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(54) Transport and display packaging assembly

(57) A packaging assembly (10) for transporting, storing and displaying containers (24) includes a merchandising feature that facilitates moving containers toward a display opening (14) of the tray as the front container is removed by a customer.

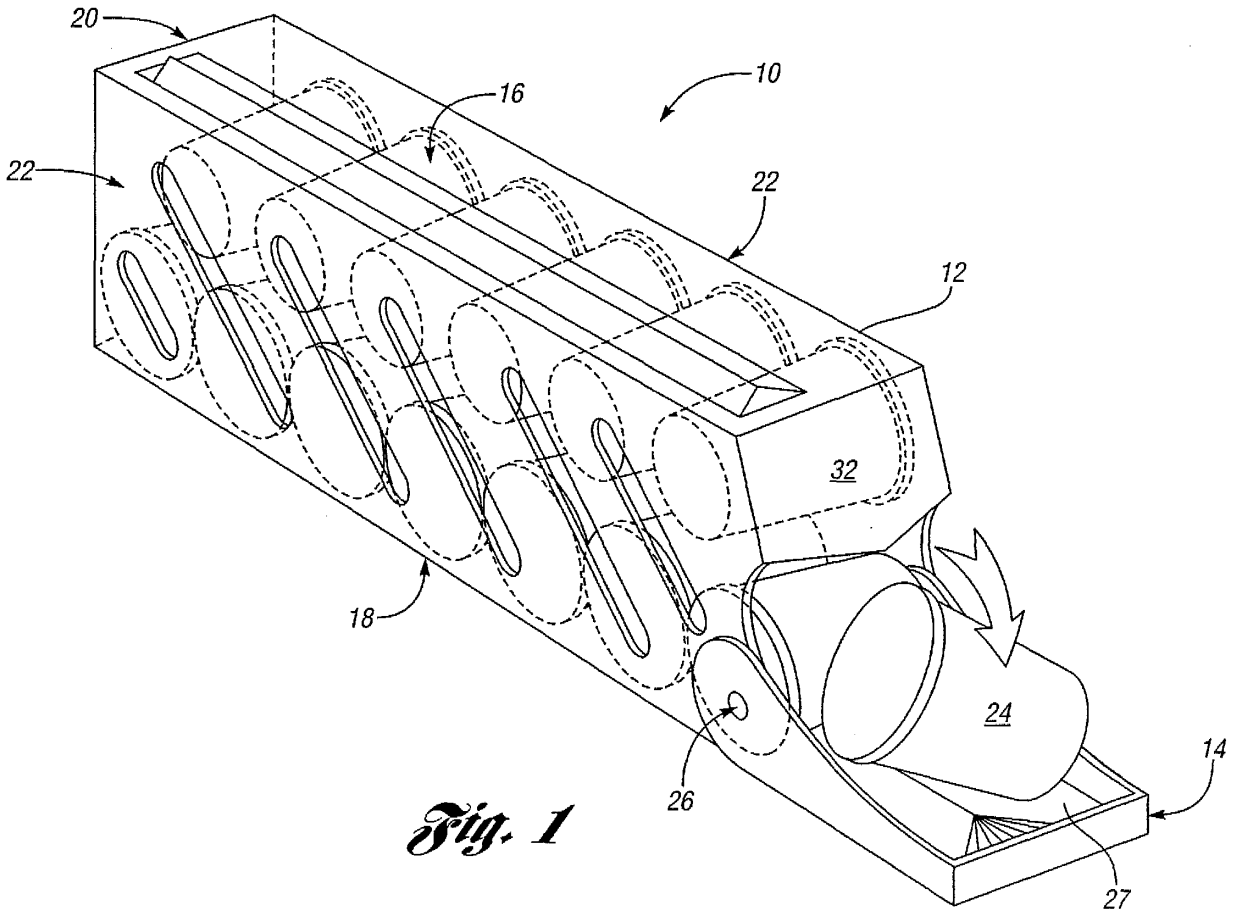


Fig. 1

EP 2 060 500 A1

Description

[0001] This invention relates to packaging for transporting, storing and displaying containers.

[0002] Small food or beverage containers are currently shipped to stores in boxes. The containers are removed from the boxes and manually arranged on refrigerator shelves for display to customers. Customers select one or more of the containers positioned at the front of the shelf. Store workers manually rearrange the containers periodically to move the remaining containers to the front of the shelf to make them more visible and accessible to customers and to facilitate first in first out inventory management.

Manually unloading the containers onto the store shelves and periodically shifting all of the rows of the containers forward is time-consuming. The current boxes are discarded and not reused.

[0003] It is therefore desirable to provide an improved packaging assembly which addresses the above described problems and/or which more generally offers improvements or an alternative to existing arrangements.

[0004] Accordingly to the present invention there is therefore provided a packaging assembly as variously described in the accompanying claims.

[0005] The present invention provides a reusable packaging assembly for transporting, storing and displaying containers, which includes a merchandising feature that facilitates moving containers toward a display opening of the packaging as the front container is removed by a customer.

[0006] Other advantages of the present invention can be understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view a packaging assembly according to one example embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a side view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1;

Figure 2A is a front view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1, with the front portion closed;

Figure 3 is a front view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is a side view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1 in a stacked configuration with a similar packaging assembly;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the packaging assembly of Figure 5 with the front portion closed;

Figure 7 is a section view taken along line A-A of Figure 6;

Figure 8 is a front view of the packaging assembly of Figure 5 in a stacked configuration with similar packaging assemblies;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention in a stacked configuration with a similar packaging assembly;

Figure 10A is a sectional side view of the packaging assembly of Figure 9 with the spring assembly in a fully loaded position;

Figure 10B is a view similar to Figure 10A with the spring assembly in the unloaded position;

Figure 11 is a side view of the packaging assembly of Figure 9 in a stacked configuration with two similar packaging assemblies;

Figure 12 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 13 is a sectional view of the packaging assembly of Figure 12 taken along line A-A with the side flaps in an extended, support position;

Figure 14 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention in a stacked configuration;

Figure 15 is a perspective view of a release button of the packaging assembly of Figure 14;

Figure 16 is a side view of the packaging assembly of Figure 14, with the side wall broken away;

Figure 17 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 18 is a side view of a plurality of packaging assemblies of Figure 17 in a stacked configuration on a shelf;

Figure 19 is a perspective view of a packaging assembly according to another example embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 20 is an end view of the packaging assembly of Figure 19 in a stacked configuration with a similar packaging assembly;

Figure 21 is a perspective view of the tray of the packaging assembly of Figure 19;

Figure 22 is a side view of the tray of the packaging assembly of Figure 19 in a stacked configuration with a similar tray;

Figure 23 is a side view of the tray of Figure 19 in a nested configuration with a similar tray; and

Figure 24 is a perspective view of the packaging assembly of Figure 19 including an alternate rack.

[0007] A packaging assembly 10 according to a first embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 1. The packaging assembly 10 includes a box 12 and a front portion 14 pivotably attached to the box 12. The box 12 includes a top portion 16, a bottom portion 18, an end portion 20 and a pair of opposing side portions 22 extending upward from the bottom portion 18 of the box 12. The top portion 16, the bottom portion 18 and the pair of opposing side portions 22 define an interior space in which containers 24 are placed.

[0008] The front portion 14 includes a recess 27 on an

interior surface and is pivotably connected to the side portions 22 at pivot axis 26. The front portion 14 of the packaging assembly 10 is pivotable from an open position to a closed position, as illustrated in Figure 2.

[0009] In the open position, the front portion 14 is pivoted downward about the pivot axis 26 to provide access to the containers 24. In the open position, customers have access to view and select containers for purchase. Also, an advertising space 32 (Figures 1 and 3), which extends downward from the top portion 16 of the box 12, is exposed when the front portion 14 is pivoted to the open position.

[0010] In the closed position, the front portion 14 is pivoted upward about the pivot axis 26. As shown in Figure 2A, the exterior of the front portion 14 includes a handle 34 extending partially over an adjacent recess 36.

[0011] Referring to Figure 3, the top portion 16 of the box 12 includes at least one rib 28 extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the top portion 16 and at least one groove 30 extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the bottom portion 18, corresponding to the at least one rib 28.

[0012] As illustrated in Figure 4, a similar packaging assembly 10' is stackable upon the packaging assembly 10 such that the at least one rib 28 of the lower packaging assembly 10 engages the at least one groove 30' of the upper packaging assembly 10'.

[0013] In the example embodiment illustrated in Figures 1-4, the containers 24 are placed horizontally within the interior space of the packaging assembly 10 in an alternating arrangement, i.e. the containers 24 are placed on their sides, with a bottom row of containers 24 having tops facing and substantially parallel to one of the opposing side portions 22 of the box 12 and a top row of containers 24 having tops facing and substantially parallel to the other of the opposing side portions 22 of the box 12.

[0014] In use, the packaging assembly 10 is shipped to a store full of containers 24 (such as yogurt containers). The packaging assembly 10 can be carried by the handle 34 and by a similar handle (not shown) molded into the end portion 20. The packaging assembly 10 can be placed directly onto a shelf, such as a shelf in a refrigerated section of the store, and similar packaging assemblies 10' can be stacked on the packaging assembly 10. On the shelf, the front portion 24 is opened so that customers can view and remove the containers 24. When the packaging assembly 10 is empty, it can be returned to the warehouse or manufacturer to be reused.

[0015] A packaging assembly 10A according to an alternate version of the first embodiment is illustrated in Figures 5-8. In the packaging assembly 10A, the containers 24 are placed vertically within the interior space of the packaging assembly 10A and arranged side-by-side. The packaging assembly 10A includes a box 12A and a front portion 14A pivotably attached to the box 12A. The box 12A includes a top portion 16A, a bottom portion 18A, an end portion 20A and a pair of opposing side portions 22A extending upward from the bottom portion 18A of the box 12A. The interior surface of the front portion 14A includes a recess 27A into which the containers 24 can be slid during removal. The recess 27A is partially defined by a wall 29A ramped upwardly toward the outer end of the front portion 14A (in the open position).

[0016] Referring to Figure 6, the front portion 14A includes a handle 34A defined adjacent an exterior recess 36A. As shown in Figure 7, the top portion 16A includes a pair of ribs 28A in alignment with a complementary pair of grooves 30A in a bottom portion 18A. Several stacks of packaging assemblies 10A, 10A' are supported on a store shelf in Figure 8.

[0017] A packaging assembly 110 according to a second embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 9. The packaging assembly 110 generally includes a box 112 and a cylindrical portion 116 disposed within the box 112, although the box 112 and cylindrical portion 116 are integrally molded together in left and right halves which are snap-fit, welded or glued together.

