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- **Gracia-Lugo, Alexis J.**
Bloomington,
New Jersey NJ 07403 (US)
- **Tedeschi jr., Thomas**
Brewster,
New York NY 10509 (US)
- **Weber, Jeffrey T.**
Lake Zurich,
Illinois IL 60062 (US)
- **Paterson, Stuart G.**
Fox River Grove,
Illinois IL 60021 (US)

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(71) Applicant: **KRAFT FOODS HOLDINGS, INC.**
Northfield,
Illinois 60093 (US)

- (72) Inventors:
- **Sierra-Gomez, Gladys O.**
Woodbridge,
New Jersey NJ 07095 (US)
 - **Peters, Eva M.**
Cedar Grove,
New Jersey NJ 07009 (US)

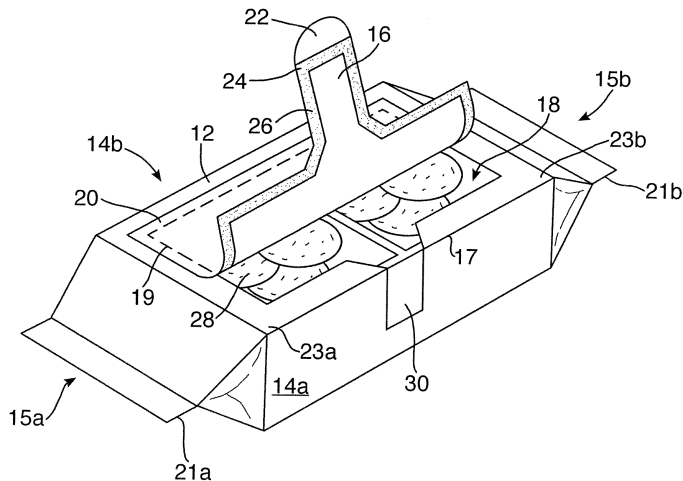
(74) Representative: **Smaggasgale, Gillian Helen**
W.P. Thompson & Co,
55 Drury Lane
London WC2B 5SQ (GB)

(54) **Resealable food container**

(57) A polygonal shaped container (10,110,210,310, 410,510) is provided which includes a wrapper surrounding a food product. The shape of the container is defined by either a frame containing a food product or rigid material incorporated with the wrapper. Access to contents

in the container is provided by withdrawing a resealable sealing layer (20,120,220a,220b,320) sealed to the top or side surface of the container (10,110,210,310, 410,510) and withdrawing the sealing layer from the container or by pivoting a rigid lid (423) away from the top of the container.

Fig.2.



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Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a resealable container, and in particular, a new and improved resealable container having a recloseable sealing cover which can be withdrawn from one of the sides of the container to gain access to its interior.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Many conventional containers for food products such as cookies and other snacks include a frame surrounded by an outer wrapper. The frame acts as a tray to hold the food product and to protect the food product from damage. One normally gains access to the contents of the container by opening one end of the wrapper, withdrawing the tray from the inside thereof, and then removing the food product from the tray. However, these containers generally do not provide a convenient opening and reclosing arrangement. For example, reclosing of the wrapper, once opened, generally includes simply folding or rolling the end down and clipping the end to keep the wrapper closed.

[0003] Reclosable seals have been used for dispensing bags for wet tissues or disposable cleaning wipes. The label on these bags can be pulled back, thereby exposing an opening, allowing access to the wet tissues or wipes inside. Typically, these dispensing bags are completely flexible, formed exclusively of a plastic or other suitable flexible material which closely surrounds the pack of wet tissues or wipes. Examples of these dispensing bags include U.S. Patent Nos. 4,840,270 and 6,026,953, U.S. Design Patent No. D 447,054 and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0182359. However, such known dispensing bags are not well suited for containing food products as these containers fail to provide adequate protection for storing food products.

[0004] One recent resealable food container is disclosed in U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0206637, herein incorporated by reference. The disclosed resealable container is adapted for use with food products and includes a frame which defines a polygonal shape and a wrapper which surrounds the frame and has a top opening. A sealable sealing layer is adhesively sealed to the top.

[0005] An additional package used to dispense wet tissues of disposable wipes is a container full of wet tissues marketed under the trade name HUGGIES SUPREME™. This package includes a rigid tray with hinged rigid lid.

[0006] An additional recent resealable dispenser-container is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,026,953 in which a resealable dispenser-container is designed for containing wet tissues. The container is made of a flexible sheet material having a top surface opening for dispensing wet tissues. A reinforcing sheet larger than the dispenser opening is attached to the top surface of the container.

A resealable flap provides for opening and closing of access to the wet tissues disposed inside the container.

[0007] There is a need to provide additional and improved containers for food products having various resealable closure devices.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The purpose of the present invention is to provide new and improved containers for food products such as cookies and the like and which the container provides adequate protection for the contents thereof, while concurrently facilitating opening of the container wrapper and resealing the container to protect the contents thereof until the contents are fully consumed. An additional purpose of the present invention is to provide a container which can be manufactured using methods other than those used in prior food containers having resealable openings. A further purpose of the present invention is to use alternative materials for a container for food products.

[0009] These purposes are achieved by providing a suitable container composed of selected materials which provide desired characteristics and containing food products which are accessible using a resealable container.

[0010] In accordance with one embodiment, the present invention comprises a food container having a frame defining the shape of the container where the container has a top, bottom and sides connected at the top and bottom. The frame contains a food product. A wrapper surrounds the frame and forms the top, sides and bottom of the container. The top and one side has an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to substantially all the food product contained within the frame. A sealing layer includes a starter portion which can be grasped by a user. The sealing layer is adhesively sealed to the top and the one side around the opening. The sealing layer is resealable when the starter portion is pulled in a direction away from the side to which the sealing layer is sealed to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of the sealing layer to provide access to the top access opening. The sealing layer is resealable against the top and side to seal the opening when the sealing layer is laid back against the top and the side.

[0011] In alternative, further embodiments, the top of the wrapper includes a flap which has substantially the same dimensions as that of the opening and is permanently affixed to the sealing layer, and the starter portion includes a tab which projects past an edge of the side of the container to which the starter portion is sealed and is accessible beyond the seal to be grasped by a user, when the starter portion is located at the crimp sealed end of the wrapper.

[0012] In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a food container comprises a frame defining a polygonal shape of the container. The container has a top, bottom and side connecting the top and bottom. The frame contains a food product. A wrapper

surrounds the frame and forms the top sides and bottom of the container. The top has at least two access openings to provide access to substantially all the food product contained within the frame. At least two sealing layers, each having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user are provided. Each of the sealing layers are adhesively sealed to the top around a respective one of the openings. Each of the sealing layers is resealable when a respective starter portion is pulled in a direction away from the top to in turn pull and thereby release a portion of the respective sealing layer to provide hand access to the respective top access opening and resealable against the top to seal the respective opening when the respective sealing layer is moved back against the top.

[0013] In further alternative embodiments, the frame comprises a tray and the tray comprises two compartments, each compartment accessible through a respective one of the at least two openings.

[0014] The present invention, in another form thereof, relates to a polygonal shaped food container comprising one or more food protectors such as frames containing a food product which define the polygonal shape of the container. The container has a top, bottom and side connecting the top and bottom. A wrapper surrounds one or more of the food products and forms the top, sides and bottom of the container. One of the sides has at least one access opening sufficiently large to allow one or more food protectors to be with withdrawn therethrough. A sealing layer having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user is adhesively sealed to the side around the opening. The sealing layer is releasable when the starter portion is pulled in a direction away from the side to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of the sealing layer to provide withdrawal of one or more food protectors and resealable against the side to seal the opening when the sealing layer is moved back against the side.

