Jan. 17, 1967 D. E. MONAHAN 3,298,131

STICK PUPPETS

Filed April 2, 1965 4 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.

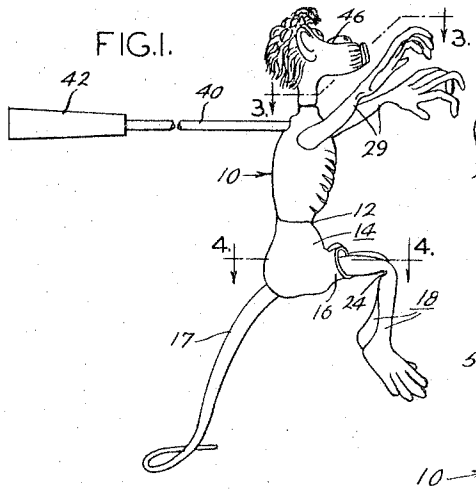


FIG. 2.

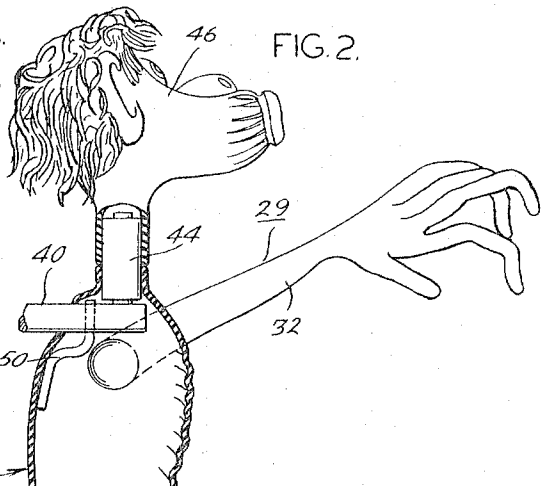


FIG. 3.

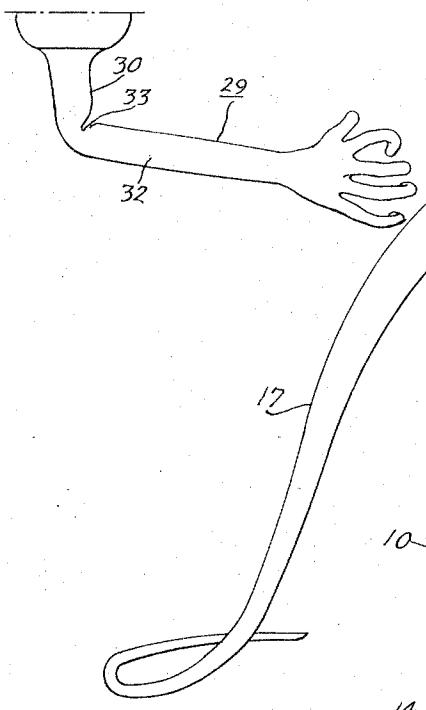
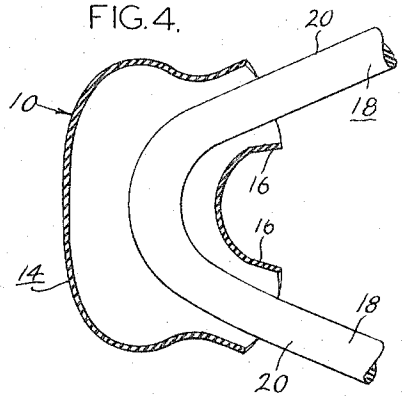


FIG. 4.



INVENTOR:
DAVID E. MONAHAN
BY Howson & Howson
ATTYS.

Jan. 17, 1967 D. E. MONAHAN 3,298,131

STICK PUPPETS

Filed April 2, 1965 4 Sheets-Sheet 2

FIG.6.

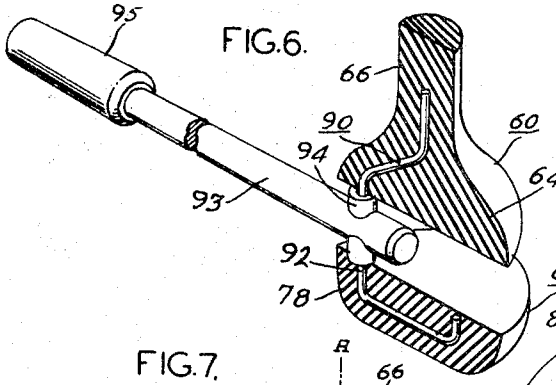


FIG.7.