[0018] The box 112 includes a front portion 114, a bottom portion 118, a rear portion 120 and a pair of opposing side portions 122 extending upward from the bottom portion 118.

[0019] The cylindrical portion 116 is disposed within the pair of opposing side portions 122 and extends from the rear portion 120 to the front portion 114. An opening 125 is disposed in the cylindrical portion 116, proximate to the front portion 114 of the box 112.

[0020] An arched opening 119 is formed at a lower edge of the front portion 114. The arched opening 119 leads to a cavity 121, shown in Figure 10A, below the cylindrical portion 116.

[0021] As illustrated in Figures 10A and 10B, a spring mechanism 150 may be disposed within the cylindrical portion 116, proximate to the rear portion 120 of the box 112. The spring mechanism 150 includes a spring 152 and a slide 154. The slide 154 is contained within the cylindrical portion 116 and the spring 152 is contained within the slide 154 with a spring extension portion 156 extending along an interior of the cylindrical portion 116. The slide 154 includes an engagement surface 158, which interacts with containers 124 to move the containers 124 within the cylindrical portion 116 toward the opening 125 located near the front portion of the box 112.

[0022] The spring mechanism 150 moves from a fully loaded position, illustrated in Figure 10A, to an unloaded position, illustrated in Figure 10B, as containers 124 are removed from the opening 125, i.e. the spring 152 is operable to move the slide 154 along a plane substantially parallel to the bottom portion 118 as the spring mechanism 150 moves from the fully loaded position to the unloaded position.

[0023] As containers 124 are inserted into the packaging assembly 110 through the opening 125 the spring mechanism 150 moves toward the fully loaded position. Conversely, as containers 124 are removed from the packaging assembly 110 through the opening 125 the spring mechanism 150 moves toward the unloaded po-

sition, thus moving the containers 24 to a position adjacent the opening 125.

[0024] As shown in Figure 9, the packaging assembly 110 can be stacked on a similar packaging assembly 110'. The cylindrical portion 116' of the lower packaging assembly 110' is received in the opening 119 in the front portion 114 and in the cavity 121 (Figure 10A) of the upper packaging assembly 110. Referring to Figure 11, another packaging assembly 110" could be stacked on top of the packaging assembly 110 in a similar manner. By staggering the packaging assemblies 110, 110', 110" as shown, access to all of the containers 24 through the three openings 125, 125', 125" is provided.

[0025] A packaging assembly 210 according to a third embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 12.

[0026] The packaging assembly 210 includes a tray 212 having a wall portion 214 extending upwardly from a periphery of a bottom portion 216. A pair of opposing wedge-shaped side flaps 220 extend along opposing sides of the wall portion 214 of the tray 212.

[0027] The tray 212 further includes a support lip 213 along an upper edge of the wall portion 214 and an open access 215 located at a front end of the packaging assembly 210.

[0028] Each of the pair of opposing side flaps 220 is integrally molded with the tray 212 and connected to the tray 212 by a living hinge 222. Each side flap 220 is moveable between an extended, support position and a folded position. In the support position, it extends downward, where it supports the tray 212 at an incline on a shelf or another, similar loaded packaging assembly. This moves the containers 224 toward the front of the packaging assembly 210 and the access 215. In the folded position against the tray 212 (shown in phantom in Figure 13), the packaging assembly 210 can be nested within another similar empty packaging assembly, so that it can be shipped back to the warehouse more efficiently.

[0029] The support lip 213 provides support for the containers 224 and the containers 224 slide down the incline along the support lip 213 toward the access cutout 215 for removal by a customer for purchase. As shown in Figure 13, the containers 224 are supported by their lids on the support lip 213.

[0030] A packaging assembly 310 according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figures 14-16.

[0031] The packaging assembly 310 includes a base 312 and at least one cartridge 314. The cartridge 314 is stackable upon the base 312 and slideably engaged with the base 312. In the example shown, a similar cartridge 314' is stacked upon and slideably engaged with the cartridge 314.

[0032] Each of the base 312, the cartridge 314 and the similar cartridge 314' includes a top portion 316, a bottom portion 318, opposing side portions 320, a rear portion 322 and a front portion 323. The opposing side portions 320 extend between the top portion 316 and the bottom portion 318. Each front portion includes a display opening 326, although preferably, the display opening 326 of the base 312 is much larger than those on the cartridge trays 314, 314'.

[0033] Additionally, as illustrated in Figure 15, each of the base 312, the cartridge 314 and the similar cartridge 314' includes a release latch button 330 that releaseably secures another tray above it.

[0034] As illustrated in Figure 16, the containers 324 are visible in each of the display openings 326 of the base 312 and the cartridge 314 and accessible to a customer for removal through the display opening 326 of the base 312.

[0035] The bottom portions 318, 318' of the cartridge packaging assemblies 314, 314' are inclined at an angle θ with respect to horizontal while the bottom portion 318 of the base packaging assembly 312 is declined at the same angle θ.

[0036] As containers 324 are removed though the display opening 326 of the base 312, containers 324 contained within the cartridge 314 and the similar cartridge 314' slide along their respective bottom portions 318, 318' toward a container supply opening 332, 332' formed in each respective bottom portion 318, 318'.

[0037] The containers 324 slide through the container supply openings 332, 322' and into a container receiving opening 334 formed in the top portion 316 of the base 312. The containers 324 then slide along the declined bottom surface 318 of the base packaging assembly 312 toward the display opening 326 in the base packaging assembly 312 for removal by a customer.

[0038] A packaging assembly 410 according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 17. The packaging assembly 410 includes a box 412 and a removable front face 414. The box 412 includes a rear portion 416, a front portion 418, a bottom portion 420, a top portion 422 and a pair of opposing side portions 424.

[0039] The bottom portion 420 includes a lower surface 420A and an upper surface 420B. The lower surface 420A of the bottom portion extends substantially horizontally between the rear portion 416 and the front portion 418. The upper surface 420B of the bottom portion 420 also extends between the rear portion 416 and the front portion 418 but the upper surface 420B declines as it extends from the rear portion 416 to the front portion 418.

[0040] The front portion 418 includes an advertising space 426 and a display opening 428 is formed at an intersection of the front portion 418 and the top portion 422. Product advertisements are placed within the advertising space 426 and containers are displayed for purchase within the display opening 428.

[0041] Containers 424 are positioned within the box 412 and visible within the display opening 428. The removable front face 414 is removably attached to the box 412, covering the display opening 428.

[0042] The box 412 also includes at least one rib 430 extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the top portion 422 of the box 412 and at least one groove 432

extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the bottom portion 420 of the box 412. In this example, two ribs 430 and two grooves 432 are shown.

[0043] The ribs 430 of the box 412 correspond to the grooves 432' of a similar box 412' such that the ribs 430 are received in the grooves 432' of the similar box 412' stacked thereon. The stacked boxes 412, 412' are placed on a shelf 436 for display, as illustrated in Figure 18.

[0044] In the example embodiment, the box 412 is reuseable and the front face 414 is disposable. As such, the box 412 is constructed, for example, from plastic and the front face 414 is constructed, for example, from cardboard or styrene. In use, the packaging assemblies 410 would be loaded and shipped to the store, where the front face 414 would be removed and where multiple packaging assemblies 410 could be stacked on a shelf. Customers would remove containers 424 through the open display opening 424. When empty, the packaging assemblies 410 would be returned to the store for reuse.

[0045] A packaging assembly 510 according to a sixth embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 19. The packaging assembly 510 includes a tray 512 and a rack 514. The rack 514 includes a plurality of legs 520 extending downward from a tray stacking platform 522, each having a recess 521 at a lower end and a complementary interlocking portion 523 protruding upwardly above the platform 522. An inwardly offset protrusion 526 extends upward from the tray stacking platform 522 inwardly adjacent each interlocking portion 523.

[0046] Referring to Figure 20, a similar rack 514' is stackable upon the rack 514, such that the recesses 521' of the upper rack 514' receive the interlocking portions 523 of the lower rack 514, and the legs 520' of the upper rack 514' abut the protrusions 526 of the lower rack 514, as illustrated in Figure 20.

[0047] The tray 512 includes a plurality of container support areas 516 and a plurality of stacking support areas 518, as illustrated in Figure 21. Containers 524 are placed within the container support areas 516 and the tray 512 is stacked upon a tray stacking platform 522 of the rack 514.

[0048] Alternatively, as illustrated in Figure 22, the tray 512 is stackable with a similar tray 512', when containers 526 are positioned within the container support areas 516 of the tray 512. The stacking support areas 518' of the similar tray 512' engage tops of the containers 526, which are positioned within the container support areas 516 of the tray 512.

[0049] As illustrated in Figure 23, the tray 512 and the similar tray 512' are nestable within one another when no containers 526 are present.

[0050] Alternatively, the tray 512 is slideably stackable within an alternate rack 550, as illustrated in Figure 24.

[0051] The invention has been described in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology that has been used is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation. Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

Claims

1. A packaging assembly comprising:

   a top portion;
   a bottom portion;
   an end portion;
   a pair of opposing side portions extending upward from the bottom portion to the top portion;
   the top portion, bottom portion and the pair of opposing side portions defining an interior space for storing a plurality of containers; and
   a front portion pivotably attached to the bottom portion of the tray, the front portion having a recess on an interior surface and a handle on an exterior surface.

2. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 1, wherein the front portion is pivotable from a closed position, where the front portion acts as a carrying handle for carrying the packaging assembly, to an open position to provide access to the interior space.

3. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 2, further including an advertising space extending down from the top portion, the advertising space is visible when the front portion is in the open position.

4. The packaging assembly as recited in any preceding claim, further including a plurality of containers in an alternating arrangement, the plurality of containers in a horizontal orientation with respect to one another within the interior space.

5. The packaging assembly as recited in any preceding claim, wherein the containers roll toward the front portion when the packaging assembly is placed on a level surface.

6. The packaging assembly as recited in any preceding laim, the top portion having at least one rib extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the top portion, the bottom portion of the packaging assembly having at least one complementary groove extending longitudinally along an outer surface of the bottom portion.

7. A packaging assembly comprising:

   a bottom portion;
   a front portion;
   a rear portion;

a pair of opposing side portions extending upward from the bottom portion; and
a cylindrical portion disposed within the pair of opposing side portions, extending from the rear portion to the front portion, having an opening proximate the front portion; and
a spring mechanism disposed within the cylindrical portion for moving items toward the opening proximate the front portion.

8. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 7, the spring mechanism having an engagement surface, wherein the engagement surface is proximate to the front portion of the tray in an unloaded position and proximate to the rear portion of the tray in a fully loaded position, wherein the engagement surface moves substantially parallel to the bottom portion from the unloaded position to the fully loaded position when items are added to the packaging assembly and from the fully loaded position to the unloaded position as items are removed from the packaging assembly.

9. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 7 or 8, the bottom portion having a concave bottom surface, such that the bottom surface of the packaging assembly can be stacked upon, and partially receive, the cylindrical portion of a similar packaging assembly.

10. A packaging assembly comprising:

a tray having a bottom portion and a wall portion extending upwardly from the bottom portion, about a periphery of the bottom portion; and
a pair of side flaps pivotably secured to opposing sides of the wall portion, the side flaps pivotable between a downward support position and an upward folded position, the side flaps each having a lower surface that is not parallel to the bottom portion when pivoted downward to a support position.

11. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 10, wherein the packaging assembly is stackable upon a similar packaging assembly when the side flaps are in the support position, and wherein the packaging assembly is nestable within a similar packaging assembly when the side flaps are pivoted to the folded position against the wall portion.

12. The packaging assembly as recited in Claims 10 or 11, wherein the side flaps are wedge shaped.

13. A packaging assembly comprising:

a base defining an base interior for storing containers, the base having a rear portion, a front portion, and a bottom portion extending at a decline from the rear portion to the front portion; and
at least one cartridge defining a cartridge interior for storing containers, the cartridge removably stackable on the base, an opening between the base interior and the cartridge interior permitting containers in the cartridge interior to move into the base interior, the at least one cartridge having a rear portion, a front portion, a bottom portion and a top portion each extending between the rear portion and the front portion, wherein the bottom portion of the at least one cartridge extends at a decline from the front portion of the at least one cartridge to the rear portion of the at least one cartridge

14. The packaging assembly as recited in Claim 13, wherein a bottom portion of the cartridge has a container supply opening and the top portion of the base has a container receiving opening, such that containers slide rearward in the cartridge, down through the container supply opening, into the container receiving opening and forward in the base as the individual containers are removed by the customer.

15. A packaging assembly comprising:

a tray having a plurality of container pockets formed on an upper surface for receiving container bottom portions therein, the tray further including a lower surface having a plurality of recessed stacking support areas for receiving container top portions, wherein the container top portions are larger than the container bottom portions, wherein the upper surface includes a plurality of projections extending upward from the upper surface and the lower surface including a plurality of recesses corresponding to the plurality of projections such that the plurality of projections of a first tray are nestable within the recesses of a second tray; and
a tray rack having a tray resting surface upon which the tray is placed, the tray rack further including a plurality of legs extending downward from the tray resting surface and aligned with a plurality of protrusions extending upward from the tray resting surface, wherein the plurality of legs each include a recess for receiving a corresponding protrusion of a similar tray rack when stacked.

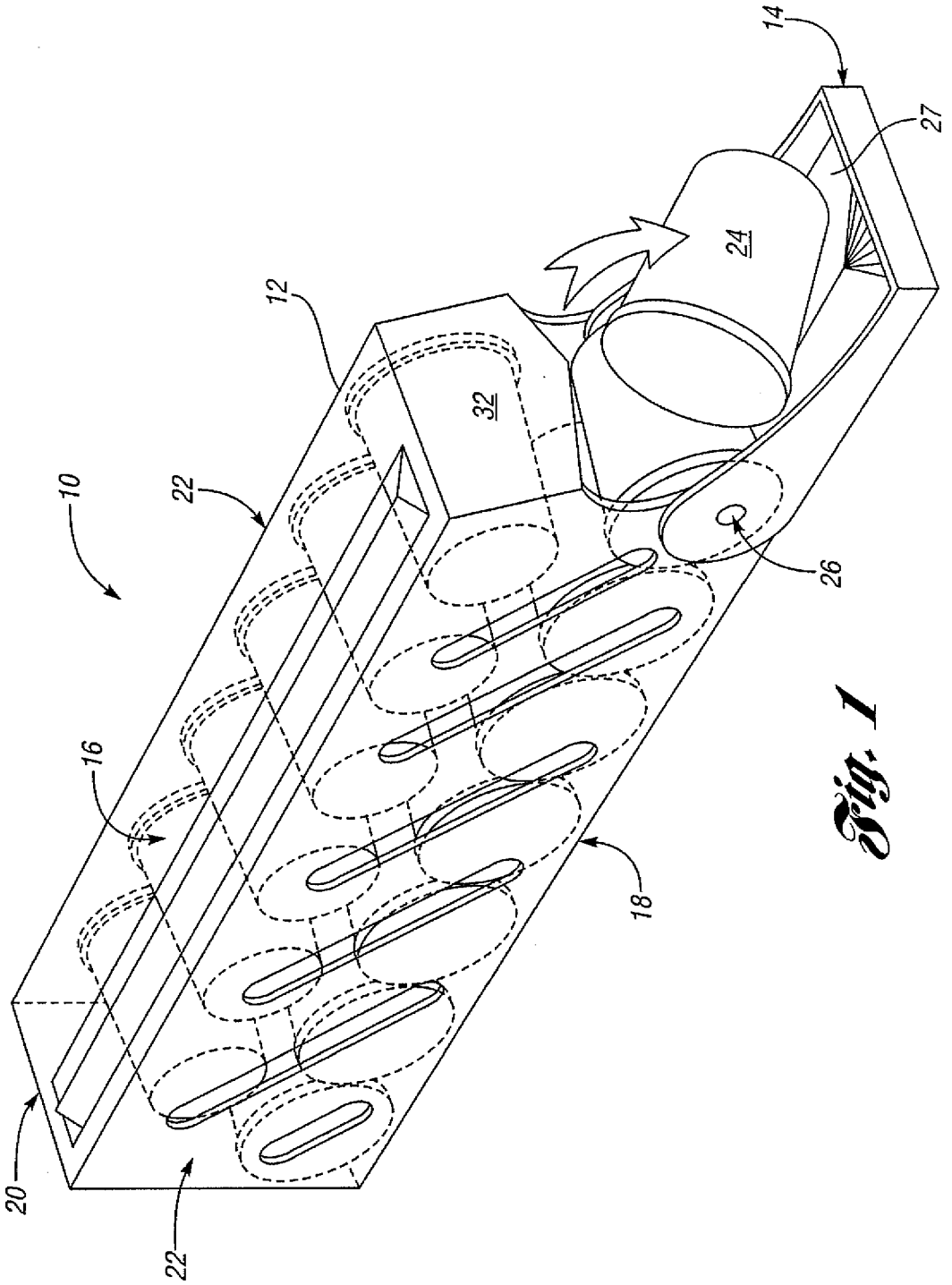


Fig. 1

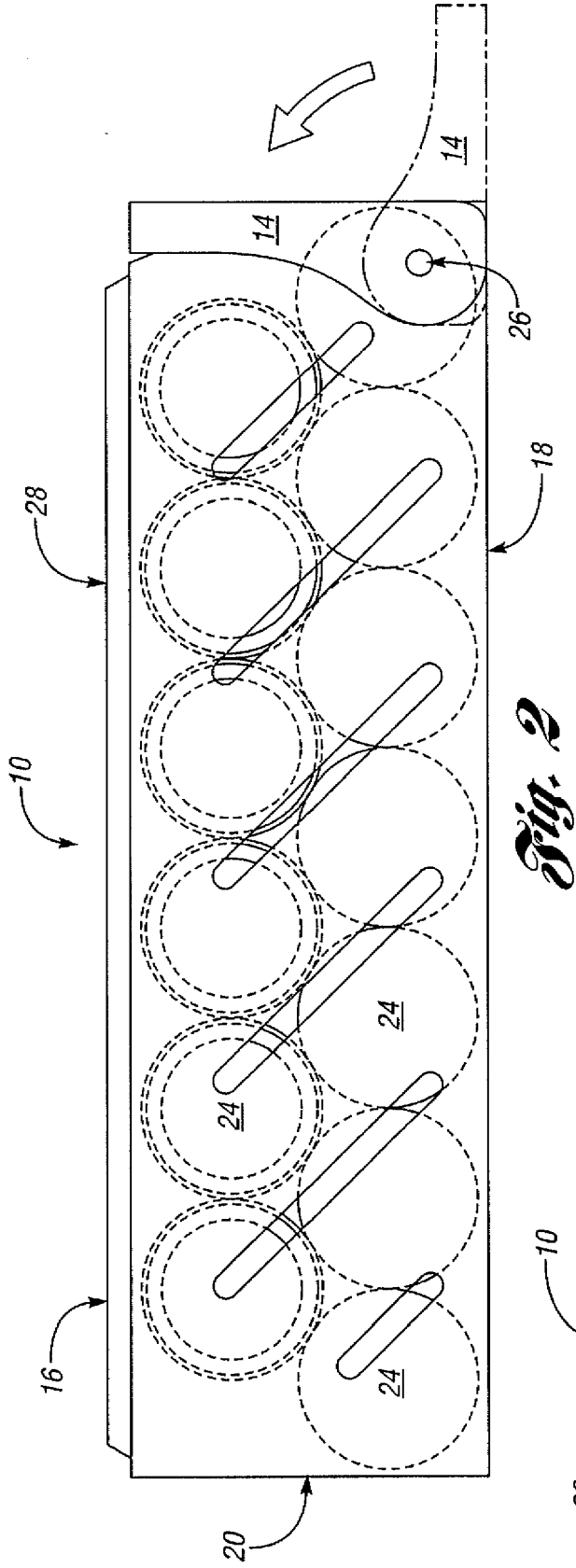


Fig. 2

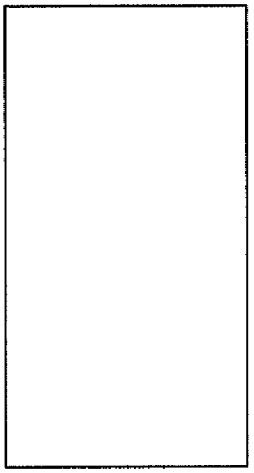


Fig. 3

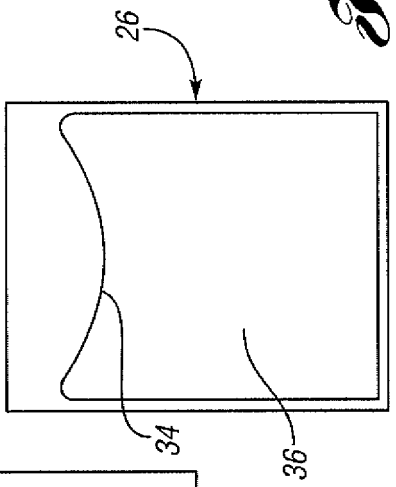
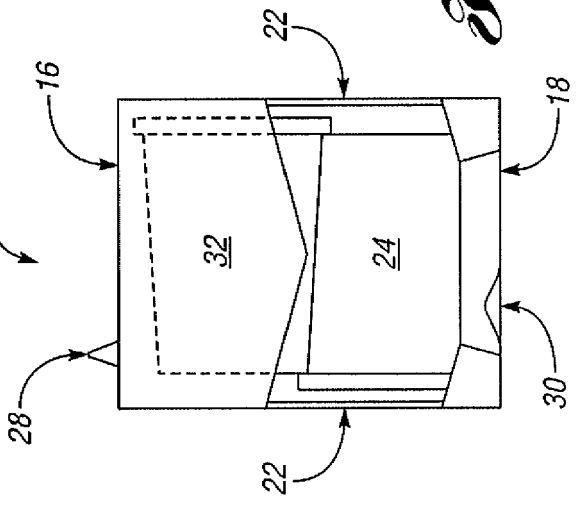


Fig. 2A.