[0015] In further alternative embodiments, the food protector comprises a tray, a slug surrounding the food product, a core buff surrounding the food product and a frame surrounding the food product, wherein the frame may not include both a top or bottom.

[0016] The present invention, in another form thereof, concerns a polygonal shaped container comprising a wrapper comprising a first flexible material and a second more rigid material than the first material. The second material is incorporated with the wrapper to thereby provide rigidity to the wrapper and define faces of the container. The faces include a top, sides and bottom of the container. The wrapper with incorporated rigid material contains a food product. One of the faces has an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to the food product contained within the wrapper. The sealing layer includes a starter portion which can be grasped by a user. The sealing layer is adhesively sealed to one face around the opening. The sealing layer is releasable when the starter portion is pulled in a direction away from the face to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of

the sealing layer to permit withdrawal of the food products and resealable against the face to seal the opening when the sealing layer is moved back against the face.

[0017] In accordance with another embodiment, the present invention comprises a polygonal shaped food container comprising a frame defining the polygonal shape of the container. The container has a top, bottom and sides connecting the top and bottom and frame contains a food product. A wrapper surrounds the frame and forms the top bottom and sides of the container. The top has an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to substantially all of the food product contained within the frame. A rigid lid is hingedly attached to the top which provides access to the top opening. The container is transformed to an open configuration by pivoting the lid away from the top along the hinge to provide access to the top opening and returned to a closed configuration by turning the lid back along the hinge so that the lid covers the access opening.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] There follows a detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention, to be read together with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0019] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a resealable container in a closed configuration in accordance with the present invention.

[0020] Figure 2 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 1 in a partially opened configuration.

[0021] Figure 3 is a perspective view of a frame of the resealable container of Figures 1 and 2.

[0022] Figure 4 is a perspective view of another frame of a resealable of food container.

[0023] Figure 5 is a perspective view of another frame of a resealable food container.

[0024] Figure 6 is a perspective view of another frame for a resealable food container.

[0025] Figure 7 is a perspective view of another frame for a resealable food container.

[0026] Figure 8 is a perspective view of another resealable food container in a closed configuration in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0027] Figure 9 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 8 in a partially open configuration.

[0028] Figure 10 is a perspective view of another resealable food container in a closed configuration in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0029] Figure 11 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 10 in a partially open configuration.

[0030] Figure 12 is a perspective view of another resealable container in a closed configuration in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0031] Figure 13 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 12 in a partially opened configuration.

[0032] Figure 14 is a perspective view of a food protector in accordance with the present invention.

[0033] Figure 15 is a perspective view of another food protector in accordance with another aspect of the present invention.

[0034] Figure 16 is a perspective view of another re-sealable food container in a closed configuration in accordance with yet another embodiment of the present invention.

[0035] Figure 17 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 16 in a partially opened configuration.

[0036] Figure 18 is a perspective view of another re-sealable container in a closed configuration in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0037] Referring now to the drawings, where like elements are represented by like numbers throughout the circle views, in Figures 1 and 2, resealable container 10 includes wrapper 11 which forms top 12, bottom 13, opposing sides 14a and 14b and opposing ends 15a and 15b. The top 12 and side 14a have a die-cut-out forming flap 16 as indicated by broken line 19. The flap 16, when pulled back from container 10, forms opening 18. The wrapper 11 extends past the end of top 12 and bottom 13 at ends 15a and 15b, where the wrapper 11 is crimped together to form crimp seals 21a, 21b.

[0038] A sealing cover or layer is formed from a sealing label 20 which is affixed to the flap 16. Advantageously, the sealing label 20 is permanently affixed to the flap 16 using an appropriate adhesive. The sealing label 20 covers a substantial portion of the top 12 extending from the proximity of side 14a to the proximity of the side 14b and from the proximity of end 15a to the proximity of end 15b. A portion of the sealing label 20 extends over top surface edge 17 and extends along side 14a.

[0039] The surface area of sealing label 20 is advantageously proportional to the size of opening 18. For example, if the sealing label 20 is too large, the covering could get caught or overlap corners 23a, 23b of the package 10, or it could get caught up in the crimp seals 21 a, 21b, both potentially hindering functionality of sealing label 20. Advantageously, the surface area of the sealing label 20 should be approximately 1.5 to 2 times and more preferably around 1.8 times the size of opening 18. Further, it is advantageous to have the size of opening 18 be proportional to the size of the package 10 and the food items contained therein so that, when the container is still full of food product, the consumer will have easy access to at essentially all of the food product inside the package, for example, not requiring one to reach deep inside the container 10 under top 12 to gain access to a food item contained therein. Of course as the container is emptied, the consumer can gain easy access to the remaining food product.

[0040] Graphics may be formed on the sealing label 20 which align with corresponding graphics on top 12 when the sealing label 20 is sealed or in a flap position

on top 12 and side 14a. Alternatively, sealing label 20 may be transparent, allowing graphics of top 12, side 14a and flap 16 to be visible through the sealing label 20.

[0041] A starter portion, for example tab 22 extends from sealing label end 24. As a result, tab 22 can be grasped by ones fingers and thumb such that the tab 22 is easily accessible for one to pull. Further, the tab 22 allows a user to reseal the package. The size and shape of tab 22 are optimized for functionality. Advantageously, tab 22 has a surface area of 1% to 6% that of the total surface area of the sealing label 20.

[0042] Adhesive 26 is applied to the surface of sealing label 20 which is in contact with top 12 and side 14a which includes the perimeter around flap 16. Advantageously, adhesive 26 provides a removable seal between a sealing label 20 and top 12 and side 14a. Adhesive 26 is not applied to tab portion 22.

[0043] The absence of an adhesive on tab 22 allows a consumer to more easily grasp the starter portion in order to open the container 10 since tab 22 will not be sealed to the side 14a. In addition, by giving a consumer a specific portion of the sealing cover on which to pull, the consumer is not drawn to touching the adhesive portion of the sealing label 20 which, because of such touching, could lose its adhesiveness and thus not provide for a proper reseal against the side 14a of the container 10. This could, in turn, allow air to gain access to the interior of the container 10 and the food product contained therein.

[0044] The sealing label 20 is made of a suitable material which provides for a desired moisture vapor transmission rate (MVTR). The MVTR of sealing label 20 limits the amount of moisture transmission between the interior of container 10 and the outside environment, thus maintaining the freshness of the food product contained therein. One preferable material for the sealing label 20 is 2 mil biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) material with a 0.15 g/in²/day MVTR. Preferable materials for the combination of the sealing label 20 and flap 16 have a maximum MVTR of 0.01 g/in²/day.

[0045] Container 10 is transformed from a closed configuration depicted in Figure 1 to a partially open configuration depicted in Figure 2 by grasping the tab 22 between ones fingers and thumb and pulling back on the sealing label 20 to gain access to opening 18. Once container 10 is opened, one can remove individual food product 28 such as cookies or other discrete food item contained inside the container 10 through opening 18.

[0046] Wrapper 11 surrounds a frame 30 which forms a tray for receiving the food contents. Referring to Figure 3, the frame 30 is comprised of a rigid material which forms that shape of the container 10. Suitable rigid materials include plastics and cardboard. Frame 30 includes ends 31a and 31 b. A divider 32 divides the frame 30 into a first section 34 and a second section 36.

[0047] Frame 30 can be any polygonal shape such as the rectangular shape depicted in Figure 3. Accordingly, the rectangularly shaped frame 30 forms a rectangularly

shaped container 10. Alternately, different polygonal shaped frames will form containers having the corresponding polygonal shape.

