Nov. 23, 1971 N. LEOPOLDI 3,621,691

KEYHOLDER

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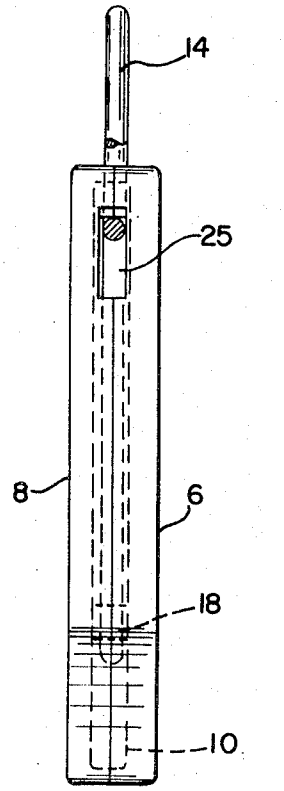


FIG. 2

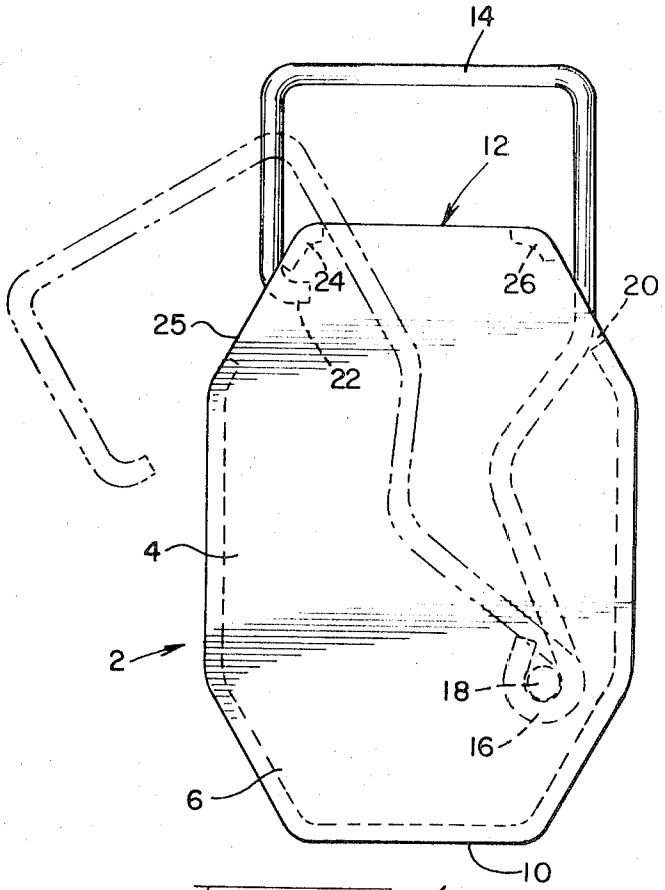


FIG. 1

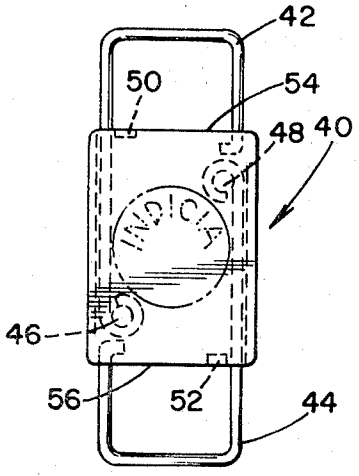


FIG. 4

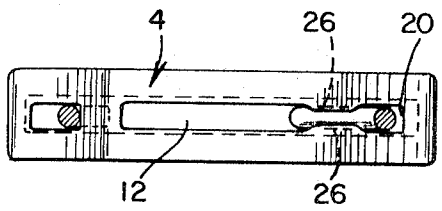


FIG. 3

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KEYHOLDER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An easily fabricated, low cost keyholder especially useful as a promotional, give-away item comprising a plastic body housing, a loop wire key retainer pivotally mounted therein and being capable of being positioned into the open or locked position by simple pivotal movement.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention pertains to keyholders which because of their easy mode of fabrication, the use of low cost materials and simplicity of design are ideal to be used as advertising give-away items. In one specific embodiment a key-ring holder is fabricated of a plastic body housing within which a wire loop or the like is pivotally mounted and it being rotatable into the open, key-receiving position and snapped back into the closed or locked position for easy retention of keys. In another embodiment the invention pertains to a double ended key-retaining holder which provides for easy compact retention of a plurality of keys.

As far as is known the prior art has suggested various designs and configurations for the retention of keys or similar elements but some have involved costly manufacturing procedures, sophisticated modes of manipulation in order to use the devices and other serious drawbacks which have not made them particularly desirable from a business promotion, advertising or give-away basis. The herein disclosed invention obviates some of these shortcomings and provides as easily fabricated, low cost key holder of unique design.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Generally, in an exemplary embodiment the invention pertains to a keyholder comprising a body housing with a key retaining member pivotally secured within the housing and being movable through a path between an open or key-fastening position and a closed or locked position. Means are provided within the path to selectively retain said key retaining member in either one of the two positions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a specific embodiment of the keyholder of this invention, the phantom lines indicating the key retaining element in the open or the key-receiving position;

FIG. 2 is an end view of the key holder of FIG. 1 partially in cross-section;

FIG. 3 is a top view of the key holder depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2 partially in cross-section, and

FIG. 4 illustrates another embodiment of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring specifically to FIGS. 1 to 3 inclusive, a keyholder **2** is illustrated as comprising a body housing **4** fabricated in this instance of thin-walled plastic having opposed side walls **6** and **8** with perpendicularly disposed flanges or extensions forming an end wall generally designated **10** which is continuous around the periphery of

