

[54] **AUTOMATIC CARD DISPENSER**

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[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**A45c 11/18**

[58] **Field of Search**221/279, 59, 280; 312/61;
206/39, 40.5, 57; 271/61 TR, 61 CS

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

Herein described is a cardholder for holding a plurality of business cards or the like and including a substantially rectangular housing having an open top portion. A pair of retaining lips are disposed over the open portion and overlap a portion thereof. A support plate is disposed in the housing and urged from the bottom by a pair of springs, whereby a suitable stack of business cards can be positioned between the support plate and the retaining lip. An opening is left on one end so that a single card can be passed therethrough, while a larger opening is left on the other end so a plurality of cards may be placed into or taken from the holder.

4 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures

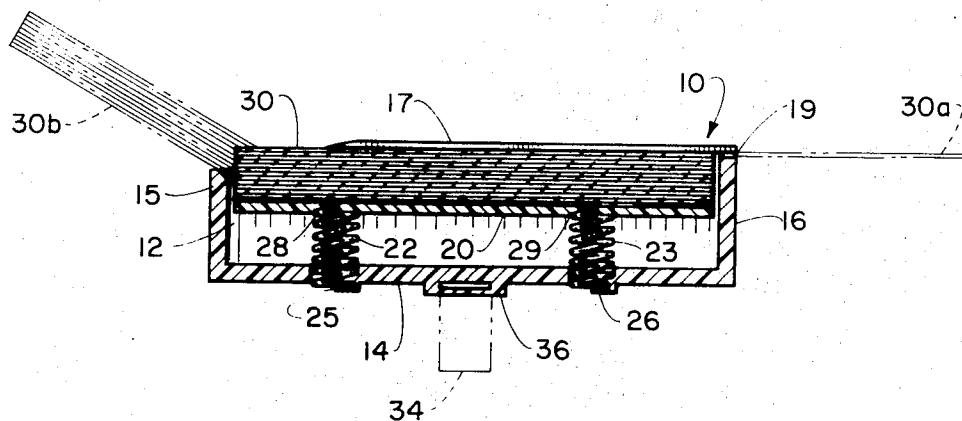


FIG. 1.

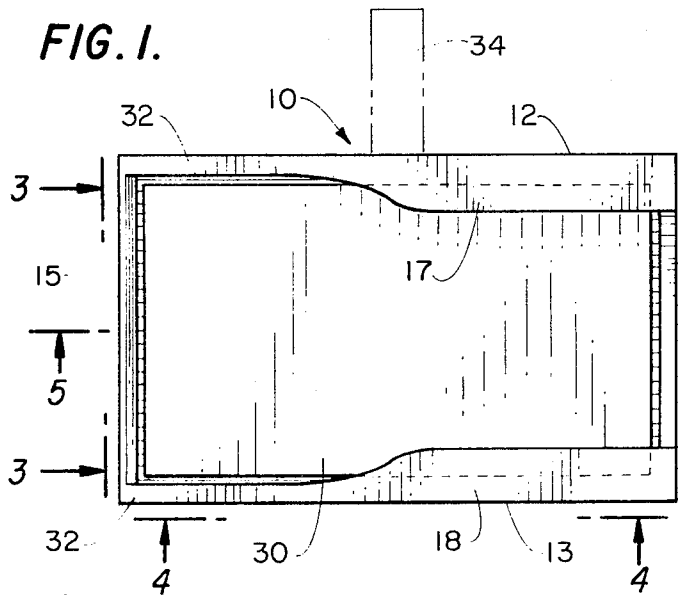


FIG. 2.

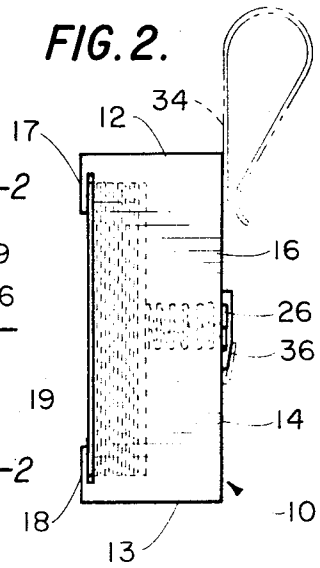


FIG. 3.

