United States Patent [19]

Vogele

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[54] **SIGN ASSEMBLY**

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[73] Assignee: **Environmental Graphic Systems, Inc.**, Chicago, Ill.

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[21] Appl. No.: **490,070**

Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 451,182, March 14, 1974, abandoned.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **40/156;** 40/125 F; 40/152.1

[51] **Int. Cl.²** **G09F 01/12**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 40/156, 152.1, 152, 135, 40/201, 202, 125 R, 125 A, 125 H, 125 F, 10 R, 10 B, 17, 18

[56] **References Cited**

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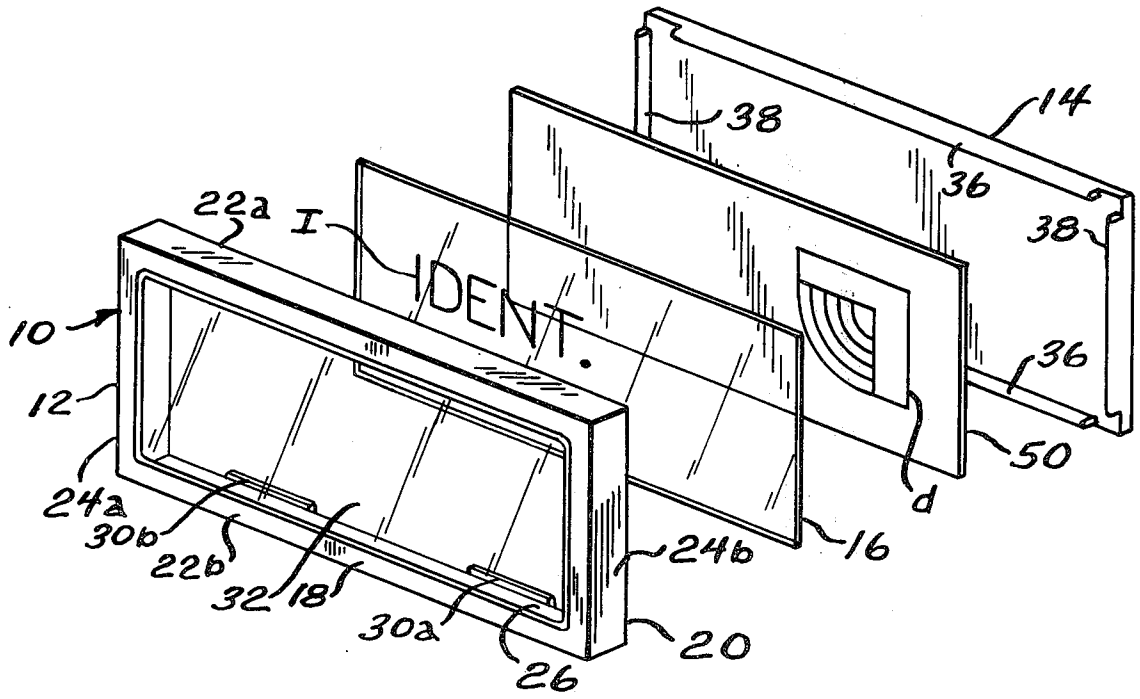
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Primary Examiner—Louis G. Mancene
Assistant Examiner—John F. Pitrelli

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A sign assembly comprising, a frame having a front surface, a rear surface, a pair of spaced side members and a pair of spaced end members connecting the side members. The side and end members define an opening extending through the frame, with at least one of the side members being made from a flexible material. The sign assembly has a transparent viewing member received in the frame adjacent the front surface, such that the viewing member covers the frame opening. The viewing member is unattached to the one side member in at least the central portion of the side member. The sign assembly also has a backing plate removably received in and covering a rear portion of the frame. The assembly has tab means co-operating between the one side member and the frame. The one side member may be flexed away from the viewing member to permit passage of the backing plate beneath the one side member for removing and inserting the backing plate, and the tab means retains the backing plate in the frame when the one side member is released.

