Sept. 26, 1967 S. E. GEGAX ETAL 3,343,785

MAIL BOX

Filed May 13, 1966 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

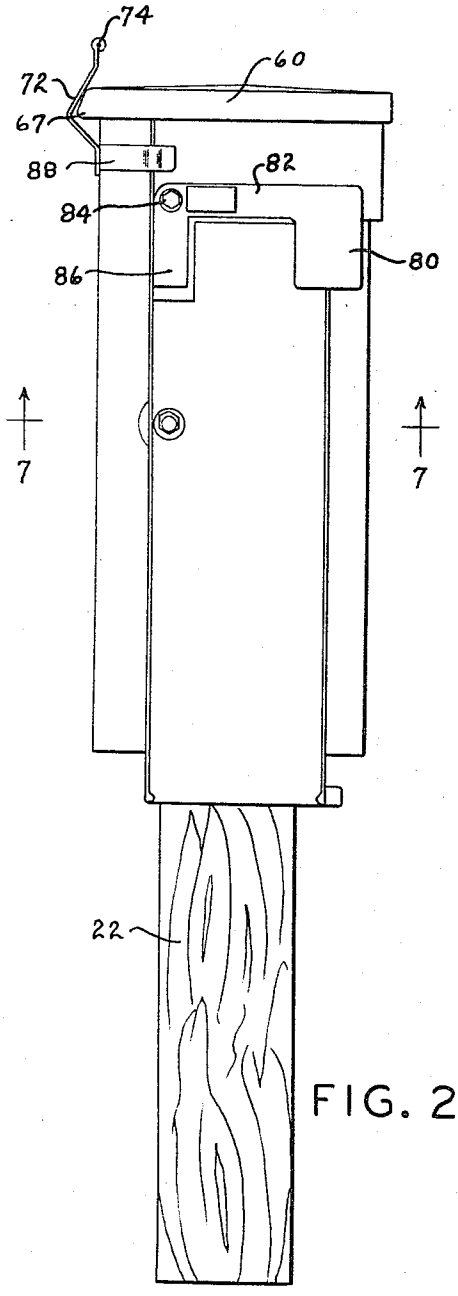


FIG. 2

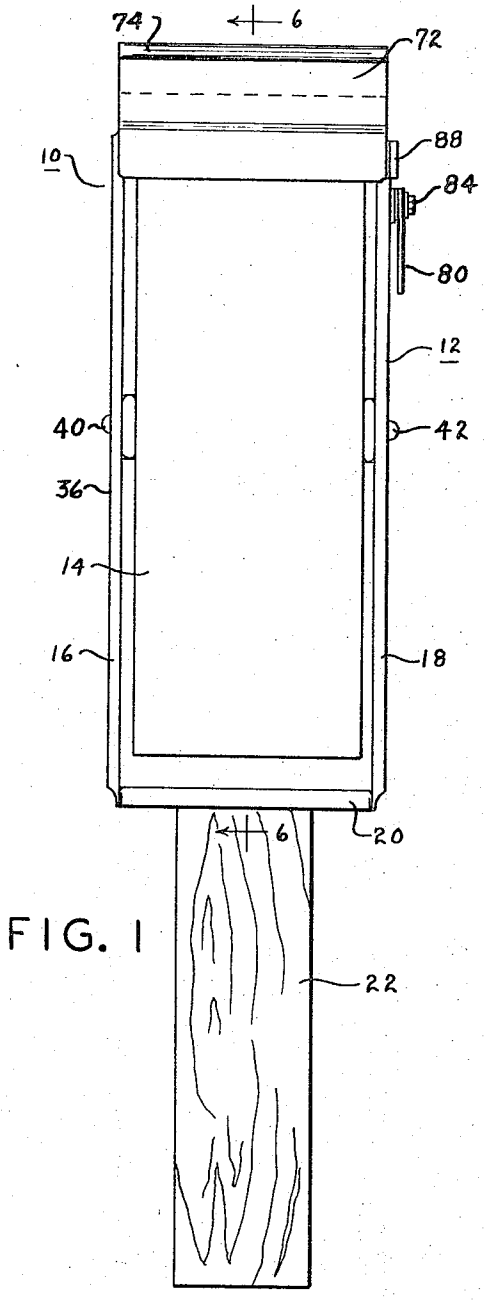


FIG. 1

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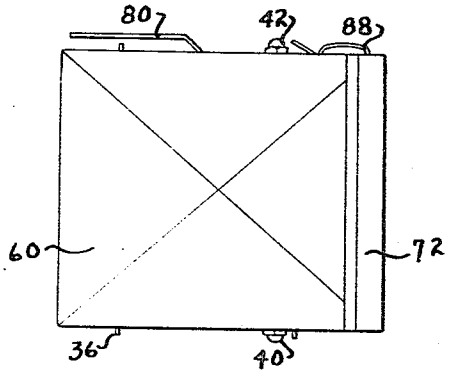