[0048] In other alternative embodiments, frames other than frame 30, which has a single divider 32 extending longitudinally along the length of the frame 30, can be used to form resealable containers. For example, referring to Figure 4, frame 40 includes a plurality of dividers 42 extending longitudinally along the frame 40. Referring to Figure 5, frame 50 includes a plurality of dividers 52 which extend transversely across the width of the frame 50. Figure 6 depicts a frame 60 which does not include a divider or ends. Figure 7 depicts a frame 70 which does not include a divider or a bottom, having merely ends 71a and 71 b and opposing sides 72a, 72b.

[0049] Selection of a particular frame depends on a desired use. Further, various frames may include ends such as frames 30, 40, and 50 which have ends 31a, 31b, 41a, 41b, 51a, 51b; or the frame may be opened at the ends such as frame 60 with open ends 61a, 61 b.

[0050] In an alternative embodiment, Figures 8 and 9 depict container 110. Like elements in container 110 are numbered similarly to those of container 10 but raised by 100. Container 110 includes wrapper 111 formed around a rigid frame such as one of the frames 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 discussed herein. A continuous parallel die-cut 119 is formed in the wrapper 111 along a portion of top 112 which extends past edge 117, along end 115a and terminates at a package crimp seal 121a of wrapper 111, so that the die-cut 119 forms flap 116. Top 112 is not die-cut along end 115b thus forming a hinged end in the proximity of end 115b.

[0051] A sealing label 120 is affixed to flap 116 along top 112 and end 115a. A starter portion in the form of tab 122 extends from the end of crimp seal 121a. Like container 10, access into opening 118 is provided by a user grasping tab 122 between ones finger and thumb and pulling back on tab 122 to withdraw sealing label 120 with flap 116 permanently affixed thereto thereby exposing opening 118. As a result, one is able to gain access to food product 128.

[0052] One advantage of container 110 is that the parallel cuts forming opening 118 allow for the access opening 118 to be formed without need for a registration system to cut an opening in the wrapper 111 as the die-cut 119 feature can be formed in a continuous fashion.

[0053] An alternative embodiment of container 210 is depicted in Figures 10 and 11 where like reference numbers are increased by 200 over those of container 10 of Figure 1. Container 210 includes a pair of openings 218a, 218b in top 212. A pair of parallel die-cuts 219a, 219b form flaps 216a, 216b which are affixed to sealing labels 220a, 220b, respectively. In one advantageous form, each sealing label 220a, 220b provides access to the food contents contained within a tray which defines the shape of container 210 and contains the food product. For example, the tray may include two compartments, each one located under one of the openings 218a, 218b.

Access to food product contained in the tray is provided through the corresponding opening.

[0054] Referring now to Figures 12 and 13, in an alternative embodiment, container 310 includes a side opening 318 formed in side 314a. The opening 318 is sufficiently large to allow one to withdraw food product contained therein.

[0055] The food product may be contained in any appropriate food protector which includes any of the frames or trays 30, 40, 50, 60 or 70. Alternatively, the food protector may be a slug 80 surrounding a food product as shown in Figure 14 or a core buff 90 depicted in Figure 15 which provides rigidity to the container 310 and provides protection to a food product wrapped therein. Slugs 80 can be formed from a plastic or wax paper or other suitable material. Core buff 90 can be formed from a corrugated cardboard paper or other suitable wrap material. Alternatively, individual trays containing a single row of food product like tray 60 which may or may not be closed at ends 61a, 61b, may be disposed in container 310. The individual trays can be individually withdrawn thereby removing a single row of food product from container 310 through opening 318.

[0056] In an alternative embodiment to container 310, the sealing label 320 can be peelable from side 314a from both the left side as shown in Figures 12 and 13 as well as from the right side, in a manner similar to sealing label 220 of container 210, thus allowing one to access opening 318 from either the left side or right side of the container.

[0057] In yet another alternative embodiment, Figures 16 and 17 depict container 410 which comprises a wrapper 411 which surrounds a rigid frame that provides the polygonal shape of container 410. A rigid lid 423 includes hinges 425 which pivotally attach lid 423 to rigid collar 426 which in turn is attached to top 412. Lid 423 includes lip 427 and raised portion 428 defining a groove 429, therebetween. When in its closed configuration, lid 423 interlockingly engages with collar 426 by having collar 426 engage with and be disposed in groove 429. Access to food product contained in container 410 is provided by one pulling up on tab 430 and pulling back on lid 423 so that lid 423 pivots along hinges 425.

[0058] In another embodiment, Figure 18 depicts container 510 which is formed by wrapper 511 composed of a flexible material similar to that of wrapper 11. Unlike container 10, the polygonal shape of container 510 is provided by a rigid material incorporated into wrapper 511 on the perimeter edges of each face of the container such as perimeter 517. Advantageously, a strip of rigid plastic material may be formed on each face of container 510 such as the perimeter of each face to provide a desired rigidity to container 510. Access into container 510 is similar to that of container 310.

[0059] An alternative to any of the aforementioned embodiments would be to combine the rigidity of material 517 to one or more faces of any of the containers of the present invention to provide additional rigidity to the re-

spective container.

[0060] As will now be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art, the present containers provided features advantages not found in prior food containers.

[0061] Although the invention has been described in detail with respect to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be apparent that the invention is capable of numerous modifications and variations, apparent to those skilled in the art, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

Claims

1. A food container comprising:

a frame defining the shape of the container; said container having a top, a bottom and sides connecting the top and bottom, the frame containing a food product;

a wrapper surrounding said frame, said wrapper forming the top, sides and bottom of the container;

said top and one said side having an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to substantially all of the food product contained within the frame; and

a sealing layer having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user, said sealing layer adhesively sealed to said top and said one side around said opening, said sealing layer being releasable when said starter portion is pulled in a direction away from said side to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of said sealing layer to provide said hand access to said top access opening and resealable against said top and said one side to seal said opening when said sealing layer is moved back against said top and said one side.

2. The food container of Claim 1, wherein said top and the one said side of said wrapper comprise a flap having substantially the same dimensions as said opening and permanently affixed to said sealing layer.

3. The food container of Claim 1 or 2, wherein said starter portion comprises a tab which projects past an edge of said one side of the container upon which said starter portion is sealed, said tab being accessible beyond said edge to be grasped by a user.

4. The food container of Claim 1 or 2, wherein said starter portion comprises a tab.

5. The food container of any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein said sealing layer is transparent.

6. The food container of any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein said top of the container includes graphics around said opening, and said sealing layer includes graphics which match the graphics on said top.

7. The food container of any one of Claims 1 to 6, wherein said starter portion is located at a crimp seal end of said wrapper.

8. A polygonal shaped food container comprising:

a frame defining the polygonal shape of the container, said container having a top, a bottom and sides connecting the top and bottom, the frame containing a food product;

a wrapper surrounding said frame, said wrapper forming the top, sides and bottom of the container;

said top having at least two access openings to, together, provide access to substantially all of the food product contained within the frame; and at least two sealing layers, each having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user, each said sealing layer adhesively sealed to said top around a respective one of said two openings, each said sealing layer being releasable when a respective said starter portion is pulled in a direction away from said top to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of said respective sealing layer to provide said hand access to said respective top access opening and resealable against said top to seal said respective opening when said respective sealing layer is moved back against said top.

9. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 8, wherein said frame comprises a tray.

10. The polygonal shaped food container of Claim 9 wherein said tray comprises two compartments, each compartment accessible through a respective one of the at least two openings.

