Dec. 10, 1963 J. E. HOWARD 3,113,716

MAILING DEVICE

Filed Aug. 1, 1961 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

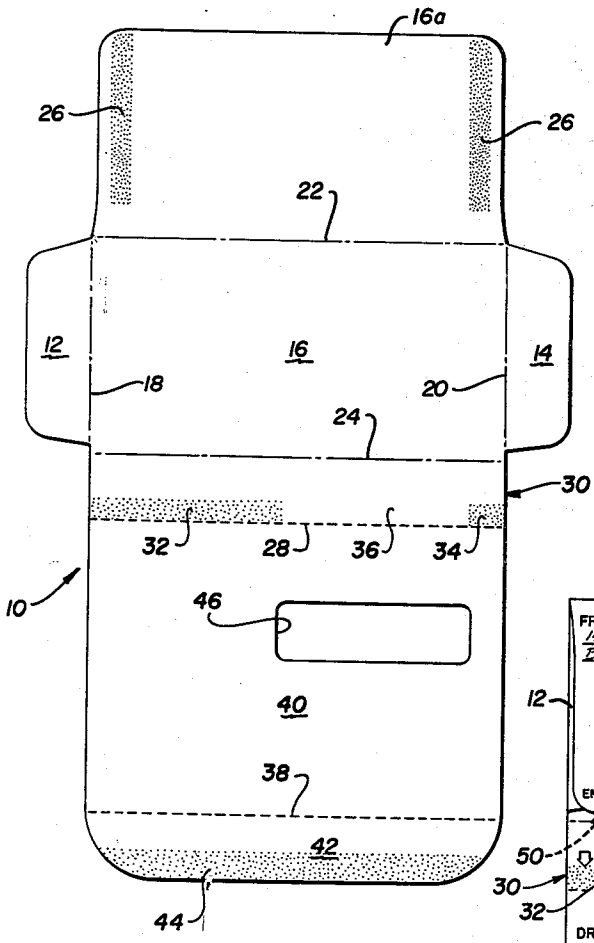


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

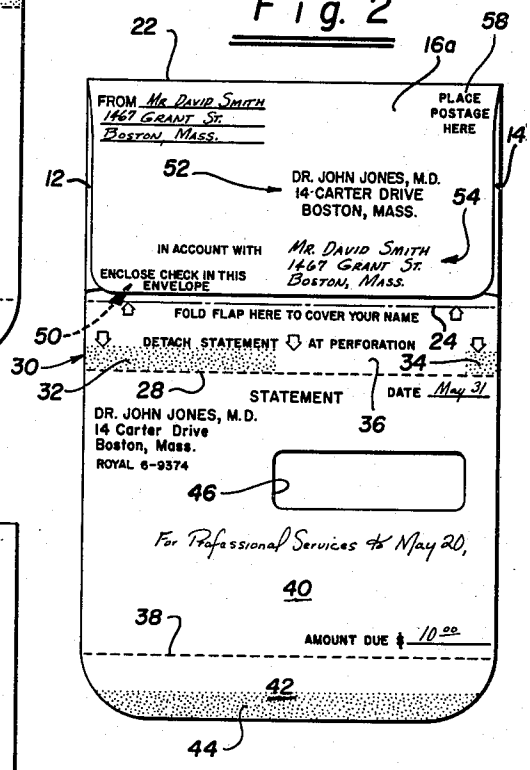
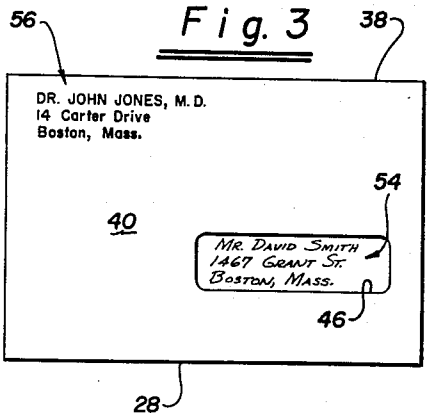


