Jan. 31, 1967 G. W. CLARK 3,301,475

MAILBOX

Filed June 9, 1965 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

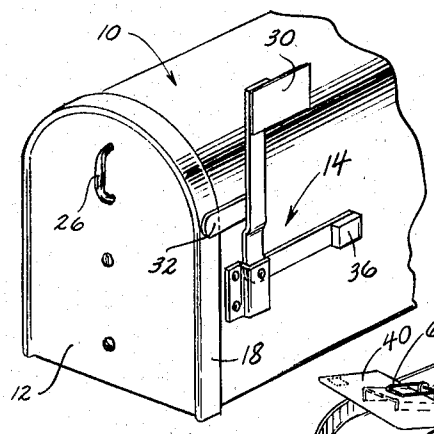


Fig. 1

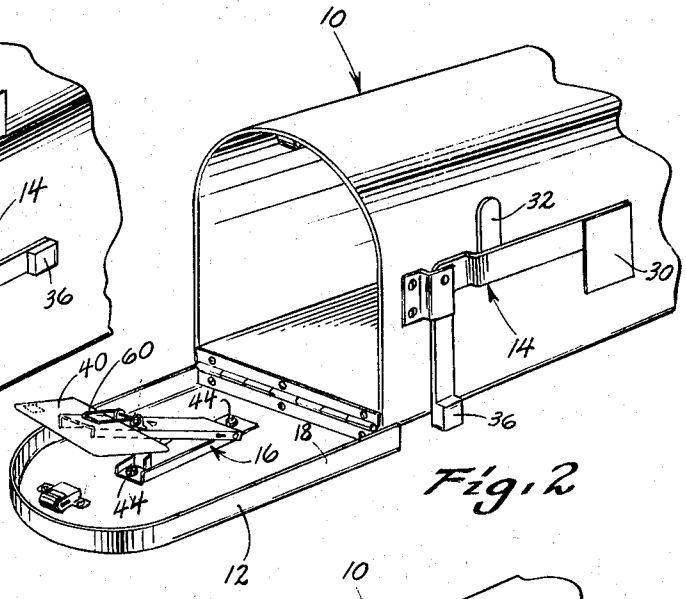


Fig. 2

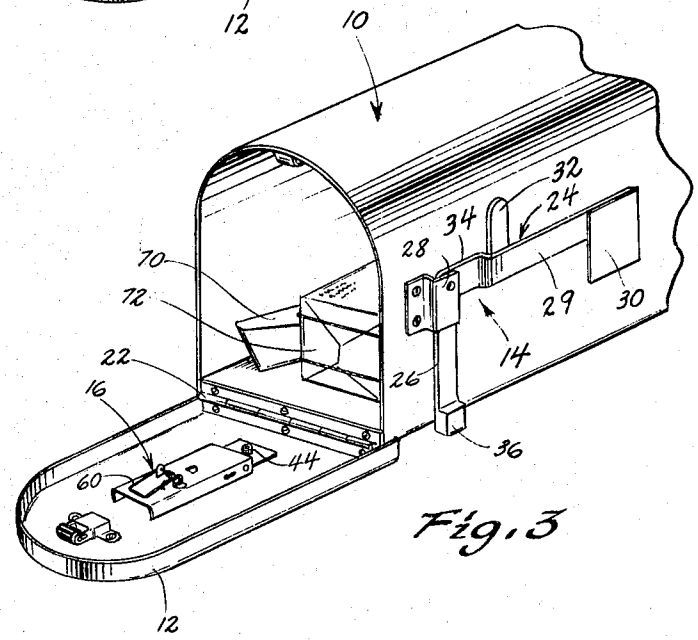


Fig. 3

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MAILBOX

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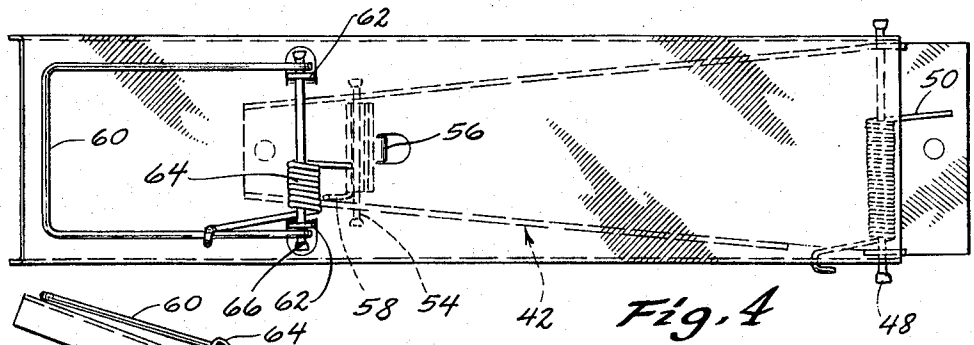


