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(71) Applicant(s)

Griffin Group Inc
(Incorporated in USA - Wisconsin)
4128 Sand Bay Point Road, Sturgeon Bay,
Wisconsin 54235, United States of America

(72) Inventor(s)

Alan Griffin

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Page White & Farrer
54 Doughty Street, LONDON, WC1N 2LS,
United Kingdom

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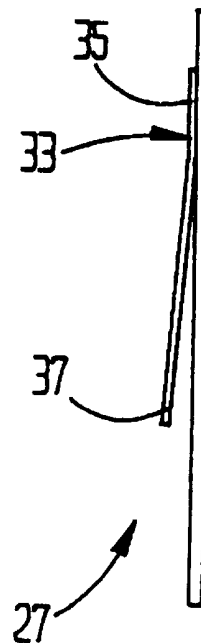
UK CL (Edition R) G5C CBF CBG CBH CBL CBM
INT CL⁷ G09F

(54) Abstract Title

Sign decoration system

(57) A sign decoration system enables large eye-catching decorations to be mounted in conventional display panels that typically can accommodate only relatively small alpha-numeric character plates. The sign decoration system comprises the decoration as well as a connector. The connector 27 may comprise two components: a holder (39, Figure 3) held in a display panel track, and a tab 33 secured to the decoration. The connector tab is inserted into the connector to mount the sign decoration system to the display panel. In a modified embodiment (Figure 23), the decoration is permanently secured directly to a single-piece connector. In another embodiment (Figure 35), the connector has downwardly converging channels that interchangeably receive mating edges of different decorations. In a further modified embodiment (Figure 39), a large decoration spans and is held simultaneously in two tracks of the display panel without any connector.

FIG. 7



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FIG. 1

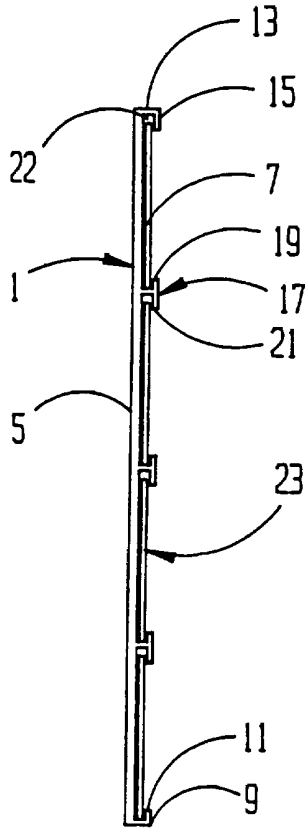
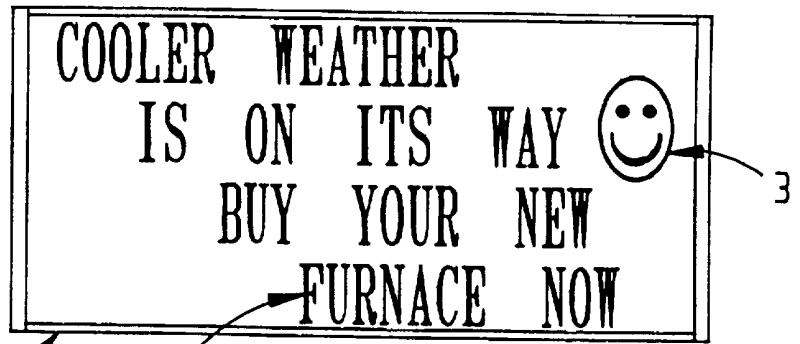


FIG. 1A

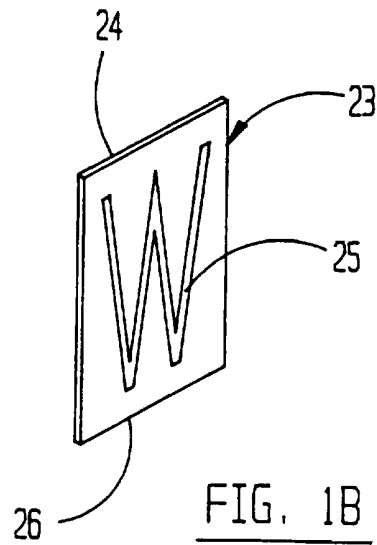


FIG. 1B

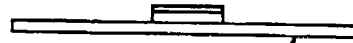


FIG. 6

FIG. 3

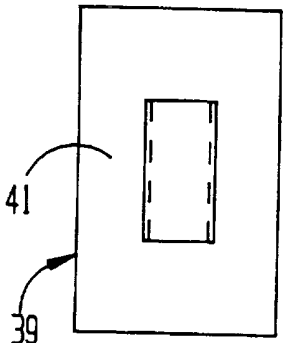
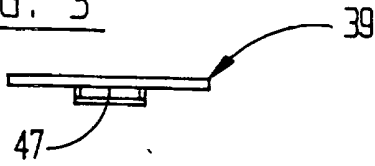


FIG. 2

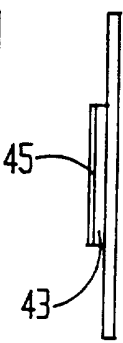


FIG. 4

FIG. 7

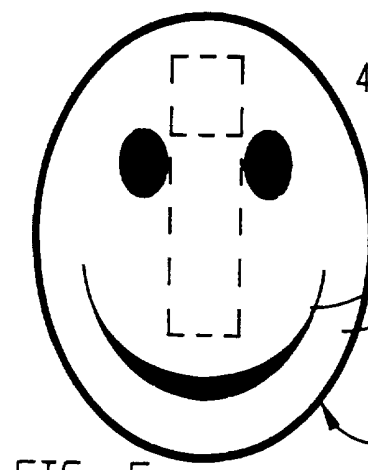
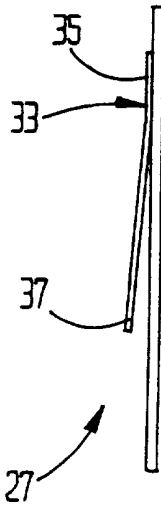
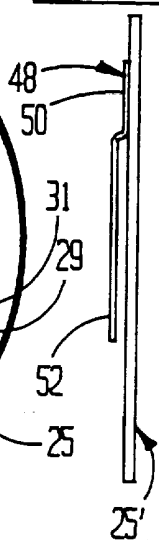


