

[54] **LETTER PACKAGES**
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 [22] Filed: **Sept. 18, 1972**
 [21] Appl. No.: **289,773**

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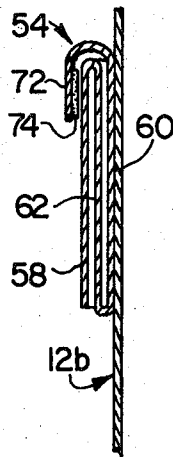
[52] U.S. Cl. 229/69, 229/70, 229/73, 229/92.3
 [51] Int. Cl. B65d 27/10, B65d 27/04, B65d 27/06
 [58] Field of Search 229/92.7, 92.3, 73, 69, 229/71, 70, 92.1

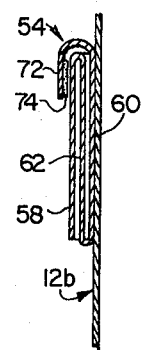
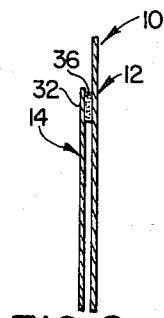
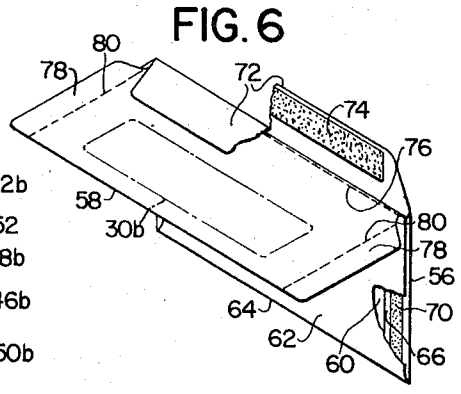
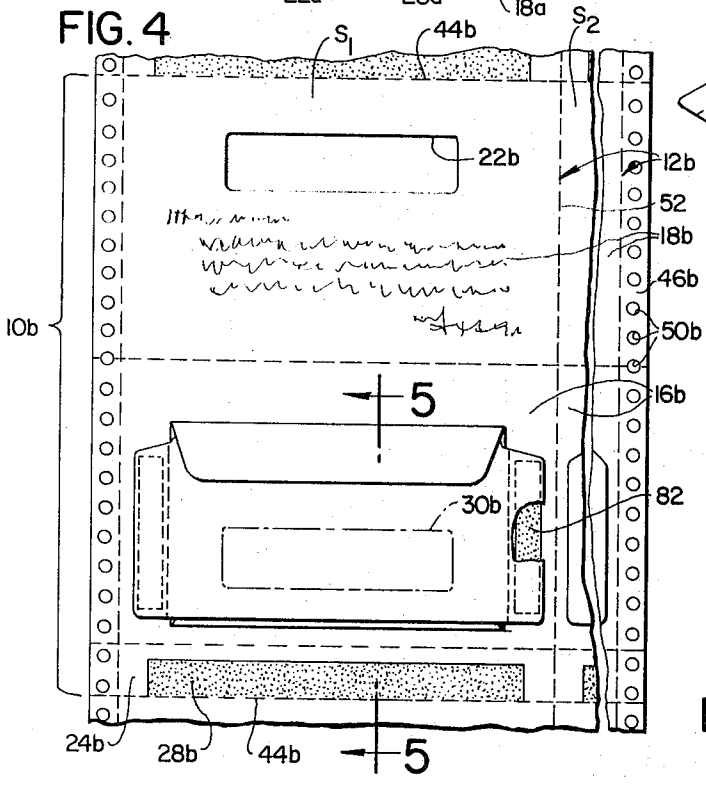
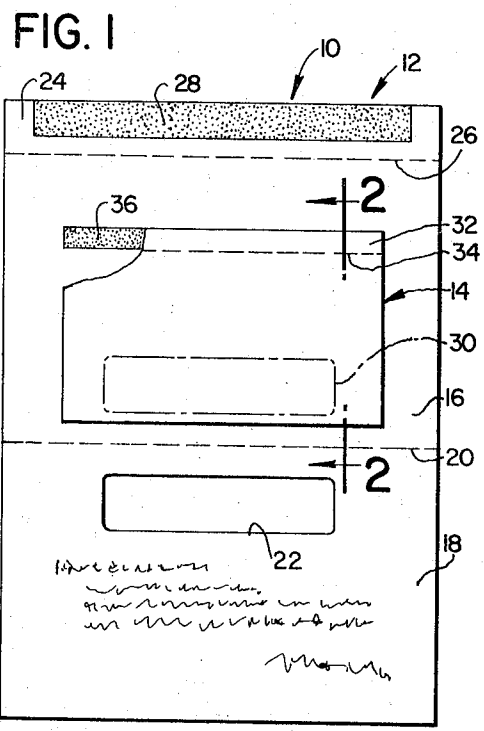
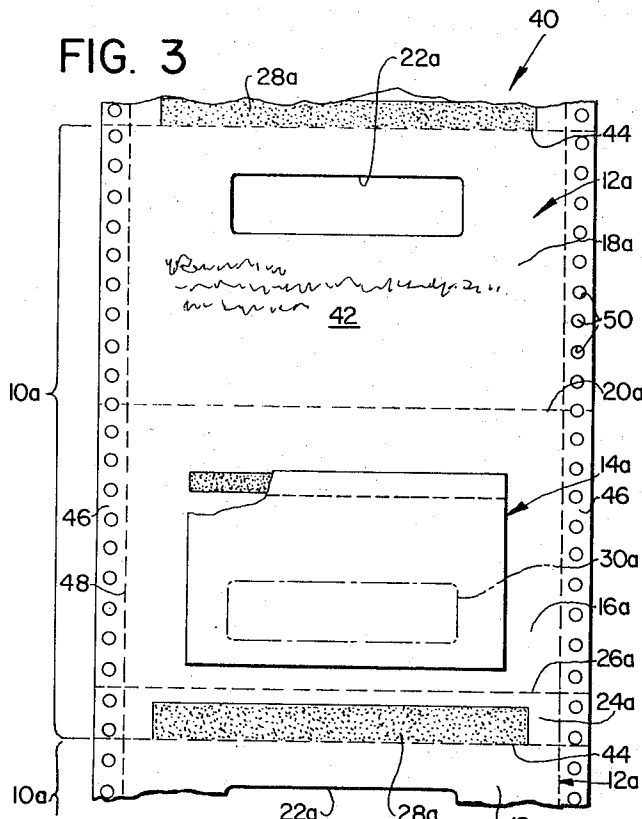
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A two-part letter package comprising an envelope-letterhead blank having a copy area thereon and a reply item attached thereto. The blank is folded and joined or sealed to itself to form a carrier envelope containing the reply item and letter copy. An address area on the reply item is exposed in a window opening through the carrier envelope whereby the reply item may be addressed after the letter package is formed and sealed. Letter packages may be provided in continuous form for personalized computer printing.