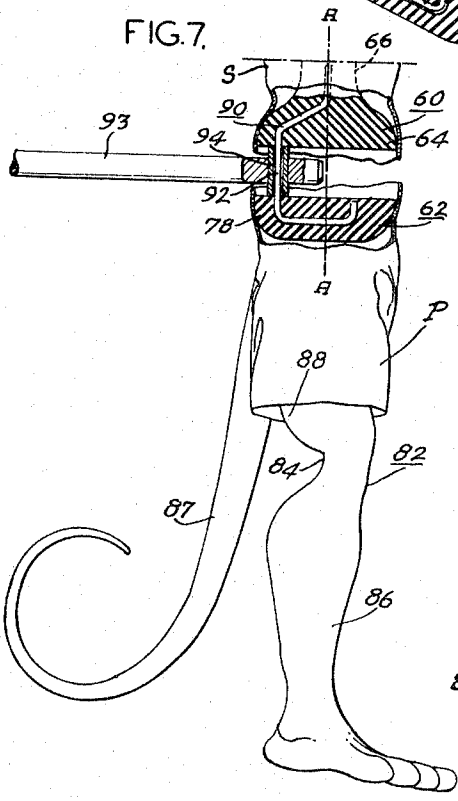
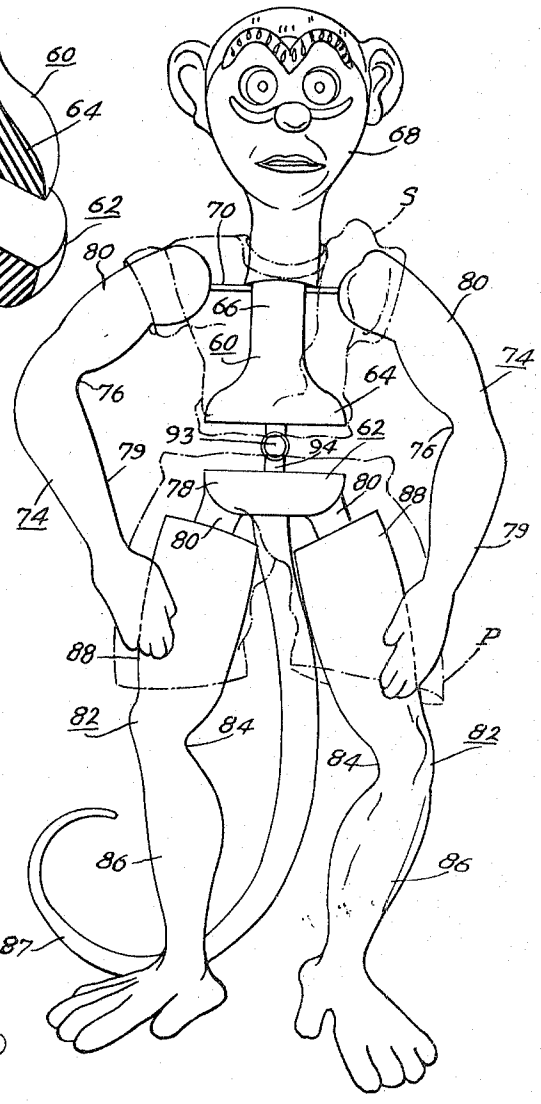


FIG5.



INVENTOR:
DAVID E. MONAHAN

BY Howson & Howson
ATTYS.

Jan. 17, 1967 D. E. MONAHAN 3,298,131

STICK PUPPETS

Filed April 2, 1965 4 Sheets-Sheet 3

FIG. 8.

