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[21]	Appl. No.	774,011
[22]	Filed	Nov. 7, 1968
[45]	Patented	Dec. 15, 1970
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[56] **References Cited**
FOREIGN PATENTS
1,303,071 7/1962 France 220/22.3
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[54] DRAWER FILING SYSTEM
12 Claims, 5 Drawing Figs.

[52]	U.S. Cl.....	220/223
[51]	Int. Cl.....	B65d 1/24, B65d 1/36
[50]	Field of Search.....	220/22.1, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 22.5, 22.6

ABSTRACT: A filing system for containing cards, drawings, papers, letters and the like wherein a one-piece resilient, molded plastic follower acts in cooperation with a drawer having a guide track integral therewith to support the rear most items in a partially full drawer. The follower position may be varied along the drawer length and the guide track includes receiving slots which are engaged by teeth integral with the follower to lock the follower at predetermined positions along the drawer length.

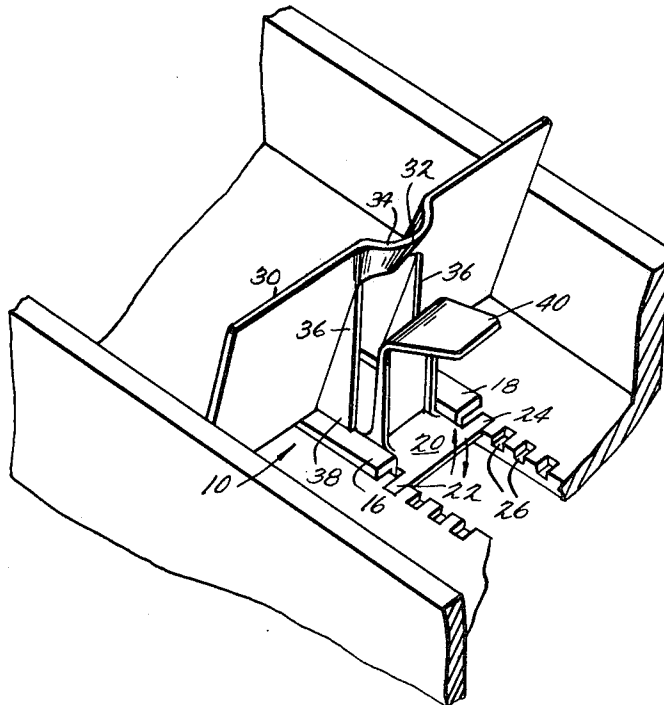


Fig. 1.

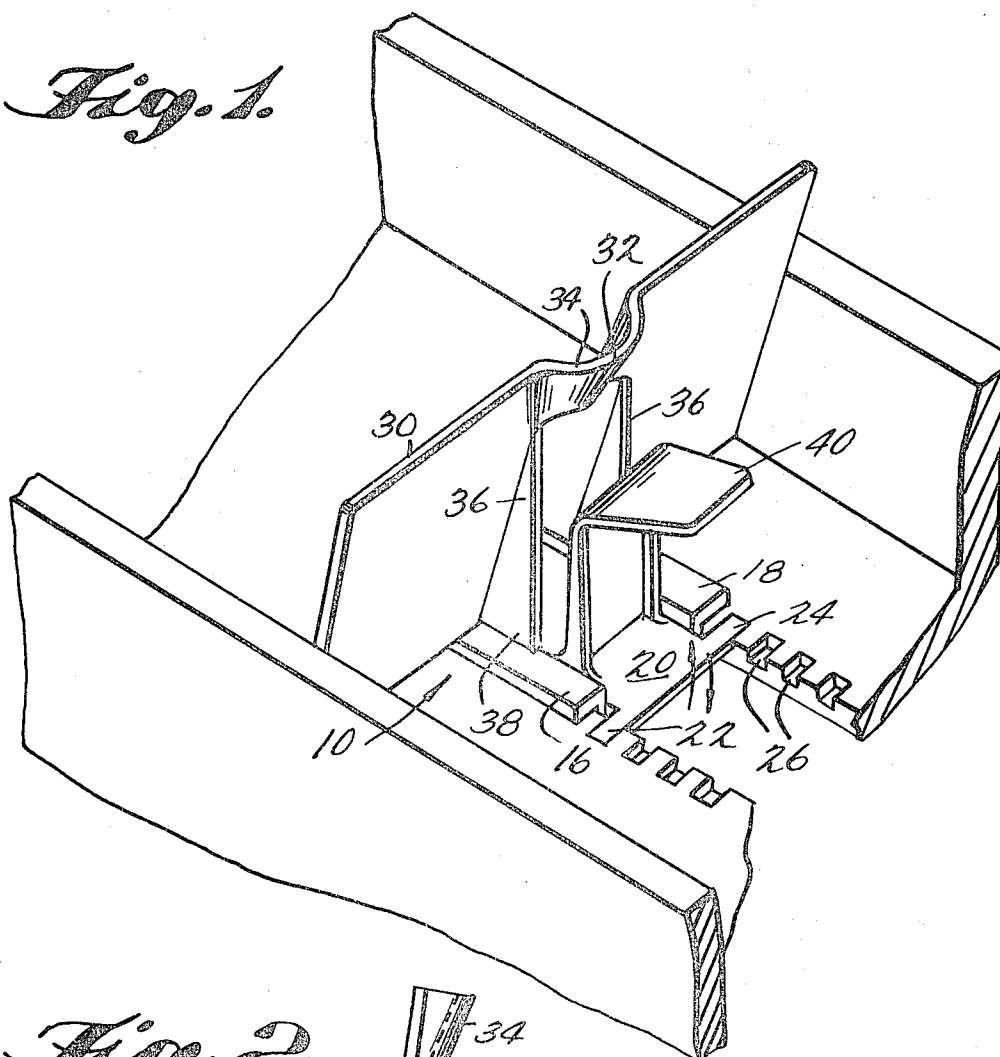
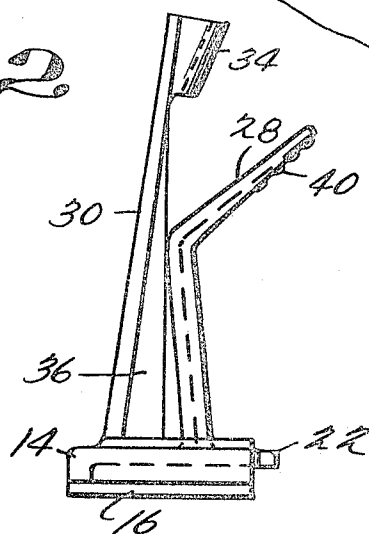


