Dec. 19, 1961 L. FERENCI 3,013,715

MAILBOX SIGNAL

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Fig. 1

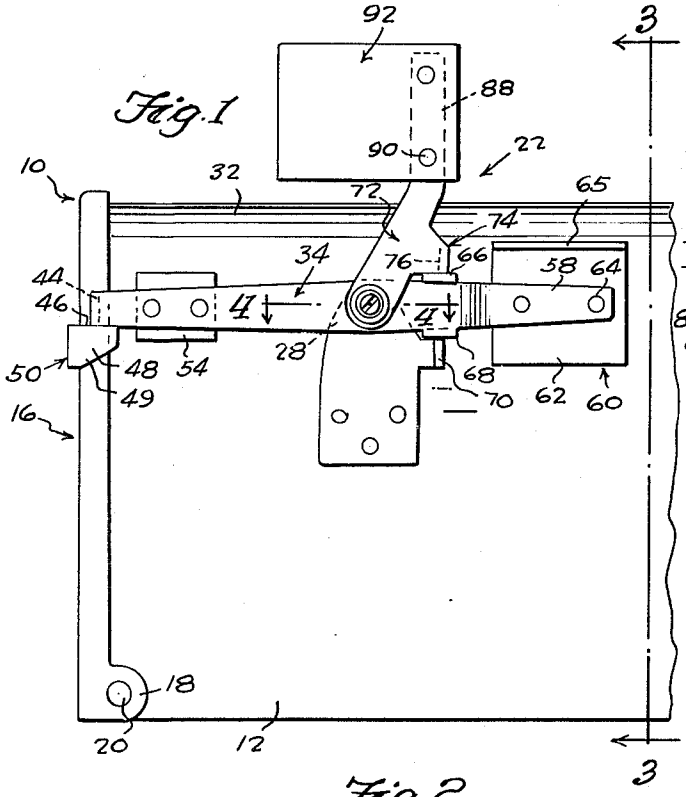


Fig. 3

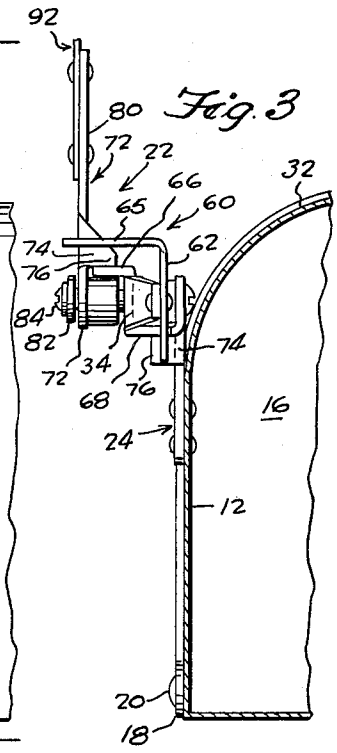


Fig. 2

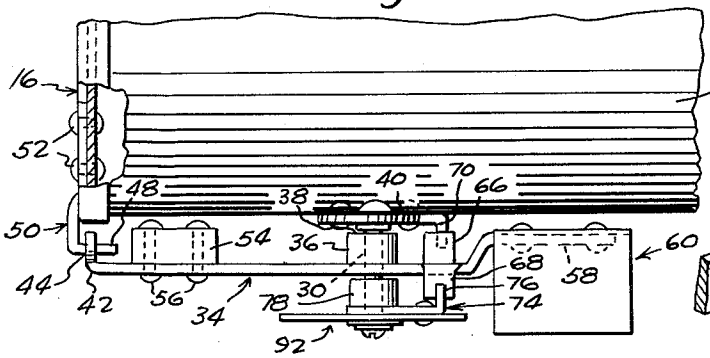


Fig. 5

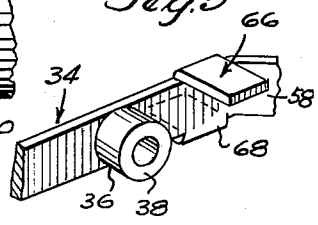
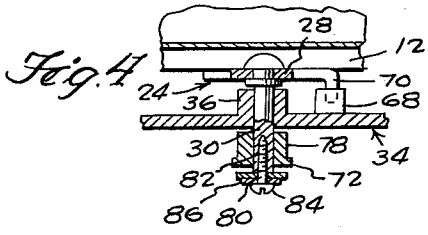