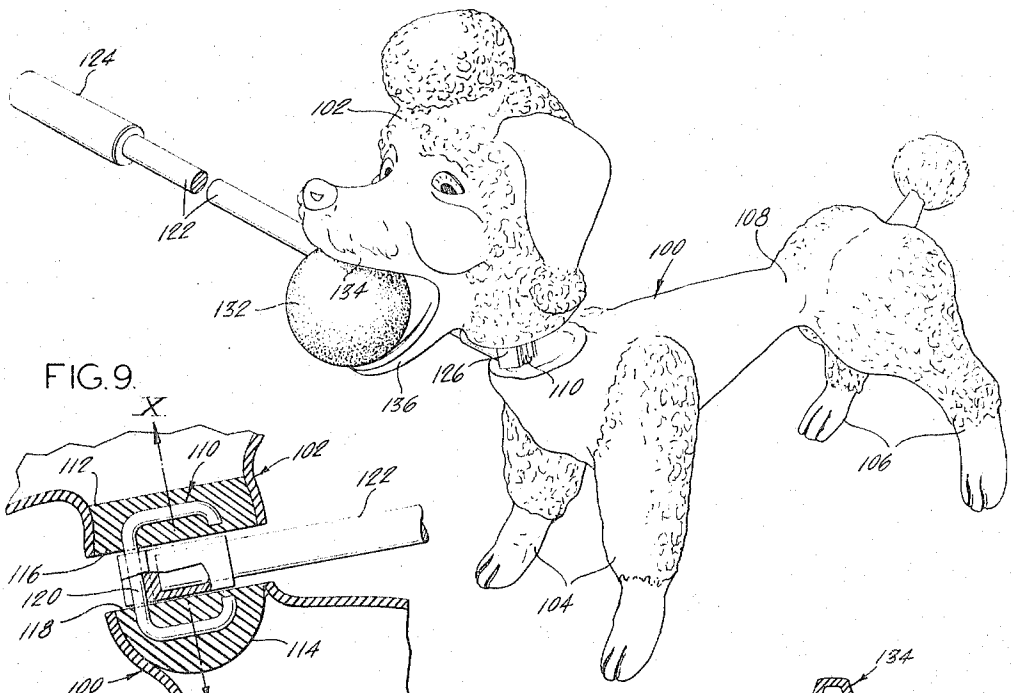


FIG. 9.

FIG. 11.

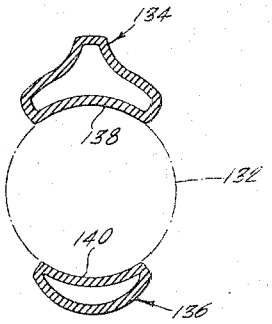


FIG. 12.

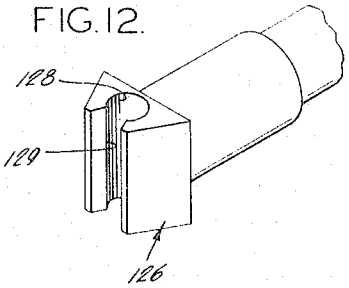


FIG. 10.

INVENTOR:
DAVID E. MONAHAN
Howson & Howson
ATTYS.

Jan. 17, 1967 D. E. MONAHAN 3,298,131

STICK PUPPETS

Filed April 2, 1965 4 Sheets-Sheet 4

FIG. 13.

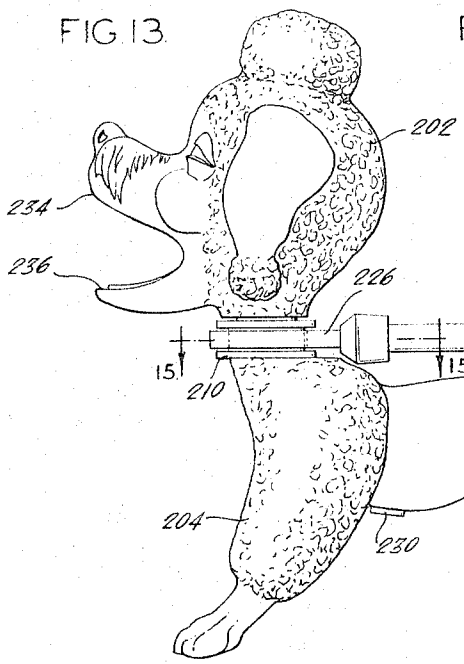


FIG. 14.

