United States Patent

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[54] **SPECIALTY ENVELOPE**

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[21] Appl. No.: **143,039**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **229/71**, 229/75, 229/79, 229/80

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 27/04**

[58] **Field of Search**.....229/68, 71, 75, 80, 79, 92.1, 229/92.3

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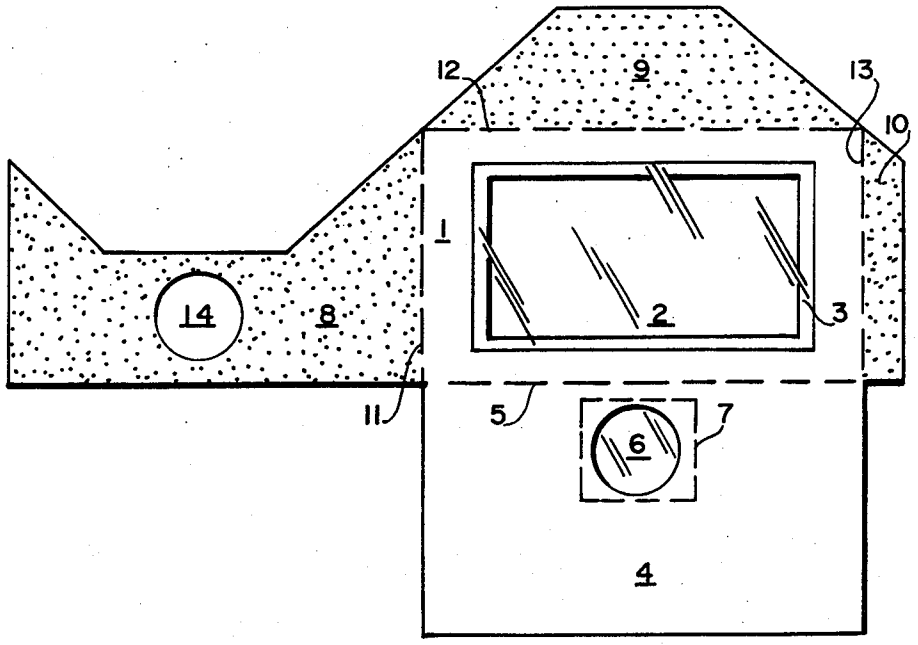
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A tamper proof specialty envelope includes a quadrilateral base panel to each edge of which a sealing flap is foldably joined. A main one of the sealing flaps is configured in the same general shape as the base panel and is folded into flat face-to-face relation therewith. The three remaining sealing flaps are foldably joined to the other three edges of the base panel respectively and are configured to form a composite panel formed of the three remaining coplanar flaps which are arranged in overlying relation to said one main sealing flap and secured thereto and constitute a tamper proof closure for an item such as a coin or a commemorative stamp disposed therein and observable through viewing windows formed in said base panel and in said main flap and in a certain one of said coplanar flaps. A sealing stamp is then affixed to portions of the three coplanar flaps and cancelling indicia is imprinted over the sealing stamp and over adjacent portions of each of the three coplanar sealing flaps.

