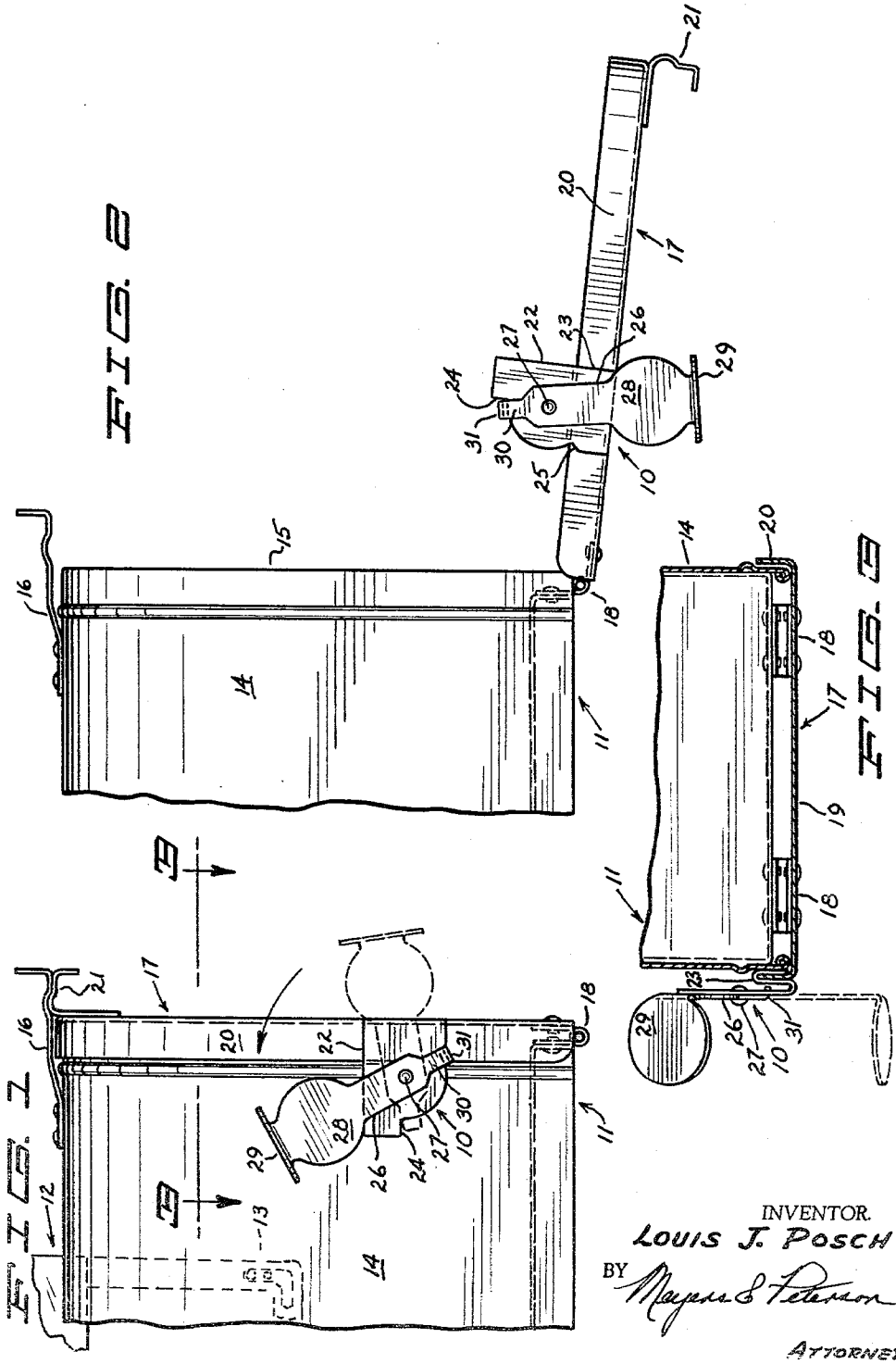
April 6, 1965 L. J. POSCH 3,176,918

HOUSEHOLDER'S MAILBOX PICK-UP SIGNAL

Filed Dec. 27, 1962



United States Patent Office 3,176,918 Patented Apr. 6, 1965

3,176,918

HOUSEHOLDER'S MAILBOX PICK-UP SIGNAL

Louis J. Posch, Rte. 2, Royalton, Minn.

