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(54) **SATCHEL SYSTEM**

(76) Inventor: **James Griffin**, Narrabeen (AU)

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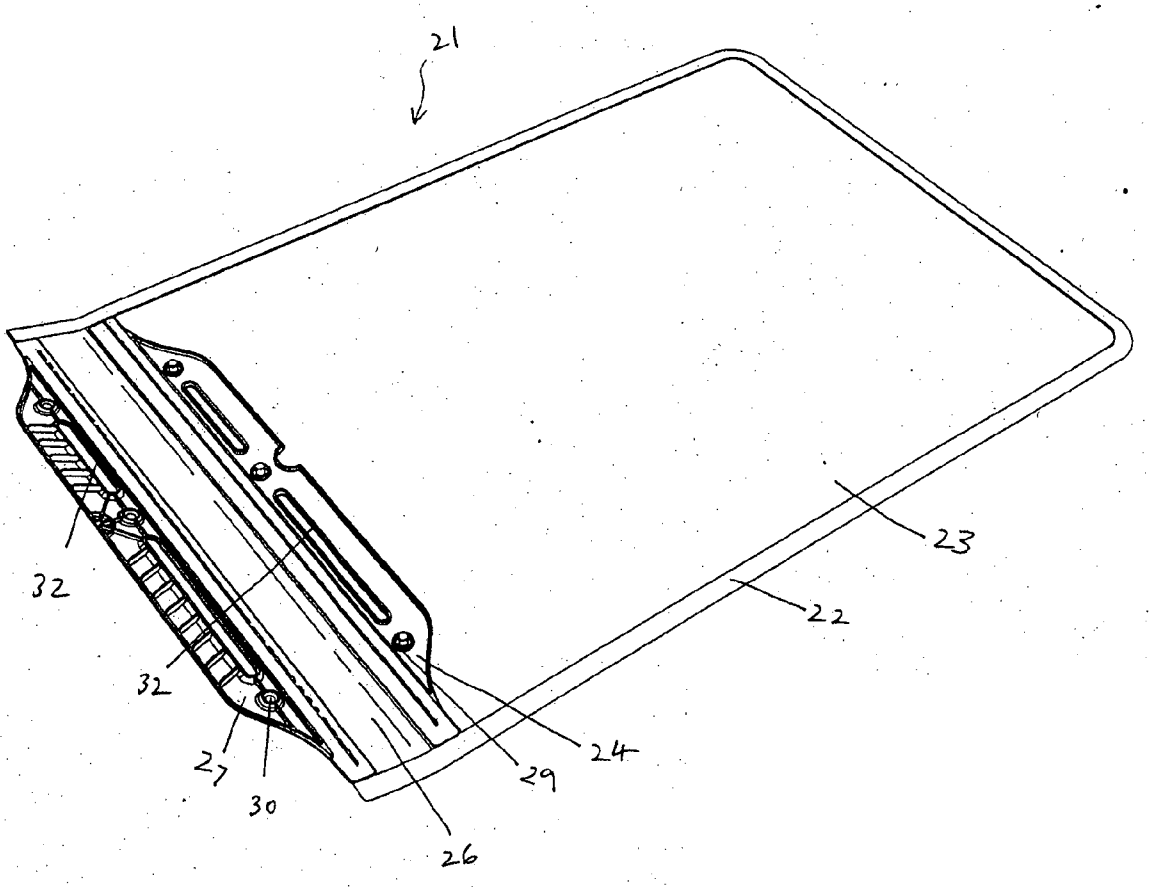
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A reusable satchel comprising a receptacle composed of a durable material and having at least one opening for inserting contents into the receptacle, the receptacle having at least two retaining slits the retaining slits being positioned such that a sheet inserted through each retaining slit acts as a closure to the opening.