Fig. 4

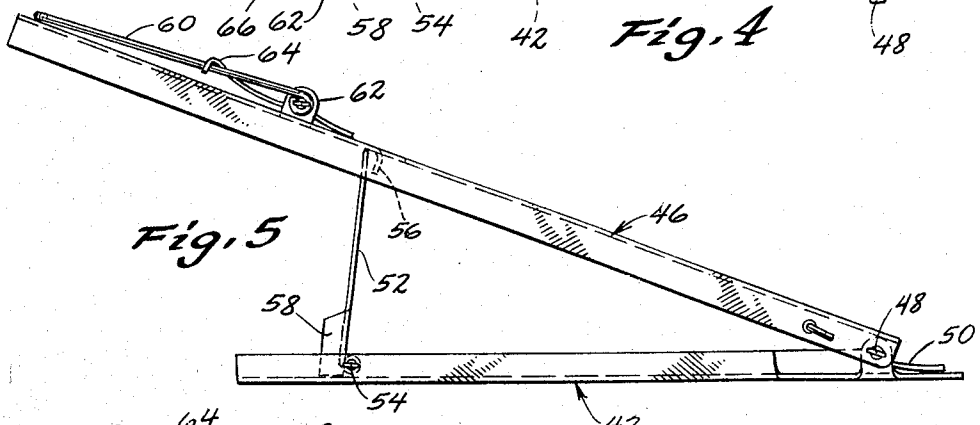


Fig. 5

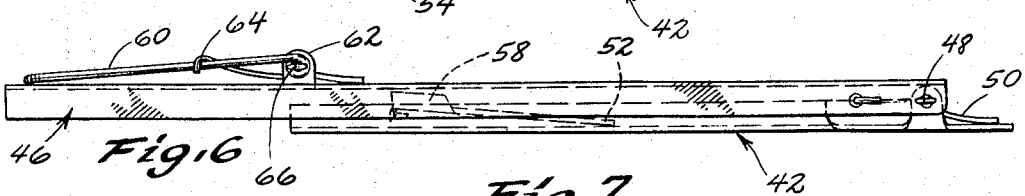
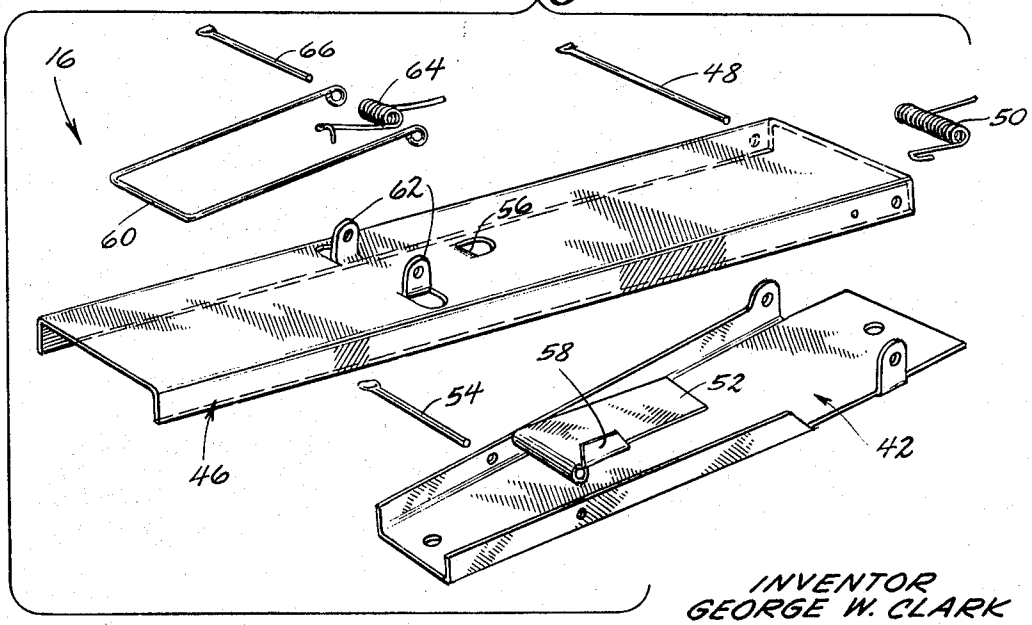


Fig. 6

Fig. 7



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MAILBOX

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6 Claims. (Cl. 232—33)

This invention relates to a mailbox and in particular to a mailbox having a signaling means for the mailman and a letter holding means to facilitate the mailman's pickup of outgoing mail.

