United States Patent

Golden

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[54] MAILBOX SUPPORT

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **248/145**
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A47g 29/12**
[58] **Field of Search** 248/145, 140, 133, 417; 287/99

[56] **References Cited**

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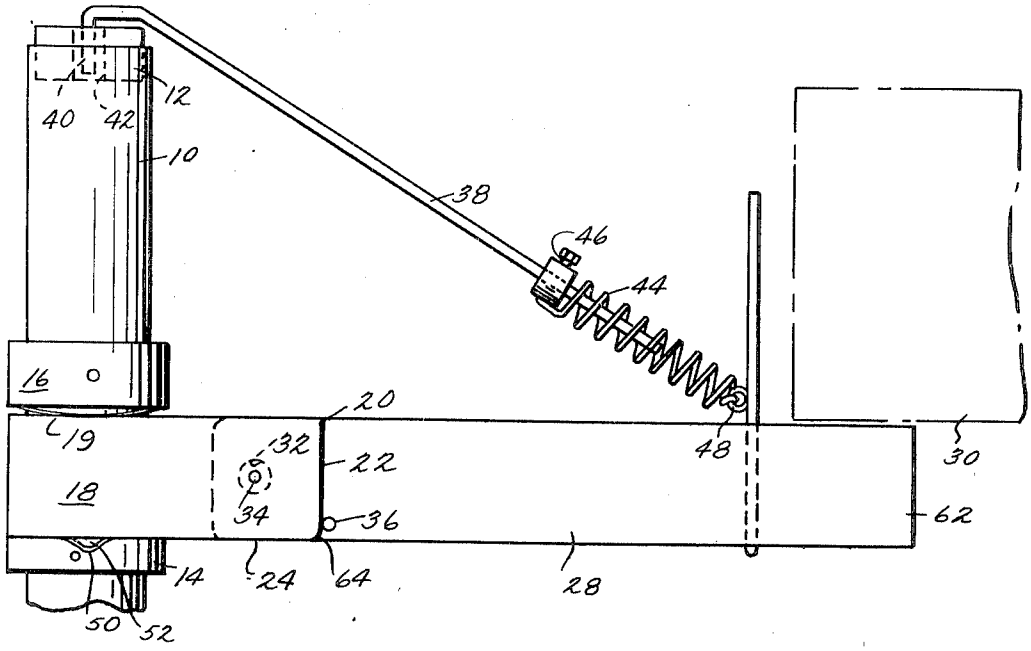
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A mailbox support having a generally upright post anchored in the ground and a mailbox support arm movably affixed to the post for movement in a lateral plane as well as in a vertical plane between a locked normal position and a locked servicing position. The mailbox support arm is freely movable in the lateral plane so that the support will not be damaged if the support arm is struck by a passing vehicle.

