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(54) **Illuminating container**

(57) A container (1) including an inner liner, an outer skin which includes at least one transparent panel (4), and an illumination means (6) arranged in an area substantially between the inner liner and the outer skin, the

illumination means (6) arranged to be switched by a switching element (9) between an on position whereby light is permitted to shine through the at least one transparent panel (4) and an off position whereby the illumination means (6) is off.

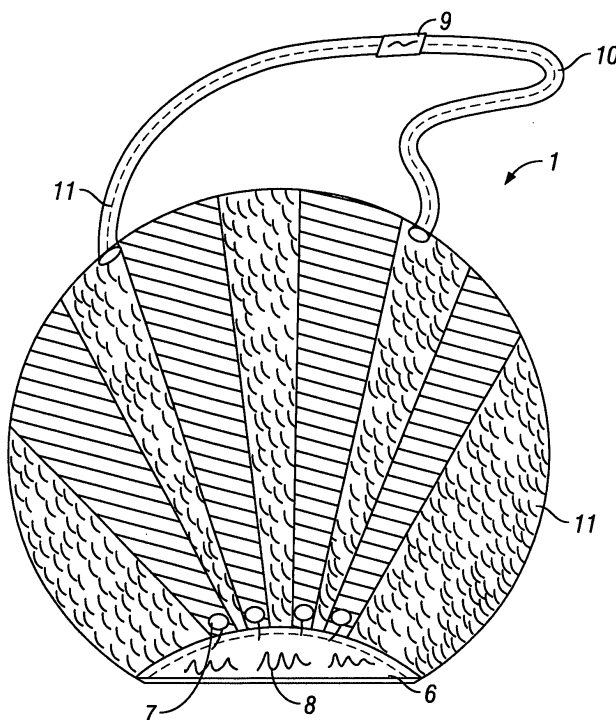


FIG. 2

Description

[0001] The present invention is concerned with a container, such as a toy bag, toy box or lunch box, the outside of which may be illuminated.

[0002] According to the present invention, there is provided a container including an inner liner, an outer skin which includes at least one transparent panel, and an illumination means arranged in an area substantially between the inner liner and the outer skin, the illumination means arranged to be switched by a switching element between an on position whereby light is permitted to shine through the at least one transparent panel and an off position whereby the illumination means is off.

[0003] It is particularly preferred that the container may be a flexible bag, a novelty bag such as a toy bag, a toy box or a food box (such as the type known as a lunch box or sandwich box). The container may be of a flexible material or alternatively, the container may be of a rigid material (such as a plastics). When the container is of a rigid material, it is envisaged that it is of the type known as a lunchbox, sandwich box or the like.

[0004] It is preferred that when the outer skin is flexible, the inner lining is flexible, and that when the outer skin is rigid, the inner lining is rigid. However, it is envisaged that the outer skin may be rigid and the inner lining is flexible, and vice versa.

[0005] Typically, the outer skin and the inner layer substantially do not contain any apertures.

[0006] Typically, the container is hinged. It is particularly advantageous that, when the container is a lunch box or the like, the container is formed in two portions which are hinged together. In this embodiment it is envisaged that the inner lining is substantially contained within any one portion (or half) of the container, thereby permitting the other portion (or half) to be substantially free of the inner liner.

[0007] The transparent panels may be arranged in the outer skin of the container to form a desired pattern. The pattern may be, for example, a sun with rays, a children's character, a name or a logo or the like. The panels may be tinted various colours. This is particularly advantageous to enhance the pattern.

[0008] It is further envisaged that the one or more of the transparent panels may be removable from the container. This would be advantageous as the pattern formed by the transparent panels could be changed by the user without changing the entire container. For example if the transparent panel included a logo, it could be interchanged with a panel having a different logo.

[0009] The illuminating means may include one or more bulbs. The bulbs may emit light at a variety of wavelengths so that the appearance of white light is seen. Alternatively, the bulbs may be arranged to emit light of a specific colour. This is particularly advantageous when the panel is not tinted. It is particularly preferred that two or more bulbs are included in the container. However, a plurality of bulbs are particularly pre-

ferred. Typically, the illuminating means is battery operated and therefore includes a battery element. It is therefore particularly preferred that the illuminating means is electrically connected to the switch element.

