

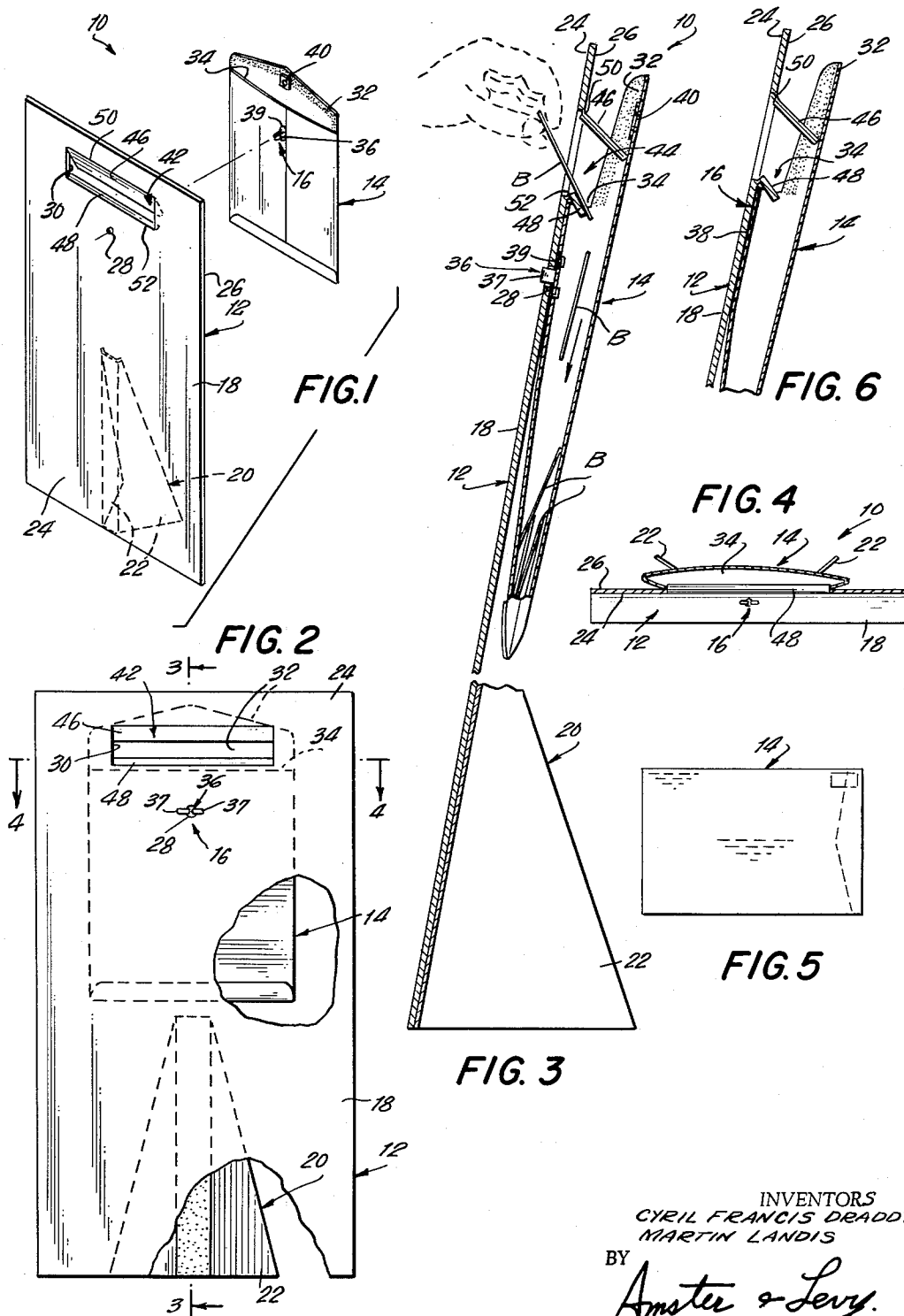
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COMBINED DISPLAY AND BALLOT RECEPTACLE

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**3,229,902
COMBINED DISPLAY AND BALLOT
RECEPTACLE**

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The present invention relates generally to display devices, and in particular to a combined display and ballot receptacle.

