Aug. 2, 1966 E. WALTZ 3,263,883

PORTABLE DISPENSER

Filed Feb. 26, 1965

Fig. 1

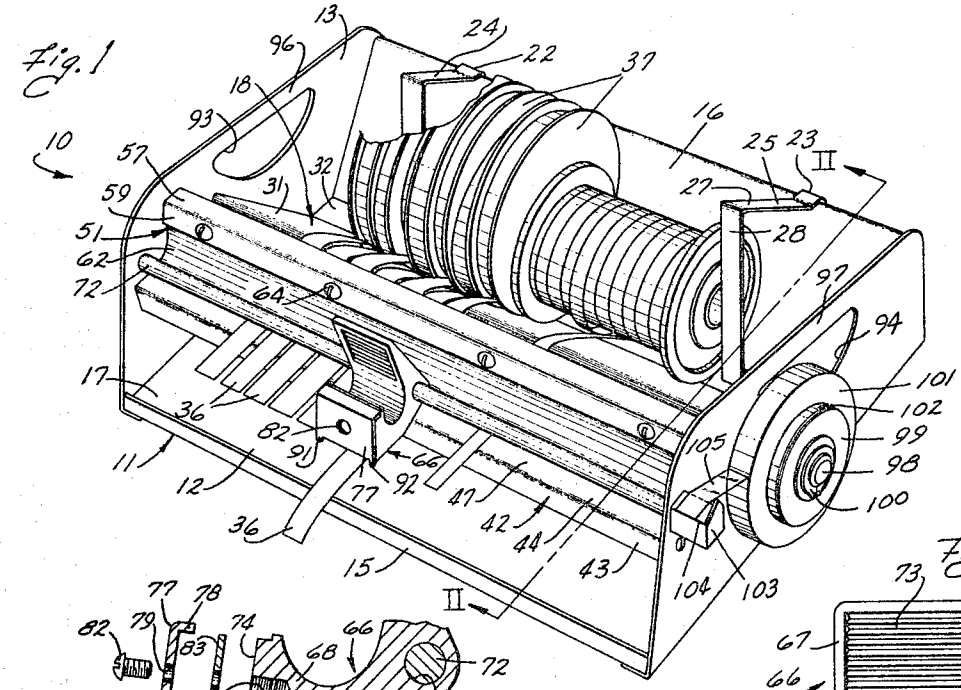
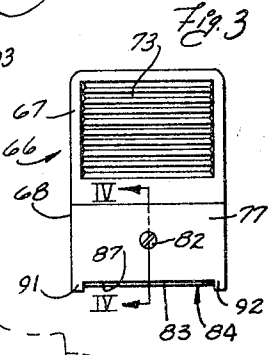