5 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures

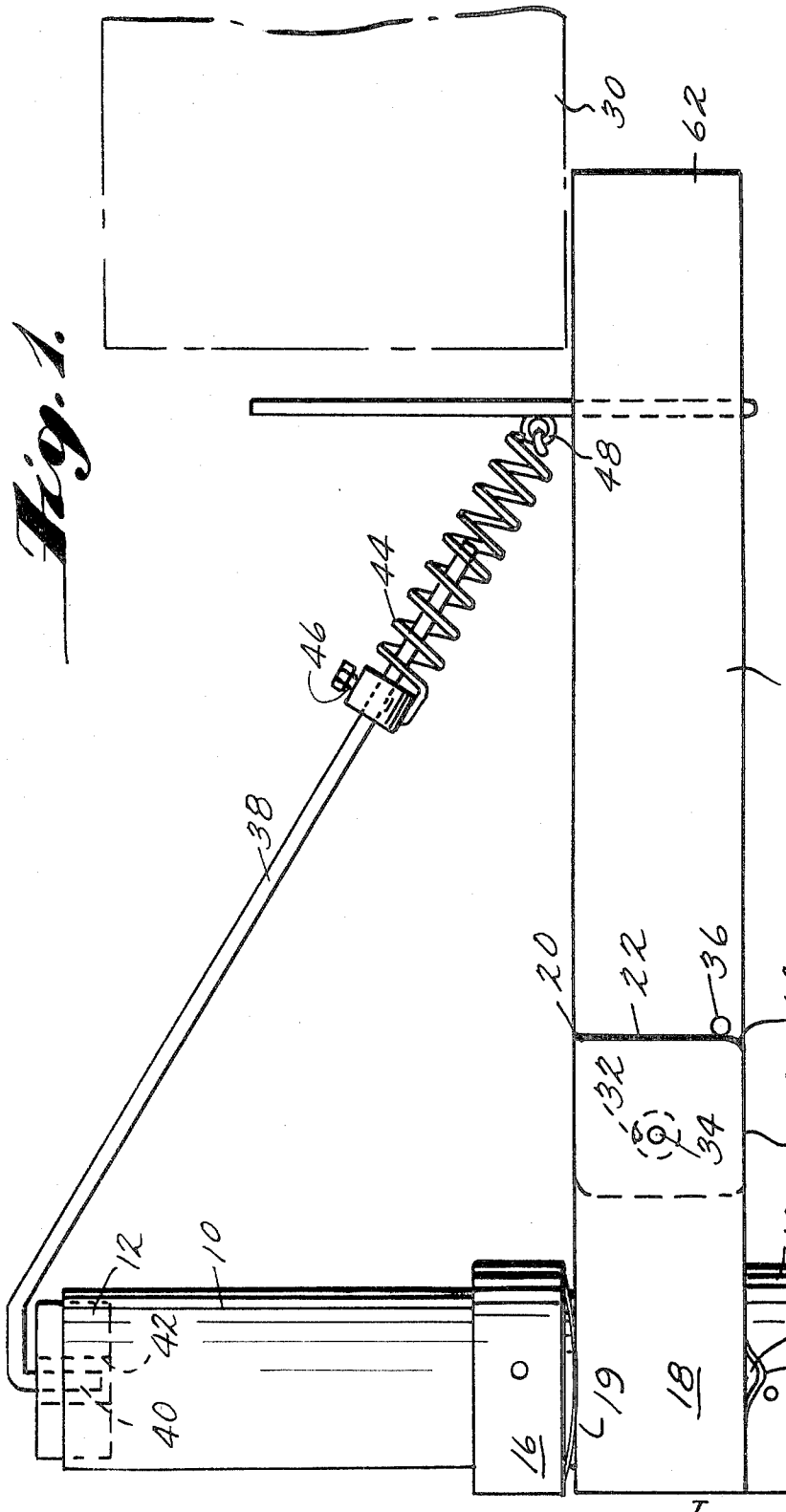


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Fig. 1.