the side walls **6** and **8** except at the top and an upper side portion. The open topped body **4** defines a hollow chamber or housing with the open top generally defining a path **12** through which key retaining member **14** of heavy gauge wire conventionally found in key rings and herein having a somewhat question-mark-like configuration may move. Key retaining member **14** is pivotally mounted as by means of lower loop **16** of wire **14** and being loosely looped around stub shaft **18** secured between side walls **6** and **8** of body member **4**. In this instance, because it is contemplated that housing **4** be made of plastic, stub shaft **18** may be formed on the interior of one of the side walls **6** or **8** during the molding process. It is also contemplated that a separate metallic-like rivet or short axel or post and the like also perform this same function. It will be noted that the open top of the housing **4** specifically at **20** forms an abutting surface or defines the extremity of the path **12** through which the wire member **14** may pivotally move. The member **14** is shown in the full line position as being in the closed or locked position and the extremity of the wire member **14** as at **22** is provided with a hooked portion to engage or abut opposed wall portion **24**, which portion along with the end walls at **20**, define the right-hand limit of the path as viewed in FIG. 1 through which the member **14** pivotally moves. Because of the hooked portion **22** of member **14** acting as an additional locking feature, it is necessary to have a discontinuous wall or slot as at **25** to allow clearance during movement of key-retaining member **14** into the open, phantom line position. Once in the open or phantom-lined position, keys of course may be easily threaded or placed on the retaining ring **14**. However, in order to reach the phantom or open position, retaining means are placed in the path **12** through which the retaining member **14** must move. In this particular instance, the retaining means takes the forth of opposing wall projections such as **26** which provide for frictional fit passage therethrough. In other words, a considerable amount of force must be exerted on the retaining member **14** to make it pass through the nip of the opposing wall projections **26** to move it in to the open or key-threading position. Obviously, the same function may be obtained by using a single wall projection as opposed to the double opposing wall projections **26**. In general, however, the preferred form is to have opposing wall projections **26** because there will be a certain amount of frictional wear caused by moving the retaining element **14** into and out of the closed position.