FIG. 5

FIG. 7A



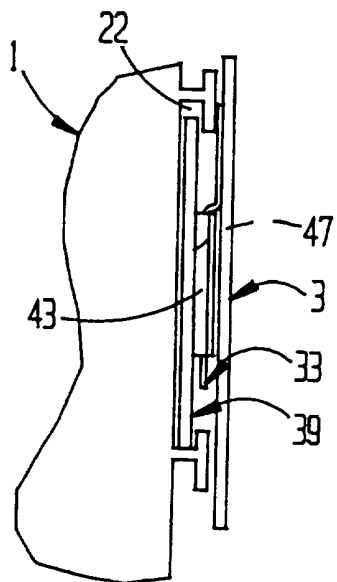


FIG. 9

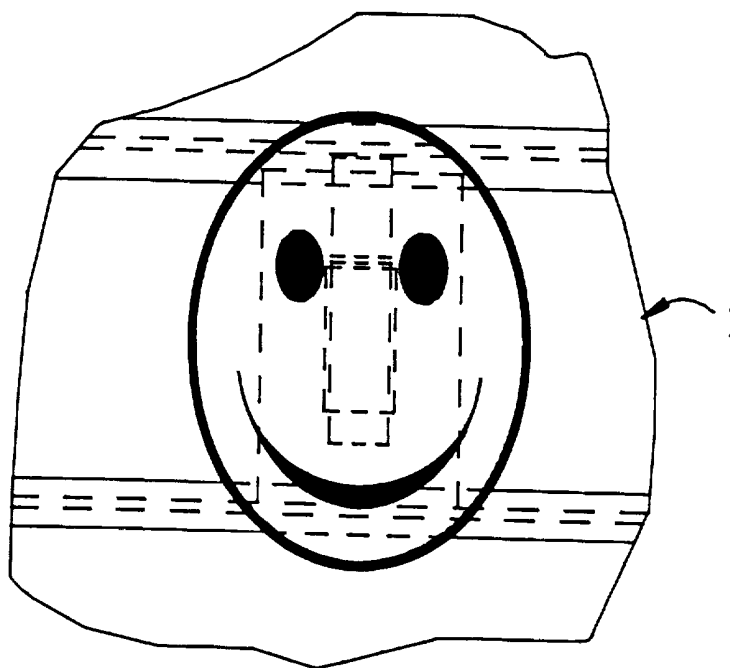


FIG. 8

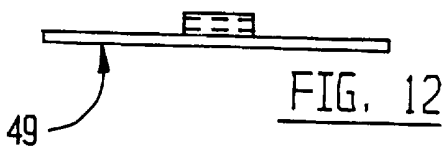


FIG. 12

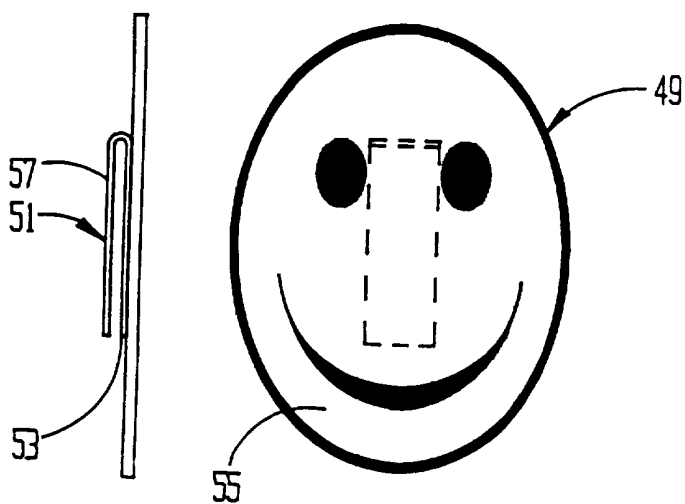


FIG. 10

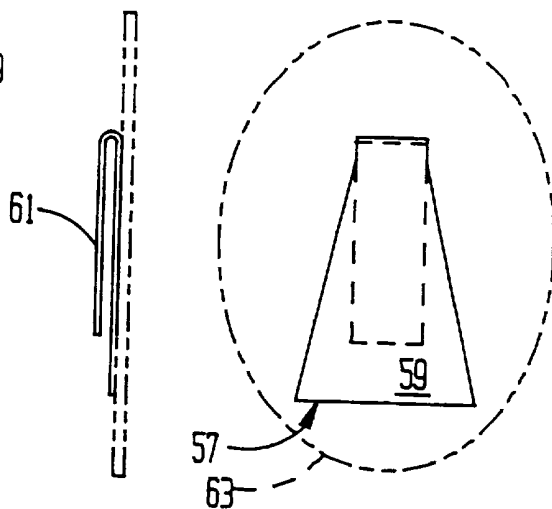


FIG. 13

FIG. 11

FIG. 14

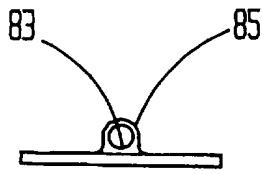


FIG. 20

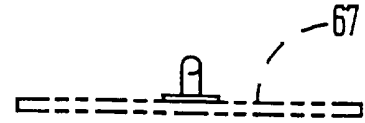


FIG. 16

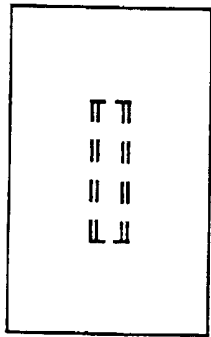
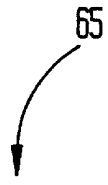


