

5 **Lighting/Sound-Producing Device Activated by Inflated Balloon**

TECHNICAL FIELD

10 The present invention relates to an accessory of a balloon, particularly to a lighting/sound-producing device for a balloon that operates when the balloon is inflated.

BACKGROUND ART

15 Balloons are decorations frequently used in daily life, and people most usually decorate the environment with inflated balloons.

20 However, this usage is too monotonous to meet diversified needs. So balloons with various special effects have been created, such as luminous balloons, lighting balloon and sound-producing balloons. Chinese patent application CN200610122541.7, for one, discloses a luminous balloon, which has a lighting effect and is characterized in that an LED lamp is taken as a light source and a light circuit device which supplies power to a silicon photocell is arranged in a plastic shell with an air hole. Said luminous balloon has a simple frame, and is convenient to use
25 and suitable not only for being held in hand after being sleeve-jointed with a plastic pipe but also for being tied and dragged by a rope to float in the air or ornament the night scene. U.S. patent 7344267 discloses an illuminated toy balloon having an illuminating device and a cylindrical plug with an integrally-formed radially extending integral flange insertable within the balloon neck, wherein the illuminating
30 device is provided within the balloon neck.

35 Since balloons are usually made of latex, aluminum film or plastic, how to install a lighting/sound-producing device becomes an important issue for a lighting/sound-producing balloon. As for the patent US7344267, a lighting device is installed at the neck of the balloon intake nozzle, which would affect inflation and use
40 of the balloon and hence is not convenient enough. Then people think of a way to install a lighting/sound-producing device inside a balloon by fixing the device onto the balloon wall, such as the structure disclosed by the patent application GB20070004575 wherein a lighting device is fixed onto the inner wall of a balloon, but such a structure has a problem on how to control the lighting/sound-producing
45 device inside the balloon.

45 Therefore, a seal sticker described in the patent application WO20110210 has become a key mechanism to control to start a lighting/sound-producing device inside a balloon. The disclosed seal sticker is used to disconnect the electric circuit of the lighting device, and said circuit is connected once the seal sticker is withdrawn, thereby controlling a lighting/sound-producing device to start. However, said seal

5 sticker is not easy to process and install as it needs to be inserted into the circuit of the lighting/sound-producing device, which increases difficulty and cost of processing, and withdrawal and then disposal of the seal sticker are especially a waste of resources and environmentally unfriendly.

10 DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

On the basis of the above problems, the present invention aims to provide a lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon, which facilitates control of the lighting/sound-producing device without affecting normal use and
15 inflation of the balloon.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon, which is easy to control, has a simple and practical structure, controls to turn on and off the lighting/sound-producing device by
20 taking full advantage of the principle of pressure, and conserves resources producing no environmentally unfriendly wastes.

To achieve these objects, the present invention is carried out through the following technical solutions.

25 A lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon comprises a lighting lamp/sounder, a battery, and a housing at least covering the lighting lamp/sounder, wherein the housing comprises:

30 an inlet end to let air or other gases into the housing,

an outlet end to discharge air or other gases from the housing, and

35 an air channel to connect the inlet end and the outlet end so that a through passage for air flow is formed within the housing; and

the lighting lamp/sounder is provided in the air channel and has a sealing device for sealing off the air channel.

40 Before inflation of the balloon, the circuit of the lighting lamp/sounder is disconnected and the lighting lamp/sounder cannot be activated to operate; after the balloon is inflated, a gas pressure is generated within and forms a pressure difference between inside and outside the air channel, which pushes the lighting lamp/sounder towards the outer end of the air channel and seals the air channel; and, when the air
45 channel is sealed up, the electric circuit of the lighting lamp/sounder is connected and the lighting lamp/sounder is activated to operate.

