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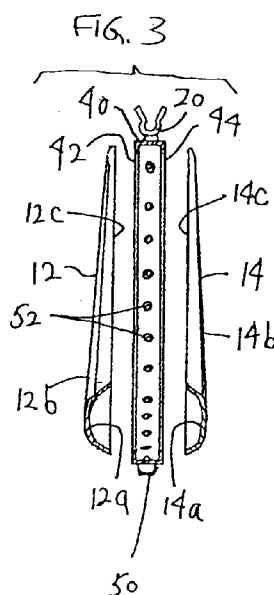
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(54) Stamped earring with insert portion

(57) A piece of jewelry (30) has inner and outer stamped shells (12,14) which are normally meant to be soldered to each other to form a piece of hollow jewelry such as a creole earring (30). An insert (40) extends along at least the outer edges of the shells to produce a new piece of jewelry using the shells. The outer surface of the insert member may be ornamented and also may include stones, and may be cast, stamped, wire or ribbon stock.



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Description

FIELD AND BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates, in general, to jewelry and, in particular, to a new and useful piece of jewelry which is made from two stamped metal portions that are attached to each other with an elongated insert therebetween, which extends at least around the outer perimeter of the piece of jewelry.

[0002] So-called "creole" or "shrimp" jewelry and, in particular, earrings are known. These earrings are made from a pair of stamped metal parts which are soldered to each other to form a closed hollow structure. The stamped parts are made from initially flat sheets of metal such as silver, gold or other metal which is appropriate for use in jewelry. The metal sheets are placed between the dies of a stamping machine which are moved against each other under pressure. This simultaneously cuts the sheets to shape and forms them into a three-dimensional pattern having an outer convex surface and an inner concave surface, with or without surface ornamentation. Two of these stampings, which can be thought of as shells, are then soldered to each other around their perimeter to form a closed hollow shape. Catches, posts, hoops or hooks can then be soldered to the upper end of the structure so that it can be attached to an ear to form an earring or other attachments can be used to form the piece into a pin, pendant or other suitable piece of jewelry.

[0003] The front and rear shells may be the same or different. In either case, for an earring, the broad surface of the shell is visible when the person wearing the earring is viewed from the side. When the person is viewed from the front, only the side edge of the earring is visible, which is generally narrow and exposes the attached edge between the front and rear shells. Further, for a particular set of dies, only one creole or shrimp earring style can be made.

[0004] Referring to Figs. 1 and 2 which illustrate the prior art, a creole earring generally designated 10 has a front shell 12 which is soldered to a rear shell 14 at a peripheral edge 16 that extends around each shell and mates with each other at a central plane. Either the front shell as shown in Fig. 1 or both the front and rear shells can include surface ornamentation 18 which are shaped by the die and may rise above or fall below the median surface of the shell. Each shell has a concave inner surface shown for example at 12a in Fig. 2, and a convex outer surface 12b. Each shell also has an outer peripheral edge shown at 16a in Fig. 1 and an inner edge 16b which meet each other at upper opposite ends 16c and 16d of the earring shown in Fig. 1. Mounting hardware is attached, preferably by soldering, to the piece of jewelry formed by the soldered together shells. In Figs. 1 and 2, this hardware includes a catch 20 soldered to one end 16d of the connected shells, and a post 22 soldered to the other end 16c.

[0005] As noted above, however, only a single piece of jewelry can be made with a set of dies. If the dies form two different shells 12 and 14 which have edges 16 that are identical, and lie in a flat plane, then two or three styles of earrings can be made by mixing and matching the shells. In general, however, the selections are very limited despite the fact that the dies can be very expensive and it is desirable for a jewelry manufacturer to produce many different styles of jewelry.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] An object of the present invention is to enhance the usefulness of stampings normally used for creole or shrimp jewelry, in particular, earrings, by providing a specially constructed insert member which can be soldered between a pair of shells to produce a new piece of jewelry which has a very different look.