Filed Dec. 27, 1962, Ser. No. 247,566
2 Claims. (Cl. 232—35)

This invention relates to mailboxes and more particularly to a signal assemblage in association therewith.

Numerous signal devices have been proposed to indicate to the postman that there is mail within a rural mailbox which should be picked up by him for mailing, irrespective of whether or not there is mail to be delivered to the boxholder. In most instances of which I am aware, the conventional mailbox is equipped with a flag which must be manually lowered by the postman to indicate that he has accepted delivery of the material to be posted. I am aware, however, of prior art devices which automatically lower a signal flag when the postman opens the mailbox. In either event, the householder knows only that the postman has taken the material to be posted but he cannot ascertain from a remote visual inspection of the mailbox whether someone else in his household has already picked up the delivered mail. The latter situation presents an annoying problem, particularly in rural areas where the mailbox is situated remotely from the house and more than one person may pick up the delivered mail. The latecomer, if he assumes the mail has been removed from the box, often must make a special return trip to the box. If he assumes that the mail has not been removed, then he often makes an unnecessary trip or unnecessarily stops and alights from his car.

It is a general object of this invention to provide a mailbox and signal assemblage which, in addition to the conventional portion which advises a postman there is mail to be sent, will also have provision for advising a householder whether his mail has already been removed from his mailbox by someone else.

More specifically, it is an object of the invention to proivde in a mailbox assemblage of the class described, a visual signal settable by one picking up mail to indicate that the delivered mail has been removed, the signal being automatically tripped without attention thereto by the postman the next time he delivers mail to the box.

A further object of the invention is to provide an inexpensive and simple signal device which can be easily and quickly installed on a mailbox to supplement the conventional signal flag thereon.

These and other objects and advantages of my invention will more fully appear from the following description, made in connection with the accompanying drawing wherein like reference characters refer to the same or similar parts throughout the several views and in which:

FIGURE 1 is a side elevation of the front end segment of a mailbox to which my signal device has been applied, unessential portions of the mailbox being eliminated from the view;

FIGURE 2 is a view similar to FIGURE 1 in which the cover is shown in open position; and

FIGURE 3 is a horizontal sectional view of the cover and supplemental signal taken on the line 3—3 of FIGURE 1.

With continued reference to the drawing, and particularly to FIGURE 1, my signal device is indicated generally at 10. This signal device is adapted to be mounted upon a conventional mailbox 11, which mailbox is provided with the conventional flag 12 having limited pivotal securement at 13 so that in its raised position it indicates to the postman that there is mail to be delivered to the post office and in lowered position indicates that the postman need not stop unless there is mail to deliver. The mailbox 11 itself comprises a stationary body 14 which has an open forward end 15 and a latch 16 overlying the

open end 15. A swingable door 17 is adapted to cover the open end 15 and is generally hinged at 18 adjacent the lower front edge of the stationary body 14. The cover 17 has a front panel 19 and an inwardly turned flange 20 which in turn is adapted to overlie the margins of the stationary box 14 at its open end 15. The cover 17 is also equipped with a latch element 21 frictionally engageable with the cooperating latch 16 on the stationary body 14.

My signal device 10 is not manually operated by the postman but will automatically effect a signal upon his opening of the door which will remain until the first person from the household picks up the mail, at which time the signal device is manually reset and then indicates to subsequent persons that the delivered mail has already been brought to the house.

The signal, in the form shown herein, is actuable by gravity whenever the door 17 is opened. To achieve this end simply, I provide a bracket 22 having an attachment portion 23 as shown in FIGURE 3. The attachment 23 may be a simple reverse bend adapted to frictionally engage the flange 20 of the door 17.

The bracket 22 when mounted on the door lies parallel to the side of the stationary body 14 and spaced slightly outward therefrom. Bracket 22 is also provided with a pair of abutments 24 and 25 which lie in arcuately spaced positions as shown in FIGURES 1 and 2.

