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3,290,780

OPENER FOR LETTERS, PACKAGES, AND THE LIKE

Filed March 21, 1966

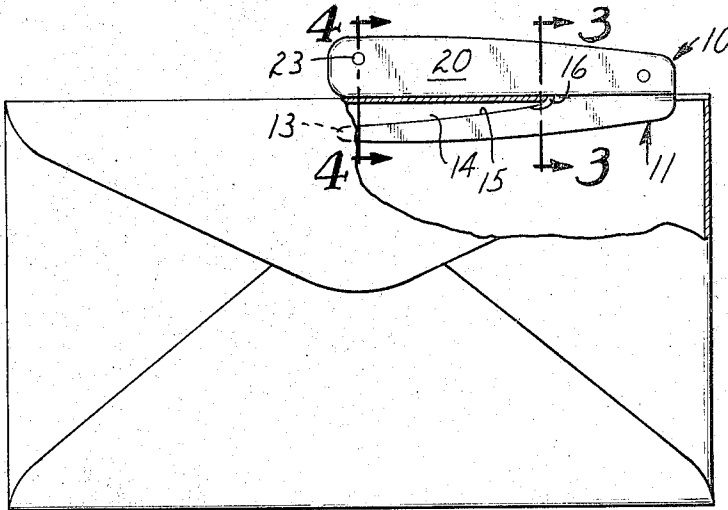


FIG. 1

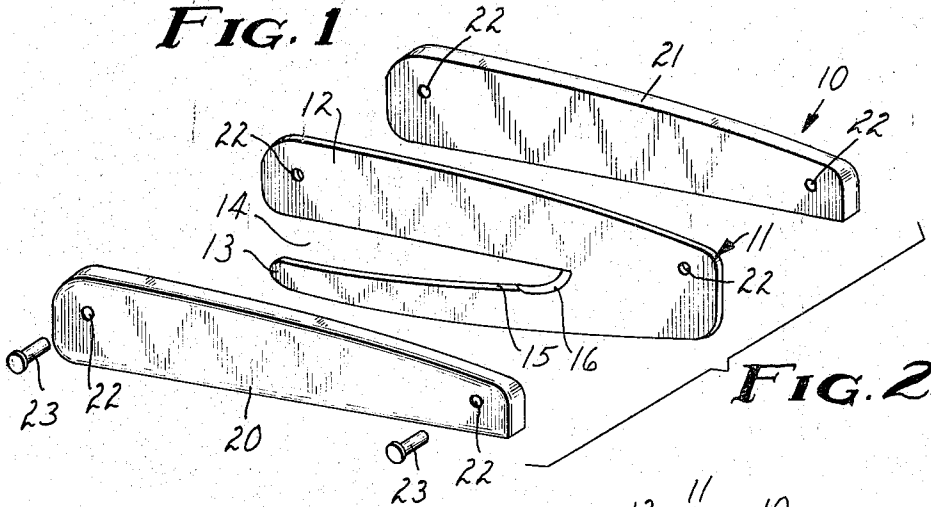


FIG. 2

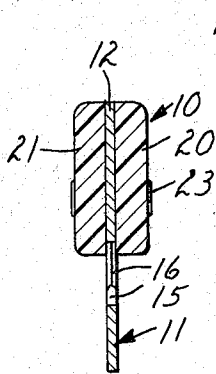


FIG. 3

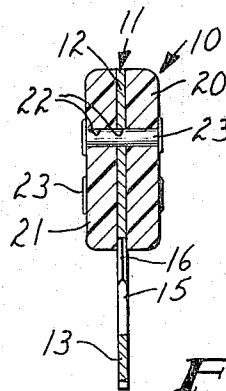


FIG. 4

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3,290,780 OPENER FOR LETTERS, PACKAGES, AND THE LIKE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 30—294)

The present invention pertains to an improved opener for letters, packages, and the like and more specifically to an opener which is very simple and inexpensive to construct and which may be carried on the person with no danger of cuts or injuries from sharp corners or blades.

Many prior art letter and package openers have been designed wherein a slot is formed in the body of the opener to accommodate the insertion of the edge of a letter, string, etc. A sharp blade is fixedly positioned within the slot to provide the cutting edge. In all of these prior art devices the sharp blade is a separate member and is, therefore, subject to becoming loosened after the opener is carried on the person for extended periods of time. Also, in all of these prior art openers a blade or the like, which is inserted into the letter or under the string, extends outwardly past the handle or body and is in some instances extremely dangerous.

In the present opener a body is formed from a flat piece of rigid material, which may be metal, hard plastic, or the like. The body has a handle receiving portion extending outwardly therefrom and a blade which extends outwardly approximately parallel to the handle receiving portion and spaced therefrom a short distance to form a slot therebetween. The inner edge of the blade slants slightly away from the handle receiving portion and a portion of this edge adjacent the body is sharpened to form a knife edge. Thus, the inner edge of the blade slants toward the knife edge and directs all paper, string, etc., to be cut toward the knife edge. A handle, which may be formed from two pieces of plastic or the like one of which is a mirror image of the other, is attached to the handle receiving portion so that the handle extends outwardly past the end of the blade. Thus, the handle serves as a protector for the blade and the knife edge.