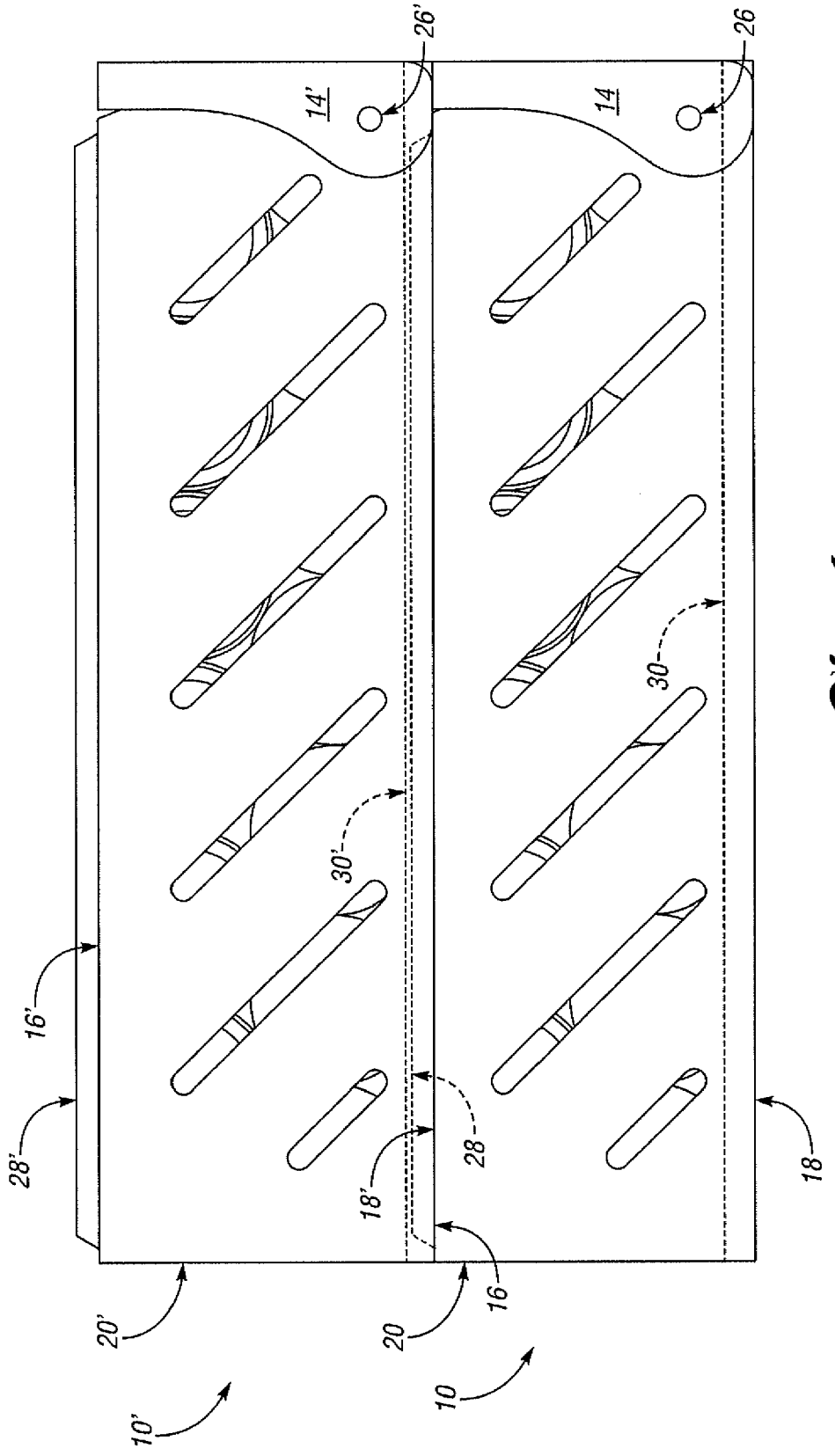


Fig. 4

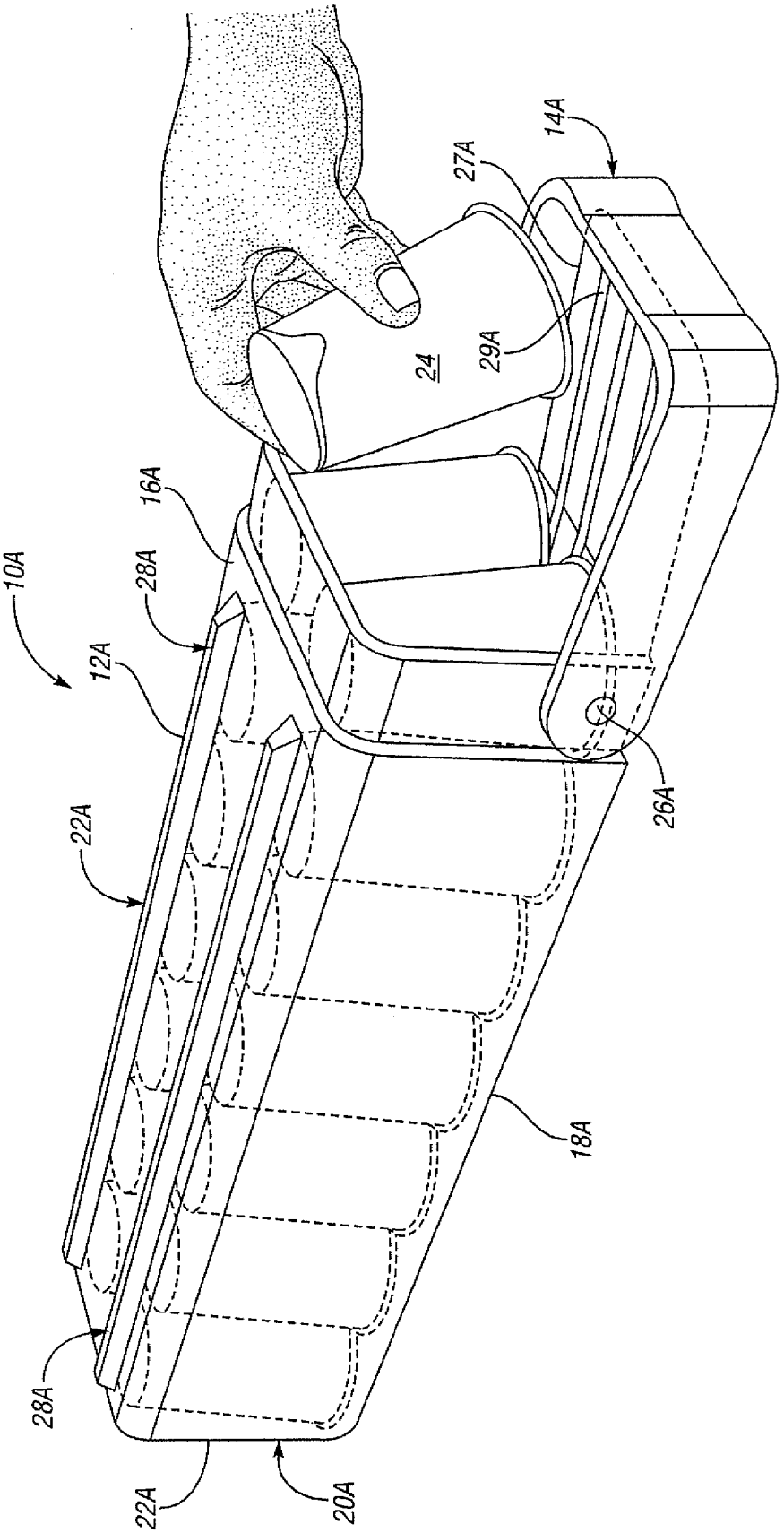


Fig. 5

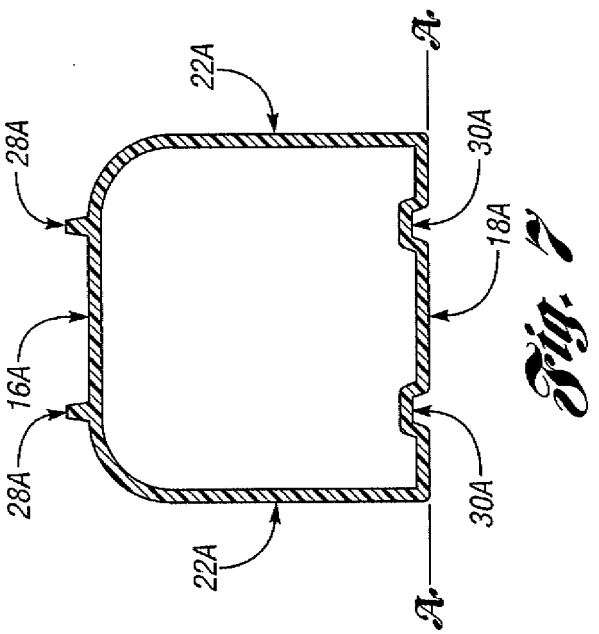


Fig. 7

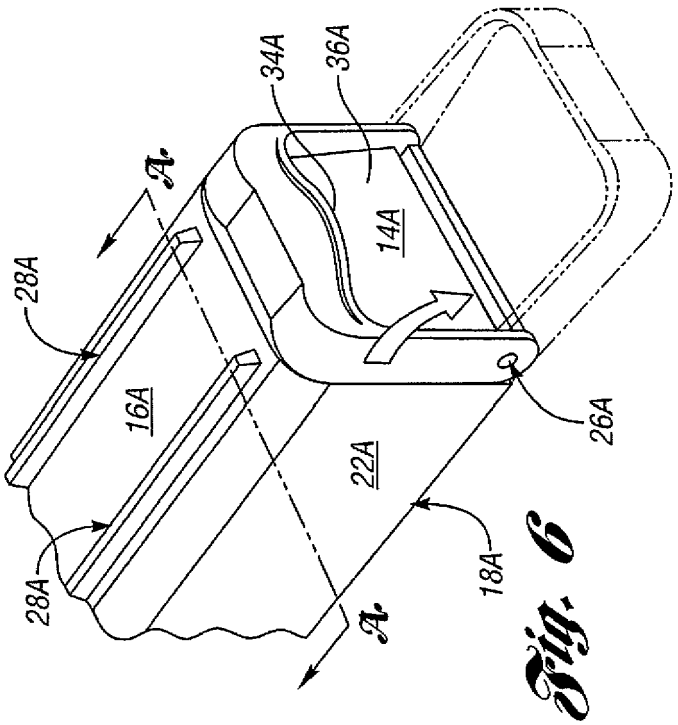


Fig. 6

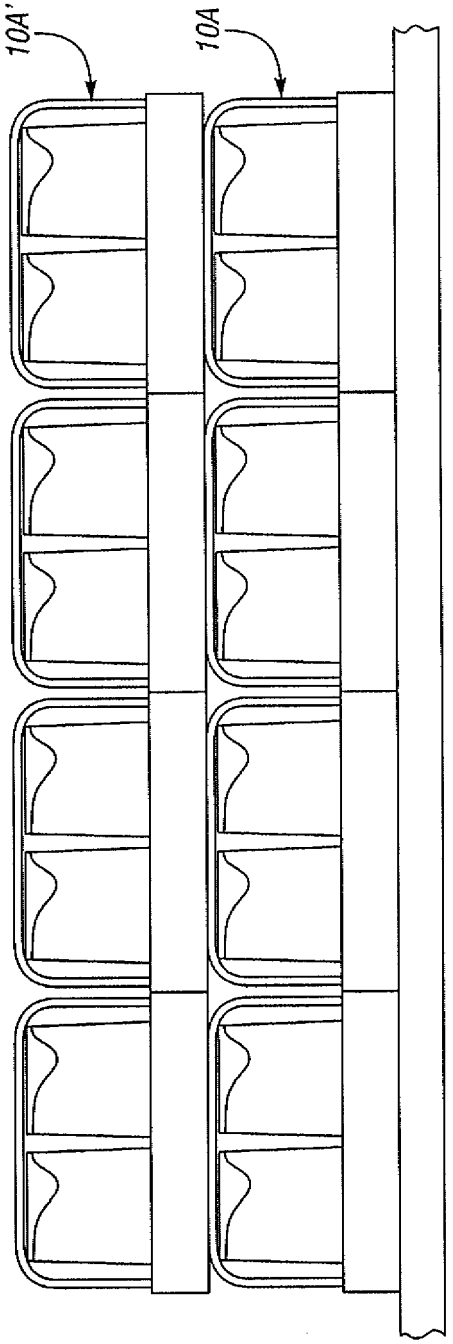


Fig. 8

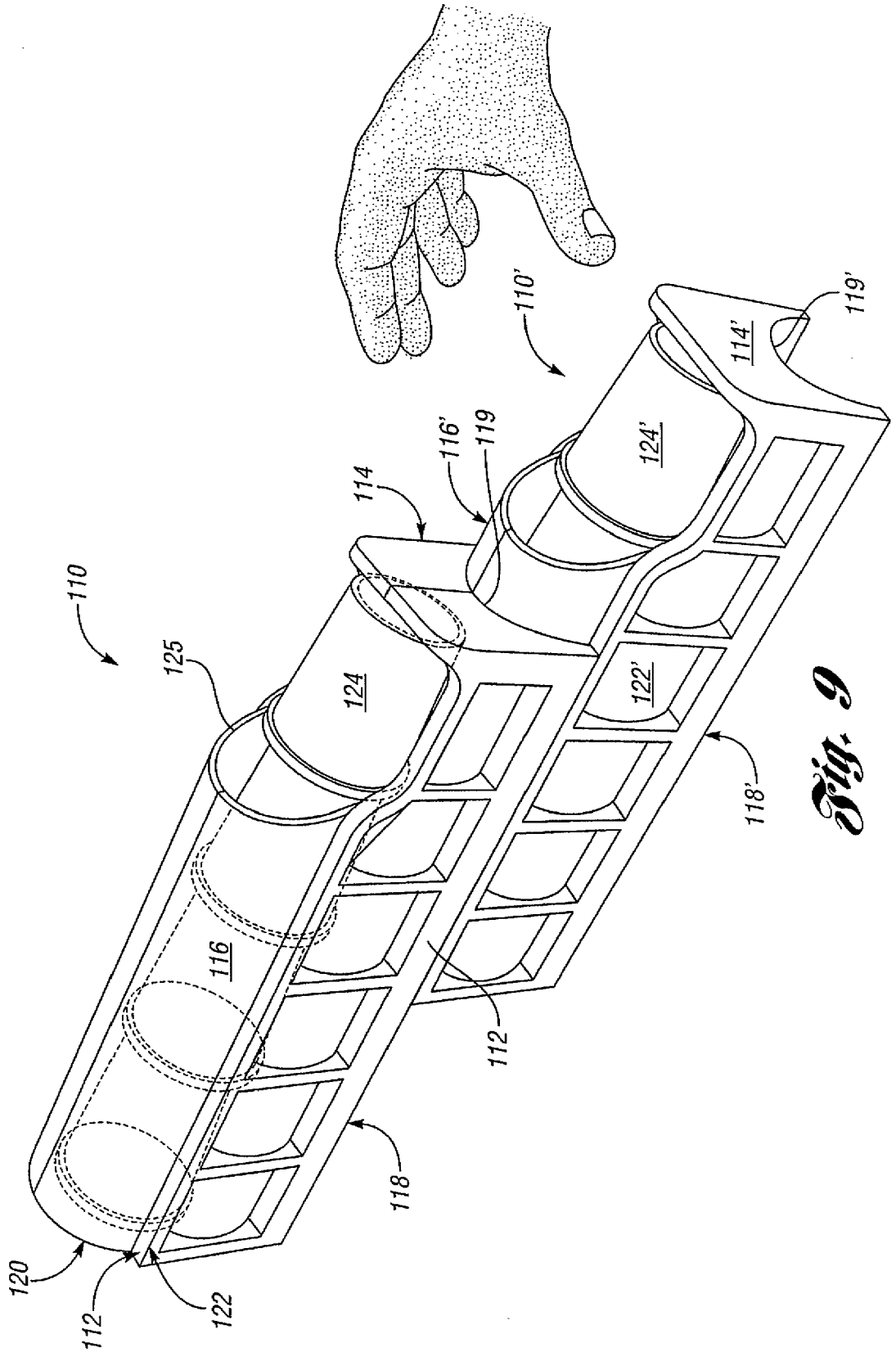