A signal arm 26 is pivotally mounted at 27 to the bracket 22 and may have an enlarged area 28 and another enlarged area 29 formed from the free end portion of the arm which is bent laterally outward therefrom as shown in FIGURE 3. The enlarged portions 28 and 29 may be painted a brilliant color so that the position of the signal arm can be readily ascertained from a remote location.

In the form shown, the enlarged areas 28 and 29 lie normally above the pivot point 27 as shown in FIGURE 1. Arm 26 also has a lower extension 30 which terminates in a bent end 31 as may be readily seen in FIGURE 3. This bent end 31 is formed laterally of the plane of bracket 22 and is adapted to strike the abutments 24 and 25 when the signal arm lies respectively at its lower and upper positions. The lower position in FIGURE 1 is indicated by dotted outline and the upper position is the full line representation. The arcuate spacing of the respective abutments 24 and 25 is such that the two positions of the signal arm are stable, that is, the center of gravity of the upper portion of the arm lies over dead center at pivot point 27 when the signal is raised in a counterclockwise direction and similarly lies over its dead center when lowered in a clockwise direction, as viewed in FIGURE 1.

The use and operation of my signal device will be readily apparent from the foregoing. When the door 17 is opened, as in FIGURE 2, the signal arm 26 will always tilt to its lowered position irrespective of the stable position to which it previously was set with the door closed. Thus, the postman need pay no attention to the signal device but merely opens the box and inserts mail therein in the usual manner. When the door is closed, the signal device will remain at its lowered position as shown in dotted outline in FIGURE 1. The enlarged areas 28 and 29 easily distinguish the lowered position from the raised position. Now when the boxholder or another member of his household picks up the delivered mail, he will simply manually raise the signal arm until it assumes the stable position shown in full line in FIGURE 1. After the door 17 has been reclosed, the signal arm will remain in the stable raised position until the postman again opens the door and, in its raised position, the signal serves notice to everyone concerned that he need not stop or make a trip to the mailbox unnecessarily.

It will, of course, be understood that various changes may be made in the form, details, arrangements and proportions of the parts without departing from the scope of my invention as set forth in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In a mailbox having an open-ended stationary body, a swingable door hinged at its lower edge to said body and adapted to cover the open end of said body, said door having a vertical flange extending along one side thereof,

(*a*) a bracket frictionally engageable with said flange having first and second arcuately spaced abutments residing to either side of a vertical plane when said bracket is engaged with said flange and said door is closed,

(*b*) a signal arm having a lateral projection at one end,

(*c*) means pivotally connecting said signal arm at a point intermediate its ends so that the end opposite said one end is larger and heavier than said one end,

(*d*) whereby when said signal arm has been manually rotated to cause engagement of said projection with said first abutment with said door closed it will remain in one tilted position, subsequent opening of said door causing automatic shifting of said arm to cause engagement of said projection with said second abutment with the result that said signal arm will remain in a second tilted position until again manually rotated to said one tilted position.

2. In a mailbox having an open-ended stationary body, and a swingable door hinged at its lower edge to said body and adapted to cover the open end of said body, said door having a vertical flange extending along one side thereof, a signal comprising:

(*a*) a bracket having a reverse bend for frictionally engaging said flange,

(*b*) a signal arm having an intermediate portion thereof pivotally connected to said bracket at a point such that the center of gravity of the arm is nearer one end than the other,

(*c*) said signal arm having a lateral projection,

(*d*) said bracket having first and second arcuately spaced abutments,

(*e*) the first of said abutments being located so as to retain said arm in a tilted relationship past dead center when said door is in a closed position and when said arm is manually actuated in one rotative direction about said pivot point, and

(*f*) the second of said abutments being located so as to retain said signal arm in a tilted relationship past dead center in an opposite direction when said door is first opened and then moved back to its closed position.

References Cited by the Examiner

UNITED STATES PATENTS

2,098,242	11/37	Holmes	232—35
2,478,727	8/49	Swanson	232—35
2,613,031	10/52	Joyce	232—35
2,808,982	10/57	Armstrong	232—35
2,849,176	8/58	McMinn	232—35

FRANK B. SHERRY, *Primary Examiner.*