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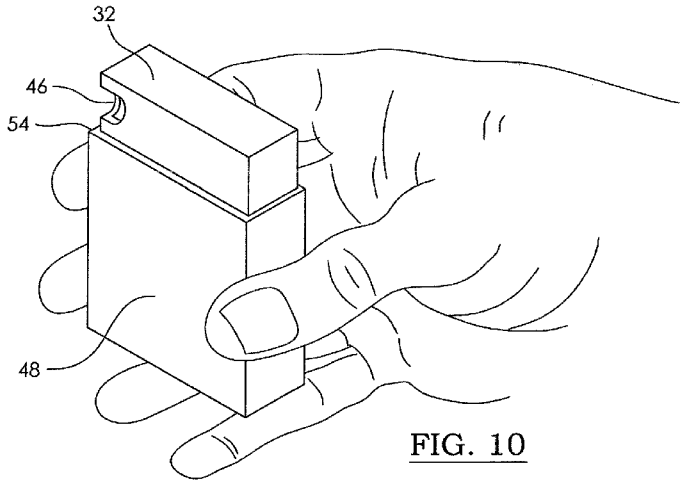

FIG. 10

(57) Abstract: A package (30) dispenses confectionery pellets (18). A box (32) has a pellet dispensing hole (46) on the front face (34) and left edge (38), allowing visual observation from the front and controlled dispensing of the pellets (18) from the edge (38). A sleeve (48) attached to the box (32) by a removable pull strip (68) slides over the box (32) to selectively cover and uncover the dispensing hole (46). The package (30) can be held in one hand while digitally pushing the box (32) upward into the open position and digitally pushing the box (32) downward into the closed position with the fingers of the one hand. A tab (76) sliding along a slot (60) delimits the closed and open positions. A clearance edge (66) extends along the sleeve front and rear face (50, 52) and allows clearance between the box bottom end (44) and the sleeve (48). A finger of one hand is extended across the sleeve front and rear faces (50, 52) for digitally pushing the box (32) into the open position so as to dispense the pellets (18).

WO 2015/168045 A1

SLEEVED PACKAGE FOR CONFECTIONERY PRODUCTS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS:

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/984,922 filed on April 28, 2014, and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/984,932 filed on April 28, 2014, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION:

This invention relates to a package for confectionery products and, more particularly, to a sleeved package for confectionery products enabling one handed opening.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION:

Confectionery products can be of any composition. For example, candy, chocolates, toffee, cough drops, bubble gum, chewing gum, or mints. Confectionery products can also be of any shape, for example, spheroidal, oblong, football, discus shaped, etc. Small boiled hard candy pellets are commonly made in a spheroidal pellet shape.

It is common to package product pellets in a rectangular box having a sleeve that uncovers a dispensing hole by sliding in one direction, and covers the hole by sliding back in the opposite direction. A blank is die-cut as one piece from card stock. The blank is folded along various lines to form the box and the sleeve overlying the box. Certain edges are glued, others are left free. The procedure is well known to those with ordinary skill in the art.

While the box and sleeve package allow for dispensing of the pellets from the box by selectively sliding the sleeve and uncovering the opening in the box, certain box and sleeve designs have disadvantages. Namely, not being able to see the pellets while dispensing them from an edge hole.

For another example, in certain designs it is difficult to manipulate the box and sleeve to allow dispensing of the pellets. Often the operation of the box and sleeve is not intuitive upon inspection. In most cases it is necessary to insert a finger into the sleeve to push the box

out, which is awkward. Instructions must be provided for the user. Also, control of dispensing of the pellets from the hole in the box is difficult, and may result in spilling of the product onto the floor.

It is therefore desirable to provide a box and sleeve package that is simple and intuitive to open and close with one hand, and from which it is easy to dispense pellets in a controlled manner, one pellet at a time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION:

In a first aspect, a package for confectionery pellets comprises a box for containing the pellets. The box extends along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end. The box has a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets.

A sleeve extends between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end. The sleeve has a sleeve front face and an opposite sleeve rear face. The sleeve is closely positioned around the box. The sleeve is attached to the box by a removable pull strip, which is adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box. This allows selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position to an open position. In the closed position the sleeve covers the dispensing hole. In the open position the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets.

A clearance edge extends along at least part of the sleeve front face and part of the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end. The clearance edge is displaced from the box bottom end by a predetermined clearance depth in the closed position. The clearance edge is adapted to allow clearance between the box bottom end and the sleeve. A finger of one hand is extended across the sleeve front face and across the sleeve rear face for digitally pushing the box into the open position so as to dispense the pellets.

In a second aspect, a package for confectionery pellets is disclosed. The pellets have a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension. A box for containing the pellets extends along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box

bottom end. The box has a box front face and an opposite box rear face. The box has a box left edge and a box right edge. The box has a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets. The box dispensing hole is disposed on the box front face and extends onto the box left edge adjacent the box top end. This allows visual observation of the dispensing hole from the box front face. In this manner, controlled dispensing of the pellets is allowed. The dispensing hole is larger than the pellet major dimension. The dispensing hole is adapted to allow only one pellet to pass at a time.

A sleeve extends along a sleeve length between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end. The sleeve is closely positioned around the box, and is attached to the box by a removable pull strip. The pull strip is adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box. This allows selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position to an open position. In the closed position the sleeve covers the dispensing hole. In the open position the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets. The sleeve length is less than the box length. Thus, the box bottom end extends beyond the sleeve bottom end in the closed position. Conversely, the box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position.

In this manner, the box and the sleeve are adapted for grasping the package with one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand. In a similar manner, the box and the sleeve are adapted for digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand. Hence, opening and closing of the package is allowed with the one hand.

In a third aspect, a package for confectionery pellets is disclosed. The pellets have a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension. A box for containing the pellets extends along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end. The box has a box front face and an opposite box rear face. The box has a box left edge and a box right edge. The box has a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets. The box dispensing hole is disposed on the box front face and extends onto the box left edge adjacent the box top end. This allows visual observation of the dispensing hole from the box

front face. In this manner, controlled dispensing of the pellets is allowed. The dispensing hole is larger than the pellet major dimension. The dispensing hole is adapted to allow only one pellet to pass at a time.

A sleeve extends along a sleeve length between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end. The sleeve has a sleeve front face and an opposite sleeve rear face. The sleeve is closely positioned around the box, and is attached to the box by a removable pull strip. The pull strip is adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box. This allows selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position to an open position. In the closed position the sleeve covers the dispensing hole. In the open position the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets. The sleeve has a notch extending through the sleeve front face and the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end. Thus, the notch exposes a portion of the box front face and a portion of the box rear face in the closed position. The box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position.

In this manner, the box and the sleeve are adapted for grasping the package with one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand juxtaposed with the notch. The one finger extends past the sleeve front face and past the sleeve rear face. In a similar manner, the box and the sleeve are adapted for digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand. Hence, opening and closing of the package is allowed with the one hand.

In a fourth aspect, a method is disclosed for packaging and dispensing confectionery pellets. The method comprises containing the pellets within a box, and extending a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets. A sleeve is positioned closely around the box to form a package.

The sleeve is attached to the box by a removable pull strip. The dispensing hole is covered with the sleeve when the pull strip is attached. The pull strip is adapted for manual removal for detaching the sleeve from the box. The sleeve is adapted for sliding along the box into a closed position for covering the dispensing hole when the pull strip is removed.

The sleeve is adapted for sliding along the box into an open position for uncovering the dispensing hole when the pull strip is removed.

A clearance edge is extended along at least part of a sleeve front face and part of a sleeve rear face at a sleeve bottom end. The clearance edge is displaced from a box bottom end by a predetermined clearance depth in the closed position. One finger is extended past the sleeve front face and past the sleeve rear face. The box is pushed into the open position digitally for dispensing the pellets when the pull strip is removed.

These and other aspects, objectives, features, and advantages of the disclosed technologies will become apparent from the following detailed description of illustrative embodiments thereof, which is to be read in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of an exemplary confectionery product pellet used in connection with the invention.

Fig. 2 is a front elevational view of the exemplary confectionery product pellet of FIG. 1.

Fig. 3 is a front elevational view of a package for confectionery products constructed in accordance with the invention, showing the package in the closed position.

Fig. 4 is a side elevational view of the package of FIG. 3.

Fig. 5 is a rear elevational view of the package of FIG. 3.

Fig. 6 is a front elevational view of the package of FIG. 3, showing the package in the open position.

Fig. 7 is a side elevational view of the package of FIG. 6.

Fig. 8 is a rear elevational view of the package of FIG. 6.

Fig. 9 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 3, showing the package before opening.

Fig. 10 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 3, showing the package after opening.

Fig. 11 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 3, showing the package before closing.

Fig. 12 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 3, showing the package after closing.

Fig. 13 is a top plan view of the package of FIG. 3, showing a blank of material after being die cut, and before folding.

Fig. 14 is a front elevational view of another package for confectionery products constructed in accordance with the invention, showing the package in the closed position.

Fig. 15 is a side elevational view of the package of FIG. 14.

Fig. 16 is a rear elevational view of the package of FIG. 14.

Fig. 17 is a front elevational view of the package of FIG. 14, showing the package in the open position.

Fig. 18 is a side elevational view of the package of FIG. 17.

Fig. 19 is a rear elevational view of the package of FIG. 17.

Fig. 20 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 14, showing the package before opening.

Fig. 21 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 14, showing the package after opening.

Fig. 22 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 14, showing the package before closing.

Fig. 23 is a top perspective view of the package of FIG. 14, showing the package after closing.

Fig. 24 is a top plan view of the package of FIG. 14, showing a blank of material after being die cut, and before folding.

Fig. 25 is a front elevational view of yet another package for confectionery products constructed in accordance with the invention, showing the package in the closed position.

