Aug. 29, 1967 J. C. SOBESKY 3,337,977

LABEL HOLDER

Filed Sept. 15, 1965

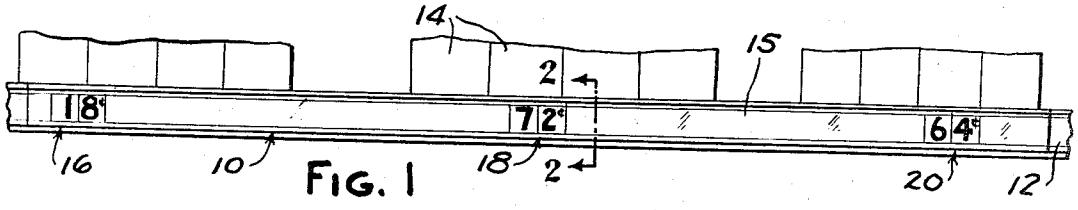


FIG. 1

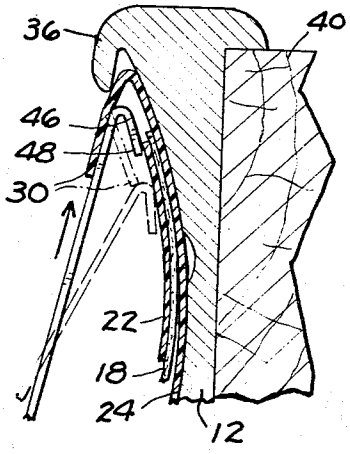


FIG. 3

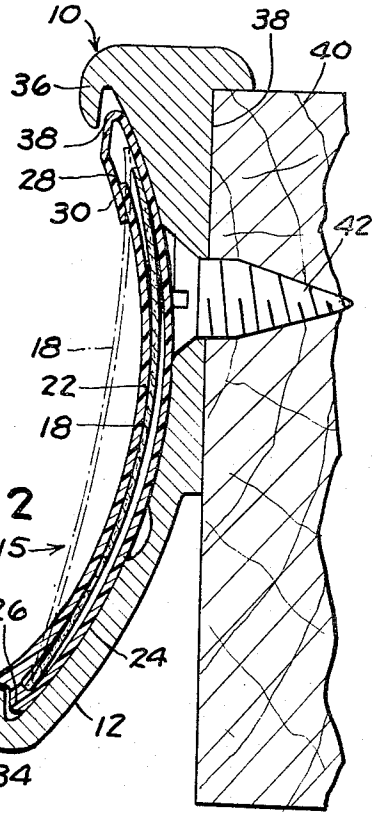


FIG. 2

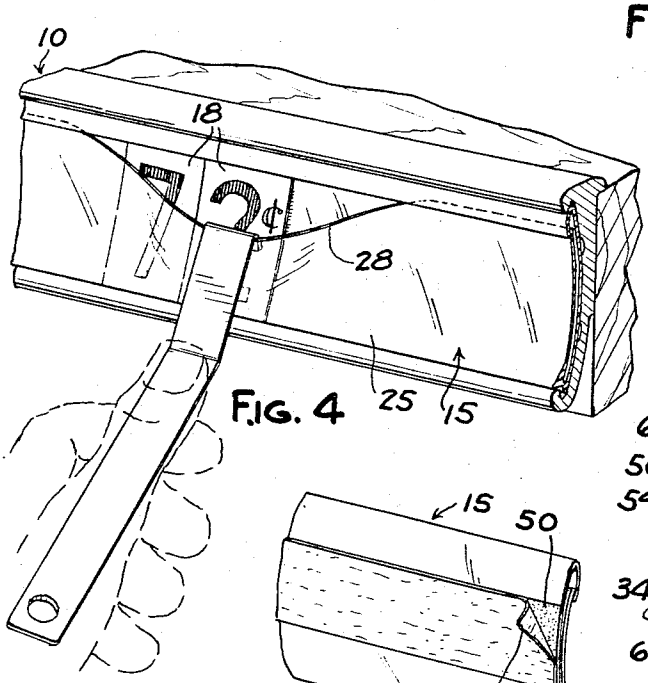


FIG. 4

FIG. 5

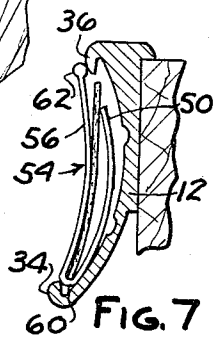


FIG. 7

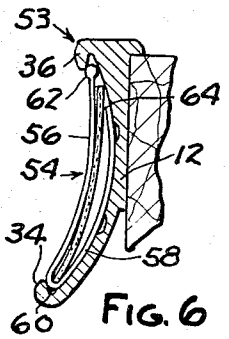


FIG. 6

INVENTOR.
JOHN C. SOBESKY
BY
Barnes, Kisselle, Raisch & Choate
ATTORNEYS

United States Patent Office 3,337,977
Patented Aug. 29, 1967

3,337,977

LABEL HOLDER

John C. Sobesky, Farmington, Mich., assignor to S & M Mfg. Co., Detroit, Mich., a corporation of Michigan

Filed Sept. 15, 1965, Ser. No. 487,373
7 Claims. (Cl. 40—10)

This invention relates to holders for labels, such as price markers, and particularly to a label holder adapted to be mounted at the front edge of a shelf.

The label holder of the present invention generally comprises a long strip in the form of a transparent sheath adapted to be engaged along its longitudinal edges underneath overhanging lips along the opposite longitudinal edges of a concave shaped retainer strip. Along one longitudinal edge the inner and outer portions of the sheath are connected together so that it can be opened in a hinged-like fashion to permit insertion and removal of a label therebetween. The sheath has a transverse dimension slightly less than the transverse arcuate dimension of the concave retainer and slightly greater than the transverse dimension between the overhanging lip portions so that it is retained between the lip portions in a generally concave condition.

An object of the invention is to provide a transparent label holder which protects the label and yet allows it to be seen.

Another object of the invention is to protect shelf-mounted price markers or other labels from being accidentally dislodged or shifted.

Another object of the invention is to make a label holder substantially tamper-proof.