11. The polygonal shaped food container of Claim 9 or 10, wherein at least one of said at least two sealing layers extends from said top along at least a portion of one of the sides of said container.

12. A polygonal shaped food container comprising:

one or more food protectors containing a food product and defining the polygonal shape of the container, said container having a top, a bottom and sides connecting the top and bottom;

a wrapper surrounding said one or more food protectors, said wrapper forming the top, sides and bottom of the container;

one of said sides having an access opening suf-

ficiently large to allow said one or more food protectors to be withdrawn therethrough; and a sealing layer having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user, said sealing layer adhesively sealed to said one side around said opening, said sealing layer being releasable when said starter portion is pulled in a direction away from said side to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of said sealing layer to provide withdrawal of said one or more food protectors and reclosable against said side to seal said opening when said sealing layer is moved back against said side.

13. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 12, wherein said one or more food protectors comprises a tray.

14. The polygonal shaped food container of Claim 12 or 13, wherein said one or more food protectors comprises a slug surrounding the food product.

15. The polygonal shaped food container of any one of Claims 12 to 14, wherein said one or more food protectors comprises a core buff surrounding the food product.

16. The polygonal shaped food container of any one of Claims 12 to 15, wherein said one or more food protectors comprises a frame surrounding the food product.

17. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 16, wherein said frame comprises sides but not a bottom or a top.

18. A polygonal shaped food container comprising:

a wrapper composed of a first, flexible material; a second material more rigid than the first material, said second material incorporated with said wrapper to provide rigidity to said wrapper and to define faces of the container, said faces comprising a top, sides and bottom of the container, the wrapper with incorporated rigid material containing a food product; one of said faces having an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to the food product contained within the wrapper; and a sealing layer having a starter portion which can be grasped by a user, said sealing layer adhesively sealed to said one face around said opening, said sealing layer being releasable when said starter portion is pulled in a direction away from said face to in turn pull and thereby release at least a portion of said sealing layer to provide withdrawal of said food items and reclosable against said face to seal said opening

when said sealing layer is moved back against said face.

19. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 18, wherein said second material is disposed along substantially the entire the perimeter of at least one of said faces of said container.

20. A polygonal shaped food container comprising:

a frame defining the polygonal shape of the container, said container having a top, a bottom and sides connecting the top and bottom, the frame containing a food product; a wrapper surrounding said frame, said wrapper forming the top, sides and bottom of the container; said top having an access opening sufficiently large to provide access to substantially all of the food product contained within the frame; and a rigid lid hingedly attached to said top,

wherein said container is transformed to an opened configuration by pivoting said lid away from said top along said hinge to provide said access to said top access opening, and returned to a closed configuration by turning said lid back along said hinge so that said lid covers said access opening.

21. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 20 further comprising a rigid collar surrounding said access opening; said collar engaging with said lid when said container is in a closed configuration.

22. The polygonal shaped food container of claim 21, wherein said collar forms an interlocking engagement with said lid when said container is in the closed configuration.

Fig. 1.

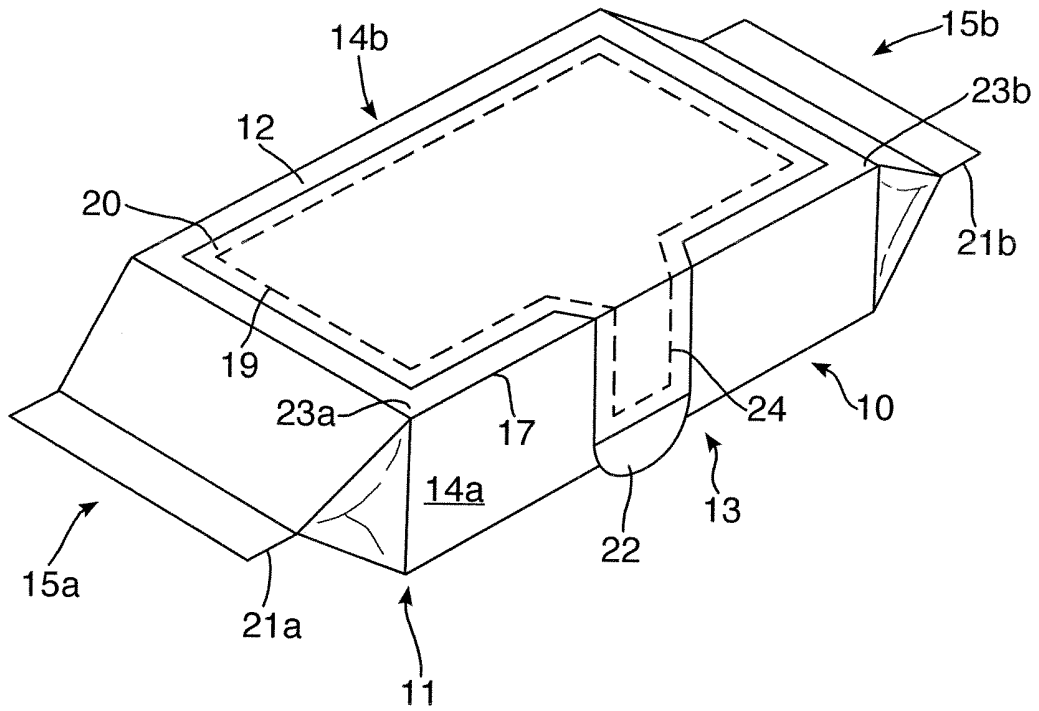
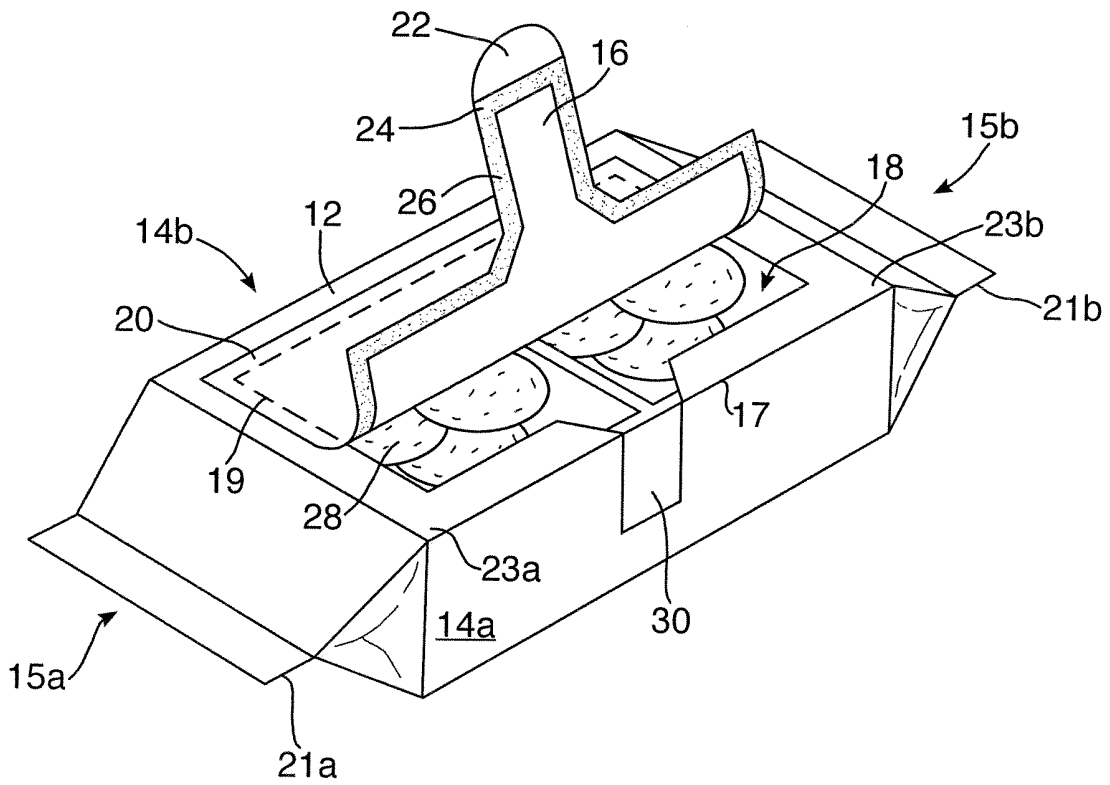


Fig. 2.