FIG. 18

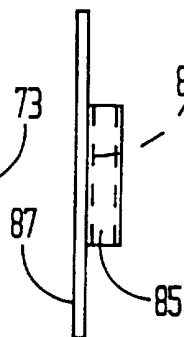


FIG. 19

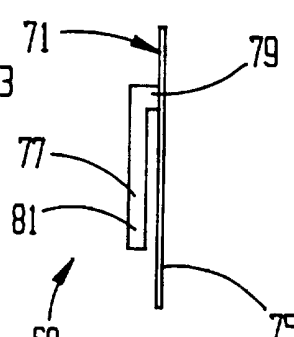


FIG. 17

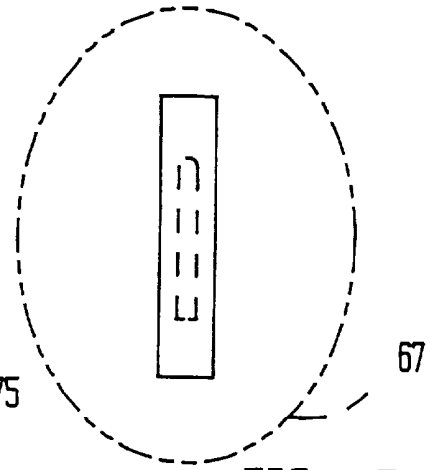


FIG. 15

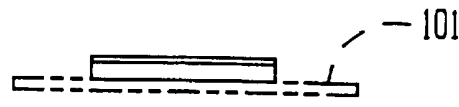


FIG. 22

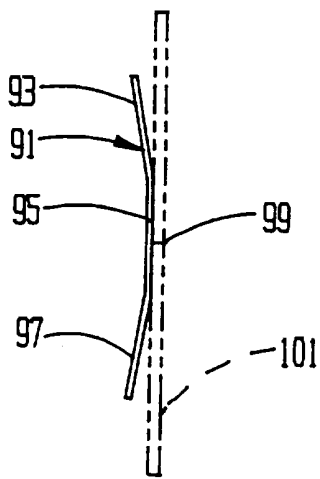


FIG. 23

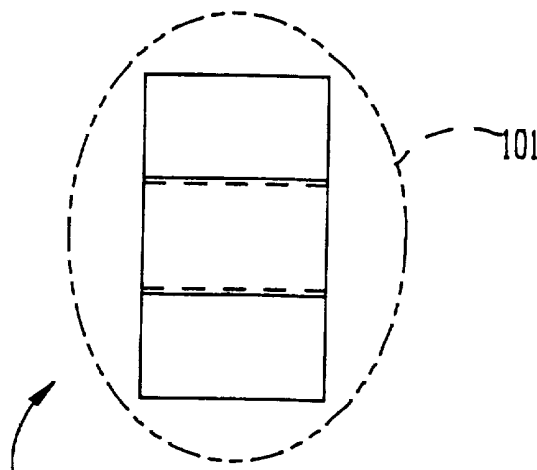


FIG. 21

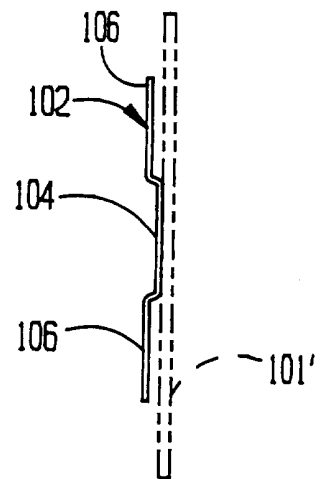


FIG. 23A

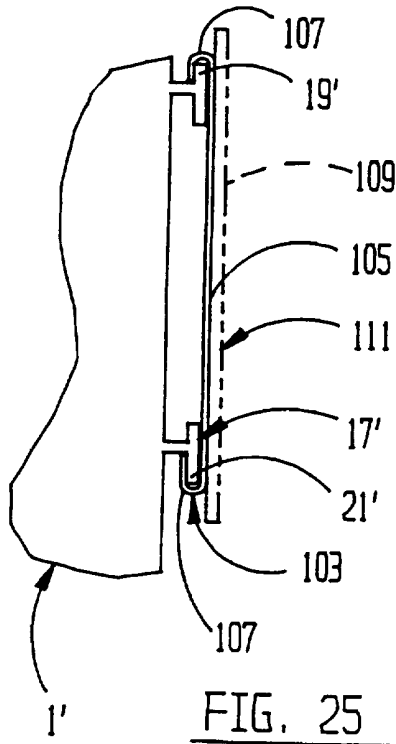


FIG. 25

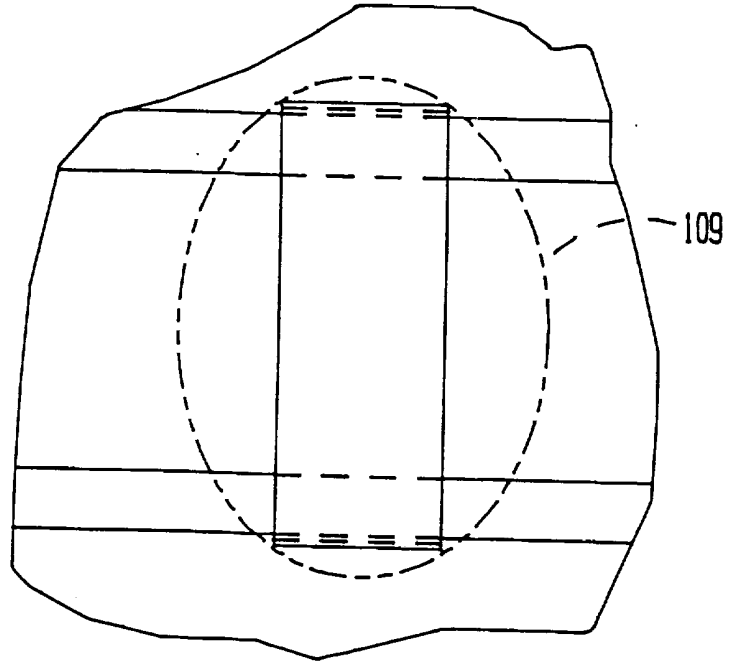


FIG. 24



FIG. 30

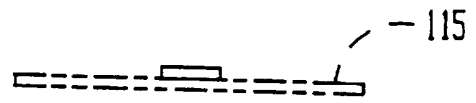


FIG. 27

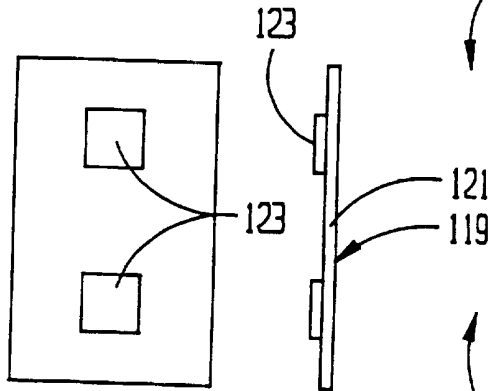


FIG. 29

FIG. 31

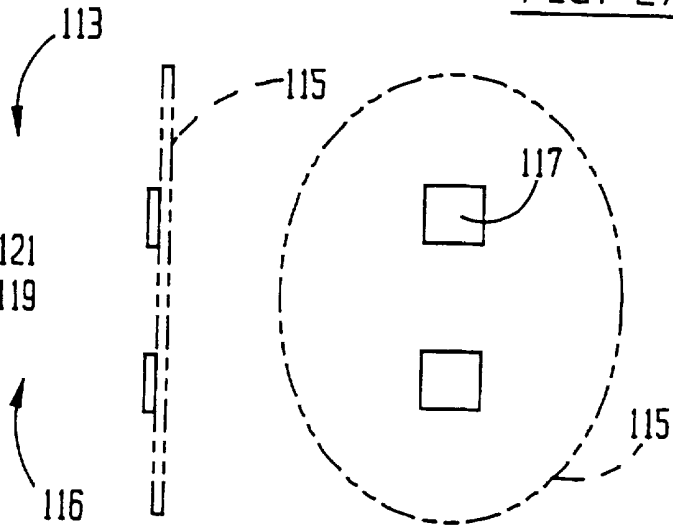


FIG. 28

FIG. 26



FIG. 34

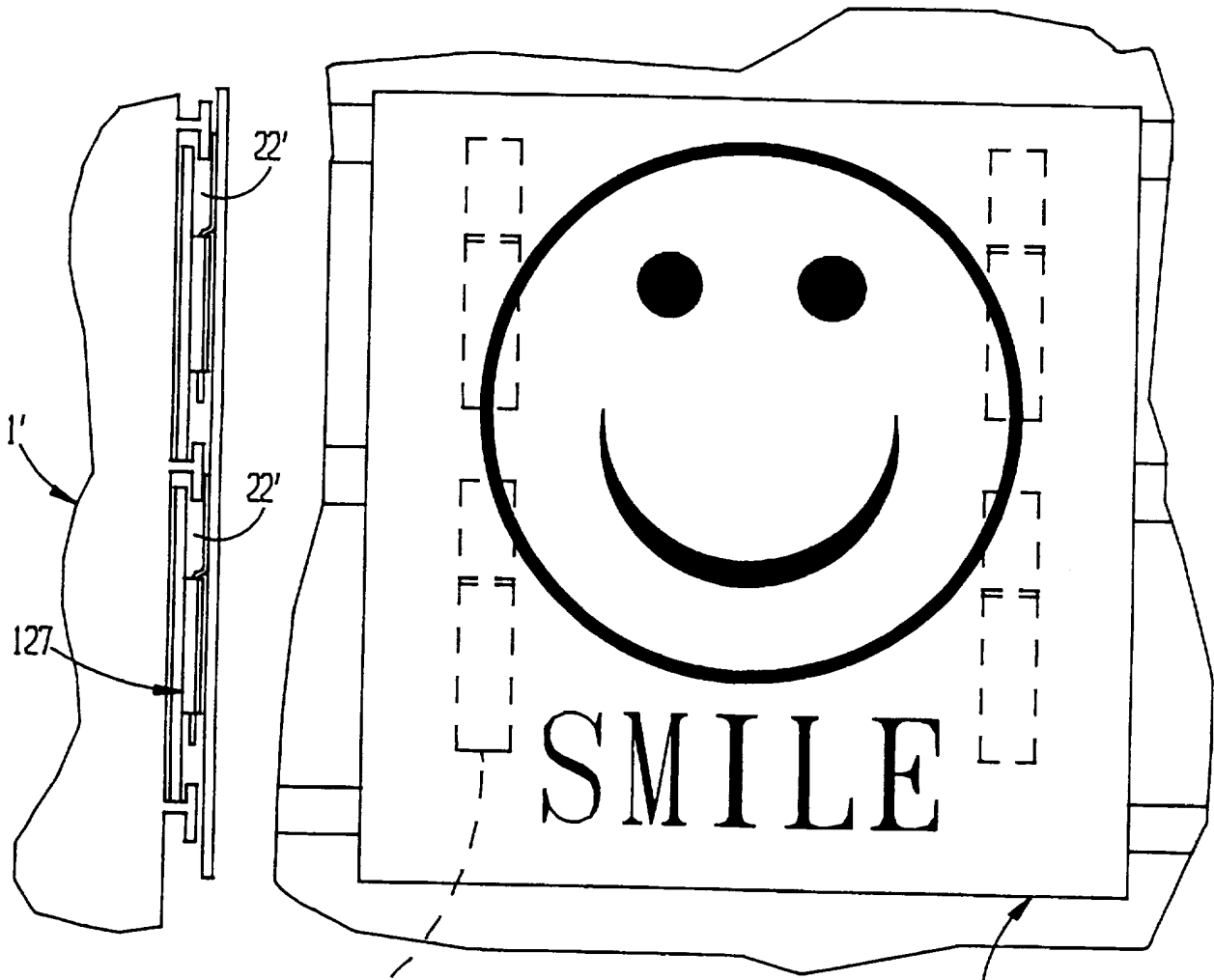


FIG. 33

FIG. 32

125

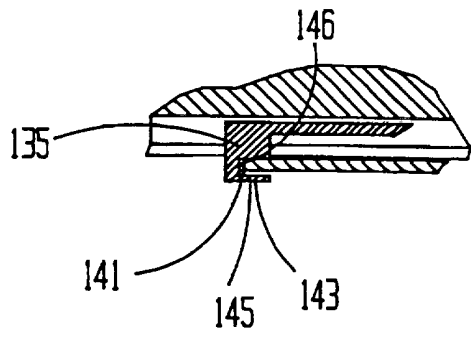


FIG. 37

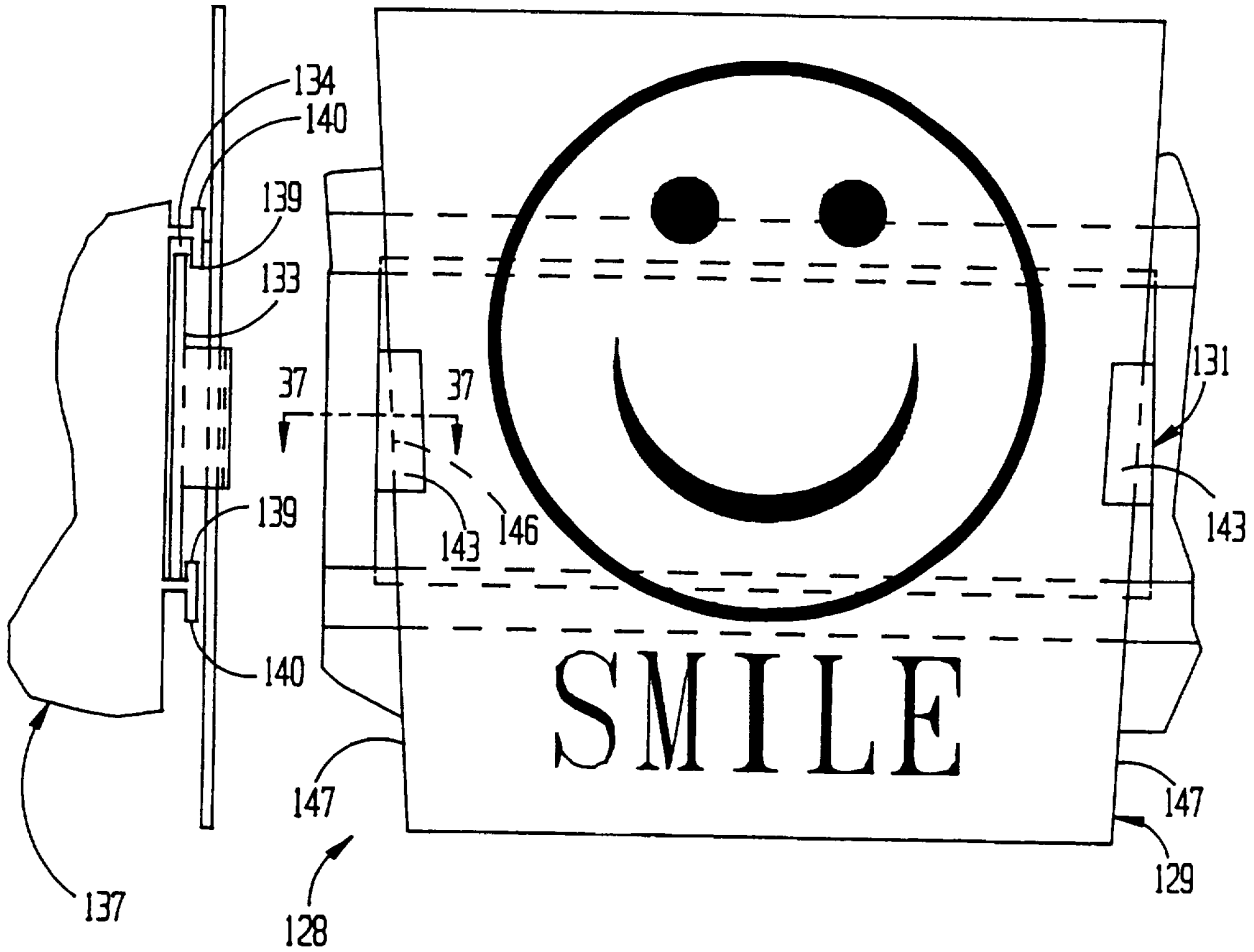


FIG. 36

FIG. 35

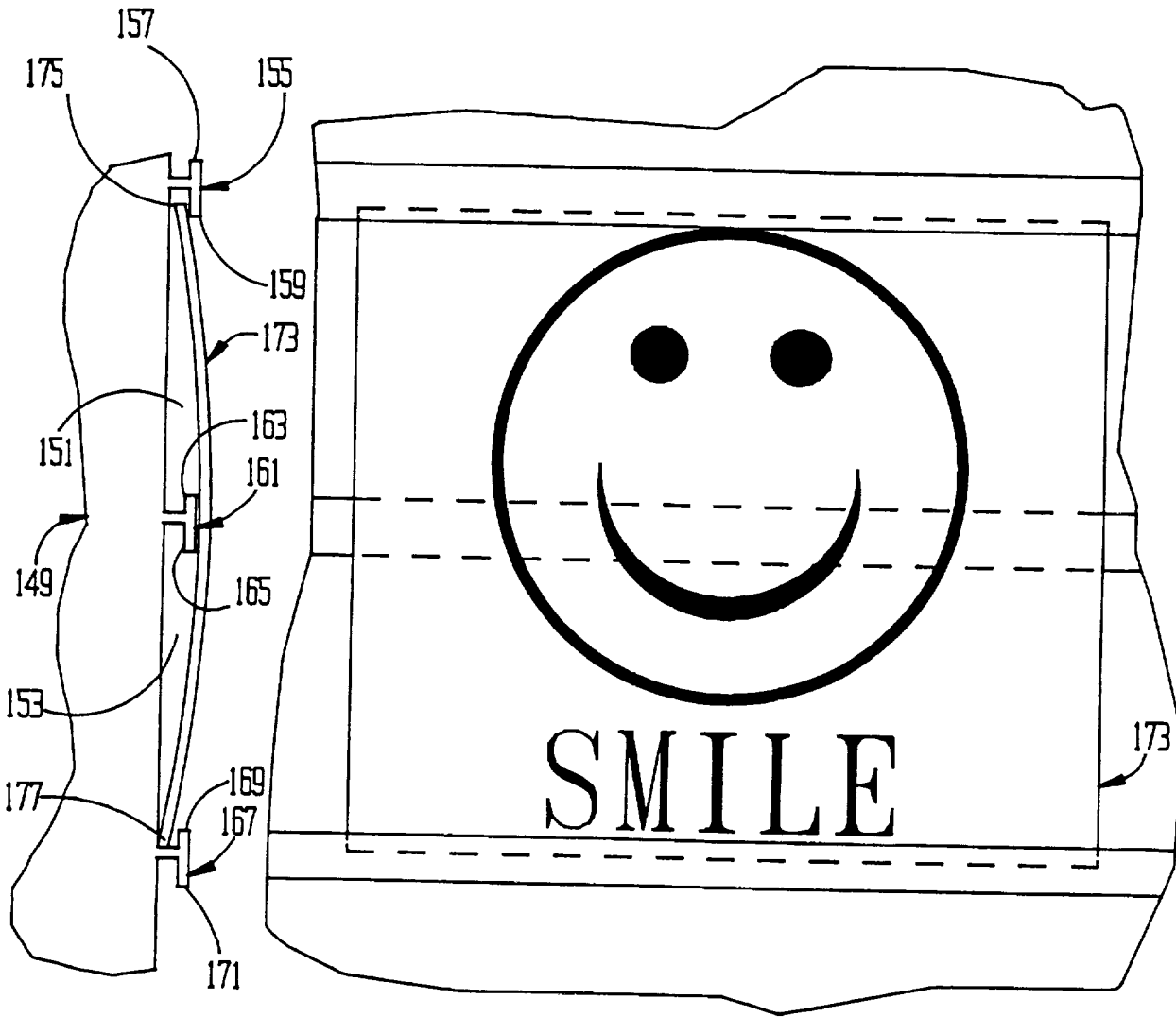


FIG. 39

FIG. 38

SIGN DECORATION SYSTEM

5

The present invention relates generally to the field of signs, and more particularly encompasses a sign decoration system for use with a display panel, apparatus for displaying illustrations and a method of display.

10 The invention pertains to advertising, and more particularly to apparatus that enhances the appearance of alpha-numeric displays.

Various types of equipment have been developed to display commercial advertising and other promotional
15 messages. For example, display panels that hold interchangeable characters such as numerals and alphabet letters are well known and in widespread use. Examples of prior display panels may be seen in U.S. patents 4,237,637; 4,265,040; 5,257,472; 5,357,701 and 5,367,800.

20 In some instances, the display panels are translucent or transparent such that a source of illumination can backlight the characters on the panel. U.S. patents 4,367,604 and 5,588,238 show backlit menu boards.

U.S. patents 5,542,202 and Des. 354,313 show
25 representative plates that include characters for display. The plate of the 5,542,202 patent is especially useful with backlit display panels.

Despite the large variety of display panels, alpha-numeric characters, and character plates that are presently
30 available, they are limited in the size and variety of graphic arts that can be handled. U.S. patent 4,367,604 shows graphic picture units, but they must be custom made to suit a particular display panel. U.S. patent 5,588,238 shows pictorial assemblies that are sandwiched between
35 transparent window panels. The pictorial assemblies must thus be of a specific size and shape. In addition, the

design of the 5,588,238 patent is such that it is difficult to change or rearrange the pictorial assembly after it has been created.

A further disadvantage of prior display equipment is that the numeral and alphabet letter plates are limited to use with specific tracks of a display panel. That is, the plates are all of the same height so as to fit within the tracks. Accordingly, variations in character heights in a particular track of a display panel are usually not possible.

