United States Patent

[11] 3,623,820

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[45] Patented **Nov. 30, 1971**

[54] **METHOD AND MEANS FOR INSTANTLY FILLING AND SEALING AN ENVELOPE**
4 Claims, 8 Drawing Figs.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **401/8**
[51] **Int. Cl.** **B43m 11/06**
[50] **Field of Search** ..... 401/6, 7, 8; 15/244 R, 244 C, 244 CH

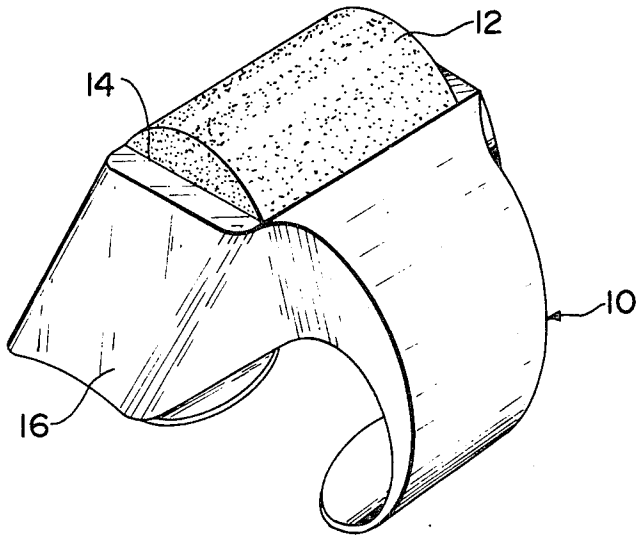
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Primary Examiner—Wm. H. Grieb
Attorney—Walter S. Pawl

ABSTRACT: The finger ring device having an open finger band with substantially stiff but flexible ends is adapted for placing on a finger of either hand so that a wetting sponge mounted on the head of the ring may be brushed over the gummed strip of the open flap of an envelope simultaneously with the insertion of the contents into this envelope, which is being held in the other hand, and the flap is then turned down and the letter instantly sealed, without making any extra strokes of the hand to reach for a wetting device and returning it to its resting place, after insertion of the contents and before sealing the envelope, the result being two filled and sealed envelopes in the time previous methods required to fill and seal just one. Thus in mass mailings, e.g., a saving in time and labor of 50 percent is accomplished by using this simple device and method.