[0010] The switch element may include a standard on-off type switch, such as a push button type or a slide switch. The switch is typically arranged at an external portion of the bag. The switch may be arranged on a handle portion of the bag or alternatively a side portion or a bottom portion. It is also envisaged that the switch element is arranged at an openable portion of the container. In this embodiment, the switch element may be a sensor type switch arranged to turn the illumination means on when the container is opened or closed. Alternatively, the sensor means may be arranged to switch the illumination means on and/or off when the container is placed on a surface, for example it may be light sensitive or pressure sensitive.

[0011] The liner may be transparent to permit light from the illumination means to light up the interior of the bag when the switch element is in an on position. Alternatively, it may be opaque such that substantially no light is seen in the interior of the container when the illumination means is switched on.

[0012] It is preferred that the area formed by the inner liner and the outer skin further includes a light reflective or glittering material. Advantageously, the light reflective material creates an enhanced illumination through the at least one transparent panel.

[0013] The present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 represents a perspective view of a bag according to the present invention;

Figure 2 represents a cross sectional view of the bag shown in figure 1;

Figure 3 represents a side view of the bag shown in figure 1; and

Figure 4 represents a perspective view of a lunch-box according to the present invention

[0014] Referring to Figures 1, 2 and 3, where like numerals are used to identify like parts, there is shown a bag 1 manufactured from a flexible material, such as fabric. The bag has a front portion 2 and a back portion 3. The front portion 2 includes six yellow tinted transparent panels 4 and opaque panels 5 which, together form the outline of the sun's rays. The opaque panels 5 are typically manufactured from flexible plastics material

[0015] The illumination means 6 includes eight bulbs 7 (only 4 of which are shown) and a battery 8. Switch 9 is positioned on handle 10. Switch 9 is electrically connected to illumination means 6 by circuit 11.

[0016] In use, switch 9 is turned to the on position by the user of the bag 1, thereby completing the circuit 11.

Bulbs 7 and battery 8 are therefore electrically connected. The bulbs 7 illuminate and shine light through panels 4 to give the appearance of the sun. Referring to figure 4, there is provided a lunchbox generally indicated by the numeral 21. The lunchbox 21 is manufactured from a rigid plastics material. The lunchbox 21 has a front portion 22 connected to a back portion 23, via hinge 26 which permits opening of the lunchbox to access the inside. The front portion 22 includes a removable panel 27 comprising yellow tinted transparent panels 24 and opaque panels 25 which, together form the outline of the sun's rays. The panel 27 can be removed from front portion 22 via opening 28.

[0017] The lunch box 21 includes illumination means (not shown) which has a similar arrangement to the illumination means shown in figure 2. Switch 29 is positioned on handle 30.

[0018] In use, switch 29 is turned to an on position. The illumination means (not shown) shines light through panels 24 to give the appearance of the sun's rays.

Claims

1. A container including an inner liner, an outer skin which includes at least one transparent panel, and an illumination means arranged in an area substantially between the inner liner and the outer skin, the illumination means arranged to be switched by a switching element between an on position whereby light is permitted to shine through the at least one transparent panel and an off position whereby the illumination means is off. 25
2. A container according to claim 1 which is a bag such as a novelty bag, for example a toy bag. 30
3. A container according to claim 1, which is a rigid container, such as a food box or the like. 35
4. A container according to any preceding claim, which includes two or more parts which are hinged together. 40
5. A container according to claim 4, wherein the container includes two portions hinged together to form the container, at least one portion including the liner, the other portion being substantially free of liner and illumination means. 45
6. A container according to any preceding claim, which includes a plurality of transparent panels. 50
7. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the panels are arranged in the outer surface of the container to form a desired pattern. 55
8. A container according to claim 7, wherein the pat-

tern is a sun with rays, a children's character, a name or a logo or the like.

9. A container according to any of claims 6 to 8, wherein the panels are tinted various colours. 5
10. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein one or more transparent panel is removable from the container. 10
11. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the illuminating means may include one or more bulbs, preferably two or more.
12. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the illuminating means is battery operated and therefore includes a battery element. 15
13. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the illuminating means is electrically connected to the switch element. 20
14. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the switch element includes a standard on-off type switch, such as a push button type or a slide switch. 25
15. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the switch element is arranged on a handle portion of the bag, a side portion or a bottom portion, or an openable portion of the container. 30
16. A container according to claim 15, wherein the switch is a sensor type switch arranged to turn the illumination means on when the container is opened or closed, or the sensor switch is pressure sensitive or light sensitive. 35
17. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the liner is transparent to permit light from the illumination means to light up the interior of the container when the switch element is in an on position; or wherein the liner is opaque such that substantially no light is seen in the interior of the container when the illumination means is switched on. 40