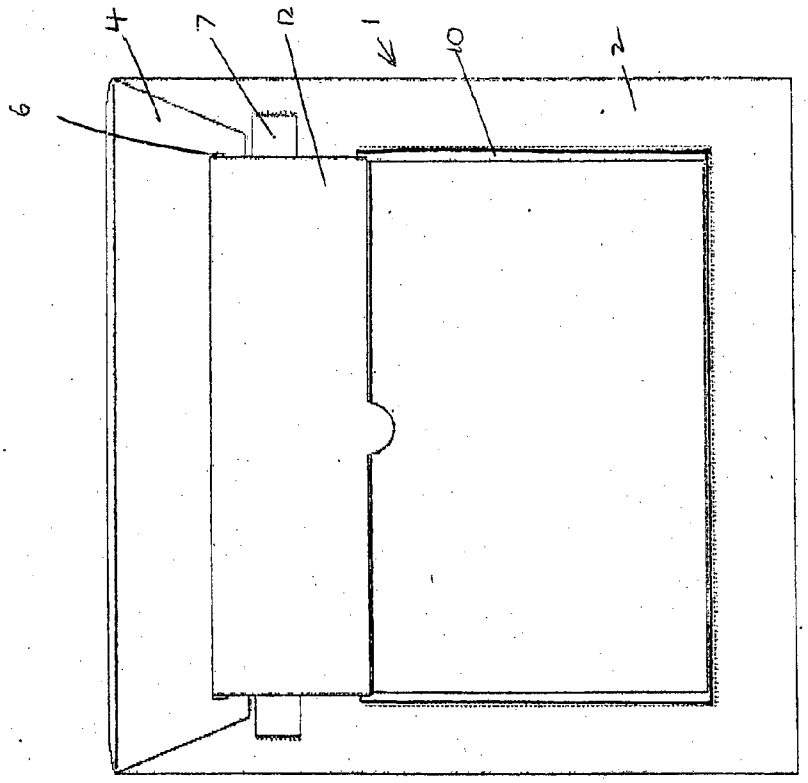


FIG. 3

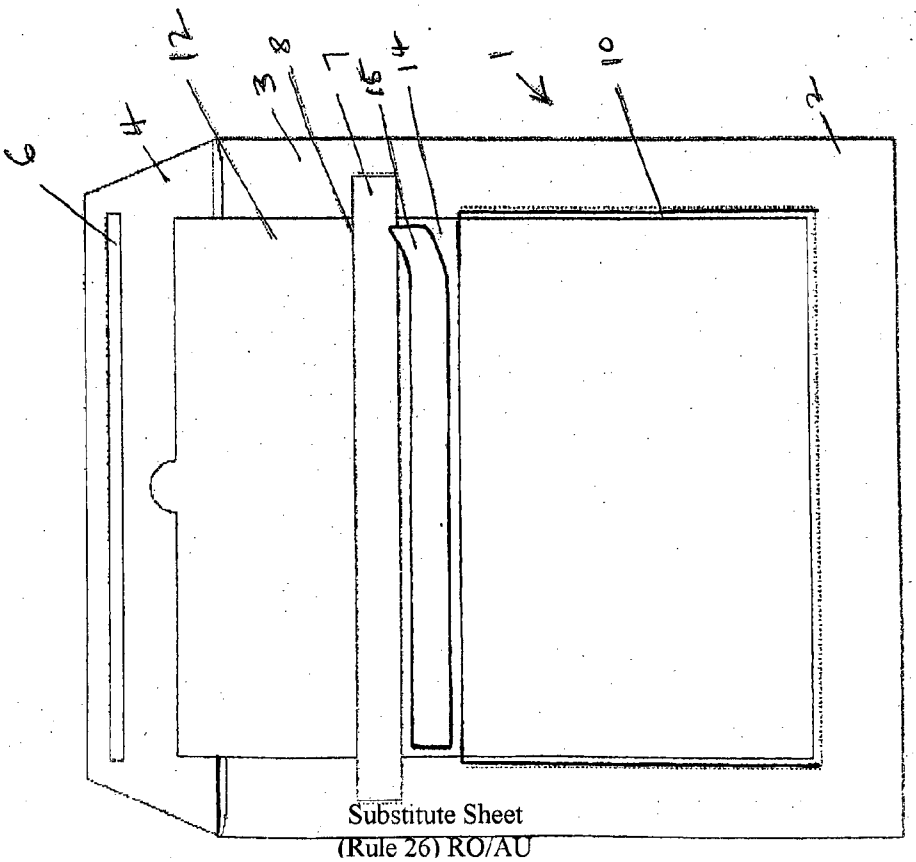


FIG. 4

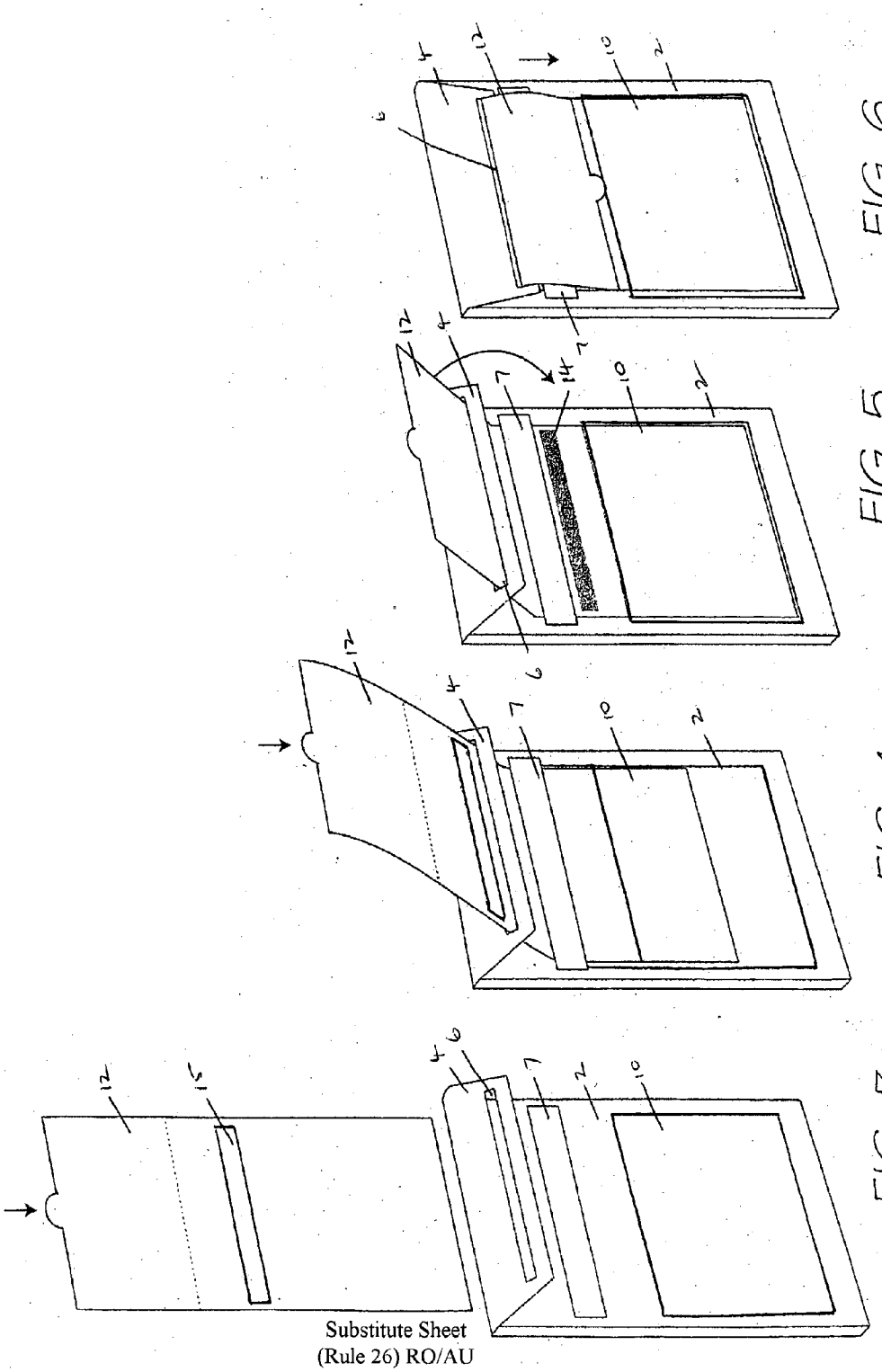


FIG. 6

FIG. 5

FIG. 4

FIG. 3

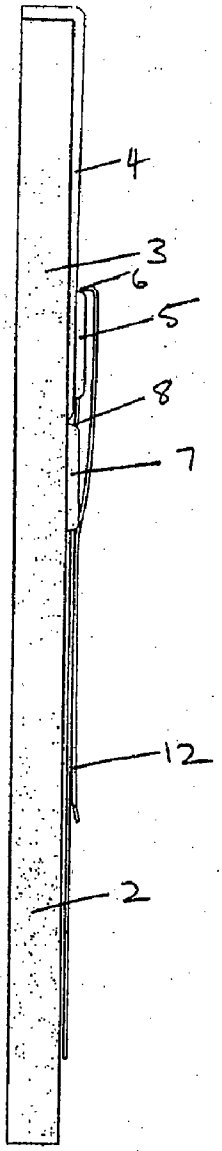


FIG. 10

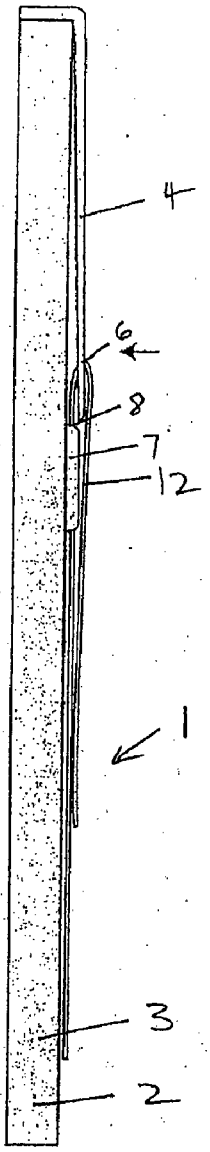


FIG. 7

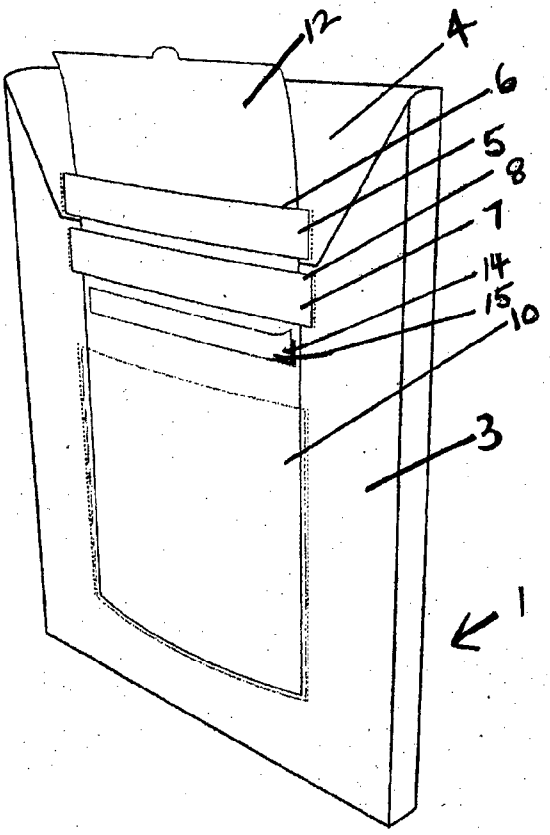


FIG. 8

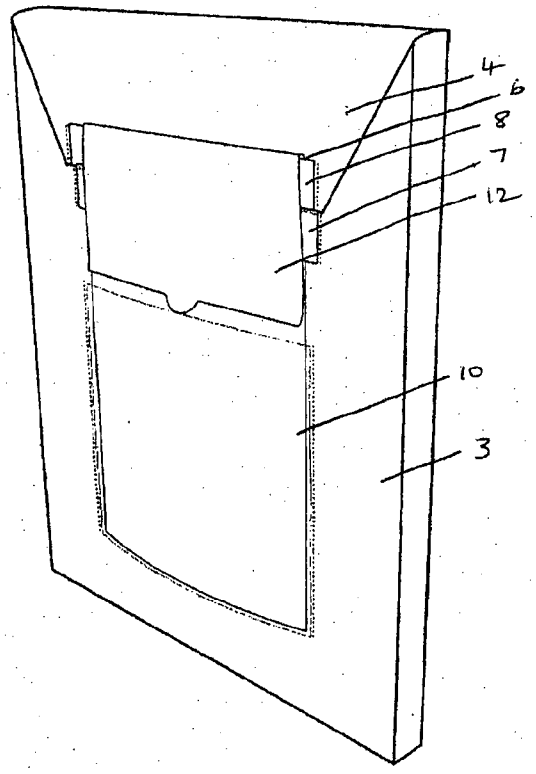


FIG. 9

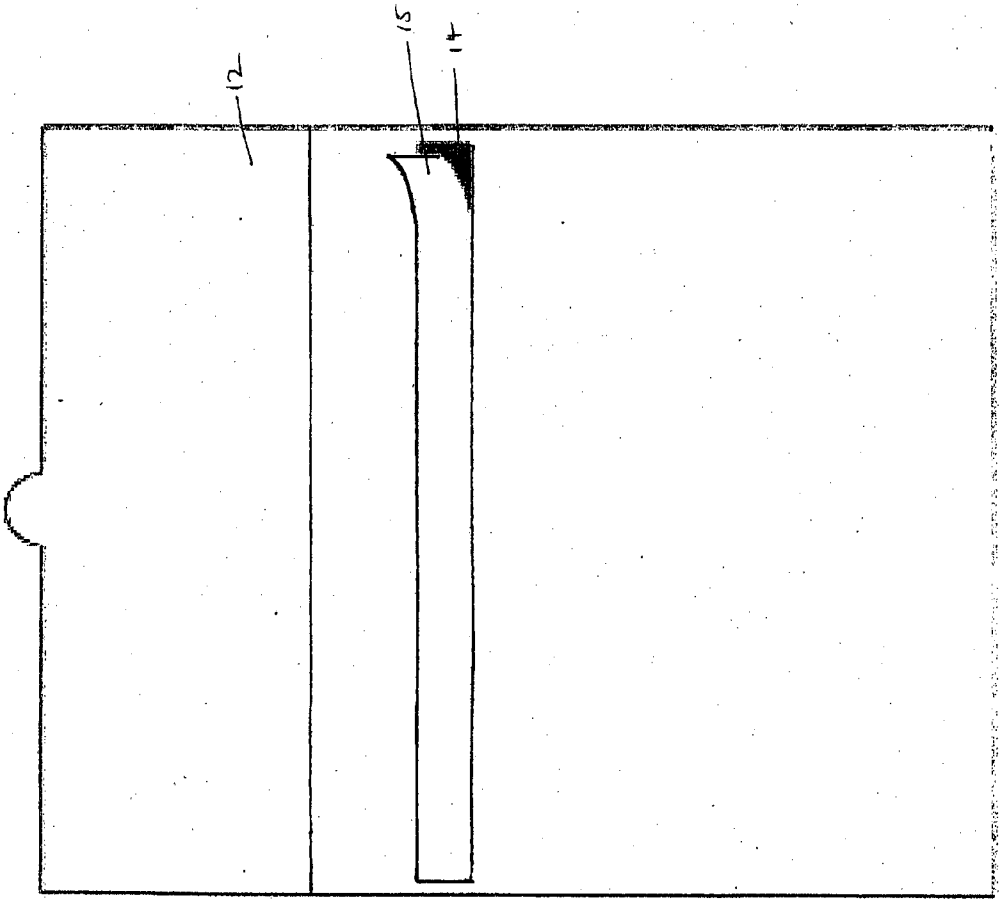


FIG. 11

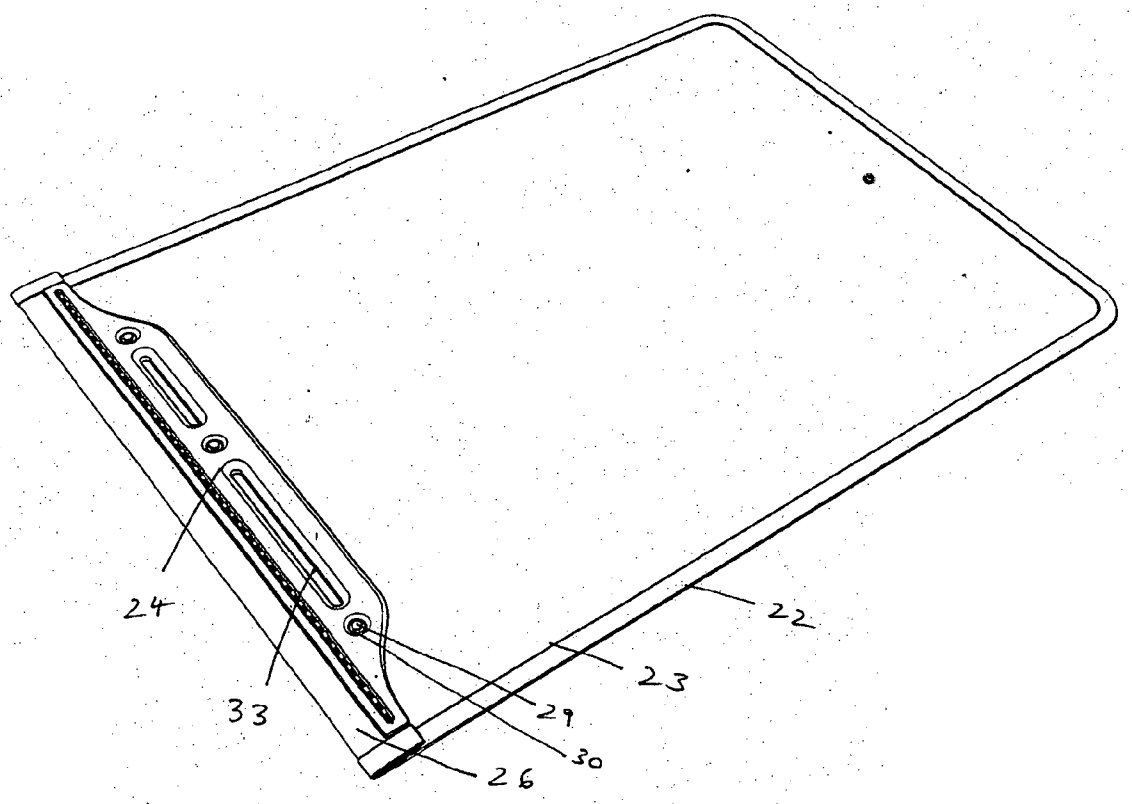


FIG. 12

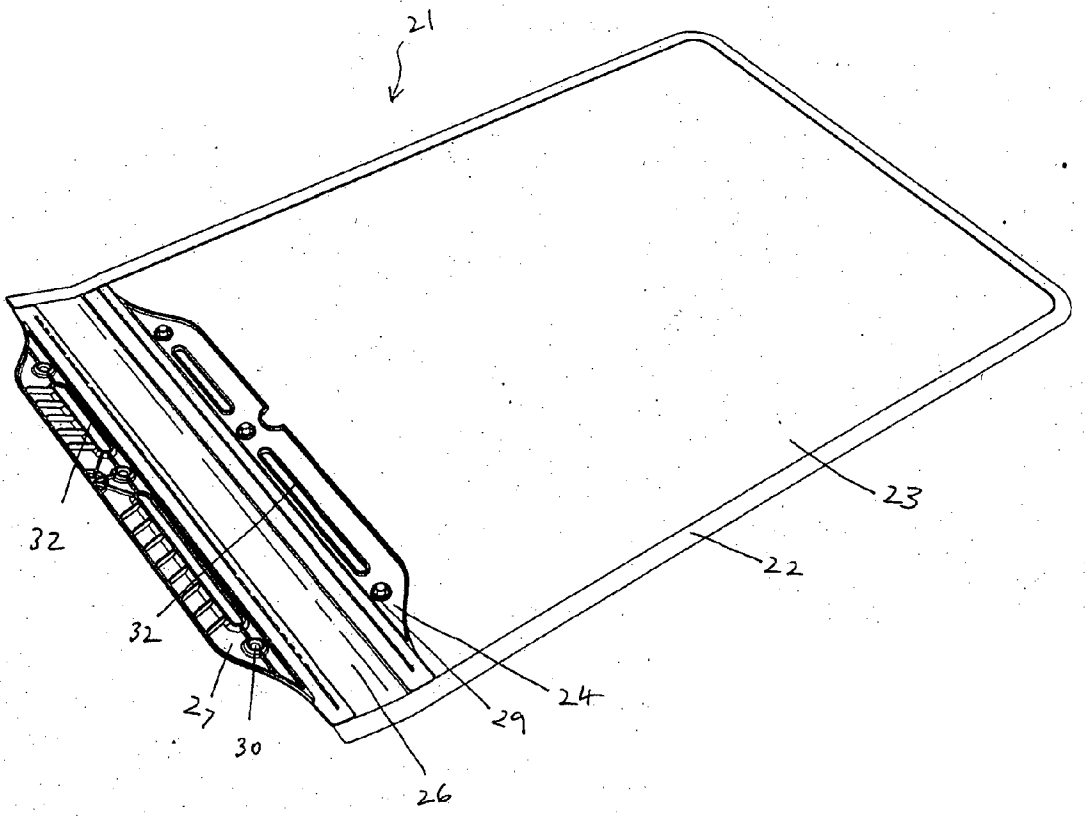


FIG. 13

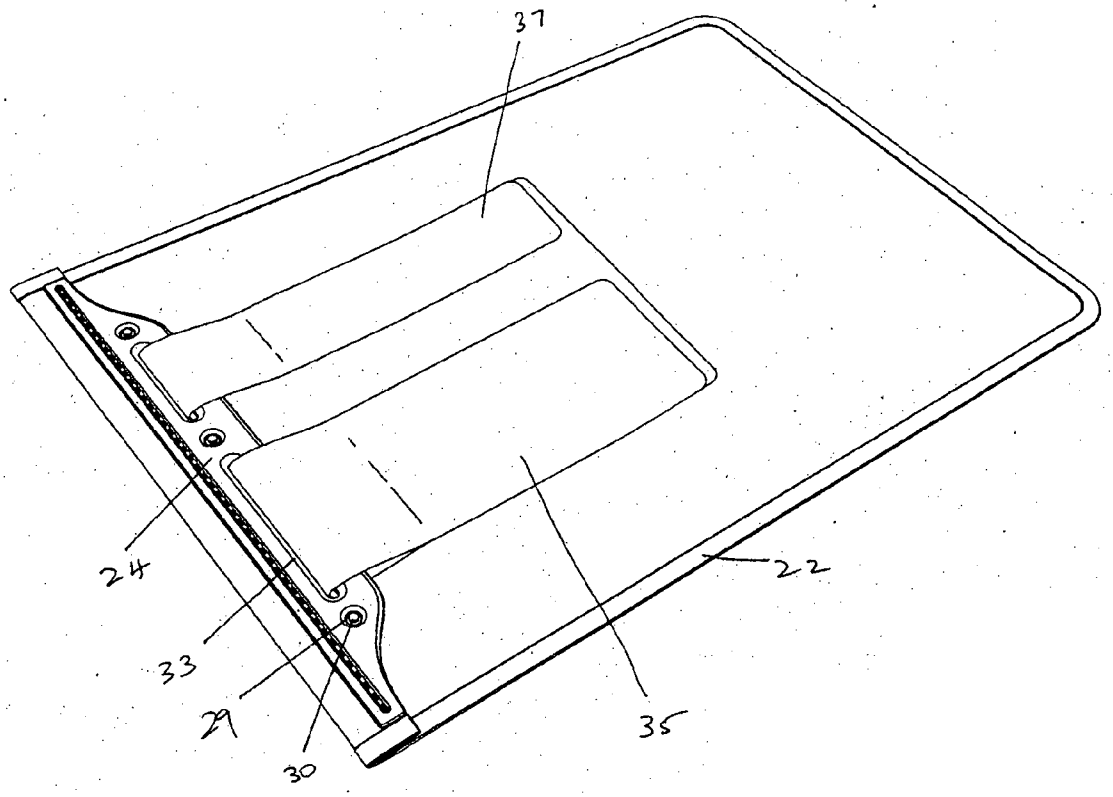


FIG. 14

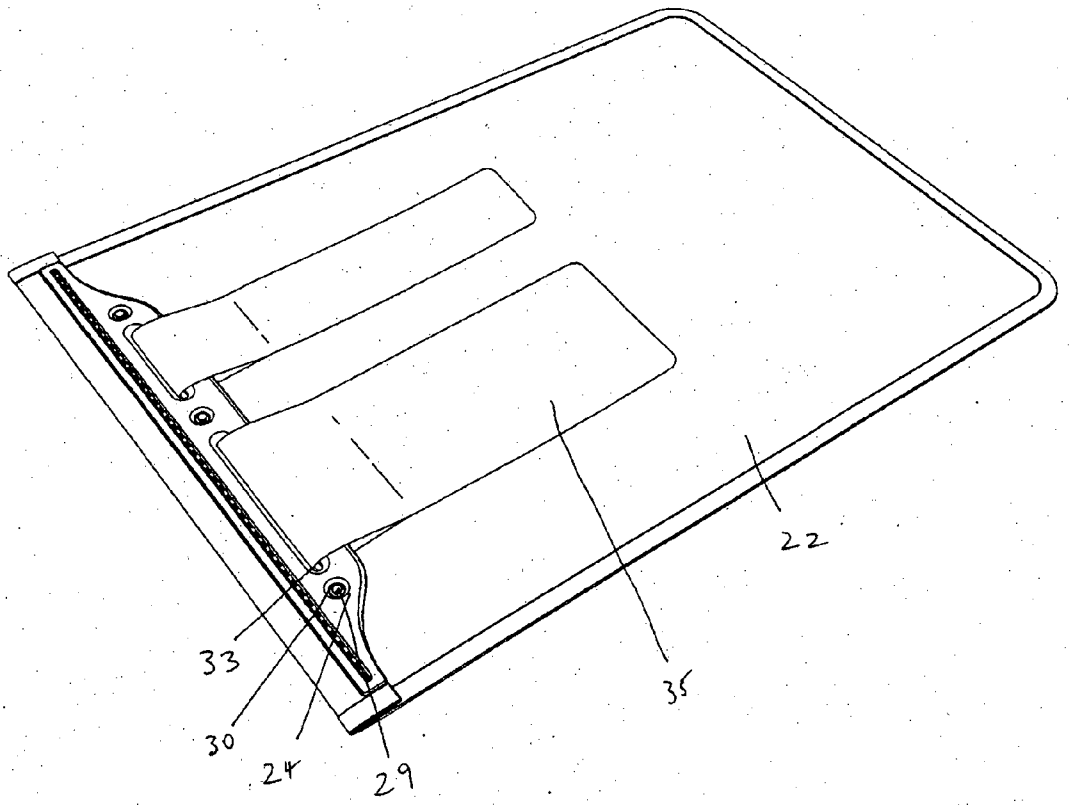


FIG. 15

SATCHEL SYSTEM

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure broadly relates to reusable satchel and envelope structures, and methods of use thereof.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] A variety of mailing envelopes and satchels are known for distribution of correspondence, parcels and the like. Generally most envelope and satchel structures can be used only once, or twice with known reusable types, and are thereafter discarded. This practice causes waste and utilises excessive disposable parts. Easily reusable envelope structures and associated methods for efficiently using those structures are desirable.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0003] Disclosed is a reusable satchel comprising a receptacle composed of a durable material and having at least one opening for inserting contents into the receptacle, the receptacle defining at least two retaining slits; the retaining slits being positioned such that a sheet inserted through each retaining slit acts as a closure to the opening.

