Sept. 13, 1949. R. T. LACEY 2,482,080

SEAL CONVEYED LETTER OPENER

Filed Dec. 30, 1946

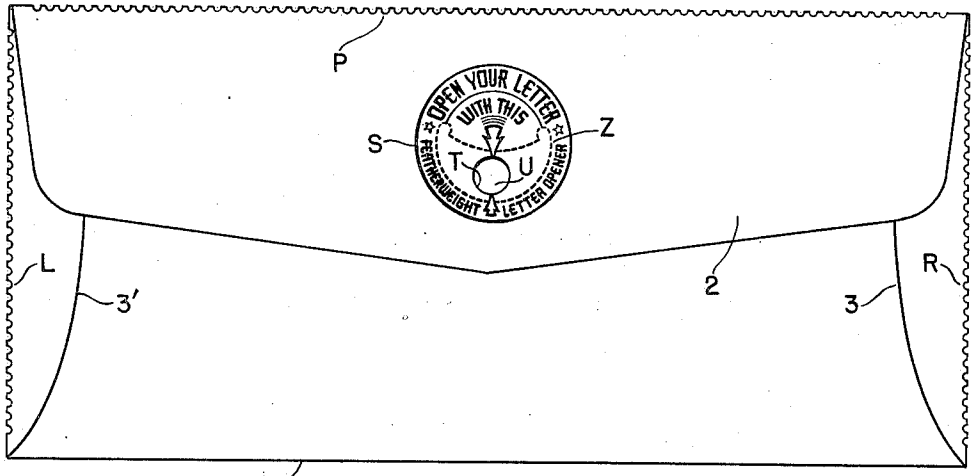


FIG. 1

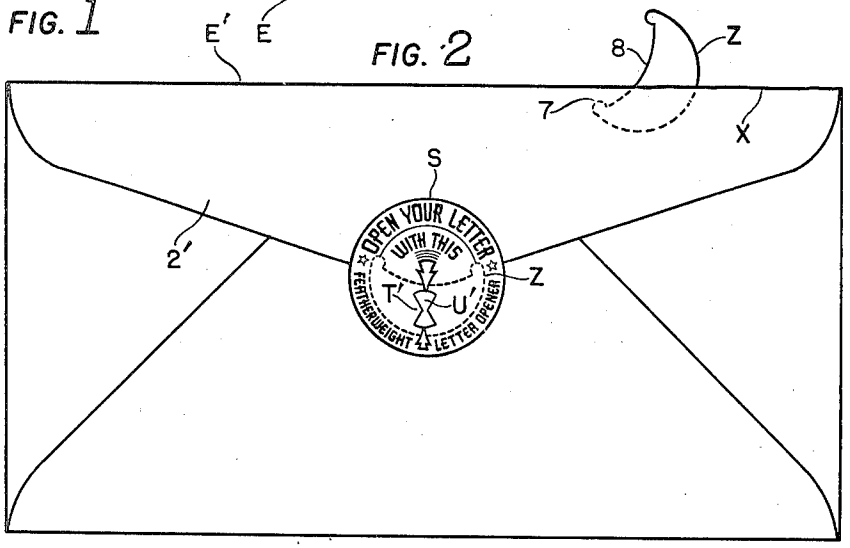
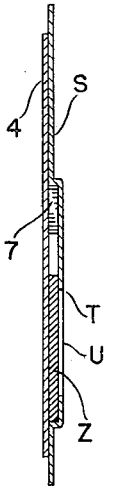


FIG. 2

FIG. 3



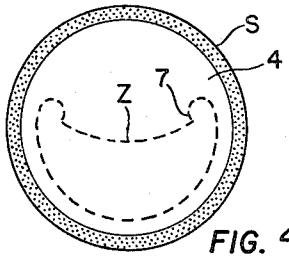


FIG. 4

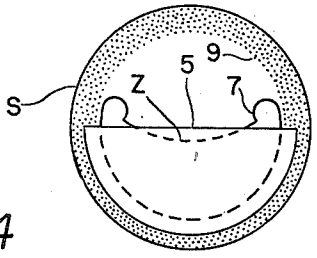


FIG. 5

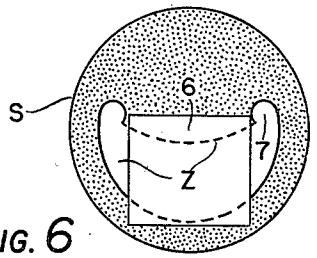


FIG. 6

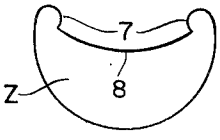


FIG. 7

INVENTOR
ROBERT T. LACEY
BY O. W. Lee
ATTORNEY

Patented Sept. 13, 1949

2,482,080

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,482,080

SEAL CONVEYED LETTER OPENER

Robert T. Lacey, Spokane, Wash.