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16 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures





LETTER PACKAGES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates in general to letter packages and deals more particularly with improved two-part letter packages particularly suitable for manufacture and use in continuous form.

Heretofore, various letter packages have been provided for use in direct mail advertising, fund raising, solicitations and the like. Such packages usually comprise a letterhead or the like carrying a personalized computer printed message and having a window opening therein and means for retaining a related reply item in registry with a window opening in the letterhead. A separate envelope is customarily provided to carry the letterhead in its associated reply item so that the complete package usually includes three or more parts or components which must be assembled. The general aim of the present invention is to provide improved simplified letter packages which comprise a minimal number of parts for low cost production and handling.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, improved two-part letter packages are provided wherein a letterhead, which may carry a personalized computer printed message or the like, forms a carrier envelope for containing a reply item adapted to be addressed either before or after the carrier envelope is formed from the letterhead. The letter packages of the present invention are particularly adapted for manufacture and use in continuous form.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a front view of a letter package embodying the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along the line 2-2 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary front view of a continuous form letter package assembly embodying the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary front view of another continuous form letter package assembly embodying the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along the line 5-5 of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of the reply item and attaching means of FIG. 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A letter package embodying the present invention generally comprises an envelope-letterhead blank which has a reply item attached thereto. The blank includes at least two panels connected together along a common fold line. One of the panels has copy area thereon and a window opening therethrough. The reply item is attached to the other of the panels and has an address area thereon which is exposed in the window when said one panel is folded into overlying relation with said other panel and its attached reply item. A means is provided for connecting the latter two panels to form a carrier envelope containing the reply item.