9 Claims, 11 Drawing Figures



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SHEET 1 OF 2

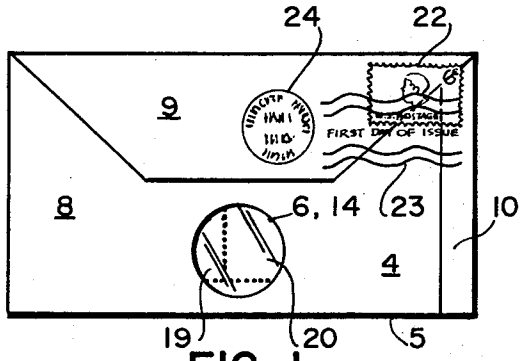


FIG. 1

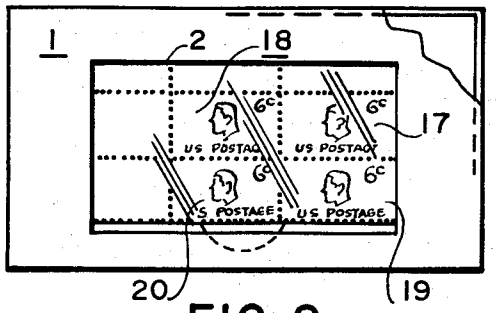


FIG. 2

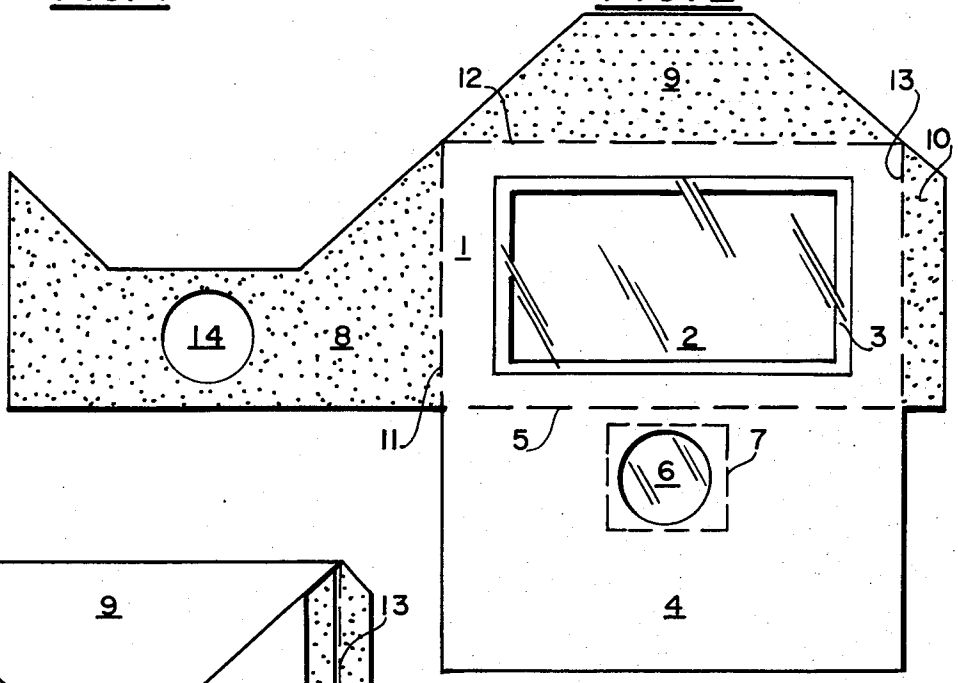


FIG. 3

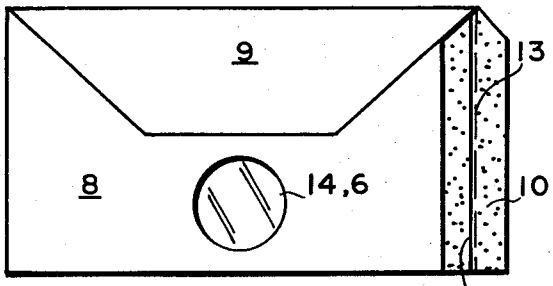


FIG. 4

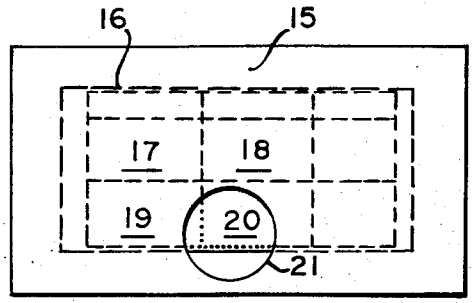


FIG. 5

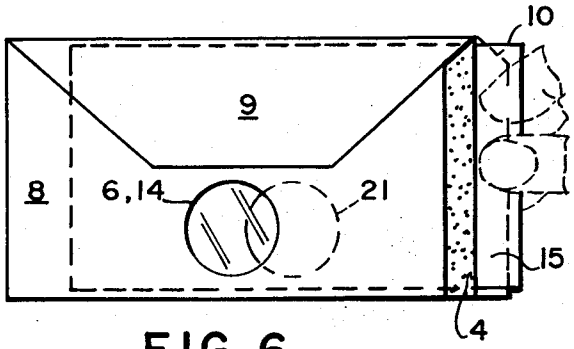


FIG. 6

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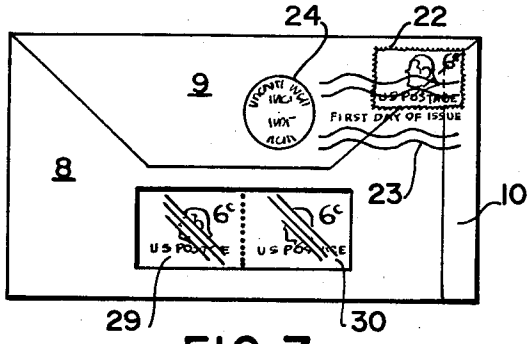


