

[54] REUSABLE ENVELOPE

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[56] References Cited

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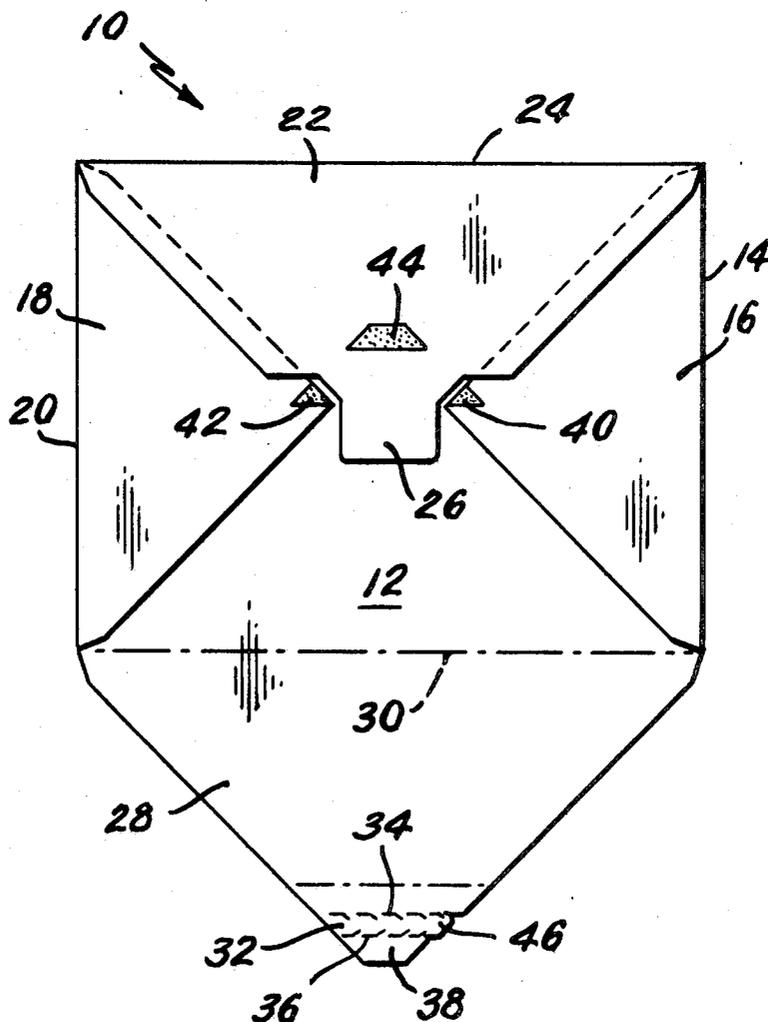