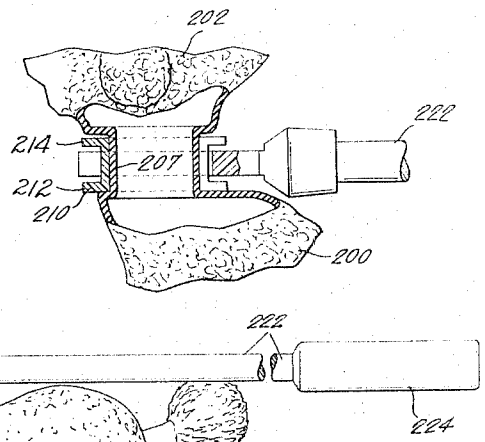


FIG. 15.

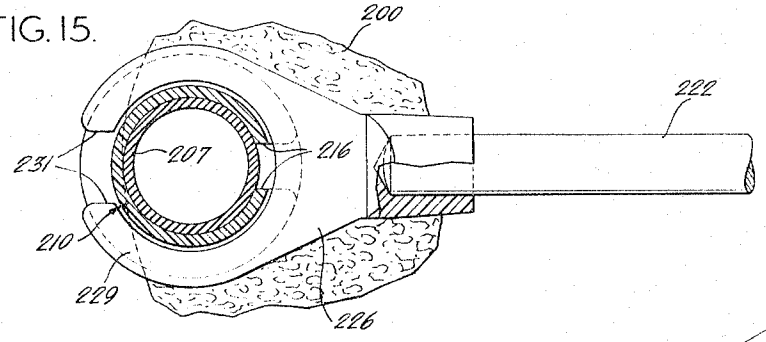
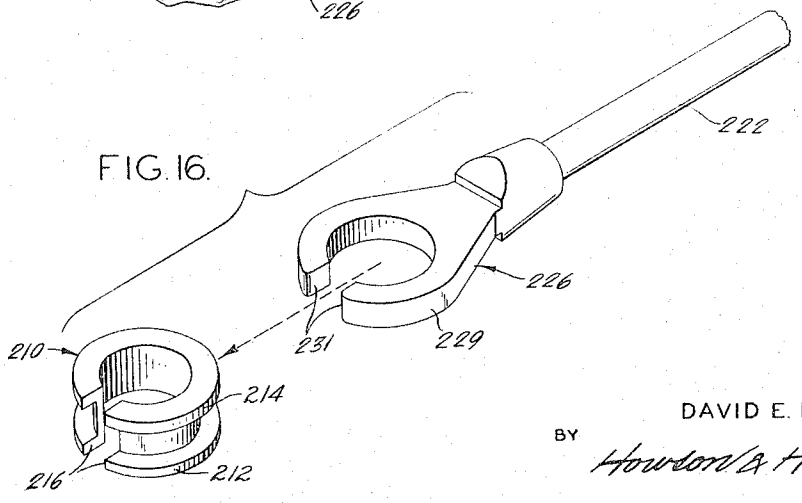


FIG. 16.



INVENTOR:
DAVID E. MONAHAN

BY Howson & Howson

ATTYS.

United States Patent Office 3,298,131 Patented Jan. 17, 1967

3,298,131

STICK PUPPETS

David E. Monahan, 156 Summit St., Upper Darby, Pa. 19023

Filed Apr. 2, 1965, Ser. No. 445,199
7 Claims. (Cl. 46—126)

This is a continuation-in-part application of my application for patent Serial No. 224,389 filed September 18, 1962, entitled "Stick Puppet" now abandoned.

The present invention relates to new and useful improvements in puppets and more particularly to the type of puppet commonly referred to as a "stick puppet."

An object of the present invention is to provide a stick puppet having novel features of construction and arrangement which is easily manipulated to execute a variety of maneuvers in a life-like, highly animated manner.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a stick puppet of comparatively simplified construction which is extremely economical to manufacture.

These and other objects of the present invention and the various features and details of the operation and construction thereof are hereinafter more fully set forth with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of one embodiment of stick puppet in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged longitudinal sectional view of the puppet shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged sectional view taken on line 3—3 of FIG. 1 showing one arm of the puppet;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary sectional view taken on line 4—4 of FIG. 1 showing the upper leg construction of the puppet;

FIG. 5 is a front elevational view of another embodiment of stick puppet in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged perspective view partly in section showing the mounting arrangement of the control stick to the torso of the puppet;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary side elevational view partly in section of the puppet shown in FIG. 5;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of still another embodiment of stick puppet in the form of a dog embodying the present invention;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged sectional view of the neck portion of the dog shown in FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 is a side elevational view showing the head of the dog in an erect position in phantom lines and in a lowered position in solid lines;