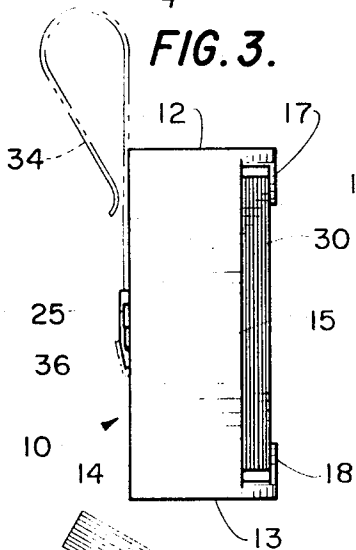


FIG. 4.

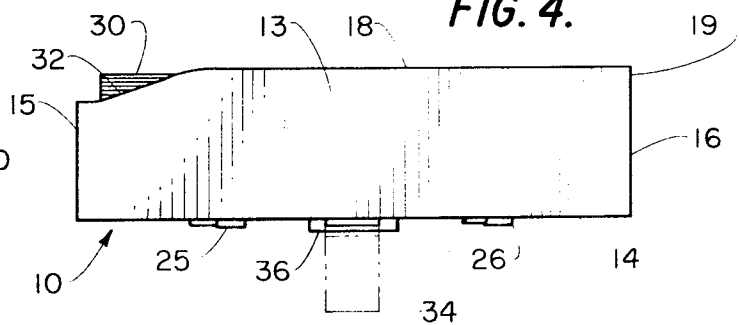
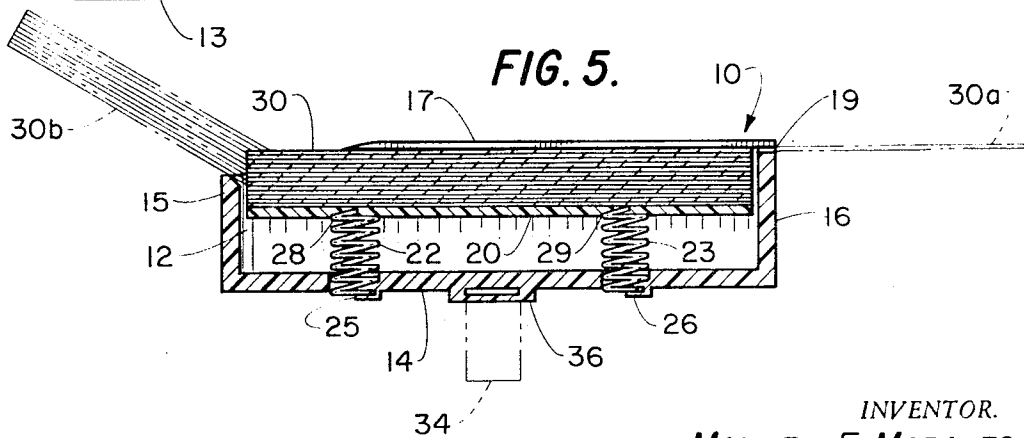


FIG. 5.



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AUTOMATIC CARD DISPENSER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to cardholders and more particularly to a novel and improved cardholder for holding business cards and the like, which is capable of dispensing a single card at a time and which can be conveniently attached to a fixed object.

2. Discussion of the Prior Art

Almost all businessmen use, what is commonly known as business cards, to identify themselves and relate their business and capabilities. The sizes of such business cards are 2 inches by 3-1/2 inches for convenience of carrying in the pocket. Cards are sometimes carried in the users wallets or in a convenient case which is about the same size as the card. At times, the businessman will have a small standard on his desk wherein a plurality of the cards are loosely stacked.

A desirable cardholder would conveniently be one which can hold snugly a stack of cards and whereby they are conveniently dispensed one at a time or a plurality at a time. Also the desirable cardholder is one which can easily be loaded with a large stack of cards.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention includes all the above desirable features. Briefly described, the present invention is a cardholder for holding a plurality of business cards or the like, which comprises a substantially rectangular box-like and substantially closed housing except the top thereof is open. A pair of retaining lips are disposed on the side members of the housing which extend over a portion of the opening of the housing. A support means, which may for example, be a corresponding plate, is disposed within the housing and urged towards the retaining lips by spring means for retaining the stack of business cards therebetween. One end of the retaining lips are spaced from one of the end members of the housing to facilitate the passing of a single card therebetween. This can easily be accomplished in the shown embodiment by sliding an exposed card with a finger or a thumb.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and advantages will become more apparent to those skilled in the art wherein like reference numerals indicate like and corresponding parts throughout the several views and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of the cardholder illustrating the principles of the invention;