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Fig. 9

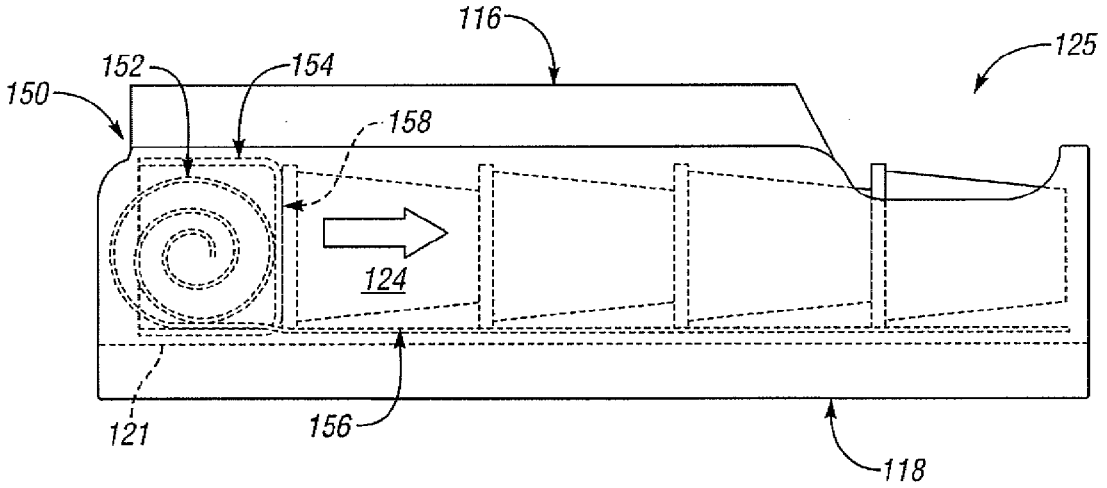


Fig. 10A

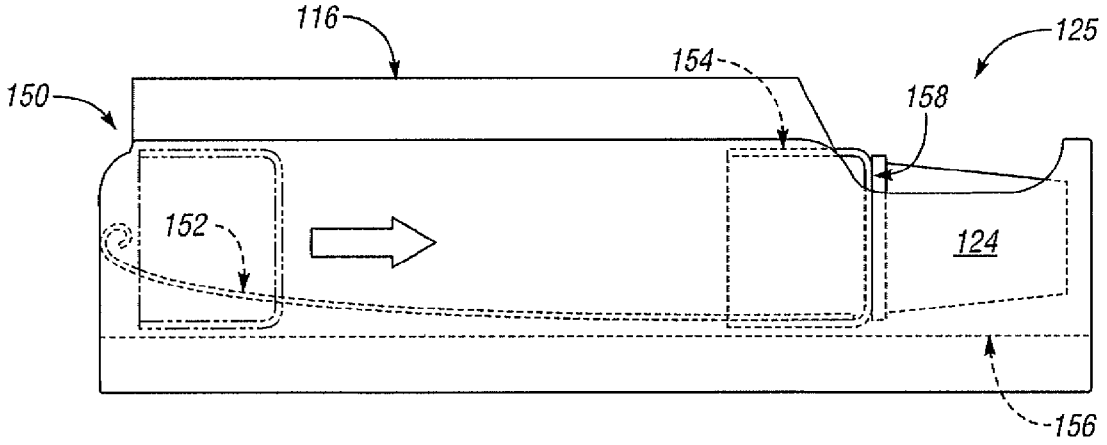


Fig. 10B

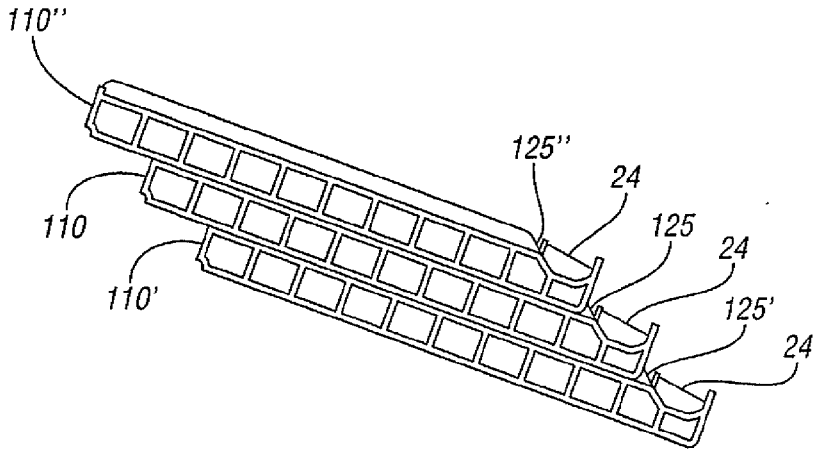
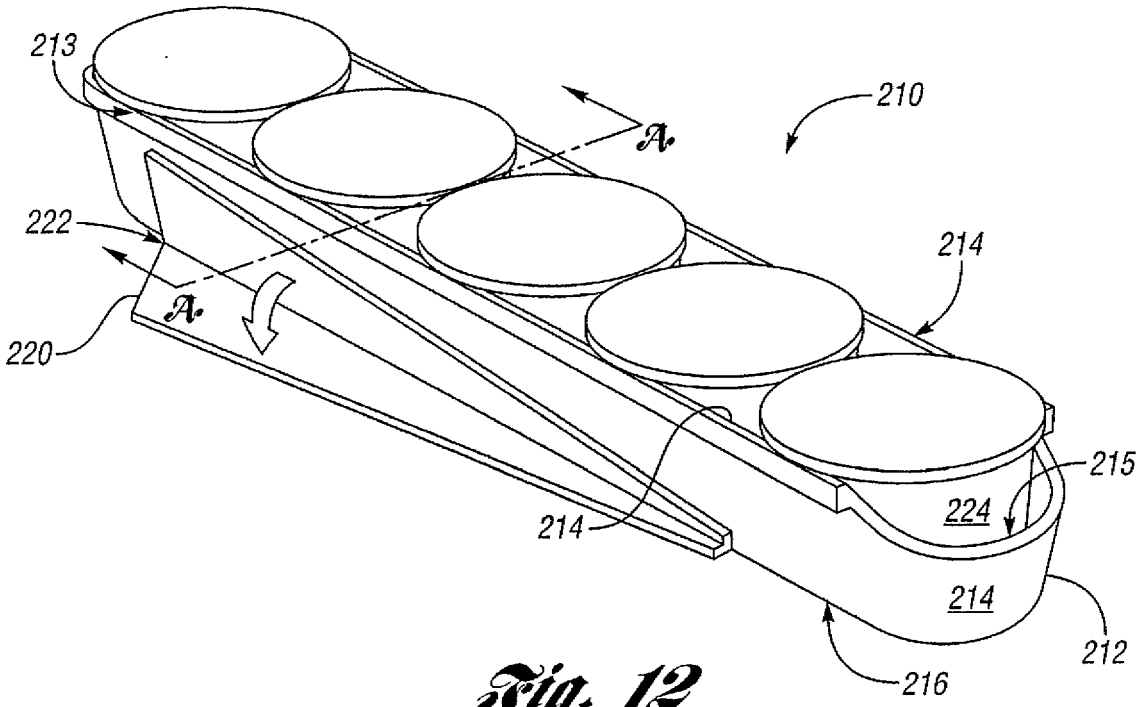


Fig. 11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216

Fig. 12