[0004] In one form the satchel further comprises a sealing sheet composed of disposable material and having an adhesive on a face thereof, the sealing sheet being sized and the adhesive positioned to allow the sealing sheet to be inserted through the retaining slits and to adhere to itself such that the sealing sheet forms a loop extending through the retaining slits to close the opening.

[0005] In one form the satchel further comprises a closure element extending from the receptacle about the opening, the retaining slits extending through a portion of the closure element.

[0006] In one form the closure element extends around the periphery of the opening and is moveable between a closed position and an open position.

[0007] In one form the closure element includes fasteners adapted to secure the closure element in a closed position.

[0008] In one form the fasteners secure the closure element in a closed position through a snap-fit or interference fit.

[0009] In one form the fasteners are positioned such that there is a central fastener and one or more peripheral fasteners.

[0010] In one form the media sheet includes an opening to allow for the central fastener.

[0011] In one form the satchel further comprises a sealing sheet composed of disposable material and having an adhesive on a front face thereof, the sealing sheet being sized and the adhesive positioned to allow the sealing sheet to be inserted through the retaining slits and to adhere to itself such that the sealing sheet forms a loop extending through the retaining slits to close the opening, wherein in a closed position the sealing sheet acts as a tamper-proof seal.

[0012] In one form at least one of the retaining slits comprises a slit extending through the closure element.

[0013] In one form the closure element is rigid or semi rigid.

[0014] In one form the closure element comprises two members.

[0015] In one form the sealing sheet comprises a media sheet composed of durable paper or card.

[0016] In one form the sealing sheet is adapted to allow distribution information to be situated thereon.

[0017] In one form the retaining slits are aligned with one another.

[0018] In one form the receptacle comprises an envelope composed of card, durable paper, or padded paper, card or some form of fibrous material such as bamboo.

[0019] In one form the receptacle comprises an envelope composed of a plastic.

[0020] In one form the receptacle comprises an envelope composed of a textile material.

[0021] In one form the receptacle comprises a rigid box or container.

[0022] In one form the receptacle comprises an inflatable bag.