FIG. 2 is an end view taken along the lines 2-2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an end view taken along the lines 2-2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a side view taken along the lines 4-4 of FIG. 3; and

FIG. 5 is a section view taken along the lines 5-5 of FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF ONE EMBODIMENT

Turning now to a more detailed description of but one preferred embodiment of this invention, there is shown in the drawings a rectangular shaped box-like

housing 10 which is used to contain a supply of business cards. A pair of side members 12 and 13 extend upwardly or normal to a bottom portion 14. A pair of end members 15 and 16 extend upwardly or normal to the bottom portion 14, to complete the housing 10. The inside dimensions of the housing 10 should be substantially the same as the business cards placed therein. The housing may preferably be made of a formed plastic-like material which is suitable for injection molding. It should be understood though, that any suitable material may be used.

A pair of retaining lips 17 and 18 are positioned upon the side members 12 and 13 and extend inwardly over the open portion of the housing 10. The amount which the lips 17 and 18 extend need only be sufficient to engage only a portion of the business cards therein. The side portions 12 and 13 extend a small amount above the end members 15 and 16 to provide a slotted opening 19 so that a single business card can be passed under the retaining lips 17 and 18.

A support means, in the form of the support plate 20, is positioned within the housing 10 to support a stack of business cards thereon. The plate 20, may be substantially rectangular in shape and have approximately the same dimensions as the business cards which it supports.

Means are included to urge the support plate 20 towards the retaining lips 17 and 18 for holding the business cards snugly within the housing 10. To facilitate this means, a pair of coil springs 22 and 23 are placed within the housing 10 between the bottom portion 15 and the plate 20. Other suitable urging means such as, a leaf spring, and still be within the spirit and scope of this invention. Suitable indentations 25, 26 and 28, 29 are placed within the bottom portion 15 and support plate 20, respectively, to assure that the springs remain intact.

With the numeral 30 representing the business cards, it can be noted, especially in FIG. 5, that movement of the top card 30a with a finger or a thumb towards the slotted opening 19, dispensing of a card one at a time is possible. When the top card 30a has been dispensed, the next card in the stack is now in position for dispensing. After all of the cards have been dispensed, a fresh supply can be placed into the housing. This can be accomplished by depressing the support plate 20 and placing the new stack therein.

In the described embodiment, the lips 17 and 18 are foreshortened on one end, that is the lips do not quite reach the end opposite slots 19. Further, the end member 15 is somewhat shorter than member 16 whereby, a stack of business cards 30 can be easily inserted into or taken from the housing 10. The corner 32 is cut or beveled in the manner best shown in FIG. 4, so that the cards 30 can be inserted into the housing 10.

A spring clip 34 is attached to the back of the bottom portion 15 of the housing 10 to facilitate connecting the housing 10 to a stationary item such as for example, the sun visor of an automobile. The clip 34 may be connected to the housing 10 in any suitable manner, but in the shown embodiment, an opening 36, so that the spring clip 36 can slip thereunder. The clip 36 may have one end thereof bent back to prevent the clip 36 from slipping out.

Having thus described but one embodiment of this invention, what is claimed is:

1. A cardholder for holding a plurality of business cards or the like, said cardholder including:

a housing having a bottom portion, a pair of upstanding end members, a pair of upstanding side members, and an open top portion;

a pair of retaining lips, said retainer lips including a first end and a second end on opposing ones of the upstanding side members of said housing and overlapping the open portion of said housing, the first end of said pair of retaining lips being positioned substantially above a corresponding one of the upstanding end member so that at least one business card of said plurality can pass therebetween, the second end of said retainer lips ending a portion of the way along said members on said housing and said side members and one of said end members at the second end of said retainer lips being reduced in height where said retainer lips end to facilitate insertion of a plurality of business cards between said support plate and said retaining lips;

support means disposed within said housing and for supporting the plurality of business cards; and means disposed between said support plate and the bottom portion of said housing for urging said support means and the business cards supported thereby against said pair of retaining lips.

2. The cardholder as defined in claim 1 and further including means disposed on one end of said housing for allowing more than one business card to be inserted in said housing between said support means and said retaining lips.

3. The cardholder as defined in claim 1 and wherein said urging means being a pair of coil springs spaced laterally apart from one another and between said support means and the bottom portion of said housing.

4. The cardholder as defined in claim 1 and further including a spring clip mounted to the bottom of said housing.

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