FIG. 7

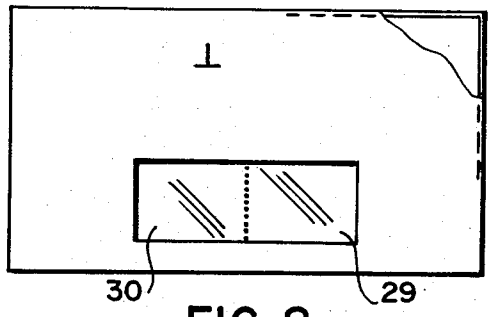


FIG. 8

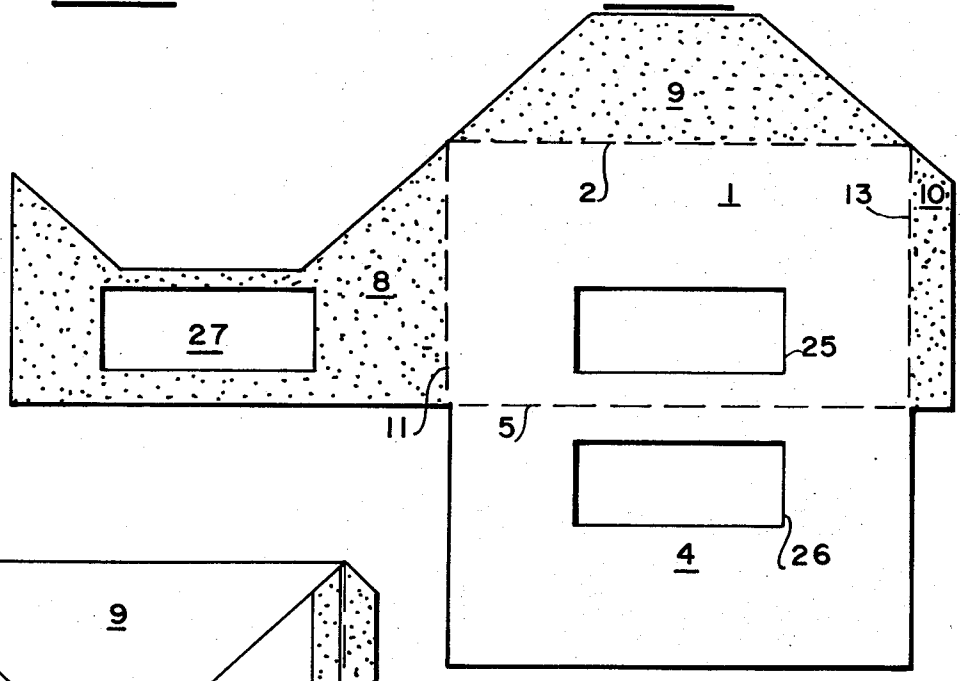


FIG. 9

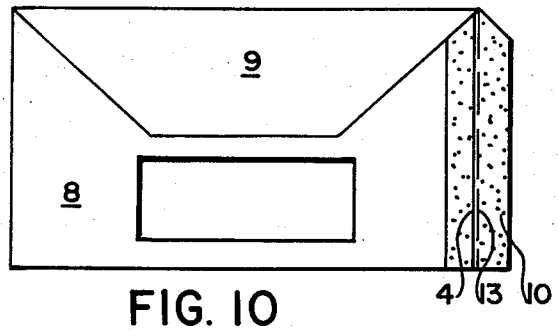


FIG. 10

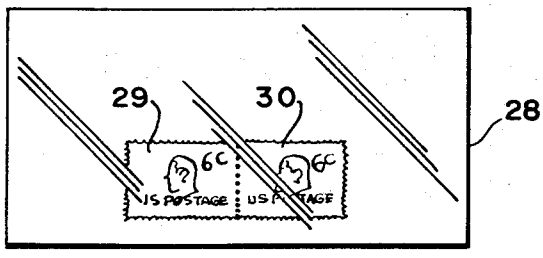


FIG. 11

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SPECIALTY ENVELOPE

In order to provide reliable evidence of the date of first issue of stamps, coins and the like, such objects may be placed within a secure enclosure such as an envelope having viewing windows through which the object may be observed and a sealing stamp applied thereto and cancelled by post office cancelling indicia which indicates not only the cancellation of the sealing stamp but which also indicates the date of which the cancellation indicia was applied to the envelope. By this means, collectors' items such as coins and stamps may be authentically dated as of the date of first issue and, with the passage of time, become more and more valuable particularly where the envelope enclosing the objects is constructed in a tamper-proof fashion.

According to the invention, a tamper-proof envelope is provided in which a four-sided base panel is provided with sealing flaps foldably joined to each of its edges. A main one of the sealing flaps is folded into face-to/-face relation with the base panel along one edge thereof and sealing flaps are foldably joined to the other three side edges and arranged in overlying relationship with respect to the main sealing flap. The latter three sealing flaps are coplanar and constitute a composite panel generally shaped to coincide with the base panel and the main sealing flap. According to a feature of the invention the coplanar flaps are disposed with an edge portion of each lying adjacent edge portions of the other two coplanar sealing flaps. Thus a sealing stamp is arranged to overlie and be sealed to portions