United States Patent [19]

Kessler

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[54] **ALL-PLASTIC DRIVEWAY MARKER AND THE LIKE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **116/63 P,** 40/10 C, 135/15, 350/97

[51] **Int. Cl.** **E01f 9/10**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 116/63 P, 173, 28; 350/97, 350/99, 100; 40/10 C, 39; 135/15; 248/473, 353, 125; 24/81, 85, 262; 211/119.01

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

Reflective driveway markers currently in use have metal stakes for driving them into the ground and metal trim to hold a reflector. In use, the markers are often hit by cars and bent, while the metal trim scratches the car fender. A driveway marker is described herein which is all-plastic and soft so that it will not scratch the automobile finish, and is sufficiently flexible so that if brushed by a car it will bend and return to its original position.

5 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures

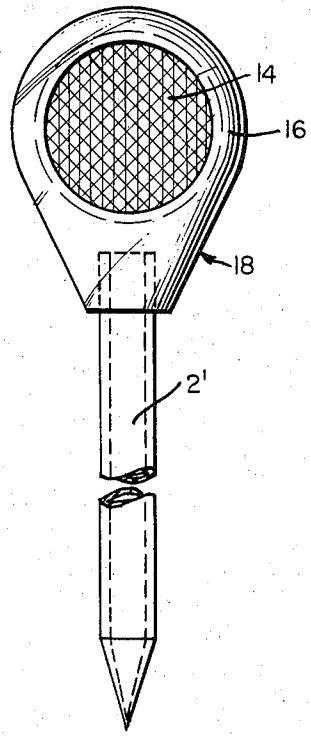


FIG. 1.

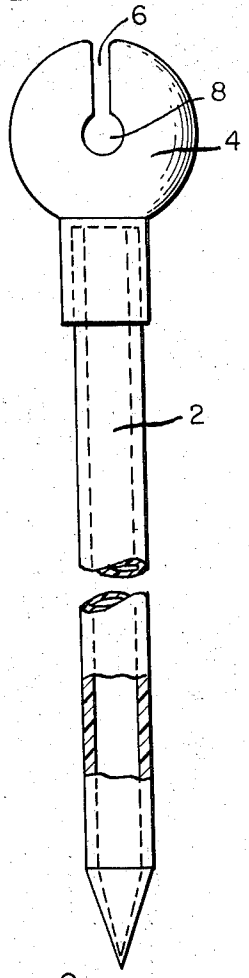


FIG. 2.

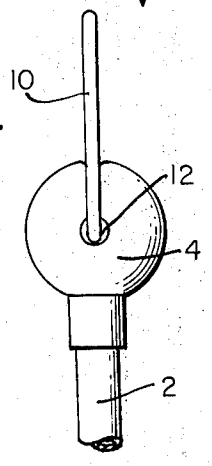


FIG. 6

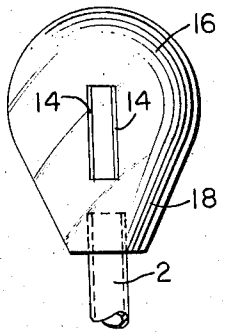


FIG. 3.

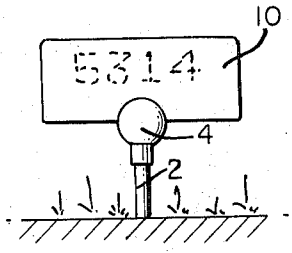


FIG. 4.

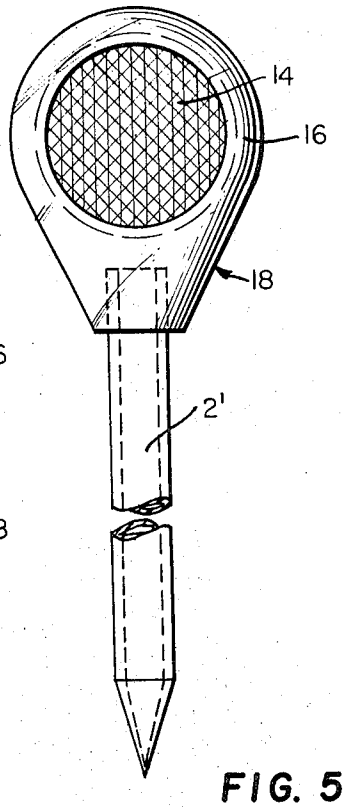
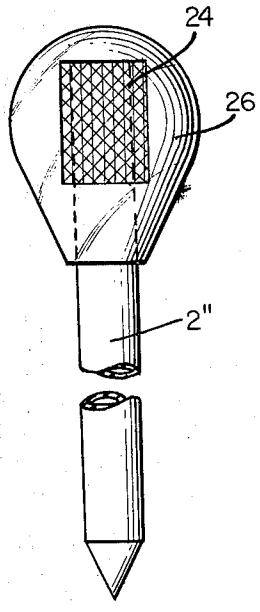


FIG. 5.



ALL-PLASTIC DRIVEWAY MARKER AND THE LIKE

Driveway markers are commonly sold, in the form of reflective elements fastened to the end of a metal rod, which are intended to be thrust into the lawn at the edge of a driveway at stratigic points so as to indicate, particularly to a person backing out of or into the driveway, the location of the driveway edge. In practice, sooner or later a car will brush against one or more of these driveway markers, and bend them out of position, while at the same time the metal trim of the marker usually scratches the car fender. The present invention provides an all-plastic driveway marker of simple and inexpensive construction, and comprises a plastic reflective element mounted on a plastic pointed rod which is sufficiently flexible to return to its original position when brushed by the passing car so that it is distorted from a straight line by up to 30°; it is seldom distorted by even this much in practice, since, after all, the car driver is trying to stay within the bounds defined by the marker, and usually merely brushes the marker slightly, although this is sufficient to both bend the metal stem and to scratch the car fender.