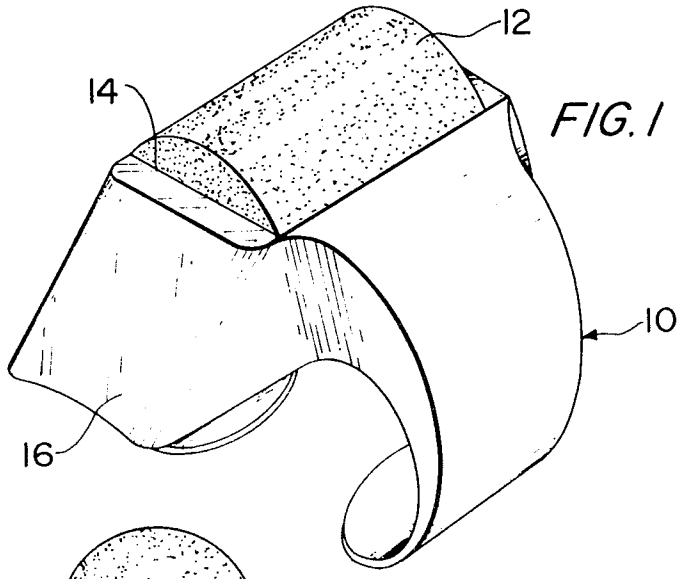


FIG. 1

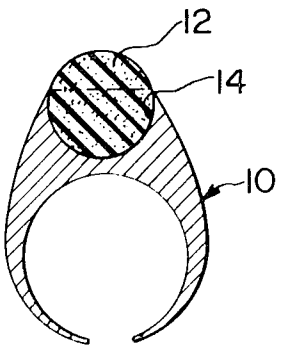


FIG. 2

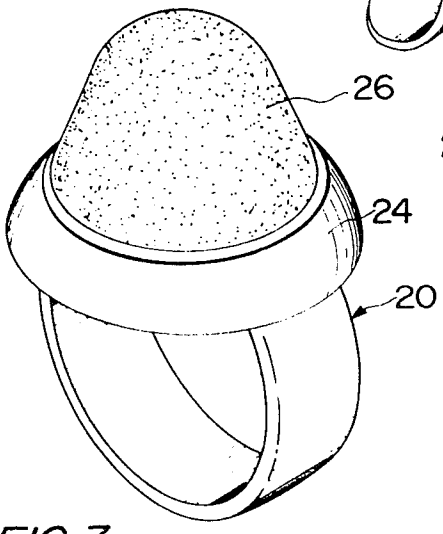


FIG. 3

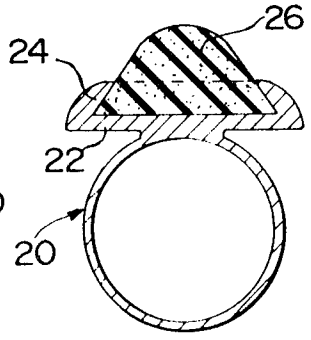


FIG. 4



FIG. 7

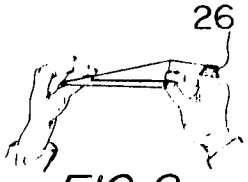


FIG. 8

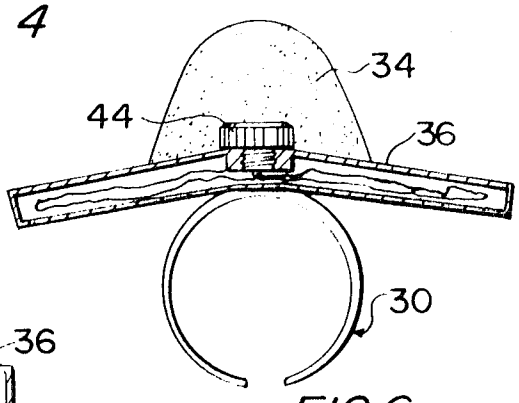


FIG. 6

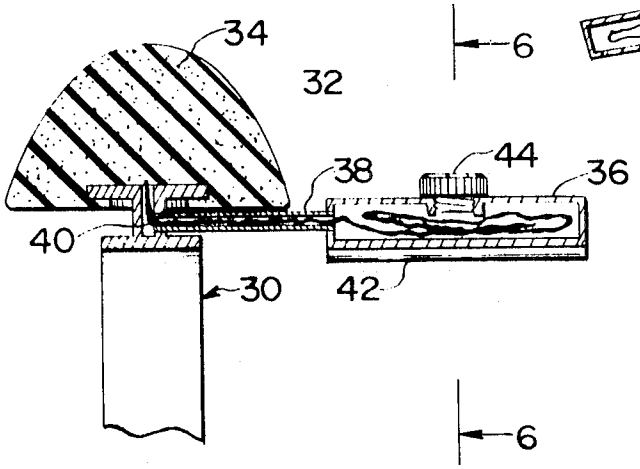


FIG. 5

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METHOD AND MEANS FOR INSTANTLY FILLING AND SEALING AN ENVELOPE

There is much art in the sealer and moistener subclasses of the prior art, but not a single reference could be found that disclosed any means or method wherein the wetting of the gummed strip was carried out simultaneously with the insertion of the contents into the envelope for immediate sealing thereof.

The main object of the present invention is to perform the filling of the envelope with its contents together with the wetting of its gummed flap, for immediate sealing, thus obviating the separate step of wetting the flap and the extra time it would take before the sealing operation could be performed.

A further object is to mount a wetting sponge on the back of means used for inserting the contents into an envelope, so that the sponge passes over the gummed flap of the envelope during the insertion stroke.

A further object is to use one hand with a wetting sponge mounted on the back of it, for the insertion of the contents into an envelope held in the other hand so as to pass the sponge over the gummed strip on the flap of the envelope during said insertion, and then instantly sealing the envelope.

