

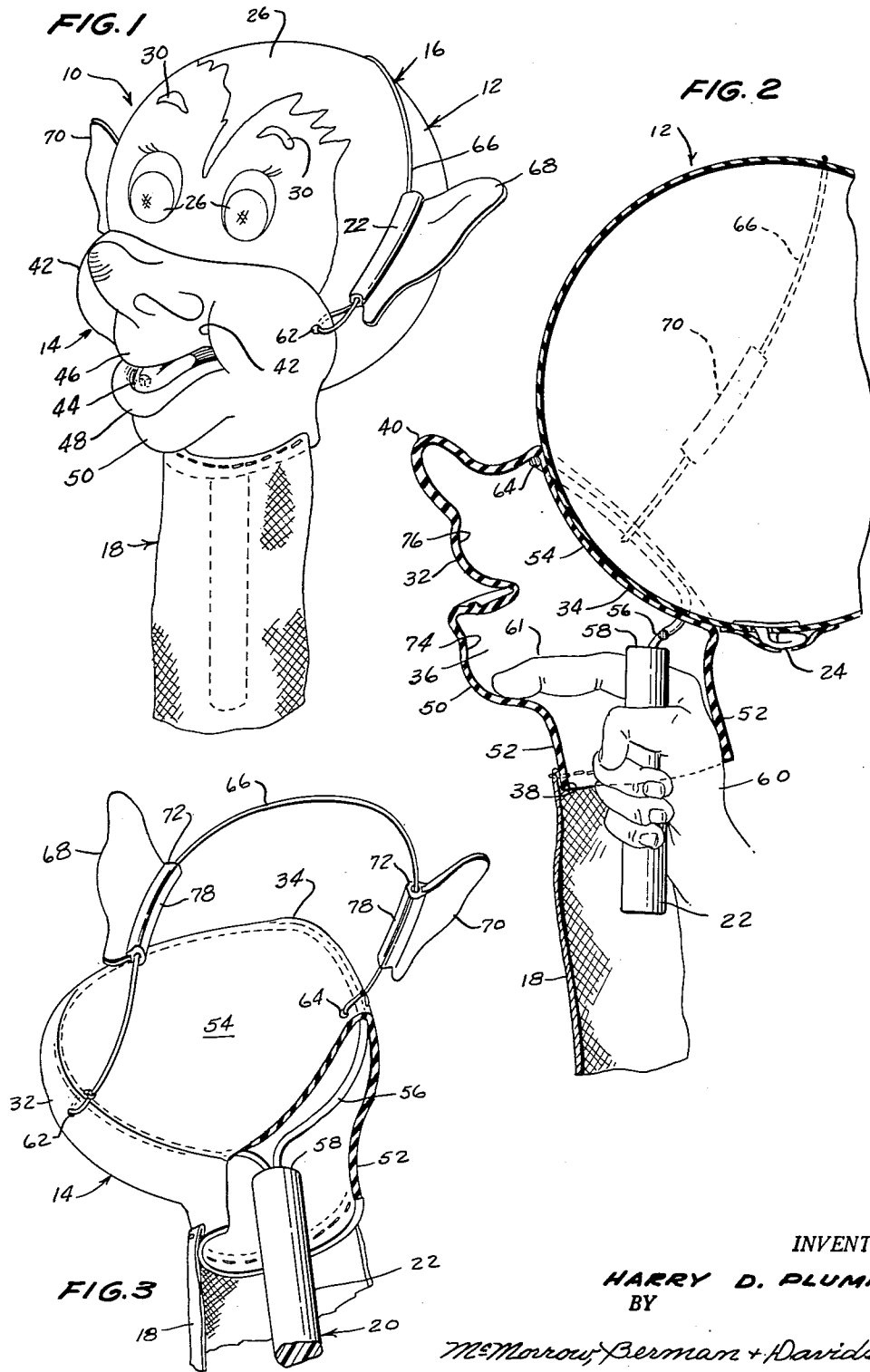
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H. D. PLUMMER

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HAND PUPPET

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INVENTOR.

HARRY D. PLUMMER
BY

McMorrow, Berman + Davidson
ATTORNEYS

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HAND PUPPET

Harry D. Plummer, Seattle, Wash.

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This invention relates to toys in general, and more particularly to a toy ventriloquist dummy head of the hand puppet type.

It is an object of this invention to provide a toy ventriloquist dummy head which is easily manipulable by the hand of the user to simulate the movement of the lower face portion.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a toy ventriloquist dummy head of the hand puppet type which is of simple construction, readily fabricated by known commercial methods of a few parts, hence capable of relatively inexpensive production.

Another and further object of this invention is to provide a toy ventriloquist dummy head in which a plurality of different faces may be provided, which faces may be readily interchangeable with a minimum amount of effort and a minimum amount of technical skill.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a hand puppet which is attractive in appearance and capable of providing entertainment both for the operator thereof and for an audience by the simple expedient of changing the facial expressions as desired by the operator by simple manipulation of the fingers of the hand of the operator which holds the dummy head or hand puppet.