FIG. 11 is an enlarged sectional view along lines 11—11 of FIG. 10;

FIG. 12 is a fragmentary perspective view of the control stick;

FIG. 13 is a side elevational view of a stick puppet in the form of a dog similar to that shown in FIG. 8 except that it has a modified neck and control stick arrangement;

FIG. 14 is an enlarged fragmentary view partly in section showing the neck construction of the dog;

FIG. 15 is an enlarged sectional view taken on lines 15—15 of FIG. 13; and

FIG. 16 is a perspective view of the collar and control stick.

Referring now to the drawings and particularly to FIGS. 1–4 thereof, the puppet illustrated is constructed to resemble a monkey and comprises at least two portions or segments including a hollow, thin wall torso **10** and a head **46** mounted at one end of the torso. The

torso **10** is made of an elastic, flexible material, such as rubber, which is of reduced cross section at the waist **12** to permit limited flexing of the torso at the waist. In the present instance, the torso below the waist is in the form of pants **14** having short leg portions **16** disposed so that the puppet is in a seated position. A tail **17** depends from the seat of the pants **14**.

The legs **18** of the puppet are constructed and arranged to facilitate ambulatory movement of the puppet in a squatting position and to exhibit animation during other maneuvers of the puppet. To this end, each of the legs is formed of an elastic, flexible material, for example rubber, and is of generally circular cross section, comprising a thigh portion **20** and a lower leg portion **22** depending from the thigh portions and disposed at an acute angle with respect thereto. The juncture of the thigh **20** and lower leg portion **22** at the knee **24** is of a reduced cross section to permit limited flexing or bending movement of the legs at the knee. In the present instance, the thigh portions **20** of the legs are formed integrally as shown in FIG. 4 and are disposed so that they diverge outwardly. Further the thigh portions **20** are smaller in cross section than the pant leg openings to permit movement of the legs therein. By this arrangement when the puppet is in an upright position as shown in FIG. 2, the feet are disposed at a slight angle to a horizontal surface such as a stage **27** so that the puppet is resting on the tips of its toes.

The arms **29** of the puppet are also constructed and arranged to provide an animated movement thereof when performing with the puppet. To this end, the upper arm portion **30** and forearm **32** of each arm are made of a resilient, flexible material, such as rubber, and are of generally circular cross section, the juncture of the upper arm and forearm being of a reduced cross section at the elbow **33**. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the arms are normally bent at the elbow so that the upper arm **30** and forearm **32** are disposed approximately perpendicular to one another. By this arrangement, when the puppet is raised and lowered, the forearms **32** tend to flop up and down from their normal positions shown in FIG. 3 and when the puppet is moved from side to side, the forearms **32** tend to swin laterally toward and away from the torso.

The puppet is operated by means of a control stick **40** having a handle **42** at one end and at its other end engaging through an opening in the back of the torso adjacent the shoulders. The control stick mounts a pin **44** at its inner end which projects through an opening in the top of the torso and supports the head **46** of the puppet. Accordingly by this arrangement, the head **46** of the puppet may be tilted from side to side by simply rotating the control stick **40**. With the feet of the puppet resting on a support surface **27**, the head **46** may be made to nod by pumping the handle **42** of the control stick **40** up and down and by maintaining the opposite end of the control stick mounting the head **46** of the puppet in a substantially fixed position relative to the surface **27**. The control stick **40** also mounts at its inner end a depending brace **50** which engages the inner wall of the back of the torso. This brace **50** serves to maintain the puppet in an upright position when it is turned on its head to perform a headstand.

The knee **24** and elbow **33** are reduced only in one dimension as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3 to provide hinge-like joints whereby the legs and arms of the puppet flex in one direction similar to the knee and elbow joint of a human being.

