Aug. 15, 1961 J. J. DONNELLAN 2,995,849

DOOR MAT WITH INTERCHANGEABLE INDICIA

Filed Jan. 14, 1959

Fig. 1

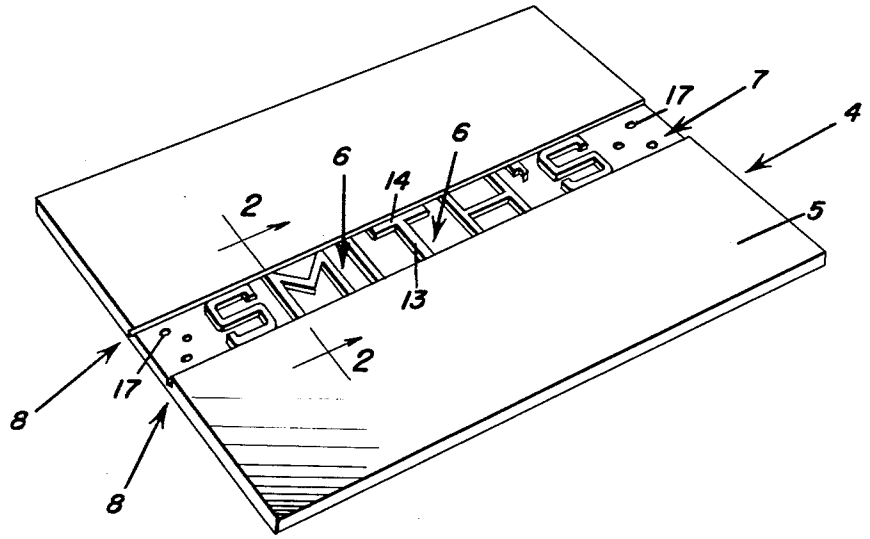


Fig. 2

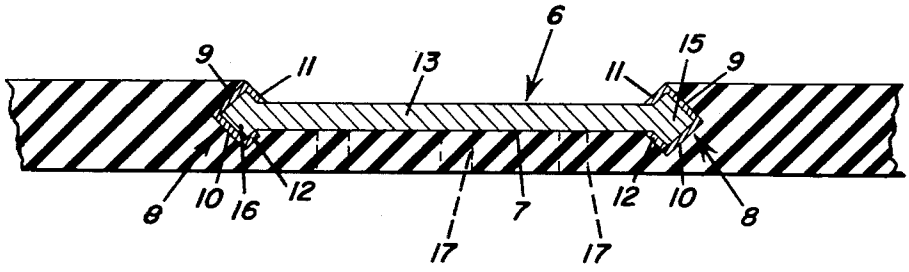
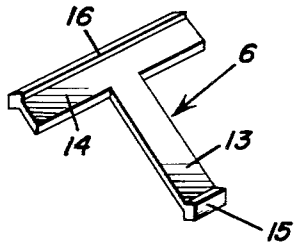


Fig. 3



John J. Donnellan

INVENTOR.

BY Clarence A. O'Brien and Harvey B. Jacobson
Attorneys

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DOOR MAT WITH INTERCHANGEABLE INDICIA

John J. Donnellan, 1836 Euclid Ave.,
Chicago Heights, Ill.

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The present invention relates to a door mat wherein variable characters, numerals and letters are utilized in a manner to display the name of the resident owner or a message of "Welcome."

As the preceding general statement of the nature of the concept reveals, so-called Welcome mats wherein changeable indicia and data are provided are not new. For example, reference may be made to the Lorraine Patent 1,936,634 which discloses a door mat characterized by a flexible body, a channel formed in the body having beveled walls, and a series of flexible or equivalent symbols or letter blocks which are adapted to be arranged in the channels and which have beveled end walls which are such that they may be interlocked with the walls of the channel. Obviously, this particular patent is mentioned because, in a manner of speaking, it tends to categorize the generally analogous, but nevertheless distinct, nature of the invention at bar.

Stated otherwise, it is an object in the instant matter to improve on the Lorraine and any other similarly constructed and performing prior patent or prior art mats by providing a structurally unique adaptation in which the letters or equivalent components are novel in construction and are highly simple and efficient in construction and which serves to satisfactorily accomplish the improved results insured by proper use of the instant invention.

More explicitly, novelty is predicated on a door mat of suitable shape and size the top portion of which is provided with at least one open-ended channel which is constructed to serve as a receiver and retainer for readily insertable and removable letters or the like used in providing what may be broadly classified as a decorative message-conveying door mat.

In carrying out the preferred embodiment of the invention the lengthwise walls of the insert or letter receiving channels are grooved to provide keyways. The cooperating end portions of the letters or inserts have correspondingly shaped keys which are removably fitted into the keyways.

Other objects, features and advantages will become more readily apparent from the following description and the accompanying illustrative but not restrictive drawing.

In the drawing, wherein like numerals are employed to designate like parts throughout the views:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a lettered or an equivalent door mat constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an exaggerated fragmentary section taken on the plane of the line 2—2 of FIG. 1, looking in the direction of the arrows.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of one of the letters, symbols or other "inserts" of the type preferably used.