Other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed description, forming the specification, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a toy ventriloquist dummy head or hand puppet embodying this invention;

Figure 2 is a vertical cross sectional view of the device of Figure 1; and

Figure 3 is a rear perspective view of the lower face member, partially broken away to better illustrate the construction thereof.

With continued reference to the drawings, the toy ventriloquist dummy head or hand puppet of this invention is generally indicated at 10 and comprises generally an inflatable upper face member or ball 12 which when inflated is in the form of a spheroid, a lower face member 14 molded of a readily deformable material such as a suitable rubber or plastic material, a flexible elastic cord 16 carried at opposite ends by the face member 14 and detachably securable about the ball 12 so as to position the member 14 on the ball 12, a depending apron or skirt 18 of a suitable flexible sheet material, and a handle 20 carried by the lower face member 14 and depending therefrom whereby the dummy or puppet 10 may be supported by the hand of the user grasping the cylindrical portion 22 of the handle 20.

The ball 10 is provided with the usual inflating valve 24 through which air may be introduced into the interior of the ball so as to inflate it and also to release the air from the interior of the ball when it is desired to deflate the same. An upper portion of a face is displayed on the exterior surface of the ball 12 and generally includes a pair of eyes 26 and hair 28 and a pair of eyebrows 30.

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It will be apparent that the eyes 26, hair 28 and eyebrows 30 will be generally arranged in the usual manner to portray the upper portion of a human face and may be in various relationships one to the other so as to present, if so desired, a rather grotesque configuration, such as that illustrated in Figure 1.

The lower face member 14 is molded as a single unit or piece from suitable rubber product or plastic sheet material and has spaced front and rear walls 32 and 34 respectively secured together about their periphery to define a chamber 36 therebetween which is open at one end 38 which is the lower end when the face member 14 is secured to the ball 12 as shown in Figures 1 and 2, to define a hand-receiving opening. The front wall 32 may be provided with the outwardly projecting nose 40 disposed centrally thereof and to the end remote from the open end or hand-receiving opening 38. A pair of arcuately formed cheeks 42 are molded in the front wall 32 to either side of the nose 40.

Immediately below the nose 40 there is provided in the front wall 32 a mouth 44 defined between outwardly projecting upper and lower lips 46 and 48 respectively and a chin 50 is disposed below the lower lip 48. The neck of the dummy head or puppet 10 is indicated at 52 and is defined between the portion of the front wall 32 which recedes from the chin 50 and terminates at the opening 38 and that portion of the rear wall 34 which extends in generally parallel spaced relation to the portion of the front wall which defines a part of the neck 52 and is dependent from the concavo-convex portion 54 which is so formed as to conform to the curvature of the ball 12 in its inflated condition.

A relatively stiff wire 56 extends within the chamber 36 and along the periphery of the concavo-convex portion 54 of the back wall or rear wall 34 and is secured thereto in any suitable manner, as by using adhesives or the like. The ends of the wire 56 extend away from the periphery of the portion 54 and are brought together in adjoining relation to be received in one end face 58 of the cylindrical portion 22 of the handle 20 so that the cylindrical portion 22 extends longitudinally through the opening 38 of the lower face member 14.

The apron or skirt 18 which dependingly hangs from its attachment, as by sewing, to the neck 52 on the side thereof adjacent the front wall 32 and adjacent the periphery of the opening 38 so as to define a shield or curtain behind which the hand 60 of the operator will be hidden from the view of the audience.

A pair of generally aligned holes 62 and 64 are provided in the lower face member 14 adjacent the peripheries thereof and generally at the rear of the respective cheeks, the holes 62 being provided in the front wall 32 while the holes 64 are provided in the rear wall 34. The opposite ends of a flexible elastic cord or line 66 are threaded through the respective pairs of holes 62 and 64 on opposite sides of the lower face member 14 to provide a yoke for member 14, and after being threaded therethrough are knotted to the run of the cord so as to provide loops which secure the cord 66 to the face member 14. A pair of wing-like elements 68 and 70 are carried by the cord 66 and may be made of any suitable sheet material such as cardboard, wood, plastic or ceramic material to define ears. Each of the ears 68 and 70 have along one longitudinal edge thereof a centrally bored barrel or sleeve 72 with the bore extending longitudinally through the sleeve being slidably received on the cord 66 so that the ears 68 and 70 are selectively movable longitudinally of the cord.

With the ball 12 in its inflated condition, the cord 66 is placed therearound to secure the concavo-convex portion 54 of the lower face member 14 in mating relation to the curvature of the ball 12 and disposed below the

upper portion of the face displayed on the ball 12. The ears 68 and 70 may then be adjusted longitudinally of the cord 66 so as to be placed in the desired position to portray the overall effect of a grotesque human likeness, insofar as the head of the human is concerned. Thus, the cord 66 defines means carried by the lower face member 14 and is detachably securable about the ball 12 to dispose the member 14 below the upper face portion displayed on the ball.