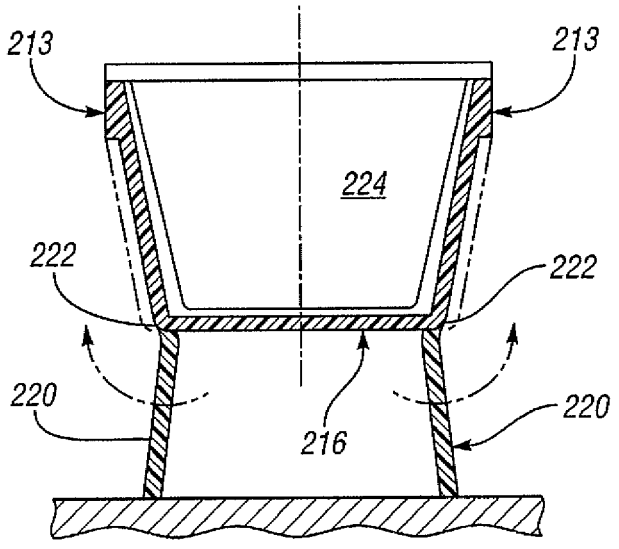
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Fig. 13

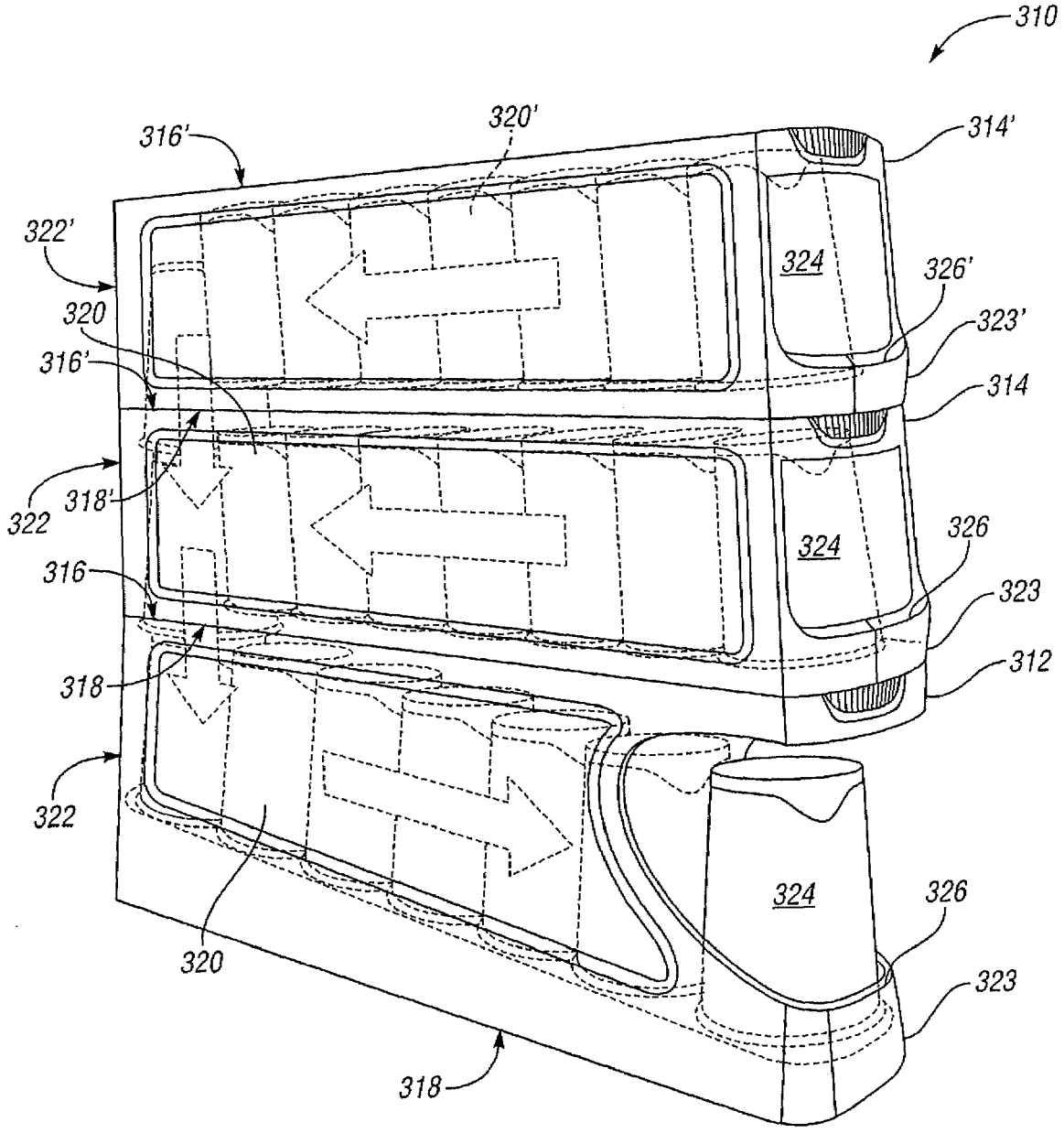
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Fig. 14

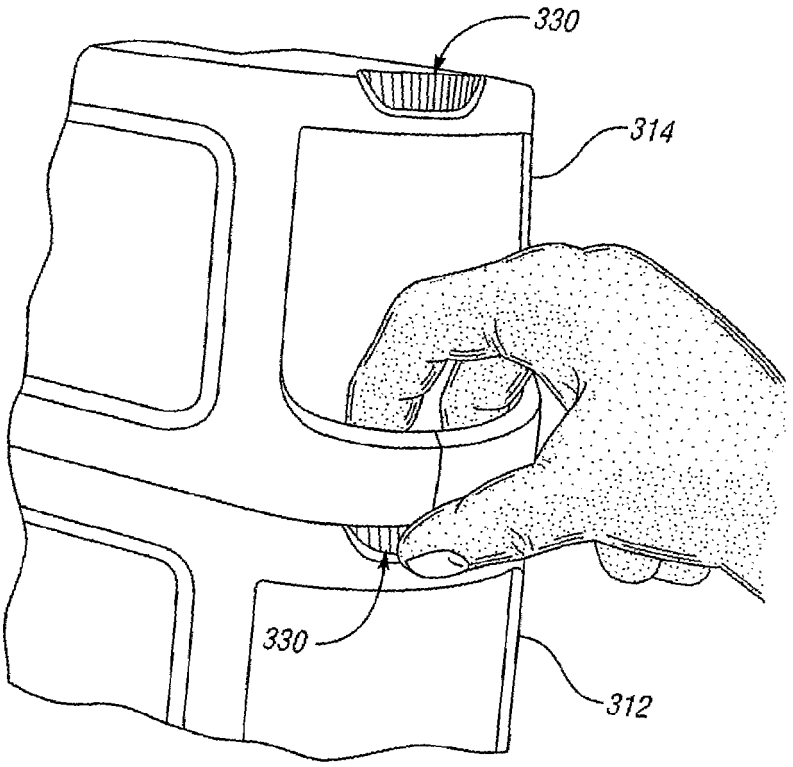
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Fig. 15