Another object of the invention is to provide a label holder which can be opened to facilitate inserting a label therein and which is self-closing.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be evident from the following description taken with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 shows a label holder in accordance with the invention mounted at the front face of a shelf.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged section taken on line 2—2 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 illustrates the manner in which a tool may be employed to pry open a plastic sheath which is part of the holder.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the holder after the sheath has been opened along a portion of its length.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view looking at the back of the sheath.

FIG. 6 is a sectional view showing a modification of the sheath.

FIG. 7 shows how the sheath of the modified embodiment is snapped into a retainer when initially mounting it.

The holder of the invention comprises a retainer and a folder-like sheath of transparent, flexible, resilient material so dimensioned as to receive price markers or other labels therein and to fit at the front face of a shelf. The sheath includes front and back strips and may have a lip at its top which overlies part of its front strip. In one embodiment the lip is integral with the back strip and in another embodiment it is part of a separate supporting structure. In either case the sheath can only be opened in a practical manner by the use of a tool, and this makes the holder substantially tamper-proof. Due to the resiliency of the material, the sheath is self-closing, although when it is mounted on the retainer and opened, it is pushed manually to snap the front strip under the retaining lip. Since the sheath is transparent, labels are visible through the front strip and are protected from being accidentally dislodged or shifted.

Referring to FIGS. 1–5, a holder 10 according to the

invention includes a sheath 15 and a retainer 12 which is affixed to the front face of a shelf on which products 14 are displayed. Holder 10 contains price markers 16, 18, 20 grouped under the particular products to which they apply.

