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PLASTIC PROTECTORS FOR SHEET MATERIAL AND THE LIKE

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

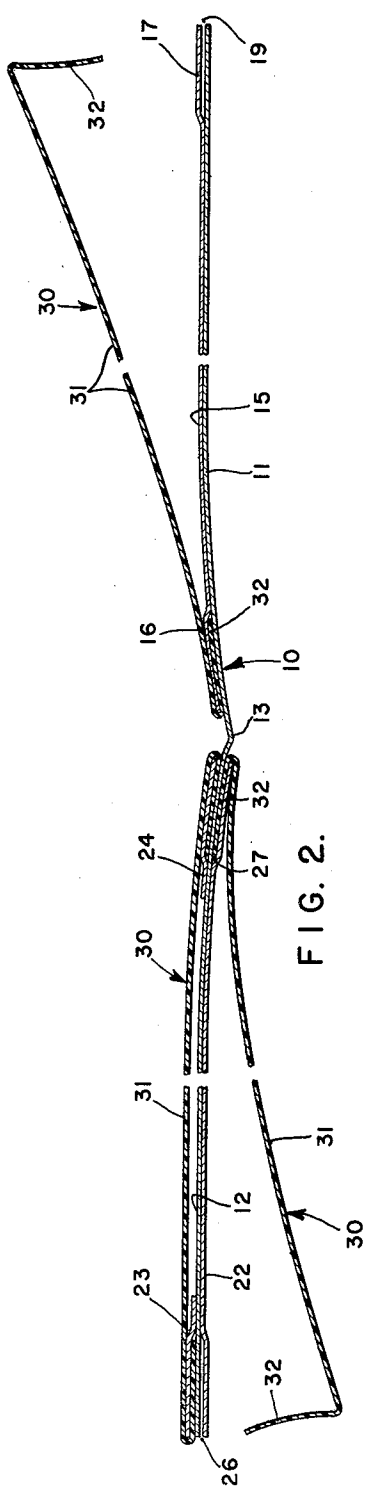


FIG. 2.

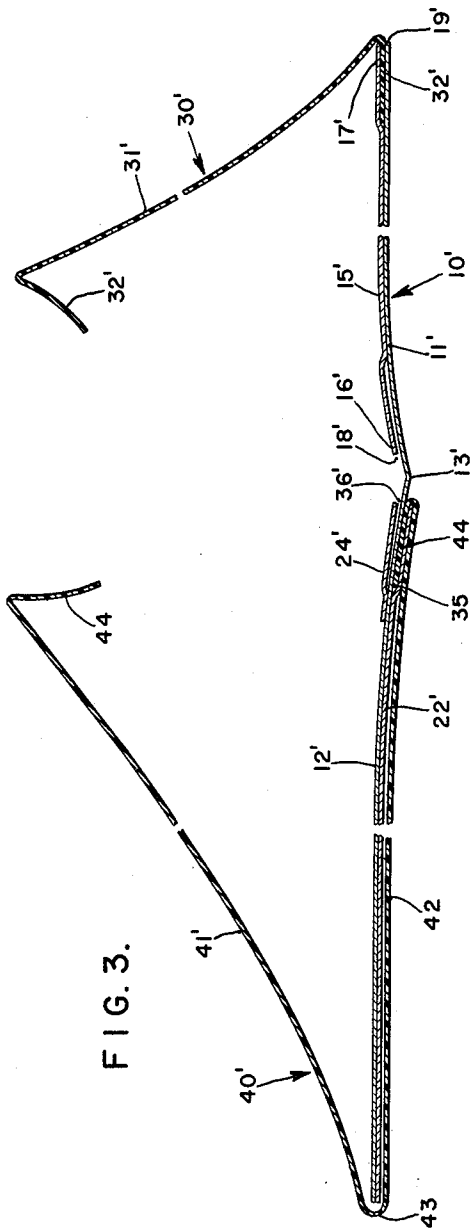


FIG. 3.

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PLASTIC PROTECTORS FOR SHEET MATERIAL AND THE LIKE

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This invention relates to protectors for sheet material, folders, and the like, and more particularly to sheet material specially constructed for use in combination with plastic protective covers adapted to be readily assembled and disassembled from the folders and selectively usable therewith to hold inserts assembled thereto.