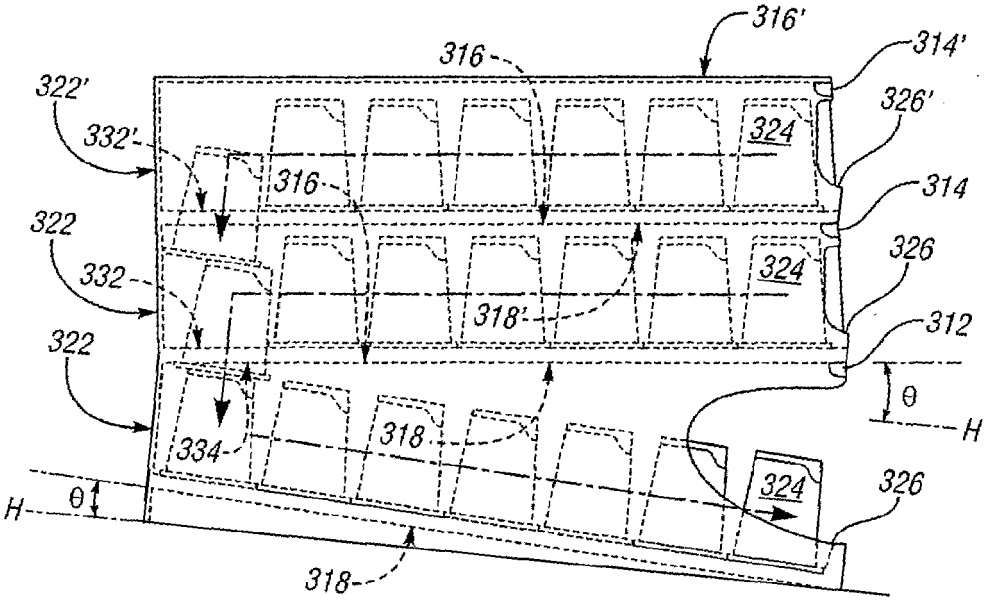
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Fig. 16

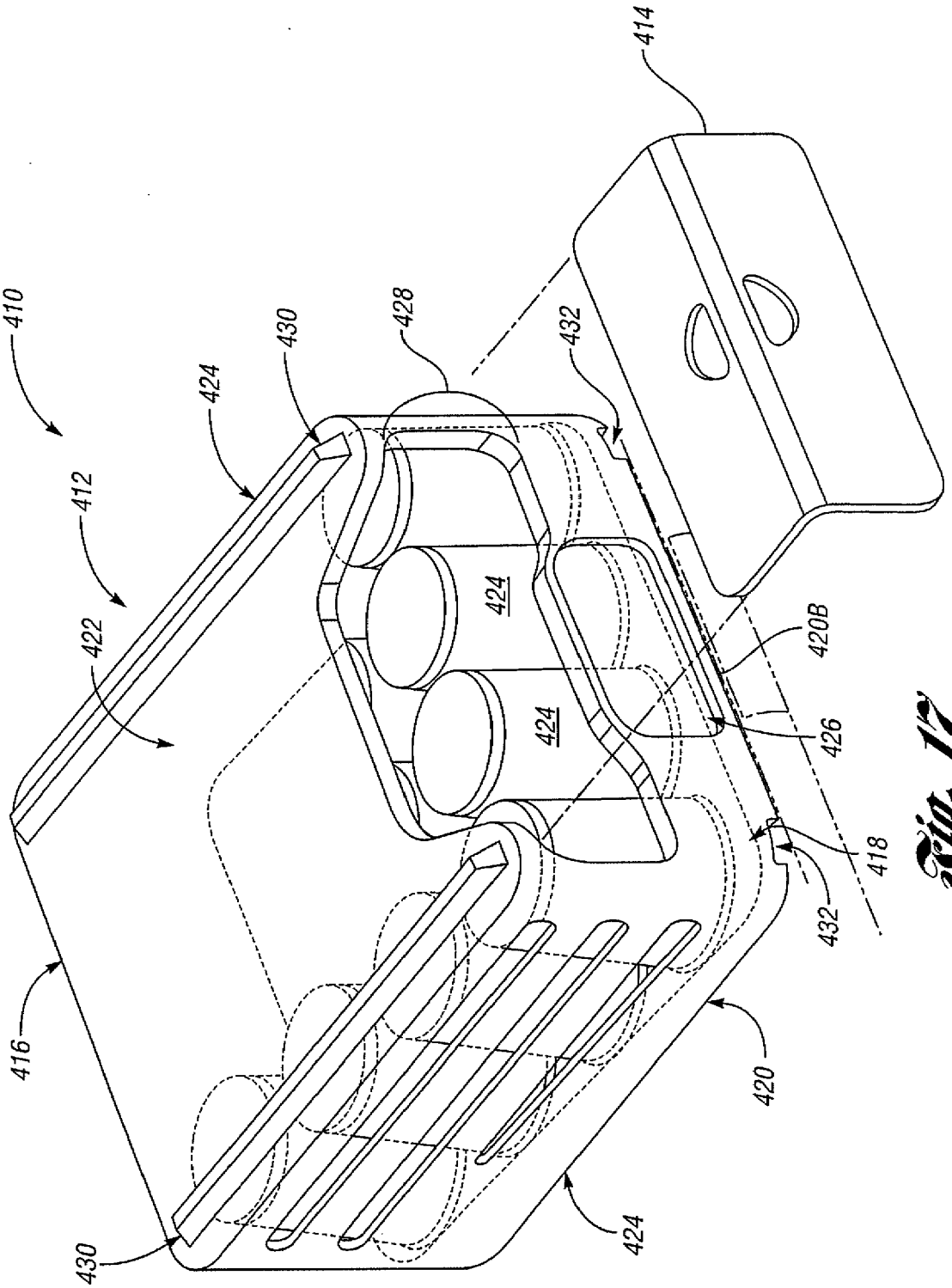
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Fig. 17