Fig. 2.



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Fig. 3.

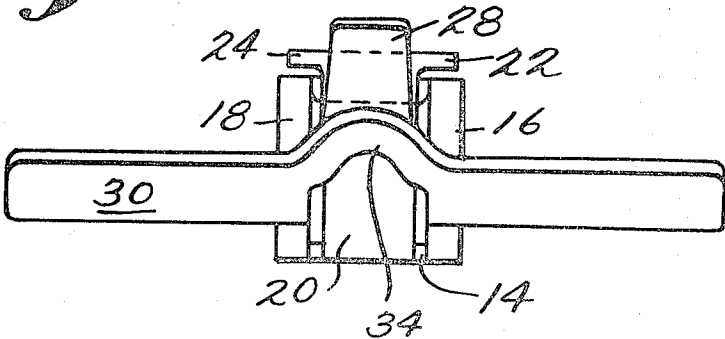


Fig. 4.

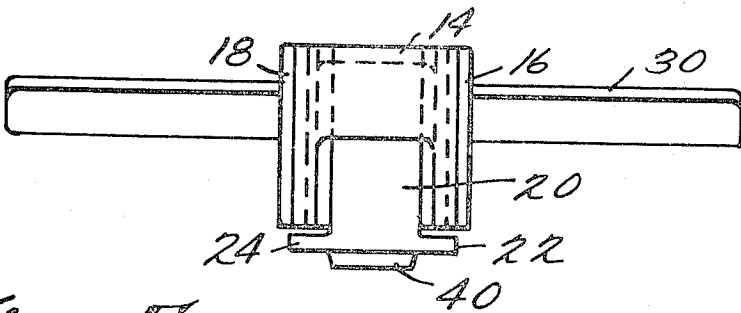
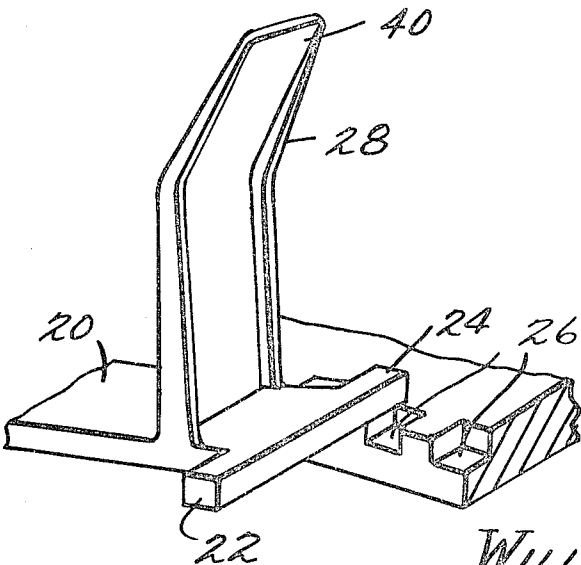


Fig. 5.