The body, including the handle receiving portion and the blade, is formed as one integral piece and, therefore, the present opener is extremely inexpensive and simple to manufacture. Also, since the knife edge is an integral portion of the blade and, consequently the body, there is no danger of any of the portions of the opener loosening when carried for extended periods of time on the person. In addition, the blade and the knife edge thereon are completely protected by the handle making the present opener completely safe to carry on the person.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved opener for letters, packages, and the like.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an opener which is safe and reliable.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an opener which is simple and inexpensive to construct.

These and other objects of this invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon consideration of the accompanying specification, claims and drawings.

Referring to the drawings, wherein like characters indicate like parts throughout the figures:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of the present opener illustrating the operation thereof, some parts shown in section;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged exploded view in perspective of the present opener;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged sectional view as seen from the line 3—3 in FIG. 1, some parts broken away; and

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FIG. 4 is an enlarged sectional view as seen from the line 4—4 in FIG. 1, some parts broken away.

In the figures the numeral 10 generally designates an opener for letters, packages, and the like having a body generally designated 11. Referring to FIG. 2 the body 11 has a handle receiving portion 12 extending outwardly to the left thereof. The handle receiving portion 12 is an elongated substantially rectangular shaped portion formed integrally with the body 11. The body 11 also has a blade 13 integrally attached thereto and extending outwardly to the left therefrom approximately parallel with the handle receiving portion 12. The blade 13 is spaced from the handle receiving portion 12 a sufficient distance to form a slot 14 therebetween. The blade 13 has an inner edge 15, adjacent the handle receiving portion 12 which slopes slightly away from the handle receiving portion 12 as it progresses outwardly towards the end thereof. A portion 16 of the edge 15 immediately adjacent the body 11, or the junction of the edge 15 with the inner edge of the handle receiving portion 12, is sharpened to provide a knife edge. Thus, the sloping edge 15 directs all material to be cut, such as paper, string, etc. toward the knife edge 16. The extreme outer end of the blade 13 is rounded and tapered to a thin edge for easy insertion into envelopes and the like.

In the present embodiment a handle for the opener 10 includes a pair of members 20 and 21. The handle members 20 and 21 are mirror images of each other and are elongated, somewhat rectangular shaped pieces of plastic or the like. Each of the members 20 and 21 is constructed to substantially overlie approximately the upper half of the body 11 including the handle receiving portion 12. The lower edges of the handle members 20 and 21 form or bound on the upper edge of the slot 14. Each of the handle members 20 and 21 and the body 11 including the handle receiving portion 12 have a pair of holes 22 therethrough adapted to receive rivets 23 therein. It should be understood that while the handle is constructed of two similar members 20 and 21, which are attached to the body 11 by a pair of rivets 23, in this embodiment, it would be within the scope of this invention to construct a somewhat different shaped handle having one or more members.

As illustrated in FIG. 1 to open a sealed envelope the extreme tapered end of the blade 13 is inserted under the flap of the envelope and a force is applied to the handle, which force is directed generally along the edge of the envelope to be cut and slightly upwardly. The sloping edge 15 of the blade 13 directs the portion of the envelope to be cut toward the knife edge 16 and the force, directed as previously explained, provides a semi-tearing-cutting action which easily and efficiently opens the envelope. It should be understood that if the present opener 10 is to be utilized only for opening envelopes the knife edge 16 need not be extremely sharp but may be simply tapered. However, if the opener 10 is to be utilized for cutting cords etc. on packages the knife edge 16 will have to be somewhat sharper.

Thus, an opener for letters, packages, and the like has been described which is simple and inexpensive to manufacture and highly efficient to use. The present opener is extremely safe since there are no parts to come loose and no exposed sharp edges or points upon which the person carrying the opener can be injured. In addition, because of the novel blade structure and because of the direction in which the force is normally applied during utilizing the opener, because of the position of the handle with respect to the blade, the present opener can be used long after the knife edge 16 has become dulled from use and, if the opener is to be utilized only for envelopes and the like, the knife edge 16 need never be sharpened but can simply be tapered slightly.

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While I have shown and described a specific embodiment of this invention, further modifications and improvements will occur to those skilled in the art. I desire it to be understood, therefore, that this invention is not limited to the particular form shown and I intend in the appended claims to cover all modifications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An opener for letters, packages, and the like comprising:

- (a) a one piece body formed from flat rigid material having a handle receiving portion extending outwardly therefrom and integrally attached thereto;
- (b) an integral blade extending outwardly from said body approximately parallel to said handle receiving portion to form a slot therebetween with the edge of said blade adjacent said handle receiving portion being slanted slightly away from said handle receiving portion as it progresses outwardly from said body;
- (c) the edge of said blade adjacent said handle receiving portion having a portion thereof in juxtaposition to said body sharpened to form a knife edge; and

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(d) a handle attached to said handle receiving portion of said body so that an edge thereof forms one side of said slot and the handle extends outwardly from said body somewhat farther than said blade.

2. An opener substantially as set forth in claim 1 wherein said handle consists of two pieces one being a mirror image of the other, said pieces being connected together one on either side of the handle receiving portion of the body.

3. An opener substantially as set forth in claim 1 wherein the end of the blade farthest from the body is tapered to a greatly reduced cross-section.

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