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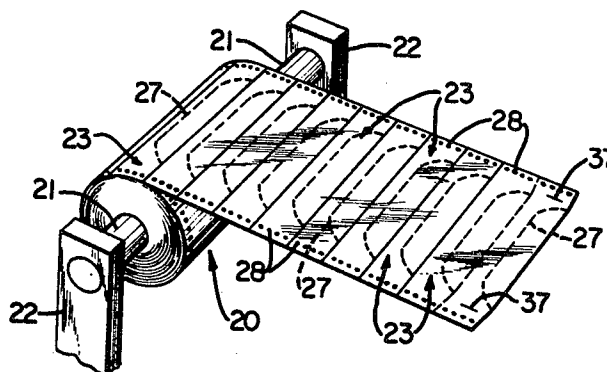
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[54] **ENVELOPE ASSEMBLY AND ENVELOPE
 STRUCTURE THEREFOR**
3 Claims, 11 Drawing Figs.

[52] U.S. Cl..... 229/69
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 [50] Field of Search..... 229/69;
 150/9

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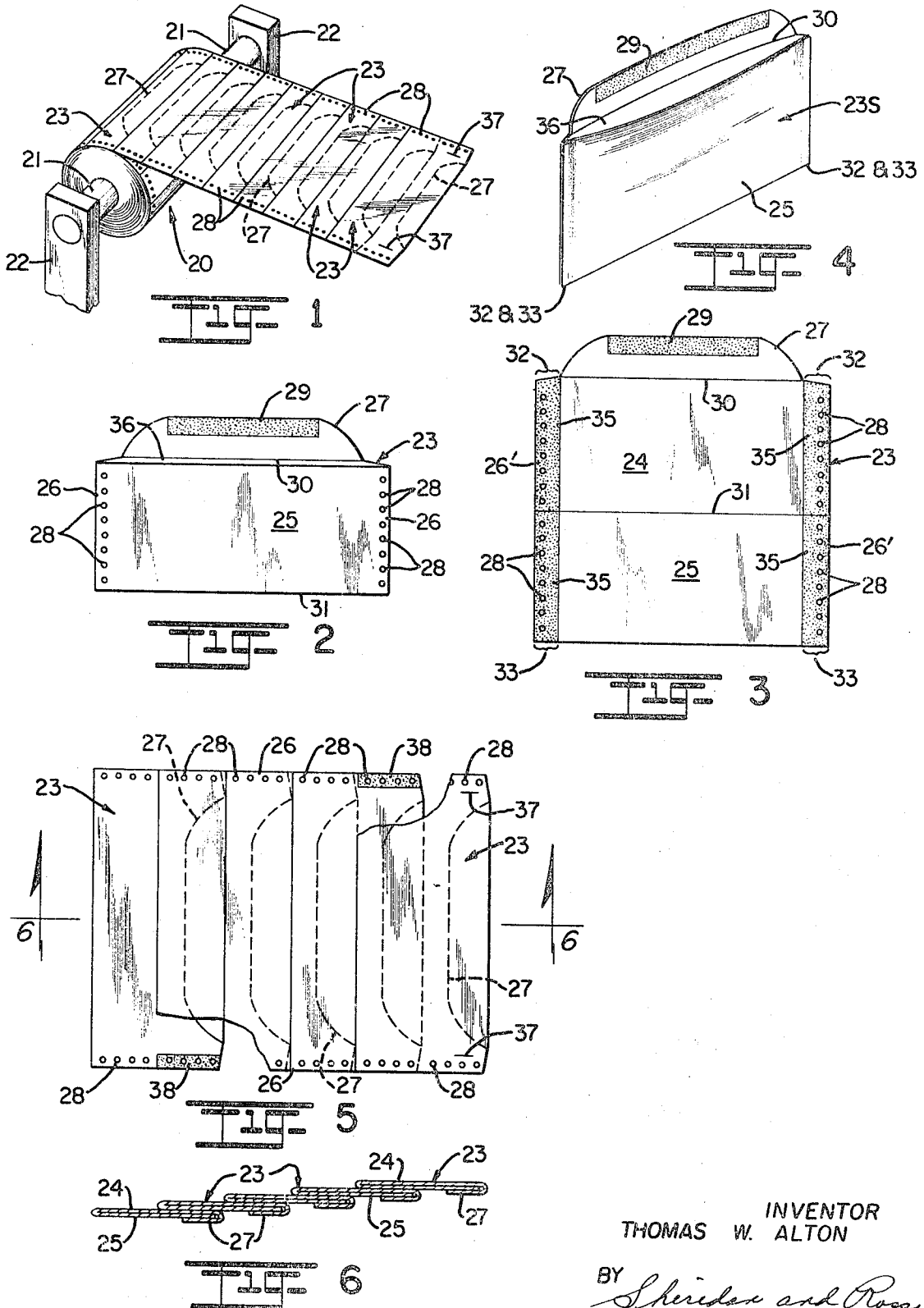
ABSTRACT: This invention relates to an assembly of envelopelike structures in which each envelop has removable, apertured side margin portions wherein the upper part of each removable, apertured side margin portion of each successive envelope underlies the lower part of a corresponding margin portion of the next preceding envelope with said envelopes being attached to each other by adhesive means disposed between the overlapping side margin portions. This invention also relates to an envelopelike structure having overlying front and rear panels, said panels being adhesively secured to each other along side margin portions thereof to form a pocket therebetween and having a plurality of apertures formed therealong whereby at least a portion of said adhesive means is disposed adjacent the overlying apertures and intermediate said pocket and aligned apertures so that sections of said overlying side margin portions may be removed thereby leaving a structure having front and rear panels and a pocket therebetween.



