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Arneson

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[45] **Aug. 6, 1974**

[54] **BOTTLE CARRIER**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.**..... **206/181,** 206/183, 220/114, 229/28 BC, 229/39 R, 229/41 R, 229/52 BC

[51] **Int. Cl.**..... **B65d 5/10,** B65d 5/36, B65d 5/48

[58] **Field of Search**..... 206/65 E, 65 C; 229/28 BC, 229/52 BC, 40, 52 B, 39 R, 41 R; 220/115, 114, 113

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Primary Examiner—William I. Price
Assistant Examiner—Bruce H. Bernstein
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A collapsible carrier for beverage bottles or the like which is formed from a blank of foldable sheet material cut and scored to provide connected side and end wall forming panels and co-operating top and bottom wall forming panels hinged to the top and bottom edges of the side wall forming panels, the top wall forming panels being foldable between the side and end wall panels when the carrier is collapsed and when the carrier is set up opening automatically for assembly with the bottles and having spaced apertures for accommodating top portions of the bottles, together with hinged marginal portions which move into bottle separating position, and the bottom wall forming panels having overlapping margins with latching and locking elements, together with hinged bottle separating panel and tab members.

20 Claims, 10 Drawing Figures

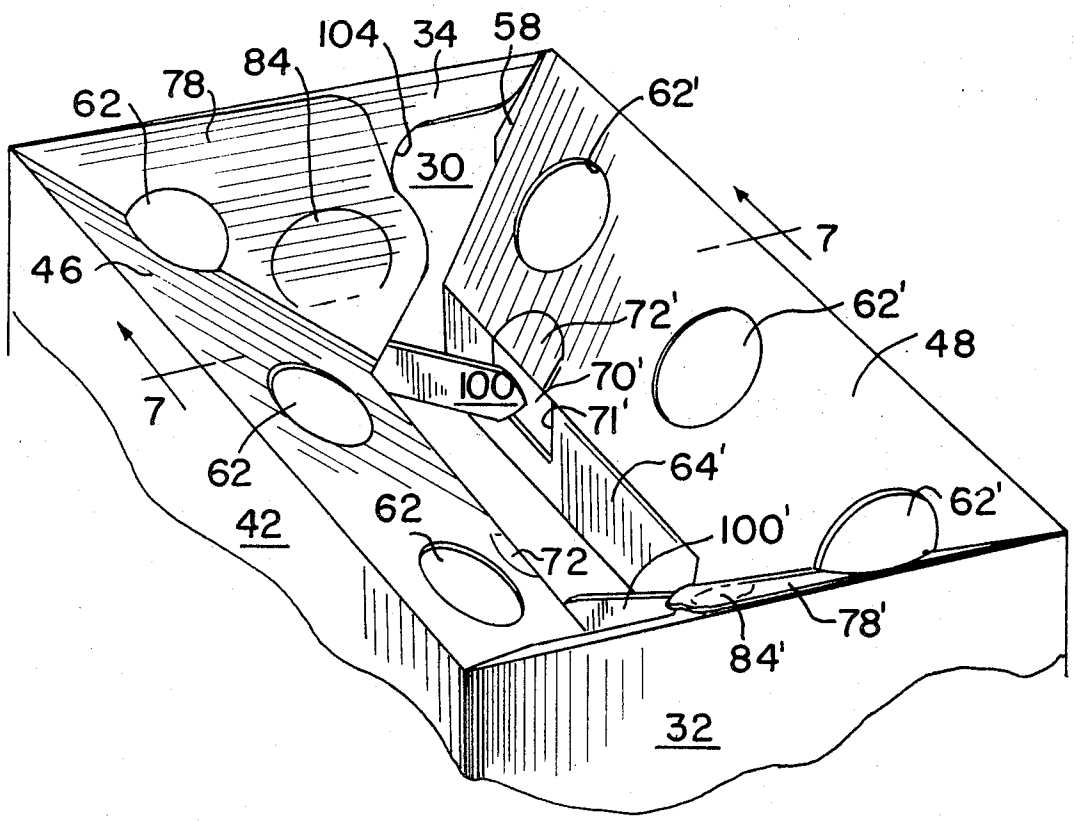


FIG. 1

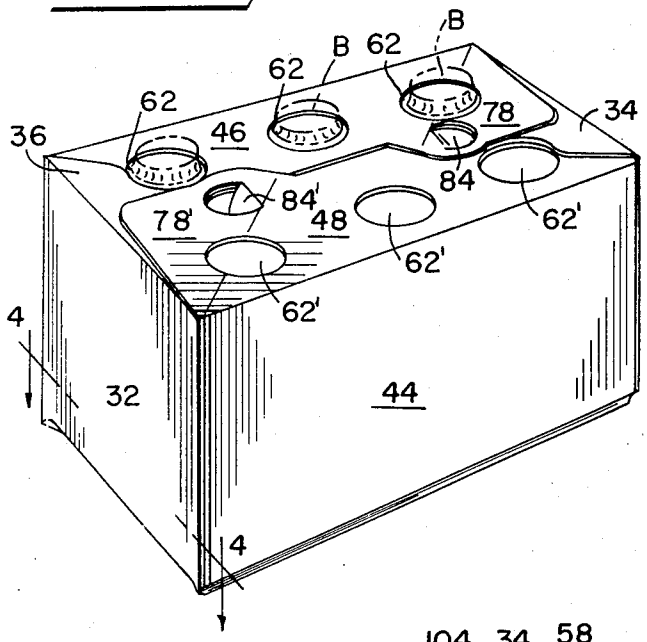
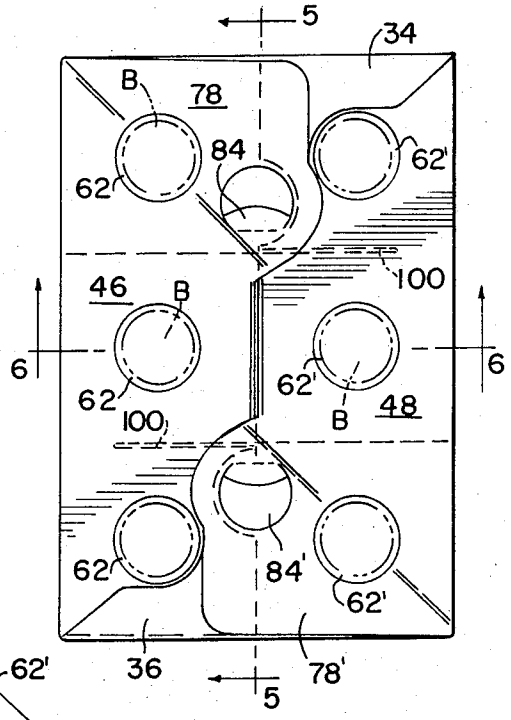


FIG. 2



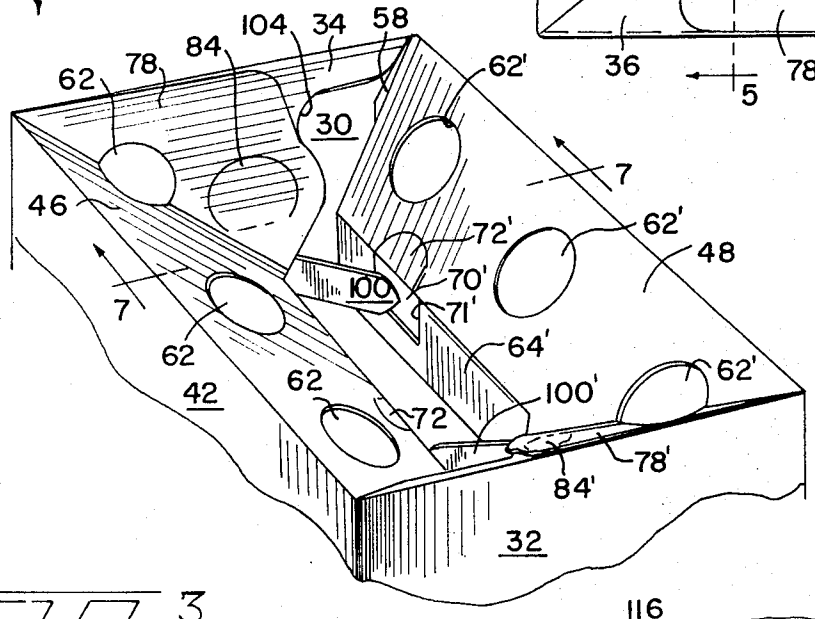
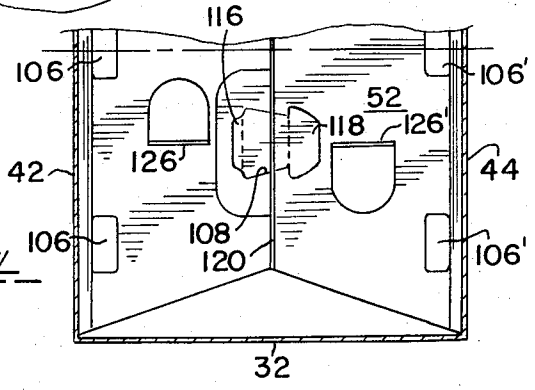