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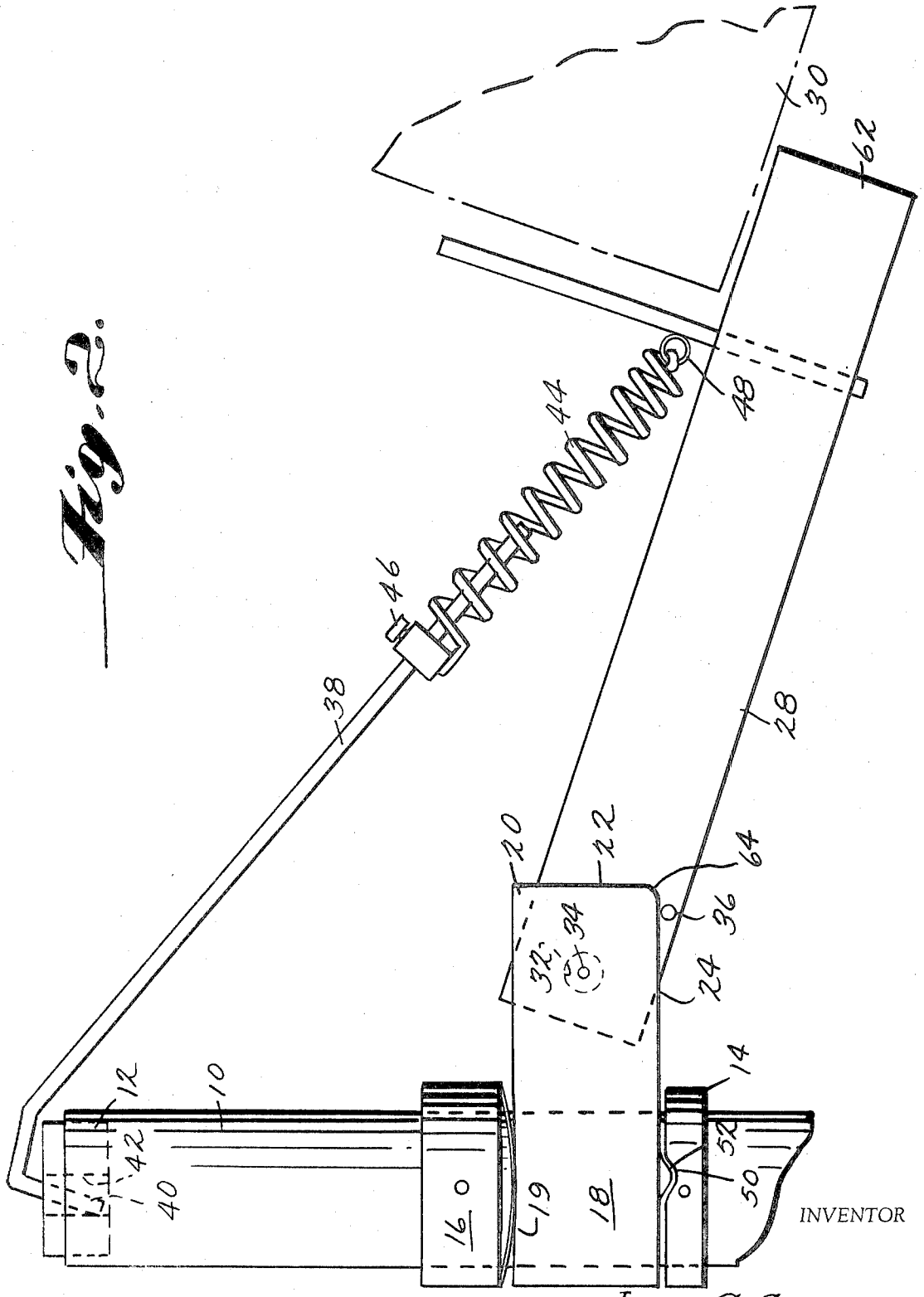
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Fig. 2



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Fig. 4.