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SHEET 1 OF 2



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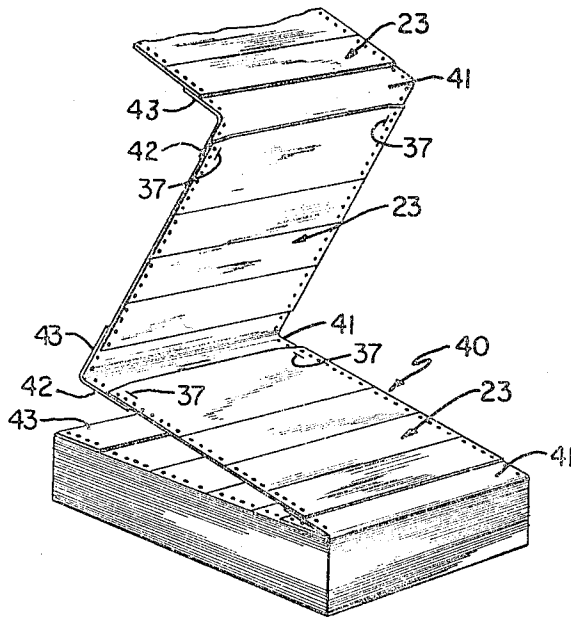


FIG 7

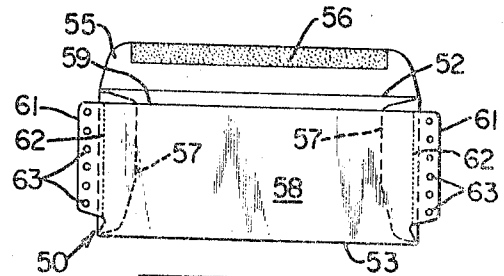


FIG 8

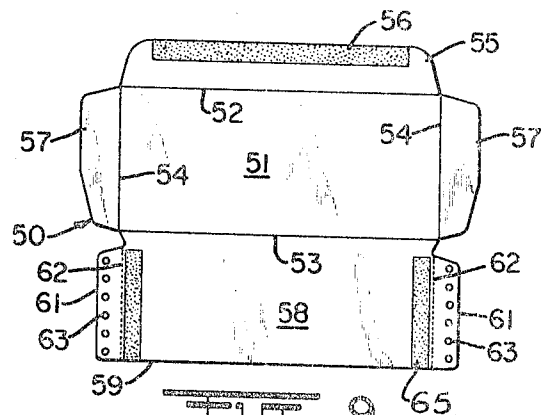


FIG 9

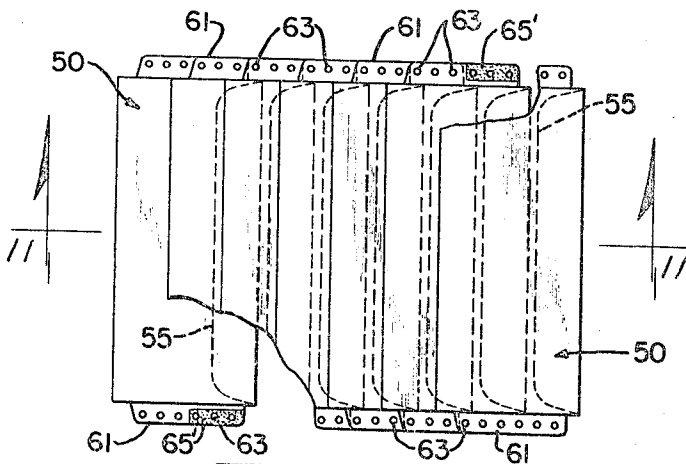


FIG 10

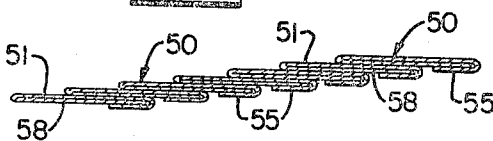


FIG 11

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ENVELOPE ASSEMBLY AND ENVELOPE STRUCTURE THEREFOR

This invention relates to an assembly of envelopes adapted for processing through printing apparatus, especially high speed printer output units of data processing computer equipment, and improved envelope structures which form a part of such an assembly prior to separation therefrom. More specifically, this invention relates to an assembly of envelopes in which each envelope structure has removable, apertured side margin portions or sections wherein said assembly comprises a plurality of envelopes the upper part of said removable, apertured side margin portions of each successive envelope underlying the lower part of the removable, apertured side margin portions of the next preceding envelope with said envelopes being attached to each other by adhesive means disposed between the overlapping side margin portions. The invention also relates to envelopes for such an assembly having the customary sealing flap and a front panel overlying a rear panel to form a pocket therebetween, at least one of said panels having oppositely disposed side margin portions, said side margin portions of the one of said panels of one envelope being adapted to be secured to the corresponding side margin portions of the next succeeding envelope by adhesive means, each of said side margin portions including a removable, apertured section which is disposable after separation of the envelopes from the assembly leaving the envelopes in a condition and appearance acceptable to the customer.

A considerable number of problems are encountered in producing and processing envelope assemblies through high-speed printing units, such as those of data processing equipment. For example, each envelope, following printing processing and separation from the assembly, should be free from any construction features or elements, such as tabs, which would cause or tend to cause processing problems such as through a high-speed automatic stamp canceling machine and, at the same time, present a neat and attractive appearance and one that will be commercially appealing to the sender and addressee. Additionally, as stated, the envelopes used within any assembly should present a neat and attractive appearance upon separation from the rest of the assembly and, further, such separation process should require a minimum of time and processing steps and preferably should be limited to a single step. Further, envelopes within an assembly should be closely spaced with respect to each preceding envelope to permit achieving maximum and efficient usage of the expensive printing machine while at the same time presenting a minimum of thickness in order that the assembly may be processed through existing high-speed printing apparatuses without the necessity of adjustment thereof. Also, the envelopes within the assembly should be attached to each other in a positive, secure manner through the use of a minimum amount of material, such as without a so-called backing or carrier sheet, as the attachment means must provide sufficient strength for passage through the printing equipment on the one hand and yet on the other hand should have the separation ability and advantages mentioned.