of all of the coplanar sealing flaps. Furthermore when cancellation indicia is applied to the sealing stamp and to each of the coplanar sealing flaps, such indicia is clearly legible due to the fact that the sealing flaps are coplanar and thus do not constitute a stepped area for receiving the cancelling indicia. By this means the first date of issue of a new coin or stamp is established and, due to the passage of time, the value thereof appreciates due to the fact that the specialty envelope of the invention precludes tampering and hence insures the authenticity of the first day of issue of the object included in the envelope.

For a better understanding of the invention reference may be had to the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing in which

FIG. 1 is a view of the front of an envelope constructed according to the invention;

FIG. 2 is a view of the back of the envelope shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the main blank from which the envelope of FIGS. 1 and 2 is constructed;

FIG. 4 is a view of the blank depicted in FIG. 3 after certain folding operations have been performed;

FIG. 5 is a plan view of positioning means which is inserted into the envelope and which serves to hold the object disposed within the envelope in general coincidence with the viewing windows;

FIG. 6 is a view similar to FIG. 4 but which depicts the insertion of the positioning means of FIG. 5 into the envelope shown in FIG. 4;

FIGS. 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are views corresponding to FIGS. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and which simply depict a slightly different form of the invention in which the viewing windows are all rectangular in configuration and the translucent membranes are not part of the envelope. Instead the membranes are part of the insert.