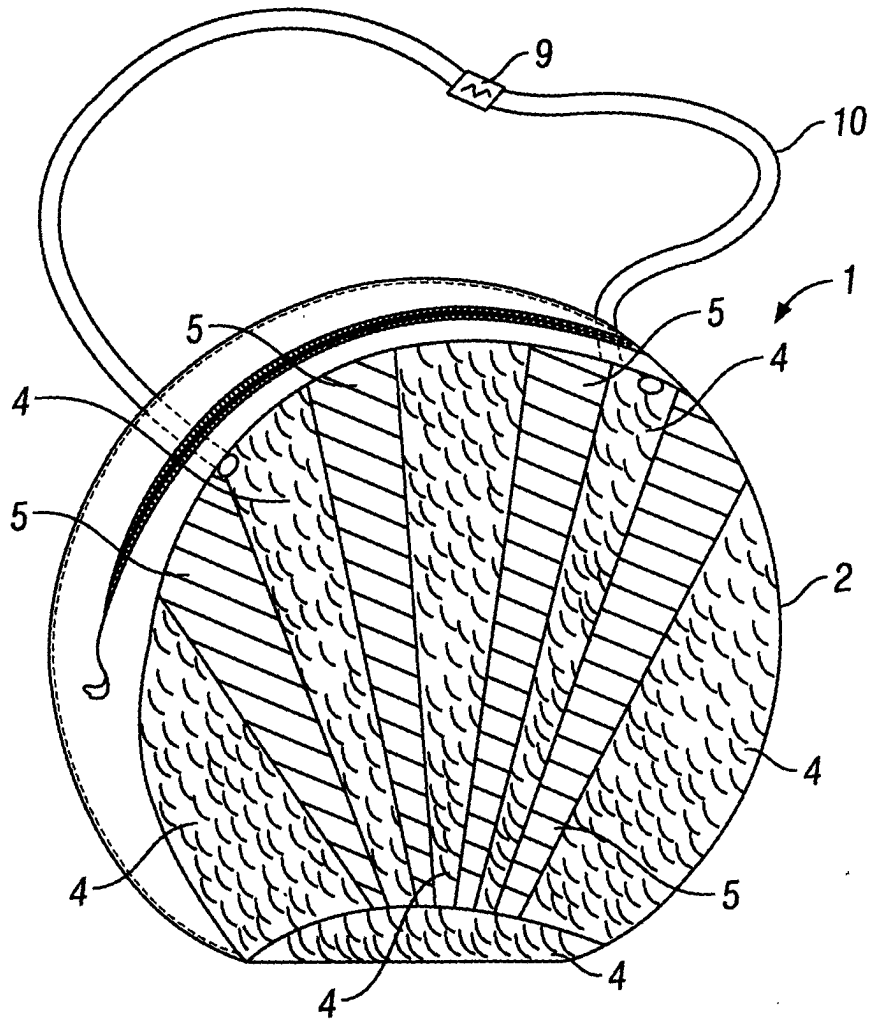


FIG. 1

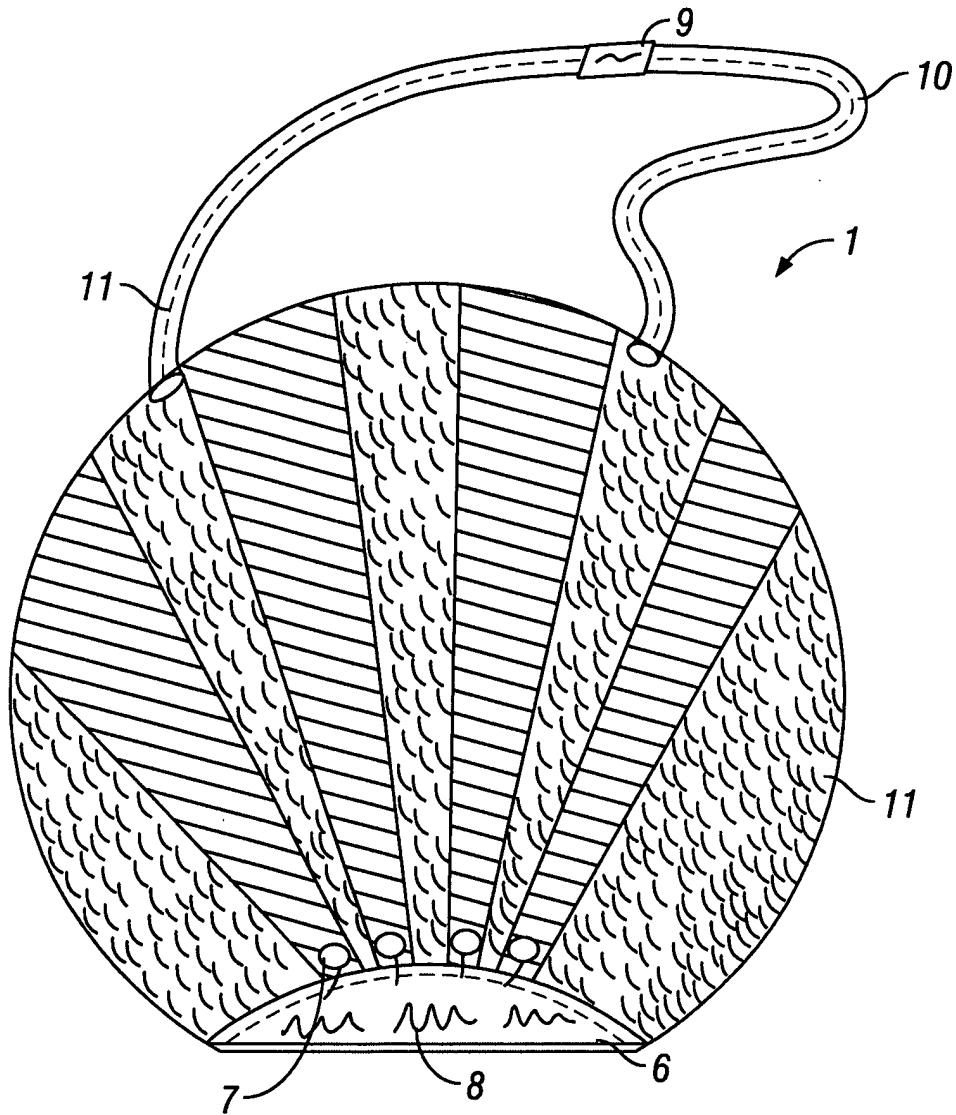


FIG. 2

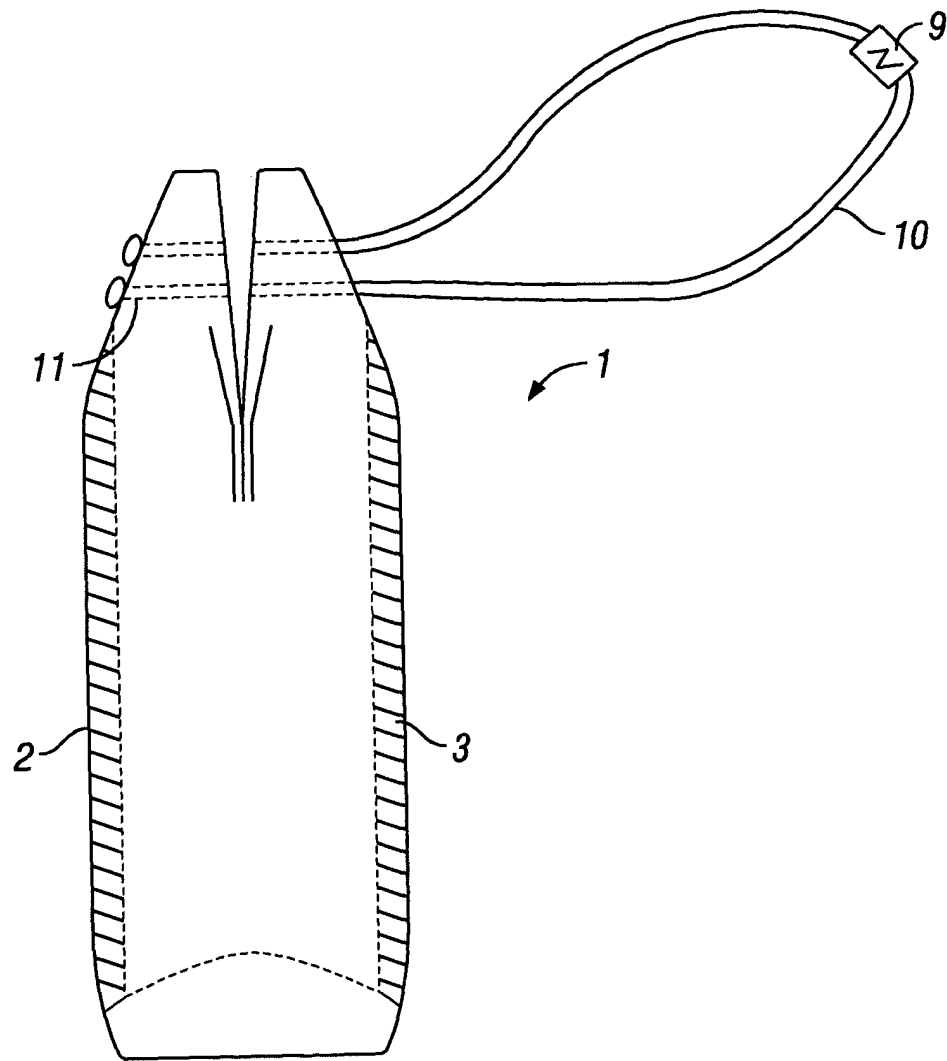


FIG. 3

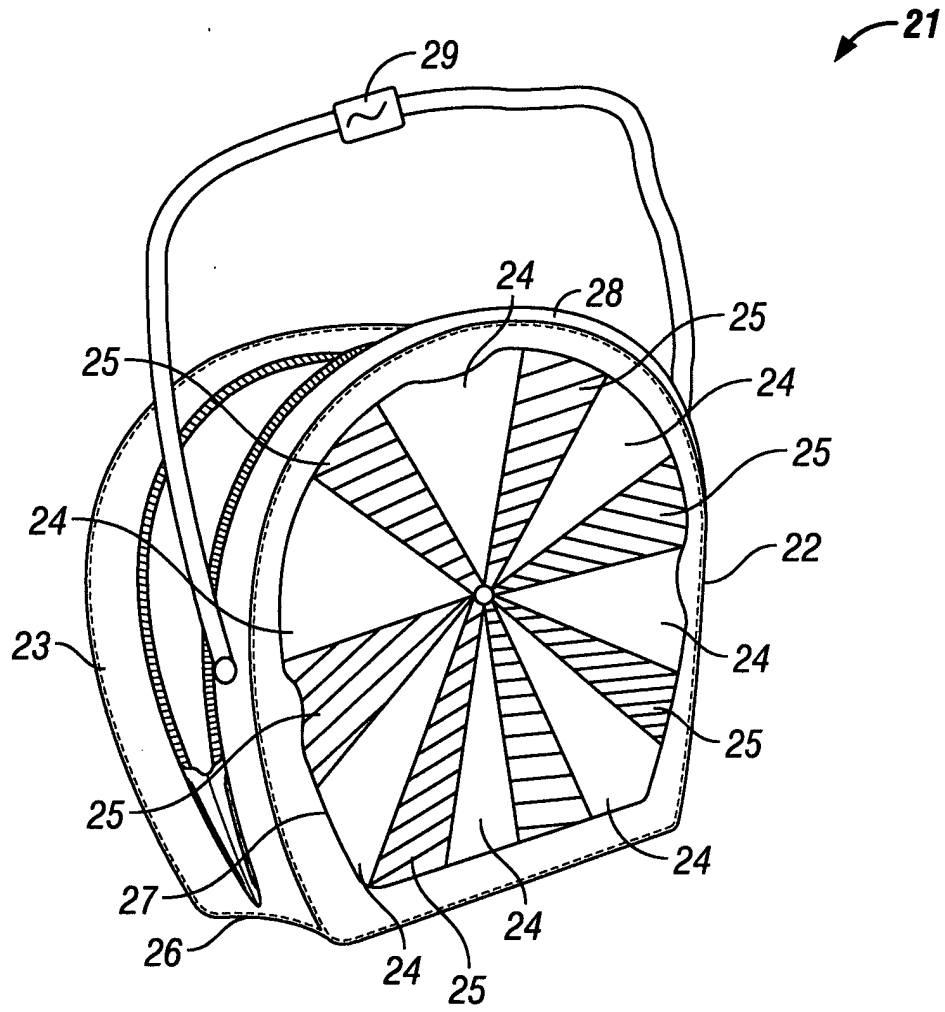


FIG. 4



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 25 5961

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 14 January 2005	Examiner Fitterer, J
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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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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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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