The invention includes a hangable envelope and kit for containing items, with the envelope formed a length of flexible material. An envelope portion is formed in the length of material at one end thereof and a flap portion formed in the length of material and at an opposite end thereof. A closing device is provided for holding the flap portion in a closed condition over the envelope portion.
POUCHES AND SYSTEMS FOR CONTAINING ARTICLES

[0001] This application claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/833,582 filed Jul. 27, 2006.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates generally to storage, organization and transport of articles. In particular, the invention relates, in one embodiment, to an envelope for containing small articles. The articles may be, for example, jewelry. In another embodiment, the invention relates to a kit for storing, organizing and/or transporting a plurality of small items. The kit may include two or more envelopes and a container for the envelopes.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] There is a plethora of useful contrivances for containing, organizing, transporting and otherwise providing for the storage of small items. These contrivances include boxes, jars, such as glass and plastic jars, bags, and other well-known containers. Small articles and items can be difficult to store and organize because of their size. The difficulty of storing the items in an organized fashion is compounded when the articles need to be grouped according to some organizational scheme.

[0004] One example of such a contrivance is the jewelry box. A jewelry box is typically a rectangular or like shaped container. The jewelry box can be made of a material such as plastic, metal, heavy paper and wood. The jewelry box is provided with a hollow interior that includes internal compartments created by subdividing the interior. The interior of the jewelry box can be provided with trays having subdivided internal compartments. Small and large compartments of the interior are preferably configured to receive small and large jewelry items and stacked trays may permit jewelry to be grouped according to a predetermined criterion. However, transporting a jewelry box can be difficult due to its size and the tendency for jewelry boxes to be sized to contain an entire collection of jewelry or other valuable items.

[0005] With respect to traveling, the traveler typically takes several outfits, for use in various situations. Each outfit may have its own theme, casual or formal, in various colors and so on. Accordingly, in the case of jewelry, a different set of jewelry might be used with each outfit with a view of matching color of the outfit or some other key. In this case, a jewelry box may not be an ideal container for organizing several different sets of jewelry.

[0006] Many such containers known in the art of containing small items are formed of a material that does not permit inspection of its contents. It would be advantageous to have, and thus there is a demand, therefore, for a simple and cost-effective container and/or kit that is useful in containing and organizing small items. The invention satisfies that demand.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The invention has a principal objective of providing, according to one aspect or embodiment of the invention, a hangable envelope for containing items, including a length of flexible material. An envelope portion is formed in the length of material at one end thereof and a flap portion is formed in the length of material and at an opposite end thereof. A closing device may be provided for holding the flap portion in a closed condition over the envelope portion.

[0008] Alternate embodiments of the invention provide a hangable envelope further including an opening formed in the flap portion. The opening may be reinforced with a reinforcement member. The reinforcement member may be a grommet and may be of various sizes. The length of flexible material may be a transparent, synthetic polymeric material. The length of flexible material may be a mesh material. The length of flexible material may include natural material. The envelope portion may include a single compartment or one or more compartments. In some embodiments, the envelope portion includes two or more sub-compartments. The closing device may include hook and loop members. The closing device may include one or more of snaps, adhesive, magnets, buttons, peas, elastic, bows, and string. The material may include one or more of plastic, mesh, vinyl, leather, silk, denim, fleece, fur, faux fur, metallic material, vinyl covered cloth, cloth covered vinyl, naphthalene, burlap, hemp, and vinyl covered paper.

[0009] The hangable envelope may further include a right side seam and a left side seam. Heat sealing may preferably form the right side seam and the left side seam. The right side seam and the left side seam may be, in alternate embodiments, formed by one or more of sewing, heat sealing, stapling, snaps, and hook and loop closures.

[0010] Another aspect of the invention provides a kit for organizing items, including two or more hangable envelopes and a storage container or portfolio sized and shaped to receive at least the two or more hangable envelopes.

[0011] These and other advantages, as well as the invention itself, will become apparent in the details of construction and operation as more fully described and claimed below. Moreover, it should be appreciated that several aspects of the invention can be used in other applications.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a front view of a hangable envelope according to one embodiment of the invention in an open condition;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a front view of the hangable envelope of FIG. 1 in a closed condition;

[0014] FIG. 3 is a rear view the hangable envelope of FIG. 1;

[0015] FIG. 4 is a side view of the hangable envelope of FIG. 1, in a partially opened condition;

[0016] FIGS. 5-12 represent hangable envelopes having different subdivisions and dimensions; and

[0017] FIG. 13 is a perspective view of a pair of hangable envelopes according to the embodiment of FIG. 1, and an envelope container, with the hangable envelopes positioned within the envelope container to provide a kit according to another embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PRESENTLY PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] The invention will now be described in detail with reference to certain embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art, that the invention may be
practiced without some or all of these specific details. In other instances, well-known process steps and/or structures have not been described in detail to prevent unnecessarily obscuring the invention. Descriptors will be provided to provide orientation of the elements of the invention according to the use in the drawings. It will be understood that the descriptors are relative to the relationships of the elements provided in the drawings and are not meant to be limiting in nature.