[0007] Another advantage of the invention is that the jewelry is provided with a broader, more decorative appearance when the wearer is viewed from the front. In other words, the jewelry has one look when the wearer is viewed from the side (and thus sees the broad usual shape for the creole earring) and another look when the wearer is viewed from the front, which exposes the edges of the front and rear shells but also presents the insert member.

[0008] According to the present invention, the insert member can be further ornamented with surface ornamentations and/or with stones or other ornamentations. While the front and rear shells are advantageously stamped, the insert member may be stamped, cast, wire, ribbon or any other elongated structure. The insert member can also be structured to extend only around the outer edge of the shells or around both the outer and inner edges of the shells.

[0009] In the case where only the outer edge of the shells carry the insert, the inner edges can be left spaced apart or be bent toward each other and soldered closed.

[0010] In another embodiment of the invention, the insert is constructed to extend around the entire outer and inner edges of the perimeter of the shells.

[0011] In a still further embodiment of the invention, the edges of the front and rear shells need not be exactly identical to each other but instead, may be slightly different from each other with the space being spanned by the insert member which is shaped to have an outer front edge corresponding to the edge of the front shell and an outer rear edge corresponding to the edge of the rear shell.

[0012] As with known creole or shrimp earrings, the edges are attached to each other using soldering or any other appropriate attachment mechanism known in the art of jewelry making.

[0013] Although in one embodiment of the invention, the elongated insert member has a constant width along its entire length, insert members having varying

width can also be used. For example, the insert may have a narrow width near one end which attaches the inner and outer shells to each other to one end of the shells. Near the middle, the insert member expands and then near the opposite end, the insert member is reduced again in width. This produces a somewhat wedge shape effect in the earring which further changes the appearance of the earring despite the fact that the same dies are used to make the same inner and outer shells.

[0014] In another embodiment a piece of jewelry comprises an outer stamped shell to be worn away from a wearer, the outer shell having an inner generally concave surface, an outer generally convex surface, and a first mating edge lying along a first mating surface;

an inner stamped shell to be worn adjacent the wearer, the inner stamped shell having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a second mating edge lying along a second mating surface, the first and second mating edges and the first and second mating surfaces corresponding to each other in shape and length so that if the first and second shells were attached to each other along the first and second mating surfaces, a closed piece of jewelry would result;

an insert member having a first attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the first mating surface, and an opposite second attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the second mating edge for connecting the inner and outer shells to the insert member and to each other; and

a mounting connected to at least one of the inner shell, the outer shell and the insert member for mounting the piece of jewelry to the wearer.

[0015] The mounting may comprise an earring post. In which case and where the piece of jewelry is U-shaped and has opposite ends, the post may be connected to one of the opposite ends and the mounting include a catch connected to the other of the opposite ends.

[0016] The insert member may have a constant, or varying, width along its length.

[0017] The inner shell, the outer shell and the insert member may all be made of precious metal.

[0018] The inner and outer shells may both be made of precious metal.

[0019] In another embodiment a piece of jewelry comprises an outer stamped shell to be worn away from a wearer, the outer shell having an inner generally concave surface, an outer generally convex surface, and a first mating edge lying along a first mating surface;

an inner stamped shell to be worn adjacent the wearer, the inner stamped shell having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a second mating edge lying along a second mating surface;

an elongated member having a first attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the first mating surface, and an opposite second attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the second mating edge for connecting the inner and outer shells to the insert member and to each other; and

a mounting connected to at least one of the inner shell, the outer shell and the insert member for mounting the piece of jewelry to the wearer.

[0020] In this embodiment the inner and outer shells may each be substantially U-shaped, the first and second mating edges having outer and inner portions, the insert member extending at least along outer portions of the first and second edges.