Fig. 3



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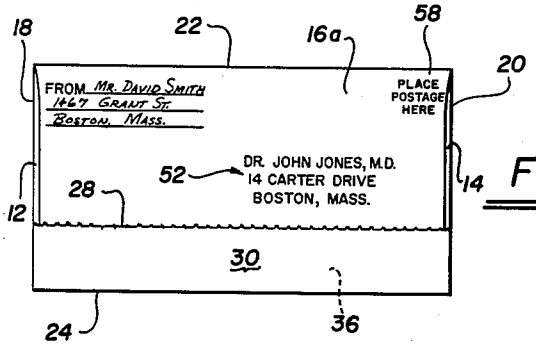


Fig. 4

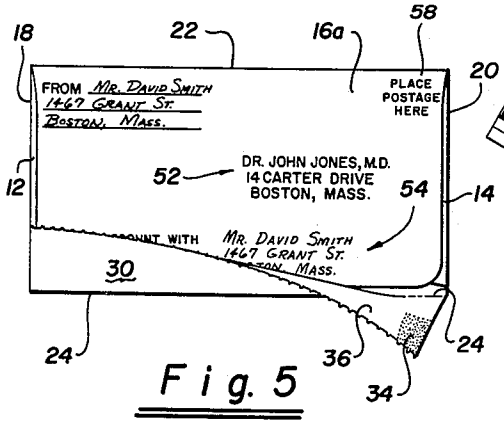


Fig. 5

Fig. 6

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MAILING DEVICE

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6 Claims. (Cl. 229—73)

This invention relates generally to mailing devices and blanks such as are used in the mailing of bills, mailing offers, statements for services, and the like.

In general, it is an object of the invention to improve upon the construction of such devices, particularly with respect to means permitting the mailing of statements, bills, etc., and the return of payment in a single envelope.

It is another object of the invention to provide a mailing device of this type capable of presenting an accurate accounting of the services rendered, charges incurred, etc., which may be retained by the addressee.

A further object is to provide a mailing device which permits printing of indicia on only one side thereof so as to facilitate preparation of the mailing device, and reduction of costs.

A further object of the invention is to provide a mailing device which permits return to the sender of the original addressee's mailing indicia, in a sealed but exposable position on the surface of the mailing device.

A further object is to provide such a mailing device which is simple in construction and which is inexpensively and easily manufactured.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description and drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a view in top plan of a blank for forming a mailing device in accordance with the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a like view showing the blank formed into a mailing device, and showing the manner of imprinting indicia on such device;

FIGURE 3 is a like view showing the mailing device folded for delivery to an addressee;

FIGURE 4 is a like view showing the mailing device with the exterior flap discarded, and the interior flap folded for return of the mailing device to the sender;

FIGURE 5 is a view like FIGURE 4, illustrating the manner in which the mailing device can be manipulated to reveal the original mailing indicia identifying the addressee; and

FIGURE 6 is a perspective view illustrating the use of the mailing device of the invention in connection with separate mailing enclosures.

Heretofore, many systems have been devised for addressing bills, mailing offers, statements and the like to clients or customers, and which are designed to facilitate return mailing so that the normal lethargy of the addressee is to some extent overcome. In most instances, a second or "return" envelope is provided which is stuffed into the mailing envelope. The return envelope is addressed to the sender. The bill or offer or statement is included in the original mailing envelope as a third item. To make use of the device, the addressee normally encloses the statement and his check for payment in the return envelope, which is sealed and returned to the sender. While such mailing devices and procedures are an improvement over normal practices (e.g., where the addressee provides his own envelope and writes a return letter) they still require a substantial expenditure of time and consequently do not provide a satisfactory solution to the problem.