There are currently available several different assemblies of envelopes for processing through high-speed printing machines and the like. However, it has been found that each of the available envelope assemblies suffers from lacking in one or more of the foregoing. For example, many of the currently available assembly of envelopes require the use of a considerable amount of backing or supporting material or other material to hold the envelopes with sufficient strength in a predetermined relation for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus. Further, it has been found that many of the existing assemblies of envelopes suffer from a distinct disadvantage since they are not practically suited for processing through all of the various high-speed printing apparatuses currently available due to the different pin feed mechanisms used by different high-speed printing apparatuses, and the fact that different assemblies require a longitudinal spacing of the envelopes that results in inefficient usage of the expensive to operate data processing equipment. Also, existing assemblies

of envelopes were disadvantageous from the amount of labor or processing required subsequent to the printing operation for the effective separation thereof. It has been found, however, that each of the foregoing disadvantages can be overcome through a novel assembly or arrangement of envelopes as hereinafter described. It has also been found that novel envelope structures as described herein, themselves may be used with exceptional advantage in forming such an assembly of envelopes.

Accordingly, one of the principal objects of the subject invention is to provide improved assemblies of envelopes adapted for processing through high-speed printing apparatuses and the like.

Another object of this invention is to provide improved envelopes useful in forming an assembly of envelopes for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus.

A further object of this invention is to provide an assembly of envelopes that is compactly arranged for processing through printing apparatuses and the like, that is constructed from a reduced quantity material than has heretofore been possible, that is adapted for use with any one of a number of pin feed drive mechanisms and that is provided with sufficient strength for use in and constructed to provide efficient use of data processing equipment.

Another object of this invention is to provide an envelope useful in forming an assembly of envelopes for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus, each envelope thereof having the usual sealing flap and panel overlying a rear panel, said panels having oppositely disposed side margin portions, the improvement comprising a pair of adhesive means each of which is disposed between a corresponding one of the overlying opposite side margin portions to secure said panels to each other to form a pocket therebetween, and a plurality of apertures formed along each side margin portion whereby at least a portion of said adhesive means is disposed between the overlying apertures and said pocket to maintain alignment of the superimposed portions and the apertures thereof whereby following passage through the printing apparatus a section of each of the superimposed portions including the aligned apertures thereof may be removed leaving the individual envelopes separated and in an acceptable condition and appearance.

Another object of this invention is to provide an assembly of envelopes for processing through a printing apparatus as defined in the preceding paragraph in which each envelope has laterally extending from the sides of the pocket, removable, apertured side margin portions; said assembly comprising a plurality of envelopes wherein the upper part of said laterally extending, removable, apertured side margin portions of each successive envelope underlies the lower part of the laterally extending, removable, apertured portions of the preceding envelope and is attached thereto by adhesive means disposed therebetween and with the apertures aligned.

A still further object of this invention is to provide an assembly of envelopes wherein each assembly includes a plurality of envelope sets of the type defined in either of the preceding paragraphs, and means for interconnecting one end of each successive set of envelopes to the corresponding end of the preceding set of envelopes to form an articulated fan folded joint intermediate the ends of said interconnected sets.

Another object of this invention is to provide an improved assembly of envelopes of the type described which is packageable in roll form or in fan-fold form.

Another object of this invention is to provide an improved blank for forming an envelope useful in producing an assembly of envelopes of the type described for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus.

Another object of this invention is to provide an assembly of envelopes having a greatly reduced overall thickness, one that is made from minimum material and yet has sufficient strength for use in data processing equipment.

The foregoing and other objects will become apparent from the specification and drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an assembly of envelopes constructed in accordance with the preferred form of the subject invention and packaged in roll form;

FIG. 2 is a rear elevational view of an envelope structure constructed in accordance with the preferred form of the subject invention useful for forming an assembly of envelopes of FIG. 1 for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the blank from which the envelope shown in FIG. 2 is formed;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of an envelope from the assembly of FIG. 1 ready for mailing;

FIG. 5 is a top view partially broken away of a portion of the assembly of FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view, greatly enlarged particularly from a thickness standpoint, taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a fan-folded assembly of FIG. 2 envelopes;

FIG. 8 is a rear elevational view of another envelope useful in forming an assembly constructed in accordance with the subject invention;

FIG. 9 is a plan view of a blank from which the envelope shown in FIG. 8 is formed;

FIG. 10 is a top view partly broken away of a portion of an assembly incorporating the envelopes of FIG. 8;

FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view, greatly enlarged particularly from a thickness standpoint, taken along line 11-11 of FIG. 10.