In the drawings the numeral 1 designates a base panel in which a viewing window 2 is formed. Viewing window 2 is provided with a closure in the form of a translucent membrane 3 which is secured about its edges to the base panel 1 in overlying relation to the window 2. Main sealing flap 4 is foldably joined to an edge of base panel 1 along fold line 5 and is provided with a circular viewing window 6 over which a square closure panel 7 is disposed, such closure panel being of translucent material and being secured by any suitable means to sealing flap 4. Of course closure 7 could be of any suitable configuration. The remaining sealing flaps 8, 9 and 10 are foldably joined to different edges of base panel 1 along fold lines 11, 12, and 13 respectively. Adhesive material as indicated by stippling is applied to sealing flaps 8, 9 and 10 as indicated by stippling in FIG. 3. The adhesive which is applied to flap 10 and to the coincidental area of flap 4 is contact type adhesive.

In order to form the envelope as show in FIG. 4 from the blank depicted in FIG. 3, the main sealing flap 4 is first folded upwardly and forwardly along fold line 5 and into face-to-face contact with base panel 1 after which sealing flaps 8 and 9 are folded into face-to-face relation with the main sealing flap 4 and secured thereto as indicated in FIG. 4. Viewing window 14 is formed in sealing flap 8 and when assembled as shown in FIG. 4 is disposed in coincidental relation with the viewing window 6 formed in main sealing flap 4.

In order to insure proper positioning of an object within the envelope so that it may be readily observed from either side of the envelope through the viewing windows 2, 6 and 14, positioning means such as is shown in FIG. 5 may be used. The positioning means of FIG. 5 incorporates a generally rectangular panel 15 to which is secured a double thickness open-ended tube of translucent membranous material designated by the numeral 16. Stamps such as are indicated in FIG. 5 by the numerals 17, 18, 19 and 20 are inserted into the translucent tubular structure 16. Since the translucent envelope 16 is secured to the plate 15 as indicated in FIG. 5, the stamps 17, 18, 19 and 20 are fixed in position relative to positioning panel 15. A viewing window 21 is formed in positioning panel 15.

With the sealing flap 10 open as indicated in FIG. 4, the positioning means 15 and its associated stamps is inserted into the envelope from the right hand end thereof as shown in FIG. 6 and when fully inserted into the envelope, sealing flap 10 is folded upwardly and toward the left along fold line 13 and affixed to the main sealing flap 4. The envelope then appears generally as indicated in FIG. 1 with portions of stamps 19 and 20 being observable through sealing windows 14 and 21.

In order to authenticate the date of the stamps such as 17, 18, 19 and 20 inside the envelope, a sealing postage stamp such as is indicated by the numeral 22 in FIG. 1 is adhered to the upper righthand corner of the envelope. It is apparent in FIG. 1 that portions of sealing stamp 22 overlie and are adhered to adjacent portions of the coplanar sealing flaps 8, 9 and 10. Thus it is impossible to open the envelope without rupturing the sealing stamp 22.

With the envelope arranged as depicted in FIG. 1 it is then presented to the post office where conventional cancellation indicia generally designated by the nu-

meral 23 is applied via a cancellation stamping operation along with a date and place stamp generally designated by the numeral 24. It is apparent from FIG. 1 that the cancellation indicia 23 overlies portions of sealing stamp 22 as well as portions of sealing flaps 8, 9 and 10, each of which is provided with an edge portion closely adjacent an edge portion of both of the other sealing flaps.

Since the sealing flaps 8, 9 and 10 all lie in a common plane, the cancellation indicia 23 is applied in a neat and orderly fashion because the adjacent portions of coplanar panels 8, 9 and 10 do not overlap. There is thus no offset between portions of lines of cancellation indicia 23 which offset, if apparent, conceivably could indicate that the envelope had been opened and resealed thus derogating from the authenticity of the stamped date of the objects such as 17-20 inclusive. According to one feature of this invention the cancellation lines 23 are neatly and properly aligned affording reliable evidence that the envelope has not been tampered with and that the contents truly represent dates of first issue.