In an effort to further simplify the return mailing procedure, other systems have been devised employing detachable sections, folding flaps, and the like, by which the original mailing envelope can be used as the return envelope. In general, these devices have presented a number

of problems. One common difficulty is the conflicting indicia appearing on the envelope which tends to confuse the addressee as he prepares the envelope for return. A particular difficulty is the continuing need for the addressee to enclose the statement (or a portion thereof), or a stub, etc., so that the sender will know which debtor is remitting and which account to credit. As these problems of remittance are almost universal, a device for procedure which would offer a further simplification of the procedures presently employed is highly to be desired.

Generally stated, the present invention relates to a mailing device comprising a single envelope having the usual pocket and a sealing flap adapted to close the pocket and overlay a portion of the envelope. In contrast to the usual sealing flap, the sealing flap of the present invention is provided with a sealing substance only at spaced apart positions along its periphery, thereby providing an open or clear space in between. In accordance with my invention, this clear space is in folding registry and adapted to overlay an indicia space on the pocket in which the name and address of the addressee is imprinted. An additional flap, removably attached to the return sealing flap, corresponds in dimension to the pocket and return sealing flap and is provided with a window which in a first folded position is also in registry with the indicia space on the pocket for the addressee's name and address. This second or window flap can also include a space for printing the statement, offer, etc., being sent to the addressee, and may be further provided along its outer periphery with a removable sealing portion which can be folded behind and sealed against the back surface of the pocket.

A particular advantage of my new construction is the retention of the addressee's name and address beneath the return sealing flap covered only by the clear space between the adhesive or other sealing means. The original sending address is consequently legible when the envelope is returned and opened by the original sender, although hidden during the return mailing process by the envelope sealing flap. This feature is important because it permits the creditor or other sender to know which debtor is remitting and to which account, without any need for the debtor or similar addressee to enclose or return any portion of the statement or note. The addressee is also benefited since he needs only to write and enclose his check, after detaching the statement for his record, and seal and return the envelope to the sender. These various advantages will be apparent from the following description of an exemplary embodiment.

The mailing device illustrated in the drawings is fabricated from a blank as illustrated in FIGURE 1. Essentially this blank comprises a substantially rectangular, elongated sheet 10, which may be fabricated of any commercially available envelope paper. Such paper is preferably moisture-resistant and adapted to withstanding heavy erasures. As illustrated, the blank includes a pair of side flaps 12 and 14 extending in opposite directions from the body of the blank 16. These flaps are separated from the body by folding lines 18 and 20. The body of the envelope is additionally defined by a first and second transverse folding line 22, 24 extending between corresponding ends of the side flap. The extending body portions 16*a* of the sheet can be provided with a sealing substance at its sides, as at 26, in a conventional manner. As will be understood by one in this art, the flaps 12 and 14 and the body portions 16 and 16*a* can be folded and sealed to form a pocket, as generally indicated at 50 in FIGURE 2.

Referring to FIGURE 2, a first line of weakness 28 is provided adjacent the folding line 24, and defines a first or intermediate foldable flap portion 30. This flap is provided with a sealing substance at spaced apart positions 32 and 34 providing a clear space 36 in between.

As will appear, it is a feature of the invention that the space 36 is in a position of folding registry with an indicia space 54 provided on the pocket of the envelope. In general, the flap 30 functions as a return sealing flap for use by the addressee after the envelope has been first mailed by the sender.

At the far end of the blank, a second line of weakness 38 is provided, spaced from the first line of weakness 28 a distance dimensioned to correspond generally with the body of the envelope and the return sealing flap 30. The lines of weakness 28 and 38 thus define a detachable flap portion 40 of substantial size and adapted to overlay the body of the envelope and the return sealing flap. A window 46 provided in the detachable flap 40 is also in a position of folding registry with the space 54 on the envelope. The function of this window will be later described.

A terminal flap 42 extending beyond the line of weakness 38 constitutes a third removable flap portion. This flap is provided with a conventional strip of sealing substance at 44 for attachment to the back surface of the pocket, to seal the main flap 40 for delivery of the envelope to the addressee.