Application December 30, 1946, Serial No. 719,279

9 Claims. (Cl. 229—85)

1

The present invention relates to a seal conveyed letter opener of miniature size, to be individually carried by each envelope, so as to be ever present and in immediate readiness to open that envelope and any others that may arrive at the same time.

The invention embodies a thin flexible letter opener of crescent-like shape and less than an inch long, the concave edge of the crescent being used as a cutting edge to open the letter or envelope by a series of short saw-like strokes. To limit the outward stroke, each end of the concave edge terminates in a small lug which serves as a stop member, to prevent the envelope opener from leaving the envelope at the end of each stroke.

To enable this miniature letter opener to be attached to the envelope, a gummed seal is provided, and the letter opener is mounted on the back of this seal, so that when the seal is affixed to an envelope, the letter opener, is covered by the seal. For convenience in removing the letter opener, the seal is provided with a suitable opening so as to enable the margin of the opening to be engaged by the thumb nail for tearing away a portion of the seal sufficient to expose the edge of the letter opener to convenient grasp for removal.

The envelope opener is sufficiently thin and flexible to readily pass through a typewriter, and therefore the seal and letter opener may be made a part of the envelope at the time of manufacture.

The invention finds ready acceptance among discriminating persons who appreciate distinctiveness, individuality, convenience and efficiency. It enables an envelope to be opened with a sharp clean cut instead of the ragged tear which usually results from opening with a pencil or with the fingers as is usually done by most individuals.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, which show the physical embodiments which I have reduced to actual practice and found satisfactory and acceptable.

Fig. 1 shows the invention applied to a combined envelope and writing paper having a perforate folded edge on three sides.

Fig. 2 shows the invention applied to a conventional envelope, and includes an additional showing of the mode of utilization.

Fig. 3 is a greatly enlarged vertical section of Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 shows the reverse side of the seal with the miniature envelope opener held by a round cover sheet.

Fig. 5 shows the reverse side of the seal with a

2

semicircular cover sheet forming a pocket for the letter opener.

Fig. 6 shows the reverse side of the seal with the envelope opener held in position by a rectangular sheet which only partly covers the letter opener.

Fig. 7 shows the letter opener separately.

Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 are made to show approximately the actual size in the printed patent.

Attention is first directed to the miniature letter opener Z which is separately shown in Fig. 7 and is of a crescent-like shape. The inner edge 8 is used as the cutting edge, and each end thereof is provided with a flat lug such as 7 which serves as a stop member to limit the cutting stroke of the letter opener Z. This miniature letter opener is cut from thin flexible sheet material such as Celluloid or suitable plastic mold material which is sufficiently hard when in thin sheet form, to serve the required purpose as a cutting edge. It should be about ten thousandths of an inch in thickness, so that it will be unnecessary to bevel or sharpen the cutting edge 8.

In Fig. 2 there is shown a conventional envelope E' closed by the usual sealed flap 2', and it will be readily understood, that when the miniature envelope opener Z is held between the thumb and finger, it is a simple matter to insert one of the lugs 7 under the sealed flap 2' so that the cutting edge 8 can cut through the folded edge of the flap. Once started, the envelope opener Z is moved lengthwise in a series of short saw-like strokes to gradually cut its way across the flap 2' and open the envelope.

In Fig. 2, the cut portion of the envelope is indicated by the freehand line at X which extends from the concave edge 8 to the right hand corner of the envelope. It will be noted that at each end of the outward stroke of the cutting edge 8, the lug 7 will contact the uncut portion of the envelope and serve as a stop member to limit the outward stroke and thus prevent the letter opener from leaving the envelope at the end of each outward stroke, as would otherwise occur. This lug 7 is an exceedingly efficient stop means and functions perfectly in inexperienced hands. By placing a lug 7 at each end of the cutting edge 8, the outer lug is particularly serviceable to afford a secure grasp on the miniature letter opener, so that it can be readily manipulated in saw-like fashion without slipping from between the thumb and finger, as would otherwise be the case if the outer end was not provided with a lug.

It is the prime purpose of the present invention to make this miniature letter opener Z a part of

the envelope so as to be carried thereby as a distinctive gift of convenience and appreciation accompanying the letter which is contained therein. To accomplish this prime purpose, this miniature letter opener Z is mounted on the back of a gummed seal S and secured in place by a cover sheet which may be of various shapes such as illustrated at 4, 5 and 6 in Figures 4, 5 and 6 each of which show the gummed side of the seal.

As shown in Fig. 4 of which Fig. 3 is an enlarged vertical section, the seal S is round and the outer edge of the crescent shaped letter opener Z is arranged concentric therewith, then a round cover sheet 4 is adhesively applied to hold the miniature letter opener Z in position. With this round cover sheet 4 the entire back of the seal S may be gummed the same as shown in Fig. 6, or else the gumming may be confined to the marginal portion as shown in Fig. 5.