The mailman is greatly handicapped by the conventional mailbox in not knowing first of all whether there is mail to be picked up and, secondly, if there is, being handicapped in reaching the mail as it usually is not conveniently located within the mailbox.

Therefore, it is a principal object of this invention to provide a mailbox which will definitely indicate to the mailman through both a signaling device and a mail holder that mail is outgoing and is to be picked up.

A further object of this invention is to provide a mailbox having a signaling device which is held in an up position by the door of the mailbox and upon opening the door of the mailbox the signaling device moves to a down position.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a mailbox having a letter holding unit which is so located to place the outgoing mail in a convenient location for the mailman when the door of the mailbox is opened.

Another related object of this invention is to provide a letter holding device for outgoing mail which is conveniently located for the mailman upon opening the door of the mailbox but also is movable out of the way of the mailman in placing mail in the mailbox.

A related object of this invention is to provide a mailbox having a letter holding unit which is movable between a position for holding the mail in a position to be picked up and then to a out of the way position for placing mail in the mailbox and said movement of the letter holding unit from said first position to said second position is accomplished by the removal of letters from the mail holder unit.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a mailbox having a signaling device which is provided with a latch means for engaging the outer edge of the door to thereby frictionally hold the signaling device in its up position and hold the door in its closed position in mating engagement with the mailbox.

Another related object of this invention is to provide a signaling device having a latch means which frictionally engages the outside surface of the flange on the mailbox door which in turn is in mating engagement with the adjacent sidewall of the mailbox.

A further object of this invention is to provide a mailbox which is simple in design, economical to manufacture and refined in appearance.

These and other objects will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

This invention consists in the construction, arrangements, and combination of the various parts of the device, whereby the objects contemplated are attained as hereinafter more fully set forth, specifically pointed out in the claims, and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of the mailbox in its closed position with the signaling device in its up position;

FIG. 2 is a perspective fragmentary view of the mailbox with the door in its opened position, the signaling device in its down position, and the mail holder unit in its position of use holding letters for pickup by a mailman;

FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2 but showing the mail holder unit after the letters have been removed and the unit has moved to its collapsed position against the mailbox door and thereby eliminating any obstruction to the placing of incoming mail into the mailbox;

FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the mail holder unit;

FIG. 5 is a side elevation view of the mail holder unit of FIG. 4 in its position of use;

FIG. 6 is a view similar to FIG. 5 with the unit in its collapsed position; and

FIG. 7 is an exploded view of the mail holder unit.

The mailbox of this invention is illustrated in FIGS. 1, 2 and 3 as including a conventional box **10** having a door **12**. A signaling unit **14** is mounted on one side of the box **10** and a letter holding unit **16** is secured to the inside face of the door **12**.

The door **12** is provided with a flange **18** which is adapted to matingly engage the outer surface of the box **10**. A handle **20** is provided on the outer side of the door **12** for pivoting the door on a hinge **22** connecting the door to the lower front of the box **10**.

The signal unit **14** includes a pair of arms **24** and **26** disposed at 90 degrees to each other and are pivotally secured to the side of the box **10** by a bracket **28**. The arm **24** has an outer portion **29** provided with a flag **30** on its outer free end and a latch plate element **32** on its inner end. The inner end is integrally connected to an inwardly offset portion **34** which is pivotally connected to the bracket **28**. The arm **26** is provided with a counterweight **36** on its outer free end while the inner free end pivotally connected to the bracket **28** is adapted to bear against the bracket to limit its downward pivotal movement as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3.

As seen in FIG. 1, the signal unit **14** is held in its operative position of use by the latch **32** frictionally engaging the outer side of the flange **18** on the door **12** and thereby additionally assist in holding the door **12** in its closed position by forcing the flange **18** into frictional engagement with the adjacent outer surface of the box **10**. It is seen that upon opening the door **12** against the frictional action of the latch **32**, the counterweight **36** causes the signaling unit **14** to pivot to its down position of FIGS. 2 and 3.