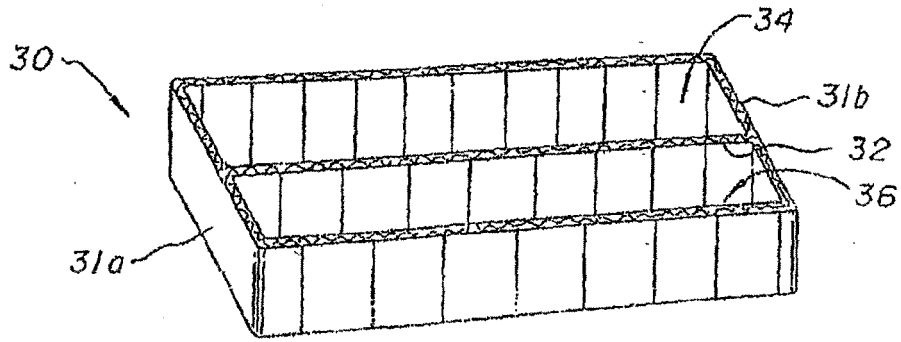


FIGURE 3

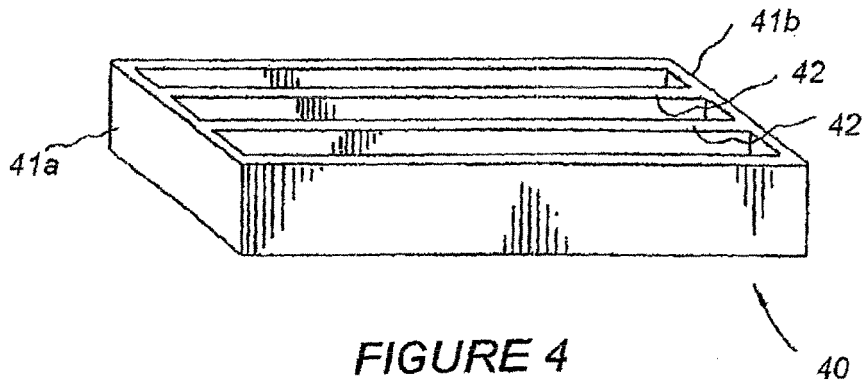
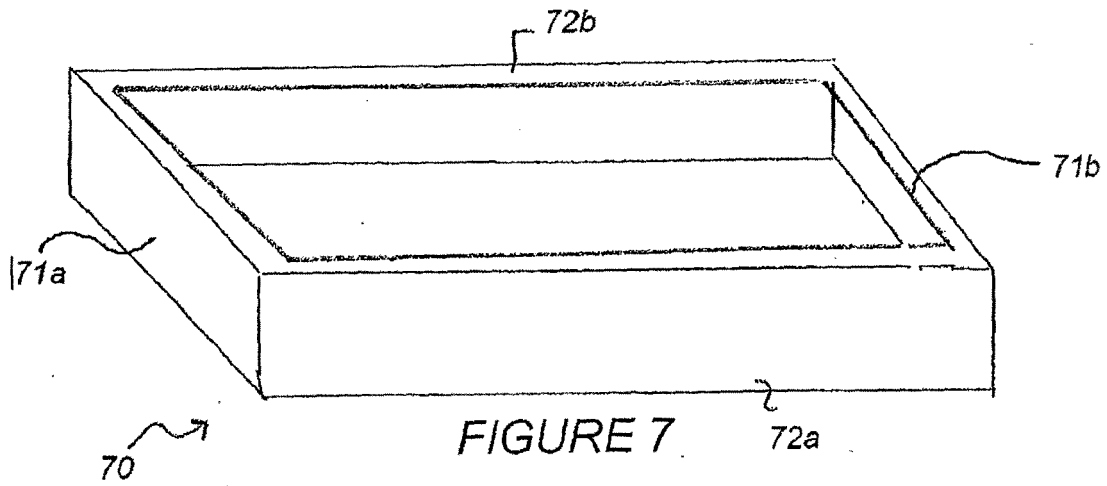