FIGURE 2 illustrates a completed mailing device, in which the body portions 16 and 16a and flaps 12 and 14 have been folded and sealed to provide the pocket 50. With the mailing device in this form, it is possible to print in a single operation all the information necessary to permit use by the sender in originating bills, mailing offers, and so on, and, at the same time, all the information needed by the addressee in returning payment, or in accepting the offer, etc. In the illustrated embodiment, the boldfaced lettering indicates indicia that might be originally printed on the mailing device, whereas the lighter lettering indicates information that can be quickly typed or filled in in longhand by the sender. It is to be particularly noted that the return address of the sender can be originally printed on an intermediate portion of the pocket, as at 52, and that the name and address of the addressee can be filled in in the indicia space at 54.

FIGURE 3 illustrates the mailing device of FIGURE 2 folded for mailing to the addressee. Particularly illustrated is the manner in which the window 46 is adapted to overlay the mailing address of the addressee in the indicia space 54 (indicated in both FIGURES 2 and 3). Also shown is the printing of an additional return address of the sender on the reverse of the flap 40, as at 56. If desired, the indicia 56 can be printed by a postage meter mailing machine, thereby eliminating the expense of one press run. In snow areas, or in areas of considerable rainfall, the window 46 may also be protected with an inner transparent material such as glassine or cellophane.

In general, it will be understood that FIGURE 3 represents the envelope as it is initially sent to the addressee. Upon receipt of the envelope, its opened appearance will be substantially that of FIGURE 2. At this point the addressee can detach the statement contained on the flap 40 from the body of the envelope by separation along the line of weakness 28. The flap 42 can be similarly separated along the line 38 so that the portion 40 is in rectangular form suitable for filing or other retention by the addressee. The addressee can now enclose a check in the interior pocket of the main envelope, fold and seal the flap 30 over his name to cover the same, on the envelope, as at 58, and mail by return mail to the sender. No second envelope is required nor is there any necessity to write a return address or to fold the statement for return, or to carry on other time consuming operations of the sort normally required.

The envelope sealed for return to the sender is illustrated in FIGURE 4. It may be noted that although the return sealing flap 30 covers the addressee's name and address and other information on the body of the envelope, the addressee's name and address remain under the clear

space 36 between the adhesive portions 32 and 34 of the flap. This is important, since upon subsequently opening the envelope, as indicated in FIGURE 5, the sender reveals the original mailing adldress 54 in clear legible form. The sender can now extract the check or other enclosure from the pocket of the envelope, compare with the addressee's name and address at 54, and enter the payment into his account records with a minimum of effort.

FIGURE 6 illustrates a modified use of my device wherein the basic envelope construction can be used to send printed statements, such as those made by photocopy methods, on billing machines, by pegboard accounting methods, and so on. All that is necessary is that the printing of the addressee's name and address on the separate printed statement be positioned to register with the window 46 when the envelope is sealed for mailing to the customer. In the alternative the window 46 may be die-cut in the flap to coincide with the customer's name and address on existing statement forms or other documents to be enclosed. My envelope is thus adaptable both for its intended use, and for the simplified return of standardized billing statements and enclosures.

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that the present invention provides a mailing device by which the time, effort and expense presently incurred in sending out bills, statements, and the like, can be substantially reduced, and without change in customary billing or mailing techniques. By way of illustration, the described mailing devices are easily adapted to use in a typewriter or conventional posting machine, or to passage through a postage meter, cancelling machine, and envelope sealer without change in construction. I have found that costs can be reduced as much as 50% through the use of my new mailing device, and even more if third class mailing privileges are available to the originator. The amount of time saved by the sender is even more astonishing, and in actual practice has been reduced to less than one-tenth the amount of time required by even the fastest methods employing separately folded and inserted enclosures. In addition, the addressee is provided with a detachable statement, or memorandum, which he can keep. Finally, public relations are greatly improved by the ease with which the addressee can make return payment, or carry on other comunication with the sender.