The stick puppet of the present invention may be manipulated by persons having very little skill to perform entertaining and animated maneuvers. For example, with the puppet in the position shown in FIG. 2, the puppet may be ambulated in a squatting position by moving it forward and simultaneously oscillating the control stick. By manipulating the control stick in this manner, the feet alternately engage the stage and the leg of the foot engaging the stage bends at the knee and when the foot is raised slightly from the stage, it flexes to its normal position (FIG. 2). Thus, by the successive bending and flexing action of each leg, the puppet ambulates in a life-like manner. This rotating action of the control stick also moves the head **46** from side to side as the puppet is walking forward in the squatted position. The puppet may be made to stand on its head by rotating the stick 180° whereby the brace **50** prevents it from flopping over. Another highly animated effect is achieved by bouncing the puppet up and down on the horizontal surface whereby the arms and legs tend to flop up and down.

Another embodiment of stick puppet in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 5–7 inclusive. The puppet comprises at least two portions or segments including in the present instance separate upper and lower torso members **60** and **62** respectively, preferably made of a flexible, resilient material, such as rubber. The upper torso member **60** comprises a generally circular plug **64** and a cylindrical stem **66** of reduced cross section projecting centrally from the plug **64**. The head **68** of the puppet is mounted on the outer free end of the stem **66** and a pin **70** which extends transversely of the stem **66** for pivotal movement with respect thereto, mounts at its outer free ends the arms **74** of the puppet. By this arrangement, the arms **74** are free to rotate through 360°. The arms **74**, which are preferably made of rubber, are of reduced cross section at the elbow **76** to facilitate swinging movement of the forearm **79** relative to the upper arm **80** during manipulation of the puppet.

The lower torso member **62** includes a rigid circular plug **78** and a pair of flexible studs **80** of reduced cross section depending therefrom, to which are secured the legs **82**. The legs **82** are also preferably made of rubber and are of reduced cross section at the knee **84** as shown in FIG. 7 to permit rearward bending of the lower leg portion **86** relative to the thigh **88**.

This puppet also resembles a monkey and is provided with a tail **87** depending from the plug **78**. The puppet is provided with a shirt S and pants P to enhance the appearance thereof.

In accordance with this embodiment of the invention, the plugs **64** and **78** are mounted in confronting spaced apart relation as shown in FIG. 7 by means of a connecting member, in the present instance in the form of wire **90** embedded in the plugs having a vertically extending section **92** parallel to and offset to the rear of the central axis A—A of the plugs. A control stick **93** is secured to the wire **90** by means of a bushing **94** at the end thereof remote from the handle **95** which loosely circumscribes the vertical section **92** of the wire **90**. As illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 7, the spacing between the plugs **64** and **78** is greater than the thickness of the control stick **93**. By this arrangement the puppet may be freely rotated on the end of the control stick through 360° and may be faced selectively forwardly, rearwardly or to the side by merely tilting the control stick forwardly, rearwardly or to the side.

Considering now some of the maneuvers of the puppet described above, with the puppet facing forwardly and the feet resting on a horizontal surface, the puppet may be made to walk in a very life-like manner by oscillating the control stick from side to side and simultaneously moving the puppet in a forward direction. By manipulating the control stick in this manner, the legs alternately engage the stage whereby the legs are bent at the knee when they engage the surface and spring forward to a position in

advance of the other leg when the pressure on the leg is released. The puppet can be pirouetted by raising it slightly from the horizontal surface and moving the hand operating the control stick **93** in a horizontal circular path. During manipulation of the puppet in this manner, the weight of the puppet is disposed relative to the vertical section **92** of the wire **90** so that the puppet rotates freely by a centrifugal action. Further, the arms **74** and legs **82** tend to flex at the elbow **76** and knee **84** respectively, and the head tends to bob about due to the reduced stem **66**. The pivotal mounting of the pin **70** supporting the arms **74** also causes thes arms **74** to move in and out from the torso and also sideways to provide a highly animated entertaining motion. The puppet can also be manipulated to perform a handstand whereby the arms pivot to a position whereby it appears that the puppet is actually standing on its hands. The studs **80** which are of reduced cross section facilitate spreading of the legs sideways so that the puppet can be placed in a split position.

The knee **84** and elbow **76** of this puppet are also reduced only in one dimension (see FIG. 5) whereby the flexing movement of the arms and legs is very life-like.

It is noted that even though puppet has been described as being made of rubber, it is to be understood that other elastomeric materials, for example, neoprene, may be used.