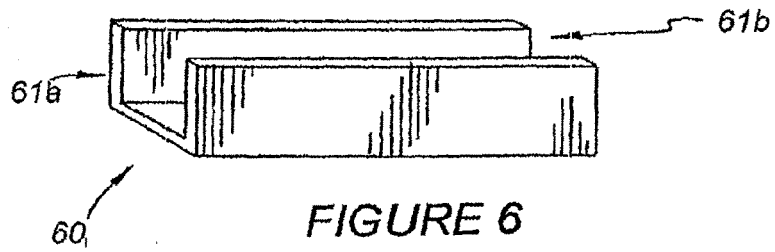
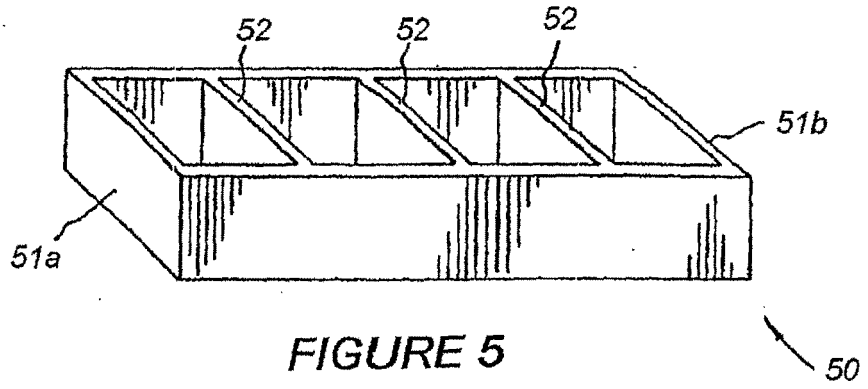
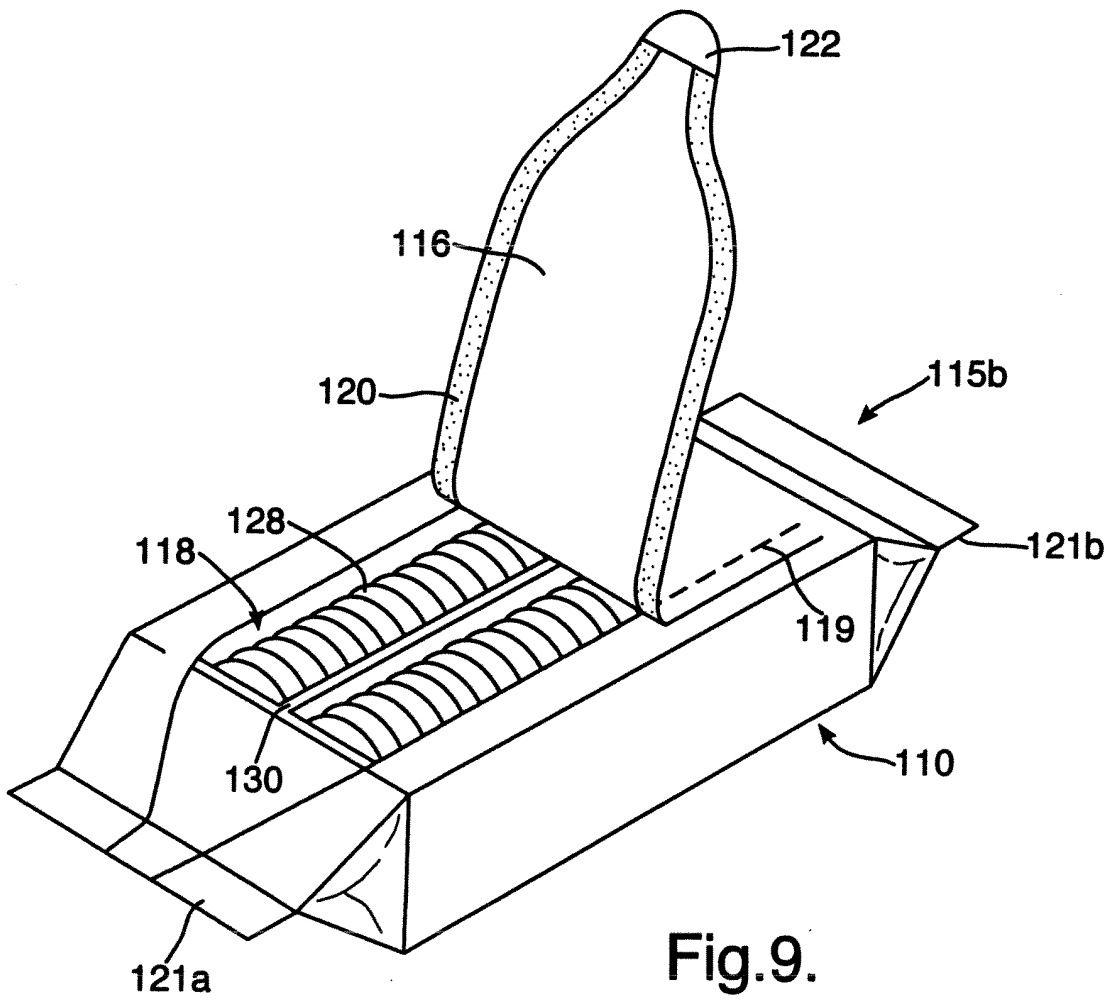
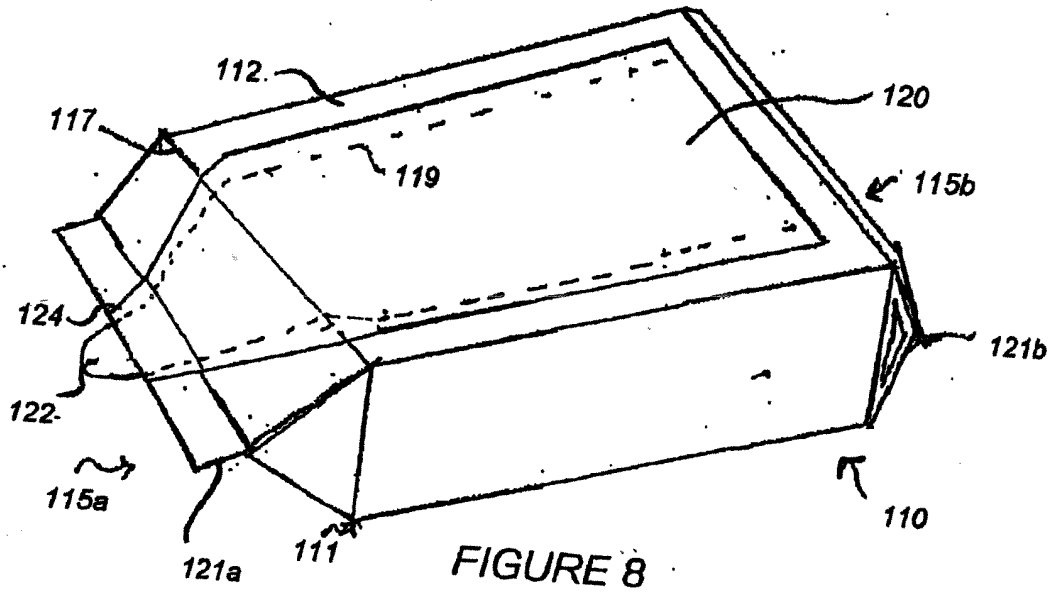