To those skilled in the art to which this invention relates many other changes in construction and widely differing embodiments and applications of the invention will suggest themselves without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, instead of employing conventional envelope paper in a press run, the envelopes might be entirely printed on light sensitive paper by a photocopy process, or the envelopes with indicia printed on the pocket might have data printed on the flap by a photocopy process. The disclosures and the description herein are purely illustrative, and not intended to be in any sense limiting.

I claim:

1. In a mailing device a permanent pocket having front and back sides and an opening therebetween at one edge, a first foldable flap portion having one edge secured to the back side of said pocket at said open edge, said flap portion being provided with a sealing substance at spaced apart positions to provide a clear space therebetween, said clear space being substantially in folding registry and adapted to overlay an indicia space on said front side ing a folded position of said first flap portion, a second foldable flap portion removably secured by a line of weakness to the peripheral edge of said first foldable flap portion, said second flap portion being foldable over and corresponding substantially in dimension to the unfolded dimensions of said pocket and said first flap portion, said second flap portion being provided with a window disposed and dimensioned to overlay said indicia space when said second flap position is folded along said line of weakness to overlay said pocket, and a sealing portion carried

by said second flap portion and serving to retain said second flap portion overlying said pocket whereby said opening can be selectively sealed either by said sealing portion to expose said indicia space through said window or by said first flap portion to protectively cover same.

2. A mailing device as in claim 1 wherein said indicia space on the pocket and the clear space on said first flap portion and the window space on said second flap portion are formed to include transverse dimensions respectively of substantially equal extent.

3. A mailing device as in claim 1 wherein said first flap portion is much smaller in its folding dimension than said pocket.

4. In a mailing device a permanent pocket having front and back sides and an opening therebetween at one edge, said sides being solid, a first foldable flap portion having one edge secured to the back side of said pocket at said open edge, said flap portion being much smaller in folding dimension than said pocket and provided with a sealing substance at spaced apart positions to provide a clear space therebetween, said clear space being substantially in folding registry and adapted to overlay an indicia space on said pocket in a folded position of said first flap portion, a second foldable flap portion removably secured by a line of weakness to the peripheral edge of said first foldable flap portion, said second flap portion being foldable over and corresponding in dimension to the combined unfolded dimensions of said pocket and said first flap portion, said second flap portion being provided with a window substantially in folding registry with and disposed and dimensioned to overlay said indicia space on the pocket when folded over said pocket along said line of weakness, and a terminal portion removably secured to said second flap portion by a line of weakness, said terminal portion being of relatively small folding dimension and including a sealing substance adapted to selectively seal against the back side of said pocket, whereby said opening can be selectively sealed either by said terminal portion to expose said indicia space through said window or by said first flap portion to protectively cover same.

5. In a mailing device having a detachable portion, a permanent pocket having front and back sides and an opening therebetween at one edge, said sides being solid, a sealing flap portion having one edge secured to the back side of said pocket at said open edge, said flap portion being smaller in folding dimension than said pocket and provided with a sealing substance at spaced apart positions to provide a clear space therebetween, an indicia region of predetermined dimension disposed on said front side of said pocket, said clear space being substantially in folded registry with and disposed and dimensioned to overlay said indicia region on said pocket in a folded sealed position of said first flap portion.

6. In a mailing device a permanent pocket having front and back sides and an opening therebetween at one edge, a first foldable flap portion having one edge secured to the back side of said pocket at said open edge, said first flap portion being adapted to fold over and seal said opening and overlay and conceal a first predetermined indicia area on the outside of said pocket while leaving a second adjacent indicia area exposed, a second foldable flap portion removably secured to said first foldable flap portion, said second flap portion being foldable over and dimensioned to substantially correspond in extent to the combined unfolded dimensions of said pocket and said first flap portion, said second flap portion being provided with a window disposed and dimensioned to substantially overlay and expose said first area on the pocket when folded over both said first flap portion and said pocket and to cover and conceal said second adjacent area, and a sealing portion carried by said second flap portion and adapted to selectively seal said device, whereby said first area can be selectively either exposed through said window or covered by said first flap portion.

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