FIG. 3

FIG. 4



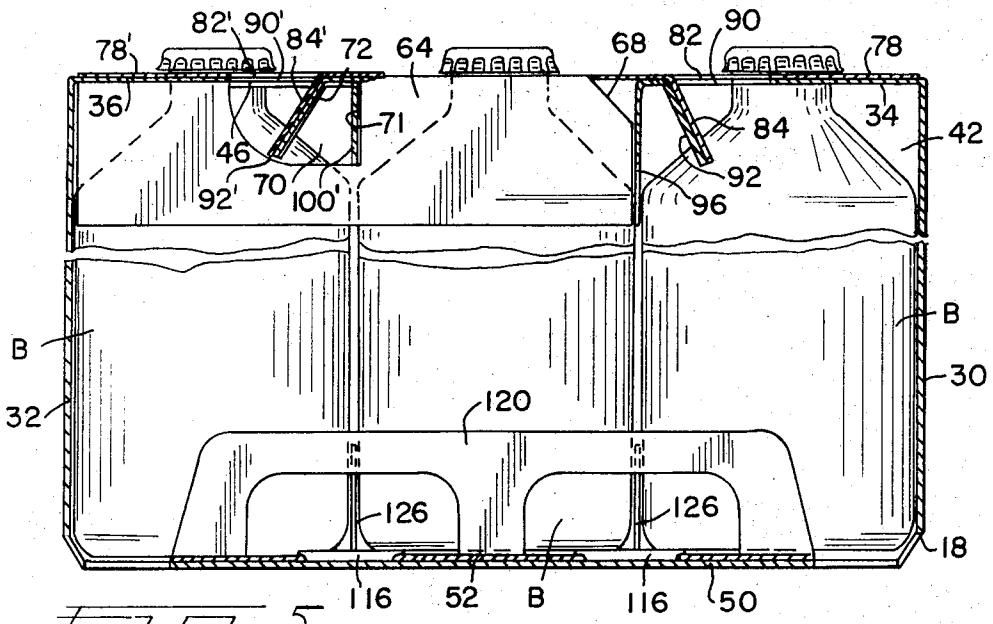


FIG. 5

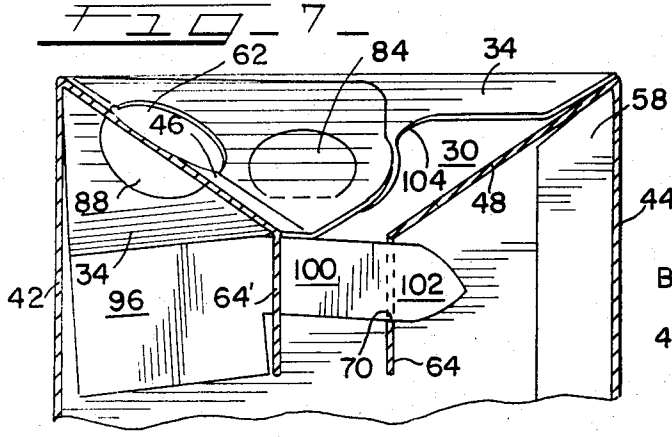


FIG. 7

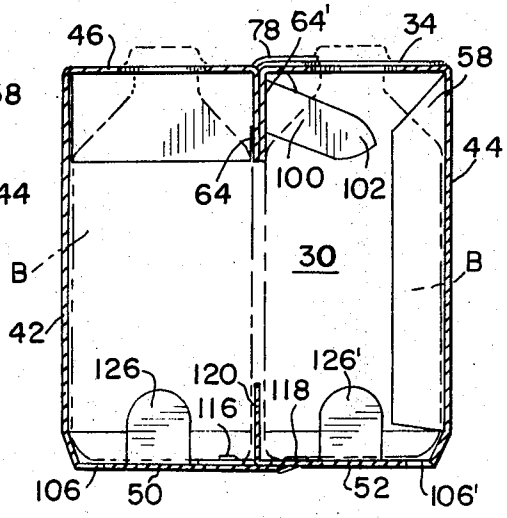


FIG. 6

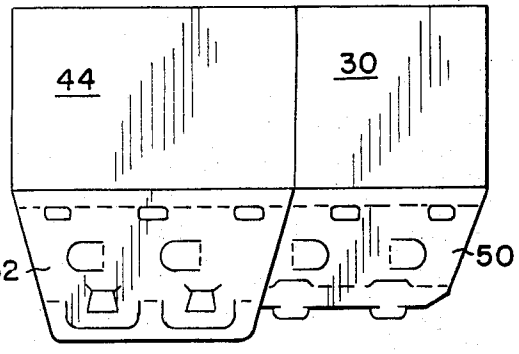
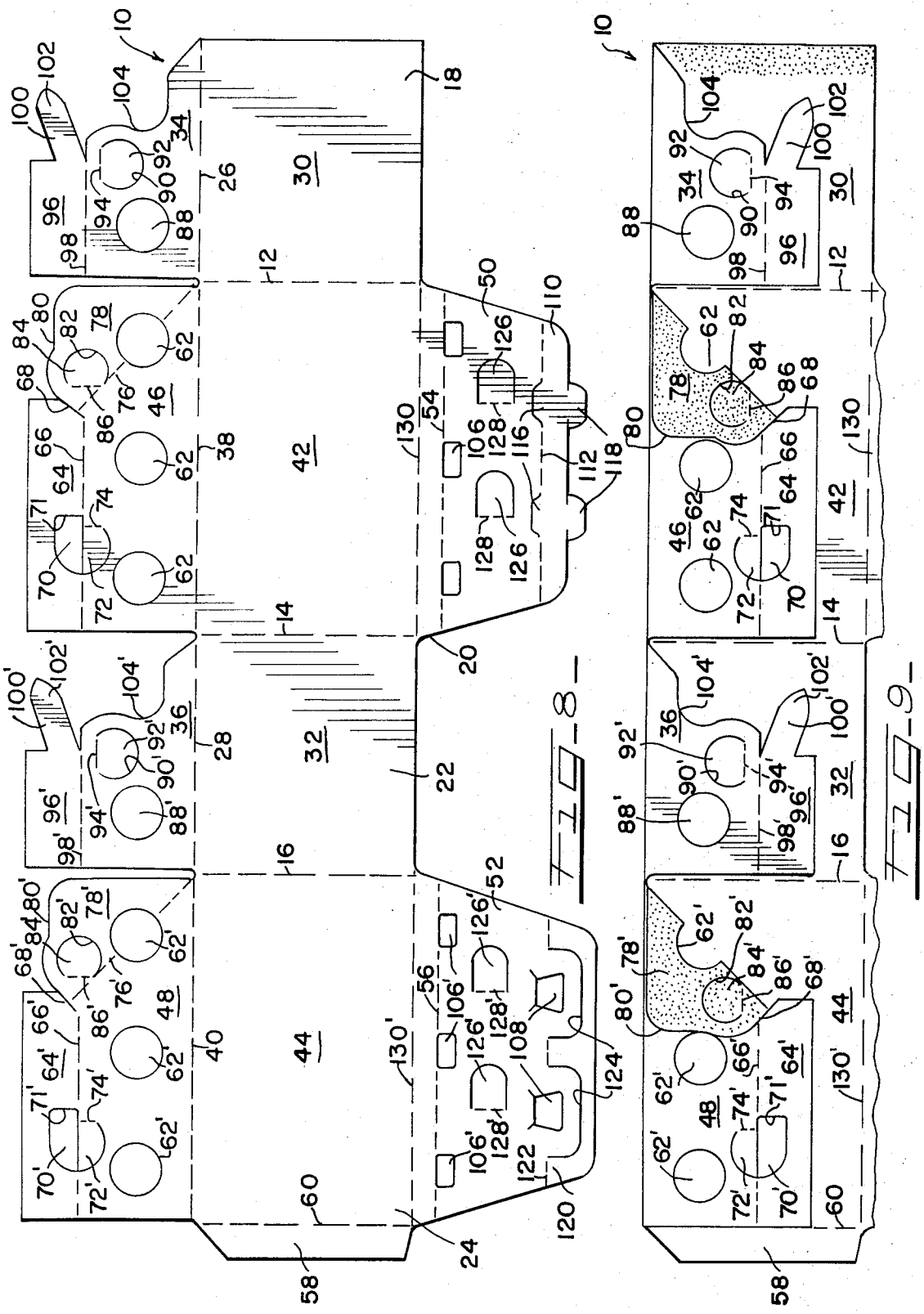