Thus, a need exists for improvements in the way graphic materials are displayed on display panels.

Embodiments of the invention enable an eye-catching sign decoration system to be provided that is readily adaptable to conventional display panels. This is accomplished by apparatus that includes a connector secured to a decoration and held in the display panel.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a sign decoration system for use with a display panel having multiple ledges that cooperate to define multiple tracks that hold selected alpha-numeric character plates of a predetermined size and shape for viewing comprising:

- a. a decoration comprising:
 - i. a sheet having a selected size and shape and first and second opposed faces; and
 - ii. a selected graphic applied to the sheet first face; and
- b. at least one connector for mounting the sign decoration system to the display panel, said at least one connector comprising:
 - i. a tab secured to the decoration sheet second face; and

ii. a holder that removably receives the tab to thereby assemble the decoration to the holder, the holder being sized and configured to be removably held in a selected track of the display panel,

5 so that the decoration is viewable on the display panel with the selected alpha-numeric characters.

According to a further aspect of the invention there
10 is provided apparatus for displaying selected graphic illustrations for viewing comprising:

a. a display panel having a back wall and a plurality of ledges projecting from the back wall that cooperate to define multiple tracks; and

15 b. a sign decoration system removably mounted to the display panel, the sign decoration system comprising:

i. at least one connector removably held in a selected display panel track; and

20 ii. a plurality of decorations each of a size and shape that is too large to fit in a display panel track, each decoration having a first face that bears a selected graphic illustration and a second face, a selected decoration being removably received in said at least one
25 connector, so that the decorations are interchangeably received in said at least one connector for viewing the respective graphic illustrations on the display panel.

According to yet another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of displaying a message for viewing
30 comprising the steps of:

a. providing a display panel having at least two parallel tracks therein;

b. providing a decoration that is too large to fit in a selected track of the display panel;

c. holding at least one holder in a first selected track of the display panel;

5 d. securing at least one first tab to the decoration; and

e. inserting said at least one first tab on the decoration into said at least one holder and thereby displaying the decoration on the display panel.

10 The decoration is preferably made from a thin sheet of material such as wood, metal, or heavy paper. The decoration may be of any desired size and shape. Any desired graphic can be imprinted or otherwise applied to the decoration front face. In one embodiment of the
15 invention, the connector comprises a tab in the form of a thin straight strip of a strong but flexible material. One end of the strip is secured to the back face of the decoration near the top end thereof. The other end of the strip is flexible to bend about the first end. A second
20 component of the connector is a holder having a slot that receives the free end of the strip that is secured to the decoration. The holder is sized to fit in a track of a conventional display panel in the same manner as conventional alpha-numeric character plates.

25 The holder and decoration can be placed at any desired location on the display panel. By inserting the strip of the decoration into the slot of the holder, the decoration is presented for view on the display panel. The decoration makes the display panel more attractive and noticeable than
30 a display panel having only conventional characters.

In a modified embodiment of the invention, the tab on the decoration is U-shaped rather than straight. One leg

of the tab is secured to the decoration, and the other leg is inserted into the holder.

In a further embodiment, the tab is L-shaped. One leg of the tab is secured to the decoration. For example, the 5 tab first leg can project from one face of a flat plate, with the flat plate second face being secured to the decoration. The tab second leg is inserted into a suitable opening in the holder.

In yet another embodiment of the invention, the 10 connector is designed as a single component in the form of a flexible generally flat plate. A centre section of one face of the plate is secured to the decoration, leaving top and bottom sections unattached to the decoration. The plate is sized such that the top and bottom sections can 15 slide within and be held in a track of the display panel in the same manner as conventional character plates.

As an alternate design, the connector is a single component having a generally C-shape. A centre section of the convex side of the connector is secured to the 20 decoration. The free ends of the connector are sized and shaped to fit over and grip the ledges that define the tracks of a conventional display panel.

As a further modification, the connector is equipped with one or more pairs of magnets or hook and eye tapes. 25 One half of the co-operating magnets or hook and eye tapes are secured to the decoration. The other half is secured to a holder that is held in a display panel track.

In many instances, the decoration can be adequately supported in the display panel by a single connector. 30 However, if the decoration size or shape makes it impractical to be supported with one connector, two or more connectors can be used. The connectors are secured to the

decoration and held in the display panel in a manner that best suits the particular decoration.

Further by the present invention, the sign decoration system need not have a connector that is permanently secured to the decoration. Rather, the sign decoration system can be designed such that the decoration is removably secured to the connector. In that embodiment, a number of different decorations are interchangeable with a single connector. The connector has the height of a conventional alpha-numeric character plate. The connector width is substantially equal to the decoration width, which may have any practical width. The connector ends bend forwardly to make narrow channels that converge downwardly. The decoration has side edges that slide into and are held by gravity in the connector channels. Different decorations with the same side edge design can be interchangeably used with a single connector.

To further demonstrate the versatility of the present invention, a large decoration is mountable on a display panel without the use of any connector. The decoration is made of a size that spans two or more tracks. The upper edge of the decoration fits in the upper ledge of a first track of the display panel. The lower edge of the decoration fits in the lower ledge of a lower track on the display panel. In that manner, a decoration that is too large to fit in a single track can be mounted to the display panel without using any connector. The method and apparatus of the invention, using a decoration alone, or in combination with one or more connectors, thus provides eye-catching appeal to a display panel. The connectors can be adapted to suit a wide variety of different decorations, even though the display panel is conventional.

Exemplary embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a front view of a typical display panel that includes a sign decoration system according to the present invention.

Fig. 1A is an end view on an enlarged scale of Fig. 1.

Fig. 1B is a perspective view of a typical alphanumeric character plate.

Fig. 2 is a front view of a system holder according to the invention.

Fig. 3 is a top view of Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a side view of Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is a front view of a typical decoration with a tab secured thereto in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 6 is a top view of Fig. 5.

Fig. 7 is a side view of Fig. 5.

Fig. 7A is a view similar to Fig. 7, but showing an alternate embodiment of the connector of Figs. 5-7.

Fig. 8 is a front view of the display panel of Fig. 1 showing the decoration system mounted thereto.

Fig. 9 is an end view of Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 is a front view of a typical decoration with a modified tab secured thereto.

Fig. 11 is an end view of Fig. 10.

Fig. 12 is a top view of Fig. 10.

Fig. 13 is a front view of a further modified tab.

Fig. 14 is an end view of Fig. 13.

Fig. 15 is a front view of a modified embodiment of a tab.

Fig. 16 is a top view of Fig. 15.

Fig. 17 is an end view of Fig. 15.

Fig. 18 is a front view of a holder that is used with the tab of Figs. 15-17.

Fig. 19 is an end view of Fig. 18.

Fig. 20 is a top view of Fig. 18.

5 Fig. 21 is a front view of a modified connector according to the invention.

Fig. 22 is a top view of Fig. 21.

Fig. 23 is an end view of Fig. 21.

10 Fig. 23A is a view similar to Fig. 23, but showing an alternate embodiment of the connector.

Fig. 24 is a front view of a further modified connector for holding a decoration to a display panel.

Fig. 25 is an end view of Fig. 24.

15 Fig. 26 is a front view of a decoration in combination with a further alternative connector.

Fig. 27 is a top view of Fig. 26.

Fig. 28 is an end view of Fig. 26.

Fig. 29 is a front view of a holder that is used with the decoration of Figs. 26-28.

20 Fig. 30 is a top view of Fig. 29.

Fig. 31 is an end view of Fig. 29.

Fig. 32 is a front view of a large decoration with more than one connector.

Fig. 33 is an end view of Fig. 32.

25 Fig. 34 is a top view of Fig. 32.

Fig. 35 is a front view of a further alternate embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 36 is an end view of Fig. 35.

30 Fig. 37 is a cross-sectional view on an enlarge scale taken along line 37-37 of Fig. 35.

Fig. 38 is a front view of a sign decoration system that requires no connector.

Fig. 39 is an end view of Fig. 38.

In the various figures, like reference numerals refer to like parts.

Although the disclosure hereof is detailed and exact
5 to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, the physical embodiments herein disclosed merely exemplify the invention, which may be embodied in other specific structures. The scope of the invention is defined in the claims appended hereto.

10 Referring first to Fig. 1, a typical display panel 1 is illustrated that advantageously includes the sign decoration system 3 of the invention. The display panel 1 itself is conventional and is merely representative of a wide variety of display panels for indoor and outdoor use
15 having horizontal tracks that accept alpha-numeric character plates 23. The display panel may be translucent for back lighting purposes.

