

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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LETTER-MAIL BOX

Application filed November 5, 1927. Serial No. 231,230.

My invention relates to letter mail boxes and the primary object of the invention is to provide a mail box of the character described, which will uniformly stack letter mail with the addressed sides thereof generally turned in the same direction; under such conditions greatly facilitating and expediting the handling, assorting, and postal cancellation of letter mail.

Further objects of the invention are to provide a device of the class stated, which is simple in its construction and arrangement, strong, durable and efficient in its use, compact, positive in its action, and comparatively inexpensive to manufacture.

To the accomplishment of these and such other objects in view which will appear as the description proceeds, the invention consists of the novel construction, combination and arrangement of parts herein specifically described and illustrated in the accompanying drawing, but it is to be understood that changes, variations and modifications of the invention may be resorted to, that come within the scope of the claims hereunto appended.

In the drawing wherein like numerals of reference designate corresponding parts throughout the several views:

Figure 1 is a side view of my improved letter mail box with the door in the open position and with parts thereof in cross section.

Figure 2 is a top plan view thereof.

Figure 3 is a front end view of the device with the casing thereof in cross section.

Referring in detail to the drawing 1 denotes a rectangularly shaped mail receptacle, having a chute casing 2 mounted on the top of the forward end thereof. The mail receptacle 1 is provided with a door 3, which is hinged to the receptacle bottom 4 and which constitutes an entire side wall of the mail receptacle 1. The free end of the door 3 is formed with a right angularly disposed, outwardly projecting flange 5, which is overlapped by the adjacent edge margin of the receptacle top 6 when the door 3 is in the closed position. The flange 5 and the receptacle top 6 are formed with a registering aperture 7 which are adapted for the recep-

tion of a suitable locking element for securing the receptacle 1 against entrance thereto by unauthorized persons.

A longitudinally extending mail support 8 is fixed in the lower end of the mail receptacle 1. The mail support 8 is inclined toward its forward end, which is fixed to the receptacle front wall 9. The rear end of the mail support 8 is positioned on the rear end of the receptacle floor or bottom 4. The mail support 8 extends on a uniform plane throughout its length and is of a width commensurate to the width of the mail receptacle 1.

The chute casing 2 is provided with a regularly curved top 10, which extends longitudinally and which is formed with a centrally disposed, transversely extending, elongated mail slot 11. A vertically disposed mail chute 12 depends into the casing 2, centrally of the latter, and has its upper end fixed to the casing top 10. The top of the mail chute 12 communicates with the mail slot 11, and the lower end 13 thereof is curved and opens into the upper end of the mail receptacle 1.

An arcuately shaped mail slot cover 14 is mounted on the outside of the curved casing top 10 for covering the mail slot 11 and the upper end of the chute 12. A similarly shaped chute bottom 15 is provided for closing the curved lower end 13 of the mail chute 12. The cover 14 and the chute bottom 15 are carried by a pair of vertically disposed legs 16, which depend through the chute casing 2 and extend into the mail receptacle 1. The pair of legs 16 are disposed on respective sides of the chute 12 and the respective side walls 17 and 18, of the chute casing 2. Each of the pair of legs 16 is provided with a bearing pin 19, which is journaled for pivotal movement in respective casing side walls 17 and 18.

The upper ends of the pair of legs 16 are integrally formed with the lower side of the cover 14 and extend through a pair of suitably spaced, elongated slots 20, which are formed in the casing top 10. The pivotal connections of the legs 16 to respective casing side walls 17 and 18 allows the mail slot cover 14 to be drawn forwardly to uncover

or clear the mail slot 11 to permit of the insertion of letter mail therethrough. The distance of travel permitted to the mail slot cover 14 is determined by the length of the slots 20 which is sufficient to provide for the covering and uncovering of the mail slot 11.

Each of the pair of legs 16 is provided with a fixed arm 21, which is disposed horizontally rearward in alignment with the bearing pins 19. The free end of each of the arms 21, carries an adjustable weight member 22, which normally functions to draw the upper ends of the pair of arms 16 rearwardly and in consequence normally maintains the mail slot 11 in the closing position.

The chute bottom 15 is fixed between the lower portions of the legs 16, which are offset forwardly relatively to the upper portions thereof. The relative positions of the mail slot cover 14 and of the chute bottom 15 are such that when the former is in the normal closing position the latter is in the opening position and vice versa.

A stacking plate 23 is pivotally connected, as at 24, between the lower ends of the legs 16. The connections 24, of the stacking plate 23, are above the center of the latter, so that the stacking plate 23 will be overbalanced to normally maintain a perpendicular edge-wise suspension, as clearly shown in Figure 1.