FIG. 4

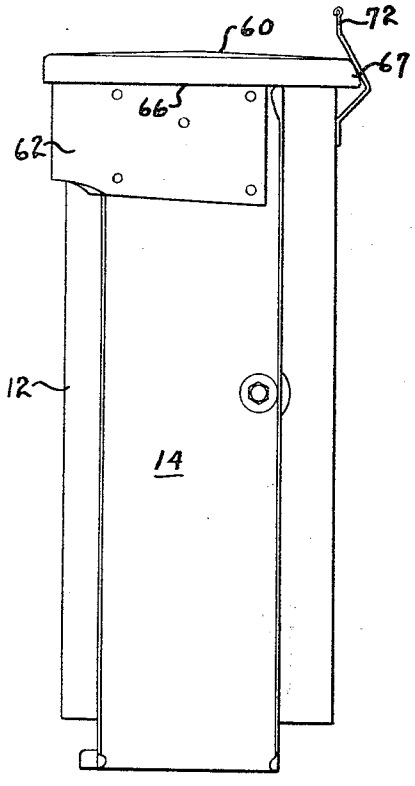


FIG. 3

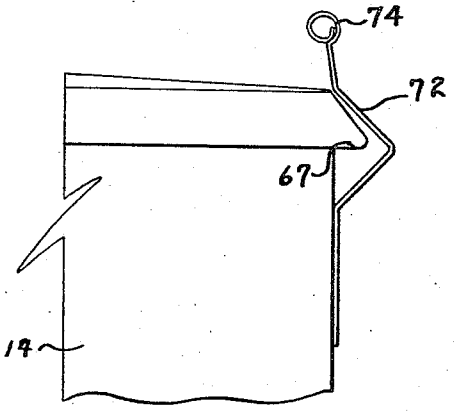


FIG. 5

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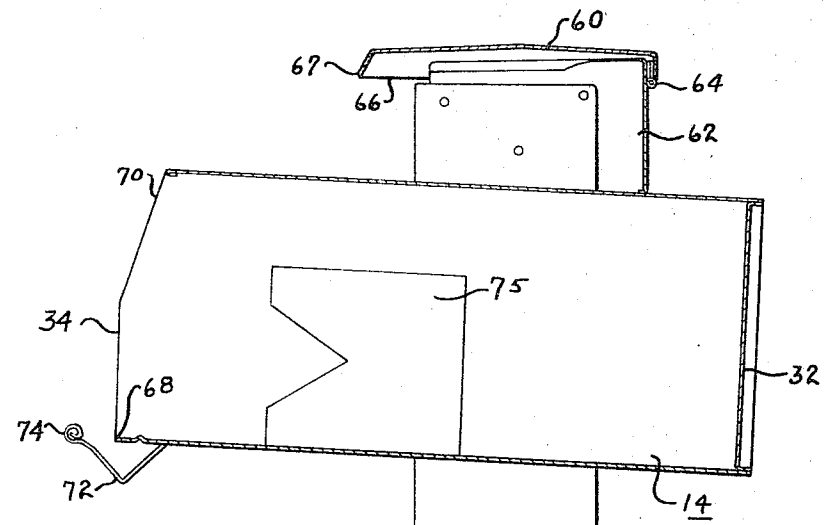


FIG. 6

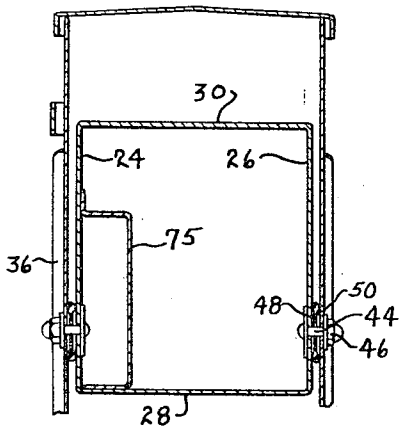


FIG. 7

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3,343,785

MAIL BOX

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A mail box having an elongated container positioned vertically when in closed position, the container being pivoted between two side members and having a top pivotally supported by the side members. The container includes a handle which operates to lock the lid firmly in place over the open end of the container when the container is in its upright and closed position.