The sealing device is any one selected from the group consisting of an O-ring, a

5 seal ring, and a seal coil (like a rubber ring), or a fitted mechanism formed between
the lighting lamp/sounder and the housing. Such mechanisms as a tightly fitted or
nested mechanism between the outside surface of the lighting lamp/sounder and the
housing or a buckled mechanism between the lighting lamp/sounder and the housing
10 are all able to seal off the air channel and thus can be referred to as a form of sealing
device.

The lighting lamp/sounder has a supporting and fixing holder that covers the
lighting lamp/sounder at least from one cross section so that the lighting lamp/sounder
has an outer wall at said cross section.

15 Said outer wall is sleeved with a sealing device in a ring-shaped structure, and is
located within the air channel.

In correspondence with said sealing device, at least part of the air channel is
20 cylindrical so as to seal off the air channel with the sealing device and connect the
circuit of the lighting lamp/sounder.

In a preferred embodiment, the lighting lamp/sounder is provided at the outside
with a seal coil or seal ring projecting from the exterior margin of the lighting
25 lamp/sounder for close contact with the air channel to seal it up.

The seal coil or seal ring projecting from the exterior margin of the lighting
lamp/sounder has the same sealing function as the sealing device provided on the
external surface.

30 Said housing has a cross section in a shape of T, I, or trapezoid, so that the air
channel forms a reduced neck portion around which a platform is provided; and a seal
gasket is provided at one end of the lighting lamp/sounder, which projects from the
end of the lighting lamp/sounder with a flat contact surface and has a diameter larger
35 than that of the reduced neck portion so that the contact surface is able to form a
sealing contact with the platform, thereby sealing off the air channel.

The inner wall of the housing has a bell-like structure, the lighting lamp/sounder
sleeved with the seal coil or seal ring is located inside the bell, and a clearance
40 between the lighting lamp/sounder and the housing constitutes the air channel.

The lighting/sound-producing device is provided inside a balloon and is fixed
onto the inner wall of the balloon by an external cover with an exhaust port
connecting the outlet end of the lighting/sound-producing device to form the air
45 channel.

Further, a piercing device is provided where the lighting/sound-producing device
contacts the inner wall of the balloon inside the external cover, which has a pointed

5 tip to pierce the inner wall of the balloon when the external cover is fixed onto the lighting/sound-producing device.

The inlet end has a top ring with a hollow middle part and a projecting top protrusion fixed onto the top ring via two side walls. The lighting lamp/sounder is
10 held by the top ring to move so as to expose the air channel for discharging air.

The lighting lamp/sounder is elastically provided within the air channel and is supported by an elastic mechanism fixed inside the air channel and electrically conductive to close a control circuit of the lighting lamp/sounder. Said elastic
15 mechanism usually applies a metal spring or a metal spring plate.

The housing of the lighting/sound-producing device has an extending portion at the inlet end, which extends outwards for people to blow air into the balloon.

20 The lighting/sound-producing device can be installed at, tied to, or fixed onto the balloon nozzle; the lighting device can also be installed at any position other than the balloon nozzle and be fixed onto the balloon wall, either way can implement the present invention. The balloon and the lighting/sound-producing device can be bound together with an O-ring, a rope or a rubber ring; or the balloon can be pressed onto the
25 lighting/sound-producing device by hydraulic pressure; or the balloon can be fixed onto the lighting/sound-producing device by adhesives.

A structure implementing the present invention uses the inner pressure of the balloon to start the lighting lamp/sounder, making the control of the lighting
30 lamp/sounder easier and more liable.

Besides, the present invention allows provision of the lighting lamp/sounder either inside the balloon or at the balloon nozzle, making it easier to use; and since no additional control mechanism is needed, the present invention does not produce
35 pollutive waste and is more environmental friendly and energy conservative.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is an exploded diagram of the first embodiment of this invention.
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Fig. 2 is a diagram of the first embodiment during inflation.

Fig. 3 is a diagram of the inflated first embodiment with an illuminated lighting lamp.
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Fig. 4 is a diagram of the second embodiment of this invention.

Fig. 5 is a diagram of the second embodiment during inflation.