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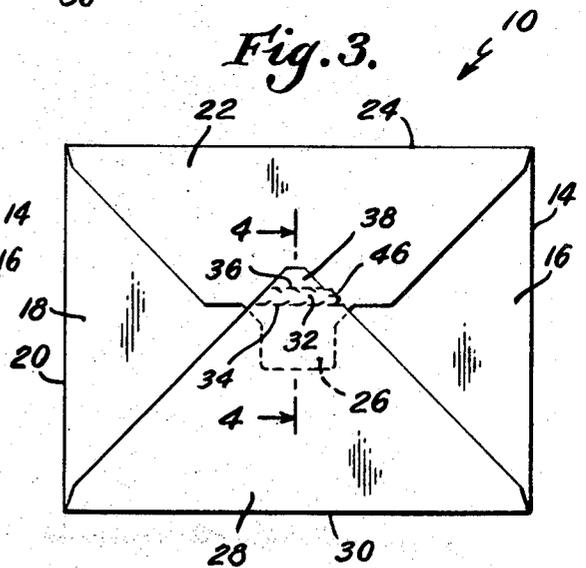
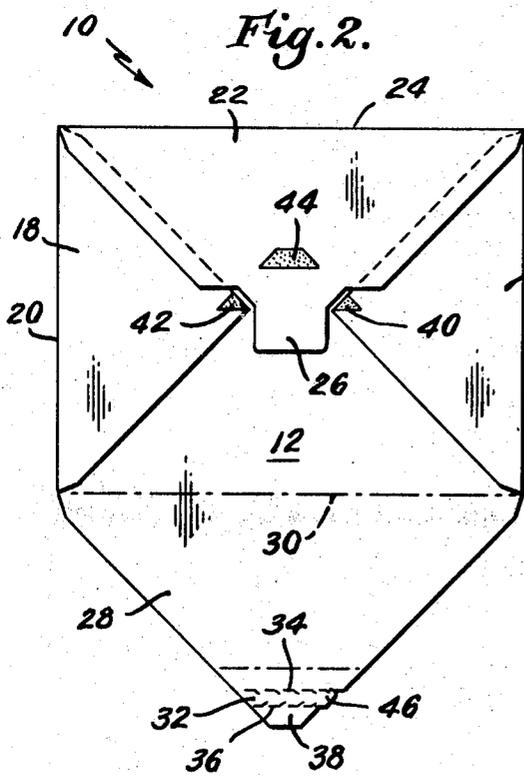
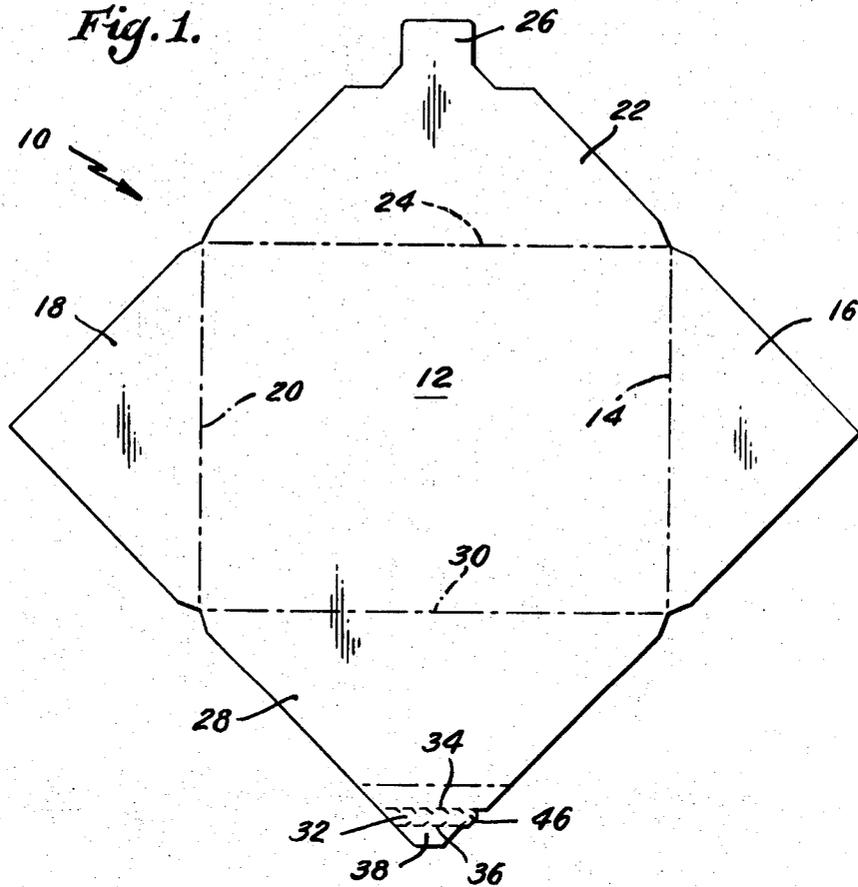
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[57] ABSTRACT