[0021] The various features of novelty which characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and specific objects attained by its uses, reference is made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which a preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022]

Fig. 1 is a front elevational view of a known creole earring, that is, the view of the earring that is visible at the side of the wearer;

Fig. 2 is a sectional view taken along line 2-2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an exploded view of an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a front elevational view of the embodiment of Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a side elevational view of the embodiment of Fig. 3, that is, the view that would be visible when facing a person wearing the earring;

Fig. 6 is an exploded perspective view of another embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 7 is a front elevational view of one embodiment of an insert member according to the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a front elevational view of another embodiment of the insert member according to the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a side elevational view of another embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 10 is a perspective view of the embodiment of Fig. 9; and

Fig. 11 is a side elevational view of a still further embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0023] Referring to the drawings in particular, the invention embodied therein, in Figs. 3, 4 and 5, comprises an enhanced piece of jewelry in the form of a creole earring generally designated 30, which has a front surface, viewed when looking at the side of a wearer, made of the front shell 12, and a rear surface which is worn against the wearer's body, in the case of an earring against the wearer's neck, made of the inner shell 14. When the wearer is viewed from the front, however, an insert member 40 is visible which, in accordance with the invention, is fixed between the mating surfaces of the inner and outer shells 12 and 14, advantageously by soldering or by any other conventional means.

[0024] In accordance with the present invention, the insert 40, as best shown in Fig. 3, has a first attachment side or edge 42 which corresponds in shape and extends along at least part of the first mating edge 12c of the outer shell 12, so that attachment side or edge 42 can be soldered along mating edge 12c. In likewise fashion, insert member 40 has an opposite inner attachment side or edge 44 which extends along and is connected to at least part of the second mating edge 14c of the inner shell 14. As with the prior art, both shells 12 and 14 have inner, generally concave surfaces 12a, 14a and generally convex outer surfaces 12b, 14b. The term "generally" is used since surface ornamentation 18 shown in Fig. 1 can be sufficiently deep so that there are some inwardly extending projections and some outwardly facing indentations in the inner and outer surfaces of the shells.

[0025] As with the prior art, the outer shell 12 is meant to be worn away from the wearer, while the inner shell 14 is meant to be worn adjacent the wearer.

[0026] The appearance of the insert may be further enhanced by providing surface ornamentation on the insert member or even by adding stones such as stones 50, which are attached to and spaced along the elongated insert member 40. For this purpose, holes or recesses 52 may be provided which help attach the stones according to known techniques for mounting stones to metal members.

[0027] While the shells 12 and 14 are advantageously stamped from metal, in particular precious metal, the insert 40 may be stamped, cast, rolled, wire stock, ribbon stock or any other elongated metallic or non-metallic structure which can be attached to the inner and outer shells and can serve as ornamentation for jewelry.

[0028] Although an earring is shown in the embodiment of Figs. 3-5, any arbitrary mounting can be used, aside from the catch and post 20, 22, and attached either to the inner shell, the outer shell or the insert member. In the embodiment of Fig. 3, the catch and post are attached to opposite ends of the insert member. As best shown in Fig. 7, the insert member, which is shown without stones, can be substantially U-shaped

to correspond to the U-shaped outer edge of the inner and outer shells. Fig. 8 illustrates another embodiment of the insert member 41 which has inner and outer members that are engaged to each other to form a closed loop, and can be attached between the inner and outer shells along the entire periphery of the first and second mating edges.

[0029] For the present invention to take advantage of pre-existing dies, the front and rear attachment sides 42 and 44 must lie parallel to the respective first and second mating surfaces in which the first and second mating edges 12c, 14c lie. Although in the preferred embodiment of the invention, all of these surfaces are flat planar surfaces, this is not a limitation of the invention. In other words, the surfaces may be curved or differently shaped, as long as when the surfaces are brought together, they mate perfectly.

[0030] Fig. 6 illustrates another embodiment of the invention where the inner and outer shells 62, 64 have outer closed edges. Although the embodiment of Fig. 6 shows an inner hole extending through both shells, and a bounding edge 66 which is spaced inwardly of the outer closed edge 68, the present invention is meant to include a solid shell which has no central hole.

[0031] In the embodiment of Fig. 6, the insert 70, which is advantageously cast, is in the form of a closed loop which has inner and outer surfaces that can be soldered against the outer edges of the inner and outer shells 62, 64. The inner edges may be left in a spaced apart condition or may be bent toward each other and either soldered to each other or left unsoldered. In an alternate embodiment, an inner insert 74 can be soldered between the inner edges of the inner and outer shells.