Fig. 26 is a front elevational view of the package of FIG. 25, showing the package in the open position.

Fig. 27 is a front elevational view of still another package for confectionery products constructed in accordance with the invention, showing the package in the closed position.

Fig. 28 is a front elevational view of the package of FIG. 27, showing the package in the open position.

Fig. 29 is a front elevational view of a further package for confectionery products constructed in accordance with the invention, showing the package in the closed position.

Fig. 30 is a front elevational view of the package of FIG. 29, showing the package in the open position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION:

Consumable products or product pieces may include but not be limited to confectionery products, as used herein, such as gum and candy, lozenges, and the like. The confectionery products are spheroidal pellets 18 of relatively small size as shown in FIGS. 1 & 2. The pellets fill the package randomly. It is to be understood that the present invention can be used with comestible products of all shapes and sizes.

Referring to FIGS. 1-13, a package 30 constructed in accordance with the invention is disclosed for confectionery pellets 18 having a predetermined minor dimension DMIN and a predetermined major dimension DMAJ. A box 32 for containing the pellets 18 extends along a box length L1 between a box top end 42 and an opposite box bottom end 44. The box 32 has a box front face 34 and an opposite box rear face 36. The box 32 has a box left edge 38 and a box right edge 40. The box 32 has a dispensing hole 46 through the box for dispensing the pellets 18. In the preferred embodiment, the box dispensing hole 46 is disposed on the box front face 34 and extends onto the box left edge 38 adjacent the box top end 42. This allows visual observation of the dispensing hole 46 from the box front face 34 while the pellet exits the box left edge 38. In this manner, controlled dispensing of the pellets is allowed. However, the box dispensing hole 46 can be disposed on either the box front face 34 or box rear face 36. Similarly, the box dispensing hole 46 can extend onto either the box left edge 38 or the box right edge 40 adjacent the box top end 42. The dispensing hole 46 is larger than the pellet major dimension. The dispensing hole 46 is typically smaller than twice the pellet minor dimension, depending upon pellet shape. Regardless of pellet shape, the dispensing hole 46 is adapted to allow only one pellet 18 at a time to pass through the dispensing hole 46.

A sleeve 48 extends along a sleeve length L2 between a sleeve top end 54 and an opposite sleeve bottom end 56. The sleeve 48 has a sleeve front face 50 and an opposite sleeve rear face 52 juxtaposed with the box front face 34 and rear face 36 respectively. The

sleeve has a sleeve left edge 53 and a sleeve right edge 55. The sleeve 48 is closely positioned around the box 32, and is attached to the box 32 by a removable pull strip 68. The pull strip 68 is adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve 48 from the box 32. This allows selectively sliding the sleeve 48 along the box 32 from a closed position shown in Figs. 3-5, to an open position shown in Figs. 6-8. Figs. 9-10 show the one-handed opening along arrow 80. Figs. 11-12 show the one-handed closing along arrow 82. In the closed position the sleeve 48 covers the dispensing hole 46. In the open position the sleeve 48 uncovers the dispensing hole 46 to dispense the pellets 18. The sleeve length L2 is less than the box length L1. Thus, the box bottom end 44 extends beyond the sleeve bottom end 56 in the closed position. Conversely, the box top end 42 extends beyond the sleeve top end 54 in the open position.

A clearance edge 66 extends along at least part of the sleeve front face 50 and part of the sleeve rear face 52 at the sleeve bottom end 56. The clearance edge 66 is displaced from the box bottom end 44 by a predetermined clearance depth CD1 in the closed position. Clearance depth CD1 is a variable, and can be any value appropriate to slide the box 32 into the open position. In this embodiment, the clearance edge 66 is the same as the sleeve bottom end 56, and extends completely around the package from the sleeve front face 50 to the sleeve rear face 52, including the sleeve left edge 53 and the sleeve right edge 55. The clearance edge 66 is adapted to allow clearance between the box bottom end 44 and the sleeve 48. A finger of one hand is extended across the sleeve front face 50 and across the sleeve rear face 52 for digitally pushing the box 32 into the open position so as to dispense the pellets.

The package 30 can be grasped with one hand and the box 32 digitally pushed upward into the open position with one finger of the same hand, as shown by arrow 80 in FIG. 9. The same hand (right hand shown) can be used for dispensing pellets into the opposite hand. In the open position in FIG. 10, the dispensing hole 46 is uncovered by the sleeve top end 54. The box 32 is then digitally pushed downward into the closed position with a different finger of the same hand, as shown by arrow 82 in FIG. 11. In the closed position in FIG. 12, the dispensing hole 46 is covered by the sleeve top end 54. This can be done with the same hand

that holds the package. The package can also be held in one hand and pushed against the edge of a table or object. Either method allows opening and closing of the package 30 with one hand.

The sleeve 48 has a window opening 58 therethrough. Juxtaposed with the window 58 is a pull strip 68. The pull strip 68 extends between a first edge 70 connected to the box 32 and a second edge 72 connected to the sleeve 48. While attached, the pull strip 68 precludes sliding movement of the sleeve 48 over the box 32. The pull strip 68 ensures that the package 30 is sealed from tampering with the product, and prevents dispensing the pellets. The pull strip 68 is perforated at perforation lines 74 along the first 70 and second 72 edges. The pull strip 68 is accessible through the window 58. The pull strip 68 is adapted for manual grasping and removing. The pull strip 68 tears along the perforation lines 74 thereby separating the sleeve 48 from the box 32. When removed, the pull strip 68 allows sliding movement of the sleeve 48 over the box 32, thereby unsealing the package 30 and allowing dispensing the pellets 18.

The sleeve 48 has a slot opening 60 therethrough with opposed ends 62, 64 aligned in the direction of sliding movement. A tab 76 is attached to the box 32 and projects outward through the slot 60. The tab 76 is adapted to slide along the slot 60 between the slot ends 62, 64 as the box 32 moves with respect to the sleeve 48. One slot end 62 delimits the closed position. The opposed slot end 64 delimits the open position.

An optional flap 78 is attached to the box 32 and projects outward at the box top end 42. The flap 78 is adapted to abut the sleeve top end 54 in the closed position. This further delimits the closed position. In this manner, the sleeve cannot be readily removed from the box. As an alternative, the flap 78 projects outward at the box bottom end 44 (not shown). This further delimits the open position.

To form the package 30, a blank 86 is die-cut as one piece from card stock, as shown in FIG. 13. The process is well known to those skilled in the art. The blank 86 is folded along various lines to form the box 32 and the sleeve 48 overlying the box. Adhesive is

applied at certain places to secure the assembly. The box is filled with product and sealed. The box 32 and sleeve 48 are joined by a pull strip 68 with perforations 74, which is visible through the cut window opening 58. By pulling the strip 68 away along the perforations 74, the sleeve 48 is separated from the box 32, allowing the sleeve 48 to slide over the box 32. Adhesive seals the box end panels after filling with comestible product pellets. The tab 76 projecting through the slot opening 60 limits the sliding of the sleeve 48. An outer moisture proof clear wrapper (not shown) covers the package.

The dispensing hole 46 is disposed on the front face 34 of the box 32 and extends around a corner onto the left edge 38 of the box adjacent the top end 42. The dispensing hole 46 is visually seen from the front face 34. This allows controlling the dispensing of the pellets from the left edge 38 because the pellets are visible from the front face 34.

Referring now to Figs. 14-24, another package 130 constructed in accordance with the invention is disclosed for confectionery pellets 18 having a predetermined minor dimension DMIN and a predetermined major dimension DMAJ. Package 130 is similar to package 30 described above, in that a box 132 for containing the pellets 18 extends along a box length L3 between a box top end 142 and an opposite box bottom end 144. The box 132 has a box front face 134 and an opposite box rear face 136. The box 132 has a box left edge 138 and a box right edge 140. The box 132 has a dispensing hole 146 through the box for dispensing the pellets 18. In the preferred embodiment, the box dispensing hole 146 is disposed on the box front face 134 and extends onto the box left edge 138 adjacent the box top end 142. This allows visual observation of the dispensing hole 146 from the box front face 134 while the pellet exits the box left edge 138. In this manner, controlled dispensing of the pellets is allowed. However, the box dispensing hole 146 can be disposed on either the box front face 134 or box rear face 136. Similarly, the box dispensing hole 146 can extend onto either the box left edge 138 or the box right edge 140 adjacent the box top end 142. The dispensing hole 146 is larger than the pellet major dimension. The dispensing hole 146 is adapted to allow only one pellet 18 at a time to pass through the dispensing hole 146.

A sleeve 148 extends along a sleeve length L4 between a sleeve top end 154 and an opposite sleeve bottom end 156. The sleeve 148 has a sleeve front face 150 and an opposite sleeve rear face 152 juxtaposed with the box front face 134 and rear face 136 respectively. The sleeve has a sleeve left edge 153 and a sleeve right edge 155. The sleeve 148 is closely positioned around the box 132, and is attached to the box 132 by a removable pull strip 168. The pull strip 168 is adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve 148 from the box 132. This allows selectively sliding the sleeve 148 along the box 132 from a closed position shown in Figs. 14-16, to an open position shown in Figs. 17-19. Figs. 20-21 show the one-handed opening along arrow 180. Figs. 22-23 show the one-handed closing along arrow 182. In the closed position the sleeve 148 covers the dispensing hole 146. In the open position the sleeve 148 uncovers the dispensing hole 146 to dispense the pellets 18. Package 130 differs from package 30 described above, in that the sleeve length L4 is approximately equal to the box length L3. Thus, the box bottom end 144 is generally aligned with the sleeve bottom end 156 in the closed position. Similarly, box top end 142 is generally aligned with the sleeve top end 154 in the closed position. The sleeve 148 has a notch 184 extending through the sleeve front face 150 and the sleeve rear face 152 at the sleeve bottom end 156. Thus, the notch 184 exposes a portion of the box front face 134 and a portion of the box rear face 136 in the closed position. As with package 30 described above, the box top end 142 extends beyond the sleeve top end 154 in the open position.

