Jan. 13, 1970 J. M. HAUGEN 3,489,313

PICTURE CONTAINER

Filed Jan. 29, 1968

Fig. 1

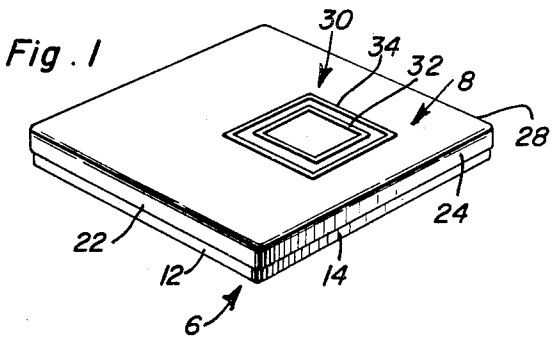


Fig. 2

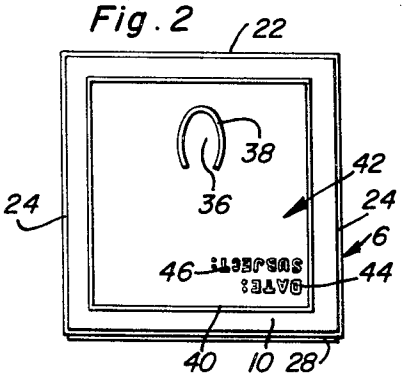


Fig. 3

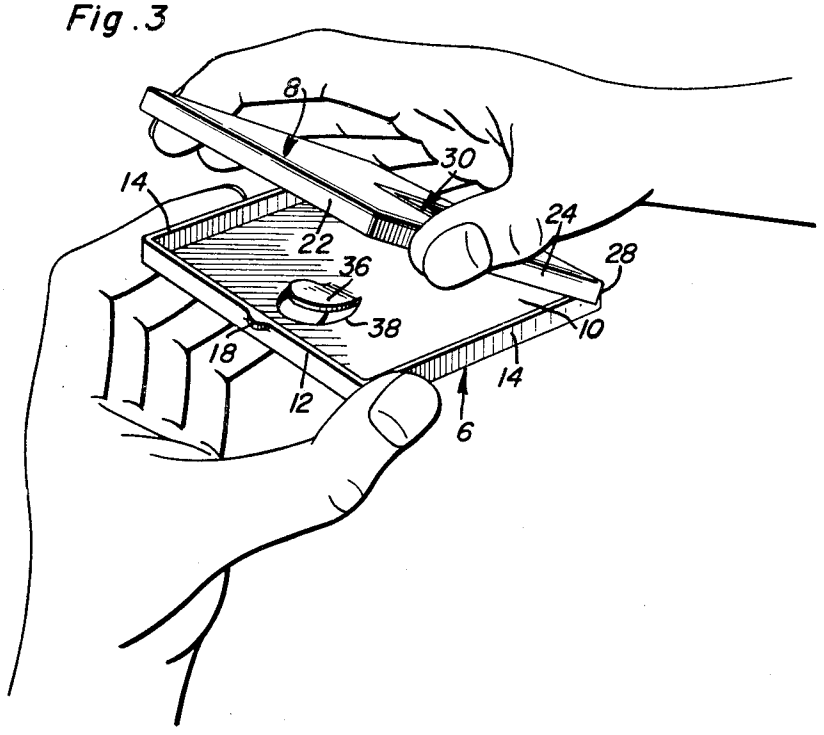
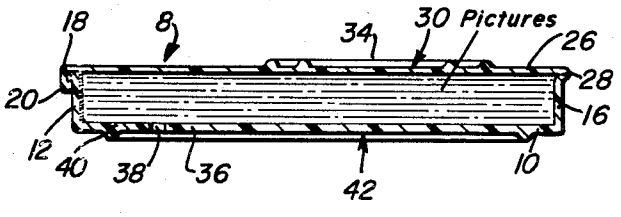


Fig. 4



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PICTURE CONTAINER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A pocket-size container for use by a photo-developing and finishing establishment. It is given to the customer with the developed prints encased therein, for placement in a garment pocket or handbag. After the photos have served their initial inspection purpose they can be replaced in the then marked and dated container, orderly grouped, and stored for periodic family viewing occasions.

This application for patent has to do with an improvement on my copending application Ser. No. 555,121 now Patent 3,381,850.