[0032] A mounting shown in the form of a simple loop 72 can be attached, for example, by soldering to the outer shell 62, the outer insert 70 or the inner shell 64, as desired. Although inserts 70 and 74 are shown unornamented, surface ornamentation and ornaments such as stones may be provided in accordance with the present invention. To form a pin, a pin member can be attached to the inner shell 64. As with the other embodiments of the present invention, both shells 62 and 64 have inner generally concave surfaces and outer generally convex surfaces, and would normally be attached to each other along a common mating plane.

[0033] Fig. 9 illustrates another embodiment of the invention where outer shell 12 is connected to inner shell 14 by an insert member 80 which is made of initially flat sheet metal that has been bent into a U-shape and stamped having an outwardly convex shape. As best shown in Fig. 10, the inner mated edges 16d of the inner and outer shells have been bent toward each other and may be soldered to each other or left unsoldered. Thus, only the outer edges 16a are spaced from each other by the intermediate insert member 80. The embodiment of Figs. 9 and 10 also illustrate that the insert member, while being elongated to extend around

at least part of the mating edges of the inner and outer shells, may have a varying width.

[0034] Fig. 11 shows an embodiment of the invention where the inner and outer creole shells 12 and 14 are connected to each other by an intermediate wire stock 90. The wire stock may be soldered between the mating surfaces on only the outer edges of the shells or on both the outer and inner edges of the shells.

[0035] Returning to Fig. 3, in Fig. 3, the insert 40 is itself a stamping, in particular, an initially flat ribbon which as been stamped to have a cross-section in the form of a U-shaped channel.

[0036] Although in the illustrated embodiments, both the inner and outer shells have convex outer surfaces, the present invention is meant to include the possibility of one of the shells, in general, the inner shell being substantially flat, or even having an inner convex and an outer concave contour, but less convex than the inner surface of the outer shell to permit the two shells to be attached to each other along the mutual mating surface.

[0037] While a specific embodiment of the invention has been shown and described in detail to illustrate the application of the principles of the invention, it will be understood that the invention may be embodied otherwise without departing from such principles.

Claims

1. A piece of jewelry, comprising:

an outer stamped shell to be worn away from a wearer, the outer shell having an inner generally concave surface, an outer generally convex surface, and a first mating edge lying along a first mating surface;

an inner stamped shell to be worn adjacent the wearer, the inner stamped shell having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a second mating edge lying along a second mating surface, the first and second mating edges and the first and second mating surfaces corresponding to each other in shape and length so that if the first and second shells were attached to each other along the first and second mating surfaces, a closed piece of jewelry would result;

an insert member having a first attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the first mating surface, and an opposite second attachment side extending along and connected to at least part of the second mating edge for connecting the inner and outer shells to the insert member and to each other; and a mounting connected to at least one of the inner shell, the outer shell and the insert member for mounting the piece of jewelry to the wearer.

2. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 1, wherein the

inner and outer shells are each substantially U-shaped, the first and second mating edges having outer and inner portions, the insert member extending only along outer portions of the first and second edges.

3. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 1, wherein the inner and outer shells are each substantially U-shaped, the first and second mating edges having outer and inner portions, the insert member extending along both the inner and outer portions.

4. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 1, wherein the insert member comprises an elongated stamping, sheet, ribbon, wire or casting.

5. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 4, including at least one stone attached to an outer surface of the insert member.

6. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 1, wherein the first and second mating edges are closed, the insert member extending around the closed mating edges.

7. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 6, wherein the first and second shells include an opening there-through defining a pair of inner mating edges.

8. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 7, wherein the inner and outer shells are bent to move the inner mating edges toward each other.

9. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 7, including a second insert member extending along and connected to said inner mating edges.