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Fig. 6 is a diagram of the inflated second embodiment with an illuminated lighting lamp.

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Fig. 7 is a diagram of the third embodiment of this invention.

Fig. 8 is a diagram of the third embodiment during inflation.

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Fig. 9 is a diagram of the inflated third embodiment with an illuminated lighting lamp.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

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To explain the objects, technical solutions and advantages of this invention in a clearer way, here is a detailed description with reference to the drawings and the embodiment. It is to be understood that any embodiment described herein is intended to be illustrative, without any limitation to the present invention.

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Fig. 1 shows the first embodiment of this invention, which is a lighting device and mainly comprises, as shown, an LED lamp 1, a holder 3, button batteries 4 and a housing 5.

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In said embodiment, two contact pieces extend from the back end of the LED lamp 1, wherein one contact piece 11 is directly connected between the LED lamp 1 and the button batteries 4; and the other contact piece 12 bends outwards, extends along the outer wall of the holder 3 to the back of the button batteries 4, and then bends inwards to form a bent portion 13 that is directed at the back of the button batteries 4 and can be connected to the button batteries 4 via a spring coil 72 so as to close the electric circuit and illuminate the LED lamp 1.

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The button batteries 4 normally number 1 to 4 (the drawings show two batteries in a way not limiting the number thereof in other implementations), which are provided along with the LED lamp 1 inside the holder 3 and are fixedly supported by the holder 3. The holder 3 is sleeved with the hollow housing 5 with an inlet 51 at one end and an outlet 52 at the other end, and a clearance between the housing 5 and the holder 3 constitutes an air channel 6. An inwardly inclined wall 53 is provided at the inner side of the inlet 51 while a ring-shaped seal coil 2 is fixed onto the outer wall of the holder 3, and the seal coil 2 projects from the outer wall of the holder and can be clamped onto the inclined wall 53 more and more tightly to seal the air channel 6.

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To fix the lighting device onto the balloon wall, the housing 5 is fitted to an external cover 8 to get fixed. To be specific, the housing 5 has a projecting external thread 54 in the outer wall of the trailing end while the external cover 8 has an internal thread 82 in the inner wall, the external thread 54 engages with the internal

5 thread 82 to fix the housing 5 with the external cover 8, and furthermore, the balloon wall passes between the housing 5 and the external cover 8 so that the two are fixed thereto. (The internal thread 82 and the external thread 54 may have the same function in a way of indentation.)

10 In respect that the air channel 6 needs a exhaust passage, the balloon wall has to be pierced after the external cover 8 fixes the balloon wall and the housing 5 together, so an exhaust port 81 is provided at the center of the external cover 8 and a piercing cover 7 is further provided between the external cover 8 and the housing 5, which is a ring-shaped cover (the piercing cover is not necessarily ring-shaped as long as it can
15 pierce the balloon wall) and has a projecting spike 71 directed at the exhaust port 81 at the center. When the external cover 8 fixes the balloon wall and the housing 5 together, the middle part of the external cover 8 will be concaved if the external cover 8 is pressed hard, and the spike 71 will protrude into the exhaust port 81 to pierce the balloon wall so as to form an exhaust passage.

20 The piercing cover 7 is further sleeved with a spring coil 72 made of metal to contact the bent portion 13 of the contact piece 12 and the button batteries 4.

25 In other implementations without a piercing cover 7, the spring coil 72 is directly fixed to the housing 5 instead, and the balloon wall is pierced from outside to form an air channel.

With reference to Figs. 2 and 3, the lighting device is installed inside the balloon 9 and fixed onto the balloon wall. During inflation of the balloon 9 through the
30 balloon nozzle 91, the pressure inside the balloon 9 is very low at the beginning and the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon is negligible, but when the inner pressure reaches a certain level, the pressure difference is large enough to discharge air through the air channel 6 in the direction of the arrow; then, the exhaust air pushes the holder 3 provided within the air channel 6 to slide outwards along the
35 air channel 6 bringing the seal coil 2 on the holder 3 into contact with the inclined wall 53; and the air channel 6 will be sealed up to stop discharging air from the balloon 9 when the seal coil 2 comes into sealing contact with the inclined wall 53.