There is an ever expanding need for an inexpensive, lightweight, effective protective device for use with sales brochures, display placards, menu folders, and the like, and having as objectives prolonging the service life of such material, enhancing its appearance and protecting the sheet material proper from soiling, fingerprints, etc. To meet such needs, it has been proposed to laminate thin plastic sheet material to printed material to be protected but this requires special processing and the use of an intervening layer of sheet adhesive. The processing of such laminated material is expensive and requires special equipment. Among the disadvantages is the fact that once the material is laminated it is impossible to change the printed material or to make any alterations of any character without completely reconstructing the whole assembly.

By the present invention there is provided a simply constructed, lightweight, inexpensive pre-formed plastic cover having folded over lateral edges adapted for assembly into complementally shaped grooves extending along the edges of the sheet material to be protected. Accordingly, it is a simple matter to assemble the protective covers to the sheet material and to remove them for reuse if and when desired. Furthermore, once assembled to the sheet material, inserts such as photos, printed matter, and the like, may be slid endwise between the protective cover and the sheet material to which it is detachably assembled. The entire area of the insert is visible without restriction and is held frictionally assembled without need for fasteners or holding devices of any kind. Such inserts are quickly and readily replaced at any time by any desired substitute or replacement. This is particularly advantageous for many applications of the cover as, for example, restaurant menu folders. When using the present inventive concept the menu folder proper may be of fine appearing material of heavy duty quality. The menu proper can be printed on inexpensive thin insert sheets properly dimensioned for insertion and retention within the protective cover and can be replaced daily or weekly by a similar reprint insert. The protective cover proper may be formed in various ways and arranged to protect one or more surfaces of the folder as desired.

Another feature of the invention is the construction of the sheet material itself in a manner to facilitate the assembly and disassembly of the protective covers. For example, the folder may be of laminated construction and formed with receiving grooves disposed for the reception of the mounting strips of the protective cover. Alternatively, mounting grooves may be formed on a previously constructed folder by use of specially designed gummed strips having an ungummed edge adapted to be embraced by the folded over edge of the protective cover.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a unique protective cover for sheet material.

Another object of the invention is the provision of an

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improved assembly comprising sheet material containing printing or the like and having one or more surfaces protected by a transparent plastic cover adapted to be readily assembled and disassembled from the sheet material.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a fairly stiff folder or the like suitable for sales literature, data sheets, menus, and the like and provided with pairs of specially formed grooves disposed to receive and retain the folded over edges of a protective cover of flexible material.

These and other more specific objects will appear upon reading the following specification and claims and upon considering in connection therewith the attached drawings to which they relate.

Referring now to the drawings in which a preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated:

FIGURE 1 is an exploded view in perspective showing typical components of an assembly incorporating the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a transverse sectional view through an assembly similar to that shown in FIGURE 1, certain of the protective covers being in assembled position with portions of others being disassembled with the folded over edges shown deflected from their normal positions; and

FIGURE 3 is a similar view of an alternate embodiment of the invention, the protective cover being only partially assembled to the folder and the mounting tab of each being shown deflected away from its normal position.

Referring first to FIGURE 1, there is shown a typical illustrative embodiment of the invention wherein the protective transparent covers are shown opposite surfaces of a paper folder designated generally 10 sought to be protected by the covers. For example, folder 10 may be formed of fairly stiff paper customarily used in a heavy duty type menu folder formed in two halves 11 and 12 integrally secured together by a longitudinal central crease or hinge 13.

To indicate the various modes in which this folder may be constructed to accommodate the mounting of both single and folded protective covers in accordance with the principles of this invention, the two halves 11 and 12 of the folder are shown constructed differently. Although there are occasions when it would be desirable to form the two halves differently, it will be understood that normally each half of the folder would be similarly constructed.

Referring first to back half 11 of the folder, it will be noted that this half is formed of two principal laminations, the rear surface being provided by the body sheet 11 and an inner lamination 15. The latter is substantially coextensive with the interior surface of the back half of the folder and is intimately bonded thereto except for a narrow strip 16, 17 along each lateral edge of lamination 15. These strips are not attached to the underlying surface of the folder to provide similar parallel, deep grooves 18 and 19. For clarity of illustration, strips 16 and 17 are shown spaced away from the underlying portion of the folder but it will be understood that these strips normally lie flush against the adjacent portions of the folder to the end that the opposite interior side walls of grooves 18 and 19 will provide a close frictional fit with the mounting strips of the protective cover.

Referring now to the front half of 12 of the folder, it is pointed out that the mounting grooves for the associated protective cover may be formed either by laminating a sheet 22 to this half of the cover or, in the alternative, by attaching narrow mounting strips 23, 24 along the opposite lateral inner edges of folder cover 12. As herein illustrated, the adhesive-coated lamination 22 is posi-

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tioned for lamination to the exterior surface of folder half 12 in a manner providing mounting grooves 26, 27 (FIGURE 2) corresponding in structure and purpose to grooves 18 and 19 described above in connection with the rear cover of the folder.