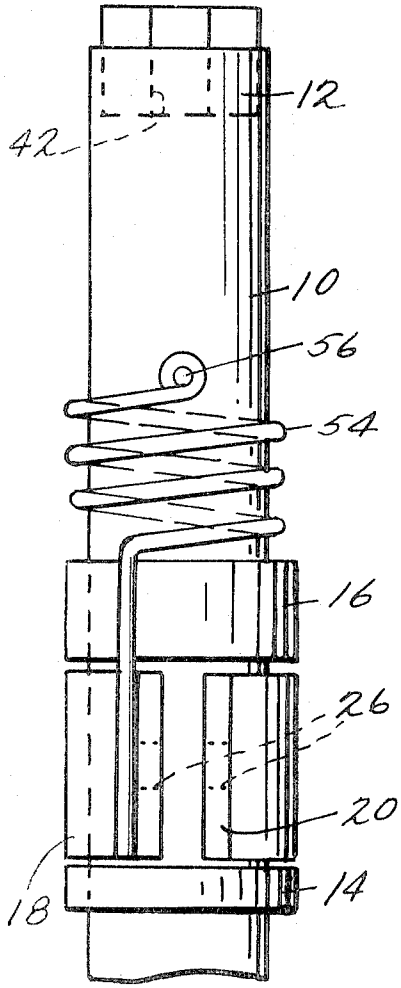
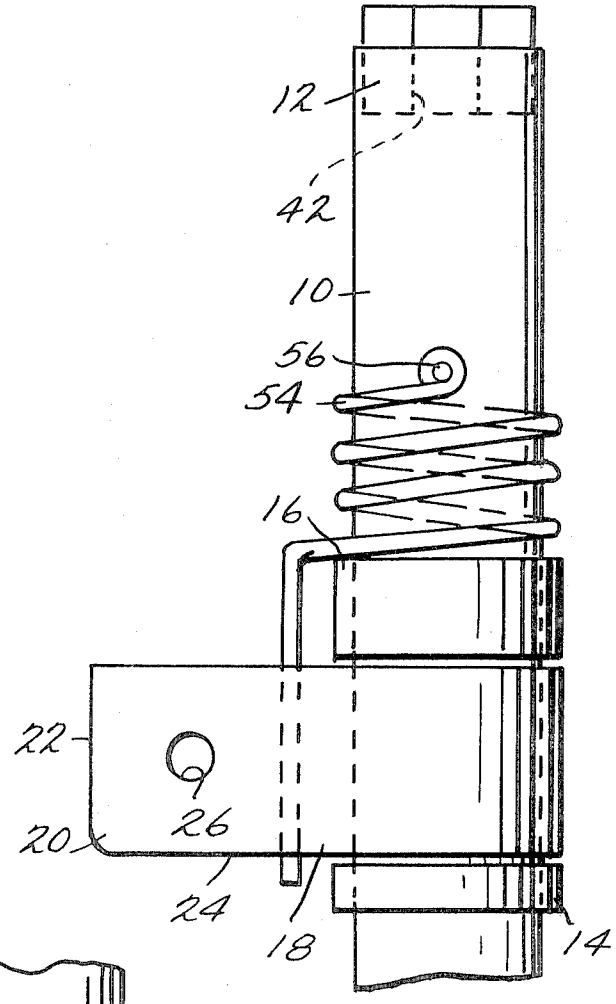


Fig. 5.



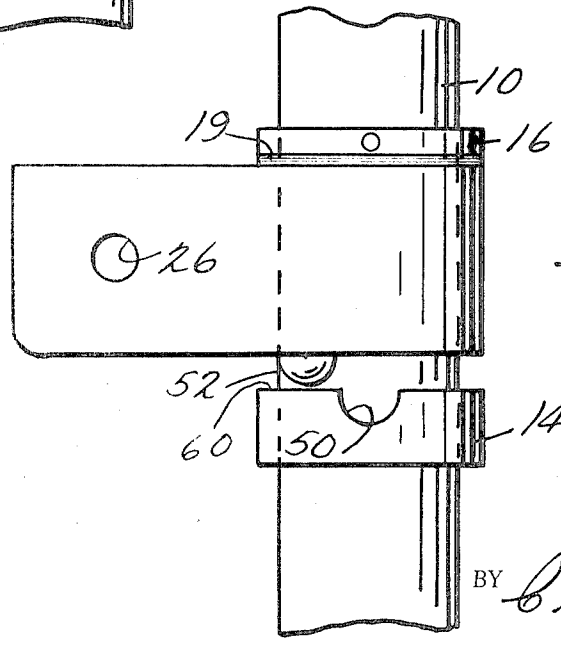


Fig. 3.

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MAILBOX SUPPORT

The present invention relates to a mailbox support and more particularly to such a support having a mailbox support arm which may be moved in a lateral direction upon its being struck by an object, such as a vehicle, without damaging the support in any way.

An object of the present invention is the provision of a rural mailbox support which is readily movable in a lateral plane so as to avoid injury to the support if the support is struck by an object such as a vehicle.

Another object is to provide a mailbox support having a support arm which is movable in a generally vertical plane between a locked normal position and a locked servicing position.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a mailbox support having a support arm which is lockable into a normal position and into a servicing position.