Fig. 4

Fig. 3



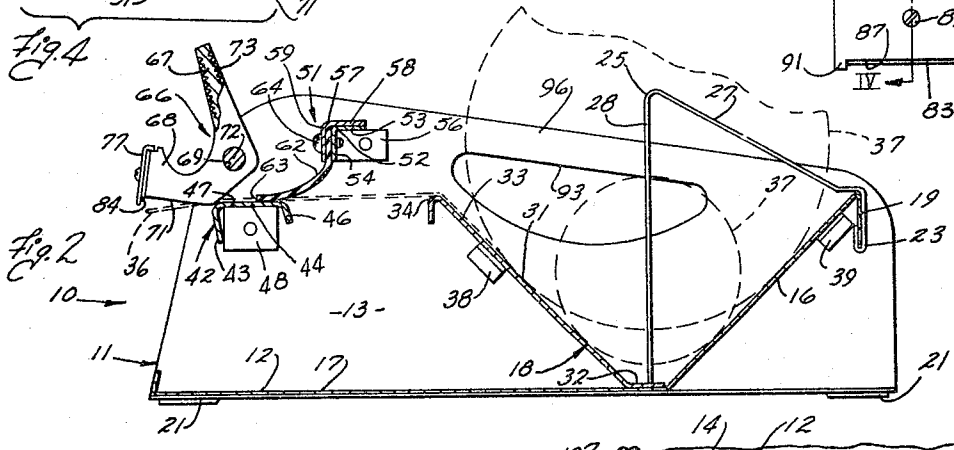


Fig. 2

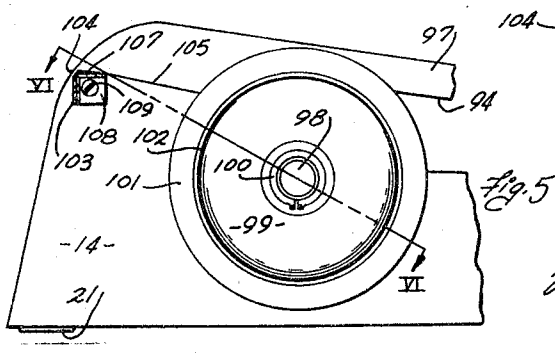


Fig. 5

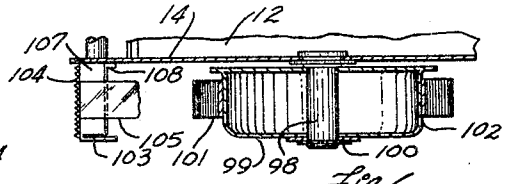


Fig. 6

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PORTABLE DISPENSER

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This invention relates in general to a portable device for dispensing strip material from a roll thereof and, more particularly, to a dispenser in which plural rolls of decorative ribbon can be supported and by which pieces of said ribbon can be severed from the rolls thereof.

The gift wrapping of packages has become an important operation in most retail stores, and particularly in department stores. In recent years, the need for gift wrapping facilities in department stores has been expanded considerably beyond the seasonal services provided, for example, during the Christmas holidays. That is, it is no longer uncommon for a purchaser of goods to request gift wrapping of such goods for birthday gifts, for wedding gifts, for shower gifts and other gifts, even though the goods may not be purchased in a gift department. Moreover, it is not uncommon for some department stores to feature free gift wrapping, also at any time during the year, in order to promote the sale of merchandise in a particular department.

Heretofore, it has been common practice to establish one or more, permanent gift wrapping counters in the store, to which the packages must be delivered either by the clerks or by the customer in order to have them gift wrapped. However, some merchants have found that customers prefer to patronize those stores wherein the gift wrapping can be accomplished either at or close to the department where the purchases are made, in order to avoid the delay or other inconvenience which is often experienced where the wrapping counter is located in some remote part of the store.

Gift wrapping materials, such as ribbons, are relatively expensive and, according to present procedures, each counter must be staffed. Thus, many store owners have been reluctant to increase the number of gift wrapping counters. That is, according to previous methods of handling gift wrapping operations, each station requires both storage and counter facilities for stocking materials and performing the wrapping operation. Moreover, each gift wrap counter must be constantly attended by at least one employee at all times regardless of whether there is any need for the services of such employee.

One of the most difficult problems in setting up a gift wrapping operation generally involves the handling of the ribbons. That is, the store can usually settle on one or two types of paper for the gift wrapping operation. Often, the paper is especially printed for the store with a particular pattern which tends to identify the merchandise with the store. Thus, the variation in the appearances of gift wrapped packages is provided by the variations in the ribbon. However, even where various papers are available, the package size in many departments tends to be about the same so that the paper can often be precut. On the other hand, even small variations in the sizes of packages usually necessitate material differences in the sizes of ribbon so that much ribbon can be wasted unless it is cut as used. As a general rule, the ribbon is far more costly than the paper used in the average gift wrapping.

Accordingly, a primary object of this invention has been the provision of a portable dispenser of strip material, such as the spools of ribbon used for wrapping gifts, whereby the ribbons can be easily moved from one place to another for the purpose of setting up a temporary gift wrapping facility.

