July 7, 1970 J. B. BENOLIEL 3,519,198

PARCEL DEPOSITORY APPARATUS

Filed Sept. 12, 1967

FIG. 1

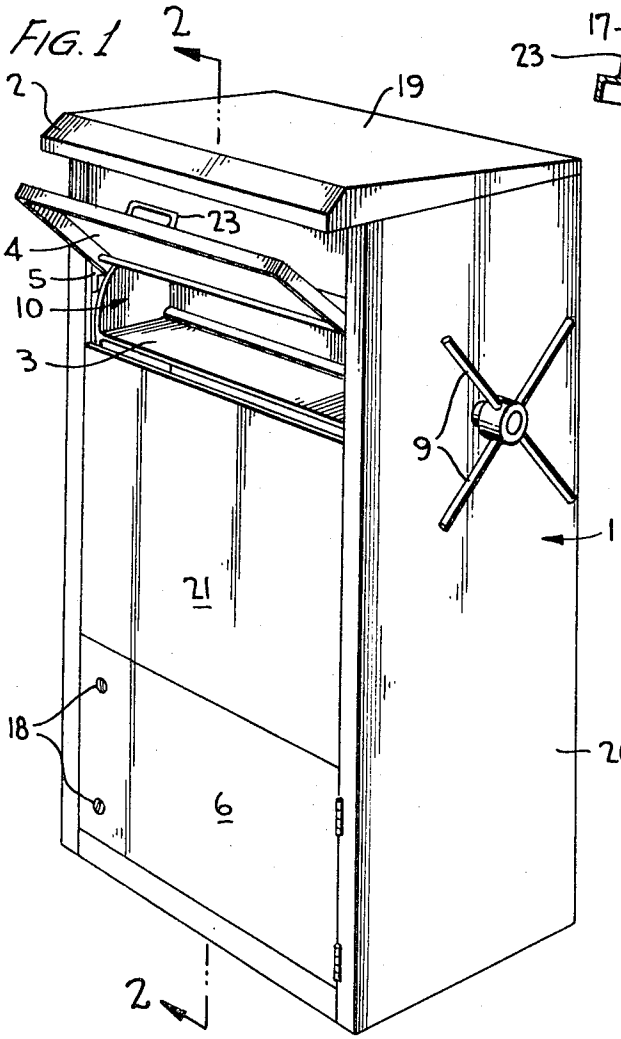


FIG. 2

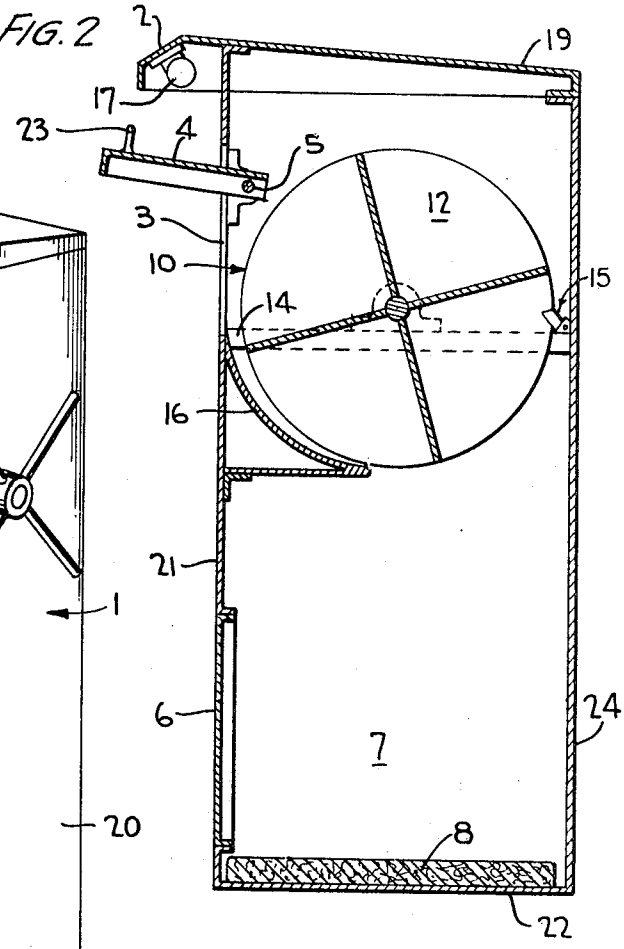
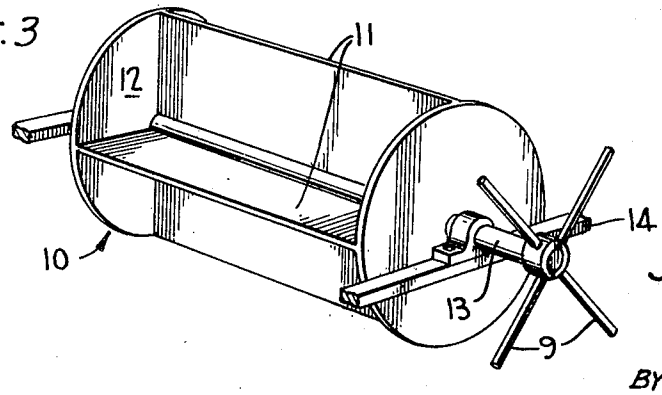