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DRAWER FILING SYSTEM

The present invention relates to a drawer filing system and more particularly to a one-piece follower for use in cooperating relationship with a drawer having a guide track adapted to receive the follower. Numerous follower devices are known in the art which generally include multipiece arrangements in cooperating relationship with separate metal tracks that are attached to the drawer. Such existing systems utilize spring-loaded locking levers to lock the follower in place with respect to the guidance track attached to the drawer. In many cases, the locking action is improved by serrations in the metal track. In addition, some one-piece follower arrangements have been used as represented in the U.S. Pat. to Bodenstein, No. 1,160,104 and in the U.S. Pat. to Harriman, No. 1,898,533. However, such followers have been difficult to use since in the unlocking process the pressure of the cards or papers works against the unlocking movement because the follower must first be moved toward the cards or papers contained thereby before the follower becomes unlocked from the track.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a unique drawer file system which requires only two parts, i.e., a one-piece follower and a drawer having a guide track integral therewith.

Another object is to provide a drawer file system that can be inexpensively manufactured.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a drawer file system having a one-piece resilient molded plastic follower which is easily unlocked for movement from a first to a second position along the guide track.

Still another object is to provide a unique one-piece follower which can be inexpensively manufactured and which is easy to operate.

Other objects and features of the invention will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art as the disclosure is made in the following description of a preferred embodiment of the invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view, partly in phantom, of the one-piece follower in locked relationship with the guidance track;

FIG. 2 is a side elevation, partly in phantom, of the one-piece follower;

FIG. 3 is a top view of the one-piece follower;

FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the follower; and

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a portion of the locking lever in a disengaged position relative to the guide track.

With reference now to the drawings, wherein like reference characters designate like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, there is shown in FIG. 1 a preferred embodiment of the one-piece follower 10 in locked cooperating relationship with guidance track 12. The follower is preferably formed by molding semirigid plastic, such as polycarbonate, polytetrafluoroethylene, nylon or the like. The follower comprises a base portion 14 which has two integrally molded female slide or channel members 16 and 18 for slideably engaging the track 12 and for guiding the follower along and within the track. Also depending from the base portion 14 and extending therefrom in the same general direction as the female slide members is locking lever 20. Integral with the locking lever and extending generally perpendicularly from the longitudinal dimension thereof are teeth 22 and 24 which are adapted to engage selected ones of the receiving slots 26 which are integral with the track 12. Integral with and extending from the locking lever 20 in a generally vertical direction is handle portion 28.

Also extending from and integral with the base portion 14 is support face member 30 having a centrally located aperture 32 therein which enables the movement of the handle member in a direction generally toward the support face 30 when it is desired to disengage the teeth 22 and 24 from the receiving slots 26 and the guide track. A bridging member 34 is integral with support face member 30 and assists in providing a rigid structure. Flange members 36 extend outwardly from the rear portion of the supporting face member and terminate in edge

portions 38 immediately adjacent to the respective female slide members 16 and 18. The handle member 28 may also include ribs 40 on the underside and at the upper extremity thereof to provide a better grip for the operator and to better facilitate the movement of the handle portion in the engaging and disengaging of teeth 22 and 24 with respect to receiving slots 26.

Although the guidance track 12 is preferably integral with the box or container, it need not be of such construction and may be a separate track which is fastened to the drawer or container. In the preferred embodiment of this invention, however, the guiding track is integral with the drawer or container and is preferably injection molded from plastic material containing well-known chemical blowing agents which yield a final product of cellular construction. The wall of the track and of the container formed in this manner has a dense outer skin and a cellular inner structure with the resulting product approaching wood in density, appearance and feel.

In addition to the advantageous configuration of a one-piece molded unit with the attendant reduction and manufacturing costs as compared to the manufacturing costs of multipiece units, the follower of this invention is molded to a unique configuration so that in the operation of the follower the supporting face member 30 does not move in the unlocking process. Prior art followers of unitary construction are known as disclosed in the Bodenstein U.S. Pat. No. 1,160,104 and in the U.S. Pat. to Harriman No. 1,898,533. However, these and similar arrangements require that the follower be moved forward against the cards or papers in order to unlock the unit from its respective track. This often makes the unlocking of the unit a difficult operation, particularly when the prior art follower is initially located with its supporting face tightly against the cards or papers which are being held in place. The unlocking of such followers under these conditions is hindered because they must first be moved forward against the cards so that the pressure of the cards is working against the unlocking movement.