[0023] In a second aspect, disclosed is a method of sealing an envelope, the envelope having at least one opening for inserting contents into the envelope, the envelope having at least two retaining slits, the retaining slits being positioned such that a sheet inserted through each retaining slit acts as a closure to the opening, the method comprising inserting a sealing sheet through each retaining slit; and folding the sealing sheet such that the sealing sheet adheres to itself to form a loop extending through the retaining slits.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] Preferred embodiments will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0025] FIG. **1** is a front view of a satchel of one embodiment of the present disclosure in an open position;

[0026] FIG. **2** is a front view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in a closed position;

[0027] FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in an open position;

[0028] FIG. **4** is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in the process of being closed;

[0029] FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in the process of being closed;

[0030] FIG. **6** is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in a closed position;

[0031] FIG. **7** is side view of the embodiment of FIG. **1** in a closed position;

[0032] FIG. **8** is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the present disclosure in an unsealed position;

[0033] FIG. **9** is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. **8** in a closed position;

[0034] FIG. **10** is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. **8** in a closed position;

[0035] FIG. **11** is a front view of a stationery sheet of the present disclosure;

[0036] FIG. **12** is a perspective view of a satchel of a third embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0037] FIG. **13** is a perspective view of the satchel of FIG. **12** in a closed orientation;

[0038] FIG. **14** is a perspective view of the satchel of FIG. **12** in a first sealed configuration;

[0039] FIG. **15** is a perspective view of the satchel of FIG. **12** in a second sealed configuration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0040] Referring to FIGS. **1-7**, disclosed is a satchel (**1**) for mailing or delivery of a package or letter (not illustrated) through ordinary postal or courier services or through any method of delivery available. The satchel (**1**) comprises an envelope body (**2**) which is made up of a receptacle (**3**) and integrated flap (**4**). The envelope body (**2**) is composed of a durable material such as polyethylene cardboard material or any other durable material appropriate for use in an envelope or bag. The envelope body further includes a flap (**4**) which extends beyond the receptacle (**3**) such that it can be folded down over the sleeve (**3**) to close the pocket. The flap (**4**) further includes a slit (**6**) extending horizontally across the flap.