40 As the spring coil 72 is settled in the housing 5, the metal spring coil 72 gets held by the button batteries 4 when the holder 3 is sliding outwards, and the spring coil 72 gets compressed and comes into contact with both the button batteries 4 and the bent portion 13 formed by the contact piece 12 extending backwards, thereby connecting the circuit and illuminating the LED lamp 1.

45 When the balloon 9 is deflated, the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon 9 disappears and the spring coil 72 gets restored freely and releases the button batteries 4 and the holder 3, and once the spring coil 72 is no longer in contact with the button batteries and the bent portion 13 formed by the

5 contact piece 12 extending backwards, the circuit is disconnected and the LED lamp 1 is turned off.

In this way, the lighting device will be turned on under the effect of the internal pressure in the balloon and turned off once the internal pressure disappears. Such a structure achieves good results and is easy to use and control for requiring no other control mechanism.

Figs. 4~6 show the second embodiment of this invention, which, as shown in Fig. 4, is a lighting device and mainly comprises an LED lamp 110, a holder 130, button batteries 140 and a housing 150.

Likewise, two contact pieces extend from the back end of the LED lamp 110, wherein one contact piece 111 is directly connected between the LED lamp 110 and the button batteries 140, and the other contact piece 112 bends outwards and extends along the outer wall of the holder 130 to the back of the button batteries 140.

The button batteries 140 normally number 1 to 4 (the drawings show two batteries in a way not limiting the number thereof in other implementations), which are provided along with the LED lamp 110 inside the holder 130 and are fixedly supported by the holder 130. The holder 130 is sleeved with the hollow housing 150 with an inlet at one end and an outlet at the other end, and a clearance between the housing 150 and the holder 130 constitutes an air channel 160. An inwardly inclined wall 151 is provided at the inner side of the outlet while a ring-shaped seal coil 120 is fixed onto the outer wall of the holder 130, and the seal coil 120 projects from the outer wall of the holder 130 and can be clamped onto the inclined wall 151 more and more tightly to seal the air channel 160.

In this embodiment, the lighting device is usually provided at the balloon nozzle, so the housing 150 has two projections 152 and 154 at the middle part to form therebetween a ring-shaped groove 153 where an O-ring 191 for fixing the balloon and the lighting device is provided. Fixing the lighting device at the nozzle 192 of the balloon 190 makes it possible to put the lighting device of this invention in the balloon nozzle, and thereby the normal use of the balloon is not affected as it can still be tied to a pipe or other accessories after inflation.

A metal spring coil 170 (or a metal spring plate, instead) within the air channel 160 functions as an elastic mechanism for connecting the contact piece 112 and the button batteries 140 to close the circuit. The metal spring coil 170 has a top ring 180 at the outer end, which is fixed on the inner wall of the housing 150 for positioning the metal spring coil 170. The ring-shaped top ring 180 has a top protrusion 181 projecting from the center, which is fixed to the top ring 180 via a side wall 182.

The top ring 180 is used to position the metal spring coil 170, and the top

5 protrusion 181 is mainly used to hold the metal spring coil 170. Another function of the top protrusion 181 lies in, by pressing it, the button batteries 140 and the holder 130 are held and pushed into the balloon so as to deflate the balloon.

10 With reference to Figs. 5 and 6, air enters the balloon 190 in the direction of the arrow when the balloon 190 is inflated. At the beginning of inflation, the pressure inside the balloon 190 is very low and the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon is negligible, but when the inner pressure reaches a certain level, the pressure difference is large enough to discharge air from the balloon through the air channel 160 so as to maintain the pressure balance.