In connection with the running of contests, it has been customary to provide ballot boxes in association with various display posters which usually have a supply of ballots secured thereto. Similar displays are also used for running a variety of tests and in diverse situations where an individual is required to supply information by means of a ballot or slip of paper and deposit the same into a ballot receptacle. A serious disadvantage in these conventional display poster and ballot box arrangements has been occasioned by difficulty encountered in expeditiously returning the ballots to their central point of destination. This was due to the fact that it was often necessary to employ individuals to collect the ballots or provide instruction at the balloting stations to remove the ballots from the ballot boxes for forwarding to a given destination. Thus, it was necessary for some individual to handle the ballots in the course of their collection. In accordance with the present combined display and ballot receptacle it is possible to meet the requirements of a simple and effective device for collecting ballot blanks, yet allowing for forwarding of the same to a given central destination with a minimum amount of handling. In addition to meeting the requirements of adaptability and the ability to achieve the intended function, it is equally important that the units be relatively compact and capable of manufacture by mass production techniques at a relatively low unit cost.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a novel combined display and ballot receptacle of the aforesaid character, incorporating one or more of the above mentioned desirable features. More particularly, it is within the contemplation of the present invention to provide novel attachment means for mounting the envelope on the display panel and with the facility for removing the envelope such that the fastening means may thereafter be employed to close the envelope.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a novel slot in the panel member which includes strike-out flaps on the upper and lower edges of the slot which serve to keep the envelope open and form a chute at the mouth of the slot for receiving ballots.

In accordance with an illustrative embodiment demonstrating these and other features of the present invention, there is provided a combined display and ballot receptacle including a panel member having front and rear surfaces and a slot formed therethrough. An envelope having an open end is adapted to be detachably secured to the panel member with the open end substantially overlying the slot for receiving ballot blanks deposited therethrough. Releasably engaging the panel member is attachment means located on the envelope contiguous with its open end for detachably securing the envelope to the panel member. The attachment means serves to close the open end of the envelope when detached from the panel member.

Additional objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent during the course of the

following specification when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a combined display and ballot receptacle incorporating the present invention, wherein the ballot receptacle or ballot envelope is shown in a position for being secured to the display arrangement;

FIG. 2 is a front elevational view showing the ballot envelope secured to the display arrangement;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2 and showing ballots being passed through the chute, formed in the display arrangement, into the ballot envelope;

FIG. 4 is a transverse sectional view taken along the line 4—4 of FIG. 2 to better show the ballot envelope when in an open condition;

FIG. 5 is a plan view of the ballot envelope, removed from display arrangement for being forwarded via mailing;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary sectional view, similar to FIG. 3, of a modified combined display and ballot receptacle in accordance with the present invention wherein a pressure sensitive adhesive is used to detachably secure the ballot envelope to the display arrangement.

Referring in detail to the drawings, FIG. 1 illustrates a combined display and ballot receptacle made in accordance with the present invention and designated generally by the reference numeral 10. The display and ballot receptacle 10 includes an upright poster or easel back 12 and a ballot receptacle or mailing envelope 14, initially serving as a ballot receptacle and detachably secured to the easel back 12 by attachment means 16.

It is within the contemplation of the present invention to utilize any conventional type of easel back by which a flat object may be made to stand upright or suitably inclined. In accordance with the type of easel back 12 chosen herein for purposes of illustration, a panel member 18 is maintained in a suitable upright or inclined position by means of a prop 20 which includes two tabs 22 which are pulled out at an angle with respect to the panel member 18. As an alternative, it is possible to use the conventional artist-type of easel wherein the prop would consist of horizontally hinged struts as opposed to the vertically hinged tabs 22 shown herein, and it would also be necessary to provide a rope or chain secured to the struts and easel back for maintaining such struts in a proper fixed position. Thus, the easel back 12 is capable of supporting a pictorial representation or poster, mounted on the panel member 18, in an upright position at a desired angle with respect to a horizontal surface.

The panel member 18 is preferably formed of cardboard material or the like, and includes a front surface 24 for mounting the pictorial display and a rear surface 26 at which the envelope 14 is secured, substantially co-extensive with an opening 28 which is disposed in the panel member 18 for this purpose, as will later be described herein. As best seen in FIG. 1, an elongated slot or ballot window opening 30 through which the ballots B are deposited, is also disposed in the panel member 18.