Referring now to the drawings, in FIG. 1 is shown an assembly 20 of envelopes in roll form, constructed in accordance with the preferred form of envelope structures of this invention, said assembly being shown, merely for purposes of illustration, as supported on a drum or reel 21 detachably mountable on portable upstanding members 22 that are positionable adjacent the input of a high-speed printing machine such as a data processing computer machine having a high-speed printing unit, not shown. Said assembly 20 comprises a plurality of envelopes 23 each of which have oppositely disposed side margin portions 26. Each side margin portion 26 has a plurality of apertures 28 formed in a part thereof. In the assembly 20, the side margin portions of each envelope 23 overlie approximately one-half of the length of the side margin portions of each successive envelope although, as will be explained, such may be varied to accommodate the operation of the high-speed printing apparatus.

Referring now to FIGS. 2-6, the preferred embodiment of envelope useful for forming the assembly 20 as shown in FIG. 1 is now described. The envelope 23 is formed from the blank shown in FIG. 3 and comprises a front panel 24, a rear panel 25 and a sealing flap 27 having adhesive material disposed thereon in the usual manner as shown at 29. The front panel 24 has a top portion 30, a bottom portion 31, and opposite side margin portions 26', see FIG. 3, wherein the side margin portion area 32 is indicated. The rear panel 25, which is integrally attached to the bottom portion 31 of the front panel 24, likewise has opposite side margin portion areas 33 similar to opposite side margin portion areas 32 of front panel 24. At least one of the panels, such as front panel 24, has on the to-be-matched face thereof a pair of adhesive means 35 disposed on the side margin area thereof to form a substantial adhesive area as shown in FIG. 3. It will be understood that the pair of adhesive means 35 may also be disposed on the areas 33 of the rear panel 25 as shown although in practice only one panel need have the adhesive means and for that matter the adhesive means need not be continuous throughout the areas although such is preferred. All of the oppositely disposed side margin portions 26' and within the area of the adhesive means if the latter is as in FIG. 3, have a plurality of apertures or openings 28 formed along a part thereof as shown in FIG. 3. When the front panel 24 is disposed to overlie (or underlie) the rear panel 25 and secured thereto by at least a pair of adhesive means 35, a pocket 36, see FIGS. 2 and 4, is formed as a result thereof as are the side margin portions 26 with the overlying

apertures being at least substantially aligned. Each of said pair of adhesive means 35 preferably extends laterally outwardly away from the pocket 36 to the exterior edge of its respective side margin portion but in any event, as will be apparent, the adhesive means must extend from the pocket side edges to adjacent the apertures 28. As illustrated, each adhesive means extends the depth of pocket 36 and is of a substantial width, and the purpose for this will be later apparent. Although the sealing flap 27, which is integrally attached to the top portion 30 of the front panel 24, is shown for purposes of clarity, coplanarly disposed with front panel 32, it is to be understood that the sealing flap 27 of each envelopes included within the assembly constructed in accordance with this invention may take many forms as long as it may be folded to underlie or overlie a portion of the rear panel of said envelope, see FIGS. 1 and 5. The apertures 28 have for their purpose to cooperate with a pin feed mechanism to provide a positive feed of the assembly of envelopes to a printing machine or the like.

Referring now to FIGS. 8 to 11, in FIGS. 8 and 9 is shown another embodiment of an envelope 50 which may be used to form an assembly 20 constructed in accordance with the subject invention and this envelope would be used if the customer preferred the so-called end flaps in its ultimate envelope.

The envelope 50 which is made from the blank shown in FIG. 9 comprises a front panel 51, with a bottom edge 53, top edge 52 and side edges 54, a rear panel 58, and a sealing flap 55 having the usual strip of adhesive material disposed thereon as shown at 56. The front panel 51 has the conventional end flaps 57 extending laterally therefrom. The rear panel 58 has a bottom edge 59 with oppositely disposed margin side portions 61 detachable by means of weakened lines of perforations secured to side edges 62, each side margin portion 61 having pin feed apertures 63 formed therein. A pair of adhesive means may be disposed along either or both of the end flaps 57, which flaps are inwardly attached to opposite sides of the rear panel 51, or (as shown) adjacent the lines of weakness of the rear panel 58 as at 65. When the end flaps 57 of the front panel 51 are folded to overlie a portion of said front panel 51 and the rear panel 58 is folded to overlie said end flaps 57 and a portion of the front panel 51 and secured to said end flaps 57 by said adhesive means 65, a pocket 59 is formed as a result thereof, see FIG. 8. It will be noted that the lines of weakness at 62 are disposed generally overlying but slightly inwardly spaced from the side edges 54 of panel 51 of the envelope.