6 Claims, 9 Drawing Figures



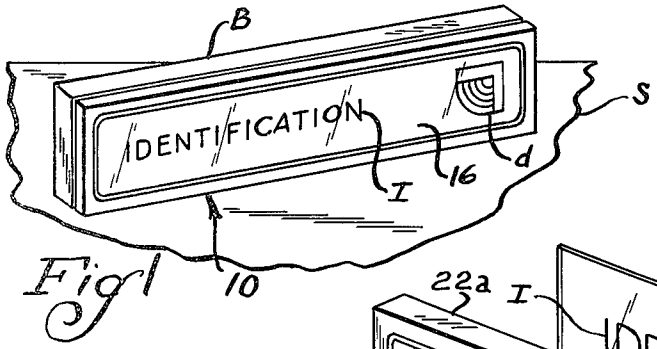
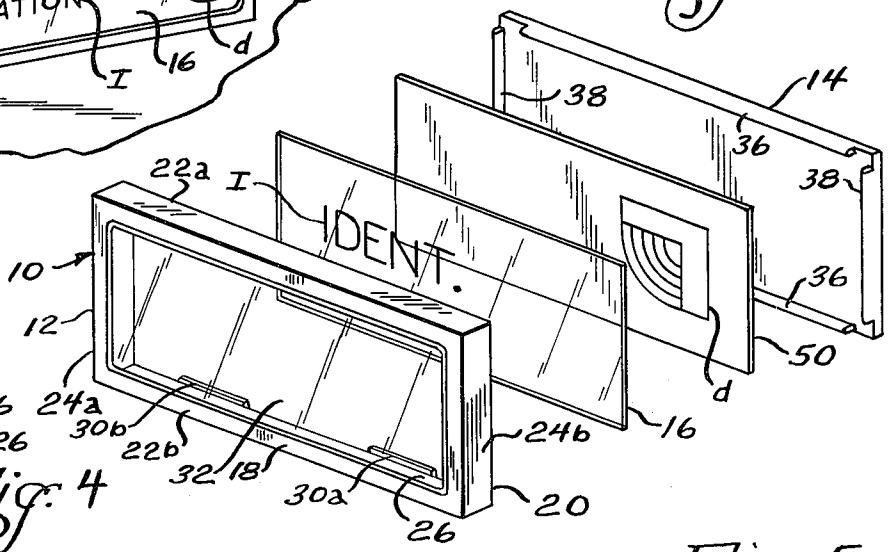


Fig. 1

Fig. 2



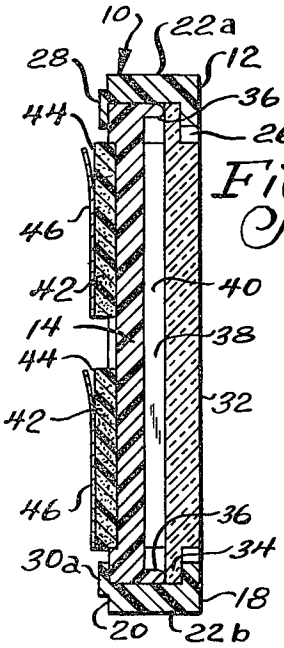


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

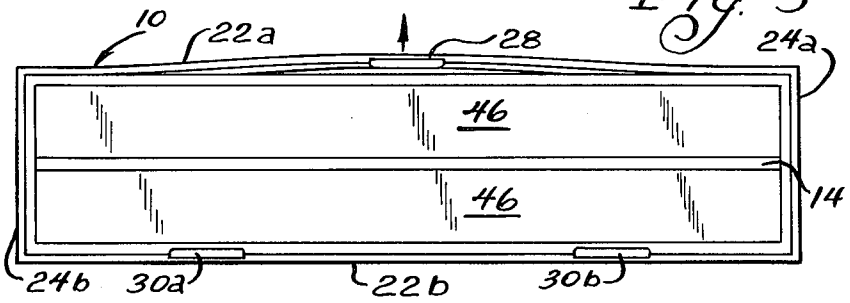
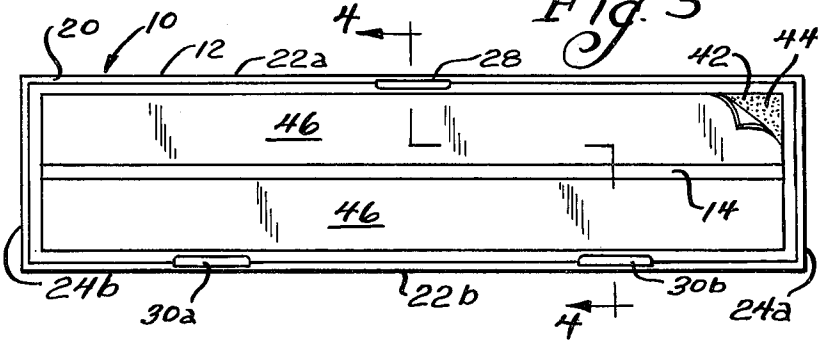


