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[54] **SELF-RIGHTING MAILBOX SUPPORT**

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[51] **Int. Cl.**[2] **F16M 13/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 248/145; 16/76; 403/111

[56] **References Cited**

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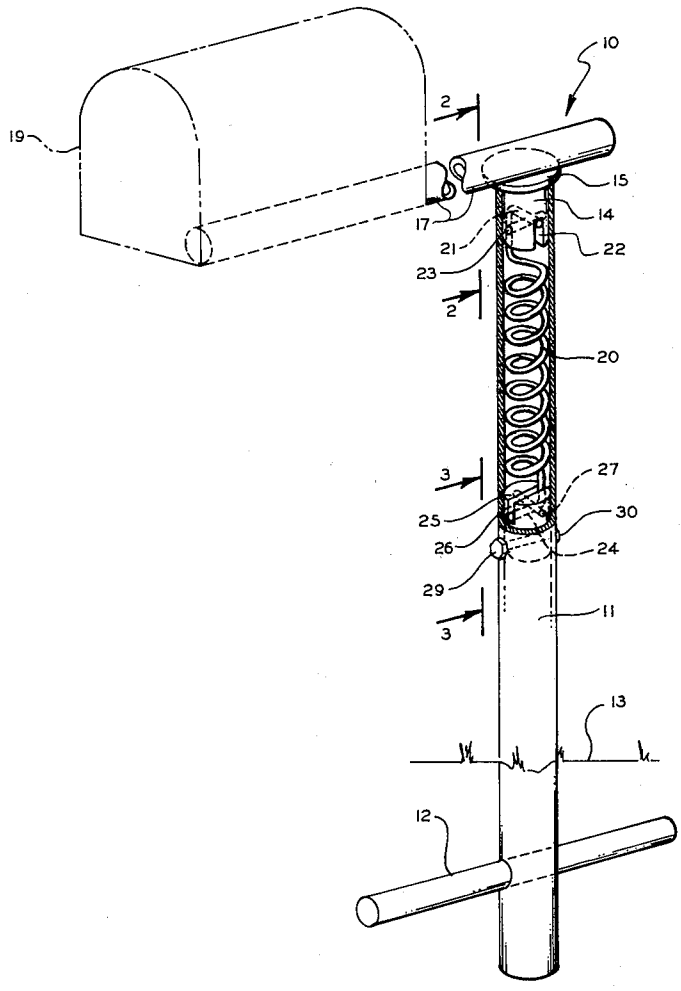
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A self-righting mailbox support has a tubular vertical member having its lower end adapted to be sunk in the ground, a cross-member secured to the buried end resisting rotation. A plug in the vertical member is rotatably contained in its upper end and has a retaining cap plate secured at its top for rotating on the top of the vertical member. An elongated mailbox-supporting-arm has one end welded to the plug cap. A coil spring contained in the vertical member has one end secured to the capped plug and its other end secured to an anchor plug which is secured within the vertical member by a bolt therethrough, the spring acting as a torsion spring for returning the mailbox end of the supporting arm to its normal position when the latter end has been struck by a passing vehicle.