The construction and operation of the one-piece follower of this invention overcomes this disadvantage inherent in the prior art devices.

FIG. 5, together with FIG. 1 illustrate the operation of the one-piece follower. FIG. 1 illustrates the follower in locked relationship with the receiving slots 26 of guidance track 12. In the event that movement of the follower from one position to a second position is desirable, the operator need only grasp the handle member 28 at the upper end thereof and apply force thereto as illustrated in FIG. 5. Because the locking lever 20 is composed of a resilient plastic material it is deflected in an upward direction so that teeth 22 and 24 become disengaged from the receiving slots 26 of the guidance track 12. Because the female slide members 16 and 18 bracket the inside edges of the track, only the handle member 28 and the locking lever 20 of the follower are moved in the unlocking operation while the remaining portions of the follower are stationary. Thus, the supporting face member 30 also remains stationary and is not moved against the cards or papers retained by the follower during the unlocking operation. By the use of the device of this invention, the follower can be readily unlocked from the track 12 merely by movement of handle 28 so that even when the cards retained by the follower are tightly packed against the face of supporting face member 30, the follower is easily unlocked from the track without the necessity of moving the face 30 toward the cards. Thus, by use of the follower of this invention, the pressure of the cards or papers does not work against the unlocking movement of the device.

Although the follower has been described for use in a container or drawer for retaining cards or papers, one of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the follower may be used for other purposes, such as book ends. Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings, and it is therefore to be un-

derstood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

I claim:

1. A file system comprising: a container having a guide track; a one-piece follower of unitary construction including at least one female slide having a longitudinal channel for slidably engaging said track and for guiding said follower within said track; and resilient locking means integral with said follower and normally in locked position with respect to said track for being disengaged from said track by deflection of said resilient locking means to enable the relative movement of said resilient locking means with respect to remaining portions of said follower which remain stationary and to enable the subsequent relative movement of said follower with respect to said track.

2. A file system as in claim 1, wherein said track includes receiving slots and wherein said locking lever includes teeth for engaging said receiving slots and for locking said follower in a predetermined fixed position with respect to said container.

3. A file system for containing items as in claim 2 wherein said follower includes:

- a support face having an aperture therein, said face oriented to at least partially support the items to be filed;
- a base portion integrally molded with said supporting face and with said female slide; and
- said locking lever integrally molded with and extending from said base portion.

4. A file system as in claim 3, wherein:

- said locking lever includes a first portion having a longitudinal dimension generally parallel to said channel within said female slide;
- said teeth extending generally perpendicularly with respect to the longitudinal dimension of said first portion; and
- a generally U-shaped handle portion integral with said first portion for deflecting said locking lever from its normal position upon the movement of said handle portion toward the aperture in said support face.

5. A file system as in claim 4, wherein said follower is of one-piece molded construction.

6. A file system as in claim 5, wherein said container is a drawer having said guide track integral therewith.

7. A file system as in claim 6, wherein said follower is comprised of a moldable, resilient plastic material.

8. A one-piece follower for use in cooperating relationship with a container having a guide track, said follower compris-

ing:

a resilient locking lever for positioning in locked relationship with said track;

said lever being disengageable from said track by deflection of the lever in a direction away from the track to enable the relative movement of the follower with respect to the track; and

at least one female slide having a longitudinal channel therein for slideably engaging said track and for guiding the follower within said track.

9. A follower for containing items as in claim 8 further including:

a support face having an aperture therein, said face oriented to at least partially support the items to be filed;

a base portion integrally molded with said supporting face and with said female slide; and

said locking lever integrally molded with and extending from said base portion.

10. A file system, comprising:

a guide track;

a follower for engaging said track, said follower including a resilient locking lever normally in locked position with respect to said track, said lever being disengaged from said track by deflection of said lever in a direction away from said track to enable the relative movement of said follower with respect to said track; and

wherein said follower further includes at least one female slide having a longitudinal channel therein for slideably engaging said track and for guiding said follower within said track.

11. A file system for containing items as in claim 10 wherein said follower includes:

a support face having an aperture therein, said face oriented to at least partially support the items to be filed;

a base portion integrally molded with said supporting face and with said female slide; and

said locking lever integrally molded with and extending from said base portion.

12. A file system as in claim 10 wherein said locking lever includes:

a first portion having a longitudinal dimension generally parallel to said channel within said female slide;

said teeth extending generally perpendicularly with respect to the longitudinal dimension of said first portion; and

a generally U-shaped handle portion integral with said first portion for deflecting said locking lever from its normal position upon the movement of said handle portion toward the aperture in said support face.

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