FIG. 3



INVENTOR,
JOSE BENZECRI BENOLIEL

BY Jacobi & Davidson

ATTORNEYS

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PARCEL DEPOSITORY APPARATUS

Jose B. Benoliel, P.O. Box 2879, Caracas, Venezuela

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus for the deposit and collection of parcels which includes an enclosed cabinet with a multi-section rotatable drum in the upper end thereof. A door in the front of the cabinet communicates with the drum to permit a parcel to be placed in one of the sections of the drum. The drum can then be rotated so that the parcel drops to the lower portion of the cabinet. A locked door at the lower end of the cabinet enables authorized persons to collect the parcels at scheduled times for shipment to their destinations.

This invention relates to a depository apparatus for parcels and more specifically it relates to an apparatus designed to receive relatively small parcels or packages for shipment to other locations.

Various means of shipping parcels and the like are in common use today. For instance, it is possible in some countries to send a package by way of the mails, by one of several parcel shipment services, by surface freight or air freight, or by truck. In many instances parcels and small packages are sent by special messenger when speed, special handling, or some other such factor is important. In other countries, it is not possible to ship parcels by mail and so these other means of shipment must necessarily be used. In any event, it is often extremely inconvenient to carry the parcel to a central location or depot maintained by the agency providing the service in order to drop it off for shipment. It is not possible to locate these depots in all areas where they may be needed due to high cost of rent, decoration, and other overhead. Even in those countries such as the United States, where mail boxes are conveniently provided in virtually all communities, such boxes are generally not sufficiently large to accommodate sizeable parcels. As for privately owned transfer agencies, a customer with a parcel to ship has to go to the central location provided for collection of the parcels or has to have the parcel picked up by truck, which may necessitate a delay.

In order to simplify and expedite the shipment of parcels from one location to another, it would be advantageous and beneficial to provide a plurality of depositories in many locations so that parcels may be conveniently deposited therein for collection.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide an apparatus for the deposit and collection of parcels to be transported from one location to another.

It is a further object of this invention, to provide a low cost, tamper-proof, convenient apparatus in which customers may deposit parcels.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a parcel depository apparatus which is aesthetically pleasing and which operates in a simple, yet efficient, manner.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus for receiving and holding packages, which apparatus protects the pracels therein from the deleterious effects of weather, and which is ruggedly constructed and is capable of extended periods of maintenance-free operation.

These and other objects of this invention will become apparent by reference to the following description of a

preferred embodiment of the invention and to the drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the apparatus of this invention;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the rotary drum mechanism of the apparatus of this invention.

Referring now to the drawings, the parcel depository apparatus comprises an enclosed box or cabinet generally designated **1**, a rotary drum mechanism generally designated **10**, said cabinet **1** including along the front thereof, an upper access door **4**, and a lower access door **6**. The cabinet **1** may be made up of individual side, front, rear, top, and bottom members **20**, **21**, **24**, **19** and **22** respectively joined by any suitable conventional means such as by rivets or by welds. The top members or portion **19** extends forwardly to form a hood **2** which partially shields the door **4** and the opening **3** from the elements. The cabinet may be divided into an upper portion which is essentially occupied by the drum **10** and a lower portion **7**, both of which are described in more detail hereinafter. The hood **2** also serves the function of providing protection for a source of illumination **17** which may be a fluorescent light source, although it is not limited thereto. This will enable the user to more easily perform the required operations even when done at night. Of course provision may be made for electricity to power the light.