A clearance edge 166 extends along at least part of the sleeve front face 150 and part of the sleeve rear face 152 at the sleeve bottom end 156. In this embodiment, the clearance edge 166 is the apex of the notch 184, in both the sleeve front face 150 and in the sleeve rear face 152. The clearance edge 166 is displaced from the box bottom end 144 by a predetermined clearance depth CD2 in the closed position. The clearance depth CD2 of package 130 is similar to clearance depth CD1 of package 30 described above, except that CD2 is a variable, and can be any value appropriate to slide the box 132 into the open position. The clearance edge 166 is adapted to allow clearance between the box bottom end 144 and the sleeve 148. A finger of one hand is extended underneath the package 30, across the sleeve front face 150, and across the sleeve rear face 152 for digitally pushing the box 132

into the open position so as to dispense the pellets. The finger rises into the notch 184 to slide the box 132 into the open position.

In this manner, the box 132 and the sleeve 148 are adapted for grasping the package 130 with one hand and digitally pushing the box 132 upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand juxtaposed with the notch 184, as shown in Figs. 20-21. The one finger extends past the sleeve front face 150 and past the sleeve rear face 152. In a similar manner, the box 132 and the sleeve 148 are adapted for digitally pushing the box 132 downward into the closed position with another finger of the same one hand, as shown in Figs. 22-23. Hence, opening and closing of the package 130 is allowed with the one hand.

As described above for the package 30, the sleeve 148 of the package 130 has a window opening 158 therethrough. Juxtaposed with the window 158 is a pull strip 168. The pull strip 168 extends between a first edge 170 connected to the box 132 and a second edge 172 connected to the sleeve 148. While attached, the pull strip 168 precludes sliding movement of the sleeve 148 over the box 132. The pull strip 168 ensures that the package 130 is sealed from tampering with the product, and prevents dispensing the pellets. The pull strip 168 is perforated at perforation lines 174 along the first 170 and second 172 edges. The pull strip 168 is accessible through the window 158. The pull strip 168 is adapted for manual grasping and removing. The pull strip 168 tears along the perforation lines 174 thereby separating the sleeve 148 from the box 132. When removed, the pull strip 168 allows sliding movement of the sleeve 148 over the box 132, thereby unsealing the package 130 and allowing dispensing the pellets 18.

The sleeve 148 has a slot opening 160 therethrough with opposed ends 162, 164 aligned in the direction of sliding movement. A tab 176 is attached to the box 132 and projects outward through the slot 160. The tab 176 is adapted to slide along the slot 160 between the slot ends 162, 164 as the box 132 moves with respect to the sleeve 148. One slot end 162 delimits the closed position. The opposed slot end 164 delimits the open position.

An optional flap 178 is attached to the box 132 and projects outward at the box top end 142. The flap 178 is adapted to abut the sleeve top end 154 in the closed position. This further delimits the closed position. In this manner, the sleeve cannot be readily removed from the box. As an alternative, the flap 178 projects outward at the box bottom end 144 (not shown). This further delimits the open position.

To form the package 130, a blank 186 is die-cut as one piece from card stock, as shown in FIG. 24. The process is well known to those skilled in the art. The blank 186 is folded along various lines to form the box 132 and the sleeve 148 overlying the box. Adhesive is applied at certain places to secure the assembly. The box 132 is filled with the comestible product pellets 18, and sealed. The box 132 and sleeve 148 are joined by a pull strip 168 with perforations 174, which is visible through the cut window opening 158. By pulling the strip 168 away along the perforations 174, the sleeve 148 is separated from the box 132, allowing the sleeve 148 to slide over the box 132. Adhesive seals the box end panels after filling. The tab 176 projecting through the slot opening 160 limits the sliding of the sleeve 148. An outer moisture proof clear wrapper (not shown) covers the package 130.

The dispensing hole 146 is disposed on the front face 134 of the box 132 and extends around a corner onto the left edge 138 of the box adjacent the top end 142. The dispensing hole 146 is visually seen from the front face 134. This allows controlling the dispensing of the pellets 18 because the pellets are visible.

Turning now to Figs. 25-26, yet another package 230 constructed in accordance with the invention is disclosed for confectionery pellets 18. Package 230 is similar to package 130 described above, in that a box 232 for containing the pellets 18 extends between a box top end 242 and an opposite box bottom end 244. The box 232 has a box left edge 238 and a box right edge 240. The box 232 has a dispensing hole 246 through the box for dispensing the pellets 18. In this embodiment, the box dispensing hole 246 is disposed on the box front face 234 and extends onto the box left edge 238 adjacent the box top end 242.

A sleeve 248 extends between a sleeve top end 254 and an opposite sleeve bottom end 256. The sleeve 248 has a sleeve front face 250. In the closed position the sleeve 248 covers the dispensing hole 246. In the open position the sleeve 248 uncovers the dispensing hole 246 to dispense the pellets 18. The sleeve 248 has a notch 284 extending through the sleeve front face 250 and the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 256. A clearance edge 266 extends along at least part of the sleeve front face 250 and part of the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 256. In this embodiment, the clearance edge 266 is the apex of the notch 284. Package 230 differs from package 130 described above, in that the notch 284 is trapezoid-shaped instead of semi-circular.

Turning now to Figs. 27-28, yet another package 330 constructed in accordance with the invention is disclosed for confectionery pellets 18. Package 330 is similar to package 130 described above, in that a box 332 for containing the pellets 18 extends between a box top end 342 and an opposite box bottom end 344. The box 332 has a box left edge 338 and a box right edge 340. The box 332 has a dispensing hole 346 through the box for dispensing the pellets 18. In this embodiment, the box dispensing hole 346 is disposed on the box front face 334 and extends onto the box left edge 338 adjacent the box top end 342.

A sleeve 348 extends between a sleeve top end 354 and an opposite sleeve bottom end 356. The sleeve 348 has a sleeve front face 350. In the closed position the sleeve 348 covers the dispensing hole 346. In the open position the sleeve 348 uncovers the dispensing hole 346 to dispense the pellets 18. The sleeve 348 has a notch 384 extending through the sleeve front face 350 and the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 356. A clearance edge 366 extends along at least part of the sleeve front face 350 and part of the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 356. In this embodiment, the clearance edge 366 is the apex of the notch 384. Package 330 differs from package 130 described above, in that the notch 384 is quarter-circular and adjacent one edge, instead of semi-circular and centered.

Referring now to Figs. 29-30, yet another package 430 constructed in accordance with the invention is disclosed for confectionery pellets 18. Package 430 is similar to package 130 described above, in that a box 432 for containing the pellets 18 extends between a box top

end 442 and an opposite box bottom end 444. The box 432 has a box left edge 438 and a box right edge 440. The box 432 has a dispensing hole 446 through the box for dispensing the pellets 18. In this embodiment, the box dispensing hole 446 is disposed on the box front face 434 and extends onto the box left edge 438 adjacent the box top end 442.

A sleeve 448 extends between a sleeve top end 454 and an opposite sleeve bottom end 456. The sleeve 448 has a sleeve front face 450. In the closed position the sleeve 448 covers the dispensing hole 446. In the open position the sleeve 448 uncovers the dispensing hole 446 to dispense the pellets 18. The sleeve 448 has a notch 484 extending through the sleeve front face 450 and the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 456. A clearance edge 466 extends along at least part of the sleeve front face 450 and part of the sleeve rear face (not shown) at the sleeve bottom end 456. In this embodiment, the clearance edge 466 is the apex of the notch 484. Package 430 differs from package 130 described above, in that the notch 484 is quarter-elliptical and adjacent one edge, instead of semi-circular and centered.

It will be appreciated that variants of the above-disclosed and other features and functions, or alternatives thereof, may be desirably combined into many other different systems or applications. Various presently unforeseen or unanticipated alternatives, modifications, variations, or improvements therein may be subsequently made by those skilled in the art which are also intended to be encompassed by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A package for confectionery pellets comprising:

a box for containing the pellets, the box extending along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end, the box having a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets;

a sleeve extending between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end, the sleeve having a sleeve front face and an opposite sleeve rear face, the sleeve being closely positioned around the box, the sleeve being attached to the box by a removable pull strip, the pull strip being adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box, so as to allow selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position wherein the sleeve covers the dispensing hole to an open position wherein the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets; and

a clearance edge extending along at least part of the sleeve front face and part of the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end, the clearance edge being displaced from the box bottom end by a predetermined clearance depth in the closed position, the clearance edge being adapted to allow clearance between the box bottom end and the sleeve for extending a finger of one hand across the sleeve front face and across the sleeve rear face for digitally pushing the box into the open position with the one hand so as to dispense the pellets.

2. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 1, further comprising:

the box having a box front face and an opposite box rear face, the box having a box left edge and a box right edge;

the sleeve front face and rear face being juxtaposed with the box front face and rear face respectively, the sleeve having a sleeve left edge and a sleeve right edge;

the clearance edge extending through the sleeve front face and the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end; and

the box and the sleeve being adapted for grasping the package with a one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand, the finger extending past the sleeve front face and past the sleeve rear face, wherein the dispensing hole is uncovered by the sleeve top end, and digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand wherein the dispensing hole is

covered by the sleeve top end, thereby allowing opening and closing of the package with the one hand.

3. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 2, wherein the sleeve further comprises a sleeve length along the direction of sliding which is less than the box length, so that the box bottom end extends beyond the sleeve bottom end in the closed position, and the box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position.

4. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 2, wherein the sleeve further comprises a notch extending through the sleeve front face and the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end, so that the notch exposes a portion of the box in the closed position, and the box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position, the notch being adapted for digitally pushing the box into the open position.

5. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 1, wherein the pellets have a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension, the package further comprising:

the box having a box front face and an opposite box rear face, the box having a box left edge and an opposite box right edge, the box extending between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end, the box dispensing hole being disposed on a one of the box front face and box rear face and extending onto a one of the box left edge and box right edge adjacent the box top end, so as to allow visual observation of the dispensing hole during controlled dispensing of the pellets; and

the dispensing hole being larger than the pellet major dimension, the dispensing hole being adapted to pass only one pellet at a time.

6. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 1, further comprising:

the sleeve having a window opening therethrough; and

the pull strip extending between a first edge connected to the box and a second edge connected to the sleeve so as to preclude sliding movement of the sleeve over the box, thereby sealing the package from dispensing the pellets, the pull strip being perforated at

perforation lines along the first and second edges, the pull strip being accessible through the window, the pull strip being adapted for manual grasping and removing the pull strip along the perforation lines thereby separating the sleeve from the box, so as to allow sliding movement of the sleeve over the box, thereby unsealing the package and allowing dispensing the pellets.

7. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 1, further comprising:

the sleeve having a slot opening therethrough with opposed ends aligned in the direction of sliding movement; and

a tab attached to the box and projecting outward through the slot, the tab being adapted to slide along the slot between the ends as the box moves with respect to the sleeve, a one slot end delimiting the closed position, and the opposed slot end delimiting the open position.

8. The package for confectionery pellets of claim 1, further comprising a flap attached to the box adjacent one end and projecting outward, the flap being adapted to abut a sleeve end in at least one of the open and closed position, thereby delimiting the sliding movement of the sleeve over the box.

9. A package for confectionery pellets, the pellets having a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension, the package comprising:

a box for containing the pellets, the box extending along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end, the box having a box front face and an opposite box rear face, the box having a box left edge and a box right edge, the box having a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets, the box dispensing hole being disposed on the box front face and extending onto the box left edge adjacent the box top end, so as to allow visual observation of the dispensing hole from the box front face, thereby allowing controlled dispensing of the pellets, the dispensing hole being larger than the pellet major dimension, the dispensing hole being adapted to pass only one pellet at a time; and

a sleeve extending along a sleeve length between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end, the sleeve being closely positioned around the box, the sleeve being

attached to the box by a removable pull strip, the pull strip being adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box, so as to allow selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position wherein the sleeve covers the dispensing hole to an open position wherein the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets, the sleeve length being less than the box length, so that the box bottom end extends beyond the sleeve bottom end in the closed position, and the box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position;

wherein the box and the sleeve being adapted for grasping the package with a one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand, and digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand, thereby allowing opening and closing of the package with the one hand.

10. A package for confectionery pellets, the pellets having a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension, the package comprising:

a box for containing the pellets, the box extending along a box length between a box top end and an opposite box bottom end, the box having a box front face and an opposite box rear face, the box having a box left edge and a box right edge, the box having a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets, the box dispensing hole being disposed on the box front face and extending onto the box left edge adjacent the box top end, so as to allow visual observation of the dispensing hole from the box front face, thereby allowing controlled dispensing of the pellets, the dispensing hole being larger than the pellet major dimension, the dispensing hole being adapted to pass only one pellet at a time; and

a sleeve extending along a sleeve length between a sleeve top end and an opposite sleeve bottom end, the sleeve having a sleeve front face and an opposite sleeve rear face, the sleeve being closely positioned around the box, the sleeve being attached to the box by a removable pull strip, the pull strip being adapted for manual removal to detach the sleeve from the box, so as to allow selectively sliding the sleeve along the box from a closed position wherein the sleeve covers the dispensing hole to an open position wherein the sleeve uncovers the dispensing hole to dispense the pellets, the sleeve having a notch extending through the sleeve front face and the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end, so that the

notch exposes a portion of the box front face and a portion of the box rear face in the closed position, and the box top end extends beyond the sleeve top end in the open position;

wherein the box and the sleeve being adapted for grasping the package with a one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand juxtaposed with the notch, the one finger extending past the sleeve front face and past the sleeve rear face, and digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand, thereby allowing opening and closing of the package with the one hand.

11. A method for packaging and dispensing confectionery pellets, the method comprising:

containing the pellets within a box;

extending a dispensing hole through the box for dispensing the pellets;

positioning a sleeve closely around the box to form a package;

attaching the sleeve to the box by a removable pull strip;

covering the dispensing hole with the sleeve when the pull strip is attached;

adapting the pull strip for manual removal for detaching the sleeve from the box;

adapting the sleeve for sliding along the box into a closed position for covering the dispensing hole when the pull strip is removed;

adapting the sleeve for sliding along the box into an open position for uncovering the dispensing hole when the pull strip is removed;

extending a clearance edge along at least part of a sleeve front face and part of a sleeve rear face at a sleeve bottom end;

displacing the clearance edge from a box bottom end by a predetermined clearance depth in the closed position;

adapting the package for extending one finger past the sleeve front face and past the sleeve rear face; and

pushing the box into the open position digitally with the one finger for dispensing the pellets when the pull strip is removed.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

adapting the box and the sleeve for grasping with a one hand and digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with one finger of the one hand; and

adapting the box and the sleeve for digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand; thereby

allowing opening and closing of the package with the one hand.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

extending the box to a predetermined length along the direction of sliding;

extending the sleeve to a length which is less than the box predetermined length;

extending the box bottom end beyond the sleeve bottom end in the closed position; and

extending a box top end beyond a sleeve top end in the open position.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

extending a notch through the sleeve front face and the sleeve rear face at the sleeve bottom end;

exposing a portion of the box front face and a portion of the box rear face through the notch in the closed position;

extending the box top end beyond the sleeve top end in the open position;

adapting the box and the sleeve for digitally pushing the box upward into the open position with the one finger of the one hand juxtaposed with the notch; and

adapting the box and the sleeve for digitally pushing the box downward into the closed position with another finger of the one hand.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the pellets have a predetermined minor dimension and a predetermined major dimension, the method further comprising:

disposing the dispensing hole on a one of the box front face and box rear face;

extending the dispensing hole onto an edge of the box adjacent a box top end;

allowing visual observation of the dispensing hole from a one of the box front face and box rear face during dispensing of the pellets;

controlling dispensing of the pellets by visual observation;

adapting the dispensing hole to dispense only one pellet at a time.

16. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

precluding sliding movement of the sleeve over the box when the pull strip is attached;

extending a window through the sleeve and juxtaposing the window with the pull strip;

allowing manually grasping and pulling the pull strip away from the package through the window, thereby separating the sleeve from the box; and

allowing sliding movement of the sleeve over the box when the pull strip is removed.

17. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

providing a slot opening through the sleeve and aligning opposed ends of the slot in the direction of sliding movement;

projecting a tab from the box outward through the slot;

allowing the tab to slide along the slot between the slot ends as the box slides within the sleeve;

delimiting the closed position when the tab impinges one slot end; and

delimiting the open position when the tab impinges the opposed slot end.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

projecting a flap outward at a one of the box ends; and

abutting the flap with a one of the sleeve ends in at least one of the open and closed position; thereby

delimiting the sliding movement of the sleeve over the box.