A reusable envelope for carrying sheet material therein and being defined by a one-piece blank having a central portion to which side and end flaps are integrally joined and that are folded relative thereto; the end flaps being adhered in place when the envelope is initially sealed, and a tear tab being formed on one of the end flaps and being stripped therefrom to disconnect the end flap to which it is joined from the other end flap, wherein the other end flap may be withdrawn from the closed position for removal of the contents of the envelope, and thereafter is reinsertable into a positive closed position when the envelope is to be reused.

1 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures





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REUSABLE ENVELOPE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The reusable envelope as embodied in the present invention is normally obtained by a user with sheet material therein and is adapted to be reused after opening for carrying sheet or paper material therein.

An envelope for carrying sheet material as employed heretofore was usually formed in a one-piece blank having flaps that were folded to a position that defined the enclosed envelope, and that further included a flap that was movable to an open position to expose the interior of the envelope. In the prior known envelope construction, of the type embodied in the present invention, the movable flap in the sealed position was adhered to a fixed flap by an adhesive or the like, and when the envelope was opened, the movable flap was torn from the sealed position; however, thereafter, if the envelope was to be reused, the entire movable flap had to be tucked within the opposite end flap which was inconvenient in most cases, or the movable flap was simply left open. Although this type of envelope served the purpose for which it was intended, the movable flap that was inserted beneath the other flaps often lifted from its position. Positive closing of the flap then required some external fastening means, such as a rubberband or a cloth tie. Because the movable flap of the prior known envelope could not be securely fastened after unsealing, the tendency of the user to discard the envelope after the contents thereof were removed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The reusable envelope as embodied in the present invention comprises a one-piece blank that includes a central portion to which side flaps and opposed end flaps are integrally joined. The flaps are folded along fold lines into overlying relation with respect to the central portion, one of the end flaps being permanently secured to the side flaps in the folded position, and the other end flap being removably secured to the first end flap and having a tongue joined thereto that is received beneath the first end flap in the closed position. A removable tab is joined to the other end flap, and upon removal thereof disconnects the opposed end flaps from each other, so that the first end flap can be lifted from the closed position thereof. The tongue as formed on the first end flap further provides for convenient closing of the first end flap after the initial unsealing of the envelope.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an envelope for carrying sheet material that is reusable after the initial opening thereof from a sealed position.

Another object of the invention is to provide a reusable envelope for sheet material having end flaps that are connected to each other in the assembly of the envelope, one of the end flaps being formed with a removable tab that disconnects the end flaps from each other, but that also provides for relocating of one of the end flaps in a positive closed position after the unsealing thereof.

Still another object is to provide an envelope made of paper material that is reusable and that includes a convenient tear tab that after removal thereof enables a movable flap to be located in a closed position after the initial opening of the envelope.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become apparent as the description thereof proceeds when considered in connection with the accompanying illustrative drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings which illustrate the best mode presently contemplated for carrying out the present invention.

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a cut and scored one-piece blank of sheet material from which the envelope of the present invention is formed;

FIG. 2 is a rear elevational view of the envelope after the folding of the side flaps and one of the end flaps to a closed position;

FIG. 3 is a rear elevational view of the envelope similar to FIG. 2 showing the flaps in the sealed position;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken along line 4-4 in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged fragmentary view similar to FIG. 3 showing the tear tab as it is removed to disconnect the end flaps of the envelope;

FIG. 6 is a rear elevational view of the folded envelope showing the manner in which the movable flap is moved to the open position after the tear tab has been removed; and

FIG. 7 is a view similar to FIG. 6 showing the manner in which the movable flap is moved to the closed position when the envelope is to be reused.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to FIG. 1, the envelope as embodied in the present invention is illustrated in blank form and is generally indicated at 10. The envelope 10 includes a central portion 12, to which a side flap 16 of triangular configuration is joined by a fold line 14. Located opposite to the side flap 16 is a triangular side flap 18 that is joined to the central portion 12 by a fold line 20. A first end flap 22 is joined to the central portion 12 by a fold line 24, the end flap 22 having a modified triangular configuration and being precut at the free end thereof to define a reduced extension that forms a tongue 26. Located opposite to the first end flap 22 is a second end flap 28 that is joined to the central portion by fold line 30. As illustrated more clearly in FIGS. 3 and 5, the second end flap 28 is also formed with a triangular configuration, the outer portion of which includes a tear tab 32 defined by laterally extending perforated lines 34 and 36. As will be described hereinafter, the tear tab 32 is adapted to be removed from the outer portion of the end flap 28 to unseal the envelope 10. As further illustrated in FIG. 1, an end portion 38 is located adjacent to the tear tab 38 and defines the outermost end of the end flap 28.

Referring now to FIG. 2, the flaps 16, 18 and 22 of the envelope 10 are illustrated after they have been folded from the open blank position shown in FIG. 1 and prior to location in the sealed position. The side flaps 16 and 18, as illustrated in FIG. 2, have been folded along their fold lines 14 and 20 respectively so as to overlie the central portion 12. The end flap 22 has also been folded along its fold line 24 into overlying relation with respect to the central portion 12, the tongue 26 extending between the adjacent outer end portions of the side flaps 16 and 18. The marginal edges of the end flap 22 also overlie the adjacent marginal edges of the side flaps 16 and 18. As further illustrated in FIG. 2, the outer end portion of the side flaps 16 and 18 receive an adhesive at specific locations indicated at 40 and 42 respectively, while adhesive is also applied to the end flap 22 at the location indicated at 44. With the adhesive so applied to the side flaps 16 and 18 and to the end flap 22 as indicated, the end flap 28 is folded along its fold line 30 to the position illustrated in FIG. 3, wherein the marginal edges thereof overlie the adjacent marginal edges of the side flaps 16 and 18 and the end portion 38 is received on the adhesive area 44 of the end flap 22. It is also seen that when the end flap 28 is folded to the sealed position illustrated in FIG. 3, the marginal edges thereof engage the adhesive areas 40 and 42 on the side flaps 16 and 18. The end flap 28 is thus sealed at the three adhesive areas to the side flaps 16 and 18 and to the end flap 22, thereby sealing all of the flaps and further sealing the contents of the envelope therein.