Fig. 4



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Fig. 7

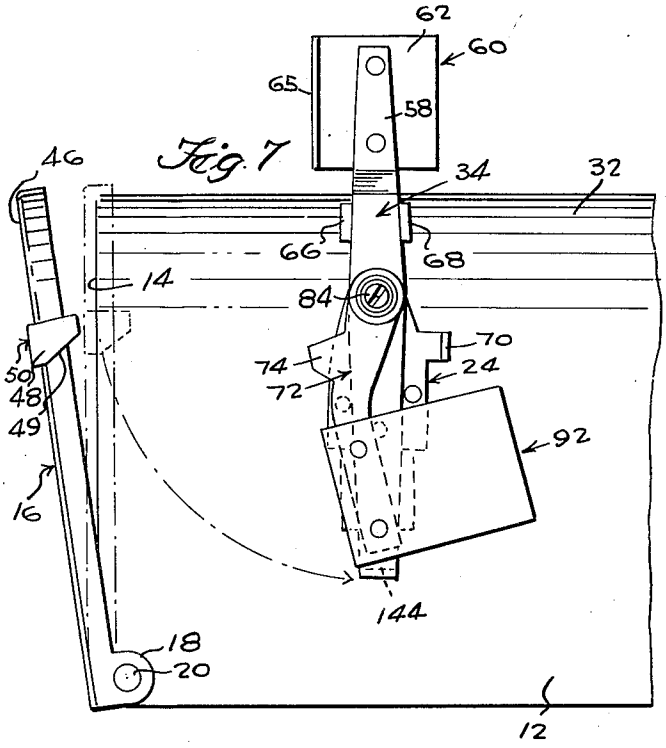


Fig. 6

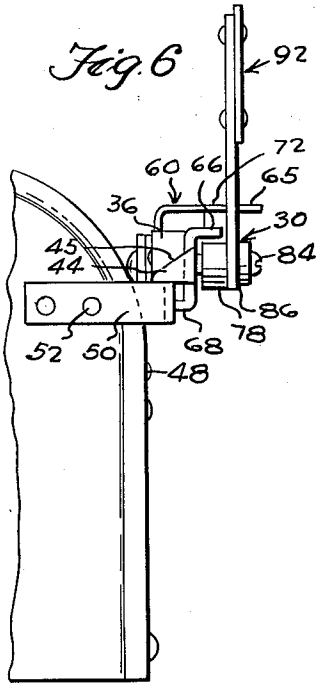


Fig. 8

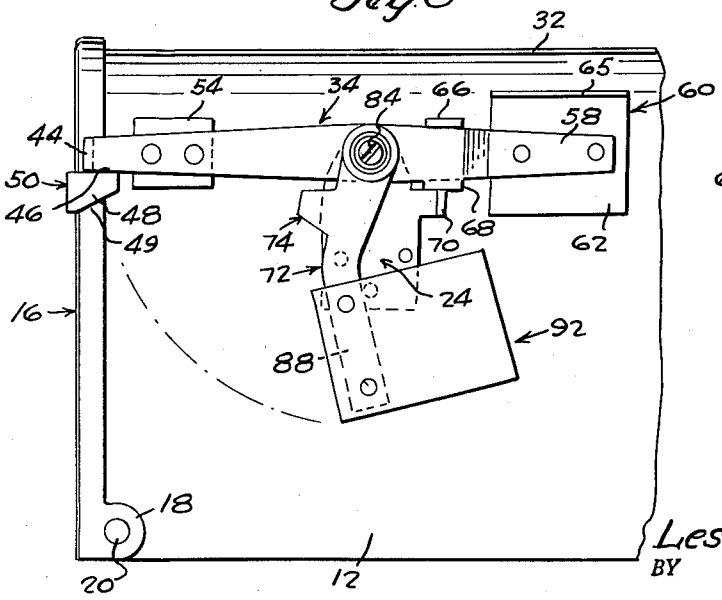
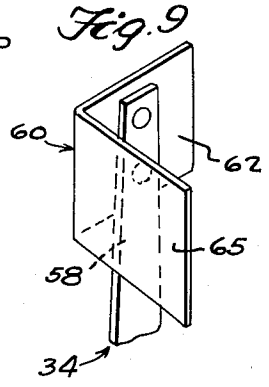


Fig. 9



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MAILBOX SIGNAL

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1 Claim. (Cl. 232—35)

This invention relates to a novel and improved signal assembly for installation on conventional rural mailboxes and has flag components for severally signalling the presence or absence in the mailbox, of mail to be picked up by a mailman, and the presence or absence, in the mailbox, of delivered mail for removal by the owner of the mailbox.

The primary object of the invention is the provision of an efficient, durable, and practical signal assembly of the kind indicated which is designed for one-hand operation, and which can be easily installed on a conventional rural mailbox, and which affords readily visible and readily distinguishable signals of the presence in the mailbox of outgoing and incoming mail, and of the absence of either or both, so that unnecessary trips to the mailbox by the owner are eliminated, and unnecessary exposure and work on the part of the mailman are eliminated.