FIG. 10



BOTTLE CARRIER

This invention relates to the packaging of articles, such as beverage bottles and is particularly concerned with improvements in wrap around type cartons or carriers which may be fabricated of paperboard or similar foldable sheet material.

Carrier-type cartons have been provided heretofore for packaging bottled beverages, and the like, which have been formed from a wrapper blank cut and scored so that it may be wrapped about an assembly of bottles and form an open ended tubular container therefor. A carrier package of this type is described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,556,386, dated Jan. 19, 1971. A package of this type, employed with some products, does not meet certain requirements for storage and shipping. For some beer products, for example, it has been found necessary, in order to meet such requirements, to close the ends of the package and to enclose the bottles so that only a small neck portion of each bottle is exposed to light. To accomplish this generally door forming panels have been provided on the end edges of the side walls with a resultant sacrifice in economy in cutting the necessary blanks from larger sheets or from a wide web. Also, this has required more complex machinery for applying the blank to the bottles. Also, separation of the bottles as required to meet railway shipping regulations has been a problem. It is a general object, therefore, of the present invention to provide an improved carrier type package for bottled beverages which employs a blank adapted to be cut from a larger sheet or web with a minimum of waste, with provision for separation of the bottles in the package and substantial or complete enclosure of the bottles so as to protect the same from the effects of light, which can be handled by existing packaging machinery with minimum machinery modifications, and which will have other important advantages.

A more specific object of the invention is to provide an improved carrier for bottled beverages or the like which is fabricated in collapsed or flattened condition, which can be opened up for deposit on an assembly of bottles and which employs a blank formed from an elongate sheet, cut and scored so as to provide a series of connected side and end wall forming panels, together with top wall forming panels extending along one side edge thereof which are arranged to move automatically into top wall forming relation when the carrier is opened up and bottom wall forming panels extending in spaced relation along the opposite side edge which have interlocking connecting elements in the margins, with both top and bottom wall forming panels having hinged portions which are movable into bottle separating position.

A further object of the invention is to provide a carrier blank of the type which is formed from an elongate generally rectangular sheet of paperboard or similar foldable sheet material, with the body of the blank scored to provide connected side and end wall panels, and with top wall forming panels extending along the one side edge of the blank which are cut and scored so as to be connected to form a foldable or collapsible top wall member, which enables the carrier to be initially formed in collapsed condition, with the top wall member adapted to open up automatically into wall forming relation with bottle separating elements upon squaring

up of the collapsed carrier for assembly with the bottles.

Another object of the invention is to provide a carrier blank for packaging bottled beverages which is formed from an elongate sheet of paperboard, or like material, wherein, the blank is cut and scored to provide connected side and end wall panels, and top and bottom wall forming panels which are hinged to the side edges of the blank so as to be folded into top and bottom wall forming relation, with the top wall panels being connected and initially collapsed between the flattened side and end wall panels, with these panels being arranged so that when the collapsed carrier is opened up for deposit on a cluster of bottles the top wall forming panels will automatically open into a common plane and form a top wall in which there are openings provided for accommodating portions of the bottle tops, also finger openings in multi-ply areas for grasping the package so as to conveniently carry the same, and integrally hinged flap members movable to a position between the bottles so as to separate the same.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a carrier for packaging bottled beverages which is formed from a generally rectangular blank of foldable sheet material wherein the blank is cut and scored to provide connected side and end wall panels, with top wall forming panels hinged to one side edge of the blank and bottom wall forming panels hinged to the opposite side edge of the blank which are spaced so as to permit nesting in cutting the blank from a wide web and which have hinged portions therein foldable to a position for providing bottle separation in both the longitudinal and the lateral direction.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from a consideration of the bottle carrier package which is shown by way of illustration in the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a packaging unit comprising two rows of three beverage bottles enclosed in a tubular carton or carrier which embodies the principal features of the invention, one row of the bottles being shown in phantom line and the other row thereof being omitted;