From FIG. 5 it is apparent that viewing window 21 is formed in positioning panel 15 and because the membrane 16 is translucent, portions of the stamps 19 and 20 may be observed from the front side of the envelope. The back side of the envelope is shown in FIG. 2 in which the front portion of the stamps 17, 18, 19 and 20 may be observed through rectangular viewing window 2 formed in base panel 1.

The modified arrangement depicted in FIGS. 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 is quite similar to the structure depicted in FIGS. 1–6 and corresponding parts of the modification are identified by the same numerals as are used in FIGS. 1–6.

The positioning panel, FIG. 11, could differ from the panel depicted in FIG. 5 only in the size, shape and location of its viewing window, however, an alternative type positioning panel is shown in FIG. 11. It is formed of two sheets of translucent material between which the objects are positioned and heatsealed or otherwise secured in the correct position. Conversely, the type positioning panel shown in FIG. 5 could be replaced by the type depicted in FIG. 11. The construction of the positioning panel could vary widely depending upon the size, shape etc. of the object or objects to be displayed. The arrangement of FIGS. 7–10 inclusive differs from the arrangement of FIGS. 1–6 inclusive in that all the viewing windows and all the panels are coincidental in size and configuration. Thus the viewing window 25 in base panel 1 coincides with viewing widow 26 in main sealing flap 4 and with viewing window 27 formed in sealing flap 8. It follows that the objects 29 ad 30 must be disposed within the positioning panel 28 in such a manner that the objects coincide with the viewing windows when the positioning panel 28 is inserted into the righthand end of the envelope depicted in FIG. 10.

Although the envelopes as described above would necessarily be constructed of an opaque material, with openings for windows having been cut, the envelopes could be constructed totally or partially of a translucent material.

From the above description it is apparent that by either modification of the invention, a secure and tamper proof envelope is provided by which reliable and authentic evidence of the date of first issue of collectors' items is provided.

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

I claim:

1. An envelope comprising a base panel of quadrilateral configuration, a sealing flap foldably joined to each edge of said base panel, a main one of said sealing flaps being folded into flat face-to-face relation with said base panel and the remaining sealing flaps being folded into flat face-to-face relation with said main sealing flap, said remaining sealing flaps being coplanar with each other and being smaller in area than said main sealing flap and being configured to form a composite flap wherein an edge potion of each coplanar flap abuts an edge portion of each of the other two coplanar flaps, and means for securing said coplanar flaps to said main flap.

2. An envelope according to claim 1 wherein a sealing stamp is secured to all of said coplanar flaps in overlying relation with said abutting edge portions thereof.

3. An envelope according to claim 2 wherein stamp cancelling indicia is marked on said sealing stamp and on said coplanar flaps.

4. An envelope according to claim 1 wherein said main sealing flap is configured to coincide substantially with said base panel.

5. An envelope according to claim 1 wherein a viewing window is formed in said base panel and disposed in coincidental relation to viewing windows formed in said main flap and in one of said coplanar flaps whereby an object within the envelope and between said base panel and said main flap is observable with the envelope sealed closed.

6. An envelope according to claim 5 wherein positioning means is disposed within the envelope and arranged to hold an object within the envelope in a position to be viewed through said viewing windows.

7. An envelope according to claim 5 wherein translucent closures for two of said viewing windows are secured to the associated base panel and to said one of said coplanar panels respectively and affixed in overlying and sealing relation to the associated window.

8. An envelope according to claim 1 wherein all panels and flaps are constructed at least in part of translucent material.

9. An envelope according to claim 1 wherein one of said remaining coplanar sealing flaps in secured to said main sealing flap with contact adhesive.

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