Looking also at Figs. 1A and 1B, the particular display panel 1 shown has a wall 5 with a front surface 7.
20 There is an L-shaped bottom ledge 9 projecting from the front surface 7. The bottom ledge 9 includes an upstanding lip 11. Another L-shaped top ledge 13 is at the top of the display panel wall 5. The top ledge 13 has a depending lip 15 that is longer than the lip 11. There are intermediate
25 generally T-shaped ledges 17 between the top ledge 13 and the bottom ledge 9. Each intermediate ledge 17 has an upstanding first lip 19 and a second longer depending lip 21. Adjacent ledges co-operate to form tracks 22.

Reference numeral 23 represents a typical character
30 plate that is used with the display panel 1. The plate is provided with any alpha-numeric character 25. The plate may be transparent, translucent, or opaque. The plate has a height that fits in the tracks 22 of the display panel.

The plates can slide into a track from an end of the display panel. Alternately, the plates can be installed from the front of the display panel by sliding the plate top edge 24 up behind a depending lip 15 or 21, swinging the plate bottom edge 26 over the associated upstanding lip 11 or 19 and fully into the track, and lowering the plate until its bottom edge rests on the track lower ledge.

According to one aspect of the invention, the sign decoration system 3 is interchangeable with the alpha-numeric character plates 23 in the display panel 1. Turning to Figs. 2-9, the sign decoration system is comprised of a decoration 25 and a connector 27. The decoration 25 can have any shape, size, and graphic illustration 31 on it. For example, the decoration may be made of a heavy sheet of paper 29 covered with the illustration 31 and laminated between transparent films.

The connector 27 has two components. The first component is a tab 33. As depicted, the tab 33 is a thin strip of a strong but flexible material. One end 35 of the strip is secured, as with an adhesive, to the decoration 25 on the side opposite the illustration 31. The other end 37 of the strip is bendable about the secured end 35.

The second component of the connector 27 is a holder 39. The holder 39 comprises a plate 41 that is the same size and shape, and may be made of the same material, as the alpha-numeric character plate 23 of Fig. 1B. On one surface of the plate 41 is attached a pair of spacers 43 and a cross bar 45. The plate 41, spacers 43, and cross bar 45 cooperate to define a slot 47 that is capable of receiving the tab 33 that is secured to the decoration 25.

In Figs. 8 and 9, the connector tab 33 is shown inserted into the slot 47 of the holder 39 to create the sign decoration system 3. The holder is installed in the

track 22 of the display panel 1 in the same manner as a conventional character plate 23 as described in connection with Figs. 1A and 1B. An example of a sign decoration system that works very well is the following: The decoration 25 is oval in shape, being approximately 13 inches high and ten inches wide. The tab 33 is a strip nine inches long and 1.50 inches wide. The strip first end 35 is approximately 3.75 inches long. The connector holder 39 is nine inches high. The slot 47 is two inches wide. The sign decoration system can be placed at any desired location on the display panel. Conventional-numeric character plates such as is shown in Fig. 1B can be used with the decoration to produce a very eye-catching message on the display panel (Fig. 1).

If desired, the connector tab can be made from a relatively rigid material. In Fig. 7A, the tab 48 is preformed. It has one end 50 that is secured to the decoration 25'. A second end 52 is offset from the first end 50 such that the second end can be inserted into the slot 47 of the holder 39 in a manner similar to that shown in Figs. 8 and 9.

A modified embodiment of the invention is shown in Figs. 10-12. A decoration 49 has a connector tab 51 that is U-shaped. One leg 53 of the tab 51 is secured to the decoration sheet 55. The other tab leg 57 is sized to fit within the slot 47 of the holder 39 of Figs. 2-4. Thus, the decoration 49 is installed in the display panel 1 in generally the same manner as the decoration 25, Figs. 8 and 9.

In Figs. 13 and 14, a U-shaped tab 57 has one leg 59 that is much larger in area than the second leg 61. The leg 59 is secured, as by bonding, to the decoration 63.

The large area of the tab leg 59 provides increased stability to the decoration 63 for outdoor applications.

Figs. 15-20 show a further modified sign decoration system 65 comprising a decoration 67 and a connector 71. The connector 69 is made of a tab 71 and a holder 73. The tab 69 is made as a thin plate 75 with an L-shaped leg 77. One end 79 of the leg 77 is joined to the plate 75. The second leg end 81 of the tab leg is received in an opening 83 of the holder 73. The holder opening 83 is defined by a tubular length 85 that lies alongside and is joined to a holder plate 87.

In Figs. 16 and 20, the cross-sections of the tab leg end 81 and of the holder opening 83 are shown as being circular. However, it will be appreciated that square or other cross-sectional shapes can be used as well as circular.

Now turning to Figs. 21-23, a sign decoration system 89 is depicted in which the connector 91 has a single component. The connector 91 is a plate having a top section 93, a centre section 95, and a bottom section 97. The height of the connector 91 is the same as the height of the holder 39 of Figs. 2-4 and of the holder 73 of Figs. 18-20. One surface 99 of the centre section 95 is secured to the decoration 101. The sections 93 and 97 are free to bend relative to the centre section 95 in the same manner as the end sections 37 of the tab 33 (Figs. 5-7). The sign decoration system 89 is mounted on the display panel by sliding the connector 91 in the tracks of the display panel from an end thereof, or by the tilting and lowering method described previously in conjunction with the plate 23 of Figs. 1A and 1B.

The connector 91 of Figs. 21-23 need not be made from a flexible material. In Fig. 23A, an alternate connector

102 is made of a relatively rigid material. The connector 102 has a centre section 104 that is secured to the decoration 101'. The connector top and bottom sections 106 are offset from the centre section 104. The connector 102
5 has a size and shape that enables it to be assembled into a track 22 of a display panel (Fig. 9).

Figs. 24 and 25 depict a connector 103 that is a single component. The connector 103 is generally C-shaped, having a long centre section 105 and opposed end sections
10 107. The end sections 107 are shaped as bent-over legs that are located and sized to slidably fit over the lips 19' and 21' of the display panel 1'. The connector centre section 105 is secured to a decoration 109 to make a sign decoration system 111. The sign decoration system 111 is
15 mounted by sliding the connector over the lips 19' and 21' from the ends of the display panel ledges 17'.

Another sign decoration system 113 according to the invention is illustrated in Figs. 26-31. The sign decoration system 113 has a connector 116 that includes one
20 or more magnets 117 secured to a decoration 115. The connector 116 further comprises a holder 119. The holder 119 is fabricated as a plate 121 similar to the alphanumeric character plate 23 of Fig. 1B. One or more additional magnets 123 are secured to the plate 121.
25 Accordingly, the decoration 115 is assembled to the holder by means of the magnets 117 and 123. If desired, cooperating patches of hook and eye tape can be substituted for the magnets. Further in accordance with the present invention, the size of the decoration is not limited by the
30 size of the connector or of the display panel tracks. Turning to Figs. 32-34, a decoration 125 is shown that is relatively large compared with the display panel tracks 22'. To mount the large decoration 125 to the display

panel 1', more than one connector is used. As shown, four connectors 127 are used. The connectors 127 in Figs. 32-34 are the same as the connector 27 of Figs. 2-7. However, it will be appreciated that any of the other connectors 69, 91, 103, or 116 of the invention can be used with the decoration 125. In addition, the number of connectors, as well as their locations on the decoration, can be varied to suit the particular size and shape of the decoration.

It is a feature of the present invention that the connector need not be permanently secured to the decoration. Rather, as shown in Figs. 35-37, a sign decoration system 128 comprises a decoration 129 that is removably secured to a connector 131. The connector 131 has a plate section 133 that has a height suitable for being held in a track 134 of a conventional display panel 137. The plate section 133 can be of any width to suit the particular decoration 129. At each end of the plate section is a pad 135. The pads 135 are between the lips 139 of the display panel ledges 140 when the connector is held in the display panel 137. Each pad has a locating surface 141 that is forwardly of the display panel ledges 140. The pad locating surfaces 141 cooperate with bent-over ends 143 to form a channel 145 on each end of the connector. The channels 145 are thus located forwardly of the display panel ledges. The channels have respective side edges 146 that converge slightly in the downward direction.

