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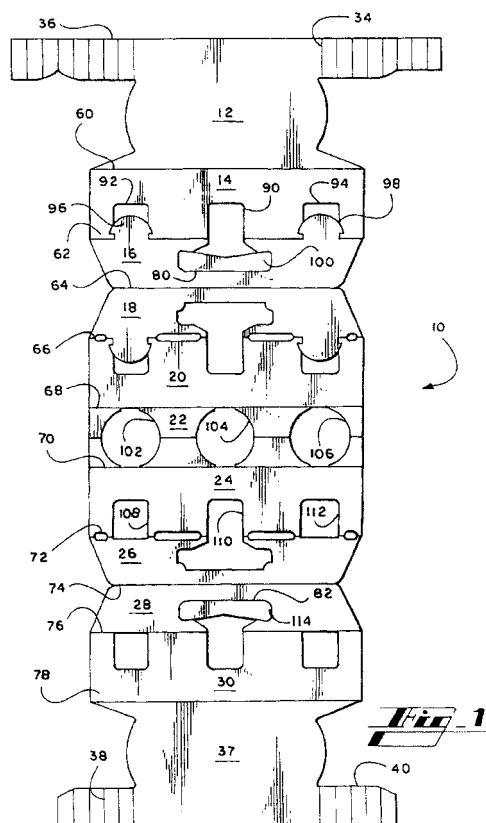
(71) Applicant: **The Mead Corporation**  
**Northeast Dayton, OH 45463 (US)**

(72) Inventors:  
 • **Auclair, Jean-Michel**  
**36000 Chateauroux (FR)**  
 • **Lebras, Philippe**  
**36000 Chateauroux (FR)**  
 • **Garnier, Jean-Michel**  
**36100 Issoudun (FR)**

(74) Representative: **Hepworth, John Malcolm et al**  
**Hepworth Lawrence Bryer & Bizley**  
**Bloxam Court**  
**Corporation Street**  
**Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2DU (GB)**

(54) **Top gripping carrier for bottles**

(57) An article carrier (10) and a blank for forming an article carrier (10) for securing a plurality of articles, such as bottles, which carrier comprises a base panel (22) having a plurality of apertures (102,104,106) to receive the articles, a pair of handle panels (16/18,26/28), the handle panels being in a face to face relationship with each other and connected to article gripping means, the article gripping means being formed from a pair of outwardly sloping side walls (14/20,24/30) being adapted to form a substantially inverted "V" structure. Each side wall is connected to the base panel (22) along their lower edge and wherein each handle panel extends from the upper edge of each side wall, wherein the article gripping means includes a pair of complementary article receiving apertures (92,108,90,110,94,112) struck from respective ones of the side walls and adapted operatively to engage and retain part of an article and locking means (96) is provided to maintain the handle panels in a face to face relationship. The locking means (96) comprises a locking tab extending from one of the handle panels (18) and a complementary portion for receiving and retaining the locking tab struck from the opposed article receiving aperture (108).





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# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 00 20 4267

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.7)
X,P	GB 2 301 079 A (WADDINGTONS CARTONS LTD) 27 November 1996 (1996-11-27) * page 8, line 26 - page 12, line 9; figures 7-11 *	1-14,18	B65D71/48
X	GB 2 038 764 A (FEDERAL PAPER BOARD) 30 July 1980 (1980-07-30) * page 4, line 58 - page 5, line 2; figures 12-14 *	5-9, 12-14,18	
Y	* figures 5-7 *	1-4,10, 11	
Y	EP 0 456 448 A (MEAD CORP) 13 November 1991 (1991-11-13) * column 2, line 39 - column 3, line 44; figures 1-3 *	1-4,10, 11	
A	DE 86 01 261 U (EUROPA CARTON AG) 3 April 1986 (1986-04-03) * figures 1-3 *	1,5,10, 12	
A	WO 95 24345 A (RIVERWOOD INTERNATIONAL) 14 September 1995 (1995-09-14) * figures 5-8 *	1-3	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
A,P	EP 0 780 323 A (RIVERWOOD INTERNATIONAL) 25 June 1997 (1997-06-25) * figures 1-7 *	5	B65D
A	US 2 300 874 A (FERRARI) 3 November 1942 (1942-11-03) * figures 1-4 *	16	
<del>The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</del>			
Place of search <b>THE HAGUE</b>		Date of completion of the search <b>6 March 2001</b>	Examiner <b>Berrington, N</b>
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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### CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

### LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☒ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

1-14, 16-18



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**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION  
SHEET B**

Application Number  
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The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1-14,16-18

An article carrier with either locking means for connecting the handle panels together or means for facilitating the release of the articles from the top gripping apertures.

2. Claim : 15

An article carrier provided with side wall prolongations.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 20 4267

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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06-03-2001

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EPO FORM P0459

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82