In Fig. 4, the back cover 4 is shown smaller than the seal S and the exposed surface of this back cover sheet 4 is left ungummed, but it may also be gummed if deemed advisable.

It will be seen from Fig. 3 that this described structure encloses the miniature letter opener Z in a pocket formed between the seal S and the back cover sheet 4. It will of course be understood that when these parts are pressed together in a wet condition that the letter opener Z will form a slight embossing on the front side of the seal S. In like manner, when the gummed margin of the seal S is moistened and the seal is pressed down upon an envelope in the manner shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, the minor thickness of the back cover sheet will be no obstacle to affixing the gummed seal to the envelope.

Fig. 5 shows the back cover sheet 5 as semicircular and concentrically mounted upon the round seal S which has an annular marginal gummed area 9 of sufficient width to extend under the edge of the semicircular back cover sheet 5, but leaving the pocket portion ungummed so that the miniature letter opener Z can be inserted after the other two pieces have been secured together. This structural form is of considerable advantage where an open pocket is desired for any reason.

Fig. 6 shows the back cover sheet 6 as a small rectangular piece affixed to the gummed back of the seal S and disposed between the two lugs 7 of the miniature letter opener Z so as to hold it against endwise movement, and the lower end of this rectangular sheet 6 has its corners affixed to the seal S below the outer edge of letter opener Z so as to hold the same in position. Here the entire surface of the seal S is gummed, but as gummed stock does not stick to Celluloid or other materials of which the miniature letter opener Z would be made, it is a matter of no consequence if the wet gummed surface comes in contact with the miniature letter opener.

As shown in Fig. 2, the front face of the seal S is provided with suitable legend affording concise instruction for use of the miniature letter opener Z. This instruction is of course for the recipient, and adds interest and attraction to the correspondence, as well as convenience and utility.

As shown in Fig. 2 the seal S has an opening U' the margins of which form tear tabs such as T' by means of which the seal S can be torn away sufficiently to expose the edge of the miniature letter opener Z so that it can be grasped and removed for utilization in the previously described manner.

In actual practice these seals S bear the trade-

mark disclosed in my trade-mark application Serial No. 515,030, where the central letter is a round letter O and it is the usual practice to locate the opening U' and tear tabs T' in the central area of this letter O. In fact, the described tear tabs may be omitted and a round opening located in the center of the letter O. Fig. 1 shows a round opening U and its margin T affords sufficient grasp to tear away the seal sufficiently to expose the margin of the miniature letter opener Z so that the latter can be removed for utilization. In fact, a single vertical slit will serve this same purpose.

The described seal S carrying the miniature letter opener Z may be adhesively secured to the envelope in any suitable location such as shown in Fig. 1 but it is preferably located as shown in Fig. 2 where it affords the additional advantage of a safety seal to preclude tampering with the correspondence.

Fig. 1 shows at E, a combined envelope and writing paper wherein the end flaps 3' and 3 are perforated as shown at L and R and the top flap 2 is perforated as shown at P; the miniature letter opener Z of the present invention is of particular advantage in opening those perforated edges.

In the manufacture of the combined envelope and writing paper shown at E in Fig. 1, the seal S need not be separate from the flap 2; but instead, the legend may be printed upon the flap 2 and the opening U cut through, then the miniature letter opener Z can be applied to the opposite side of that flap and held in position by a suitable cover sheet in the manner previously described.

In like manner, the envelope E' shown in Fig. 2 can have its flap 2' cut with a round extension to accommodate the illustrated legend, so that the seal S and flap 2' will be a single piece. In like manner a round extension could be provided on the flap 2 of Fig. 1.

When the invention is thus made a part of the flap of the envelope, the miniature letter opener being of flexible material only about ten thousandths of an inch thick, it will readily pass through the typewriter without any hinderance whatever.

In any event, the invention becomes a part of the stationery, and the miniature letter opener is conveyed along with the letter, so that it is always at the very finger tips in immediate readiness for opening the letter in a clean cut presentable manner, free from the distressing ragged tears which might otherwise occur and are so objectionable in fine stationery and particularly so when the correspondence is prized sufficiently to be preserved.

The cutting edge 8 has been described as concave because that affords the most efficient cutting action, but it will be understood that this cutting edge may be straight instead of concave, the lugs 7 being employed on the straight cutting edge in the same manner as hereinbefore described.

I claim as my invention:

1. A seal conveyed letter opener comprising a small crescent-like piece of thin flexible sheet material, each of the two ends thereof having a flat lug projecting from the inner edge of the crescent, a seal having an aperture therethrough, said letter opener disposed behind said aperture, a back cover sheet secured to said seal and holding said letter opener in position thereon, and said seal being gummed for attaching said letter opener to an envelope.