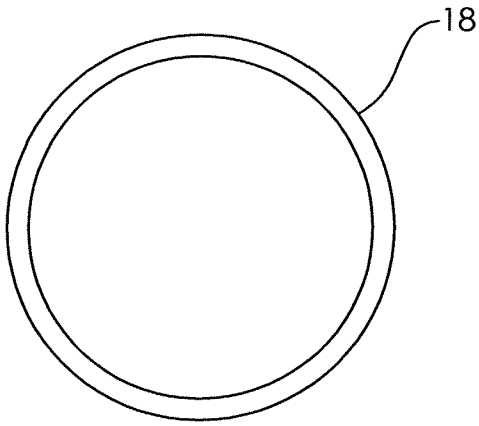

FIG. 1

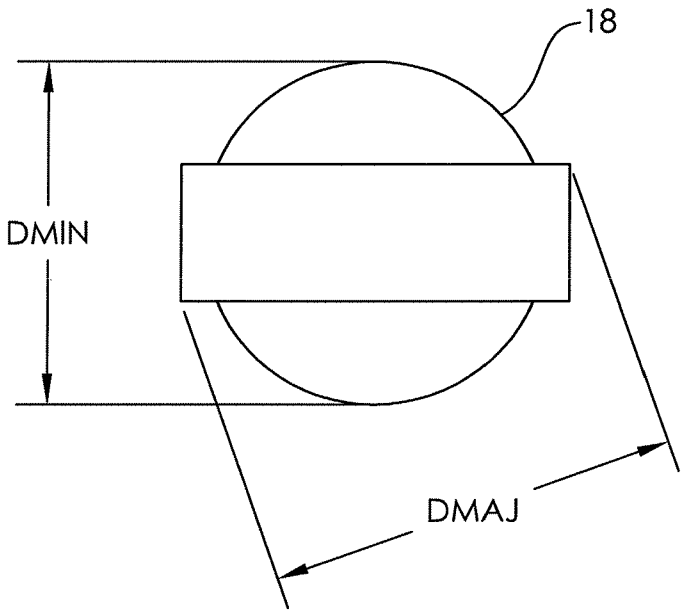

FIG. 2

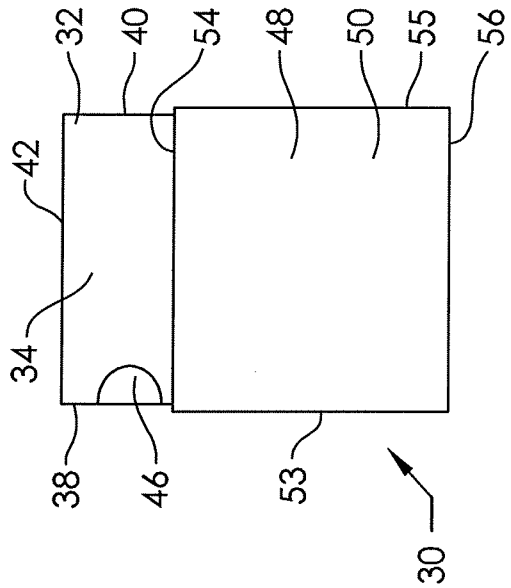

FIG. 6

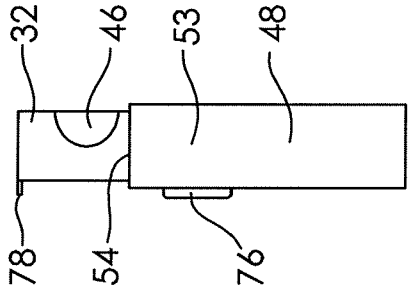

FIG. 7

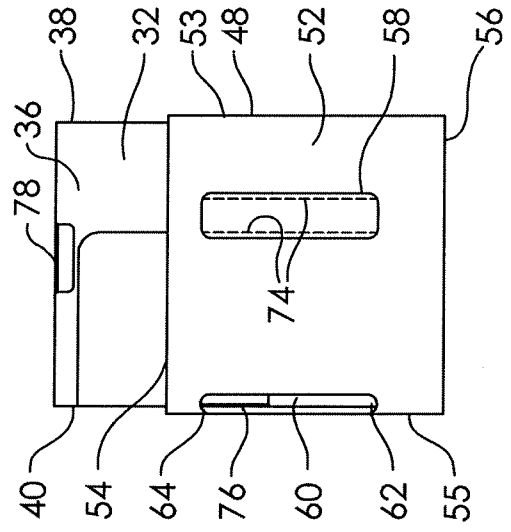

FIG. 8

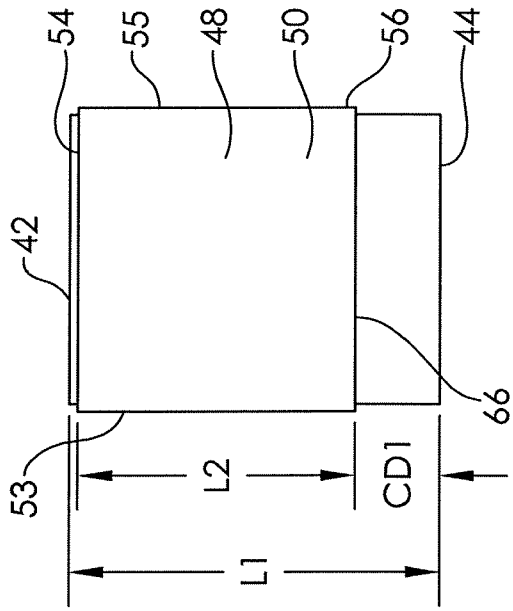

FIG. 3

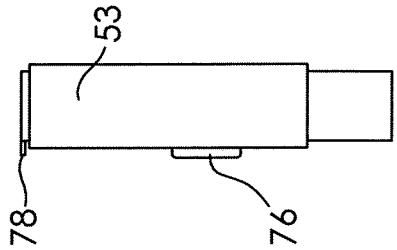

FIG. 4

