

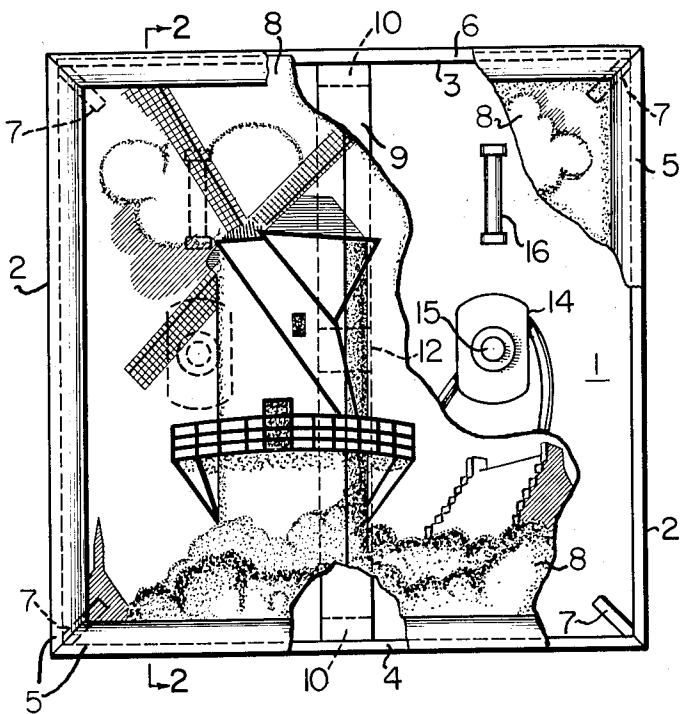
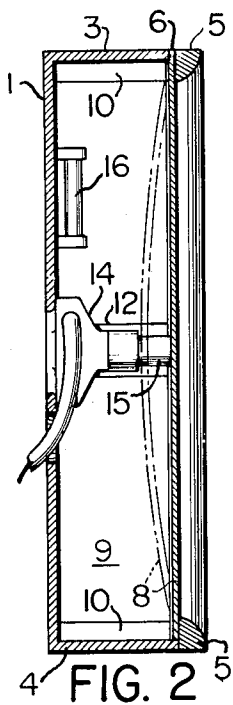
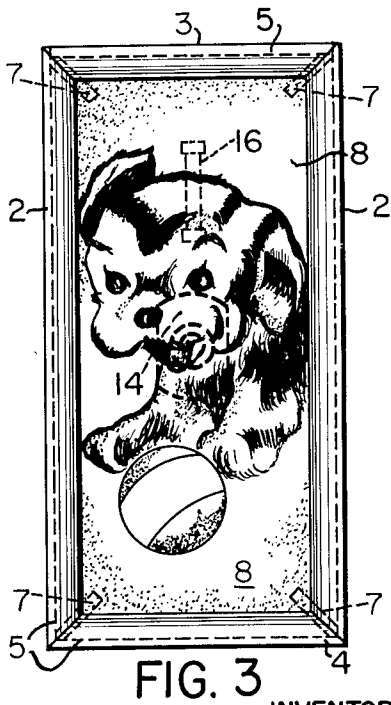
March 6, 1956

A. M. SHALNA ET AL
ELECTRIC SWITCH HOUSINGS

Filed Nov. 25, 1952

2,737,559

FIG. 1



INVENTORS,
ANNA M. SHALNA AND EDWARD J. SHALNA

BY
man,
ATTORNEY

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2,737,559

ELECTRIC SWITCH HOUSINGS

Anna M. Shalna and Edward J. Shalna, Philadelphia, Pa.

Application November 25, 1952, Serial No. 322,390

4 Claims. (Cl. 200—172)

The object of the invention is to provide improvements in supports and housings for wall switches, such as are used to control the lighting and miscellaneous electric appliances in homes, offices and the like, but which are not limited thereto.

Wall switches have always been quite similar in general appearance, as to their mountings while those characterized by the well known switch-plates in particular are subdivided into such subclasses as the angularly oscillatable type that is moved vertically or horizontally between operative, or "on" and "off" positions, the double pushbutton type that is actuated by pushing inwardly upon the buttons of a given pair alternately, and the single button toggle or similar type that is actuated alternately into operative and inoperative positions by pushing inwardly always upon the same button.

It is particularly with relation to this last-mentioned type that the present invention relates, and another object therefore is to provide an ornamental housing or mask for such a switch or switches, that when suitably supported upon a wall or other surface it will present an esthetic or pleasing appearance, will so mask the switch or switches hidden behind its front surface as to make them unidentifiable as such, and at the same time make it possible to actuate the hidden switch or switches in the usual manner by those who are familiar with the switch location and the method of actuating the same.

Another and more specific object is to provide a device of this character, that essentially comprises a single-button toggle or similar switch, a preferably ornamented resiliently distortable shield in front of the same, and a suitable frame by which the said shield is maintained in operative relation to said switch, yet can be removed from such position for replacement of said shield, or the adjustment and replacement of said switch, whenever the same may be desirable or necessary.

A further object is to provide such a device, comprising a back or wall plate, a single-button switch operatively supported thereby, a peripheral frame that may either partially or completely surround said switch, or at least the operating button or equivalent element thereof, and a replaceable panel of resiliently distortable and preferably transparent material operatively supported by said frame, and spanning said switch while being artistically ornamented, which ornamentation may be carried by the reverse surface of said shield, when said shield is of transparent material.