The conventional outdoor or roadside mail box is not only unattractive but is inconvenient for the mail delivery man in opening and closing the box and in operating the flag, and it often fails to provide adequate protection to the mail and packages placed therein. Further, since these mail boxes, being in the horizontal position, protrude outwardly toward the road, they are occasionally a hazard to the motorist and to the one who removes the mail from the box, since the mail box door faces the road, and hence requires the one removing the mail to move between the box and the road to reach the mail in the box. It is therefore one of the principal objects of the present invention to provide a mail box which, in effect, is extensible and retractable, yet is easily reached by the mail man for inserting and removing mail therefrom, and which completely closes automatically when released by the mail man and forms a weather tight seal when fully closed.

Another object of the invention is to provide a vertically positioned mail box which easily tilts to substantially horizontal position when opened and which will return to its vertical position when released where it will remain closed unless intentionally opened.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a mail box of the aforesaid type which can be installed on top of a post and, when so installed, blends in with the lines of the post to form an attractive or inconspicuous assembly and which can be placed further from the road than the conventional rural mail box without interfering with the easy operation by the mail man.

A further object is to provide a mail box which is so constructed and arranged that the opening handle or fixture can be readily and conveniently grasped by the mail man and easily pulled forwardly to open the box, and that the mail may be inserted with the door facing the road and removed therefrom with the door facing upwardly while the one removing the mail is standing to the rear of the box, i.e. on the side opposite the road in relative safety.

Another object of the invention is to provide a mail box of the foregoing type which is so designed that the flag can be easily placed in upright position where it can be effectively seen and from where it will readily and automatically return to its lowered position when the box is opened.

Additional objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following description and accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a front elevational view of the present mail box showing it in closed position and mounted on a post;

FIGURE 2 is a side elevational view of the mail box and post shown in FIGURE 1, again showing the mail box in closed position;

FIGURE 3 is an elevational view of the side opposite from that shown in FIGURE 2, showing the box removed from the post;

FIGURE 4 is a top plan view of the present mail box;

FIGURE 5 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the mail box, as viewed in FIGURE 3;

FIGURE 6 is a vertical cross sectional view of the present mail box, showing the mail box in its opened position, the section being taken on line 6—6 of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 7 is a fragmentary vertical cross sectional view of the mail box in its opened position as shown in FIGURE 6, the section being taken on line 7—7 of FIGURE 2.

Referring more specifically to the drawings, and to FIGURE 1 in particular, numeral **10** designates generally the present mail box having a frame **12** and mail container **14** pivoted in frame **12**, the frame consisting of two vertically positioned side members **16** and **18** of rectangular shape and a bottom **20** joined rigidly to the lower edges of side members **16** and **18**. The bottom may be drilled with one or more holes for receiving screws for attaching the mail box to a post **22** or other suitable supporting structure.

The container **14** is of a generally rectangular shape having sidewalls **24** and **26** and front and rear walls **28** and **30** joined integrally to the sidewalls, and a bottom **32** secured to the lower end of the side and rear walls, thus forming a completely enclosed container except for the open end **34**. The frame **12** and container **14** are preferably formed of sheet metal and are of rigid construction, the frame being reinforced by a plurality of marginal flanges **36**. The container is pivoted in the frame at opposite sides by pivot means **40** and **42**, each having a bolt **44** extending through the respective sidewall **24** or **26** of the container, and through the respective side frame member **16** or **18**, and having a nut **46** threaded onto the outer end thereof. A pair of washers **48** and **50** and a gasket are preferably interposed between the sides **24** and **26** of the container and side members **16** and **18** of the frame, in order to prevent rubbing of those parts when the container is shifted from its closed position, as viewed in FIGURE 1, to its opened position, as seen in FIGURE 6. Various other types of pivot means may be used in place of the one shown, including merely rivets in place of the bolts.

As can be readily seen in FIGURES 2 and 7, the two pivot means **40** and **42** are positioned near the forward edge of the side members **16** and **18** of the frame and above the horizontal center of the container, thus offsetting or overbalancing the container rearwardly so that it will move automatically from the position shown in FIGURE 6 to its closed position, i.e. the weight of the container below and to the rear of the pivot point being greater than the weight on the upper and forward portion of the container. Thus, the container is not only moved toward closed position, but is effectively held in closed position until it is intentionally opened by the mail man or by one removing the mail from the box.

A cover **60** pivoted to an upper frame member **62** by hinge **64** on the rear side of the frame seats over the top of the container and has flanges **66** on the front and two sides extending downwardly over the front and two sides of the container to exclude water, snow, ice and dirt from the container when the container is in its fully closed position. The forward edge **67** of the cover extends downwardly and forwardly so that the cover will be easily lifted by the forward edge **68** of the container when the container is pivoted forwardly in the opening operation. The cover normally rests on the upper edge of frame

member 62, which is U-shaped and projects above the upper edge of the two frame members 16 and 18. The upper edge of the two sides 24 and 26 of the container are beveled at numeral 70 so that the container will slip beneath the cover and raise the cover sufficiently to permit the container to return to its fully vertical position, as viewed in FIGURES 1, 2 and 3.