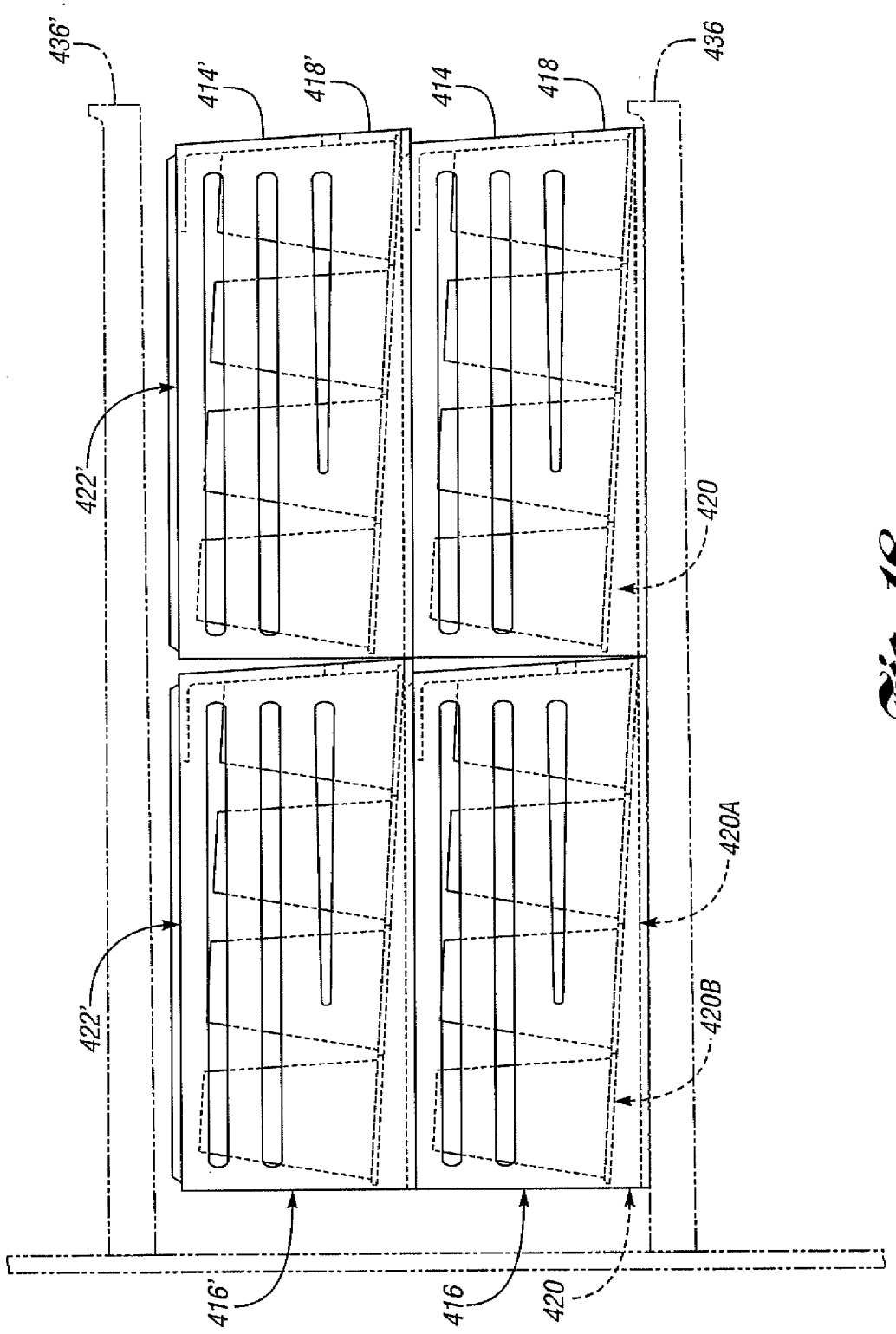

Fig. 18

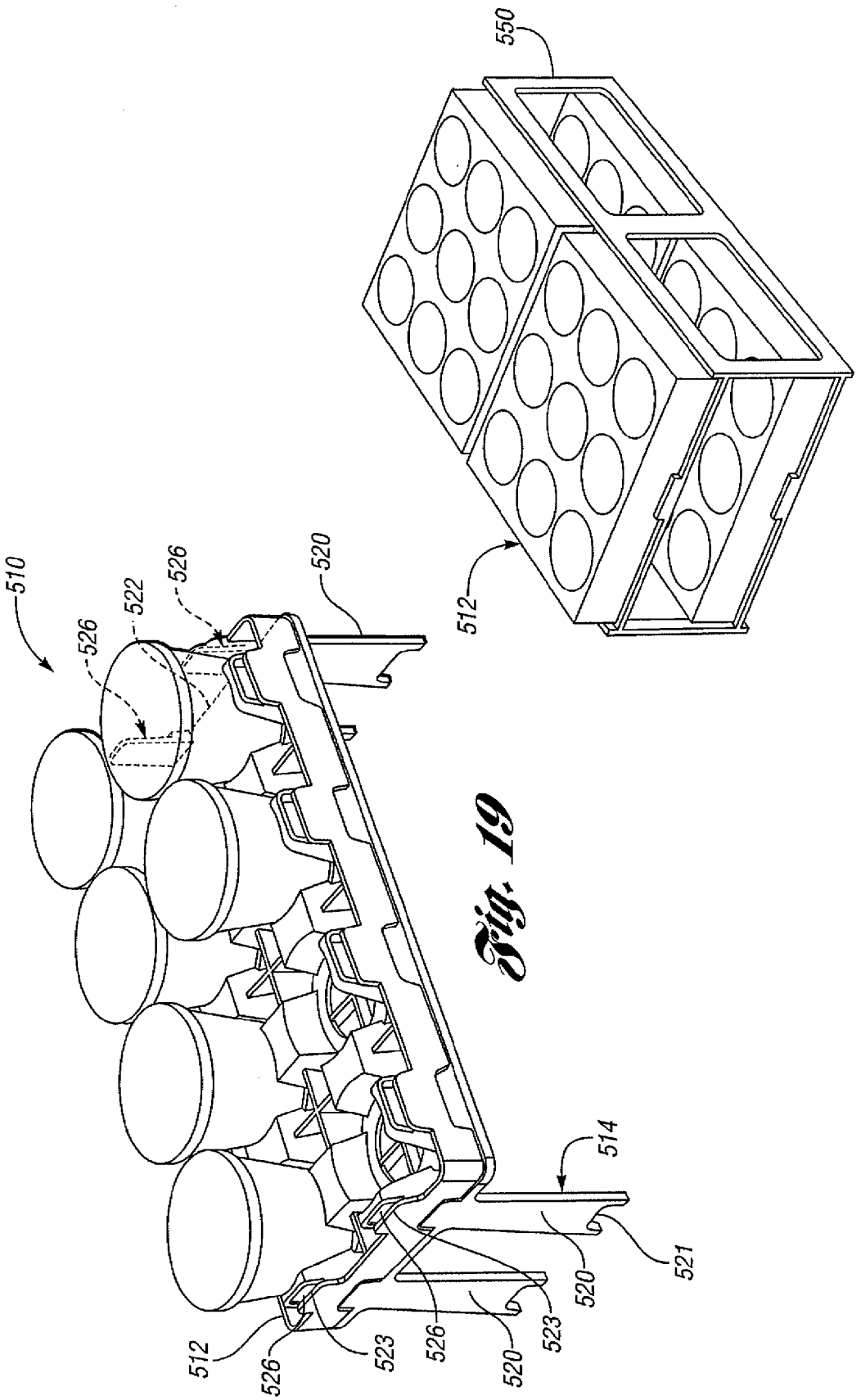

Fig. 19

Fig. 24

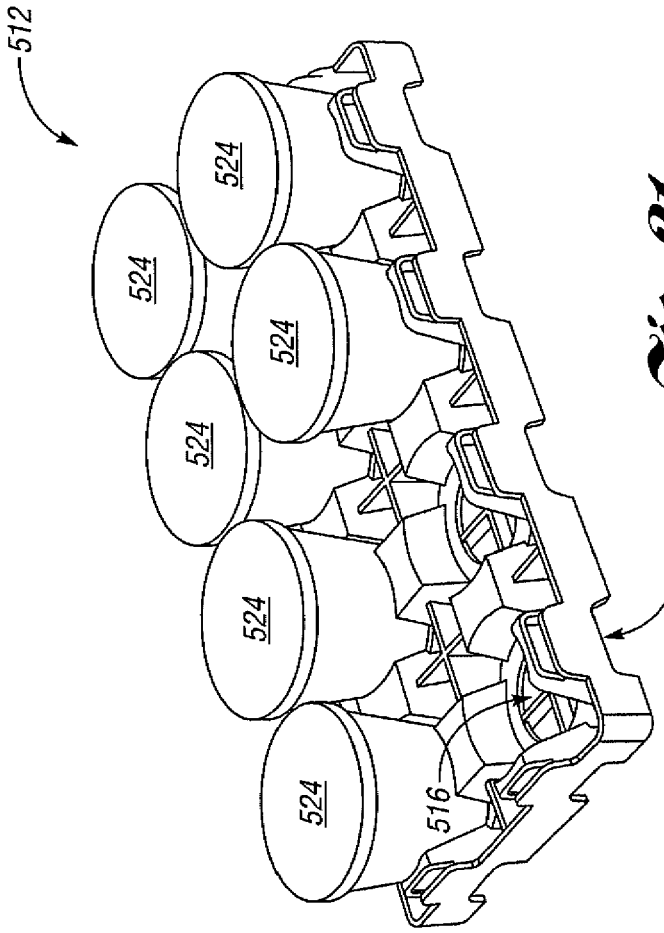
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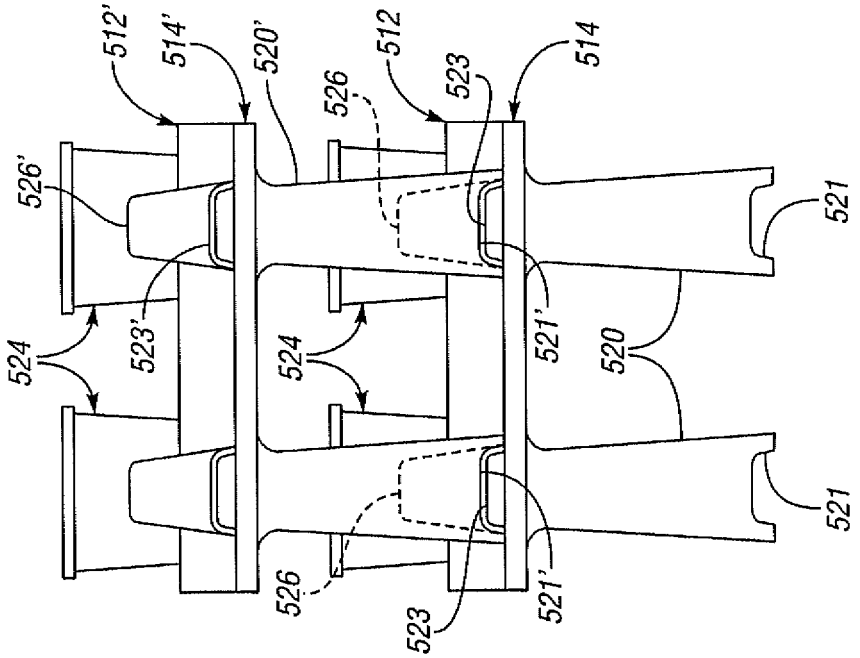
Fig. 21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521'
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Fig. 20

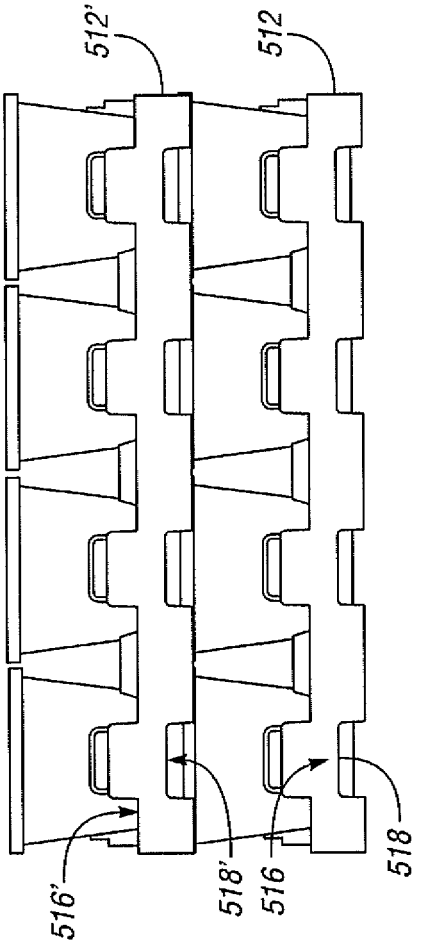

Fig. 22

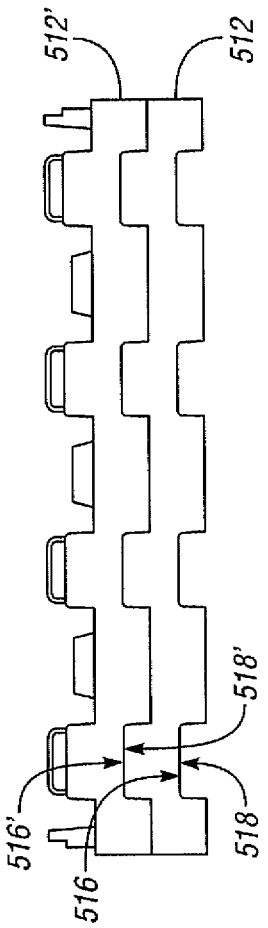

Fig. 23

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 16 9163

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	DE 20 2006 007160 U1 (SCA VERPACKUNG & DISPLAY VERTR [DE]) 12 October 2006 (2006-10-12)	10,12	INV. B65D21/02 B65D25/38
A	* paragraphs [0006], [0011] - [0013], [0015], [0016], [0024]; figure 3 *	11	B65D25/52 B65D83/00 A47B87/02
Y	GB 1 432 723 A (MICHEL M) 22 April 1976 (1976-04-22) * the whole document *	7,8	
Y	DE 20 2006 007162 U1 (SCA VERPACKUNG & DISPLAY VERTR [DE]) 28 December 2006 (2006-12-28) * abstract * * paragraphs [0028] - [0030]; figures 3-6 *	7,8	
Y	US 2003/217980 A1 (JOHNSON ALLEN E [US] ET AL) 27 November 2003 (2003-11-27) * paragraph [0034]; figures 1a,3,4 *	8	
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A	US 3 263 806 A (RING FRANCIS D) 2 August 1966 (1966-08-02) * the whole document *	7	

-/--

~~The present search report has been drawn up for all claims~~

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	31 March 2009	Leijten, René

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 16 9163

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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A	US 2 207 917 A (NATHAN FLEISCHER) 16 July 1940 (1940-07-16) * page 1, column 1, line 38 - page 1, column 2, line 27; figures 1,2 *	10	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)

~~The present search report has been drawn up for all claims~~

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	31 March 2009	Leijten, René

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X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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L : document cited for other reasons

& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document

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Application Number
EP 08 16 9163

CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing claims for which payment was due.

☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due 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 those claims for which no payment was due.

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:

1-14

☐ 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:

☐ The present supplementary 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 (Rule 164 (1) EPC).

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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number
EP 08 16 9163

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: 1-6

   A packaging assembly with a hinged front portion having a recess on an interior surface and a handle on an exterior surface.

   ---

2. claims: 7-14

   A packaging assembly having a "feature" that facilitates moving containers towards the front portion of the packaging assembly as the front container is removed.
   2.1: claims 7-9: the feature is a spring
   2.2: claims 10-12: the feature is a pair of said flaps
   2.3: claims 13 and 14: the feature is a system of cartridges with inclinded positions.

   ---

3. claim: 15

   A packaging assembly having pockets for receiving containers and a plurality of stacking and nesting features.

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO. EP 08 16 9163

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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31-03-2009

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