Fig. 3



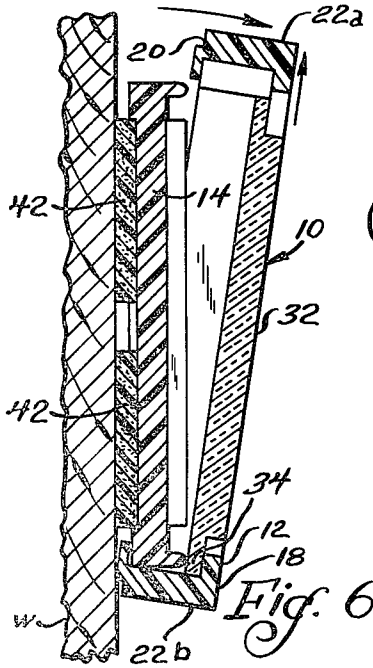


Fig. 6

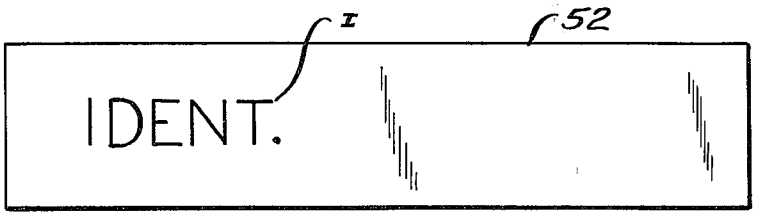


Fig. 7

Fig 8

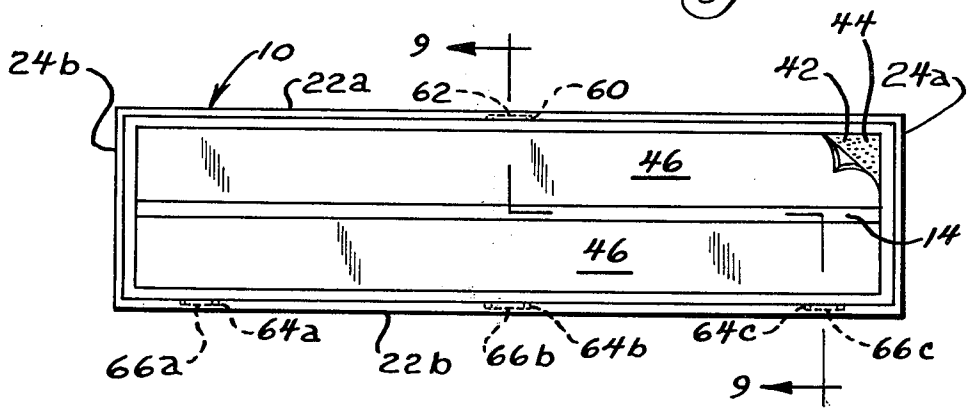
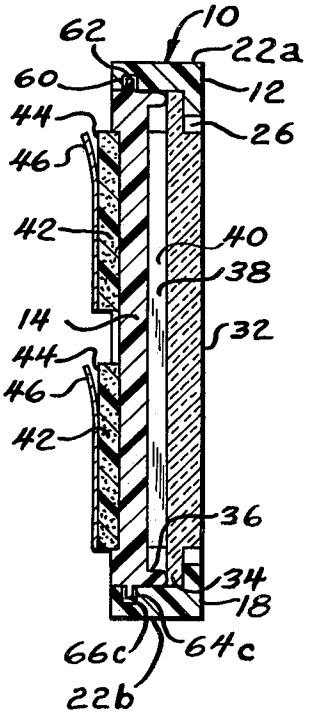