Another object of the invention is to provide a signal assembly of the character indicated above wherein the flag components are arranged so that, opening of the mailbox door automatically sets the delivered or incoming mail signalling flag.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a signal assembly of the character indicated above which is uncomplex in construction, is composed of a small number of simple and easily assembled parts, and which can be made in rugged and serviceable forms at relatively low cost.

Other important objects and advantageous features of the invention will be apparent from the following description and the accompanying drawings, wherein, for purposes of illustration only, a specific form of the invention is set forth in detail.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a fragmentary side elevation of a rural mailbox showing a signal assembly of the present invention installed thereon, and with the red or out-going mail flag in elevated signalling position;

FIGURE 2 is a fragmentary top plan view of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is a framentary vertical transverse section taken on the line 3—3 of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 4 is a fragmentary horizontal section taken on the line 4—4 of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary perspective view of the yellow flag carrying arm;

FIGURE 6 is a fragmentary end view, taken from the left of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 7 is a side elevation, like FIGURE 1, showing the yellow or delivered mail signalling flag in elevated or set position, and the other flag in depressed position;

FIGURE 8 is a view, like FIGURE 7, showing both flags in depressed or retracted positions; and,

FIGURE 9 is an enlarged perspective view of the yellow or delivered mail signalling flag.

Referring in detail to the drawings, wherein like numerals designate like parts throughout the several views, there is shown a conventional rural mailbox **10**, having a sidewall **12**, and an open end **14**. A pan-shaped door **16** has ears **18**, at its lower end, which are engaged on headed pivots **20** on the sidewall **12**, and is swingable upwardly from a horizontal open position (not shown),

to a vertical position in which the door closes the open end **14** of the mailbox **10**.

Mounted on the upper part of the sidewall **12** is a signal assembly, generally designated **22**, embodying the present invention, which comprises a flat mounting bracket **24**, secured at its lower end, as indicated at **26**, to the mailbox sidewall **12** and having a reduced upper end portion **28** through which is secured, as shown in FIGURE 4, a fixed pivot pin **30**, the pin **30** being located on a level with the lower part of the arcuate top wall **32** of the mailbox **10**, and spaced longitudinally inwardly from the open end **14** thereof. An elongated flat arm **34** is pivoted intermediate its ends on the pin **30**, and has fixed thereon a laterally inwardly extending spacer boss **36**, which is journalled on the pin **30**, and has a free inward end **38** which bears against a washer **40**, which is circumposed on the pin **30**, between the bracket portion **28** and the boss **36**.

As shown in FIGURE 2, the arm **34** has an outer or forward end **42** which reaches to the open end **14** of the mailbox **10**, and is provided thereat with a laterally inwardly extending lug **44** which is arranged to bear upon the upper horizontal edge **46** of an inwardly or rearwardly extending arm **48** of a laterally outwardly extending L-shaped arm **50** which is fixed, as indicated at **52**, to the outer or forward side of the mailbox door **16**, in the closed position of the door **16** and in the neutral or retracted horizontal position of the arm **34**, shown in FIGURES 1, 2, and 8. A weight block **54** is fixed, as indicated at **56**, to the laterally inward side of the arm **34**, near its forward end, which serves to bias the arm **34** downwardly to its horizontal retracted position, and to its pendant position, shown in FIGURE 7.

A laterally inwardly offset rear end portion **58** of the arm **34** carries an L-shaped yellow or delivered mail signalling flag **60**, which is composed of a vertical flat plate **62**, secured, as indicated at **64**, to the arm portion **58**, and a horizontal flat plate **65**, which is disposed at right angles to the plate **62**. At a location between and spaced from the boss **36** and the offset arm portion **58**, the arm **34** has fixed, on its upper and lower edges, upper and lower lateral stop lugs **66** and **68**, respectively. The upper stop lug **66** extends laterally inwardly from the arm **64** to bear downwardly upon an outstanding stop lug **70** which is located on the rear or inward edge of the bracket **24** and is spaced below the pivot pin **30**, whereby the arm **34** is prevented from tilting downwardly and inwardly or rearwardly from its horizontal retracted position. The lower stop lug **68**, on the arm **34**, extends laterally outwardly from the arm **34**.

Pivoted on the pin **30**, at the laterally outward side of the arm **34**, is one end of a red flag or mail pick-up signalling arm **72**. As shown in FIGURE 1, the arm **72**, in its erect signalling position, extends upwardly from the pivot pin **30** at a rearwardly inclined angle, and has an inwardly or rearwardly extending L-shaped stop **74** on its then rearward edge, between the ends thereof, which has a laterally inwardly extending stop lug **76** which bears upon the upper stop lug **66** of the arm **34**. The arm **72** has a laterally inwardly extending spacer boss **78**, on its lower end, which is journalled on the pin **30**, and is held thereon by a stud **80**, which is threaded, as indicated at **82**, in FIGURE 4, into the outer end of the pin **30** and has an enlarged head **84**. A washer **86** is circumposed on the pin **30** between the head **84** and the arm **72**.