1 Claim, 3 Drawing Figures



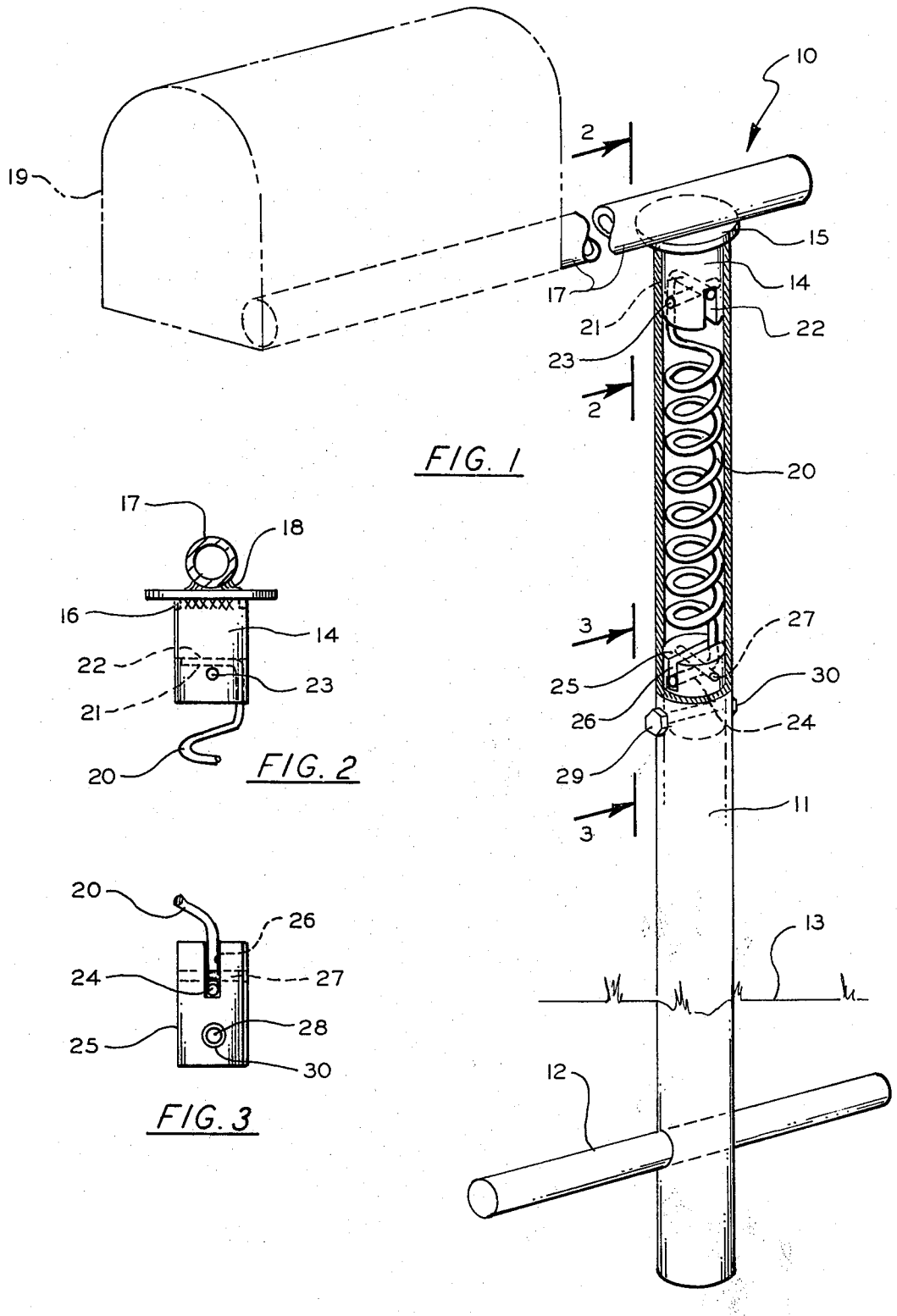


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

SELF-RIGHTING MAILBOX SUPPORT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to mailbox supports and in particular to a support having an elongated, horizontally extending arm on one end of which the mailbox is adapted to be secured, the other end of the arm being pivotally secured on top of a vertically extending tubular member for swinging aside of the horizontal arm, a spring inside the vertical member automatically returning the mailbox from its swung aside position.

Supports for mailboxes have heretofore been provided having arms for supporting the mailbox adjacent the roadway, the supporting arm being swingable away from the roadway when struck by a vehicle. Such supports must be manually returned to their original roadside position and resecured.

Other mailbox supports are known having spring means for elevating the mailbox or for rotating the mailbox about a horizontal axis and such spring means usually must be manually released or reset.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention contemplates a tubular vertical member anchored in the ground alongside a roadway and an elongated, horizontally extending mailbox supporting arm for positioning the mailbox at one of its ends immediately adjacent the roadway. The other end of the supporting arm is secured to a capped plug rotatable in the upper end of the vertical member, the cap of the plug resting on the upper end of the vertical member and acting as a bearing member if the mailbox is struck by a passing vehicle, such as a snowplow, swinging the arm to one side away from the roadway.

The invention also contemplates a helical coil spring of such size as to be contained in the tubular vertical member and having one of its ends secured to the capped plug and having its other end secured to an anchor plug which is secured to the vertical member by a bolt passing through the vertical member and the anchor plug. The spring acts as a torsion spring and automatically returns the mailbox carrying end of the support arm to its original position immediately adjacent the roadway.