The rearward end of the chute bottom 15 carries a fixed, perpendicularly extending apron 25, which is disposed between the lower offset portions of the legs 16. The lower end of the apron 25 is positioned in close proximity to the upper end of the stacking plate 23, and is provided to prevent the accidental passage of letter mail therebetween to a position forwardly of the stacking plate 23.

A substantially L-shaped slide rest 26 is shiftably positioned on the inclined support 8. The width of the slide rest 26 is commensurate to the width of the receptacle 1, and the front face 27 thereof is positioned at an angle with the upper end disposed rearwardly of the lower end.

The operation of my improved mail box will stack letter mail 28 flatly endwise and inclined against each other and against the front face 27 of the slide rest 26, as clearly shown in Figure 1. The operation of the device is facilitated by a pull lug 29 which is formed integral with the top of the mail slot cover 14.

In practice, the depositor draws the cover 14 forwardly to uncover the mail slot 11. Such forward movement of the cover 14 will actuate the legs 16 to bring the chute bottom 15 to the closing position, and to shift the stacking plate 23 rearwardly, with the previously deposited letter 30, against the let-

ter mail 28 already stacked against the slide rest 26. The stacking position of the stacking plate 23 is clearly illustrated in dash lines in Figure 1. The rearward movement of the stacking plate 23, in the manner stated, will shift all of the stacked mail matter 28, together with the slide rest 26, rearwardly on the support 8, so that the clearance or distance between the most forward letter of the stack 28 and the normal position of the stacking plate 23 remains constant. Such shifting of the stacked letter mail 28 and of the slide rest 26 is not difficult owing to the downward grade of the support 8 on which it is shifting.

After the depositor has drawn the mail slot cover 14 forwardly to uncover the mail slot 11, he deposits his letter, which remains in the chute 12 until the cover 14 is released and returns to its normal closing position by the action of the weight members 22. During the closing movement of the cover 14 the chute bottom 15 will be shifting forwardly to the opening position, thereby allowing the deposited letter to pass from the chute 12 into the mail receptacle 1. Such deposited letter will normally assume the position of the letter 30, as shown in Figure 1, which is an endwise position ready to be stacked by the next movement of the stacking plate 23, when the mail slot cover 14 is next drawn to the opening position.

It will be noted that the chute 12 is of sufficient length to accommodate the length of the letter, as the latter is confined in the chute 12 until the cover 14 is automatically returned to the closing position, at which time the chute bottom 15 has shifted to the opening position.

The lower end of the stacking plate 23 is normally disposed in close proximity to the top of the support 8, and is normally disposed forwardly to the vertical alignment of the forward side of the chute 12. This arrangement eliminates the possibility of any interference to the letter when the same passes from the chute 12 and is stacked against the previously stacked letter mail 28, which is already positioned on the mail support 8.

All letters inserted in my improved mail box will be neatly stacked flatly against each other, and as the depositor usually takes a final look at the letter to satisfy himself that the same has been properly stamped and addressed, the letters will be found to be generally turned in the same direction, thereby facilitating and expediting the handling of the mail matter when same reaches the post office. When the mail matter is collected from the mail box by the letter carrier, it will of course be necessary for him to move the slide rest 26 forwardly to its proper starting position on the support 8.

It will be obvious that my improved letter mail box may be employed as a unit or ar-

ranged in a battery of units of different sizes to accommodate letters of various sizes. Further the device may be combined with a mail receptacle which is adapted for the reception
5 of parcel mail.

What I claim is:

In a mail box, the combination of a receptacle including a casing having a mail slot formed in the top thereof, a support fixed in
10 said receptacle, a slide rest shiftably mounted on said support, a chute carried by and depending into said casing, the upper end of said casing communicating with said slot and the lower end thereof with said receptacle, a
15 pair of legs pivotally connecting with said casing and being disposed on respective sides of said chute, a cover for said slot mounted on the top of said casing and being fixed to the upper ends of said pair of legs, the lower
20 portions of said pair of legs being forwardly offset relatively to the upper portions thereof, a bottom for said chute being fixed to and between said forwardly offset portions of said pair of legs, a stacking plate being pivotally
25 connected to and between the lower ends of said forwardly offset portions of said pair of legs, said stacking plate being overbalanced for normally maintaining a perpendicular edgewise suspension between said pair
30 of legs, the movement of said cover for opening said slot actuating said bottom for closing the lower end of said chute and further shifting said stacking plate toward said slide rest, and a weight member carried by said
35 legs and operable for automatically returning said cover to the closed position.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.
WILLIAM R. BANKSON.

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