A handle 72 is attached to the front of the container and extends upwardly and rearwardly over the front edge 67 of cover 60 and holds the cover in closed position so long as the container is in its fully vertical position. The upper edge of handle 72 is rolled to provide a bead or smooth edge 74 which is grasped by the mail man when the box is to be opened. The container may include a small compartment portion 75 for receiving letters which are to be picked up by the mail man. This compartment is placed near the open end 34 so that the letters can be easily reached and removed from the container.

A flag 80 is mounted on frame 12 and has a stem 82 pivoted on a pivot bolt or rivet 84 extending through the stem and through frame side 18 near the upper edge thereof. A weighted portion 86 is joined to the lower end of the stem for the purpose of urging the stem downwardly to the position shown in FIGURE 2. The flag is held in its upright position by a spring clip 88 joined to the forward edge of the container, and extending along the outer surface of side 18 for engaging stem 82 when the flag is moved to its upright position. The clip frictionally holds the flag in the upright position until the container is intentionally moved toward open position carrying the clip 88 forwardly and away from stem 82, thereby permitting weight 86 to return the flag to its lowered position.

In the use of the present mail box, container 14 is normally in its vertical, closed position with cover 60 seated on top of frame member 62 and projecting outwardly over the front of the container beneath the angular portion of handle 72. In this position, the container is fully enclosed by the cover, so that water and dirt cannot enter. When mail is to be inserted or removed from the container, the handle 72 is pulled forwardly, causing the front upper edge of the container to engage the sloping front portion of cover 60, causing the cover to rise, thereby permitting the container to tilt forwardly from the position shown in FIGURE 3 to the position shown in FIGURE 6. Upon releasing the handle, the forwardly and upwardly offset pivot means 40 and 42 causing the container to be over-balanced in the closing direction, automatically cause it to tilt back to its vertical position. When the rear edge of the container reaches the front edge of cover 60, sloping portion 70 engages the lower front edge of the cover, thereby raising it sufficiently to permit the container to slip beneath the cover to its vertical position. When the container reaches substantially vertical position, the cover again seats on frame member 62, thereby completely enclosing the upper end of the container. The cover is held in its closed position by the upwardly, inwardly sloping portion of handle 72 overlapping the front edge of the cover. The mail may be removed from the container by merely pivoting cover 60 upwardly and rearwardly after the container has been tilted forwardly sufficiently to disengage the cover from the handle.

When packages, papers or other large parcels of mail cannot be inserted in the container, they may be placed on top of the container when the container is in its forwardly tilted position, and they are held there by the cover and upwardly projecting side walls 16 and 18. They may also be placed beneath the container between the two side walls. While this leaves the packages and mail exposed, they are held firmly in place where they can readily be seen by the recipient. It is seen from the figures that the straight line vertical contour of the present mail box when in closed position coincides with the straight line configuration of a post, particularly a post of rectangular cross section. This not only requires less space when not in use, but provides a rather pleasing appearance and convenient mode of operation.

The preferred manner of installing the present box is on top of a post; however, the box may be mounted laterally from the post or from a wall or other supporting structure by suitable brackets attached either to the bottom of the frame or sides thereof. While only one embodiment of the present invention has been described in detail herein, various changes and modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention.

We claim:

1. A vertically positioned mail box comprising a frame having two spaced upright side members, and an open front and back, a container with an upper open end suspended between said side members and being elongated vertically, pivot means on each side of said container supported by said side members, said pivot means on each side of said container being spaced forwardly of a vertical center line and upwardly from a horizontal center line of said container, a cover pivoted at its rear edge to the frame for closing said container and having a front edge seating downwardly over the front of the container, said container being tiltable between vertical position with said open end closed by said cover to a position between said vertical position and a horizontal position with said open end exposed, said container projecting forwardly and rearwardly from said side members when it is in tilted position, a handle for tilting said container forwardly from said vertical position and having a portion overlapping the upper edge of said cover for holding the cover in closed position when the container is in vertical position, a flag pivoted on one of said side members, and a spring clip attached to the said container for holding said flag in an elevated position when the container is in its vertical position.

2. A mail box as defined in claim 1 in which a base means connects said side members near the bottom for supporting said frame.

3. A mail box as defined in claim 2 in which the base means is joined to the lower edge of said upright side members for seating on top of a post and securing said mail box thereto.

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