In FIG. 5 is shown a top partly broken away, view of an assembly of envelopes 20 constructed in accordance with the subject invention and incorporating the preferred type of envelope structure depicted at 23. It will be noted that the sealing flap 27 of each envelope 23 is folded to underlie a portion of its respective envelope 23, namely a substantial part of the upper portion thereof as well as a substantial portion of the lower part of the preceding envelope, and that each sealing flap 27 of each preceding envelope is longitudinally displaced with respect to each successive envelope. Each preceding envelope is shown as overlapping or overlying approximately one-half of the length of the side margin portions 26 of each successive envelope by the use of a pair of mating adhesive means 38 (only one of said pair of adhesive means is necessary and for that matter shown in FIG. 5), said adhesive means 38 being disposed between the apertured portions of the removable side margin portions of the envelopes and forming a secure connector means for the envelopes all to provide the assembly. In FIG. 10, adhesive means for the side margin portions similar to means 38 is depicted, by numeral 65', all for securing envelope structures 50 to form assembly 20. It will be understood that the longitudinal spacing of the envelope structures 23 and 50 within an assembly, following collating or assembling, will depend upon a number of factors, one of which is the height of the sealing flap, another of which is the maximum thickness permitted for the overall assembly of envelopes, and yet another being the printing capabilities and desirabilities of the computer machine. In all events, however,

maximum or minimum spacing of the envelopes is governed by strength and thickness requirements of the assembly. Where an envelope structure constructed in the same manner as envelope 23 shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 is used to form the assembly shown in FIG. 6 it will be noted that the assembly arrangement, in strip form, will have an overall maximum thickness equal to approximately seven times the thickness of the sheet material used to form the blank of which said envelope 23 is made. The view of FIG. 6 and for that matter FIG. 11 is greatly exaggerated for purposes of illustration and in actuality the assembly thickness is very small. It has been found that conventionally available high-speed printing apparatuses may easily accommodate an assembly of envelopes having an overall sheet thickness of the type illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 11 without the necessity of making any necessary adjustments to the printing apparatus.

As previously indicated, the sealing flaps 27 and 55 are folded under as shown in FIGS. 5 and 10. The purpose for this is to insure that the overall assembly is streamlined in its direction of flow and to prevent the sealing flap from becoming torn or causing the assembly to jam or to tear apart during the processing thereof through a high-speed printing apparatus. This problem is particularly critical where high-speed processing rates, such as 8,000 envelopes per hour, are involved.

Referring now to FIG. 7, an assembly 40 of envelope structures 23 are shown comprising a plurality of envelope sets in which one end of each successive set is interconnected to a corresponding end of the preceding set by suitable means 41 to form an articulated joint intermediate the ends of said interconnected sets. The means 41 comprises a sheet material appropriately secured to adjacent ends of the longitudinally displaced envelope sets. The sides of the means 41 have a plurality of pin feed apertures formed therein, said apertures having the same longitudinal spacing as the apertures which are formed within the envelope sets. The upper portion 43 of each means 41 is adhesively secured to the lower part of the removable, apertured portion of the side margins of the last envelope contained in the preceding envelope set. The lower portion 42 of each means 41 is adhesively secured to the upper part of the removable, apertured portion of the side margins of the first envelope of the succeeding envelope set. As shown in FIG. 7, each envelope set comprises four envelope structures 23. Each of the envelopes within each set are interconnected to each other in the manner heretofore described. This type of assembly constitutes the well known fan-folded continuous envelope assembly with the means 41 forming a connecting patch to permit the fan folding. From the foregoing description it should be clear that envelopes 50 may be grouped in sets and similarly connected by means 41 to a fan-folded assembly in the event the customer so desires. It will be understood that a high-speed printing apparatus will be adjusted to accommodate the longitudinal spacing between each envelope set. The adjusting of the high-speed printing apparatus to accompany this is accomplished in a known manner.