For the ballot receptacle 14 it is contemplated to utilize the conventional elongated type envelope which includes a closure flap 32 and attachment means 16 located at the rear face of the envelope 14, contiguous to its open end or mouth 34.

One form of the attachment means 16 illustrated herein utilizes the conventional separable fastener clasp 36 which is usually provided with larger types of mailing envelopes. Thus, the fastener clasp 36 includes a pair of spaced-apart fastening fingers 37 which extend radially from a mount-

ing yoke 39 secured to the rear face of the envelope 14. Since the fastening fingers 37 are formed of a relatively light gauge, bendable type of metal, it is possible for the fastening fingers 37 to be spread apart and together, so that the fingers 37 can be pivoted about the mounting yoke 39. It is preferable to provide a closure opening 40 in the closure flap 32 which is located in a position coextensive with the mounting yoke 39 when the closure flap 32 is folded over the rear face of the envelope 14, as best seen in FIG. 5. However, it is possible to dispense with the closure opening 40 and merely insert the sharp leading edges of the fastening fingers 37 through the material of the closure flap 32.

In the modified embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the fastening means includes a pressure sensitive adhesive 38 which is preferably disposed on the rear face of the mailing envelope 14. Alternatively, it is possible to deposit the pressure sensitive adhesive 38 on the rear surface 26 of the panel member 18 in a position below the ballot window opening 30. Utilizing the latter arrangement the pressure sensitive adhesive 38 would be used to secure the envelope 14 to the panel member 18 and it would be necessary to provide glue or other fastening means on the closure flap 32 for securing the same for mailing. As a further alternative it is possible to deposit the pressure sensitive adhesive 38 on both the mailing envelope 14 and the rear surface 26 of the panel member 18 thereby obtaining even greater adhesion. Thus, it is apparent that the pressure sensitive adhesive 38 serves to detachably secure the mailing envelope 14 to the panel member 18 and to close the open end 34 of the envelope 14 when it is detached from the panel member 18.

To achieve the ballot receptacle function in connection with the mailing envelope 14, the attachment means 16 on the envelope 14 releasably engage the panel member 18 for detachably securing the envelope 14 to the panel member 18 at the rear surface 26 with the open end 34 being coextensive with the slot 30 for receiving the ballot blanks B which are deposited therethrough from the front display surface 24. As shown in FIG. 1, it is a relatively easy task to insert the fastening fingers 37 through the opening 28 in the panel member 18, and the fastening fingers 37 which are initially vertically disposed with respect to the rear face of the envelope 14 can then be spread apart to secure the envelope 14 at the rear surface 26 of panel member 18. If the mailing envelope 14 is provided with a pressure sensitive adhesive 38, it is merely necessary to apply finger pressure against the front of the mailing envelope 14 with the area of the envelope 14 containing the pressure sensitive adhesive 38 being positioned below the slot 30. Thus, the attachment means 16 serves a dual function, namely, to detachably secure the envelope 14 to the easel back 12 when the envelope 14 is serving as a ballot receptacle and to close the open end 34 of the envelope 14 when it is detached from the easel back 12 to serve as a mailing receptacle.

Another aspect of the present invention is the provision of flap means 42 which are integral with the panel member 18 and extend rearwardly from the periphery of the elongated slot 30 so as to contact the closure flap 32 and spread apart the envelope 14 in an open condition thereby forming a chute 44 for depositing the ballots B into the envelope 14 which serves as a ballot receptacle. The flap means 42 include an upper strike-out flap 46 located along the upper horizontal edge of the ballot window opening 30 and a lower strike-out flap 48 located along the lower horizontal edge of the ballot window opening 30. It is preferable to form the strike-out flaps 46, 48 when the ballot window opening 30 is formed in the panel member 18, by not completely piercing the material of the panel member 18 along the respective upper and lower horizontal edges of the slot 30 so that a suitable hinging effect can be obtained. Thus, an upper hinge 50 and a lower hinge 52 are effectively formed at the respective upper and lower horizontal edges of the elongated slot 30

with the hinges 50, 52 being integral with the rear surface 26 of the panel member 18 such that the strike-out flaps 46, 48 can be pivoted rearwardly of the panel member 18. Accordingly, after securing the envelope 14 to the panel member 18 in the manner described herein, the strike-out flaps 46, 48 are pushed back so as to frame the ballot window opening 30 and hold the mouth 34 of the envelope 14 open for receiving the ballots B. Since the upper and lower hinges 50, 52 provide rather stiff pivotal movement for the upper and lower strike-out flaps 46, 48, they have a tendency to remain in a relatively fixed position when pushed back as described above, with the upper strike-out flap 46 contacting the envelope closure flap 32 and the lower strike-out flap 48 contacting the rear edge of the envelope 14 along its mouth 34. Thus, the flap means 42 is capable of maintaining the envelope 14 in a spread apart or open condition thereby forming the chute 44 for depositing the ballots B into the envelope 14.