A further object of this invention has been the provision of a ribbon dispenser, as aforesaid, in which spools of ribbon can be easily placed and conveniently held for dispensing the desired amount of ribbon from any given roll, such ribbon being easily accessible by the person operating the dispenser and easily severable from the remainder of the roll.

A further object of this invention has been the provision of a dispenser which is easy to operate by any person capable of properly wrapping a gift, which is light in weight so that it can be easily and quickly moved from one place to another, and which is specifically designed to display the ribbons in an attractive, easily visible and accessible manner to facilitate the choice of ribbons.

A further object of this invention has been the provision of a ribbon dispenser, as aforesaid, which is inexpensive to manufacture, which is sturdy in structure, which is pleasing in appearance and which is adapted for storing and/or holding other materials used in a gift wrapping operation.

Other objects and purposes of this invention will become apparent to persons familiar with dispensers of strip material upon reading the following descriptive material and examining the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a dispenser embodying the invention.

FIGURE 2 is a sectional view substantially as taken along the line II—II in FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 3 is a front elevational view of the cutting head on said dispenser.

FIGURE 4 is an exploded, sectional view taken along the line IV—IV in FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary, broken side elevational view of said dispenser.

FIGURE 6 is a sectional view taken along the line VI—VI in FIGURE 5.

For the purpose of convenience in description, the terms "upper," "lower," "front," "rear" and terms of similar import, as used herein, will have reference to the dispenser of the invention as appearing in FIGURE 2, the front of the dispenser being on the left side of such figure. The terms "inner," "outer" and derivatives thereof will have reference to the geometric center of said dispenser and parts thereof.

General construction

The objects and purposes of the invention, including those set forth above, have been met by providing a dispenser having an upwardly opening trough in which spools of strip material, such as ribbon can be held, in side-by-side, axially parallel positions. The strip material is fed away from said spools between the upper surface of a guide member and the lower surface of an elongated drag strip which is removably engageable with said guide member. The guide member is located frontwardly of the spool supporting trough. A cutting head is slideably supported upon a rod which is parallel with and located above the guide member. The cutting head has a downwardly facing cutting edge disposed frontwardly of said guide member.

Detailed description

The dispenser **10** (FIGURE 1), which has been selected to illustrate a preferred embodiment of the invention, is comprised of a frame structure **11** including a bottom wall **12** and a pair of upright end walls **13** and **14** rigidly secured to, and extending upwardly from the opposite ends of, said bottom wall **12**. The bottom wall **12** preferably has an integral, upwardly extending flange **15** along its front edge which extends between front edges of the end walls **13** and **14**. Also, four resiliently flexible pads **21** are preferably secured to the lower surfaces of the frame structure **11** adjacent the four corners thereof for the purpose of preventing marring of a relatively soft sur-

face or counter upon which the dispenser **10** is placed during operation thereof. Also, the pads **21** may be made from a material which has nonskid characteristics whereby sliding movement of the dispenser during its use is resisted.

The bottom wall **12** includes a rear portion **16** (FIGURE 2), which slopes upwardly and rearwardly from the front portion **17** thereof to provide the rear side wall of the trough of channel **18**, which extends between the end walls **13** and **14**. The upper edge portion **19** of the rear side wall **16** may be bent downwardly to strengthen the side wall and to provide a flange which is slideably engaged by the hooks **22** and **23** on a pair of slide brackets **24** and **25**, respectively. The bracket **24**, for example, which is preferably identical with the bracket **25**, is approximately L-shaped with a frontwardly extending leg **27** and a substantially vertical leg **28** integral with and extending downwardly from the front end of the leg **27** toward the lower end of the side wall **16**. The slide bracket **25** is similarly constructed.