Sheath 15 has a front strip 22, a back strip 24 and a crease-like bottom edge 26. The sheath is made of a transparent, flexible, resilient plastic material, preferably by extrusion. The front and back strips 22 and 24 merge together at the bottom edge 26, and as may be seen in FIG. 2, bottom edge 26 is thickened slightly compared to strips 22 and 24 to strengthen the edge. Front strip 22 has a top edge 28 which is free, but which is retained in closed position by a lip 30. In this embodiment, lip 30 merges with back strip 24 at the crease-like top edge 32 of the sheath. Lip 30 overlies only a narrow width of front strip 22 at and near its top edge 28, thus allowing the sheath to be opened by prying top edge 28 out from under lip 30. Lip 30 constitutes a semi-rigid flap which can be bent outwardly with most of the bending occurring at edge 32.

Sheath 15 is mounted on retainer 12 with its top and bottom edges 26 and 32 inserted under the lips 34 and 36 of the retainer. The back strip 24 of sheath 15 may be bonded with adhesive material to the face of retainer 12. The retainer in turn is attached to front face 38 of shelf 40 by suitable screws 42. The front and back strips 22 and 24 are concave toward retainer 12 and the face of the retainer is also concave. The sheath fits snugly against the retainer with the front and back strips of the sheath spaced apart slightly in its closed position.

A price marker 18 is received in the space between front and back strips 22 and 24 and rests on bottom edge 26. Front strip 22 is sufficiently stiff to bend price marker 18, thus holding it solidly in place. The normal, unbent condition of price marker 18 is indicated by broken lines in FIG. 2, and since the marker is resilient it will assume this position when front strip 22 is pulled away from back strip 24 to open the sheath.

The sheath is opened by inserting the hooked end 46 of a tool 44 under lip 30 and over top edge 28 of front strip 22 in the manner indicated in FIG. 3. As tool 44 is forced upward, it bends lip 30 outward and when its tip 48 clears top edge 28 the tool is pulled down to grip top edge 28. The tool is then turned upward while maintaining downward pressure on top edge 28 with hooked portion 46, so as to pry part of top edge 28 out from under lip 30. The result of this prying action is illustrated in perspective in FIG. 4, where it may be seen that sheath 15 has been opened only along part of its length, allowing two price markers 18 to be removed. Front strip 22 is stiff enough to prevent it from easily being pulled out from under lip 30 except by the use of a tool such as tool 44. On the other hand, front strip 22 is flexible enough to bend easily when it is pried with a tool in the manner just described. Due to the resiliency of the material of sheath 15, front strip 22 tends to return to its closed position and to this extent sheath 15 is self-closing. However, it is necessary to push front strip 22 toward retainer 12 in order to snap top edge 28 under lip 30.

Referring to FIG. 5, the adhesive 50 on back side 24 of the sheath may initially be protected with a cover strip 52. Cover strip 52 is flexible and may be peeled off while leaving a layer of adhesive on the exterior side of back strip 24. This adhesive material is pressure-sensitive.

FIG. 6 is a cross-section of a modified holder 53 wherein there is no lip integral with the back strip of the folder-like sheath 54. Sheath 54, like sheath 15, consists of a single piece of transparent, flexible, resilient material and has a front strip 56 and a back strip 58. The front and back strips merge at a crease-like bottom edge 60. Top edge 62 of front strip 56 is the topmost extremity of

sheath 54, and it is retained in closed position by the upper lip 36 of retainer 12. Top edge 62 is beaded to stiffen it. Front strip 56 is flexible enough to allow the sheath to be opened by prying beaded edge 62 out from under lip 36 with a tool. The tool may be a straight blade, and when its tip is inserted under lip 36 and over beaded edge 62, it is helpful to also push front strip 56 toward retainer 12. This bends strip 56 and pulls beaded edge 62 down enough to allow the blade's tip to get a puchase on beaded edge 62. Front strip 56 is stiff enough so that it cannot be pried out from under lip 36 wholly with the fingers, thus making this embodiment relatively tamper-proof like the embodiment of FIGS. 2–5. It may be noted that back strip 58 has a top edge 64 located well below top edge 62 of front strip 56. Back strip 58 is affixed to retainer 12 with adhesive material in the same manner as described previously.