Turning now to the drawing and referring first particularly to FIGS. 1 and 2, a two-part letter package embodying the present invention and indicated generally at 10 comprises an envelope-letterhead blank and an

associated reply item respectively generally indicated by the reference numerals 12 and 14. The blank 12 may take various forms, but preferably, and as shown, it comprises a generally rectangular piece of sheet material which includes two panels 16 and 18 of substantially equal size connected along a transversely extending fold line which, as shown, is defined by a line of perforation or weakening 20. The panel 18 has copy area on the front surface thereof, substantially as indicated, for receiving letter copy or the like which may be imprinted thereon when the package 10 is manufactured or at some later time. A window 22 is formed in the panel 16 spaced from the fold line 20. The blank 12 also includes a third panel 24 connected to the panel 16 along another line 26 generally parallel to the fold line 20 and which may comprise another line of weakening, substantially as shown. The panel 24 has a strip of adhesive 28 disposed on the front surface thereof, which may, for example, be of a remoistenable or pressure sensitive type. The panel 24 and associated adhesive 28 are provided to secure or seal the two panels 16 and 18, in folded connected relation as will be hereinafter further discussed.

Reply items of various types may be used in practicing the invention. In the illustrated case, the reply item comprises a generally rectangular reply card 14 which has an address area 30 on its front surface and may, if desired, have a message, order form or the like imprinted on the rear surface thereof. The card 14 has a marginal portion 32 separated from the remainder thereof by a line of weakening 34. The marginal portion 32 is attached to the front surface of the panel 16 by a strip of adhesive 36.

After the desired copy has been imprinted in the copy area, the panel 18 is folded upwardly along the fold line 20 and into overlying relation with associated portions of the panel 16 and the reply card 14 attached thereto which brings the window 22 into registry with the address area 30. The panel 24 may then be folded downwardly along the fold line 26 and into overlying relation with an associated marginal portion of the panel 18 and sealed thereto by the adhesive strip 28. The name and address of a recipient may be imprinted on the address area 30 or, if desired, a computer addressed label may be affixed thereto, either before or after the package is sealed. The various lines of weakening facilitate opening of the package 10 and separating the reply item 14 therefrom.

The letter packages of the present invention are particularly adapted for manufacture and use in continuous form. A typical continuous form letter package assembly embodying the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 3 and designated generally by the reference numeral 40. The assembly 40 comprises a plurality of individual letter packages 10a, 10a similar to the letter package 10, previously described, but connected together in end-to-end relation. Parts of each letter package 10a which are similar to parts of the package 10 bear the same reference numerals used in the description of the package 10 together with a letter "a" suffix. Each letter package 10a includes an envelope-letterhead blank 12a and an associated reply item 14a attached to and carried by the blank 12a. The letter packages 10a, 10a are adapted to be separated from each other after which each blank 12a may be folded and joined or sealed to form a carrier envelope which contains an associated reply item 14a.

The assembly **40** is formed from an elongated web of sheet material designated generally by the numeral **42** which defines a longitudinal series of connected separable envelope-letterhead blanks **12a**, **12a** similar to the blanks **12**, **12** previously described. The reply items **14a**, **14a** are substantially identical to the reply item **14** and formed from a plurality of separate pieces of sheet material and attached in longitudinal series along the web **42**.