24b
10
22a
9
62
60
44
42
24a
46
46
14
64a
66a
22b
66b
64b
64c
66c
9

Fig 9


62
10
22a
60
12
44
26
46
42
40
38
14
32
44
46
42
36
34
18
66c
64c
22b

SIGN ASSEMBLY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. **451,182,** filed Mar. **14, 1974,** now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to signs, and more particularly to sign assemblies.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The use of plates for identification purposes is well known. For example, name plates are often utilized to identify an individual's office in a building. Such plates are most usually made by stamping the individual's name into a plastic plate. Although these plates have served their intended purpose of identifying the individual's office, they have not always proven satisfactory for other reasons.

Initially, it is apparent that separate name plates must be specially ordered according to each individual's name. It has been found that, depending upon the supplier of the plates, a delay of from **6** to **8** weeks may usually be encountered to obtain a name plate. Accordingly, the managers of office buildings receive frequent complaints from tenants due to such delays, and have viewed such plates with disfavor for this reason alone. Moreover, if an individual moves from one office to another location in the same building, the plate must be removed from a wall or other object and repositioned at another office. If the individual terminates employment with a company or otherwise quits a building altogether, such plates must be discarded since they have been specially made for the individual. Finally, such plates have definite limitations as to their aesthetic appeal.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A principal feature of the present invention is the provision of a sign assembly providing the capability of a ready change of identification.

The sign assembly of the present invention comprises a frame having a front surface, a rear surface, a pair of spaced side members and a pair of spaced end members connecting the side members. The side and end members define an opening extending through the frame, with at least one of the side members being made of a flexible material. The assembly has tab means co-operating between the one side member and the frame. The frame has a transparent viewing member received in the frame adjacent the front surface, such that the viewing member covers the frame opening and is unattached to the one side member in at least its central portion. The sign assembly also has a backing plate removably received in and covering a rear portion of the frame.

A feature of the present invention is that the one side member may be flexed away from the viewing member to permit passage of the backing plate beneath the one side member for removing and inserting the backing plate.

Another feature of the invention is that the tab means retains the backing plate in the frame when the one side member is released.

Another feature of the invention is that an indiciacontaining insert may be received between the viewing member and backing plate.

Yet another feature of the invention is the provision of tab means co-operating between the other of the side members and the backing plate for retaining the backing plate in the frame.

Further features will become more fully apparent in the following description of the embodiments of this invention and from the appended claims.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a sign assembly of the present invention as secured to a block for placement on an individual's desk;

FIG. **2** is an exploded perspective view of the sign assembly of the present invention;

FIG. **3** is a back elevational view of the sign assembly of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** is a sectional view taken substantially as indicated along the line **4—4** of FIG. **3**;

FIG. **5** is a back elevational view of the sign assembly of FIG. **2** showing a side member being flexed preparatory to removal of a frame from a backing plate;

FIG. **6** is a sectional view of the sign assembly showing the frame being removed from the backing plate;

FIG. **7** is a plan view of an identification card for the sign assembly of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **8** is a back elevational view of another embodiment of the sign assembly of the present invention; and

FIG. **9** is a sectional view taken substantially as indicated along the line **9—9** of FIG. **8.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to FIGS. **2, 3** and **4,** there is shown a sign assembly generally designated **10,** having a frame **12,** a backing plate **14,** and insert **16** containing indicia I. The frame **12** is made from a flexible material, such as plastic, and has a front surface **18** and rear surface **20.** The frame **12** also has an elongated spaced pair of side members **22***a* and **22***b* and a pair of end members **24***a* and **24***b* connecting the side members **22***a* and *b*. The side and end members **22***a* and *b* and **24***a* and *b* define an opening **26** extending through the frame **12.** One of the side members **22***a* has a depending tab **28** adjacent the rear surface **20,** and the other side member **22***b* has an upstanding pair of spaced tabs or tab means **30***a* and **30***b* adjacent the rear surface **20,** for purposes which will be described below.