And a still further object is to provide a device of this type that provides for the inclusion of means to illuminate the interior of the said frame, and at the same time shine at least partially through the substance of the shield, to indicate thereby when the switch operatively connected thereto is energized or functioning.

With the foregoing objects in mind, the invention comprises further details of construction and operation, such as are hereinafter fully brought out in the following description, when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which Fig. 1 is a front elevation of a device comprising one embodiment of the invention and

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comprising a plurality of switch elements and with the resiliently distortable front wall members partly broken away to expose portions of the interior of the frame; Fig. 2 is a vertical section on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1; and Fig. 3 is a front elevation of a modification of the device housing a single such switch element.

Referring to Figs. 1 and 2, a hollow frame is provided, comprising a rear wall 1, laterally positioned side walls 2, top wall 3, bottom wall 4, secured to and supported by said side and bottom walls in frame that comprises a sectional peripheral molding 5, the top section of which is spaced from the slightly abbreviated top wall of said frame to provide a slot 6. Each of the four corners of said frame is provided with a reinforcing corner piece 7 of any suitable shape, but of such depth that they together provide inward positioning means of resiliently distortable cover plates or panels 8, which are inserted into said frame individually and independently of each other, and which along their adjacent edges are inwardly supported by a full partition or a semi-partitioning strip 9, that is supported at its opposite ends by blocks 10 and centrally by a third block 12.

Inwardly said panels rest upon said corner pieces, and through the medium of said strip upon said central and end blocks. Outwardly said panels are restricted and operatively positioned by direct sliding contact with the inner surfaces of the strips of molding that cooperate to form said frame. Thus, when it is desired to remove either of the said panels, they may be slid vertically outwardly through the slot 6, and then replaced unaltered, or by substitutions carrying different pictures, or other form of indicia, as may be desired. If said panels are formed of transparent plastic or other suitable material, it will be seen that a picture or indicia of any sort can be secured to the reverse surface of said panels, and they will be visible through and by virtue of the transparency of said panels, and will not be scratched or otherwise marred when cleaning the latter.

Within said frame and secured to the rear wall 1 is a suitable toggle switch 41, or other suitable form that comprises a single, forwardly projecting button 15, that is shifted rearwardly by manual engagement of the adjacent panel in each instance, alternate pushing rearwardly of said panel effecting such actuation of the adjacent button and cooperating switch mechanism (not shown), as to alternately set such mechanism in electrically or "closed" operative, and "open" or inoperative positions, respectively, so that any electrically energized actuated, or driven device connected to such switch is manually controlled at will. In addition, therefore, if the indicia-supporting medium is sufficiently transparent, it may be caused to glow in the dark, either permanently or only when the switches are "on" or "off," by positioning a small fluorescent or neon lamp 16 to the rear of the panel, and carried by the inner surface of the rear wall of said frame.

Referring to Fig. 3, there is here shown a single switch unit, that is identical with the form shown in Figs. 1 and 2, except that only a single switch, actuating panel and lamp are present, wherefore the same numerals are employed to identify equivalent parts.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim and desire to protect by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A switch housing of the class described, comprising peripheral side walls, a rear wall, and a transversely resilient front wall longitudinally removable in its own plane, in combination with an electric pushbutton switch unit carried by said rear wall and having a reciprocable actuating element extending therefrom withing said frame and into proximity with the rear surface of said front wall, whereby distortion of said front wall

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into engagement with and the shifting of said element alternately actuates said switch into "on" and "off" positions.

2. A switch housing of the class described, comprising peripheral side walls, a rear wall spanning the space surrounded by said side walls, and a transversely resilient front wall longitudinally removable in its own plane detachably secured to said side walls, in combination with an electric pushbutton switch unit carried by said rear wall and having a reciprocable actuating element extending therefrom within said frame and into proximity with the rear surface of said front wall, whereby manual distortion of said front wall into engagement with and the shifting of said element alternately actuates said switch into "on" and "off" positions in the control of an electrically energized device in an extraneous circuit.

3. A switch housing of the class described, comprising peripheral side walls at least two of which have parallel guideways, a rear wall spanning the space surrounded by said side walls, and a transversely resilient front wall removably positioned in said guideways, in combination with an electric pushbutton switch unit carried by said rear wall and having a reciprocable actuating element extending therefrom within said frame and into proximity with the rear surface of said front wall, whereby manual distortion of said front wall in engagement with and the shifting of said element alternately actuates said switch into "on" and "off" positions in the control of an electrically energized device in an extraneous circuit.

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4. A switch housing of the class described, comprising peripheral side walls at least a pair of opposed side walls having parallel guideways, a rear wall spanning the space surrounded by said side walls, a space-dividing element positioned between the walls of said pair, and sectional transversely resilient front wall elements removably positioned in said guideways, and each of which is supported by at least one of said guideways and said element, in combination with electric pushbutton switch units supported by said rear wall upon the opposite sides of said space-dividing element and corresponding with said resilient elements, said units having reciprocable actuating elements extending therefrom within said frame and into proximity with the respective rear surfaces of said front wall elements, whereby individual distortion of said last-mentioned elements into engagement with and the shifting of said respectively adjacent switch elements alternately actuates said switches into "on" and "off" positions selectively and independently of each other in the control of electrically energized devices in extraneous circuits.

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