The front side wall **31** of the trough **18** is provided by an elongated, substantially flat sheet having a lower edge portion **32** which forms an included angle of about 135° with the rest of the sheet and which is rigidly secured, as by welding, to the bottom wall **12** near the lower end of the rear side wall **16**. Thus, the front side wall **31** slopes upwardly and frontwardly preferably at about the same angle of slope as the rear side wall **16**. The upper edge portion **33** of the side wall **31** is bent downwardly to form a rolled edge **34** over which the strips **36** of material on the spools or rolls **37** are fed when the spools are disposed within the trough **18**, as shown in FIGURE 2. The side walls **16** and **31** of the trough **18** may have their upper ends held with respect to the end walls **13** and **14** by means of L-shaped brackets **38** and **39**, respectively (FIGURE 2), which may be spot welded in place.

An elongated member **42** extends between and is secured to the end walls **13** and **14** near the frontward ends thereof. Said guide member is preferably in the form of a downwardly opening channel having a front flange **43**, a web **44** and a rear flange **46**. The web **44** has its upper surface **47** preferably parallel with and adjacent a plane defined by the upper edges of the side walls **16** and **31** of the trough **18**. Said guide member **42** is spaced frontwardly from the front side wall **31** and has a pair of downwardly extending, integral end flanges, such as the end flange **48** shown in FIGURE 2, whereby said guide member **42** is connected to the end walls **13** and **14** by means of rivets, welding or the like.

A drag device **51** is mounted upon and between the end walls **13** and **14**, preferably above and between the guide member **42** and the upper edge **34** of the side wall **31**. Said drag device is comprised of an elongated angle member **52** having a top horizontal flange **53** and a downwardly extending, front flange **54**. The angle member **52** has a pair of integral end flanges, such as the end flange **56** shown in FIGURE 2, whereby said angle member is rigidly secured to the end walls **13** and **14** by any convenient means such as rivets or welding. A clamping angle **57** has a top horizontal flange **58**, which is supported upon the top flange **53**, and a downwardly extending front flange **59**, which is preferably substantially parallel with and on the front side of the front flange **54** of the angle member **52**.

An elongated, flexible drag element **62**, which may be a relatively flat strip of plastic material, has one lengthwise edge thereof clamped between the front flanges **54** and **59**. The other lengthwise edge of the drag element rests upon the upper surface **47** of the guide member **42**. The drag element **62**, which preferably extends substantially the full length of the guide member **42**, may be resiliently flexible so that its lower front edge **63** is positively urged against said upper surface **47**, due to the fact that the drag element is flexed in its normal position of operation, as shown in FIGURE 2. The flanges **54** and **59** are held together by a plurality of screws **64**, which extend through the flanges and the drag element **62**.

A substantially L-shaped cutting head **66** has a handle flange **67**, a blade supporting flange **68** and a transverse opening **69** at the junction of the two flanges. An elongated slide rod **72** is mounted upon the between the end walls **13** and **14** preferably parallel with and directly above the web **44** of the guide member **42**. Said slide rod **72** extends through the opening **69** in the cutting head **66** so that said cutting head **66** can be pivoted around and moved lengthwise of said slide rod **72**. Said cutting head **66** is constructed and said slide rod **72** is positioned so that the lower surface **71** of the blade flange **68** normally rests upon the web **44** under the urging of gravity when said cutting head is in its normal position upon the slide rod **72**. In this position, the blade flange **68** extends substantially horizontally and frontwardly away from the rod **72** and substantially beyond the front edge of the guide member **42**. At the same time, the handle flange **67**, which has serrations **73** in its front and rear sides to improve the grip thereof, extends upwardly from said slide rod **72**.