FIG. **2** is a top plan view of the carrier of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a perspective view showing the top of the carrier in partially opened up position;

FIG. **4** is a view showing one half of the bottom face of the carrier of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **5** is a longitudinal section to a larger scale, the view being taken on line **5—5** of FIG. **2**, with portions broken away;

FIG. **6** is a transverse section taken on the line **6—6** of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **7** is a partial transverse section taken on line **7—7** of FIG. **3** to a larger scale;

FIG. **8** is a plan view of a paperboard blank which is cut and scored to form the carrier of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **9** is a partial plan view showing portions of the blank which have been folded and supplied with glue preparatory to completing the carrier in knocked down condition; and

FIG. **10** is a plan view showing the completed carrier in collapsed or knocked down condition.

Referring first to FIG. **1**, there is illustrated a package unit which incorporates therein the principal features of the invention and which comprises a group of six beverage bottles B, enclosed in a wrapper, in the form

of a blank, which is folded about the group of bottles so as to constitute a combination container or carton and carrier C of tubular or sleeve-type configuration.

The bottles B, in the illustrated package unit, are the so called "stubby Handi-Bottles" which are characterized by a relatively short neck portion so that the top edge or shoulder of the bottle body is located at a point which is a relatively short distance below the closure cap. The package is particularly adapted for bottles of the type illustrated.

The illustrated carrier or carton blank **10**, which is shown in FIG. **5**, is formed of paperboard or other sheet material of suitable weight and thickness, which material is relatively flexible and which is capable of being cut and folded to form a substantially complete enclosure about the bottle assembly, with sufficient strength and rigidity to support the bottles, which lends itself to high speed or high volume packaging operations, and which does not require complex machinery for handling the same.

The paperboard blank **10** is cut and creased or scored, as shown in FIG. **5**, to provide the walls and associated connecting members for the bottle receiving carton or carrier of FIG. **1**. The blank **10** which is of generally rectangular shape, is divided by transverse score lines **12, 14** and **16** into four integrally connected sections **18, 20, 22** and **24**. The one end section **18** and the intermediate section **22** are cut and scored in an identical manner while the sections **20** and **24** are in part identical. The sections **18** and **22** of the blank are divided by score lines **26** and **28**, which are aligned in the lengthwise direction of the blank, to provide end wall forming panels **30** and **32** and integral top wall forming panels **34** and **36**, the latter being adapted to hinge on the score lines **26** and **28**. The other two blank sections **20** and **24** are divided by longitudinal score lines **38** and **40**, which are aligned with score lines **26** and **28**, into separate side wall forming panels **42** and **44** and top wall forming panels **46** and **48**, with bottom wall forming panels **50** and **52** extending laterally from the opposite side edges of the blank and separated from the side wall forming panels **42** and **44** by longitudinally aligned scores **54** and **56**.

A narrow glue flap **58** extends transversely at one end of the blank **10** which is separated from the side wall forming panel **44** by the transverse score line **60**, the latter being parallel with the transverse score lines **12, 14** and **16**. The end wall forming panels **30** and **32** are identical and the associated top wall forming panels **34** and **36** are cut so as to be identical. Likewise, the side wall panels **42** and **44** are identical and the associated top wall forming panels **46** and **48** are cut and scored so as to be identical while the bottom wall forming panels **50** and **52** have free outer margins which differ.

The two top wall forming panels **46** and **48**, which are foldable on the hinge lines **38** and **40** in fabricating the carrier, are each provided with a longitudinally extending row of circular apertures **62, 62'**, which apertures are spaced longitudinally and transversely according to the spacing of the bottles in the assembly which is being packaged. In each of the panels **46** and **48** the top accommodating apertures **62, 62'** are spaced from the hinge forming crease lines **38** and **40**, according to the diametrical dimension of the bottles so as to move into proper position for vertical alignment with the bottles when the panels **46** and **48** are brought into top wall forming relation. The panels **46** and **48** are each cut along the outer edges so as to provide for a longitudinal partition panel **64, 64'** which extends from one end approximately two thirds of the length of the panel and is separated from the main body of the panel by hinge forming score line **66, 66'**, the latter being parallel with hinge forming score lines **38** and **40** and terminating at a small diagonal cutting line **68, 68'** which frees the panel for hinging about the score line **66, 66'**. The score lines **66, 66'** are spaced from the score lines **38, 40**, a distance equal to one half the longitudinal dimension of end wall forming panels **30, 32**. The panels **64, 64'** extend approximately two thirds of the lengthwise dimensions of the panels **46** and **48** and each of these panels has cut therein, for a purpose which will be described, an aperture **70, 70'** bordering on the hinge line **66, 66'**. The aperture **70, 70'** is generally rectangular and terminates at an abutment forming edge **71, 71'** which extends transversely of the blank and is located at a distance from the transverse score line **14** or **60**, corresponding to approximately the diameter of the bottles being packaged or one third the longitudinal dimension of the associated side wall forming panel **42** or **44**. A semi-circular finger hole reinforcing tab **72, 72'** is cut in the adjoining top wall forming panel **46, 48** on the opposite side of the hinge line **66, 66'** which is foldable on the small hinge forming transverse score line **74, 74'**.