A viewing member **32** is received in the frame **12** adjacent the front surface **18.** The viewing member **32** has flange means **34** extending around its periphery and which is located adjacent the inner surfaces of the side and end members, such that the viewing member extends between the side and end members and covers the opening **26.** The viewing member is made of a transparent material, such as an acrylic, in order that the indicia I on insert **16** may be seen through the viewing member. The flange means **34** is secured to the end members **24***a* and *b* and the other side member **22***b*, such as by adhesive or sonic welding. The flange means **34** is unattached to the one side member **22***a*, in order that the one side member may be flexed from the viewing member **32,** as shown in FIGS. **5** and **6,** for purposes described below.

As illustrated in FIGS. 2, 3, and 4, the backing plate 14 has a size sufficient that the backing plate extends between the inner surfaces of the side members 22*a* and *b* and end members 24*a* and *b* when the backing plate 14 is received in the frame 12. The backing plate 14 has a pair of side flanges 36 and end flanges 38 adjacent its periphery, such that the side and end flanges 36 and 38 abut against the inner surface of the viewing member 32 when the backing plate 14 is positioned in the frame 12. In this configuration, the backing plate 14 and viewing member 32 define a relatively thin cavity 40 to retain the insert 16 in place between the backing plate 14 and viewing member 32.

As illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4, a pair of elongated slats 42 are secured to the rear surface of the backing plate 14. The slats 42 have adhesive 44 on their outer surfaces which are covered by a pair of release sheets 46. The release sheets 46 are removed from the slats 42 to expose the adhesive 44 and permit securement of the backing plate 14 to an object, such as a wall W, as shown in FIG. 6. However, it is readily apparent that the use of adhesive to secure the backing plate and sign assembly to an object is for convenience only, and other suitable securement means, such as clips, may be provided for this purpose.

As best illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4, when the backing plate 14 is received in the frame 12, the upper tab 28 and lower tabs 30*a* and *b* engage the rear surface of the backing plate 14 and retain the backing plate in the frame. When it is desired to place an insert 16 in the sign assembly 10, or change inserts 16, the one side member 22*a* is flexed away from the backing plate 14 and viewing member 32, as indicated by the direction of arrows in FIGS. 5 and 6, to permit passage of the backing plate 14 beneath the upper tab 28. In this configuration, the frame 12 may be swung away from the backing plate 14, as indicated by the direction of the arrow in FIG. 6, until the tab 28 clears the backing plate 14, and the lower tabs 30*a* and *b* may be disengaged from the lower part of the backing plate to remove the frame 12 from the backing plate 14. The desired insert 16 is then placed between the side and end flanges 36 and 38 of the backing plate 14, and the procedure is reversed to secure the frame to the backing plate. Thus, the lower tabs 30*a* and *b* of the frame 12 are engaged against the rear surface of the backing plate, the one side member 22*a* is flexed away from the viewing member 32, the frame 12 is swung toward the backing plate 14 until the upper tab 28 clears the backing plate, and the one side member 22*a* is released, such that the tab 28 engages the rear surface of the backing plate 14 and retains the frame on the backing plate.

It will be readily apparent that the sign assembly of the present invention provides for great flexibility of convenient identification. For example, a backing insert 50 may be positioned between the transparent insert 16 and the backing plate 14, as illustrated in FIG. 2. The backing insert 50 may have any suitable color as a contrast in background for the indicia I on the insert 16, and may contain a design *d* or other identification information. Accordingly, the color and design on the backing insert 50 may be utilized not only for aesthetic appeal, it may provide the viewer with information, such as a company color and logo, if desired. Alternatively, an opaque insert 52, as shown in FIG. 7, may be utilized in lieu of the inserts 16 and 50. The insert 52 may have indicia I and any suitable background color and design, as desired.

Another embodiment of the sign assembly of the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9, in which like reference numerals designate like parts. In this embodiment, the one side member 22*a* has a centrally located slot 60 in its inner surface facing the other side member 22*b*. The backing plate 14 has an associated outwardly extending tab 62 which is received in the slot 60 to releasably retain the backing plate in the frame 12. The other side member 22*b* has a plurality of, and preferably three, spaced slots 64*a*, 64*b*, and 64*c* in its inner surface facing the one side member 22*a*. The backing plate 14 has a plurality of associated outwardly extending tabs 66*a*, 66*b*, and 66*c* which are receivable in the slots 64*a*, *b* and *c* to retain the lower portion of the backing plate in the frame 12. In other respects, the operation of the sign assembly of FIGS. 8 and 9 is similar to the sign assembly described in connection with FIGS. 17.