The decoration 129 has a width between side edges 147 that suits the width of the connector 131. The decoration side edges 147 converge downwardly at the same angle as the side edges 146 of the connector channels 145. The decoration is slipped into the connector channels until a wedging action is made between the side edges 146 and the

decoration side edges 147. At that point, the sign decoration system 128 is firmly mounted to the display panel 137. Any of a number of decorations can be interchangeably assembled to a single connector, which
5 remains held in the display panel. A typical sign decoration system 128 has a decoration that is 20 inches high and 18 inches wide across the top. The holder channels 145 and decoration side edges 147 converge at a five degree included angle.

10 The versatility of the present invention is further demonstrated with reference to Figs. 38 and 39. Reference numeral 149 represents a conventional display panel having two tracks 151 and 153. The track 151 is defined by an upper ledge 155 having an upper lip 157 and a longer lower
15 lip 159, and by a centre ledge 161 having lips 163 and 165. The display panel track 153 is defined by the centre ledge 161 and by a lower ledge 167 having an upper lip 169 and a longer lower lip 171.

A decoration 173 has a height that is greater than the
20 heights of the individual display panel tracks 151 and 153. Ordinarily, the decoration 173 would not be mountable in the display panel 149 without using one or more of the connectors 27, 69, 91, 102, 103, 116, or 131 described previously. However, the decoration 173 is designed with a
25 height that substantially spans both tracks 151 and 153 as well as the ledge 161. Specifically, the decoration height is chosen such that the decoration upper edge 175 fits behind the lower lip 159 of the ledge 155. At the same time, the decoration lower edge 177 fits behind the upper
30 lip 169 of the ledge 167. The decoration is made of a material flexible enough to permit it to bend slightly to pass in front of the centre ledge 161. As used in one commercially available display panel 149, the decoration

173 has a height of 20 inches and a width of 16 inches. It will be understood, of course, that the decoration can be constructed to span three or more tracks, if desired.

In summary, the results and advantages of display panels, both indoor and outdoor, can now be more fully realised. The sign decoration system of the invention provides both eye-catching appeal and versatility to display panels. This desirable result comes from using the combined functions of the connectors. According to one aspect of the invention, the connector comprises a single component. In that case, the connector is more or less permanently secured to the back side of a decoration, which may be any of a wide variety of decorative graphics or other artwork. The connector and decoration constitute a unitary system that is complete in itself. The holder is held in the display panel in the same manner as conventional alpha-numeric character plates used with the display panel for displaying written messages. Alternately, the connector may be in two pieces: a tab secured to the decoration, and a holder held in the display panel. Any of a number of different decorations can be used interchangeably with a holder. Accordingly, the holder need not be removed from the display panel in order to change the decoration. According to another aspect of the invention, the connector and decoration are not permanently secured to each other. The decoration is removably secured to the connector by a wedging action such that many different decorations can be interchangeably secured to the connector. The sign decoration system is further characterised by a large decoration that needs no connector to mount it to a display panel.

It will also be recognised that in addition to the superior performance of the sign decoration system, its

construction is such as to cost little more than
traditional alpha-numeric character plates installed on
display panels. Moreover, since the sign decoration system
is made of rugged components and according to a simple
5 design, it will give a long service life with minimal
maintenance.

Thus, it is apparent that there has been provided, in
accordance with the invention, a sign decorating system
that fully satisfies the aims and advantages set forth
10 above. While the invention has been described in
conjunction with specific embodiments thereof, it is
evident that many alternatives, modifications, and
variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in
light of the foregoing description. Accordingly, it is
15 intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications,
and variations as fall within the scope of the appended
claims.

Claims:

1. A sign decoration system for use with a display panel having multiple ledges that cooperate to define multiple tracks that hold selected alpha-numeric character plates of a predetermined size and shape for viewing comprising:
- a. a decoration comprising:
 - i. a sheet having a selected size and shape and first and second opposed faces; and
 - 10 ii. a selected graphic applied to the sheet first face; and
 - b. at least one connector for mounting the sign decoration system to the display panel, said at least one connector comprising:
 - 15 i. a tab secured to the decoration sheet second face; and
 - ii. a holder that removably receives the tab to thereby assemble the decoration to the holder, the holder being sized and configured to be removably held in a
20 selected track of the display panel,
so that the decoration is viewable on the display panel with the selected alpha-numeric characters.
- 25 2. A sign decoration system as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
- a. the tab comprises a strip of material having first and second ends, the strip first end being secured to the decoration second face; and
 - 30 b. the holder comprises a plate that is holdable in a track of the display panel and that defines a slot that removably receives the second end of the tab strip.

3. A sign decoration system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the tab strip of material is flexible to enable the strip second end to bend relative to the first end and thereby enable the strip second end to be inserted into the holder slot.
4. A sign decoration system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the tab strip of material is made from a relatively stiff material, and wherein the strip second end is offset relative to and generally parallel to the first end to thereby enable the strip second end to be inserted into the holder slot without bending the strip.
5. A sign decoration system as claimed in any preceding claim wherein:
- a. the tab comprises a generally U-shaped strip of material having a first leg of a first predetermined area secured to the decoration second face, and a second leg of a second predetermined area; and
 - b. the holder comprises a plate that is holdable in a track of the display panel and that defines a slot that removably receives the second leg of the tab.
6. A sign decoration system as claimed in claim 5 wherein the area of the tab first leg is substantially greater than the area of the tab second leg.
7. A sign decoration system as claimed in any of claims 1-4 wherein:
- a. the tab comprises a plate having a first surface secured to the decoration second face and a second surface opposite the first surface, and an L-shaped leg

having a first end attached to the plate second surface and a second end depending from the first end; and

b. the holder comprises a plate that is holdable in a track of the display panel, and a tubular section joined to the plate, the tubular section removably receiving the second end of the tab leg.

8. A sign decoration system as claimed in claim 7 wherein the second end of the tab L-shaped leg has a circular cross-section, and wherein the tubular section of the holder defines an opening that has a circular cross-section.

9. A sign decoration system as claimed in any preceding claim wherein:

a. the decoration has a size and shape that spans at least two tracks of the display panel; and

b. there are multiple connectors used to mount the decoration to each of the tracks of the display panel that are spanned by the decoration, each connector comprising:

i. a tab secured to the decoration sheet second face; and

ii. a holder that removably receives an associated tab, each holder being sized and configured to be removably held in a selected one of the tracks of the display panel that are spanned by the decoration,

so that the tabs and holders cooperate to mount the decoration to the display panel.

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10. A sign decoration system for use with a display panel having multiple ledges that cooperate to define multiple

tracks that hold selected alpha-numeric character plates of a predetermined size and shape for viewing comprising:

- a. a decoration comprising:
 - i. a sheet having a selected size and shape and first and second opposed faces; and
 - ii. a selected graphic applied to the sheet first face; and
- b. a connector for mounting the sign decoration system to the display panel, the connector comprising a plate having an upper section, a centre section, and a lower section, the plate centre section being secured to the decoration second face, the plate top and bottom sections being holdable on the display panel to thereby render the decoration viewable on the display panel with the selected alpha-numeric character plates.

11. A sign decoration system according to claim 10 wherein the holder plate is made from a flexible material that enables the top and bottom sections to bend relative to the centre section and thereby enable the holder plate top and bottom sections to be held in a track of the display panel.

12. A sign decoration system according to claim 10 wherein the holder plate is made from a relatively rigid material, and wherein the holder plate top and bottom sections are offset from the centre section to enable the plate to be held in a track of the display panel.

13. A sign decoration system according to claim 10 wherein the holder plate top and bottom sections are shaped as respective bent-over legs to give the plate a generally C-shape, the legs being located and sized to fit onto at

least two display panel ledges to thereby enable the sign decoration system to be mounted to the display panel.

14. A sign decoration system for use with a display panel
5 having multiple ledges that cooperate to define multiple tracks that hold selected alpha-numeric character plates of a predetermined size and shape for viewing comprising:

a. a decoration comprising:
i. a sheet having a selected size and
10 shape and first and second opposed faces; and
ii. a selected graphic applied to the sheet first face; and

b. at least one connector for mounting the sign decoration system to the display panel, said at least one
15 connector comprising:

i. at least one first member of a two-member set of co-operating securement elements fastened to the decoration;

ii. a holder sized and configured to be
20 removably held in a track of the display panel; and

iii. at least one second member of the two-member set of securement elements fastened to the holder, the first and second members of the securement elements co-operating to assemble the decoration to the holder,

25 so that the decoration is viewable on the display panel when the decoration is assembled to the holder and the holder is held in the display panel.

15. A sign decoration system according to claim 14 wherein the set of securement elements comprises at least one pair
30 of magnets.