The panels **46** and **48** are scored on diagonal lines **76** and **76'** which extend outwardly in generally parallel relation from the terminii of the lines **12** and **16**, respectively, so as to divide from the main body of the panels **46** and **48** glue flaps **78, 78'** which are adapted to hinge on the score lines **76, 76'**. The score lines **76, 76'** bisect the endmost bottle top receiving apertures **62, 62'**. The outer margins are cut on the lines **80, 80'** so as to clear the tops of the end bottles in the opposite row thereof and provide adequate area for cutting a finger hole therein. Each of the flaps **78, 78'** is provided with a finger hole by cutting on the C-shaped lines **82, 82'** and a finger hole reinforcing tab **84, 84'** resulting from the cutting, which reinforcing tab is adapted to hinge on the transverse score line **86, 86'**.

The top wall forming panels **34** and **36**, which are integrally hinged to the top edges of the end wall forming panels **30** and **32**, are each provided with a single bottle top accommodating aperture or hole **88, 88'** which is aligned with the endmost hole **62** or **62'** in the associated panel **46** or **48** when the panels **34, 36** and **46, 48** are connected and moved into top wall forming position. The two panels **34** and **36** are cut on the C-shaped lines **90, 90'** to provide finger holes with reinforcing tabs **92, 92'** which are hinged on the longitudinally extending score lines **94, 94'**. The finger holes or apertures in these panels are located so as to substantially align with the finger holes or apertures in the triangular panels **78, 78'** when the panels **78, 78'** are connected to the outer faces of the panels **34** and **36**, enabling the reinforcing tabs **84, 84'** and the underlying tabs **92, 92'** to be folded inwardly together.

The outer margins of the panels **34** and **36** are cut and scored to provide transverse partition and bottle separating panels **96, 96'** which are adapted to hinge about the longitudinal score lines **98, 98'**, the latter being parallel with the score lines **26, 28** and spaced therefrom a distance corresponding to one third the longitudinal dimension of the side wall forming panels

42, 44. The width of the panel 96, 96' is determined by the bottle contour at the top and is sufficient to depend between the bottles so as to separate the same as shown in FIG. 6. The main portion of each of the transverse partition panels 96, 96' has a dimension, lengthwise of the blank, which corresponds to one half the corresponding dimensions of the associated end wall forming panel 30, 32 with a finger-like extension panel 100, 100' at the end. Each extension panel 100, 100' has a width which will enable it to pass through the guide opening 70, 70', as shown in FIG. 7, and a length sufficient to bring the end portion 102, 102' into bottle separating position as shown in FIG. 6. The width of the opening 70, 70' and the width of the extension 100, 100' will be very nearly the same so that the extension 100, 100' will enter the opening and seat snugly in the same, abutting the end edge 71, 71' as shown in FIGS. 5, 6 and 7. Each bottom wall end panel 34, 36 is cut away on the line 101, 101' to clear the top of the end bottle in the opposite row of the bottles, the latter being received in the end aperture 62 or 62' in the bottom wall side panel 46 or 48 which is in the same plane and opposite the bottom wall side panel to which the bottom wall end panel is hinged when the carrier is opened up and bottles encased therein.

At the other side edge of the blank 10 the bottom wall forming panels 50 and 52 are each provided with series of compression apertures 106, 106' which extend in row alignment along the score lines 54 and 56 for receiving compression forming fingers when the panels 50 and 52 are hinged towards each other in closing the same for forming the bottom wall of the carrier as illustrated in U.S. Pat. No. 3,474,590, dated Oct. 28, 1969. The panels 50 and 52 are provided at their outer margins with a means for latching the two panels together in bottom wall forming relation which may take the form of apertures 108 in the outer margin of panel 52 and a locking strip or panel 110 on the outer margin of the panel 50. The locking panel 110, which is adapted to hinge on a longitudinal score line 112, is provided with longitudinally spaced locking tabs 114, spaced along the hinge line 112 and locking tabs or tongues 116 together with associated 118 which are adapted for insertion in the apertures 108. The bottom wall forming panel 52 has its outer margin cut and scored as shown to provide a longitudinal partition and separation panel 120 which is adapted to hinge on the score line 122 into position to separate the bottles as shown in FIGS. 5 and 6. The panel 120 is freed for hinging movement by cutting on the C-shaped lines 124. Both bottom wall forming panels 50 and 52 are provided with bottle bottom separating tabs 126, 126', formed by cutting on C-shaped lines, which hinge on transverse score lines 128, 128' into vertical transverse planes, as shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, in the set up position of the carrier.

The panels 42, 44 may be scored on the lines indicated at 130, 130' to give the same flexibility at the bottom of the package and to allow the bottom edge to conform to the rounded bottom edge of the bottles.

In the fabrication of the carrier the top wall forming panels 34, 36, 46 and 48 are first folded about the hinge forming score lines 26, 28, 38 and 40 onto the inside faces of the end and side wall forming panels 30, 32, 42 and 44. The connecting panels 78, 78' are then folded about the hinge forming score lines 76, 76' onto the panels 46 and 48 as shown in FIG. 9. An adhesive is applied to the inside faces of the panels 78, 78'. The blank section 24 is folded about the corner hinge line 16 and an adhesive is applied to the outside face of the connecting strip 58 after which the blank section 18 is folded about the carrier hinge line 12 which completes the carrier in the folded or collapsed condition shown in FIG. 7. Any suitable type of adhesive may be employed and it may be applied prior to folding. With the proper adhesive or coating heat sealing may be employed.