It is seen that upon opening the door **12** to its horizontal position of FIGS. 2 and 3, that the letter holding unit **16** is exposed and extends outwardly within easy reach of a mailman, a letter **40**. The letter holding device **16** is illustrated in detail in FIGS. 4, 5, 6 and 7 and includes a channel-shaped base portion **42** (FIG. 7) which is secured by bolts **44** (FIG. 2) to the inside surface of the box door **12**. A downwardly facing channel member **46** is pivotally connected by a pin **48** to the inner end of the base channel member **42** and a spring **50** is provided on the pin **48** to normally bias the channel member **46** downwardly towards the door **12**.

A latch plate **52** is pivotally connected by pin **54** to the outer end of the base member **42**. The latch plate **52** is adapted to pivot to a substantially perpendicular position as shown in FIGS. 2 and 5 wherein its outer free end engages the underside of the arm **46**. A stop tab element **56** is deformed out of the base portion of the upper arm **46** for reasonable engagement with the outer free end of the latch plate **52** as seen in FIG. 5. A stop element **58** is provided on the lower end of the latch plate **52** for engagement with the base portion of the base member **42** to limit the pivotal movement of the latch **52**. Accordingly upon lifting the upper member **46** such that the latch **52** may pass under the stop tab **56**, the latch **52** will fall to its down position as shown in FIGS. 3 and 7.

On the outer end, on the upper surface of the arm **46**, a jaw or mousetrap type wire spring member **60** is pro-

vided and is pivotally connected to a pair of upwardly extending tabs **62** deformed out of the member **46**. A spring **64** is mounted on a pin **66** extending through the free ends of the wire clamp **60** and the tab **62** to hold the clamp **60** in a normally down position engaging the top surface of the arm **46**.

Thus it is seen that as the mailman approaches the mailbox **10** he will be immediately notified that there is mail to be picked up if the flag **30** is in its raised position of FIG. 1. Accordingly, when he opens the door **12** to its position of FIGS. 2 and 3, he will find a letter or the like **40** held outside of the box by the letter holder unit **16** mounted on the lid **12**. As he lifts the letter **40** from between the clamp **60** and the arm **46**, he will raise the arm **46** such that the latch **52** may fall to its position of FIG. 7 and thus permit the arm **46** to fall to the position in FIG. 3. Now, the inside of the box **10** is fully exposed and he may insert letters **70** and packages **72** as shown in FIG. 3, without any obstruction whatsoever. It is apparent therefore that the inconvenience of reaching to the rear of the mailbox to obtain outgoing mail has been completely eliminated and instead the letters to be picked up are conveniently placed within easy reach.

It is stressed that both the signaling unit **14** and the letter holding device **16** are for the benefit of the mailman as the signaling unit lets the mailman know that he has mail to pick up and the letter holding unit **16** facilitates the efficient handling and pickup of the outgoing mail and moreover readily permits incoming mail to be placed in the box **10**.

Some changes may be made in the construction and arrangement of my mailbox without departing from the real spirit and purpose of my invention, and it is my intention to cover by my claims, and modified forms of structure or use of mechanical equivalents which may be reasonably included within their scope.

I claim:

1. A mailbox, comprising,

a box unit having a door hingedly connected to one end and adapted to pivot between a vertical closed position to a horizontal open position, and

a mail holder pivotally connected to the inside of said door adjacent the inner end of said door and means

tending to pivot said mail holder towards said door when said door is in its open position, said mail holder having a free end disposed adjacent the free end of said door, said free end having a releasable clamp means for holding mail, latch means for releasably holding said mail holder in a position pivoted away from the inside of said door, upon said holder being pivoted away from said door when said door is in its open position said holder is disengaged from said latch means whereby said holder is pivoted towards said door.

2. The structure of claim **1** wherein the axis of pivotal movement of said mail holder is parallel to the axis pivotal movement of said door.

3. The structure of claim **2** wherein said releasable clamp means is pivoted about an axis parallel to the pivotal axes of said door and said mail holder.

4. The structure of claim **2** wherein said latch means is operatively pivotally connected to said door, said mail holder having a stop means for engagement with said latch means to maintain said mail holder in said position pivoted away from the inside of said door.

5. The structure of claim **4** wherein said stop means extends towards said door and a second stop means is provided on said latch means for limiting movement in one direction past a position substantially perpendicular to said door.

6. The structure of claim **4** and a spring means is provided for yieldably pivoting said mail holder towards said door.

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