[0019] Turning to FIGS. 1-4, a hangable envelope 30 is shown according to one embodiment of the invention. The most general form of the hangable envelopes includes a rectangular length of material 32, which is folded and secured in place to form an envelope portion 34 and a flap portion 36. The flap portion 36 of the envelope includes an opening 38, formed therethrough, and in this case the opening 38 is reinforced by a grommet 40. A closure device 42 is provided to releasably secure the flap portion 36 in a closed position.

[0020] The hangable envelope 30 is formed from any suitable length of material 32 or combinations of material. Preferably, the length of material 32 provides the ability to observe contents contained within the hangable envelope 30. Examples of such material 32 are any clear, plastic or polymeric materials, which are clear, colored, or translucent and are preferably flexible. While it is preferred that the material 32 is flexible, it is also desirable that the material resist tearing, puncture and other damage so as to resist losing the contents of the envelope. Other examples of suitable material 32 include various types of mesh material, which can be either a woven synthetic plastic for example, and natural woven materials including natural fibers such as cotton, wool, and plant fibers. In other examples, the length of material 32 may be formed of a material which is not translucent or transparent such as leather, smooth or suede types, woven fabrics such as silk, cotton, wool, denim. Other examples of material 32 could include fleece materials either natural or synthetic, fur, faux fur, metallic appearing materials, vinyl covered cloth, naugahyde, burlap, hemp cloth or mesh materials, and vinyl covered paper to illustrate the broad range of materials which can be used to construct the hangable envelope 30. A preferred example of material 32 is a 16 gauge transparent plastic that combines both durability and flexibility. Combinations of these and other materials are contemplated, including laminations thereof. In one example, a clear plastic front of the envelope can be combined with a non-transparent back. Other materials may be used to enhance the appearance such as decorations, printing, bonding, fringes, and any other suitable decorative elements and combinations thereof. Interior or interior back materials may be added to the envelope 30 to provide a cushion to the contents of the envelope or to reduce or eliminate scratching, in cases where the contents are scratchable or fragile, for example.

[0021] The hangable envelope 30 comprises two main portions. A first portion comprises the envelope portion 34 and the second portion comprises a flap portion 36. As discussed above, both the envelope portion 34 and the flap portion 36 are formed from a single length of material 32. In the alternate, the envelope portion 34 and the flap portion 36 are formed from joined lengths of material or separate construction.

[0022] Thus, in the first example, it can be seen that the flap portion 36 can be formed by folding over a bottom length 52 of the material 32, to form a front panel 44 and a rear panel 46 (see FIG. 1 and FIG. 3) of the envelope portion. Similarly, the flap portion 36 can be formed by folding over a top length 54 of material 32. In this manner, a smooth uninterrupted envelope portion bottom seam 56 is formed in the envelope portion 34, and a smooth uninterrupted flap portion top seam 58 is formed at the end of the flap portion 36. In the alternate, flap portion 36 may terminate at an end of the material 32 without forming a seam, although the top flap may accordingly appear less finished.

[0023] The sides of the hangable envelope 30 are closed with a right side seam 48 and a left side seam 50. The right and left side seam 48, 50 close the edges of the envelope portion 34 and provide, in some embodiments a decorative edging. The right and left side seam 48, 50 may be formed with a heat seal, an adhesive appropriate for the material 32, a sewn edge, a sewn edge with bias tape or any suitable closure device. In a preferred embodiment, the right and left side scenes 48, 50 are lengths of double fold bias tape, which is sewn to the hangable envelope 30 with metallic decorative thread.

[0024] The envelope portion 34 may be a single large compartment, or subdivided into sub-compartments by one or more subdivision feature or compartment seam 60. The subdivision feature may be a line of sewing, a heat seal, a line of adhesive, or any other suitable method of creating sub compartments in the envelope portion 34. In the example provided in FIG. 1, the envelope portion 34 is subdivided into a first sub-compartment 62, and a second sub-compartment 64. The first and second sub-compartments 62, 64 may be different sizes, as shown, or maybe similar sizes.

[0025] The top flap 36 is provided with, in some embodiments, an opening 38. The opening 38 may be reinforced with a reinforcement element 40, which may be in the form of a grommet, or fabric, or any other suitable means of reinforcement. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, opening 38 is formed only through the flap portion 36 of the material 32 of the hangable envelope 30. In this embodiment, the envelope can be suspended only when in an open condition. In embodiment shown in FIG. 2, opening 38 is formed through the flap portion 36 and through envelope portion 34 so that it may be suspended when in an open condition (shown in FIG. 1) or a closed condition (shown in FIG. 2).

[0026] In some embodiments of the invention, the top flap 36 and bottom envelope 36 are provided with a closure feature 42. The closure feature 42 may be any suitable fastener means, such as for example, a hook and loop closure, rivets, buttons, pins, string, snaps, a zipper, magnets, adhesive pads, or any other suitable fastener. Other examples of a closure feature 42 including buckles, clips, elastic, fabric bows, and so on.