An opening **3** is provided in the upper portion of the front wall **21** of the cabinet through which the parcels will be inserted into the apparatus. The upper door **4** which is movably suppported on hinges **5** covers the opening **3** to protect it from the weather. In use, the door will be opened upwardly to allow access to the opening **3** and the rotary drum **10** therebehind. The door may be provided with a lock in the event there is to be limited access to the apparatus.

The rotary drum mechanism **10** consists essentially of two wheels or discs **12** which act as end members and which are joined by four or more longitudinal partitions **11** which form compartments into which the parcels will be deposited. The partitions **11** are of equal size and radiate axially outwardly from an axle **13** of the drum **10**.

The axle **13** extends beyond the end member **12** and is supported at each end by transversely located reinforced bars or rods **14** mounted within the cabinet **1** along the sides thereof. The rods **14** occupy any free space which may have existed between the drum **10** and the cabinet **1** and thereby prevent tampering with the drum mechanism. The axle **13** protrudes through at least one of said side members **20** of said cabinet **1** and terminates in levers or handles **9** which will be used to rotate the drum **10**. A conventional ratchet mechanism or pawl **15** is provided to coact with the drum **10** to assure that the drum can be rotated in only one direction.

A curved ramp means **16** is fixed to the front and side walls on the inside of the cabinet **1**, immediately below the supports **14** and the opening **3**, so that it is not possible to tamper with the mechanism by reaching inwardly and downwardly through the opening **3**. The curved ramp means **16** extends rearwardly and at least partially circumferentially about the drum means **10**. The curved ramp **16** also serves to guide the parcels when the drum **10** is rotated.

In use, a person opens the door **4** by means of a handle **23** attached thereto and inserts the parcel through the opening **3** into one of the compartments in the drum **10** formed by the partitions **11**. He then rotates the drum **10** by means of the handles **9** until the parcel passes beyond the curved ramp **16** and drops into the lower portion **7** of the cabinet. A cushioning means of an impact or shock

absorbing material 8 is provided at the bottom of the cabinet to prevent damage to the falling parcel. The door 6 provided at the lower end of the front of the cabinet permits the parcels to be removed or collected by authorized personnel. The door 6 is locked by one or more locks 18 to prevent unauthorized access.

The apparatus is fixedly mounted in place by any suitable means known in the art, as, for example, by bolts embedded in concrete. The cabinet is preferably constructed of a corrosion-resistent material such as a metal which may be painted on both the inside and outside with a non-oxidizing paint for protection.

The sides of the cabinet may be utilized for advertising or for instructions in the proper use of the apparatus.

It is to be understood that such factors as size, color and material of construction may be varied by the user without effecting the scope of this invention. The construction hereinabove described and shown is to be considered exemplary of a preferred embodiment and is not in any way limiting. Accordingly, what is claimed is:

1. A parcel depository apparatus comprising an enclosed cabinet means having a front wall, a back wall, side walls interconnecting said front and back walls, and a top wall that slopes rearwardly and has a portion that extends beyond said front wall to provide a hood; said cabinet means having an upper portion and a lower portion; a rotatable drum means mounted in the upper portion of said cabinet, said drum means including a drum having at least four partition members of equal length fixed to and radiating outwardly from axle means and a circular end member at each end of said partition member thereby forming within said drum a plurality of compartments; said axle means extending axially in opposite directions from said drum and through the side walls of said cabinet; axle support means comprising a bar mounted on each of said side walls and extending the entire distance between said front wall and said backwall to rotatably mount said drum; ratchet means mounted within said cabinet means in engagement with said rotatable drum to permit rotation of the drum in only one direction; said axle means including an extending portion projecting beyond

said cabinet means; handle means attached to said extending portion externally of said cabinet; said cabinet including a first opening means in said upper portion aligned with and juxtaposed to said drum means; said cabinet also including a second opening means in said lower portion thereof; cushioning means disposed in said lower portion to diminish shock on parcels deposited thereinto by said drum means; first and second door means normally closing said first and second opening means respectively; at least one of said door means being provided with a lock; curved ramp means within said cabinet inlet means below said first opening means, said ramp extending rearwardly and at least partially circumferentially about said drum means; said door means being moved manually to provide access to said opening means; said apparatus being operative when said first door is opened and a parcel is inserted through said first opening means by rotating said handle means which in turn rotates said drum means to gravitationally transfer said parcel into said lower portion from which an authorized person can remove said parcel by unlocking and opening said second door; and a light means mounted under said hood to illuminate said first door and said first opening.

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FRANCIS K. ZUGEL, Primary Examiner

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232—52