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 the invention as illustrated in the accompanying sheets of drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is an elevation of an embodiment of the invention with the support arm shown in the locked normal position;

FIG. 2 is an elevational view of the invention showing the support arm in the locked servicing position;

FIG. 3 is a detailed elevational view of a portion of the invention showing the relative positions of a movable ring and a stopper ring when the support arm has been moved from its normal position in a lateral direction;

FIG. 4 is a front elevation of another embodiment of the support with parts removed for clarity; and

FIG. 5 is a front elevation of the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4 with parts removed for clarity illustrating the position of the movable ring when the support arm has been struck so as to move it in a lateral direction from its normal position.

With reference now to the drawings, wherein like reference characters designate like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, there is shown a generally vertically oriented post **10** which has an upper end with a cap **12** fitted therein and a lower end which is adapted to be anchored in the ground. A stopper ring **14** is affixed to the post by conventional means and a lockring **16** is also conventionally attached to the post. A movable ring is located on the post **10** and between the lockring **16** and the stopper ring **14**, and a spring washer **19** is located around the post and between the lockring and the movable ring. The movable ring includes a yoke portion or member **20** integral therewith and the yoke member includes a first surface **22** and a second surface **24**. In addition, the yoke member **20** includes aligned apertures **26**.

A support arm **28** having a standard rural mailbox **30** mounted thereon has an aperture **32** of predetermined size and shape adjacent a first end thereof. Although the aperture **32** is illustrated as being a circular aperture of larger size than the apertures **26**, a slotted aperture **32** could also be provided with the longest dimension of the aperture being generally parallel with the ground. A pin member **34** extends through the aligned apertures **26** and through the aperture **32** to hold the first end of the support arm **28** within the yoke member **20** so that the support arm **28** is able to rotate in a generally vertical plane about the pin member **34**.

The support arm **28** has a locking pin **36** extending therefrom at a predetermined position for normally engaging the first surface **22** of the yoke member when the support arm is in the normal position and for engaging the second surface **24** of the yoke member when the support arm **28** is placed into the servicing position. An extendable support means is coupled between the post **10** and the support arm **28** and includes a tubular member **38** having an end portion **40** which extends through the cap **12** and into an aperture **42** therein. A coil spring **44** is affixed to the tubular member **38** in a conventional manner at **46** and is affixed to the support arm **28** at **48**.

In one embodiment of the invention, as illustrated in FIGS. 1–3 the stopper ring includes a notch **50** therein and the movable ring includes a projection **52** thereon for normally seating

in the notch **50** when the support arm **28** is in the normal position in a lateral lane. In another embodiment, illustrated in FIGS. **4** and **5**, a coil spring **54** is located around the post **10** and a first end of the spring is affixed to the post by conventional means at **56** while a second end of the spring engages the movable ring **18**.

In the operation of the support as illustrated in FIGS. 1–3, the support arm **28** is normally held in the position shown in FIG. 1. The projection **52** is seated within the notch **50** and the coil spring **44** retracts the arm **28** into the normal locked position with the locking pin engaging the first surface **22**. In the event that a snow plow or other vehicle strikes the support arm **28** the rounded projection **52** is caused to move up the side of the notch **50** and onto the surface **60** of the stopper ring. This is most clearly shown in FIG. 3. As the vehicle passes by, the support arm **28** will be moved in a generally lateral plane and will freely rotate about the post **10** so that damage to the arm **28** and to the post is avoided. Using this embodiment it is then necessary to manually move the arm **28** back into the normal position so that the projection **52** again seats in the notch **50**.

If the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **4** and **5** is utilized the arm **28**, as connected to the movable ring **18**, will move in a generally lateral plane if struck by a snow plow or other vehicle in the same manner as described with respect to the embodiment illustrated in plane. 1–3. However, the coil spring **54** is used in place of the projection **52** and the notch **50** so that the arm **28** is permitted to freely rotate about the post **10** until the vehicle passes. After the vehicle has passed the action of the spring **54** against the movable ring **18** will cause the ring and the arm **28** to return to the normal position as illustrated in FIG. **4**.