[0027] The envelope portion 34 may be left open, or may be provided with a closure element or elements (not shown), such as a line of adhesive, a Ziploc® or a zipper, hook and loop closures, or any other suitable closure element. It is considered well within the skill of the ordinary worker in the art to provide an envelope with a closure element.

[0028] In use, the hangable envelope 30 is filled when in an open condition and the flap portion 36, after filling of the envelope portion 34 with items (not shown), is folded over the envelope portion 34 by engaging closure members 42. In this condition, namely the closed condition, the hangable envelope 30 can be stored away. In the alternate, after the hangable envelope 30 is filled with items, the hangable
envelope may be disposed over a hanger, like a clothing hanger (not shown), a clothes hook, or any type of protrusion sized and shaped to fit within the opening 38. A beneficial effect of this capability of the hangable envelope 30 is that items stored in the hangable envelope may be kept with an outfit or array of clothes for which the items are intended to be used. For example, a preselected suit of clothing to be used for an event may be provided with a preselected set of jewelry items designed to complement the preselected suit of clothing, by storing the jewelry items in the present hangable envelope and disposing the jewelry filled hangable envelope over the hanger which is also supporting the suit of clothing.

[0029] The hangable envelopes shown in FIGS. 5-12 show some examples of the wide array of configurations possible. The hangable envelope 30a of FIG. 5 is configured in a manner, and provided with the same elements as the hangable envelope of FIG. 1. The hangable envelope 30b of FIG. 6 has the same morphological configuration as that shown in FIG. 1 minus an opening 38 and grommet 40. The hangable envelope 30c of FIG. 7 includes first and second envelope sub compartments 62a and 64b that have the same size and shape as each other. The hangable envelope 30d of FIG. 8 is identical to the hangable envelope 30c of FIG. 7 minus an opening 38 and grommet 40. The hangable envelope 30e of FIG. 9 has an envelope portion 34 with no subdivision thereof. The hangable envelope 30f of FIG. 10 is identical to the hangable envelope 30c of FIG. 9 minus an opening 38 and grommet 40. The hangable envelope 30g of FIG. 11 is identical to envelope 30c of FIG. 9 but has an envelope portion 34 which occupies more than half of the overall dimensions on the hangable envelope. The hangable envelope 30h of FIG. 12 is identical to hangable envelope 30g of FIG. 11 minus an opening 38 and grommet 40. It will be understood that the hangable envelope of the invention may be subdivided array configured according to a variety of geometric sizes and shapes, subdivisions thereof and provided with other features functional and decorative in view of the disclosure provided herein and other features not specifically disclosed but well within the reach of one with ordinary skilled the art.

[0030] FIG. 13 illustrates yet another embodiment of the invention, namely a storage kit 100, which generally comprises two or more hangable envelopes 130a and 130b, fitted within a storage container 102. It will be understood that the storage container 102 may be any suitable size and shape configured to receive two or more hangable envelopes. The storage container 102 may be a box or a pouch, for example. In this way, the storage kit 100 can include a plurality of pre-organized envelopes of pre-selected or pre-organized items, such as jewelry, for example. It will be understood that the storage container 102 can be rectangular or square, or any other suitable shape and size, can be made any suitable material such as wood, cardboard, metal, plastic, fabric or any other suitable material, and provided with any number of decorative elements, the specifics of which are not critical to the invention.

[0031] Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

1. A hangable envelope for containing items, comprising: a length of flexible material; an envelope portion formed in the length of material at one end thereof and a flap portion formed in the length of material and at an opposite end thereof; and a closing device for holding the flap portion in a closed condition over the envelope portion.

2. The hangable envelope of claim 1, further comprising: an opening formed in the flap portion.

3. The hangable envelope of claim 2, wherein the opening is reinforced with a reinforcement member.

4. The hangable envelope of claim 3, wherein the reinforcement member is a grommet.

5. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the length of flexible material is a transparent, synthetic polymeric material.

6. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the length of flexible material is a mesh material.

7. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the length of flexible material includes natural material.

8. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the envelope portion includes a single compartment.

9. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the envelope portion includes one or more compartments.

10. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the envelope portion includes two or more sub-compartments.

11. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the closing device includes hook and loop members.

12. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the closing device includes one or more of snaps, adhesive magnets, buttons, pins, elastic bows, and string.

13. The hangable envelope of claim 1, wherein the material includes one or more of plastic, mesh, vinyl, letter, silk, denim, fleece, fur, fox fur, metallic material, vinyl covered cloth, cloth covered vinyl, naugahyde, burlap, hemp, and vinyl covered paper.

14. The hangable envelope of claim 1, further comprising the right side seam and a left side seam.

15. The hangable envelope of claim 14, wherein the right side seam and the left side seam are formed by heat sealing.

16. The hangable envelope of claim 14, wherein the right side seam and the left side seam are formed by one or more of sewing, heat sealing, stapling, and snaps.

17. A kit for organizing items, comprising: two or more hangable envelopes; and a storage container sized and shaped to receive at least the two or more hangable envelopes.

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