FIGURE 4





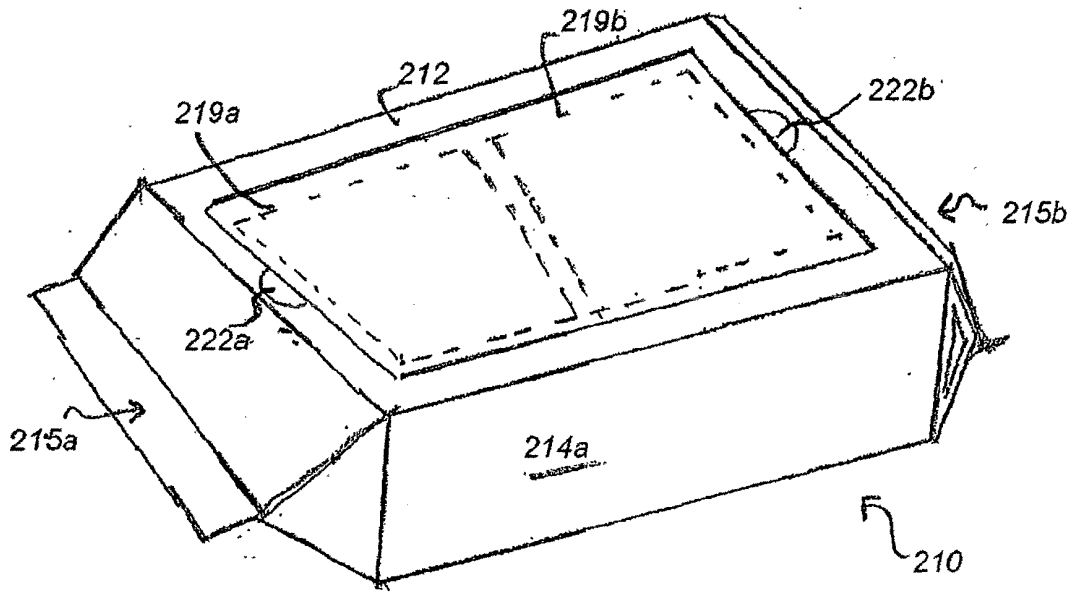


FIGURE 10

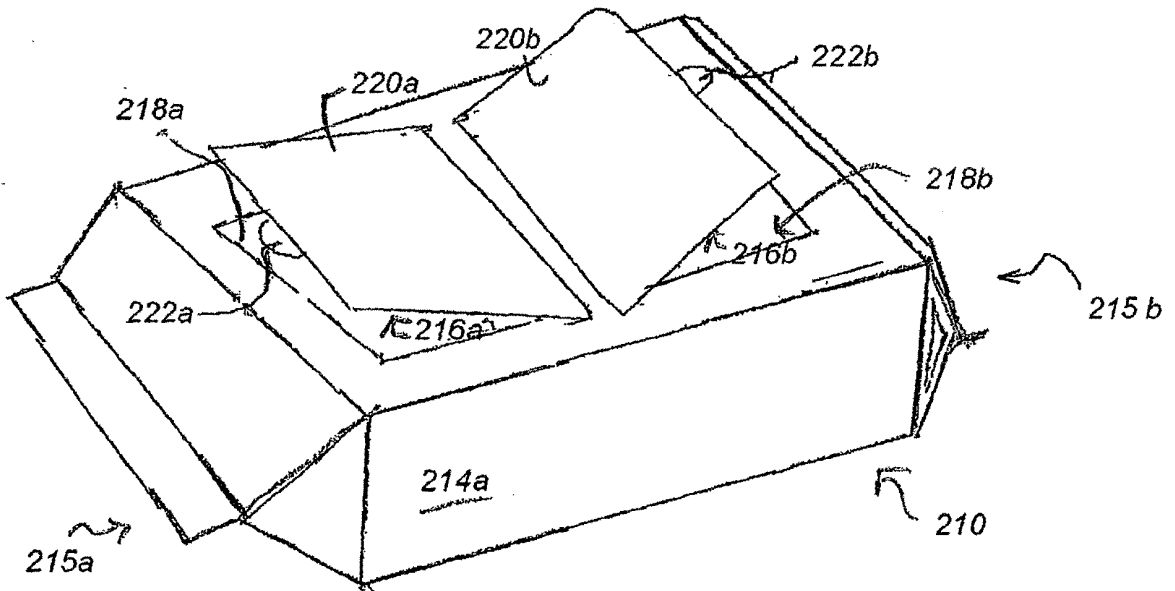


FIGURE 11

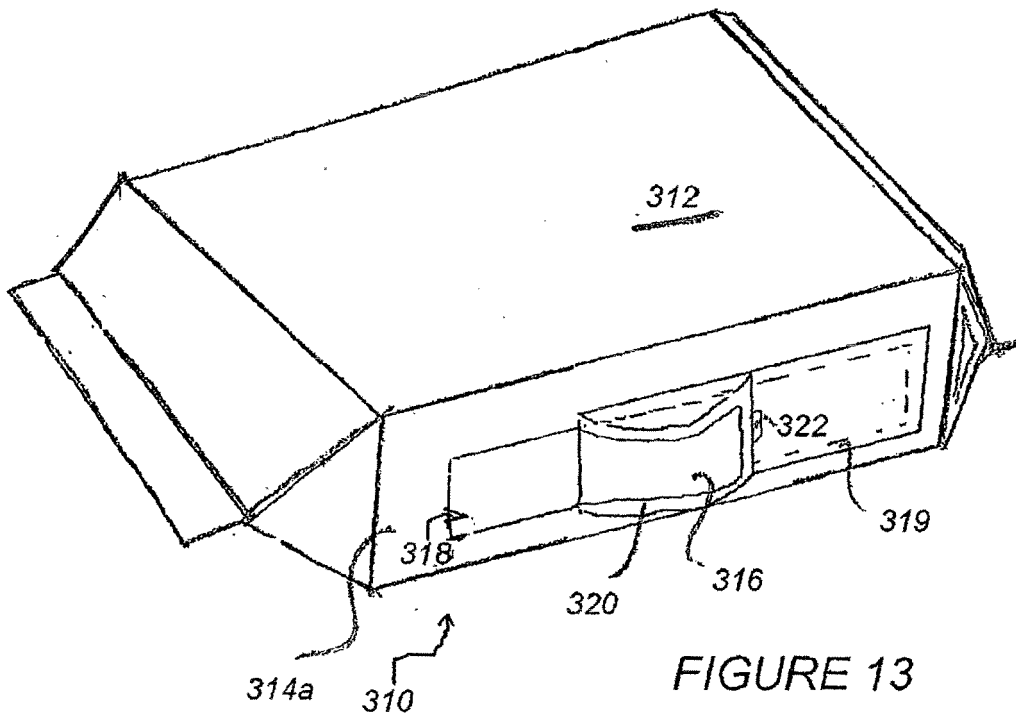
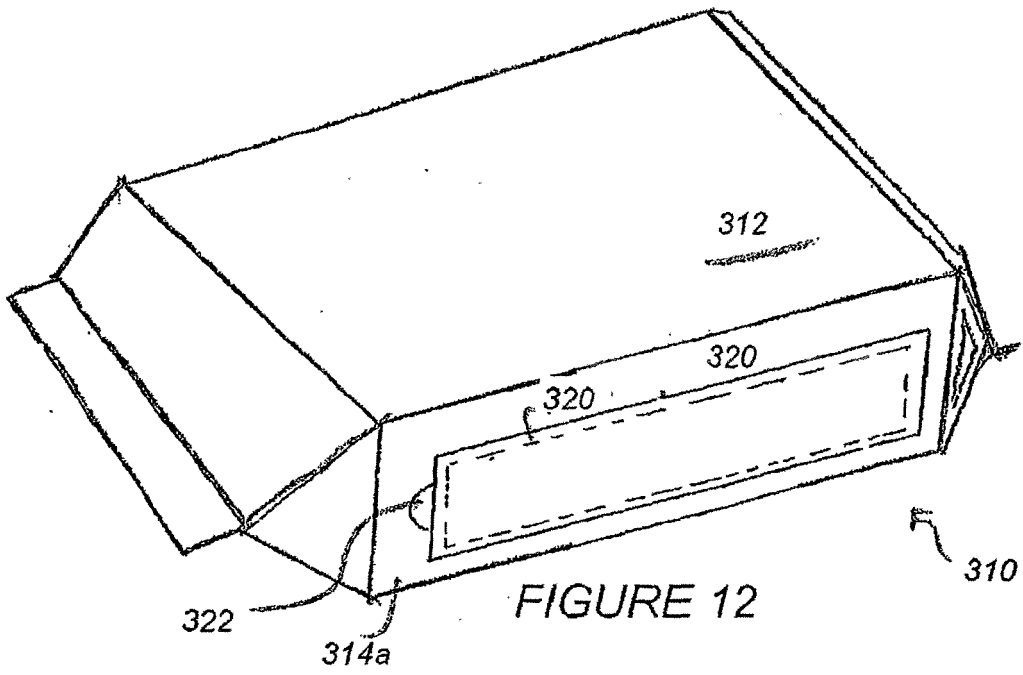


Fig.14.