Further considering the assembly **40**, each blank **12a** is connected to the next successive blank **12a** in the series by a longitudinally extending line of weakening **44** formed on the web **42**. The blanks which comprise the assembly may be further connected by at least one longitudinally extending marginal carrier strip. The illustrated embodiment **40** includes a pair of carrier strips **46**, **46**. Each carrier strip **46** is separated from the remainder of the web by a longitudinally extending line of weakening **48** transversely spaced from an associated side edge of the web **42**. A longitudinal series of configurations or holes **50**, **50** are formed in each carrier strip **46** for engaging a sprocket, pin wheel feed mechanism or the like of an associated computer printer or other printing apparatus.

The essential difference between the letter packages **10a**, **10a** and the letter package **10** previously described resides in the arrangement of the copy area on the envelope-letterhead blank and the location of the tipped-on reply or return vehicle attached thereto. Further considering a typical letter package **10a**, as shown in FIG. 3, the blank **12a** comprises two panels **16a** and **18a** connected together along a common fold line **20a** defined by a line of weakening formed on the web **42**. The blank **12a** also includes a third panel **24a** connected to the lower edge of the panel **16a** along another line defined by a transversely extending line of weakening **26a** formed on the web. As in the previously described embodiment, the panel **18a** has a window **22a** opening therethrough and spaced from the fold line **20a**. A strip of adhesive **28a** disposed on the front surface of the panel **24a** extends transversely thereof for sealing the package **10a** after separation from the assembly **40**. The reply item **14a** is attached to the panel **16a** by a strip of adhesive **36a** as previously discussed.

After the desired letter or other copy has been imprinted on the envelope-letterhead blanks **12a**, **12a**, the letter packages **10a**, **10a** may be separated from each other for folding and sealing. The carrier strips **46**, **46** are removed from the assembly **40** by bursting or tearing along the lines of weakening **48**, **48**. Each package **10a**, **10a** is separated from adjacent packages in the series by bursting or tearing along the lines of weakening **42**, **42**. When the letter copy is of a personalized computer printed type, the letters are preferably printed and the reply items addressed in the same computerized printing operation thereby wholly eliminating the need for any collating operation. However, if desired, each letter package **10a** may be addressed after it has been folded and sealed, as previously discussed.

Referring now to FIGS. 4 and 5, another continuous form assembly of letter packages embodying the invention is designated generally at **40b**. The assembly **40b** is formed in part from an elongated web of sheet material **42b** and comprises a plurality of series of connected letter packages **10b**, **10b**. The letter packages in each series are connected in side-by-side relation to the letter packages in another series. In the illustrated em-

bodiment **40b** two series are shown and designated **S1** and **S2**, however, assemblies which include additional series are contemplated. The letter packages in each longitudinal series are connected to those in an adjacent series along a longitudinally extending line of weakening such as indicated at **52**. The assembly **40b** comprises a pair of marginal carrier strips **46b**, **46b** and a plurality of series of envelope-letterhead blanks **12b**, **12b** formed on the web **42b**. Each blank **12b** is substantially identical to the blank **12a** previously described and carries a reply item **54**. Parts identical to parts previously described bear the same reference numeral and a letter *b* suffix and will not be hereinafter further described.

Considering now a typical reply item **54** in further detail, and referring particularly to FIG. 6, the reply item comprises an envelope structure which includes a plurality of connected panels. More specifically, the reply envelope structure **54** is formed from a single piece of sheet material and includes an envelope indicated generally at **56** and a panel or coupon **58** attached to the envelope **56**. The envelope has a plurality of integrally connected envelope panels which include body panels **60** and **62** connected along a lower fold line **64**. A pair of side panels **66**, **66** connected to the side edges of the body panel **60** along fold lines **68**, **68** are folded inwardly and further connected to the body panel **62** by strips of adhesive **70**, **70**. A closure panel **72** is connected to the upper edge of the body panel **60** along another fold line and carries a strip of sealing adhesive **74**. The panel **58** is connected to the upper edge of the body panel **62** along another fold line **76** defined by a line of weakening. A pair of tabs **78**, **78** extend outwardly from opposite ends of the panel **58** for attaching the envelope structure **56** to an associated envelope-letterhead blank **12b**. Each tab **78** is separated from the panel **58** by an associated line of weakening **80**. The tabs **78**, **78** are attached to the front surface of the blank **12b**, **12b** by strips of adhesive **82**, **82**. The panel **58** has an address area **30b** on the front surface thereof, as shown in FIG. 4, for registry with an associated window **22b**, and may have an order form or other copy imprinted on its rear surface.