Not only does the sign assembly of the present invention provide for a wide capability of identification, it is readily apparent that changes in identification may be made in a simplified and expeditious manner. Once the sign assembly has been secured to a desired object at a given location, it would no longer be necessary to move the assembly, since its identification inserts may be easily changed. For example, if the sign assembly is utilized to identify an individual's office, and the individual changes offices, a new insert may be utilized to identify the new individual who occupies the vacated office. The identification inserts for the offices may be conveniently made by personnel owning the building or by company personnel, and, accordingly, may be changed without incurring a significant delay. Moreover, it may be desired to periodically change the backing insert 50 to provide different colors or designs, or the indicia on the inserts may be readily modified to indicate a change of position for an individual.

It is also apparent that the sign assembly of the present invention may be constructed in a variety of shapes and may be utilized for a wide variety of purposes. For example, relatively larger sign assemblies may be placed on the walls of a building to provide visitors with directional information. As another example, the sign assembly 10 may be secured to a block B for placement of the sign assembly on a surface S, such as a desk, as shown in FIG. 1. Other uses of the sign assembly are multitude in scope, as will be apparent to a person skilled in the art.

Thus, the foregoing detailed description is given for clearness of understanding only, and no unnecessary limitations should be understood therefrom, as modifications will be obvious to those skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:

1. A sign assembly comprising:

a frame having a front surface, a rear surface, a pair of spaced side members and a pair of spaced end members connecting said side members, said side and end members defining an opening extending through the frame, at least one of said side members being made of a flexible material;

a transparent viewing member received in the frame adjacent said front surface, said viewing member covering the frame opening and being unattached to said one side member in at least the central portion of the side member, said viewing member hav-

ing a flange extending around its periphery and being located adjacent inner surfaces of the other side member and end members;

a backing plate removably received in and covering a rear portion of said frame, said backing plate having a pair of side flanges and end flanges, said side and end flanges abutting against the inner surface of said viewing member when said backing plate is positioned in the frame;

a pair of elongated slats disposed on a rear surface of said backing plate having means for securing said backing plate to an object for display; and

tab means comprising a tab on the one side member adjacent its rear surface extending toward the other of said side members, and a plurality of spaced tabs on the other of said side members adjacent the rear surface of the frame extending toward the one side member, said one side member being flexed away from the viewing member to permit passage of the backing plate beneath said one side member for removing and inserting the backing plate, said tab means retaining the backing plate in the frame when the one side member is released.

2. The assembly of claim **1** including an indiciacontaining insert receivable between said viewing member and backing plate.

3. The assembly of claim **2** wherein said insert is made from a transparent material.

4. The assembly of claim **3** including a backing insert receivable between the transparent insert and the backing plate.

5. The assembly of claim **2** wherein said insert is made from an opaque material.

6. A sign assembly comprising:

a frame having a front surface, a rear surface, a pair of spaced side members and a pair of spaced end members connecting said side members, said side and end members defining an opening extending through the frame, at least one of said side members being made of a flexible material;

said one side member having a slot on its inner surface facing the other of said side members, said other of said side members having a plurality of spaced slots on its inner surface facing the one side member;

a transparent viewing member received in the frame adjacent said front surface, said viewing member covering the frame opening and being unattached to said one side member in at least the central portion of the side member, said viewing member having a flange extending around its periphery and being located adjacent inner surfaces of the other side member and end members;

a backing plate removable received in and covering a rear portion of said frame, said backing plate having a pair of side flanges and end flanges, said side and end flanges abutting against the inner surface of said viewing member when said backing plate is positioned in the frame;

a pair of elongated slats disposed on a rear surface of said backing plate having means for securing said backing plate to an object for display; and

tab means comprising a tab extending outwardly from a top portion of said backing plate which is receivable in the slot on said one side member, and a plurality of tabs extending outwardly from a lower portion of said backing plate which are receivable in the slots in the other of said side members, said one side member being flexed away from the viewing member to permit passage of the backing plate beneath said one side member for removing and inserting the backing plate, said tab means retaining the backing plate in the frame when one side member is released.

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