Another embodiment of stick puppet in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 8–12 inclusive. The puppet is in the form of a dog having at least two portions or segments including in the present instance, a body portion **100** and a head **102**, both made of a resilient flexible material such as rubber. The body portion **100** includes front and rear legs **104** and **106** respectively and is of reduced cross section adjacent its hind quarters **108** to permit bending at this point and to facilitate performance of various maneuvers. In this embodiment of the invention, the head and body portion are mounted in spaced apart relation by means of a connecting member, in the present instance in the form of wire **110** embedded in a pair of plugs **112** and **114** mounted in the head and body portion respectively and which have confronting generally circular faces **116** and **118**. The wire **110** has a vertically extending section **120** parallel to and offset forwardly from the central axis XX of the plugs.

A control stick **122** mounts at one end a handle **124** to be gripped by the user and at its opposite end a yoke-like fitting **126** whereby it may be attached to the vertical section of the wire for pivotal movement with respect thereto. The fitting **126** has a generally circular opening **128** of a cross section slightly greater than the cross section of the wire **120** and is open along one side as at **129** to permit the fitting to be snapped over the vertical section **120** of the wire. In the present instance a noise maker **130** is mounted in the body of the dog so that during manipulation of the dog and contraction or expansion of the body portion, air passing through the noise maker results in a sound effect.

Another feature of the dog is the configuration of the mouth which permits the dog to pick up and release a ball **132**. To this end, the upper and lower jaws **134** and **136** are spaced apart as illustrated and have a contoured internal configuration as at **138** and **140** which conforms to the periphery of the ball. By this arrangement, as best illustrated in FIG. 10, the head of the dog may be moved from an erect position shown in broken lines to a lowered position shown in solid lines to pick up the ball by merely rotating the control stick. The jaws are normally spaced apart a distance less than the diameter of the ball so that they spread apart slightly as they engage the ball and permit the ball to be gripped in the mouth of the dog. Now when it is desired to release the ball, the legs of the dog are bounced against a support surface S and the jarring action releases the ball.

The dog may be manipulated through the control stick to perform other interesting maneuvers. For example, with the control stick disposed approximately 90° to the body of the dog and with the feet of the dog resting on the support surface S, the dog may be moved forwardly and in so doing, the feet tend to skip over the surface so that the dog appears to walk. Additionally, with the dog in this position, the control stick may be moved rearwardly and downwardly whereby the feet frictionally engage the support surface and the body portion flexes about the section **108** and the dog assumes a sitting position. Again with the dog in the position shown in FIG. 10, if the control stick is moved forwardly and slight downward pressure is exerted, the front and rear legs spread apart and the dog assumes a spread out, lying position. Further, by reason of the pivotal mounting of the control stick, the dog may be made to walk in one direction and then by merely raising it slightly from the support surface and tilting the stick slightly, the dog may be rotated to face the opposite direction. Other interesting maneuvers may also be performed.

Another embodiment of the stick puppet in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 13–16 inclusive. This puppet is also in the form of a dog and is very similar to that shown in the previously described embodiment. This dog puppet comprises a body portion **200** and a head **202**, the body portion having depending front and rear legs **204** and **206**. However, in the present instance the body portion and head are formed integrally of a single molded construction. In the present instance the neck portion is of reduced diameter as at **207** in FIG. 14 and is of generally circular cross section. Mounted on the reduced portion **207** of the neck is a split collar **210** having radially outwardly projecting flanges **212** and **214** at opposite axial ends thereof, the collar having an opening or gap **216** so that it may be applied over the reduced portion **207** of the neck. The internal diameter of the collar **210** is slightly less than the external diameter of the reduced neck **207** so that when the collar is applied it snugly embraces the neck.