In accordance with the invention, the reflective marker is either made of soft plastic material having a shining reflective surface or else is a conventional reflector such as sold under the name of "Scotchlite" in strips or rolls of adhesive tape having a reflective surface on one side and being adhered to a surface on the back side. When used as thus intended, the reflective surface being exposed usually does not last very long, and must be frequently replaced. In the present case, when this material is used, it is imbedded in clear plastic which protects it and renders it much more durable.

The specific nature of the invention, as well as other objects and advantages thereof, will clearly appear from a description of a preferred embodiment as shown in the accompanying drawing in which:

FIG. 1 is a side elevation of one form of plastic marker;

FIG. 2 shows the top end of the same plastic marker holding a flat identity plate such as a name plate or one bearing a house number;

FIG. 3 shows a front view of the marker holding a house number;

FIG. 4 is a front view of a modified form of the invention;

FIG. 5 is a similar view of a still different form of the invention;

and FIG. 6 is a side view of the invention shown in FIG. 4.

Referring to FIG. 1, a driveway marker is shown consisting of two elements — the first being a rod 2 of fairly rigid but flexible plastic material such as vinyl. The rod should be sufficiently rigid so that it can be driven into the ground of an ordinary lawn under normal conditions, if necessary using a hammer or mallet to drive it in, but should be sufficiently flexible so that it can be bent approximately 30° from a straight line and still return to the straight line condition. A suitable plastic for this purpose is vinyl. This plastic material can be extruded and therefore made very inexpensively in very long strips which can be cut to the desired length and pointed at one end in a device like an ordinary pencil sharpener. The plastic rod 2 may be solid, but is preferably in the form of a thick-walled tube as shown, in order to conserve material, since the same amount of material has greater strength in the form of a tube than a solid rod.

After the rod has been cut to length, at the unpointed end a reflective ball 4 is molded so as to integrally surround a portion of the end of the rod and thus form a single integral unit, using well-known molding techniques. The ball 4 is made with a shiny surface, and may be of a highly visible color for daylight driving conditions, such as orange or red. Being integrally molded onto the end of the rod 2, the ball thus forms a single strong unit with the rod, which cannot be taken apart or readily broken. The ball is preferably made of a softer plastic material such as plasticized vinyl. At least some of the balls 4, or if desired all of them, may be provided with a slot 6 having an enlarged bottom edge 8, in order to receive a suitably dimensioned plastic marker plate 10, which is usually put on the end marker or markers near the street end of the driveway, for the purpose of identifying the dwelling to which the driveway leads. Since the material of the ball 4 is fairly soft and resilient, the marker plate 10 can be pressed down into it until its rounded bottom edge 12 seats in the enlarged bottom of the slot as shown at 8, to firmly hold it in place. The numbers or letters used on the plate are, of course, individual to the residents, and are separately furnished, being either in the form of adhesive plastic letters or any other desired form. If adhesive-backed plastic letters are used, the entire assembly is quite weather-proof and permanent. As is well known, the ball reflective surface will provide a point of light directed back to the source, which would be the headlights or back-up lights of an automobile using the driveway, and if a series of these markers are used along the edge of the driveway, there will be a line of points of light defining the edges of the driveway.

FIG. 4 shows another form of the invention, in which the rod is the same as in FIG. 1, but in this case a flat reflecting surface 14 is employed, which is somewhat more efficient as a reflector than the ball shown in FIG. 1, and is preferably made of reflective tape commonly available under the name "Scotchlite". However, in the present case, this reflective surface which may and preferably is formed by two such pieces back-to-back so that they will work in either direction, is imbedded in a thick rounded, knob-like member of molded clear soft plastic 16 which not only surrounds the reflective material and protects it, but also extends down and over the end of the rod 2′ as shown at 18 so that a single unitary marker is formed. Thus the soft resilient plastic 16 entirely encases and protects the reflector marker, giving it the necessary strength and durability for the purpose. If the proper grade of plastic is used, it will be sufficiently strong so that if necessary it can be driven into the ground by a hammer striking on the plastic 16.

FIG. 5 shows still another form of the invention, in this case the rod 2″ is the same as before, and a strip of the adhesive flexible "Scotchlite" tape 24 is wrapped around its end, after which a rounded knob-like member of clear molded plastic 26 encases the entire end of the rod for the same purpose as before. The reflective tape is now in the form of a cylindrical surface at the end of the rod, and is therefore effective in all directions, without having to be oriented as does a flat surface.

I claim:

1. a. An all-plastic driveway marker comprising

b. a straight flexible plastic rod having a point at one end,

c. a plastic reflector integrally fixed to the other end of said rod,

d. said rod being sufficiently rigid to be drivable into the ground, but sufficiently flexible to return to its original position when forcibly deflected at least 30° from a straight line,

e. said plastic reflector having at least its exterior surface of soft plastic material incapable of scratching a car finish.

2. The invention according to claim **1,**

f. said reflector being a smooth, soft plastic ball integrally fixed to the other end of said plastic rod,

g. said ball having a shiny reflective surface.

3. The invention according to claim **2,** said plastic ball having a slot in its upper side, and a flat plastic identification plate resiliently held in said slot.

4. The invention according to claim **1,**

f. said reflector being a strip of reflective tape wrapped around the rod near its said other end,

g. and a thick coating of soft clear plastic material surrounding said reflective tape and the adjacent portion of the rod.

5. The invention according to claim **1,**

f. said reflector being a flat reflector with its edges embedded in soft plastic material,

g. said soft plastic material also extending around the end of said rod to retain said reflector in place at the top of the rod.

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