[0041] The envelope body (**2**) further includes a retaining strip (**7**) which is affixed to the envelope body such that a retaining slit (**8**) is defined between the retaining strip (**7**) and the pocket (**3**). The envelope body (**2**) further comprises a stationery sleeve (**10**) which is positioned on the face of the envelope body (**2**) adjacent or proximal to the retaining strip (**7**).

[0042] The satchel (**1**) further comprises a sealing sheet (**12**) which is sized to slide into the stationery sleeve (**10**) and extends therefrom such that the sealing sheet extends through the retaining slit (**8**) behind the retaining strip (**7**) and upwardly so as to allow the sealing sheet to be threaded through the slit (**6**) and fold thereover.

[0043] The sealing sheet (**12**) includes an adhesive (**14**) covered by a covering strip (**15**).

[0044] In use, a user inserts a package or letter into the pocket (**3**) then inserts the sealing sheet (**12**) into the stationery sleeve (**10**) through the retaining slit (**8**). The user then folds the flap (**4**) downwardly such that the sealing sheet (**12**) is inserted through the slit (**6**). The flap is then positioned in a closed position. The sealing sheet (**12**) can then be folded over to contact itself at the adhesive (**14**). Alternatively, the sealing sheet is inserted through the slits and into the stationary sleeve when the flap is in the closed position. Once the covering strip (**15**) is removed from the adhesive (**14**) the sealing sheet (**12**) is sealed to itself by contact with the adhesive (**14**).

[0045] The sealing sheet (**12**) comprises a sheet of stationery which may incorporate an area for sticky labels such as postage paid labels, stamps and further incorporates addressing and other information when folded. In one form the stationery is in an envelope format so that documentation such as an invoice or other documentation which may accompany a parcel can be inserted into the sealing sheet or printed directly onto the sealing sheet itself. The sealing sheet may also be reversible in format to allow for two-way sending or on-forwarding.

[0046] The material of the sealing sheet is generally strong or durable paper or card although any material such as fibrous materials, textiles, polyester, or plastic is envisaged in the present application.

[0047] The adhesive (**14**) is composed of a strong adhesive in the form of one or more strips. In alternative embodiment the adhesive is in other forms.

[0048] The sealing sheet (**12**) in one form incorporates a fold line as **4** guide for insuring a secure closure and seal of the satchel (**1**). The sealing sheet may also incorporate a tear away strip to allow for easy tearing of the sealing sheet (**12**) to open the seal and remove the contents of the satchel (**1**).

[0049] In a second embodiment of the present invention shown in FIGS. **8-10** like numerals refer to like features. The satchel (**1**) comprises a pocket body (**3**) having a flap for extending therefrom. The flap (**4**) incorporates a slit (**6**) which is defined by a flap retaining strip (**5**) the flap retaining strip (**5**)is aligned with the retaining strip (**7**) such that the slit (**6**) and the retaining slit (**8**) are in alignment with one another. The satchel body further includes a stationery sleeve (**10**). In use contents are inserted into the envelope body (**3**) the flap (**4**) is then folded over and a dealing sheet (**12**) is inserted through the aligned slit (**6**) and retaining slit (**8**) and into the stationery sleeve (**10**). The sealing sheet (**12**) extends upwardly from above the flap retaining strip (**5**). The sealing sheet (**12**) is then folded over the flap retaining strip (**5**) such that a surface of the sealing sheet (**12**) comes into contact with adhesive (**14**) which is positioned On the sealing sheet (**12**). The satchel (**1**) is then in a closed position as shown in FIG. **9**.

[0050] In a not illustrated form slits are positioned on either side of the opening and the sealing sheet extends between them and across the opening to close the opening.

[0051] In a third embodiment, disclosed is a satchel (**21**) for mailing or delivery of a package or letter (not illustrated) through ordinary postal or courier services or through any method of delivery available. The satchel (**21**) comprises an envelope body (**22**) which is made up of a receptacle (**23**) and closure element (**24**).

[0052] The receptacle (**23**) is composed of a durable material such as polyethylene, cardboard material or any other durable material appropriate for use in an envelope or bag. The receptacle (**23**) includes an Opening (**26**) to allow a user to place an article inside the receptacle (**23**).

[0053] The closure element (**24**) extends from the receptacle (**23**) about the opening (**26**). In the illustrated form the closure element (**24**) is composed of a rigid material such as rigid plastic. In alternative embodiments the closure element could be composed of other rigid materials or indeed of flexible materials such as cloth or paper within the parameters of allowing closure.

[0054] The closure element (**24**) comprises two closure members. (**27**) one extending along each side of the opening (**26**). The closure members (**27**) include respective protrusions (**29**) and apertures (**30**) adapted to engage one another to releasably secure the closure element (**24**) in its closed configuration.

[0055] The illustrated form shows a closure element comprising two members, one extending down each side of the opening, however a person skilled in the art will realize that the closure element could be in the form of a single flexible element extending about the periphery of the opening and incorporating fasteners to releasably secure to itself. The illustrated form shows fasteners in the form of protrusions and apertures, however a person skilled in the art will be aware that multiple fasteners are possible including alternative snap fit and interference fit options, hooks, Velcro™, magnets, clips, buttons, ties and alternative fasteners that releasably secure the closure element in a closed position.

[0056] The closure element further includes four retaining slits (**32**) positioned such that in the closed position the retaining slits will be aligned in pairs to create a closure cavity (**33**) extending through the closure element (**24**). While the illustrated form shows four retaining slits, in other forms the closure element includes two aligned slits or an aligned slit and bar or flap creating a second slit.

[0057] The system further includes a sealing sheet (**35**) which is adapted to engage with the satchel (**21**) by extending through the retaining slits (**32**) to secure the closure element (**24**) in a closed position with a tamper proof seal. The sealing sheet (**35**) comprises a sheet of stationery which may incorporate an area for sticky labels such as postage paid labels, stamps and barcode labels. The sheet further incorporates addressing and other information when folded. In one form the stationery is in an envelope format so that documentation such as an invoice or other documentation which may accompany a parcel can be inserted into the sealing sheet or printed directly onto the sealing sheet itself. The sealing sheet (**35**) may also be reversible in format to allow for two-way sending or on-forwarding.