Although door mats are capable of being used indoors or outdoors, as the case may be, it will simplify the presentation and understanding of the subject matter here to think of a "door mat" of any suitable size, shape or material which may be used wherever and whenever a door mat is suitable for use. In any event the door mat proper, which is here apparently constructed from suitably fabricated rubber or the like, is denoted by the numeral 4. As already mentioned the central area of the top surface 5 is channeled lengthwise to define a receiver for the various "inserts" 6. The channel is denoted generally by the numeral 7 and it is constructed so that it opens through the opposite transverse ends of the mat.

The longitudinal edge portions of the open-ended channels are provided with built-in tracks which, in turn, provide suitable and desirable keyways. More particularly, the longitudinal walls of the channel are countergrooved. Each groove is denoted by the numeral 8. Embedded in the mat and serving to line the walls or surfaces of the groove is an elongated metal or equivalent tube. The tube shown is somewhat diamond shaped, as it were, in cross-section. The main converging wall portions 9 and 10 are suitably embedded while the exposed convergent flanges 11 and 12 constitute separate lips with a space therebetween. The thus constructed tube, as a unit, provides the aforementioned keying track or keyway. Whatever cross-sectional shape is adopted for the keying track will determine the cross-sectional shape and size of the keying ribs or heads seen in FIG. 3. With reference to FIG. 3 the insert 6 comprises the letter T having a stem 13 and a cross-head 14. The outer end of the stem is provided with a keying rib or head 15 which corresponds in cross-section and size to the complemental or companion keying rib or head 16 along the outer edge of the cross-head 14. Broadly these elements 15 and 16 may be called "keys" and the aforementioned tracks keyways. Usually the letters will be struck out or molded from some suitable composition material so that the letters will yield slightly to be readily slipped into the channel 7 in an endwise manner and thus moved into assembled relationship. There will be friction gripping contact between the keys and keyways so that the letters, once they are positioned, will stay put. The numeral 17 designates the drainage holes arranged preferably at the open end portions of the channel 7.

With the construction shown it will be evident that the keys and keying tracks are substantially invisible. Therefore only the principal and usable portions of the letters or inserts 6 are seen once the letters are assembled to provide a surname or other message such as would ordinarily be used in a mat having interchangeable letters or inserts.

As before mentioned door mats are sometimes thought of in this category as greeting mats or Welcome mats as the case may be and while the idea of interchangeable messages is not in and of itself new it is obvious that the construction herein shown and disclosed brings about better and more satisfactory results. Some of the points to be enumerated in connection with the invention pertain to a construction wherein the letters or inserts are removable easily and interchangeable. With the construction disclosed door mats can be offered with suitable greeting messages and wherein a supply of "inserts" would pertain to letters, numerals, designs and the like. It is believed that the channel with constantly open ends is new and advantageous in that it allows the individual inserts to be selected and slipped and keyed in the channel and readily pushed out as desired. Thus, it is possible for the owner to select the desired letters and inserts and to make up his own identification, message or the like. The letters or inserts will be made of metal, rubber, wood or plastic as desired. They can be stamped out in different shapes and forms to add to the decorative aspect thereof. Actually the inserts or letters should be some 2 inches in height on what may be called a standard size door mat. Customers can buy the mat and then purchase the desired letters or inserts for interchangeable and varying needs. As a matter of fact, the inserts may be made available in different colors and design characteristics. By standardizing the cross-sectional shape of the keying tracks and the keys no difficulty will be encountered in offering to members of the public an innovation in which both ornamental and utilitarian aspects are effectually carried out.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those

skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. A door mat comprising a flexible mat having a shallow channel formed in a top side, said channel opening through the respective ends of the mat and providing an adaptable receiver and retainer for manually applicable and removable inserts, letters and numerals for example, the lengthwise walls of said channel having open ended insert keying tracks embedded therein, said tracks being disposed in spaced apart parallelism along the lengthwise edges of the channel, and inserts fitting removably in the channel and transversely bridging the channel and insertable and removable by way of the open ends of the channel and tracks and having keying means at respective end portions thereof slidingly fitted and keyed in said tracks.

2. A door mat comprising a flexible mat having a top side provided with an open-ended channel defining and providing a receiver for individual insertable and removable alphabetical letters or the like, said channel having lengthwise walls with grooves for reception and retention of tubular members, open-ended tubular members fitted into their respective grooves, said members being longitudinally slotted to serve as keying tracks, and individual insertable and removable letters fitted into said channel and extending transversely across the same, each letter being provided at ends thereof with keying heads, said keying heads being keyed in said tracks and the cross-sectional construction of the tracks and keying heads being the same.

3. The structure defined in claim 2 and wherein said tubular member is provided with converging spaced walls providing an intervening slot to allow for the passage therethrough of the cooperating body portion of the co-acting letter, said tubular member and said keying head being of a corresponding cross-sectional shape.

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