15 During discharge of air, the exhaust air pushes the holder 130 provided within the air channel 160 to slide outwards along the air channel 160 bringing the seal coil 120 on the holder 130 into contact with the inclined wall 151, and the air channel 160 will be sealed up to stop discharging air from the balloon 190 when the seal coil 120 comes into sealing contact with the inclined wall 151.

20 At this time, the holder 130 is sliding outwards under the pressure and is displaced to such a position that the metal spring coil 170 gets held by the button batteries 140, gets compressed and comes into contact with both the button batteries 25 140 and the contact piece 112, thereby connecting the circuit and illuminating the LED lamp 110.

The inflated balloon 190 can be deflated by pressing the top protrusion 181 inwards; when the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon 190 is reduced to zero, the spring coil 170 gets restored freely and releases the button batteries 140 and the holder 130; and once the spring coil 170 is no longer in contact with the button batteries 140 and the contact piece 112, the circuit is disconnected and the LED lamp 110 is turned off.

35 In this embodiment, the lighting device is placed inside the balloon nozzle 192 and is fixed by the O-ring 191, whereas the outer end of the balloon nozzle 192 still has a structure of a flexible balloon wall. The balloon can be inflated in conventional ways, like by blowing with mouth, or using tools. After the balloon gets inflated, the nozzle 192 can be tied with a string or wound into a knot itself to achieve air tightness, 40 and then the balloon can be hung up, stuck to a wall with an adhesive, or attached to a rod for use and entertainment.

Figs. 7~9 show the third embodiment of this invention, which, as shown in Fig. 7, is a lighting device and mainly comprises an LED lamp 210, a holder 230, button batteries 240 and a housing 250.

Likewise, two contact pieces extend from the back end of the LED lamp 210, wherein one contact piece 211 is directly connected between the LED lamp 210 and

5 the button batteries 240, and the other contact piece 212 bends outwards and extends along the outer wall of the holder 230 to the back of the button batteries 240.

10 The button batteries 240 normally number 1 to 4 (the drawings show two batteries in a way not limiting the number thereof in other implementations), which are provided along with the LED lamp 210 inside the holder 230 and are fixedly supported by the holder 230. The holder 230 is sleeved with the hollow housing 250 with an inlet at one end and an outlet at the other end, and a clearance between the housing 250 and the holder 230 constitutes an air channel 260. An inwardly inclined wall 251 is provided at the inner side of the outlet while a ring-shaped seal coil 220 is fixed onto the outer wall of the holder 230, and the seal coil 220 projects from the outer wall of the holder 230 and can be clamped onto the inclined wall 251 more and more tightly to seal the air channel 260.

20 This embodiment is similar to the embodiment shown in Fig. 4 in that the lighting device is usually provided at the balloon nozzle, so the housing 250 firstly has an extending portion 252 with two projections 254 at the back end and an outer end convenient for handhold. The extending portion 252 further has a projecting ring 253 to attach a string so that the balloon can be dragged or tied on other articles.

25 A metal spring coil 270 is provided within the air channel 260 for connecting the contact piece 212 and the button batteries 240 to close the circuit. The metal spring coil 270 has a top ring 280 at the outer end, which is fixed on the inner wall of the housing 250. The ring-shaped top ring 280 has a top protrusion 281 projecting from the center, which is fixed to the top ring 280 via a side wall 282.

30 The top protrusion 281 is mainly used to hold the metal spring coil 270, but another function of it lies in, by pressing it, the button batteries 240 and the holder 230 are held and pushed into the balloon so as to deflate the balloon.

35 With reference to Figs. 8 and 9, when the balloon 290 is integrated with the lighting device of this invention, the two can be tightly fixed together by sleeving the projections 254 with the balloon nozzle 291 and providing a seal ring 292 between the two projections 254.

40 As shown in Fig. 8, air enters the balloon 290 in the direction of the arrow when the balloon 290 is inflated. At the beginning of inflation, the pressure inside the balloon 290 is very low and the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon is negligible, but when the inner pressure reaches a certain level, the pressure difference is large enough to discharge air from the balloon through the air channel 260 so as to maintain the pressure balance.