FIG. 7 shows sheath 54 outside retainer 12 in a position from which it can be pushed against the retainer to snap edges 60 and 62 between lips 34 and 36. This pressure causes adhesive 50 on back strip 58 to stick to retainer 12, thus bonding the sheath to the retainer.

The price markers to be used with either embodiment of the invention do not have to be resilient; they may be made of paper in order to reduce costs. This is practical because the price markers are well protected by the sheath.

The sheath as initially supplied has a length measured along its bottom edge many times greater than its height measured from its bottom edge to its top edge. This allows a large number of labels to be placed in a single sheath, either individually or in groups as illustrated in FIG. 1. It also allows the sheath to be divided into shorter sections in order to fit the sheath to short sections of shelving. A typical sheath in accordance with the invention has a length of 36 inches and a height of about 1 inch.

I claim:

1. In combination a retainer adapted to be secured to a support such as the front edge of a shelf, said retainer comprising a length of rigid material having a concave front face with overhanging lip portions extending along the opposite longitudinal edges thereof, a sheath formed of a transparent, resilient material, said sheath comprising a pair of elongated strips integrally connected along one longitudinal edge thereof so as to be separable in a hinge-like manner, said sheath having a transverse dimension slightly less than the transverse arcuate dimension of said concave front face and slightly greater than the transverse dimension between the longitudinal free edges of said lip portions, said sheath having its opposite longitudinal edges engaged beneath said lip portions and retained thereby in a concave condition generally parallel to said concave face and a label retained between said strips of said sheath.

2. The combination called for in claim 1 wherein the outer strip of said sheath has a greater transverse dimension than the inner strip and the free edge of said outer sheath is hooked behind one of the lip portions of the retainer.

3. The combination called for in claim 1 wherein the inner strip of said sheath has its free longitudinal edge portion in the form of a flange which overlies the free edge portion of the outer strip, said outer strip having its free edge terminating along the line extending longitudinally adjacent but spaced laterially inwardly of one of said lip portions.

4. The combination called for in claim 3 wherein said flange provides a relatively wide flap along the outer face of said sheath at one longitudinal edge thereof, said flange being self-supporting and resilient to enable insertion of a prying tool therebeneath for enabling the free edge portion of the outer strip to be pulled outwardly of said retainer so as to permit access to the space between the inner and outer strips for insertion and removal of a label therefrom.

5. The combination called for in claim 2 wherein said last mentioned free edge is formed as a thickened bead.

6. The combination called for in claim 2 wherein the center strip of said sheath is spaced from said concave face such that it is adapted to be depressed against said concave face to retract the free edge thereof sufficiently from behind its associated lip portion to enable insertion of a prying tool therebehind.

7. In combination a shelf adapted to support commodities, a retainer secured to the front edge of said shelt and extending lengthwise thereof, said retainer comprising a length of rigid material having a concave front face with overhanging lip portions extending along the opposite longitudinal edges thereof, a sheath formed of a transparent, resilient material, said sheath comprising a pair of elongated strips integrally connected along one longitudinal edge thereof so as to be separable in a hinge-like manner, said sheath having a transverse dimension silghtly less than the transverse arcuate dimension of said concave front face and slightly greater than the transverse dimension between the longitudinal free edges of said lip portions, said sheath having its opposite longitudinal edges engaged beneath said lip portions and retained thereby in a concave condition generally parallel to said concave face and a label retained between said strips of said sheath.

References Cited

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,487,520	3/1924	Ringler.	
2,331,086	10/1943	Taylor.	
2,626,472	1/1953	Stingl	40—16
2,812,600	11/1957	Hopp	40—10

EUGENE R. CAPOZIO, *Primary Examiner.*

W. J. CONTRERAS, *Assistant Examiner.*