10. A piece of jewelry according to Claim 1, wherein the mounting comprises an earring post.

FIG. 1 (PRIOR ART)

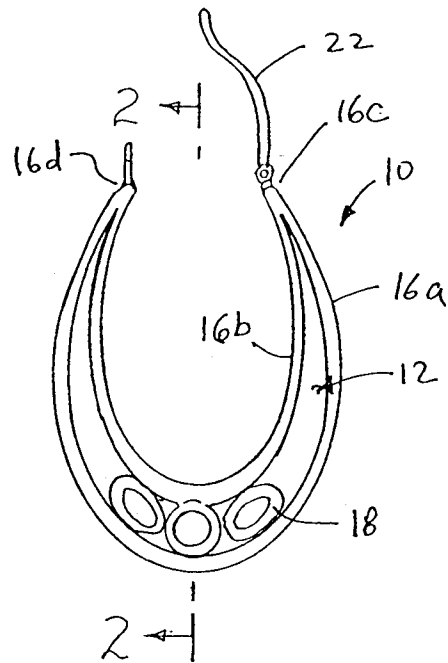


FIG. 2 (PRIOR ART)

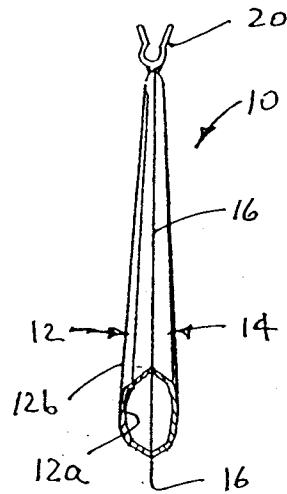


FIG. 3

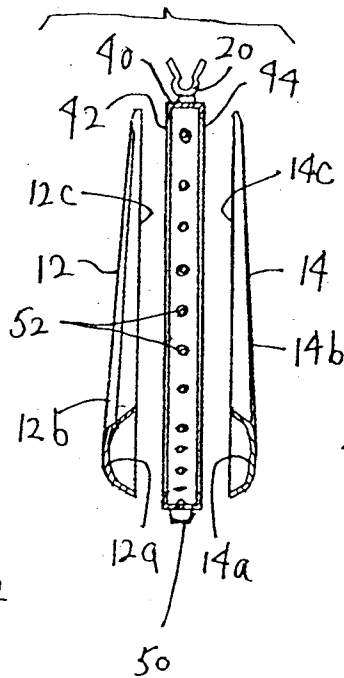


FIG. 4

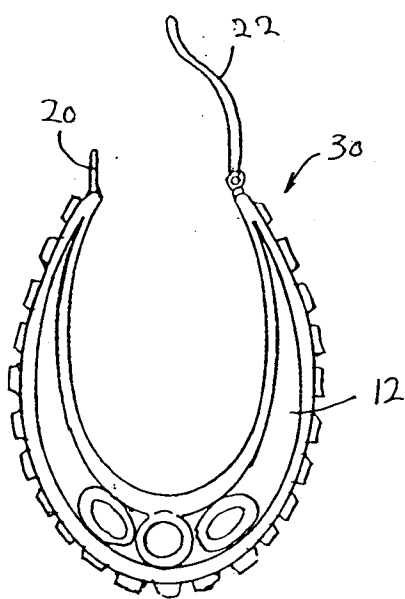


FIG. 5

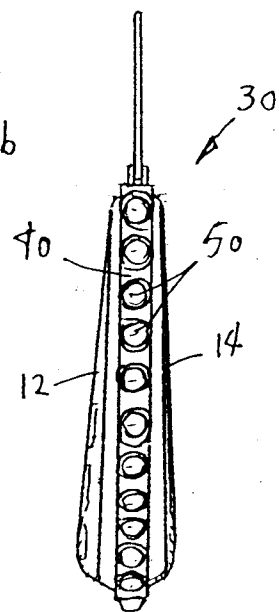


FIG. 6

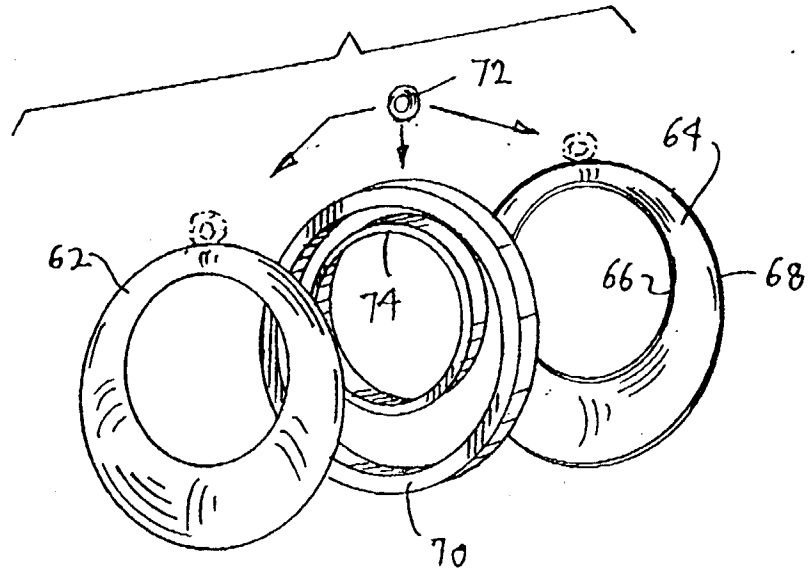


FIG. 7

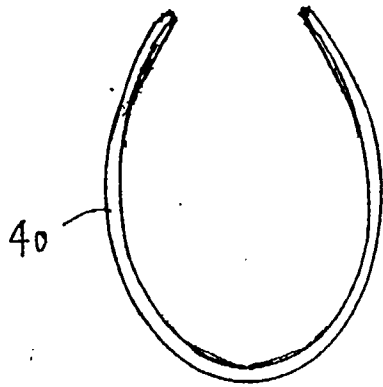


FIG. 8

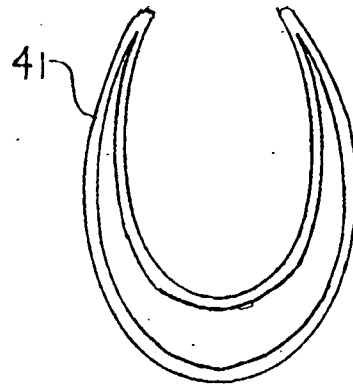


FIG. 9

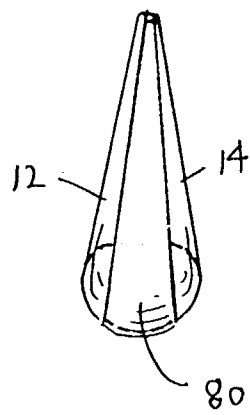


FIG. 10

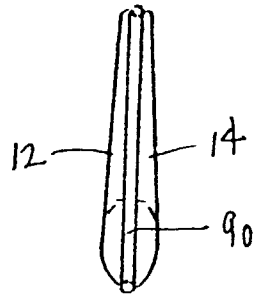
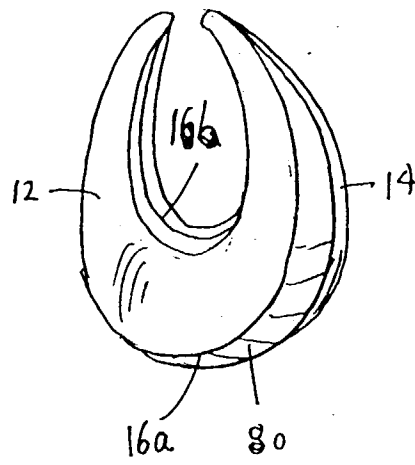


FIG. 11



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 30 5283

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	US 3 208 239 A (RALPH PINTARELLI) 28 September 1965 * column 1, line 18 - line 37 * * column 2, line 20 - line 35 * * column 2, line 43 - line 59 * * figures 1-3 *	1-10	A44C7/00
A	GB 1 383 021 A (MONOCRAFT INC.) 5 February 1975 * page 2, line 68 - line 106 * * figure 1 *	1-4,6-10	
A	US 5 228 316 A (SCOTT B. MEYROWITZ) 20 July 1993 * figures 1,2 *	5	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) A44C
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 11 May 1999	Examiner Fairbanks, S
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 98 30 5283

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11-05-1999

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