As in the previously described embodiment, the dog is manipulated by means of a control stick **222** having a handle portion **224** at one end and mounting a yoke-like fitting **226** at its opposite end adapted to pivotally engage over the collar **210**. To this end the fitting **226** as best illustrated in FIGS. 15 and 16 includes a ring portion **229** of a thickness slightly less than the distance between the flanges of the collar and having an opening **231** which in the present instance is slightly greater than the gap **216** in the collar. The fitting is preferably made of a flexible material, for example, nylon so that the opening **231** may be spread apart to assemble it over the collar. When assembled to the collar, the internal diameter of the ring is slightly greater than the outer diameter of the collar so that the ring freely pivots on the collar. The split collar and yoke-like fitting **226** at one end of the control stick define connecting means pivotally connecting the control stick to the puppet at the neck portion for free pivotal movement thereof. By this arrangement, the puppet may be freely rotated on the end of the control stick through 360° and may be faced selectively forwardly, rearwardly, or to the side by merely tilting the control stick forwardly, rearwardly or to the side. The connecting means comprised of the collar and yoke-like fitting define a pivot about which the head portion of the puppet may be pivoted relative to the body portion when the body portion is supported on a support surface. This puppet may be manipulated to perform interesting maneuvers of the type described above in connection with the previous embodiment. Thus, the mouth of the puppet is made with spread jaw members **234** and **236** which are internally contoured to conform to the shape of a ball so that the puppet may be manipulated to pick up a ball in the manner described above. Additionally, a noise maker **230** is mounted in the body of the puppet so that during manipulation of the puppet when the body is distorted, air passing through the noise maker gives a sound effect.

From the foregoing it is apparent that the stick puppets of the present invention by reason of the novel construction and arrangement thereof may be manipulated easily by a person having very little skill to perform highly animated and entertaining maneuvers.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described herein, it is not intended to limit the invention and changes and modifications may be made herein within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A puppet comprising a torso made of a flexible resilient material consisting of an upper section and a lower section, arm and leg members connected to the upper and lower torso sections respectively, said arm and leg members being of a reduced cross section in one dimension at the elbow and knee respectively to define a hinge-like connecting point thereby permitting limited flexing movement of the arms and legs, said upper and lower torso members each including a generally circular plug, means connecting the upper and lower torso members in fixed, spaced apart relation including a connecting member having a vertically extending section parallel to and offset from the central axis of said plugs, and a control stick pivotally connected at one end to said vertical section of said connecting member.

2. A puppet as claimed in claim **1** including a stem projecting upwardly from said plug in said upper torso section and a pin pivotally mounted in said stem and extending transversely thereof, said arm members mounted at opposite ends of said pin whereby the arms may be rotated through 360°.

3. A puppet as claimed in claim **1** including a pair of studs of reduced cross section depending from the plug carried by said lower torso member, each of said studs mounting one of said leg members.

4. A puppet comprising a body portion and a head portion, means connecting the head and body portion in spaced apart relation including a plug mounted in the head having a circular face confronting a plug mounted in the body portion also having a circular face, a connecting member connecting the plugs in spaced apart relation, said connecting member being offset from the central axis of the plugs and a control stick with a yoke-like fitting at one end having an opening therein with a tapered throat to snap over said connecting member pivotably connected at one end to the connecting member mounted for free pivotal movement relative to the connecting member whereby the puppet may be rotated through 360° relative to the control stick.

5. A puppet comprising a resilient body portion, a resilient head portion and a resilient neck portion connecting the head and body portions, a control stick, connecting means pivotally connecting said control stick to the puppet at the neck portion for free pivotal movement thereof whereby the puppet may be rotated through 360° relative to the control stick, said connecting means including a split collar mounted on said neck portion snugly engaging the same to resist turning relative thereto, and a yoke-like fitting at one end of the control stick having a central opening slightly greater than the outer diameter of the collar, said collar and yoke-like fitting being freely rotatable relative to one another and said connecting means defining a pivot about which the head portion of the puppet may be pivoted relative to the body portion when the body portion is supported on a support surface.

6. A puppet as claimed in claim **5** wherein said neck portion is of reduced and generally circular cross section and said split collar is mounted on said neck portion of reduced cross section.

7. A puppet as claimed in claim **5** wherein said head portion includes a pair of spaced apart flexible jaw mem-

bers contoured to the shape of a ball so that the puppet may be manipulated to pick up a ball.

References Cited by the Examiner

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,065,776	6/1913	Brown	46—173
1,940,608	12/1933	Schavoir	46—161
2,489,107	11/1949	Rheingold et al.	46—124 X

2,624,155	1/1953	Boyce	46—126
3,060,636	10/1962	Aquino	46—220

FOREIGN PATENTS

181,783	6/1922	Great Britain.
651,266	3/1951	Great Britain.

RICHARD C. PINKHAM, *Primary Examiner.*

LOUIS J. BOVASSO, F. BARRY SHAY,
Assistant Examiners.