The blade flange **68** (FIGURE 4) has a front end surface **74** which is approximately perpendicular to the lengthwise extent of said blade flange. A threaded recess **76** is provided in said surface **74**. A substantially flat blade holder **77** has a flange **78** along its upper edge engageable with the upper side of the blade flange **68** adjacent the front surface **74**. Said blade holder also has a central opening **79** through which a screw **82** can be slidably received for threaded reception into the recess **76** whereby the blade holder **77** can be clamped against the front surface **74**. A cutting blade **83**, such as a razor blade, having a cutting edge **84** and a central opening **86** through which the screw **82** is received, is clamped between the blade holder **77** and said front surface **74**. When the blade is so held, said cutting edge **84** extends slightly below the lower edge **87** of the blade holder **77** and the lower surface **71** of the flange **68** adjacent said cutting edge **84**. The blade holder **77** has a pair of downwardly extending abutments **91** and **92** (FIGURE 1) near the opposite ends of the lower edge **87** thereof which extend slightly below the lower cutting edge **84** of the blade **83**. These abutments prevent the strip **36** from slipping off either end of the cutting edge **84** during the cutting operation.

The end walls **13** and **14** have a pair of openings **93** and **94** near their upper edges which provide hand grips **96** and **97** whereby the dispenser **10** can be manually lifted and then easily carried from one place of use to another by any person capable of operating the dispenser.

A short axle **98** is secured to the end wall **14** and extends outwardly therefrom about midway between the upper and lower edges thereof in a direction substantially parallel with the slide rod **72**. A drum **99** is rotatably supported upon the axle **98** between the end wall **14** and a spring clip **100** fastened to the axle **98** near its outer end. A roll **101** of adhesive coated tape **105** can be slideably received upon the peripheral wall **102** of the drum **99** for rotation therewith.

A tape cutting member **103** is mounted upon the outer surface of the end wall **13** near its front end in radial alignment with and spaced radially from the roll **101** of tape. Said cutting member **103** has on the front side thereof an upwardly projecting cutting edge **104** which is preferably serrated and engageable by a strip of the tape **105** peeled from the roll **101**. The cutting member **103** has a flat upper surface **107** adjacent to, and immediately rearwardly of, the cutting edge **104**, which surface is approximately on a level with the upper side of the drum **99**. During a severing operation of the strip **105** by the cutting edge **104**, the adhesive side of the strip **105** will adhere to the surface **107** and thereby hold the end portion of the tape after the severing operation. The cutting member **103** has an integral flange **108** at its inner

end which is secured to the outer surface of the end wall **14** by means such as the screw **109**.

Operation

The dispenser is used by placing one or a plurality of spools **37** of strip material, such as ribbon, within the trough **18**. Particularly, if the spools **37** are relatively narrow in an axial direction, the slide brackets **24** and **25** are moved along the trough **18** until they loosely engage the two spools **37** at the opposite ends of the group thereof.

The rolls **37** are preferably disposed within the trough **18** so that the ribbon thereon can be fed upwardly along the front side wall **31**, across the upper edge **34** thereof and then between the guide member **42** and the drag device **51**. The free ends of the ribbons **36** will extend beyond the member **42**, as shown in FIGURE 1, for manual engagement of said ribbons. When it becomes desirable to sever a piece of a particular ribbon from the roll thereof, the free end of such ribbon is manually engaged and pulled frontwardly until the length of the piece desired extends forwardly of the blade holder **77** on the cutting head **66**. The cutting head is then moved along the slide rod **72** until it is directly above the particular ribbon involved. By manually engaging the handle flange **67** and rotating same in a counterclockwise direction, as shown in FIGURE 2, the ribbon **36** is clamped between the web **44** of the guide member **42** and the lower surface **71** of the blade supporting flange **68**. While this clamping action is maintained, the portion of the ribbon **36** forwardly of the cutting head **66** is manually engaged and pulled upwardly against the cutting edge **84** whereby it is severed from the remainder of the roll. The ribbon **36**, being held between the guide member **42** and the drag element **62**, will remain in a position substantially as shown in FIGURE 1 following the severing operation performed thereon.

If it is desired to provide several ribbons of the same length, this can be accomplished by pulling one ribbon the proper distance frontwardly from the dispenser and then using the one ribbon as a reference for the other ribbons. Then, by positioning the cutting head **66** along the slide rod **72**, each of these ribbons can be severed from their rolls.

