacent face 4 of the body, as seen best in FIGURE 5. A flag 13 is hinged to the flange 10 of the door as indicated at 14 to pivotally move relatively to the door so as to signal the mailman or the mailbox owner that there is something in the box. At the upper end thereof this flag has an angularly offset portion 15 corresponding to the portion 12 on the handle 11 so that the entire front end of the mailbox has a symmetrical and pleasing appearance when the handle is raised or in non-signaling position. The angular portion 15 on the handle also functions as a means to facilitate moving the handle from the non-signaling position of FIGURE 3 to signal position as seen in FIGURE 6.

A post is utilized to support a box or assembly of boxes. The post may be of any suitable material, and a non-corrosive metallic post being preferable. As seen in FIGURES 3, 4 and 5, a post 16 which may be round in shape, is provided with a suitable notch at its upper end to receive an angular bracket 17 bonded in any suitable fashion to the upper end of the post. The bracket is of the proper angle to intimately receive one of the apical lines 5 of the box body and a portion of each face 4 on the sides thereof as seen best in FIGURE 4, and the mailbox body is secured to the angle in any suitable manner such as by bolt and nut assemblies 18. Mounting the mailbox with one of the apical lines 5 downward within the angle plate 17 permits the mail to lie across the inside of the box above the very bottom thereof, rendering it more simple to grasp the mail and remove it from the box.

With the instant invention, mailboxes may be assembled into tightly compact groups, whereby a mailman may serve a relatively large number of boxes with one stop of his delivery vehicle. The group arrangement of the mailboxes results in an attractive assembly, and if the mailboxes are made of aluminum, anodized, at least the mailbox covers may be provided with various colors adding to the attractiveness of the assembly. A different color on the cover of each box also aids the mailman in determining ownership of the boxes without going to the trouble of reading the name and address of the owner of each box. The owner's name and address may readily be stenciled or otherwise applied to the handle or door of the respective mailbox.

In FIGURE 1 I have indicated one attractive assembly wherein a lower mailbox 1 may be mounted on a post 16 in the manner above described. Then, on the upper left-hand oblique face 4 of the box 1 another box 1a may be connected to the first box by telescoping a female rib 7 of the box 1a over the male rib 6 on the box 1. On the upper right-hand oblique face 4 of the box 1 a box 1b may be connected by telescoping the male rib of the box 1b into a female rib 7 of the box 1, and at the same time telescoping a female rib of the box 1b over a male rib on the side of the box 1a. In this manner all three boxes are firmly secured together yet the box 1 supports the other two boxes. The arrangement is exceedingly compact and it is not at all difficult for a mailman to service all three boxes at one stop. Obviously, another box could be mounted in the same assembly directly over the box 1 connected to the two adjacent sloping faces of the boxes 1a

and 1b, and in similar manner substantially any desired arrangement can be made.

In FIGURE 2 I have illustrated an arrangement whereby a total of ten boxes are supported on two spaced posts 16—16, the entire ten boxes being carried and supported by the lower left and right hand boxes connected to the two posts. In this arrangement, some of the boxes, particularly the two central ones, have a telescopic connection with six other boxes, and the entire assembly with each box thereof having a plurality of telescopic connections with other boxes is an exceedingly rigid and durable arrangement.

It will be understood that the two assemblies of FIGURES 1 and 2 are shown by way of example and not by way of limitation since it is virtually impossible herein to even suggest all of the arrangements that may be desired for efficiency or attractiveness and which would occur to one skilled in the art after a study of the instant invention.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that I have provided an economical, highly durable, and ornamental mailbox so formed as to be readily positively connected to similar mailboxes to form compact assemblies for ready and easy servicing of the boxes by a mail carrier. The boxes may be so arranged that a compact strong assembly may be provided and supported by a minimum number of ground posts, permitting various ornamental arrangements to be selected by the box owners.

It will be understood that modifications and variations may be effected without departing from the scope of the novel concepts of the present invention.

I claim as my invention:

1. A mailbox comprising

(a) a hollow body closed at one end and made of a light weight metal,

(1) said body having a polygonal cross-section,

(b) a cover hinged to said body for closing the open end thereof,

(c) and an external rib extending lengthwise centrally of each face of the polygonal body,

(1) said ribs being alternately of male and female shape,

whereby similar mailboxes may be connected in face to face relationship.

2. A mailbox comprising

(a) a hollow body closed at one end and made of a lightweight metal,

(1) said body having a polygonal cross-section,

(b) a cover hinged to said body for closing the open end thereof,

(c) and an external rib extending lengthwise centrally along each of a plurality of the side faces of the polygonal body for longitudinal telescopic association with a complementary rib on another mailbox.

3. A mailbox comprising

(a) a tubular metallic body closed at one end

(1) and having a plurality of external flat faces therearound,

(b) a door hinged to said body for closing the other end thereof, and

(c) a plurality of external male and female connecting members on said body for engagement with complementary means on similar mailboxes,

whereby a plurality of separate mailboxes may be supported solely by one mailbox in external face to face relationship.

4. A mailbox comprising

(a) an extruded metal tubular body having a closed end,

(1) said body being polygonal in cross-section to provide

(2) a plurality of flat external faces around said body,

(b) an integral rib extending lengthwise of said body on each of a plurality of said faces,

(1) there being both male and female ribs on said body,

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- (2) at least the female ribs being hollow for telescopic engagement with a male rib on a similar mailbox, and
- (c) a door hinged to said body in position to close the open end of said body.
5. A mailbox assembly comprising
- (a) a hollow box body closed at one end, said body having
- (1) a polygonal cross-section with a plurality of external flat faces and
- (2) an apical line between each pair of adjacent faces,
- (b) a closure for the other end of said body,
- (c) a ground post,
- (d) and an angular support mounted apex downwardly on said post, and
- said box body being mounted on said support with an apical line thereof downward and seating in the angle of said support.
6. A mailbox assembly comprising,
- (a) a plurality of like mailboxes,
- (b) each mailbox being hexagonal in cross-section,
- (c) connecting means on each mailbox complementary to those on each other mailbox,
- (d) a pair of spaced ground posts,
- (e) one of said mailboxes being mounted on each of said ground posts, and

- (f) the remainder of said mailboxes being connected together and to the post mounted mailboxes by said connecting means in honeycomb fashion, whereby the remainder of said mailboxes are all directly supported by the pair of post mounted mailboxes.
7. A mailbox assembly comprising,
- (a) a single ground post,
- (b) a plurality of mailboxes arranged in honeycomb style carried by one mailbox secured to said post,
- (c) said mailboxes each having a plurality of flat faces, and
- (d) male and female longitudinally extending ribs on a plurality of the faces of said mailboxes arranged in telescopic engagement by which the mailboxes are connected to each other.

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