The envelope of the present invention is designed to be reused after the contents thereof have been removed and/or replaced or if other sheet material is inserted in the envelope after it is initially unsealed. In order to unseal the envelope 10 and to further provide for the closing thereof in a positive locked position, the tear tab 32 is provided, and as illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 5, the tear tab 32 includes an extension 46 that projects outwardly of the end portion 38 of the end flap 28 to which it is connected. The projection 46 of the tab 32 defines a convenient finger grip for enabling the user to readily strip the tear tab 32 from the end flap 28. As illustrated in FIG. 5,

the tear tab 32 is shown as it is being stripped from the end flap 28, the removal of the tear tab 32 disconnecting the secured end portion 38 of the end flap 28 from the remainder thereof. Thus it is seen that as the tab 32 is completely removed from the end flap 28, the connection thereof to the end flap 22 is broken. However, since the end flap 28 is still secured to the side flaps 16 and 18 by the adhesive areas 40 and 42, it will remain in its sealed position thereof. The end flap 22 which has been disconnected from the end flap 28 is now free for withdrawal from the closed position and may be moved to an open position, as shown in FIG. 6, by withdrawing the tongue 26 from beneath the end flap 28. The end flap 22 in the open position exposes the contents of the envelope which may be removed therefrom as required. Reinsertion of the contents or additional material may be accomplished as desired by the user, after which the end flap 22 is returned to a locked position by folding it over the side flaps 16 and 18 and reinserting the tongue 26 between the end portions of the side flaps 16 and 18 and beneath the end flap 28, as illustrated in FIG. 7.

It is seen that the original contents of the envelope 10 are initially sealed therein when the end flap 28 is fixed to the side flaps 16 and 18 and to the end flap 22 by the adhesive areas 40, 42 and 44 as illustrated in FIG. 2. However, rather than ripping the flaps from the adhesive areas as is usually the case in the prior known envelope, the end flap 22 is disconnected from the end flap 28 by tearing the pull tab 32 from the end flap 28, which then releases the end flap 22; however, disconnecting of the end flap 22 does not disturb the sealed connections between the end flap 28 and the side flaps 16 and 18. The end flap 22, as previously described, is then movable to an open position as desired by withdrawing the tongue 26 from beneath the end flap 28. Because of the formation of the ton-

gue 26, the end flap 22 can be returned to the closed position by inserting the tongue 26 beneath the end flap 28 as illustrated in FIG. 7. It is apparent that the envelope may be reopened and reclosed after the initial opening thereof, depending upon the requirements of the user.

What is claimed is:

1. A reusable envelope in which sheet material is adapted to be carried, comprising a one-piece blank that includes a central portion to which side flaps, a first end flap and a second end flap are integrally joined along fold lines, said flaps being folded along said fold lines relative to said central portion and into overlying relation with respect thereto, said second end flap being permanently secured to said side flaps in the folded position thereof, said first end flap being removably secured to said second flap and having an outwardly extending tongue joined thereto that is received beneath said second end flap in the closed position thereof, said second end flap including an end portion that is adhered to the first end flap when the end flaps are sealed in the closed position, a tear tab formed on said second end flap adjacent to the end portion thereof and being defined by spaced laterally extending perforated lines, said tear tab being removable from said second end flap by tearing along the perforated lines, wherein the second end flap is disengaged from said end portion to release the first end flap from adhered engagement with said second end flap, whereafter the tongue of said end flap is removable from beneath the second end flap that is still adhered to said side flaps, the first end flap being pivotal about its fold line to an outward position to expose the interior of said envelope, said tongue thereafter being insertable beneath said second end flap to close said envelope when said envelope is to be reused after the initial opening thereof.

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