A roll **101** of adhesive coated tape **105** may be mounted upon the drum **99** for use in the wrapping operation. With the free end portion of the strip **105** adhering to the upper surface **107** of the cutting member **103**, the portion of the strip **105** between the cutting member **103** and the outer surface of the roll **101** can be easily engaged and raised so that it is disengaged from the cutting member **103**. The strip is then pulled away from the roll **101** until the desired amount has been moved frontwardly beyond the cutting edge **104**. Thereafter, the tape is moved downwardly against the upper surface **107** whereby the desired portion thereof is removed and the new end of the tape adheres to the upper surface **107** of the cutting member **103**. This adherence prevents movement of the tape during the severing operation and thereafter until another piece of tape is needed.

The zone within the dispenser above the bottom wall **12**, below the guide member **42** and frontwardly of the front side wall **31** can be used as a storage space for other materials or utensils. The upwardly extending flange **15** serves to prevent accidental dislodgement of such materials and utensils from within the zone.

Although particular preferred embodiments of the invention have been disclosed above for illustrative purposes, it will be understood that variations or modifications of such disclosure, which come within the scope of the appended claims, are fully contemplated.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A device for dispensing a piece of strip material from a roll thereof, comprising:

a frame structure having an upwardly opening trough for supporting said roll;

an elongated guide member mounted upon said frame structure and extending substantially parallel with the lengthwise axis of said trough, said guide member being near one side of said trough for supporting a portion of said material;

flexible means supported upon said frame structure and engageable with said guide member for holding said portion of material thereagainst;

rod means mounted upon said frame structure substantially parallel with and spaced upwardly from said guide member; and

a cutting head supported upon said rod means for movement lengthwise thereof, said cutting head having a cutting edge thereon located on the opposite side thereof from said trough and engageable by said strip material for severing a piece thereof from said roll, said cutting head being movable around said rod means into and out of engagement with said guide member to hold said material thereagainst when said piece is being severed.

2. An apparatus for supporting a roll of strip material and for removing a piece of said material from the roll thereof, comprising:

a frame structure having a bottom wall and a pair of spaced end members;

an upwardly opening trough secured to said frame structure and extending between said end members, said trough having a pair of substantially flat, upwardly diverging side walls between which said roll is received;

an elongated guide member mounted upon and extending between said end members, said guide member being spaced from and substantially parallel with the upper edge of the adjacent side wall of said trough, said guide member and said upper edge being at substantially the same distance from said bottom wall;

elonged support means mounted upon and between said end members above and between said guide member and said upper edge;

an elongated flexible strip having one lengthwise edge portion resting upon and yieldably urged against the upper surface of said guide member, the other lengthwise edge of said flexible strip being engaged and held by said support means;

elongated rod means mounted upon and extending between said end members above and substantially parallel with said guide member; and

a cutting head slideably supported upon said rod means for movement lengthwise thereof, said cutting head having a cutting edge on the opposite side of said guide member from said trough for engagement by and severing of said strip material, said cutting head being movable around said rod means for engagement with said guide member whereby said strip is firmly held while it is severed from said roll thereof.

3. The structure of claim **2**, wherein said trough is elongated so that it can hold plural spools of strip material rolled thereon; and

wherein said cutting head is substantially L-shaped and has a blade engaging end surface with a threaded opening therein, said head including a blade having said cutting edge, a clamp plate and screw means extending through said plate and said blade for reception into said threaded opening, whereby said blade is rigidly secured to said head.

4. A structure according to claim 2 comprising also axle means mounted upon one of said end members on the opposite side thereof from said trough and extending substantially parallel with said rod means;

drum means rotatably supported upon said axle means; and

cutting means spaced radially from said drum means and having a cutting edge substantially parallel with said axle, said cutting means being secured to said one end member.

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