According to the alternative mode of construction, identical mounting strips 23 and 24 include a narrow strip of adhesive 29 extending along one edge of each by which the strips are securable to the opposite edges of folder cover 12 in the manner made clear by FIGURES 1 and 2. It will be understood that mounting strips 23 and 24 may be secured to the exterior surfaces of cover 12 in the same manner if desired in lieu of lamination 22, and that the latter lamination may be fixed to the interior surface of page 12 if desired.

The novel protective covers adapted to be assembled within the mounting grooves of the described folder may be constructed in either of two manners, one preferred construction being illustrated in full lines in FIGURE 1 and designated generally 30. A second preferred construction designated generally 40 and illustrated in dot-dash line is also shown in FIGURE 1. Each of these covers is preferably made of either transparent or opaque sheet plastic of the thermo-setting type.

Protective covers 30 each include a flat central panel 31 having folded over opposite lateral edges to provide a narrow elongated mounting strip or tab 32. These folded over edges are formed while the plastic is heated to render the material soft and readily formable, strips 32 then being held substantially flush against the rear surface of panel 31 until the crease lines take a firm set. It will be understood that mounting strips 32 can be deflected outwardly but that, upon release, these strips immediately resume their normal position flush against the inner surface of the covers. Accordingly, in their normal position strips 32 cooperate with the central panel to provide grooves corresponding to receiving grooves 18 and 19 of the folder. As is made clear by the drawings the transverse distance between the creases of the folded over strips 32 of each cover corresponds to the distance between the remote edges of the cooperating strips 16 and 17 of receiving grooves 18 and 19 carried by the sheet material to be protected.

The assembly of covers 30 to the folder is usually accomplished while one end of the cover is positioned opposite one end edge of a folder half 11 or 12. The assembler first inserts one of the mounting strips within an end of one of the mounting grooves and holds the parts steadily in this position while the mounting strip along the other edge of the cover is similarly inserted in the other receiving groove. Thereupon the parts are telescoped lengthwise of one another smoothly and expeditiously. The assembly may be facilitated by bowing the central parts of the cover and the underlying folder away from one another until the parts are substantially fully telescoped together whereupon the parts are permitted to flatten together.

As will be appreciated from FIGURE 3, mounting strips 32 are fully concealed within the receiving or mounting grooves leaving the entire central panel 31 and all underlying portions of the folder half completely exposed. The printed matter to be protected may be printed directly on the folder half or it may be placed on a separate sheet for insertion between the juxtaposed surfaces of the protective cover and the underlying folder surface.

Referring now to FIGURE 3, there is shown a modified embodiment of the invention wherein the same or similar parts are designated by the same reference characters distinguished from those used above by the addition of a prime. The construction of folder 10' differs in that the front cover half 12' of the folder is of laminated construction and includes an outer sheet 22' adhesively bonded thereto throughout its entire area with the exception of a narrow strip adjacent hinge 13'. This narrow strip is left free of adhesive to provide a receiving groove 35 identical with the receiving grooves described above, as for example

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grooves 18, 19. It will also be understood that mounting strip 23 described in connection with FIGURES 1 and 2 is omitted from the interior surface of front folder half 12'. Mounting 24', however, is present and forms a deep seating groove 36 opening toward hinge 13', as does the similar groove 35.

The protective cover 40 for the front half 12' of folder 10' differs from cover 30 described above in connection with FIGURES 1 and 2 in that it comprises two central panels 41, 42 integrally connected together by a tightly folded over hinge 43 extending along the longitudinal center line of the cover. The two remote lateral edges of panels 41 and 42 are folded over to provide mounting strips 44, 44 identical with mounting strips 32 of the previously described protective covers.

The doublet type cover 40 is assembled to the folder in the same manner described above in connection with covers 30 and has the advantage of protecting the inner and outer surfaces of folder half 12' including its lateral edge. Furthermore, the construction of the folder proper is simpler and less expensive. It is also pointed out that the doublet type protector may be assembled to the front half 12 of folder 10 in lieu of the separate protective covers 30, 30 shown in FIGURE 1. It is for this reason that doublet 40 is shown in phantom lines in FIGURE 1 thereby indicating that it may be used in lieu of the separate covers 30, 30.