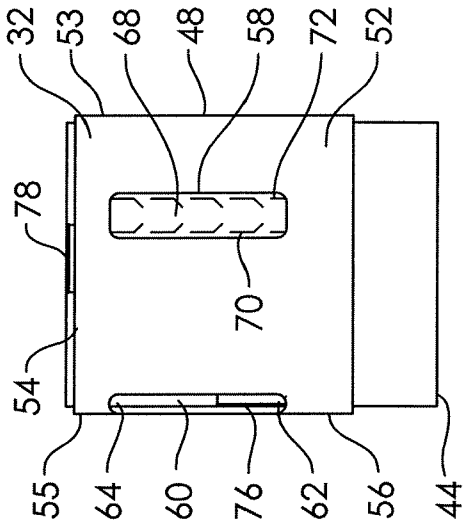

FIG. 5

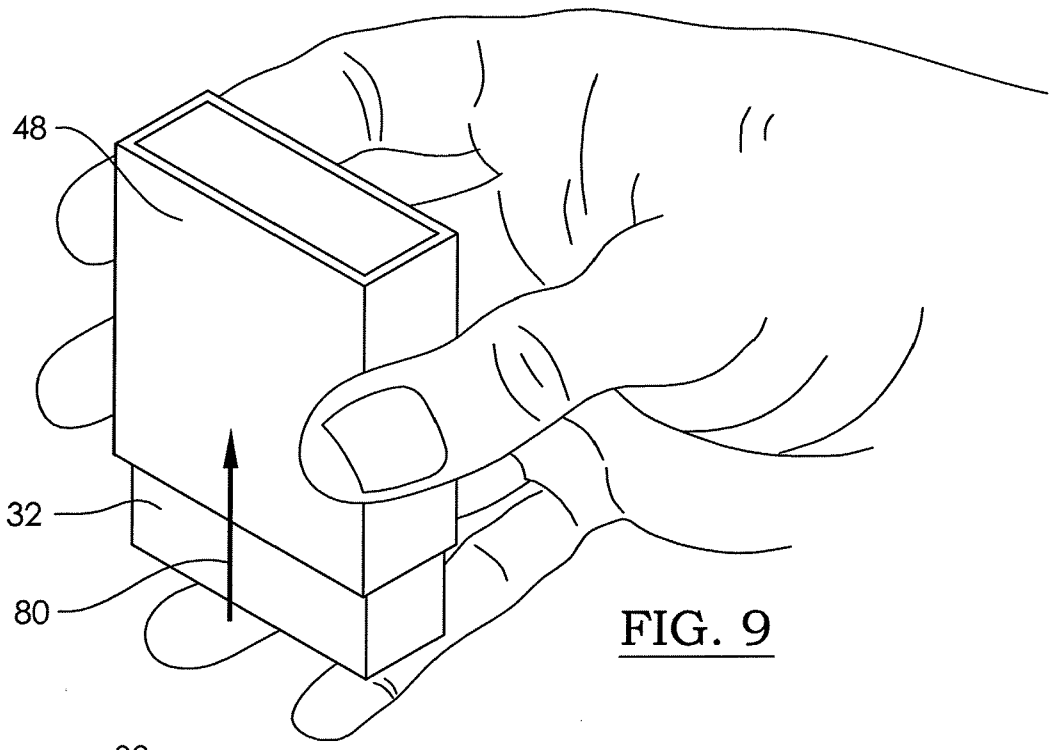

FIG. 9

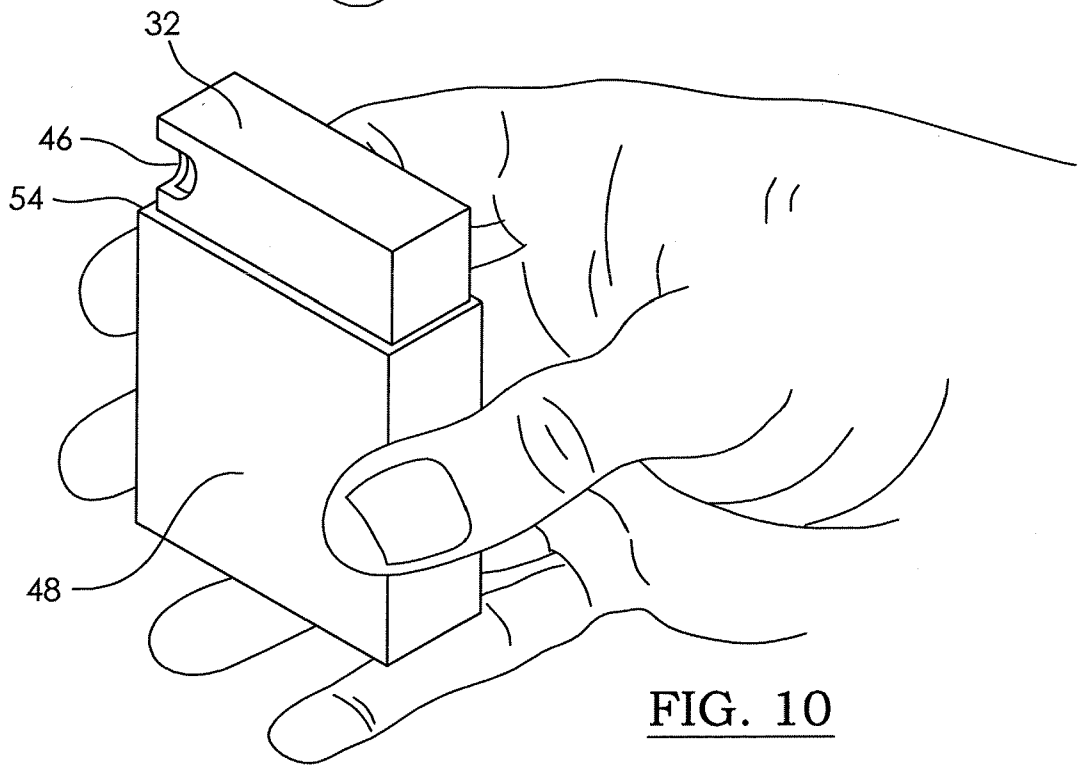

FIG. 10

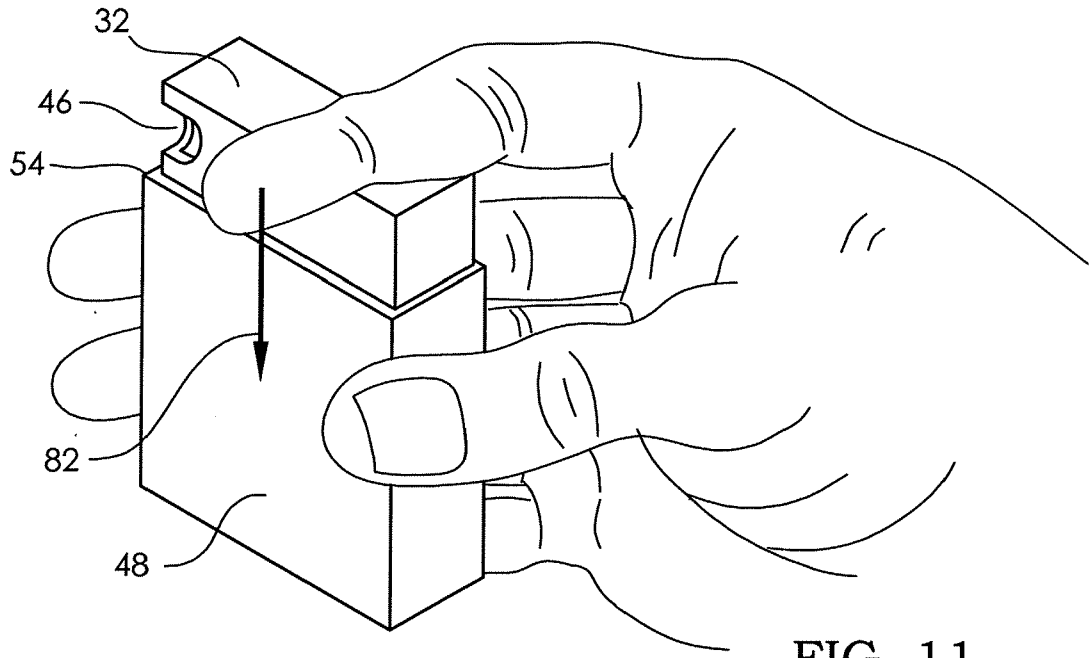

FIG. 11

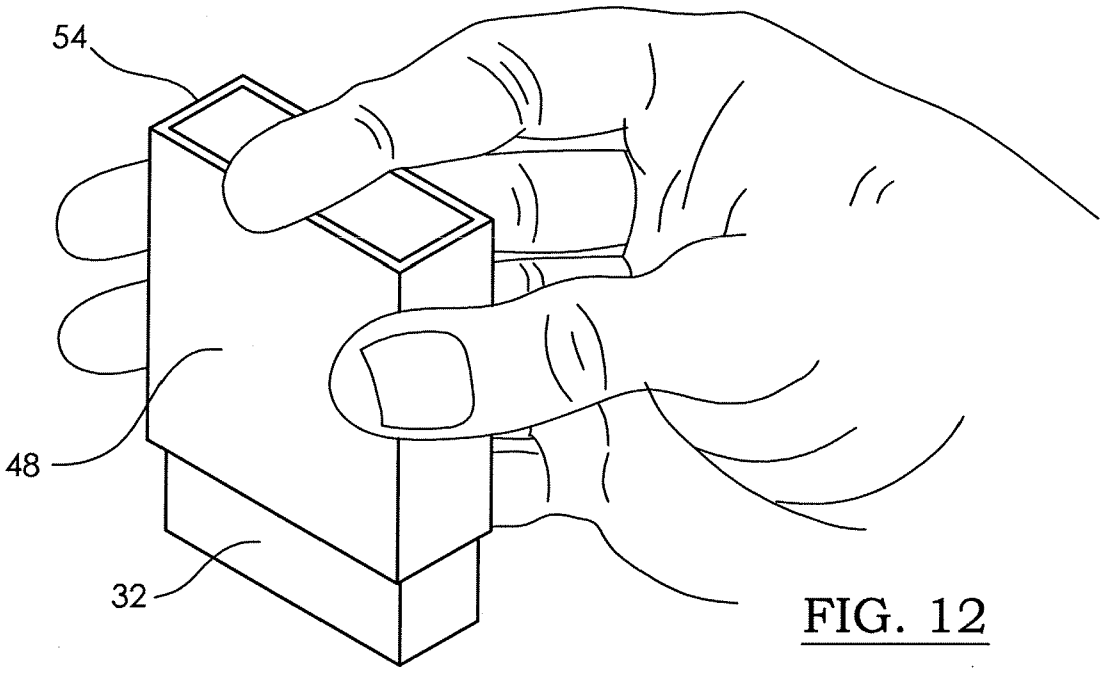

FIG. 12

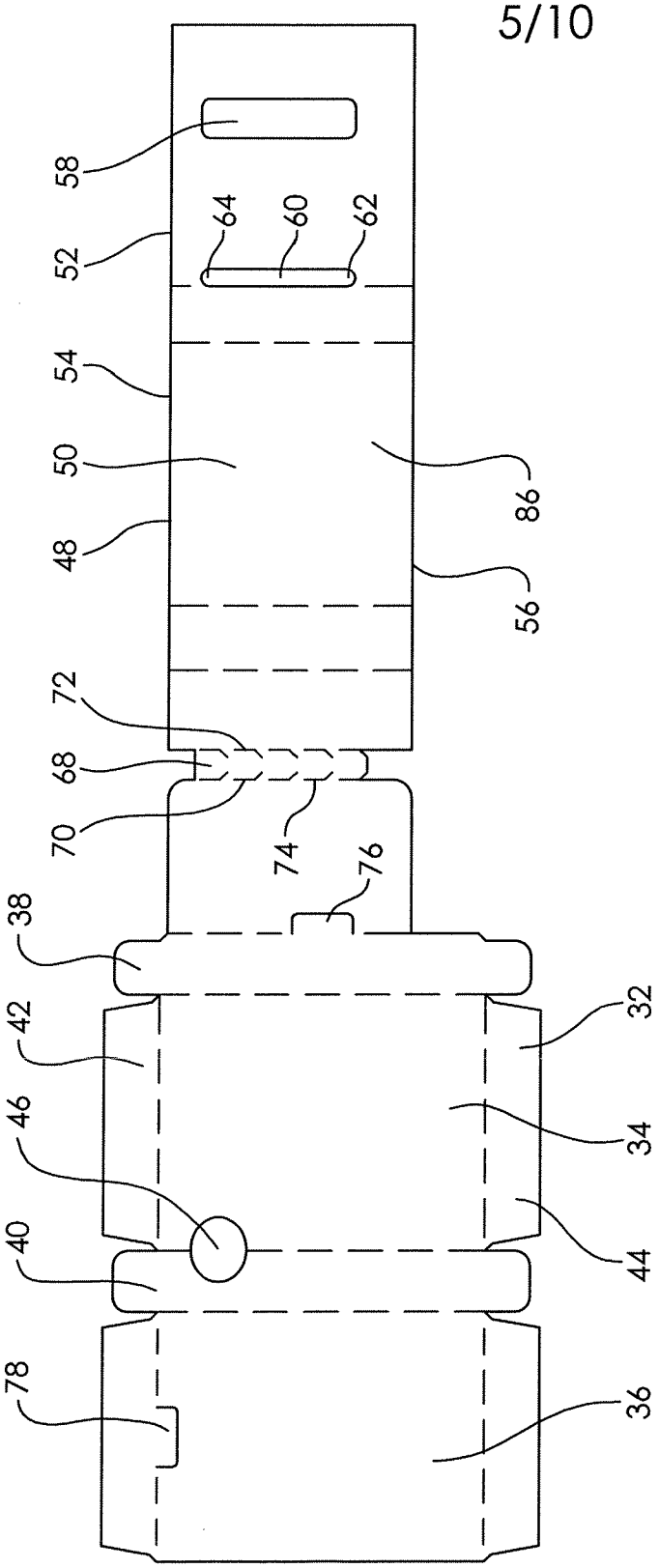

FIG. 13

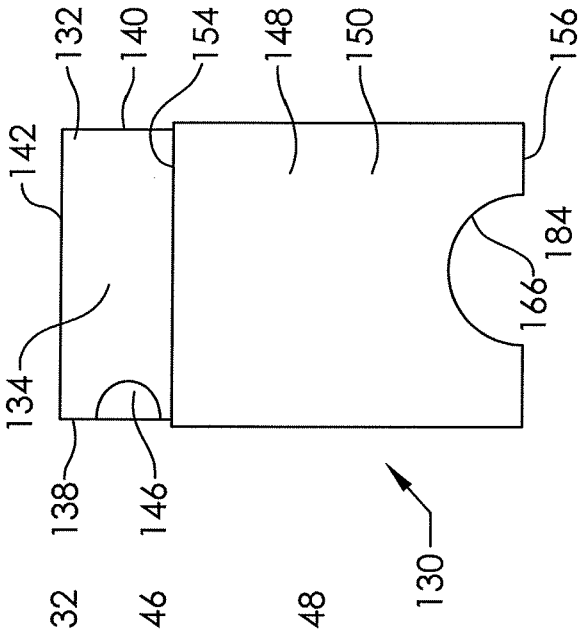

FIG. 17

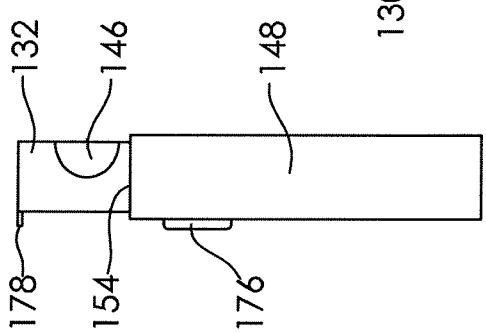