[0058] The sealing sheet includes an adhesive positioned to allow the sealing sheet (**35**) to form a loop and engage itself in a tamper-proof manner. The material of the sealing sheet (**35**) is generally strong or durable paper or card although any material such as fibrous materials, polyester or plastics is envisaged in the present application.

[0059] In use contents are inserted into the receptacle (**23**), the closure element (**24**) is secured closed using the fasteners such that the retaining slits (**32**) are aligned to form a closure cavity (**33**). The media sheet (**35**) is inserted into the closure cavity (**33**) such that the sealing sheet extends through the retaining slits (**32**) so as to allow the media sheet to fold over itself and be sealed to itself.

[0060] The sealing sheet (**35**) in one form incorporates a fold line or other indicia as a guide for ensuring a secure closure and seal of the satchel (**21**). The sealing sheet may also incorporate a tear away strip to allow for easy tearing of the sealing sheet (**35**) to open the seal and remove the contents of the satchel (**21**).

[0061] The sealing sheet may comprise a single sheet extending to two tabs (**37**) as shown in FIG. **14**. Alternatively the sealing sheet may comprise two sheets as shown in FIG. **15**. In alternative not illustrated embodiments the sealing sheet may comprise a single sheet. In one not illustrated form the sealing sheet may comprise a single sheet with an aperture extending therethrough.

[0062] In one not illustrated form the sealing sheet incorporates removable tabs adapted to be inserted between the aligned slits.

[0063] The fasteners extending from the closure element and the sealing sheet are configured to allow a tamper proof seal. In one form one or more central fasteners as shown in FIGS. **12-15** along with two or more peripheral fasteners limit access to the contents of the satchel **21** without tearing or otherwise breaking or unsealing the sealing sheet. In one form in the closed position at least one centrally located fastener is surrounded on either side by sealing sheet to make opening of the satchel difficult without tearing the sealing sheet. In one form at least one fastener extends through an aperture in the sealing sheet, through the gap between two sealing sheets or through the gap between the tab portions of a sealing sheet. In one form at least one fastener is surrounded on two sides by a sealing sheet.

[0064] In one form the receptacle is a box or folder having an opening incorporating aligned slits through which a sealing sheet acts as a closure.

[0065] In one form the receptacle includes an extension extending upwardly from the opening and in the unused state the retaining slits are not aligned. In this form the area of the receptacle positioned intermediate a first retaining slit and the opening is folded over such that the retaining slits are aligned and the retaining sheet can be inserted through both slits.

[0066] While the satchel has been described with specific features as shown in the figures, variation in the design will fall within the scope of the present invention as defined in the claims. For example, two retaining strips could be positioned on either side of the envelope in a case where the envelope does not include a flap such that the sealing sheet can be inserted through both retaining slits and folded over itself to seal. Further, the corners of the envelope body can incorporate structures to conceal and secure the contents of the satchel. This may be achieved by the top edge of the flap being rigid and adapted to be tucked under the retaining strip on the opposite side of the envelope. Alternatively, the flap could lock into position. An internal sealing mechanism such as a zip, velcro, zip-lock or press-fit can create a seal which is reinforced by the sealing sheet such that the satchel cannot be opened in transit. The address details on the sealing sheet may be positioned within the stationery sleeve in which case the stationery sleeve would most beneficially be transparent. Address details or information can be incorporated on the folded portion of the flap.

[0067] In the claims which follow and in the preceding summary of the invention, except where the context requires otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the word "comprising" is used in the sense of "including", that is the features specified may be associated with further is features in various embodiments of the invention.

[0068] Variations and modifications may be made to the parts previously described without departing from the spirit or ambit of the invention.

1. A reusable satchel comprising:

a receptacle composed of a durable material and having at least one opening for inserting contents into the receptacle, the receptacle having at least two retaining slits;

the retaining slits being positioned such that a sheet inserted through each retaining slit acts as a closure to the opening.

2. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1**, further comprising a sealing sheet composed of disposable material and having an adhesive on a front face thereof, the sealing sheet being sized and the adhesive positioned to allow the sealing sheet to be inserted through the retaining slits and to adhere to itself such that the sealing sheet forms a loop extending through the retaining slits to close the opening.

3. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1**, further comprising a closure element extending from the receptacle about the opening, the retaining slits extending through a portion of the closure element.

4. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **3**, wherein the closure element extends around the periphery of the opening and is moveable between a closed position and an open position.

5. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **4**, wherein the closure element includes fasteners adapted to secure the closure element in a closed position.

6. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **5**, wherein the fasteners secure the closure element in a closed position through a snap-fit or interference fit.

7. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **5**, further comprising a sealing sheet composed of disposable material and having an adhesive on a front face thereof, the sealing sheet being sized and the adhesive positioned to allow the sealing sheet to be inserted through the retaining slits and to adhere to

itself such that the sealing sheet forms a loop extending through the retaining slits to close the opening, wherein in a closed position the sealing sheet acts as a tamper-proof seal.

8. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **3**, wherein at least one of the retaining slits comprises a slit extending through the closure element.

9. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **3**, wherein the closure element is rigid.

10. (canceled)

11. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **2**, wherein the sealing sheet comprises a media sheet composed of durable paper or card.

12. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **2**, wherein the sealing sheet is adapted to allow distribution information to be situated thereon.

13. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1** wherein the retaining slits are aligned with one another.

14. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1**, wherein the receptacle comprises an envelope composed of card, durable paper, or padded paper, card or some form of fibrous material such as bamboo.

15. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1**, wherein the receptacle comprises an envelope composed of a plastic.

16. The reusable satchel as defined in claim **1**, wherein the receptacle comprises an inflatable bag.

17. A method of sealing an envelope, the envelope having at least one opening for inserting contents into the envelope, the envelope having at least two retaining slits, the retaining slits being positioned such that a sheet inserted through each retaining slit acts as a closure to the opening, the method comprising:

inserting a sealing sheet through each retaining slit; and,

folding the sealing sheet such that the sealing sheet adheres to itself to form a loop extending through the retaining slits.

* * * * *