When the mailman wants to insert mail into the box **30** it will often be desirable for him to be able to pull the box **30** in a downward direction so that the box will be located adjacent to the window of the vehicle used by the mailman. In this way he can readily place the mail into the box. This vertical movement of the support arm **28** and of the box **30** is facilitated by the pin **34** which permits rotation of the arm **28** in a generally vertical plane. In addition, the locking pin **36** is so placed on the arm **28** that it engages the first surface **22** when the arm **28** is in the normal position. Thus, the pin **36** together with the tubular member **38** and spring **44** act to hold the support arm **28** in the normal position. However, when the mailman desires to place mail into the mailbox **30** he need only grasp the end **62** of the arm **28** or the mailbox so as to first move the arm **28** in a generally linear direction perpendicular to the axis of the post **10**. This movement permits the aperture **32** to move relative to the pin **34** and permits the locking pin **36** to clear the corner **64** of the yoke member **20** when the arm **28** is rotated in a generally downward direction. The mailman can then release the arm **28** and the tubular member **38** together with the spring **44** will cause the locking pin **36** to engage the second surface **24** of the yoke member **20** so that the arm **28** is locked into the servicing position.

After the mail has been deposited into the box **30** the mailman can again grasp the end **62** of the support arm **28** so as to extend the spring **44** and to cause the aperture **32** to move relative to the pin **34**. This movement again permits the locking pin **36** to move relative to the corner **64** of yoke member **20** to clear the corner and the support arm **28** is returned to the normal position by the contracting action of the spring **44**.

Thus, this invention provides for a mailbox support, a portion of which is freely movable in a lateral direction to prevent damage to the support as a result of being struck by a snow plow or other type vehicle. In addition, the support of this invention provides for the movement of the mailbox from a normal position to a servicing position whereby the box can easily be locked in either of these positions.

Obviously many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that within the scope of the ap-

pended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

What is claimed is:

1. A rural mailbox support comprising:

a post having a generally vertical axis, an upper end and a lower end, said lower end being adapted to be anchored in the ground;

a mailbox support arm having an aperture of predetermined size and shape adjacent a first end thereof;

a lockring fixedly attached to said post;

a stopper ring spaced from said lockring along said post and fixedly attached to said post;

a movable ring located on said post between said lockring and said stopper, said movable ring having an integral yoke member with at least first and second adjacent exterior surfaces extending at different angles to the vertical and aligned apertures in said member, said aligned apertures being of different size from said support arm aperture;

a pin member extending through said aligned apertures and through said support arm aperture to hold said first end of said support arm within said yoke member so that said arm can move linearly in a plane roughly perpendicular to said post;

a locking pin extending from said support arm for normally engaging said first surface of said yoke member for maintaining said support arm in a normal position and for engaging said second surface when said support art is linearly moved and then rotated about said pin member to cause said locking pin to move along said first surface to said second surface and along said second surface to a position such that said locking pin maintains said support arm in said servicing position;

extendable support means coupled between said post and said support arm for enabling the movement of said support arm between said normal position and said servicing position and exerting a force urging said support arm towards said post so as to hold said support arm in either said servicing or normal position by the engagement of said locking pin with said first or second surfaces, respectively, and

means operatively associated with said movable ring for normally maintaining said movable ring in said normal position.

2. A mailbox support as in claim 1 wherein said stopper ring includes a notch therein and wherein said movable ring has a projection thereon for normally seating in said notch to maintain said support arm in said normal position.

3. A mailbox support as in claim 2 further including:

a spring washer located around said post between said movable ring and said lockring for normally urging said projection into said notch.

4. A mailbox support as in claim 1 wherein said maintaining means include:

a spring located around said post with a first end of the spring affixed to said post and a second end of the spring engaging said movable ring.

5. A mailbox support as in claim 1 further including:

cap means affixed to said upper end for movably receiving a portion of said extendable support means and for enabling movement together with said movable ring of said support arm in a generally horizontal direction.

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