The formation and use of an assembly of envelopes constructed in accordance with the subject invention is now described. First of all, the blanks from which the envelopes are to be formed are produced with the pin feed apertures formed. Thereafter, the strips of adhesive material are applied as desired or required and then the blank is folded to form an envelope to be incorporated into the assembly to be formed. Next, adhesive material is applied to a portion of the removable, apertured section of the side margin portions, said adhesive material being represented by the numeral 38 as shown in FIG. 5 and by the numeral 65' as shown in FIG. 10. At the same time, the sealing flap is folded to underlie a portion of the rear panel of each envelope. Thereafter, a successive envelope is longitudinally displaced with respect to each preceding envelope and is brought in contact with the strips of adhesive material such as strips 38 or 65'. Upon setting, said strips of adhesive material firmly secure and collate each successive

envelope to a preceding envelope. The assembly of envelopes are then preferably packaged in a roll form such as shown in FIG. 1.

It will be understood that the apertures are preferably formed in the side margin portions of the blank at the time the blank is produced or immediately thereafter. Where the apertures are formed in this manner, proper steps must be taken to insure that the apertures in mating side margin portions are aligned and in any event the overlying removable apertured sections of each successive envelope must have their apertures aligned with the apertures in each preceding envelope in order to insure a proper feeding of the assembly of envelopes through the high-speed printing apparatus. This can be done in a number of ways which form no part of this invention. On the other hand, the blanks used to form envelopes which are to be incorporated in an assembly constructed in accordance with this invention may be formed without any apertures in the side margin portions and instead, the apertures may be formed in the side margin portions after the envelopes have been incorporated within an assembly as described above.

After the assembly of envelopes has been processed through the high-speed printing apparatus, the envelopes are then processed through a decollater (not shown) which severs or slits the removable, apertured sections of the side margin portions from the remaining part of the envelope. In FIG. 5, the apertured side margin portions are preferably severed along the line indicated by numeral 37. Upon so severing, sections including the aligned apertures of the side margin portions are removed, each envelope thus being separated from the remaining assembly. Such an envelope 23S will appear as illustrated in FIG. 4, there still being, after slitting, sufficient adhesive 35 to secure panels 24 and 25 and thus maintain the pocket 36 and it is apparent that envelope 23S is attractive and acceptable in appearance and function. It will be understood that where an envelope structure 50 similar to that shown in FIG. 8 is used, the assembly, after process through the computer machine, is passed through a conventional burster (not shown) which separates each envelope from the assembly by pulling the apertured side margin portions 61 away from each envelope body, such being the purpose of the perforations at 62, and in this instance the removable sections constitute all of the portions 62.

From the foregoing, it will be readily apparent that several novel assemblies of envelopes have been described which can be processed through high-speed printing apparatus at rates up to about 200 per minute (3—6 lines per envelope—if only three lines per envelope were involved the rate will be even higher) or 12,000 or more per hour which is believed more than twice the rate heretofore possible. As a matter of fact, an assembly of envelopes is available for the first time which can be processed through the high-speed printing apparatus just about as fast as such apparatus can operate. This has been achieved due to the manner of overlapping the envelopes and securing same to each other in the compact manner heretofore described thereby substantially eliminating, or at least drastically reducing, the "skip time" previously encountered with prior art assemblies of envelopes. As indicated, the elimination of this "skip time" or "slew time" has greatly increased the rate at which envelopes can be processed through high-speed apparatus. Further, such assemblies of envelopes can be processed through conventional printing apparatuses without the necessity of changing any of the settings used therein except those settings relating to margins and the number of lines per envelope. Since the degree which each envelope may overlap the next succeeding envelope may be varied as desired or required, it will be understood that in some instances it may be desirable to adjust the gap setting between the rotating parts to which the envelopes must pass during the printing operation. Although the amount of overlapping may be varied to meet a customer's particular requirements, it will be understood that the greater amount of overlapping involved will result in a smaller amount of "skip time." Assemblies of envelopes constructed in accordance with the