The arm **72** has a perpendicular extension **88** on its upper end, which, in effect is rearwardly offset relative to the arm **72**, to which is secured, as indicated at **90**, a rectangular and forwardly extending red flag plate **92**, so that the combined weight of the arm **72** and the flag plate **92** keeps the arm **72** overbalanced rearwardly and

supported on the upper stop lug 66 of the arm 34; and so that the arm 72 swings downwardly to its pendant retracted position, as shown in FIGURES 7 and 8.

The upper edge 45 of the lug 44 on the forward end of the arm 34 is downwardly and laterally inwardly angled, as shown in FIGURE 6, to serve as a cam, so that the arm 34 can be reset, to its horizontal retracted position, from its vertical or erect operative position, shown in FIGURE 7, without having to open the mailbox door 16, the cam edge 45 then acting upwardly against the upwardly and rearwardly angled lower edge 49 of the arm 48 of the door arm 50, so that the arm 34, which has limited resilience, is sprung laterally outwardly, away from the mailbox sidewall 12, sufficiently to enable the lug 44 to pass upwardly beyond the door arm 48. This feature enables one-hand resetting of the arm 34, which is a particular convenience, inasmuch as a box holder will have, in one hand, mail removed from the mailbox and has only the other hand free for operating the arm 34.

It being understood that erection of the yellow signal flag 60 signals that mail is presumably present in the mailbox 10 to be taken up by the owner or holder thereof, and erection of the red signal flag 92 signals to the mailman that mail is presumably present in the mailbox to be picked up by him supposing that the red flag 92 has been erected by the owner, to take the mail out of the mailbox, the mailman or postman simply pulls the door 16 open, with one hand, and removes the mail. Opening of the door 16 frees the weighted forward end of the yellow flag arm 34 to swing gravitationally downwardly and erect the yellow flag 60, accompanied by the red flag arm 72, so that the flags assume the positions shown in FIGURE 7, whereby the owner of the mailbox is informed that mail has been delivered to the mailbox. The mailman then pushes the door 16 closed.

The box owner then opens the door 16 and removes his mail and recloses the door 16, and the owner resets the yellow flag arm to its horizontal or non-pendant position. If, on the other hand, the owner deposits mail in the mailbox to be picked up by the mailman, in addition to resetting the yellow flag arm 34, the owner resets the red flag arm 72 to its upright position, by swinging the red flag arm 72 upwardly and rearwardly until its stop lug 76 bears upon the upper stop lug 66 of the yellow flag arm 34, so that the red mail pick-up flag 92 is erected over the mailbox and signals the postman that mail is in the mailbox to be picked up by him.

From the foregoing it will be evident that simple, reliable and easily operated means has been provided whereby the owner or holder of the mailbox is saved the inconvenience of needless trips to the mailbox when the same is empty of incoming mail.

While there has been shown and described herein a preferred form of the invention, it is to be understood that the invention is not necessarily confined thereto, and that any change or changes in the structure of and in the relative arrangements of components thereof are contemplated as being within the scope of the invention as defined by the claim appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

In combination, a mailbox having an open forward end, a sidewall, and a top wall, a door hinged at its lower end on a lower part of the mailbox for closing said open end, a bracket fixed on said sidewall at a location spaced from said open end, a laterally outwardly extending pivot pin fixed on said bracket at a location spaced above the door hinge axis, a first elongated arm pivoted intermediate its ends on said pin, said first arm having a forward end reaching to the open end of the mailbox in a horizontal retracted position of the first arm, a delivered mail flag on the rear end of said first arm and a weight on said first arm at a location forward of the pivot pin, a laterally inwardly extending lug on the forward end of the first arm, a longitudinally inwardly extending lug fixed on an upper part of the door, upon which the first arm lug rests in the closed position of the door only in the horizontal retracted position of the first arm, the forward end of said first arm being adapted to swing downwardly when the door is opened and the door lug is withdrawn from under the first arm lug and erect the delivered mail flag, a second arm having first and second ends, said first end being pivoted on said pivot pin, said second end having an out-going mail flag thereon, said second arm being freely swingable relative to said first arm, said second arm being adapted to be erected to signalling position with its flag above the mailbox only in the horizontal retracted position of said first arm, first stop means on said bracket and the part of the first arm behind the pivot pin precluding downward swinging of the first arm from its horizontal position, and second stop means on said second arm and on said rear part of the first arm preventing rearward tilting of the second arm out of its erect position, the second arm being manually swingable upwardly and rearwardly from a pendant inoperative position to its erect position, said second arm having an extension offset relative to the remainder of the second arm acting to overbalance the second arm rearwardly in its erect position.

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