To use the device of the present invention in the form of a toy ventriloquist dummy head or hand puppet, the hand 60 of the operator grasps the cylindrical portion 22 of the handle 20 with the forefinger 61 extending laterally therefrom and outwardly toward the chin 50 so that the end of the finger 61 is disposed within the pocket 74 defined by the curvature of the chin 50 and the lower lip 48. Thus, it will be seen that the hand 60 enters the chamber 36 through the hand-receiving opening 38 when the elongated cylindrical portion 22 of the handle 20 is grasped, and by movement of the forefinger or index finger 61 the front wall 32 of the lower face member 14 may be deformed in any manner desired by the operator so as to simulate movement of the chin 50 and the lower lip 48 of the dummy head or hand puppet 10 thereby simulating talking of the head or puppet 10.

To get simulated mouth action, the operator may hold the grip or cylindrical portion 22 and insert the first two fingers of the hand in the pocket 74 and by selective movement of the fingers deform the chin 50 and lower lip 48, which deformation will also impart a limited movement to the upper lip 46. It will be appreciated, that the lower face portion 14 will resume its original shape after the pressure of the fingers which cause deformation is released. Also, it is possible to so grasp the grip 22 so as to have the first two fingers of the hand inserted to the pocket 76 defined by the inner surface of the protruding upper lip 46 and the thumb extending in and contacting the pocket 74, thereby effecting a greater degree of simulated mouth movement of both the upper and lower lips in any manner desired by the operator.

The ball 12, as well as the lower face member 14 and the ears 68 and 70 may be colored as desired and molded to portray a variety of forms. Also, it will be possible to use a variety of lower face member forms with a single inflatable ball 12, and a number of inflatable balls 12 having different upper face portions disposed thereon may be employed with a selected lower face portion. Hence, a variety of different faces or heads may be produced easily and quickly since the only attachment between the lower face member 14 and the ball 12 is the securing means defined by the elastic cord 66, which is readily securable and detachable from the ball 12.

It will also be apparent that a variety of different pairs of ears, such as ears 68 and 70, may be employed with the cord 66 since the only step required for changing the ears is to tie the knot of the securing loops, slide the ears carried thereon off the free ends, and sliding the new pair of ears thereon and then rethreading the free ends of the cord 66 through the respective pairs of openings or holes 62 and 64 and resecure or retie the free ends of the cord 66 to the run of the cord in the manner hereinbefore described.

With respect to the barrel or sleeve 72 on each of the ears 68 and 70, it should be noted that the longitudinal lower surface 78 remote from the respective ear is arcuately formed so as to conform to the curvature of

the ball 12 and closely mate therewith when the cord 66 is secured about the ball 12.

While there is shown and described the preferred embodiment of the invention, it is to be understood that the structure is susceptible to change and modification within the practicability of the invention and therefore should be limited only by the scope of the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. In a hand puppet, a hollow lower face member shaped to simulate the lower part of a face, said member being of a deformable material and being formed open at one end to permit insertion of a hand for manipulating selected portions of said member; a flexible, elongated yoke element connected at its ends to opposite sides of said face member at the other end thereof; and an upper face member formed as an inflatable balloon having depicted thereon the upper part of a face, said upper face member, when inflated with the yoke extending thereabout, tensioning the yoke to draw the lower face member into engagement with the upper face member.

2. In a hand puppet, a hollow, lower face member shaped to simulate the lower part of a face, said member being of a deformable material and being open at one end to permit insertion of a hand for manipulating selected portions of said member, the other end of said member being closed; a generally annular wire frame extending peripherally of and within the closed end of said member; a flexible, elongated yoke element connected at its end to opposite sides of said frame; and an upper face member formed as an inflatable balloon having depicted thereon the upper part of a face, said upper face member, when inflated with the yoke extending thereabout, tensioning the yoke to draw the frame toward the upper face member, thus to shift the lower face member at said closed end thereof into engagement with the upper face member.

3. In a hand puppet, a hollow lower face member shaped to simulate the lower part of a face, said member being of a deformable material and being open at one end to permit insertion of a hand for manipulating selected portions of said member, the other end of said member being closed; a generally annular wire frame extending peripherally of and within the closed end of said member, the portion said closed end about which the frame extends being of concavo-convex formation; a flexible, elongated yoke element connected at its ends to said frame at opposite sides of the concavo-convex formation; a flexible, elongated yoke element connected at its ends to said frame at opposite sides of the concavo-convex portion; and an upper face member formed as an inflatable spheroid having depicted thereon the upper part of a face, and said upper face member, when inflated with the yoke extending thereabout, tensioning the yoke to draw the frame toward the upper face member, thus to engage the frame against the spheroid, with said concavo-convex portion forming a segment of a sphere receiving a complementary portion of the spheroid to connect the lower to the upper face member.

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