subject invention are compactly arranged thereby insuring maximum printing apparatus usage while maintaining at the same time a relatively small overall thickness of the assembly as same is fed into the printing apparatus. Assemblies of envelopes utilizing the overlapping detachable margin glued construction described herein are relatively inexpensive to manufacture, and may be constructed and held together with a minimum of material and yet upon removal thereof from said assembly present a neat and overall attractive appearance. Additionally, the arrangements and assemblies of envelopes as described herein may be easily and conveniently packaged either in roll form or fan-folded form as desired or required. In this respect, it is to be noted that either the envelopes shown in FIGS. 4 and 8 may be easily and conveniently packaged either in roll form and fan-folded form. Additionally, novel envelope structures useful in forming an assembly of envelopes for processing through a high-speed printing apparatus have also been described. For example, it is to be noted that the envelope structure shown in FIG. 3 has an even thickness of material or paper from one apertured edge to the other apertured edge. This has been made possible through the use of the "weld" seam concept, i.e., the adhering together of the apertured edges at the sides of the envelope which results in the decollated envelope having both sides thereof secured together in the form of seams. This weld seam concept permits a tight adhesion between the front and rear panels of the envelope while at the same time allowing for a very nominal thickness variation from one apertured edge to the other apertured edge. This is quite important where envelopes of this type of assembly are processed through high-speed printing apparatuses which have thickness limitations as to how much material can be passed between the print ink rollers and the type hammers. It has been found that this weld seam is thin enough not to distort appreciably the overall thickness requirements while at the same time forming a sufficient bond to insure nonseparation during use of the envelope. Further, such an envelope structure, although permitting a wider flexibility in use, is relatively inexpensive to manufacture and may be easily and conveniently made with conventional envelope-making machines. Finally, it will be fully appreciated that the envelope 27 shown in FIG. 6 with the flaps 27 thereof being disposed in a downwardly direction may be assembled with the flaps 27 disposed in an upwardly direction but overlying the rear panel, in which event the printing or addressing thereof would be done on the rear panel of the envelope rather than on the front panel thereof.

From the foregoing, it should be apparent that the subject

invention accomplishes the heretofore outlined objects and advantages. It is to be understood, however, that this invention is not limited to the exact embodiments of the arrangements of envelopes shown and described, which are merely by way of illustration and not apparent to those skilled in the art, and it is therefore intended that the appended claims cover all such changes and modifications. Also, the term "envelopelike structure" used in some of the claims is intended to include units as specifically described and similar structures as long as such include front and rear panels and a pocket therebetween. Still further, the term "preceding" in reference to envelopes within an assembly is meant to apply to the preceding envelope that would have been fed into the printer.

I claim:

1. An assembly of envelopes in which each envelope body has front and rear panels connected to form a pocket and at least one of said panels has laterally extending, apertured side margin portions; said assembly comprising a plurality of said envelopes wherein the upper part of each successive envelope and the upper part of its laterally extending, apertured side margin portions underlie, respectively, the lower part of the preceding envelope and its corresponding laterally extending apertured side margin portions, and said corresponding apertured side margin portions of said successive and preceding envelopes are attached together by adhesive securing means located between said corresponding apertured side margin portions and outwardly of the corresponding ends of the pockets of said successive and preceding envelopes, the apertures of said corresponding overlying portions being aligned, said margin portions, including said overlying portions, being removable from said assembly along a severing area between said adhesive securing means and the corresponding ends of the pockets of said successive and preceding envelopes, whereby upon removal of said overlapping margin portions said succeeding and preceding envelopes are completely separated.

2. An assembly of envelopes as described in claim 1 wherein the apertured portions of said side margin portions are secured to the respective side margin portions by a weakened line of perforation.

3. An assembly of envelopes as described in claim 1 in which each assembly includes a plurality of envelope sets and means for interconnecting one end of each successive set of envelopes to a corresponding end of the preceding set of envelopes to form an articulated joint intermediate the ends of said interconnected sets whereby interconnected sets of envelopes are packaged in fan-fold form.