It is further pointed out in connection with the second embodiment that protector 40 offers the same advantages described above in that separate inserts may be assembled beneath either the front or the interior halves 42, 41, respectively, of the unitary double protector 40.

From the foregoing it will be recognized that the hereinabove described components may be assembled in a variety of ways all falling within the scope and principles of the present invention. Although the material being covered is disclosed as comprising a two-page folder, it will be recognized that the material to be protected may take various forms and may include one, two or more sheets with or without connecting hinges and folded together in ways other than those herein specifically illustrated and described.

While the particular plastic protectors for sheet material and the like herein shown and disclosed in detail are fully capable of attaining the objects and providing the advantages hereinbefore stated, it is to be understood that they are merely illustrative of the presently preferred embodiments of the invention and that no limitations are intended to the details of construction or design herein shown other than as defined in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A protector for sheet material including sales literature, drawings, brochures and the like large area sheets comprising a sheet of thin flexible plastic material having sufficient rigidity as to retain a fold tenaciously when the fold is formed and takes a set upon cooling after being heated, said protector having a wide area flat central portion coextensive in size with the flat sheet material to be covered and relatively narrow strip portions of its opposite lateral edges being folded over to lie closely against the same face of said protector, the distance between the creases of said folded over strip portions being substantially coextensive with the corresponding dimension of sheet material to be embraced by said protector with the result that sheet material inserted between said folded over edge portions of said protector is retained therein solely by the gripping action of the lateral edges of the protector with the juxtaposed areas of the sheet material.

2. A protector as defined in claim 1 characterized in that said protector is formed of transparent plastic material.

3. In combination, sheet material including sales literature, drawings, menus and the like subject to frequent handling and likely to become soiled, a protective cover

coextensive in size with said sheet material detachably assembled against one face of said sheet material, said sheet material having a pair of deep narrow grooves extending parallel to one another along the opposite edges of said sheet material and opening outwardly away from one another each adapted to receive and frictionally retain a similarly shaped mating tongue integral with and underlying the opposite lateral edges of a protective cover lying substantially flush against one surface of said sheet material, a protective cover of thin sheet plastic coextensive in size with said sheet material having its opposite edges folded over against the same surface of said cover to provide resilient tongues integral with said sheet plastic, said tongues being assembled into the juxtaposed ones of said pair of deep grooves of said sheet material and held frictionally assembled and concealed therewithin.

4. The combination defined in claim 3 wherein said grooves are formed by narrow strips of flexible material adhesively secured to said sheet material along one edge of said strip leaving the other edge of said strips unattached to said sheet and cooperating therewith to form a deep groove opening laterally of the edge of said strip.

5. The combination defined in claim 3 characterized in that said deep grooves open away from one another along widely spaced parallel areas extending lengthwise of the sheet material to be protected by said plastic cover.

6. A menu or the like type folder or stiff paper stock comprising two sheets hinged together along a generally central longitudinal axis, means for holding a sheet of printed matter assembled to the interior surfaces of said folder to either side of said hinge, said means comprising oppositely facing retainer strips secured along the opposite lateral interior edges of said folder halves, transparent thin flat sheet plastic covers having intumed folded over lateral edges of a size to receive and retain therewithin said sheets of printed matter, and said intumed folded over edges of said plastic covers being frictionally seatable beneath said retainer strips to hold the same assembled to the respective interior halves of said folder.

7. A folder as defined in claim 6 characterized in that the adjacent edges of the plastic covers for the two halves of said folder are spaced apart closely beside said folder hinge thereby avoiding interference with the opening and closing of said folder.

8. A stiff paper folder suitable for use as a menu or the like, said folder being formed in two integral halves hinged together by a crease extending along the medial axis of said folder, said folder having means providing pairs of parallel grooves opening away from one another in the plane of said folder halves, and a plurality of independent protective covers of transparent flat flexible sheet plastic material each having folded over opposite lateral edges spaced apart a distance enabling said folded over edges of the respective covers to be assembled into and concealed by an associated pair of said grooves.

9. A folder as defined in claim 8 characterized in that said protective plastic covers are open at least at one transverse end and adapted to have sheet material inserted between and frictionally engaged and retained in place by the facing surfaces of said folder and of said protective cover without restricting in any degree the exposed surface of the inserted sheet.

10. A folder as defined in claim 8 characterized in that said folder is formed of laminated stock and in that two of the laminations thereof are separated along elongated narrow parallel strips thereof in a manner to provide a pair of deep grooves opening laterally away from one another along the opposite edges of said folder halves.

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