When the letter packages **10b**, **10b** are ready to be folded and sealed, the carrier strips **46b**, **46b** are torn or burst along the lines of weakening **48b**, **48b** and the letter packages are further separated from each other by tearing or bursting along the various lines of weakening **44b** and **52**. The remaining lines of weakening on each letter package are provided to facilitate the opening and separation of the various parts of the package by a recipient thereof.

I claim:

1. A continuous form letter package assembly comprising an elongated web of sheet material defining at least one longitudinal series of foldable carrier envelope-letterhead blanks connected together in series in end-to-end relation and a plurality of reply envelope structures equal in number to said carrier envelope-letterhead blanks, each of said letter packages comprising one of said blanks and an associated one of said reply envelope structures carried by said one blank, said one blank having a copy area on the front surface thereof and including two carrier envelope panels connected along a common fold line, one of said carrier envelope panels having a window opening there-through spaced from said common fold line, said one

blank having means for securing said two carrier envelope panels in folded relation with said associated one reply envelope structure therebetween when said one blank is separated from said series and said one carrier envelope panel is folded along said common fold line relative to the other carrier envelope panel to form a carrier envelope for said one reply envelope structure, said one reply envelope structure comprising a reply envelope, a coupon panel connected to said reply envelope, and a pair of attaching tabs connected to said coupon panel for attaching said one reply envelope structure to said one blank, said reply envelope having a plurality of body panels connected together to form an envelope body, said coupon panel being connected to the upper edge of one of said body panels along an associated line of weakening and folded downwardly therealong and into overlying relation with said envelope body, said attaching tabs being connected along associated lines of weakening to the respective opposite side edges of said coupon panel and extending outwardly in opposite directions therefrom and beyond the respectively associated side edges of said envelope body, each of said attaching tabs being adhesively connected to an associated portion of the front surface of said other carrier envelope panel, said coupon panel and said tabs cooperating with said other carrier envelope panel to retain said envelope body between said other carrier envelope panel and said coupon panel and in generally overlying relation with an associated portion of said front surface of said other carrier envelope panel, said coupon panel having an address area thereon in registry with and exposed in said window opening when said two carrier envelope panels are secured in folded relation by said securing means.

2. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said body panels comprise a front panel and a rear panel and said reply envelope includes a closure panel connected to the upper edge of said front body panel, said coupon panel being connected to the upper edge of said rear body panel and folded downwardly into overlying relation with said rear body panel, said front body panel being retained in generally overlying relation with an associated portion of said front surface of said other carrier envelope panel.

3. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said securing means comprises a third panel connected to one of said two carrier envelope panels along another line generally parallel to said common fold line and sealing adhesive disposed on said third panel for securing said one panel to the other of said two panels.

4. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said other line comprises a line of weakening.

5. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said common fold line comprises a transversely extending line of weakening.

6. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said common fold line extends transversely of said web and said one carrier envelope panel and said other carrier envelope panel are of substantially equal size.

7. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said common fold line comprises a line of weakening and said other fold line comprises a line of weakening.

8. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 1 including at least one longitudinally extending line of weakening formed on said web transversely spaced from an associated side edge thereof and separating a marginal portion of said web from said one longitudinal series of envelope-letterhead blanks, said marginal portion defining a carrier strip.

9. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 8 including a longitudinal series of configurations formed on said carrier strip for engaging as associated feed mechanism.

10. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said carrier envelopes are connected together in end-to-end relation along a longitudinal series of transversely extending lines of weakening formed on said web.

11. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 1 including a plurality of series of envelope-letterhead blanks.

12. A continuous form letter package assembly as set forth in claim 11 wherein each said longitudinal series of envelope-letterhead blanks is connected to another longitudinal series of envelope-letterhead blanks along a longitudinally extending line of weakening formed on said web.

13. A continuous form letter package assembly set forth in claim 12 including a pair of longitudinally extending lines of weakening formed on said web, each of said lines of weakening comprising said pair being spaced transversely inwardly of an associated side edge of said web and separating a marginal portion of said web from an associated series of envelope-letterhead blanks, each said marginal portion defining a carrier strip.

14. A letter package comprising a foldable envelope-letterhead blank and a reply envelope structure carried by said blank, said blank having a copy area on the front surface thereof and including two carrier envelope panels connected along a common fold line, one of said carrier envelope panels having a window opening therethrough spaced from said common fold line, said blank having means for securing said two carrier envelope panels in folded relation with said associated reply envelope structure therebetween when said one carrier envelope panel is folded along said common fold line relative to the other carrier envelope panel to form a carrier envelope for said reply envelope structure, said reply envelope structure comprising a reply envelope, a coupon panel connected to said reply envelope, and a pair of attaching tabs connected to said coupon panel for attaching said reply envelope structure to said blank, said reply envelope having a plurality of body panels connected together to form an envelope body, said coupon panel being connected to the upper edge of one of said body panels along an associated line of weakening and folded downwardly therealong and into overlying relation with said envelope body, said attaching tabs being connected along associated lines of weakening to the respective opposite side edges of said coupon panel and extending outwardly in opposite directions therefrom and beyond the respectively associated side edges of said envelope body, each of said attaching tabs being adhesively connected to an associated portion of the front surface of said other carrier envelope panel, said coupon panel and said tabs cooperating with said other carrier envelope panel to retain said envelope body between said other carrier

envelope panel and said coupon panel and in generally overlying relation with an associated portion of said front surface of said other carrier envelope panel, said coupon panel having an address area thereon in registry with and exposed in said window opening when said two carrier envelope panels are secured in folded relation by said securing means.

15. A letter package assembly as set forth in claim 14 wherein said body panels comprise a front panel and a rear panel and said reply envelope includes a closure panel connected to the upper edge of said front body panel, said coupon panel being connected to the upper edge of said rear body panel and folded downwardly into overlying relation with said rear body panel, said front body panel being retained in generally overlying relation with an associated portion of said front surface of said other carrier envelope panel.

16. A continuous form letter package assembly comprising an elongated web of sheet material defining at least one longitudinal series of rectangular foldable carrier envelope-letterhead blanks connected together in series and in end-to-end relation along transversely extending lines of weakening and a plurality of reply cards equal in number to said carrier envelope-letterhead blanks, each of said letter packages comprising one of said blanks and an associated one of said reply cards carried by said one blank, said one blank having a copy area on the front surface thereof, and in-

cluding two rectangular carrier envelope panels of substantially equal size connected along a common fold line defined by a transversely extending line of weakening, one of said carrier envelope panels having a window opening therethrough spaced from said common fold line, said one blank having a rectangular third panel connected to one of said two carrier envelope panels along another line of weakening parallel to said common fold line and having sealing adhesive disposed thereon for securing said two carrier envelope panels in folded relation with said associated one reply card therebetween when said one blank is separated from said series and said one carrier envelope panel is folded along said common fold line relative to the other carrier envelope panel to form a carrier envelope for said one reply card, said one reply card comprising a rectangular card having a transversely extending line of weakening thereon parallel to one edge thereof and to said common fold line and separating a marginal portion of said card from the remaining portion thereof, a strip of adhesive securing said marginal portion to said other carrier envelope panel, said remaining portion having an address area thereon in registry with and exposed in said window opening when said two carrier envelope panels are secured in folded relation by said third panel.

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