FIG. 18

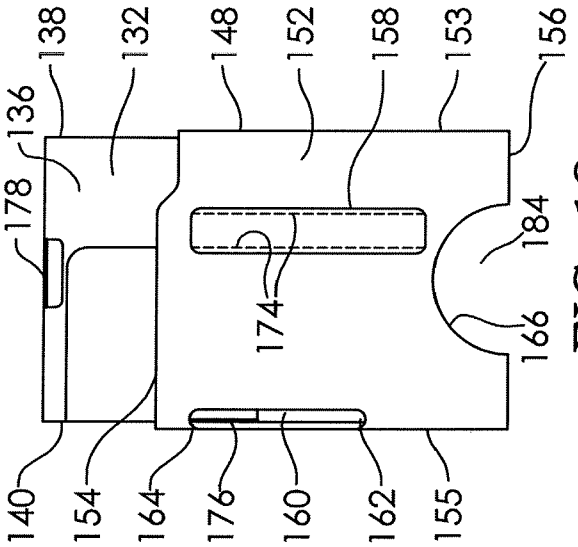

FIG. 19

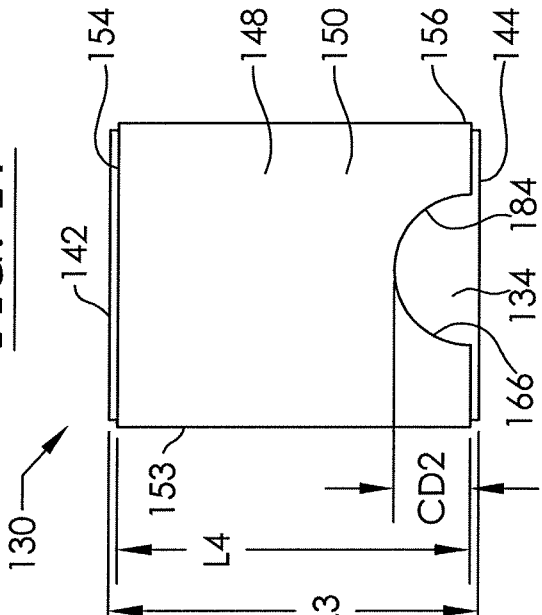

FIG. 14

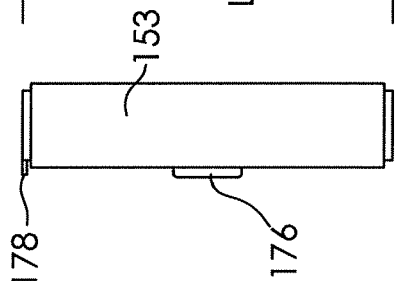

FIG. 15

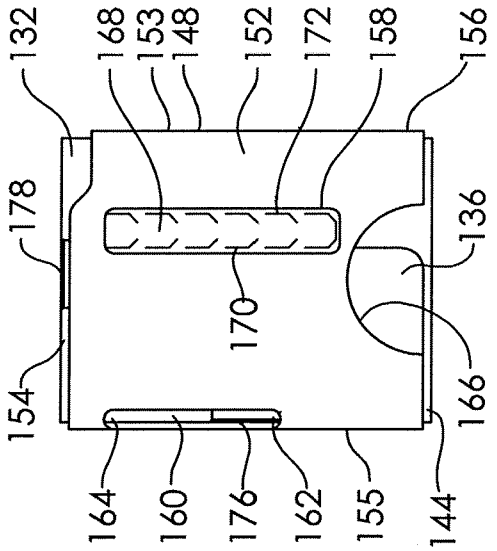

FIG. 16

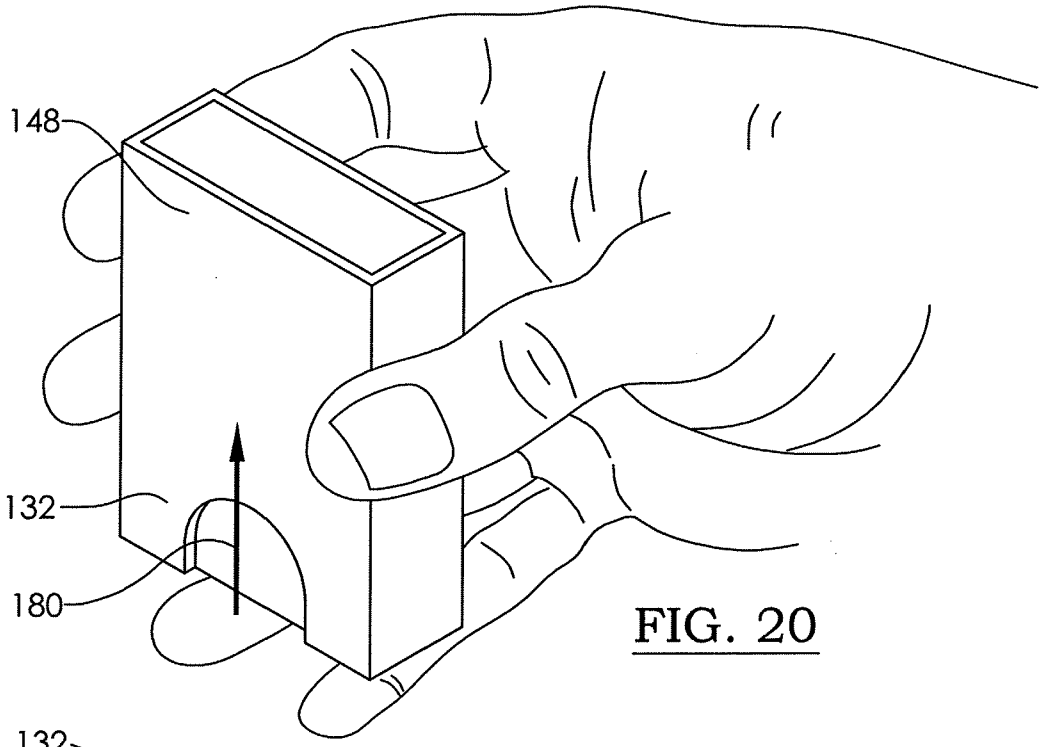

FIG. 20

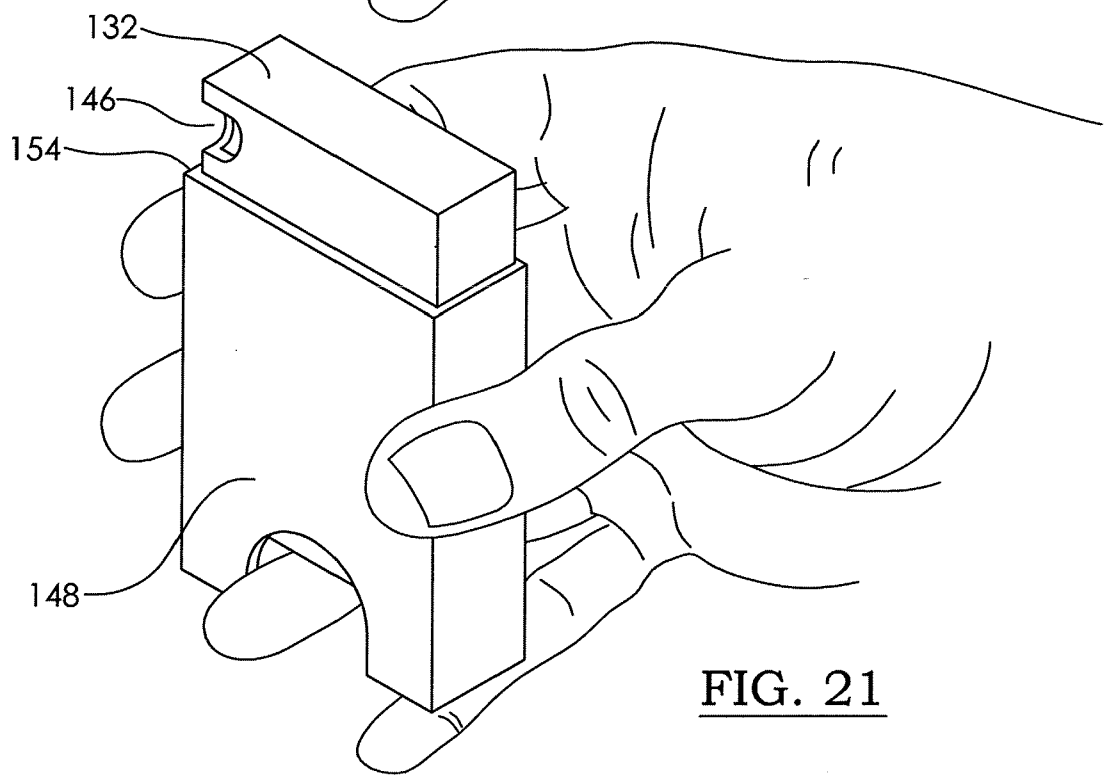

FIG. 21

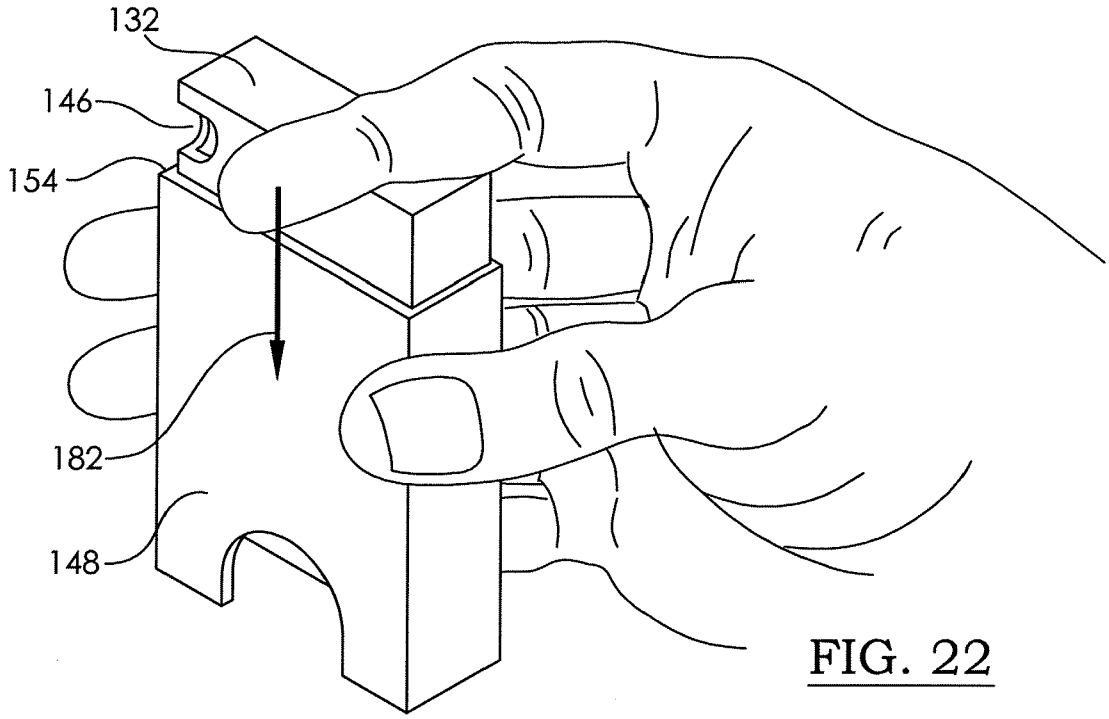