While preferred embodiments of this invention have been shown and described herein, it is to be understood that numerous additions, changes and omissions may be made in such embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What we claim is:

1. The combination with an envelope receptacle having an open end for receiving ballot blanks, of a panel member having a rear surface, a front display surface and a slot formed therethrough, attachment means on said envelope at the rear face thereof adjacent the open end of said envelope for releasably engaging said panel member for detachably securing said envelope to said panel member at the rear surface thereof with said open end substantially coextensive with said slot for receiving ballot blanks which are deposited therethrough from said display surface, and said attachment means serving to close said open end of said envelope when said envelope is detached from said panel member, a closure member located at said open end of the envelope, flap means integral with said panel member and capable of extending rearwardly from the periphery of said slot so as to contact said closure member thereby spreading apart said envelope in an open condition and forming a chute for depositing said ballot blanks into said envelope.

2. A combined display and ballot blank receptacle including a panel member having front and rear surfaces and a slot formed therethrough, an envelope having an open end and adapted to be detachably secured to the rear surface of said panel member with said open end substantially overlying said slot for receiving blanks which are deposited therethrough from said front surface, and attachment means on said envelope at the rear face thereof adjacent the open end of said receptacle engageable with said panel member for detachably securing said envelope to said panel member contiguous to said open end and said attachment means serving to close said open end of said envelope when said envelope is detached from said panel member, a closure member located at said open end of the envelope, upper flap means integral with said panel member and capable of extending rearwardly from the upper periphery of said slot so as to contact said closure member thereby spreading apart said envelope in an open condition and forming a chute for depositing said ballot blanks into said envelope.

3. A combined display and ballot receptacle including a panel member having front and rear surfaces and an elongated slot formed therethrough, means for mounting said panel in an upright position, an envelope having an open end and adapted to be detachably secured to said panel member with said open end overlying said slot for receiving blanks which are deposited therethrough, a closure member extending from the open end of said envelope, attachment means on said envelope at the rear face thereof adjacent the open end of said envelope for releasably mounting said envelope on said panel member and serving to close said open end of said envelope when de-

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tached from said panel member, and an upper strike-out flap hingedly mounted on said panel member along the upper periphery of said elongated slot and a lower strike-out flap hingedly mounted on said panel member along the lower periphery of said elongated slot, said upper strike-out flap being capable of extending rearwardly from the periphery of said elongated slot so as to contact said closure flap when said envelope is mounted on said panel member thereby spreading apart said envelope in an open condition and forming a chute for depositing ballots into said receptacle.

4. A combined display and ballot receptacle according to claim 3 in which said attachment means includes a pressure sensitive adhesive disposed on the rear face of said envelope.

5. A combined display and ballot blank receptacle comprising an easel back including a panel member having front and rear surfaces and an elongated slot and mounting aperture formed therethrough, an envelope having an open end and adapted to be detachably secured to said panel member with said open end substantially overlying said slot for receiving blanks which are deposited therethrough, a closure member extending from the open end of said envelope, a fastener clasp secured to said envelope at the rear face thereof and adjacent the open end of said envelope and adapted to be inserted through said mounting aperture and spread apart and together so as to releasably engage said panel member for detachably securing said envelope to said panel member contiguous to said open end and said fastener clasp

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serving to close said open end of said envelope when said envelope is detached from said panel member, and an upper strike-out flap hingedly mounted on said panel member along the upper periphery of said elongated slot and a lower strike-out flap hingedly mounted on said panel member along the lower periphery of said elongated slot, said upper strike-out flap being capable of extending rearwardly from the periphery of said elongated slot so as to contact said closure flap when said envelope is mounted on said panel member thereby spreading apart said envelope in an open condition and forming a chute for depositing ballots into said receptacle.

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