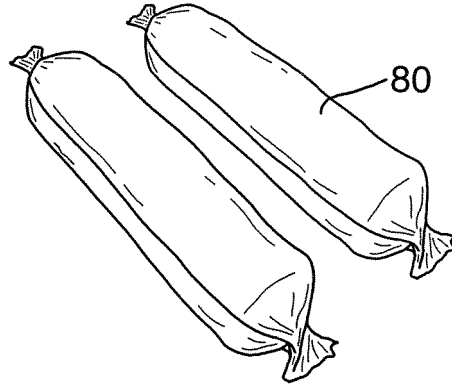
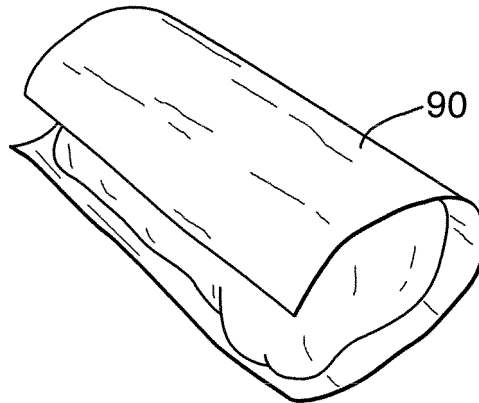
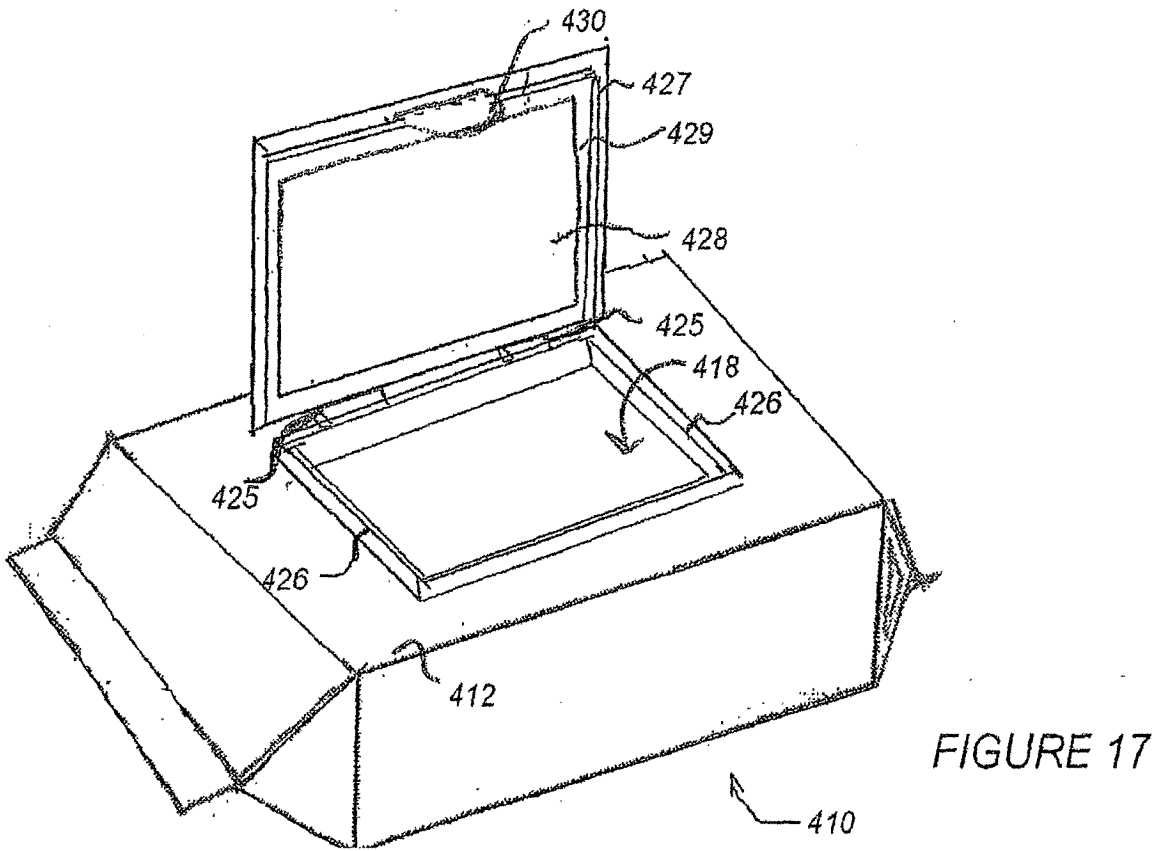
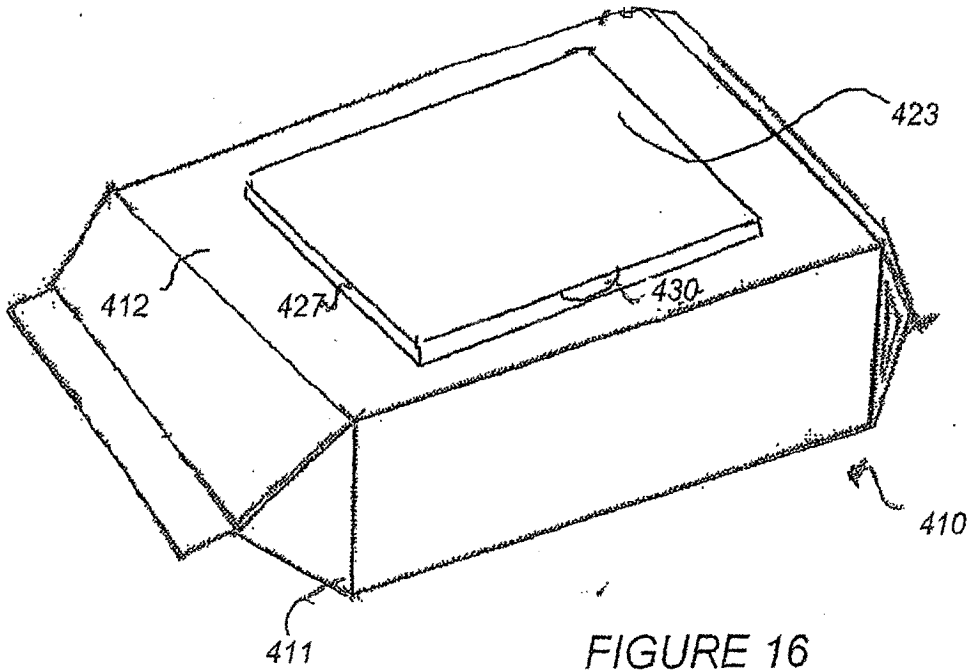


Fig.15.





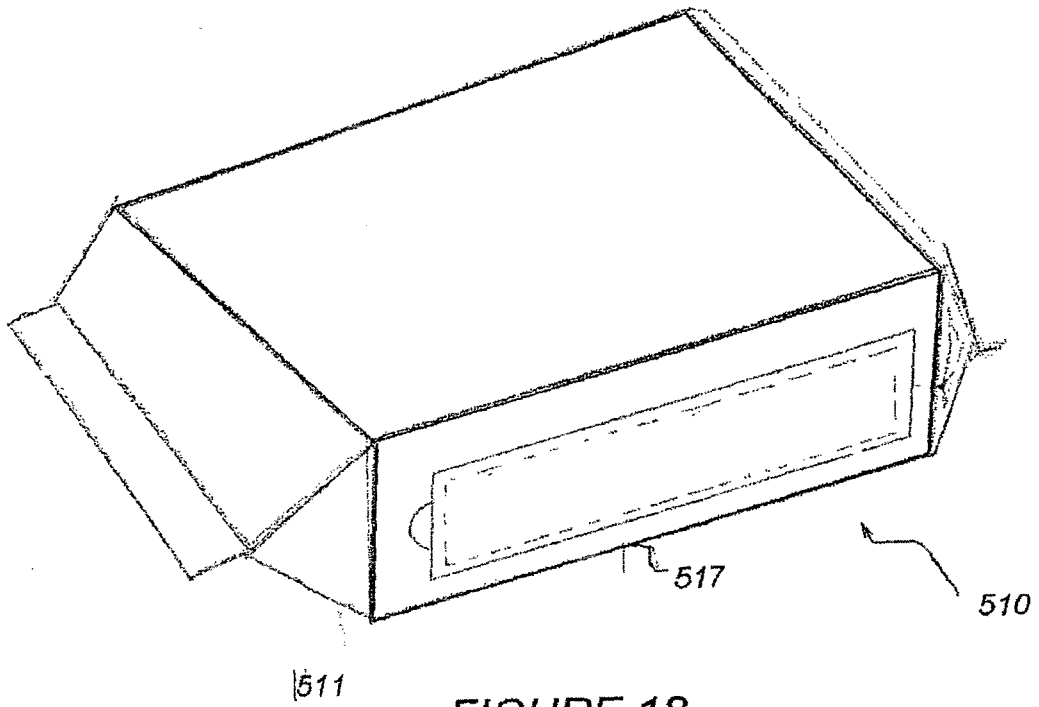


FIGURE 18

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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