This invention relates to a novel pocket-size case-type container for protectively storing memorable and keepsake pictures, photographic prints and preserving negatives and related memoranda. It is primarily designed and adapted for advertising and commercial use in a photo-developing and finishing establishment for optional sale to customers over the counter or, as is usually the situation, given without extra charge to the customer in lieu of a paper sack as is currently the practice.

Briefly, the invention comprises a flat colorful box or case made of moldable plastic material, polypropylene for example. It comprises a tray provided with a hinged cover or lid and lugs or detents fixed on the front wall portions and coacting in providing a snap-action catch which keeps the lid closed. The herein described containers currently and popularly in use are suitable for 3½ x 3½ inch (also 3½ x 5½ inch) prints but may well vary in size.

Instead of handing the prints to the customer in a paper sack or bag, as is generally done, the herein disclosed plastic box or container is substituted for the bag. Not only is this container colorfully attractive it has proved out to be highly practical in that it is indicative of and in keeping with service not offered by competitive photographers. When the customer receives this container with the prints protectively confined therein it can be slipped in a garment pocket or handbag for easy handling and carrying. After the photos have served their initial purpose they are replaced in the container and thus can be safely grouped and kept for viewing whenever necessary or desired.

To the ends desired, the exterior of the bottom of the tray is provided with a significant outstanding bead which borders said bottom and defines and provides a marginally framed surface. This surface can be and is used in that a gummed label may, if desired, be pasted within the encompassing limits of the frame where it remains intact. The framed space can be used, with or without a label, to quickly reveal the nature or subject matter of the enclosed photos and date (or dates) on which they were taken and so on. The frame protects the label and data written thereon and is one of the features of the inventive concept.

Inasmuch as the integrally hinged lid is snap-fitted and the coacting rims of the tray and lid sections are yieldingly and friction retained, it has been repeatedly discovered that the step of opening the normally closed picture-retaining case may and often does pose a slight

handling difficulty. Accordingly, a highly significant improvement has to do with striking out and providing a flap-like tongue in the bottom of the tray. This tongue and the opening surrounding it, provides a practical adaptation which can be utilized in a manner that the user can conveniently catch hold of the tray and lid sections in a manner to open the case for whatever purpose that may be desired or necessary.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a picture container constructed in accordance with the present invention and showing the lid or cover closed, it being understood that the tray is then empty.

FIG. 2 is a bottom plan view of the tray section showing the improved feature, that is a struck-out tongue-like tab which is employed in any one of several ways to assist the user in catching hold of and opening the container.

FIG. 3 is a view in perspective which shows one way in which the tray section is gripped with one hand and one finger is used to temporarily lodge itself in the finger hole, whereby to permit the hinged lid section to be more readily opened.

FIG. 4 is a view, that is a central sectional view which shows the lid or cover closed and the receptacle or container space filled with a stack of pictures.

In actual practice the material which is used in constructing the innovation is preferably, but not necessarily, nontransparent and is of an appropriate as well as an attractive color. The containers presently being used are bright yellow but obviously, any suitable color may be employed in keeping with the desires of the manufacturer, distributor, or photo-establishment using the same.

The rectangular shallow bottom section referred to as the tray or receiver is denoted by the numeral **6** while the complemental lid or cover section is denoted at **8**. The flat bottom wall of the tray is designated at **10** and embodies integrally joined upstanding rim-forming walls. The front wall is denoted at **12**, the side walls at **14** and the back wall at **16**. The median upper edge portion of the front wall is provided with a relatively small upstanding lug or detent **18** to accommodate a coacting detent **20** (FIG. 4) on the flange or front wall **22** of the lid **18**. The wall **22** and side walls **24** are adapted to fit snugly and retentively over the walls **12** and **14** of the tray section. The coacting edge portions at the juncture of the lid proper **26** and wall **16** are joined by a hinging web **28**, that is, a web which is a component of the overall one-piece container.

In actual practice the top or main component **26** of the lid is embossed to provide an identifying name or trademark (not shown). The median portion is also provided with an ornamental design **30** comprising inner and outer rectangular frames or beads **32** and **34** and which in actual practice encompass the word "Picture" (not shown) within the limits thereof. This design feature **30** is decorative and optional.