The spring ends may be secured to the capped plug and the anchor plug by welding or the ends may be partially bent and held in place by pins or bolts extending through the plugs. A preferred securing means includes providing slots extending diametrically across the bottom of the capped plug and across the top of the anchor plug. The spring ends are bent to give them a terminal portion extending radially of the spring and the terminal portions lie in respective plug slots. Pins extending through the respective plugs across the slots retain the terminal portion of the spring ends in the slots.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of a mailbox support embodying the invention, the top portion of the vertical member thereof being shown in longitudinal section;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary side elevational view of the capped plug and associated parts as viewed in the direction of the arrows 2—2 of FIG. 1, the horizontal arm being shown in section; and

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary side elevational view of the anchor plug and associated parts as viewed in the direction of the arrows 3—3 of FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIG. 1, the support 10 has a tubular vertical member 11 whose lower end is adapted to be sunk in the ground spaced from a roadway. The member 11 may be a 7 feet length of 1½ inch pipe and preferably has a crosspiece 12, such as a 12 inches length of ¾ inch pipe, driven into an appropriate hole drilled through the member 11 as shown, adjacent the lower end of member 11. The lower end of member 11 is thus adapted to be buried about 2 feet deep, as indicated by the ground level shown at 13, the crosspiece 12 resisting rotation of the member 11. Preferably the lower end of member 11 and crosspiece 12 are embedded in concrete.

At its upper end member 11 carries a cylindrical steel plug 14 of a diameter such that it fits within the member 11 and is rotatable therein. Its length may be as long as 8 inches. As shown in FIG. 2, a flat steel cap 15 is welded at 16 to the top of plug 14, the cap being a disk larger in diameter than the member 11.

To the top of cap 15, one end of a horizontally extending mailbox supporting arm 17 is welded at 18, as shown. The other end of arm 17 is provided with holes, not shown, adapting the arm for attachment thereto of a mailbox 19 indicated in phantom lines in FIG. 1. Arm 17 may be a 1¼ inch pipe and is typically about 3 feet in length for supporting mailbox 19 in close proximity to the roadway.

As indicated in FIG. 1, a helical coil spring 20 has one end 21 secured to the capped plug 14. The plug 14 has a diametrically extending slot 22 across its bottom and the end 21 of the spring is bent to extend radially of the spring for lying in the slot 22. A pin 23 extends through the plug 14 across slot 22 under the spring end 21.

Spring 20 lies concealed in member 11 and has its lower end 24 secured to an anchor plug 25. Plug 25 fits loosely in member 11 and has a slot 26 extending diametrically across its top as shown in FIG. 1. The spring end 24 is bent to extend radially of the spring, as shown, and lies in slot 26. A pin 27, best seen in FIG. 3, extends through the plug 25 across slot 26 above the spring end 24 for securing the plug to the spring when it is assembled in member 11.

As best seen in FIG. 3, a hole 28 is provided in the anchor plug 25 below the slot 26 and, as seen in FIG. 1, a bolt 29 extends through member 11 and hole 28 for anchoring plug 25, a nut 30 and an appropriate washer securing the bolt 29 in place. As shown at 30 in FIG. 3, the ends of hole 28 may be conically countersunk to aid in the insertion of bolt 29. Slots 22 and 26 and spring ends 21 and 24 are angularly related to the hole 28 so as to normally direct the mailbox carrying end of arm 17 toward the roadway.

It will be seen that an economically constructed support has been provided for the mailbox. Should a snowplow or other vehicle strike the mailbox, arm 17 will swing away from the roadway and will be automatically returned to normal position by the spring 20. Moreover, the spring 20 is at all times concealed and protected in member 11.

I claim:

1. A mailbox support comprising a tubular upright member adapted to have one end secured in the ground alongside a roadway, a capped plug rotatably contained on the open upper end of the upright member, an elongated horizontally-disposed member secured at one end to the capped plug and having its other end normally positioned close to the roadway and adapted to be supportingly secured to a mailbox, a helical coil spring contained in the upright member, an anchor plug contained in the upright member, the plug being secured to the upright member by bolt means therethrough, each end of the spring being at least partially bent to extend radially of the spring, the capped plug having a slot across its lower end, the anchor plug having a slot across its upper end, the spring bent upper end lying in the capped plug slot, the spring bent lower and lying in the anchor plug slot, a pin extending diametrically across the capped plug slot below the spring bent upper end, and a pin extending diametrically across the anchor plug slot above the spring bent lower end, whereby when the mailbox end of the horizontally disposed member is struck by a vehicle it swings away from the roadway and is returned to its normal position by the spring.

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