16. A sign decoration system according to claim 14 wherein the set of securement elements comprises at least one pair of co-operating hook and eye tapes.
- 5 17. A sign decoration system for use with a display panel having at least two ledges that cooperate to define a track comprising:
- a. a decoration having opposed side edges that converge downwardly at a predetermined angle; and
 - 10 b. a holder comprising a plate having a size and shape that enables it to be removably held in the display panel track, the holder further comprising opposed ends that define respective channels having side edges that converge downwardly at the predetermined angle, the holder
15 channels removably receiving the decoration side edges to thereby removably mount the decoration to the display panel.
18. A sign decoration system according to claim 17 wherein
20 the holder is formed with a pair of locating surfaces that cooperate with the holder channels to locate the decoration forwardly of the display panel ledges.
19. Apparatus for displaying selected graphic
25 illustrations for viewing comprising:
- a. a display panel having a back wall and a plurality of ledges projecting from the back wall that cooperate to define multiple tracks; and
 - b. a sign decoration system removably mounted
30 to the display panel, the sign decoration system comprising:
 - i. at least one connector removably held in a selected display panel track; and

ii. a plurality of decorations each of a size and shape that is too large to fit in a display panel track, each decoration having a first face that bears a selected graphic illustration and a second face, a selected decoration being removably received in said at least one connector,

so that the decorations are interchangeably received in said at least one connector for viewing the respective graphic illustrations on the display panel.

10

20. An apparatus according to claim 19 wherein said at least one connector comprises:

a. a holder held in a selected display panel track, the holder defining an opening therein; and

15

b. a tab secured to each decoration, the tab of the selected decoration being removably inserted into the opening of the holder to thereby assemble the selected decoration to the holder.

20 21. An apparatus according to claim 19 wherein:

a. each decoration has opposed side edges that converge downwardly at a predetermined angle; and

b. said at least one connector comprises a plate section that is held in a selected display panel track, the plate section having opposed bent-over ends that cooperate with the plate section to define a pair of channels that converge downwardly at the predetermined angle, the decorations being interchangeably received in the connector channels.

30

22. An apparatus according to claim 21 wherein the connector comprises a locating surface in operative

association with each bent-over end to locate the selected decoration forwardly of the display panel ledges.

23. Apparatus for displaying selected graphic
5 illustrations for viewing comprising:

- a. a display panel having a back wall and a plurality of ledges projecting from the back wall that cooperate to define multiple tracks; and
- b. a sign decoration system removably mounted to the
10 display panel, the sign decoration system comprising:

- i. a generally C-shaped connector having a centre section with opposed bent-over legs that engage respective ledges of the display panel to hold the connector to the display panel; and
- 15 ii. a decoration of a size and shape too large to fit in a selected display panel track, the decoration having a first face that bears a graphic illustration and a second face secured to the centre section of the connector,
20 so that the decoration graphic illustration is viewable on the display panel.

24. A method of displaying a message for viewing comprising the steps of:

- 25 a. providing a display panel having at least two parallel tracks therein;
- b. providing a decoration that is too large to fit in a selected track of the display panel;
- c. holding at least one holder in a first
30 selected track of the display panel;
- d. securing at least one first tab to the decoration; and

e. inserting said at least one first tab on the decoration into said at least one holder and thereby displaying the decoration on the display panel.

5 25. A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the step of securing said at least one first tab to the decoration comprises the step of securing at least one flexible tab to the decoration.

10 26. A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the step of securing said at least one tab to the decoration comprises the step of securing at least one rigid tab to the decoration.

15 27. A method as claimed in any of claims 24-26 comprising the further steps of:

a. holding at least one second holder in a second selected track in the display panel;

20 b. securing at least one second tab to the decoration; and

c. inserting said at least one second tab into said at least one second holder and thereby mounting the decoration to the display panel with multiple tabs and holders.

25

28. A method of adding eye-appeal to a display panel having a track therein comprising the steps of:

a. providing a decoration that is too large to fit in the display panel track;

30 b. providing a flexible connector having top, centre, and bottom sections;

c. securing the connector centre section to the decoration; and

d. bending the connector top and bottom sections relative to the centre section and holding the connector top and bottom sections in the display panel track and thereby mounting the decoration to the display
5 panel.

29. A method of mounting an eye-catching decoration to a display panel having at least two ledges thereon that hold alpha-numeric character plates comprising the steps of:

10 a. providing a generally C-shaped connector having a centre section and top and bottom section shaped as bent-over legs;

b. securing the decoration to the connector centre section; and

15 c. engaging the connector bent-over legs with the display panel ledges and thereby holding the connector to the display panel for displaying the decoration on the display panel.

20 30. A method of displaying an eye-catching decoration comprising the steps of:

a. providing a display panel having at least one track therein;

25 b. holding a plate in a selected display panel track;

c. securing a first member of a pair of co-operating securement elements to the plate, and securing a second member of the pair of co-operating securement elements to the decoration; and

30 d. assembling the first and second members of the pair of co-operating securement elements to each other and thereby mounting the decoration to the display panel.

31. A method as claimed in claim 30 wherein the steps of securing a first member and a second member to the plate and decoration, respectively, comprise the steps of securing a first magnet to the plate, and securing a second
5 magnet to the decoration.

32. A method as claimed in claim 30 wherein the steps of securing a first member and a second member to the plate and decoration, respectively, comprise the steps of
10 securing a first hook and eye tape to the plate, and securing a second hook and eye tape to the decoration.

33. A method of displaying selected decorations for viewing comprising the steps of:

15 a. providing a display panel having at least one track therein;

b. providing a connector having a plate that is held in the display panel track, and opposed ends that define respective downwardly converging channels;

20 c. providing at least one decoration that is too large to be held in the display panel track and that has opposed downwardly converging side edges; and

d. inserting the side edges of said at least one decoration in the connector channels and thereby
25 wedging said at least one decoration in the connector channels to mount said at least one decoration to the display panel for viewing.

34. For a sign system having a display panel with a back wall, and a plurality of spaced apart ledges each having
30 top and bottom lips and projecting from the back wall wherein the ledges partially define at least two horizontal tracks having respective heights that are defined by associated top and bottom ledges, each track being further

defined by the display panel back wall, a bottom lip of the associated top ledge, and a top lip of the associated bottom ledge, wherein the bottom ledge of a selected track is common with the top ledge of a next lower track; and a
5 plurality of alpha-numeric character plates held in a selected display panel track and arranged to present a message for viewing,

an eye-catching decoration having top and bottom edges spaced apart a greater distance than the height of
10 any display panel track, the decoration top edge being held between the display panel back wall and the bottom lip of the top ledge associated with a first track, the decoration bottom edge being held between the display panel back wall and the top lip of the bottom ledge associated with a
15 second track that is lower on the display panel than the first track, the decoration being sufficiently flexible to pass in front of and span at least one ledge between the first and second tracks,

whereby a decoration that is too large to be held
20 in a selected track of the display panel is held in two tracks simultaneously and is thereby viewable on the display panel with the alpha-numeric character plates.

35. A method of displaying a large eye-catching decoration
25 in a display panel of a type having a back wall and a plurality of spaced apart ledges projecting from the back wall, consecutive pairs of ledges co-operating to define parallel tracks that receive alpha-numeric character plates of a predetermined height and arranged to display a
30 selected message, wherein each track is defined by the display panel back wall, a top ledge of a pair of ledges, a bottom lip on the top ledge, a bottom ledge of the pair of ledges, and a top lip on the bottom ledge comprising the

steps of providing a decoration having top and bottom edges spaced apart a distance greater than the predetermined height such that the decoration will not fit in a track; holding the decoration top edge in a first track between
5 the display panel back wall and the bottom lip of the top ledge of the first track; and simultaneously holding the decoration bottom edge in a second track lower on the display panel than the first track between the display panel back wall and the top lip of the bottom ledge of the
10 second track.

36. A method as claimed in claim 35 wherein:

a. the steps of holding the decoration first edge and simultaneously holding the decoration bottom edge
15 comprise the step of passing the decoration in front of and spanning at least one third ledge between the top ledge of the first track and the bottom ledge of the second track;
and

b. the step of providing a decoration comprises
20 the step of providing a decoration having sufficient flexibility to bend at the third ledge and thereby enable the decoration to be held simultaneously in the first and second tracks.



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UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.R): G5C(CBF,CBG,CBH,CBM,CBL)

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Other:

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	GB 2321331 A (KINGSMILL)	1
A	GB 2264805 A (CHAIN REACTION)	1
A	GB 1473378 (PILKINGTON)	1

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