With particular reference to the built-in or integral hinge **28** (FIG. 4) experience has shown that this feature can be so formed that it has inherent resilient properties whereby when the detent **20** is released from the keeper detent **18**, there is a tendency for the lid to automatically swing up to an open position.

Also because of the fact that the container is made from colorful plastic material it has been found that it is sometimes difficult to spring the lid from a closed position (FIGS. 1, 2 and 4 for example) to the open position

shown in FIG. 2. One reason is because the plastic material tends to stick slightly and since it is desirable to keep the container effectively closed the friction-retained surfaces between the rim walls **12**, **14**, **22** and **24** are effective but necessitate pulling the sections apart by catching hold of the tray **6** with one hand and the lid with the other hand. However, and to assist in achieving this result, it has been found practical and expedient to strike-out a flap-like tongue of ovate or similar shape. The tongue is denoted by the numeral **36** and the finger opening is denoted at **38**. The tongue and opening can be placed at the suggested point in the bottom wall **10**. Normally the tongue springs down to the flush or normal position shown in FIG. 2.

With further reference to the featured finger-hole **38** and the complemental tab-like tongue **36**, it can be employed in several ways. The mode of use can, if desired, be that shown, for example, in FIG. 3 wherein the lid and tray sections are individually gripped with the fingers of both hands with one finger of one hand, say the left hand, poked through and lodged in the hole in a manner to bend the then inwardly flexed flap into the tray. With one finger thus "hooked in place" the tray can be held with one hand and the lid with the other hand and opened. It is also feasible to insert the fingernail of a finger (not shown) into a marginal portion of the finger-hole, pry and flex flap or tongue outwardly so that it can be caught hold of with the thumb and a finger in a manner to positively hold the tray while the lid is pulled open. The provision of the tab-like tongue in the bottom wall facilitates the user's capability of handling the container whether empty or packed with a stack of tight fitting pictures. For example, the tab-like tongue **36** lends itself to desirable use as a readily manipulable follower in that it can be manually pressed up (in a manner similar to that shown in FIG. 3) to dislodge and conveniently eject pictures (not shown) that might tend to hang and thus interfere with easy removal. As a matter of fact, the user can push the pictures up and against the lid and thus open the lid at the same time.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4 the bottom wall **10** is provided inwardly of the rim walls with an endless substantially rectangular bottom elevating bead **40**. This embossed bead defines a framed data accommodation space **42**. Within the limits of the space (preferably in one corner) embossed words such as "Date" **44** and "Subject" **46** are provided. One can use the writing surface **42** to make pencil notes on (not illustrated). It is also within the purview of the concept to use a major portion of the space **42** for sticking a gummed label (not shown) therein with data thereon having to do with the persons or places involved in the pictures contained in the box. Accordingly, the box lends itself to practical and informative use.

In practice, after the purchaser or customer has examined the prints and has paid for same, the prints are transferred from the usual paper bag into the receptacle portion of the tray of the protective container or box herein shown and described. Thus the prints are protected and, after the same have served their initial viewing purposes, they are returned to the box or container and maintained safely for future reference purposes. The advantages of this manner of handling and of storage are self-evident. Accordingly, it is submitted that the invention well serves the purposes for which it is intended.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and opertion shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. A picture container for encasing, storing and protecting a stack of photographic prints, negatives and the like comprising: an open top box-like tray embodying a bottom wall marginally encompassed by upstanding front, rear and side walls defining and providing a rim for said tray, a lid providing a cover for said tray, said lid having a rear marginal edge terminating contiguous to and registering with the underlying upper edge of said rear wall, and also having front and side marginal flanges overhanging said front and side walls and retaining said lid in a tray-closing position, a pliant web commensurate in length with the length of said rear marginal edge and said rear wall and integrally joined therewith and providing a lid and tray connecting hinge, said bottom wall having a bendably resilient tongue struck out and simultaneously providing a fingerhole and a complemental flap which can be bent (1) in or (2) flexed out and caught hold of with one's fingers or (3) employed as a follower to assist the user in dislodging and ejecting pictures for convenient access and removal, the exterior of the bottom surface of said bottom wall provided inwardly of the surrounding front, rear and side walls with an endless embossed outstanding surface elevating bead delineating a framed explanatory data reception space susceptible of use in enabling one to write in or otherwise supply information descriptive of and relative to the pictures or prints confined in said container.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

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