In the collapsed condition (FIG. 7) the carrier may be supplied for use on a packaging machine where the successive carriers are squared up and applied to the bottles by depositing on a cluster thereof from the top with the bottom wall forming panels being subsequently folded beneath the bottles and locked in place. When the collapsed corner is set up the bottom wall forming panels 34, 46 and 36, 48 will automatically open up into coplanar bottom wall forming position. As the bottom wall forming panels swing out from the side and end walls to which they are hinged the end portions 102, 102' of cross partition members 100, 100' move into the apertures 70, 70' in the longitudinal partition members 64, 64' which causes the latter to move into a depending vertical plane in which they form a longitudinal center partition as shown in FIG. 6. At the same time the cross partition panels 96, 96' are swung about the hinge lines 98, 98' to a depending vertical position with the extension panels 100, 100' lying against the vertical end edges 71, 71' of the apertures 70, 70' as shown in FIG. 5. When the bottom wall forming panels 50, 52 are closed and locked the bottle separating panel 120 and tabs 126, 126' are folded into upright bottle separating position as shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 so that bottle separation, both longitudinally and transversely is provided at the bottom of the bottle assembly.

I claim:

1. A carrier for bottled products which is fabricated from an elongate, generally rectangular blank cut and scored to provide connected side and end wall forming panels hinged to each other so as to form a collapsible tube for encircling an assembly of bottles which are arranged in double row and transversely paired relation, top wall forming panels hinged to the top edges of the side and end wall panels, said top wall forming panels being arranged in pairs with a panel of each pair thereof hinged to a side wall and the associated panel which is paired therewith being hinged to an adjoining end wall, the panels of each pair being connected and foldable upon each other inwardly of the side and end walls about a hinge line extending in a diagonal direction from the hinged corner connection of the associated side and end wall so as to lie between the side and end wall when the carrier is collapsed, said top wall forming panels having means for engaging top portions of the bottles so as to hold the same in position, said top wall forming panels having means movable to a depending bottle separating position, and bottom wall forming panels hinged to the bottom edges of the side wall panels which botton wall forming panels have connecting means for securing said bottom wall panels in bottom wall forming relation beneath the bottles.

2. A collapsible carrier for bottles formed from a blank of foldable sheet material which is cut and scored to provide hingedly connected side and end wall forming panels, top wall forming panels hinged to the top edges of the side and end wall forming panels and a pair

of bottom wall forming panels hinged to the bottom edges of the side wall forming panels, said top wall forming panels being arranged in pairs with the panels of each pair adjoining each other and connected to each other on a hinge line extending diagonally inwardly of the corner forming fold which connects the side and end wall forming panels to which said pair of top wall forming panels are hinged so as to collapse between the side and end wall forming panels when said panels are folded upon each other in collapsing the carrier, said top wall forming panels having bottle separating means depending therefrom, and said bottom wall forming panels having free marginal portions with means for connecting said marginal portions when the carrier is opened up and deposited on an assembly of bottles and said bottom wall forming panels are hinged into coplanar relation beneath the assembly of bottles.

3. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said top wall forming panels have bottle top engaging means in the form of aligned apertures for receiving the tops of the assembly of bottles which bottles are in double row and transversely paired alignment.

4. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said top wall forming panels which are hinged to the side wall panels have hinged marginal portions which move into depending abutting relation and form said bottle separating means when said panels are in top wall forming position.

5. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said top wall forming panels have marginal portions which are hingedly connected thereto and which move into interconnected depending relation when the top wall forming panels are moved into coplanar relation so as to form said bottle separating means.

6. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said top wall forming panels have hinged marginal portions which are disposed in vertical planes when said top wall forming panels are in top wall forming position and which constitute said bottle separating means.

7. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said top wall forming panels have hinged marginal portions constituting said bottle separating means which are disposed in longitudinal and transverse planes between the bottles when said top wall forming panels are in top wall forming position.

8. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein the panels of each said pair of said top wall forming panels have overlapping portions when in top wall forming position which provide multi-ply thickness and finger holes are cut in said multi-ply thickness.

9. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein said bottom wall forming panels have marginal portions which overlap when in coplanar relation wherein locking tongues and co-operating locking apertures in which said tongues are engaged are provided in said overlapping marginal portions.

10. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **2** wherein compression finger receiving apertures are provided at the juncture of said side wall forming panels and the adjoining bottom wall forming panels.

11. A collapsible carrier for an assembly of bottles which are arranged in double row and transversely paired alignment, said carrier being formed from a blank of foldable sheet material, said blank being cut and scored to provide hingedly connected side and end wall forming panels, top wall forming panels hinged to top portions of the side and end wall forming panels and a pair of bottom wall forming panels hinged to the bottom edges of the side wall forming panels, said top wall forming panels being arranged in pairs with the panels of each pair adjoining each other and connected to each other on a hinge line extending diagonally inwardly of the corner forming fold which connects the side and end wall forming panels to which said pair of top wall panels are hinged so as to collapse between the side and end wall forming panels when said panels are folded upon each other in collapsing the carrier and to automatically move into coplanar top wall forming relation when the carrier is squared up, said top wall forming panels each having a hingedly connected portion movable into depending bottle separating relation when said top wall forming panels are moved to top wall forming position, and said bottom wall forming panels having free marginal portions with means for connecting said marginal portions when the carrier is opened up and deposited on an assembly of bottles and said bottom wall forming panels are hinged into coplanar relation beneath the assembly of bottles.

12. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **11** wherein said hingedly connected portions of said top wall panels comprise relatively narrow panel portions which move into longitudinal and transverse planes for separating the bottles both longitudinally and transversely when the carrier is set up.

13. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **12** wherein said panel portions which separate the bottles longitudinally have apertures therein and said panel portions which separate the bottles transversely have end extensions which move through said apertures to a position to separate the bottles on the opposite sides of the longitudinal separating panel portions.

14. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **11** wherein said top wall forming panels which are hinged to the side wall forming panels have relatively narrow panels hinged to the free edges thereof which move into face to face relation when the carrier is set up and form a longitudinal center partition for separating the rows of bottles.

15. A collapsible carrier for bottles as set forth in claim **11** wherein said top wall forming panels which are hinged to the end wall forming panels have panel portions hinged to the free edges thereof which are movable into vertical planes when the carrier is set up and form cross partitions for separating pairs of bottles at opposite ends of the assembly thereof.

16. A collapsible carrier for an assembly of bottles which are arranged in double row and transversely paired alignment, said carrier being fabricated from a blank of foldable sheet material, which blank is cut and scored to provide hingedly connected side and end wall forming panels, top wall forming panels hinged to top portions of the side and end wall forming panels and a pair of bottom wall forming panels hinged to the bottom edges of the side wall forming panels, said top wall forming panels being arranged in pairs with the panels of each pair connected to each other so as to collapse between the side and end wall forming panels when said panels are folded upon each other in collapsing the

carrier and to automatically move into coplanar top wall forming relation when the carrier is squared up, said top wall forming panels each having a hingedly connected portion movable into depending bottle separating relation when said top wall forming panels are moved to top wall forming position, said bottom wall forming panels having marginal portions with interengaging locking means for connecting said marginal portions when said bottom wall forming panels are hinged into coplanar relation beneath an assembly of bottles, and one of said bottom wall forming panels having an integrally hinged marginal portion which is swingable to upright position to form a separator between the bottom portions of the bottles.

17. A collapsible carrier as set forth in claim **16** wherein said interengaging locking means for said bottom wall forming panels comprises spaced locking apertures in the margin of one of said bottom wall forming panels and co-operating locking and latching tabs spaced along a relatively narrow, hinged locking panel on the margin of the co-operating bottom wall forming panel, which locking and latching tabs are adapted to be engaged in said apertures, and wherein said bottle separating marginal portion on said one bottom wall forming panel is hinged outboard of the locking apertures in said bottom wall forming panel.

18. A collapsible carrier for an assembly of bottles which are arranged in double row and transversely paired alignment, said carrier being fabricated from a blank of foldable sheet material, which blank is cut and scored to provide hingedly connected side and end wall members, top wall forming members hinged to top portions of the side and end wall members and a pair of bottom wall forming panel members hinged to the bottom edges of the side wall members, said top wall members being arranged in pairs with the members of each pair thereof connected on hinge lines which extend from diagonally opposite corners of the top wall when the carrier is squared up and permitting said top wall members to collapse between side and end wall members when said members are folded upon each other in collapsing said carrier and to automatically move into coplanar top wall forming relation when the carrier is squared up and said top wall members having hingedly connected portions movable into depending bottle separating position when said top wall members are moved into coplanar top wall forming relation, one of said bottom wall forming panel members having a marginal portion with locking apertures, the other one of said bottom wall forming panel members having a locking panel hinged on the margin thereof with locking tongues and latching tabs adapted to engage in said locking apertures, a bottle separating panel on the margin of said apertured panel which is swingable to upright position between bottom portions of the bottles and said bottom wall forming panels having separating tab portions which are swingable into bottle separating upright position in transverse planes.

19. A blank for fabricating a collapsible bottle carrier comprising an elongate sheet of bendable paperboard material which is cut and transversely scored to divide the same into integrally connected, generally rectangular bottom wall forming panels extending laterally at one side edge of the sheet which are separated from the side wall forming panels by hinge forming score lines, and top wall forming panels extending laterally of the opposite side edge of the sheet which are separated from the side and end wall forming panels by hinge forming score lines which are aligned longitudinally of the sheet, said top wall forming panels which extend from the side wall forming panels each having a dimension transversely of the sheet which is greater than one half the dimension of the end wall forming panels in the lengthwise direction of the sheet, each of said top wall forming panels which extend from the side wall forming panels having a relatively narrow partition panel in the free outer edge thereof which is separated therefrom by a longitudinally extending, hinge forming score line and along which there is an elongate aperture with a relatively short abutment forming inner edge extending transversely of the blank, each of said top wall forming panels having a hinge forming diagonal score at one end thereof for dividing therefrom a generally triangular glue tab forming portion for connection in face engaging relation with an adjoining top wall forming panel which extends from the adjacent end wall forming panel and said top wall forming panels which are hinged to the end wall forming panels each having a bottle separation finger with dimensions enabling it to pass through said elongate aperture when the carrier is opened up.

20. A blank as set forth in claim **19** wherein each of the top wall forming panels which extends from an end wall forming panel has a relatively narrow partition panel in the free outer edge which is separated therefrom by a longitudinally extending, hinge forming score line and wherein said bottle separation fingers extend from said narrow partition panels.

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