45 As shown in Fig. 9, during discharge of air, the exhaust air pushes the holder 230 provided within the air channel 260 to slide outwards along the air channel 260

5 bringing the seal coil 220 on the holder 230 into contact with the inclined wall 251,
and the air channel 260 will be sealed up to stop discharging air from the balloon 290
when the seal coil 220 comes into sealing contact with the inclined wall 251.

10 At this time, the holder 230 is sliding outwards under the pressure and is
displaced to such a position that the metal spring coil 270 gets held by the button
batteries 240, gets compressed and comes into contact with both the button batteries
240 and the contact piece 212, thereby connecting the circuit and illuminating the
LED lamp 210.

15 The inflated balloon 290 can be deflated by pressing the top protrusion 281
inwards; when the pressure difference between inside and outside the balloon 290 is
reduced to zero, the spring coil 270 gets restored freely and releases the button
batteries 240 and the holder 230; and once the spring coil 270 is no longer in contact
20 with the button batteries 240 and the contact piece 212, the circuit is disconnected and
the LED lamp 210 is turned off.

The foregoing is only a description of the present invention in combination with
preferred embodiments, and the modes for implementation of this invention are not
limited thereby in any way. Any simple derivation or replacement that may be made
25 by those of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the spirit of the invention
is covered under the protection scope claimed therein.

1. A lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon, comprising a lighting lamp/sounder, a battery, and a housing at least covering the lighting lamp/sounder, wherein the housing comprises:
 - 10 an inlet end to let air or other gases into the housing,
 - an outlet end to discharge air or other gases from the housing, and
 - an air channel to connect the inlet end and the outlet end so that a through passage for air flow is formed within the housing; and
 - the lighting lamp/sounder is provided within the air channel and has a sealing
 - 15 device for sealing off the air channel.
2. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the sealing device is any one selected from the group consisting of an O-ring, a seal ring, and a seal coil.
- 20 3. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the lighting lamp/sounder has a supporting and fixing holder that covers the lighting lamp/sounder at least from one cross section so that the lighting lamp/sounder has an outer wall on said cross section.
- 25 4. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 3, wherein said outer wall is sleeved with a sealing device in a ring-shaped structure, and is located within the air channel.
- 30 5. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the sealing device of the lighting lamp/sounder is a seal coil or a seal ring projecting from the exterior margin of the lighting lamp/sounder.
6. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to

5 claim 1, wherein the air channel forms a reduced neck portion around which a platform is provided; a seal gasket is provided at one end of the lighting lamp/sounder, which projects from the end of the lighting lamp/sounder and has a flat contact surface; and said seal gasket has a diameter larger than that of the reduced neck portion so that the contact surface is able to form a sealing contact
10 with the platform.

7. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 5, wherein the inner wall of the housing has a bell-like structure, the lighting lamp/sounder sleeved with the seal coil or seal ring is located inside the bell, and a
15 clearance between the lighting lamp/sounder and the housing constitutes the air channel.

8. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the lighting/sound-producing device is provided inside a balloon
20 and is fixed onto the inner wall of the balloon by an external cover with an exhaust port connected to the outlet end of the lighting/sound-producing device to form the air channel; and, a piercing device is provided where the lighting/sound-producing device contacts the inner wall of the balloon within the external cover, and has a pointed tip to pierce the inner wall of the balloon when
25 the external cover is fixed onto the lighting/sound-producing device to form the air channel.

9. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the inlet end has a top ring with a hollow middle part and a
30 projecting top protrusion fixed onto the top ring via two side walls.

10. The lighting/sound-producing device activated by inflated balloon according to claim 1, wherein the lighting lamp/sounder is elastically provided inside the air channel and is supported by an elastic mechanism which is fixed within the air
35 channel and has an electrical conductivity to connect a control circuit of the

5 lighting lamp/sounder.