It is contemplated that body housing **4** be fabricated of two separate plastic components having the general designation depicted wherein the wire member or the key retaining member is placed therebetween on a stub shaft provided for anchoring purposes. The two halves are then put together and sealed along its peripheral mating edge as by means of plastic, cement, adhesive or the like. Other means of adhering the two body halves to one another will be obvious to those skilled in the art and will of course include fusion adhesion, etc., where the materials of construction used are plastic. Other materials are of course contemplated. The body of the key holder **2** may take any configuration as may be key-retaining member **14** just so long as the shapes of these members are consistent with the desired end results alluded to hereinbefore. The types of plastic and indeed other materials from which the key holders of this invention may be made are many but because of low cost and durability, plastic and heavy gauge wire are preferred. The hollow interior of the key holder may be utilized to good advantage by the placement of advertising indicia or similar such matter therein. Also, advertising, promotional and other information may be printed or otherwise provided on the exterior wall surfaces of the key holder.

The versatility of the key holders of this invention will become apparent when considering another embodiment of the invention as depicted in FIG. 4. Here the keyholder **40** is of rectangular configuration and design employing key retaining members **42** and **44** of slightly different shape than that earlier described but operating on the same general principles. Each of the members **42** and **44** are secured on a stub shaft **46** and **48** respectively and the key ring **40** provided with opposed wall portions such as **50** and **52** through which the key retaining members **42** and **44** respectively must move. Again, an open top and open bottom such as **54** and **56** are provided to allow pivotal movement of the key-retaining members.

Thus, there are a myriad of configurations and modifications that may be made to the key holders of this invention without the departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as disclosed herein. All such modifications will at once make themselves apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The embodiments in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A keyholder comprising a body housing, a key-retaining member pivotally secured within said housing at one side thereof and being movable through a path across the width of said housing between an open or key-fastening position outwardly of the other side of the housing and a closed or locked position in the housing adjacent said one side, and securing means in the housing within said path to selectively retain said key-retaining member in said key-fastening position or release said member for movement to said open position.

2. A keyholder in accordance with claim **1** wherein said body housing has an open top and said path is defined thereby.

3. A keyholder in accordance with claim **2** wherein said key-retaining member is of heavy gauge wire having a looped configuration suitable for retaining a plurality of keys and moving along said path.

4. A keyholder in accordance with claim **3** wherein the end of said wire opposite said looped configuration is looped in pivotal relationship around a stub post fastened to at least one interior wall of said body housing.

5. A keyholder in accordance with claim **3** wherein said means within said path comprises at least one wall projection of said body housing adjacent said open top to provide frictional fit passage of said wire therethrough and to retain it in the said closed or locked position.

6. A key holder comprising a body housing, a key-retaining member pivotally secured within said housing and

being movable through a path between an open or key-fastening position and a closed or locked position, and means within said path to selectively retain said key-retaining member in either one of said positions, said body housing having an open top and said path being defined thereby, said key-retaining member being of heavy gauge wire having a looped configuration suitable for retaining a plurality of keys and moving along said path, said means within said path comprising at least one wall projection of said body housing adjacent said open top to provide frictional fit passage of said wire therethrough and to retain it in the said closed or locked position, opposing wall portions of said body housing adjacent said open top opposite said at least one wall projection defining the limits of said wire while in the open or key-fastening position.

7. A key holder in accordance with claim **6** wherein another oppositely opposed wall projection of said body housing is provided opposite said at least one wall projection and the side walls of said body housing are adapted to carry advertising indicia.

8. A key holder in accordance with claim **7** wherein said wire has a question mark-like configuration and said housing is of plastic.

9. A key holder in accordance with claim **7** wherein said body housing has an open bottom and additionally includes a second key-retaining member pivotally secured therein in like manner as the other key-retaining member.

10. A key holder in accordance with claim **9** wherein the side walls of said body housing are partially discontinuous to allow pivotal movement of said key-retaining members.

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