Other and more specific objects will become apparent in the following detailed description of some preferred forms of the invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawing, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an enlarged perspective view of a preferred form of ring device for use in the present method,

FIG. 2 is a transverse elevational view in cross section on a reduced scale, showing the construction of this device,

FIGS. 3 and 4 are similar views of another form of ring device adapted for use in this invention,

FIG. 5 is an axial sectional view in elevation of still another form of the ring device coupled with a reservoir for feeding water to the wetting sponge of this device,

FIG. 6 is a sectional view of this combination, taken on the line 6—6 of FIG. 5,

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of an envelope being held in the left hand and filled with its contents by the right hand, which has a ring device with a sponge 26 being simultaneously passed over the gummed strip on the flap of the envelope for instant sealing immediately thereafter, and

FIG. 8 is a sectional view through the envelope, with the hands and sponge shown in the same relative position as seen in FIG. 7.

A simple sponge device for wetting and sealing a flap in one continuous stroke is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 2,525,291, and shows how the sponge may be fed by a water supply from a reservoir in the handle of the device. However, it would be impossible to use this device on the back of an envelope filling means to wet the gummed flap, because the sealing arm on this sponge device would interfere with the filling operation. Furthermore, the sponge in this device would be difficult to guide under the flap of the envelope during the filling stroke of the means on the back of which it might be mounted, because it lacks guide wedge at its front edge to direct the edge of the flap over the sponge during the filling stroke.

The sponges used in the present invention are all adapted to wedge under the flap during this filling stroke, so that the gummed surface thereon will go over the sponge and be wetted thereby as the contents of the envelope are inserted therein.

The sponge mounting means as illustrated are of ring form with means for holding the sponge on the back of the hand which is to be used for insertion of the contents into the envelope while the envelope is held in the other hand.

In FIGS. 1 and 2 the ring 10 is open and the open ends of its band portion are stiff but flexible enough to fit over different finger sizes. The ring may be placed on any finger, but more conveniently on the second or third finger of the hand, with

the sponge 12 extending from the cylindrical reservoir 14 in the head of the ring at the back of the hand, the projecting wedge 16 at one end of the reservoir extending outwardly of the fingers. The sponge may be soaked with water before mounting it in the reservoir and thereafter, it may be occasionally dipped into a cup of water during extended use without removing it from the reservoir.

If a greater portion of the gummed strip is required to be moistened, a corresponding transverse movement of the hand may be made during the filling stroke to wet transversely extending portions of the gummed strip without loss of time.

The ring 20 in FIGS. 3 and 4 has a closed band with a flat head portion 22 with an inturned rim 24 for holding the base of a pyramidal sponge 26. The inturned rim forms a wedge around the head the forward portion of which readily slips under the envelope flap during the filling operation. This sponge may be soaked with water in the same manner as sponge 12.

A ring device 30 shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, which also has a flat head portion with a flat rim over which the grooved sponge 34 is mounted. A water reservoir 36 is connected through a tube 38 to the passage 40 in the head portion 32 to the sponge base. A wick 42 may be used to facilitate feeding of the water from the reservoir to the sponge. Filler cap 44 provides access to the reservoir for filling it with water, and for insertion of the wick 42.

When the ring is mounted on a finger, the reservoir extends over the back of the hand toward the wrist so that it does not interfere with the filling of the envelope or with the moistening operations.

The ring devices may be made in attractive colors and designs, so that they may be normally worn by clerks or secretaries for decorative purposes when not in use as flap wetting devices.

Obviously, many other forms of these contents inserting and flap wetting devices may be adapted for use in this new method of filling and sealing envelopes without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A finger ring comprising
an open band of stiffly resilient material adapted to fit snugly over substantially any size finger,
an enlarged head portion on said ring formed as a holding means for a sponge and having a wedge guide portion extending outwardly at the back of a finger on which it is mounted for deflecting and guiding a gummed envelope flap over said head portion,
said wedge guide portion having a bevelled outer edge substantially resting against the back of said finger, and
a sponge mounted in said holding means and having an exposed portion adapted when wet to moisten said gummed flap.

2. A finger ring as defined in claim 1,
said ring, head portion and exposed portion of the sponge being of an attractive appearance in design and color to serve a decorative purpose when not in use as an efficient wetting device for gummed material.

3. A finger ring as defined in claim 1,
said sponge holding means forming an enlarged reservoir space for excess water to feed the sponge, and
said sponge being formed to close the opening of said reservoir.

4. A finger ring as defined in claim 1,
whereby when filling said envelope with material to be sealed therein, said wedge guide portion of a ring mounted on a finger of the hand which inserts said material into the envelope will slide under its flap during said insertion and the flap will be guided over the sponge mounted in the holding means to simultaneously moisten the gummed flap.

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