FIG. 22

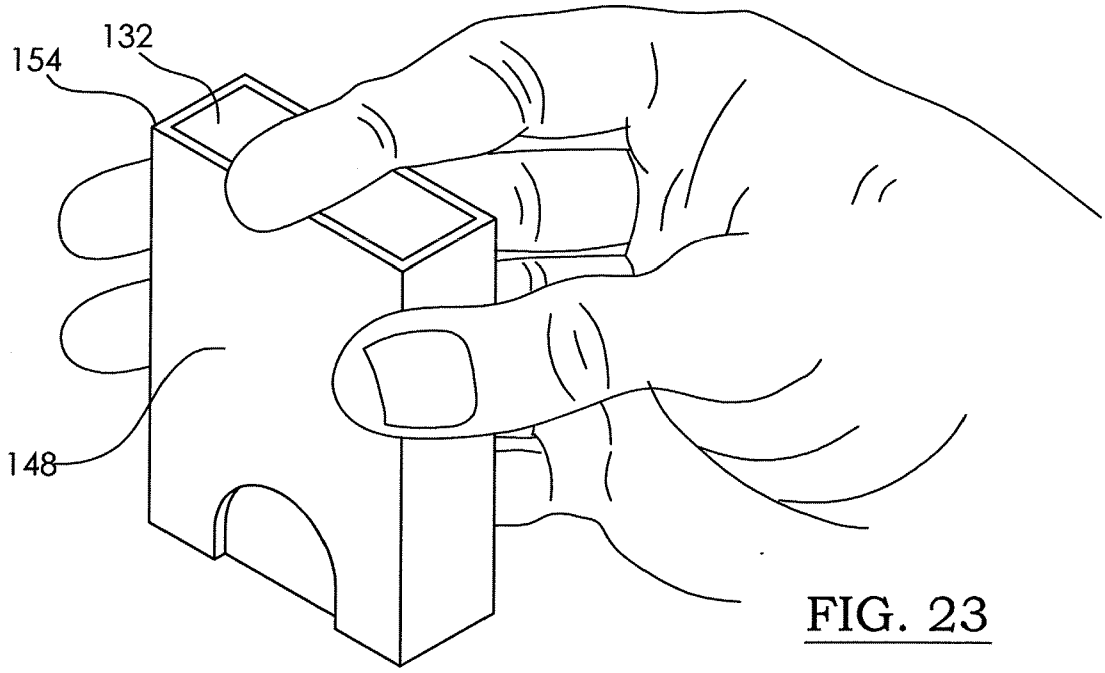

FIG. 23

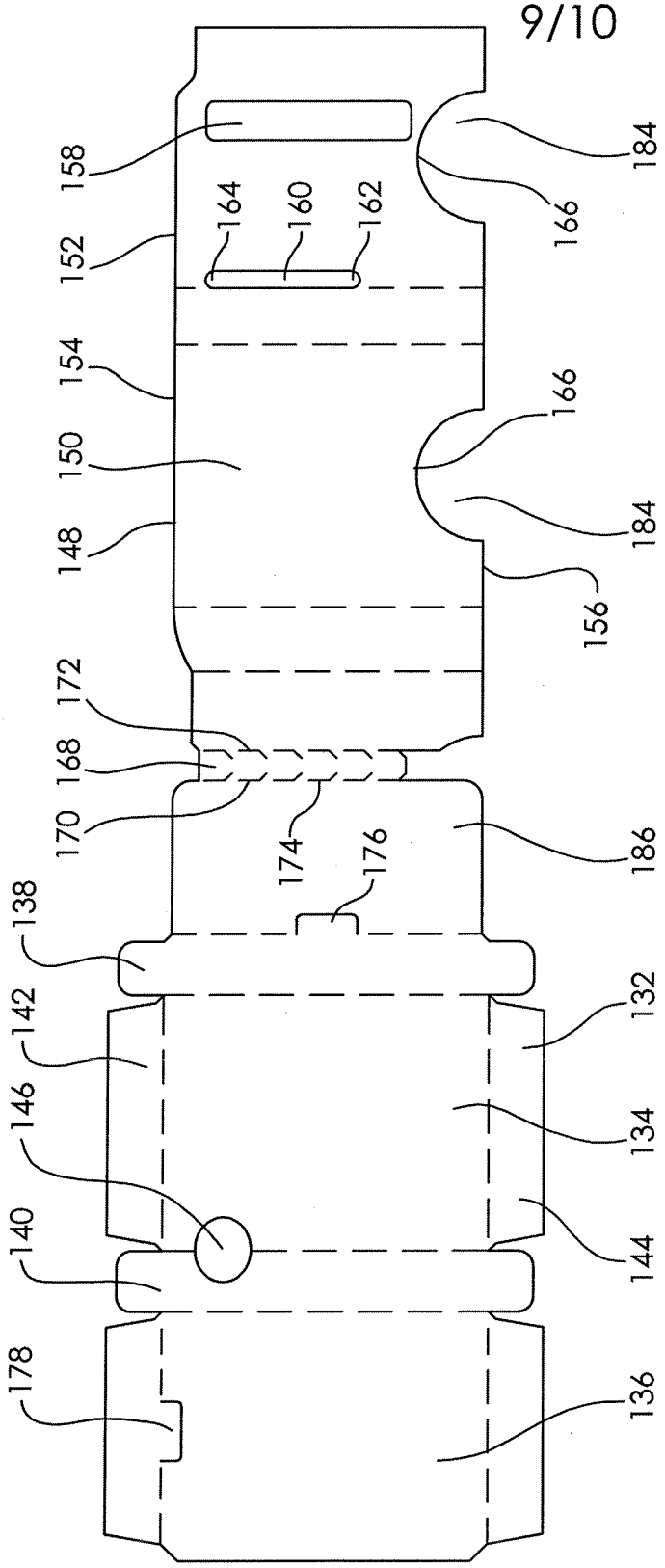
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FIG. 24

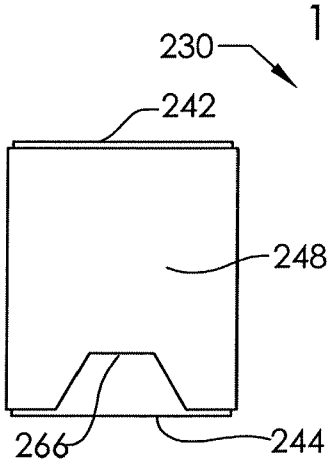

FIG. 25

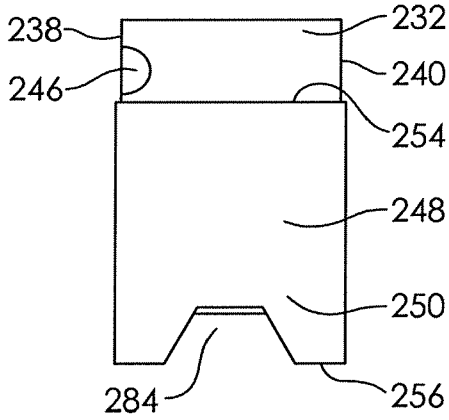

FIG. 26

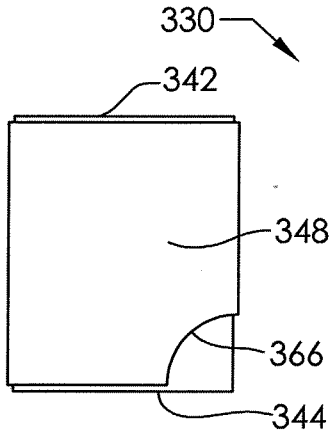

FIG. 27

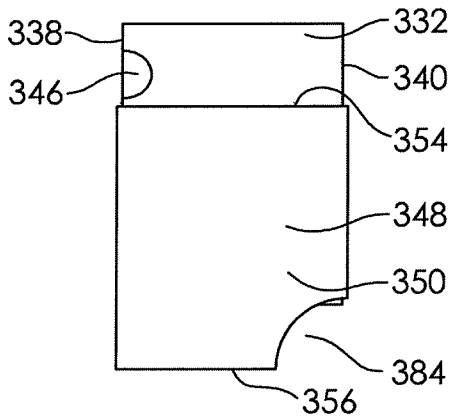

FIG. 28

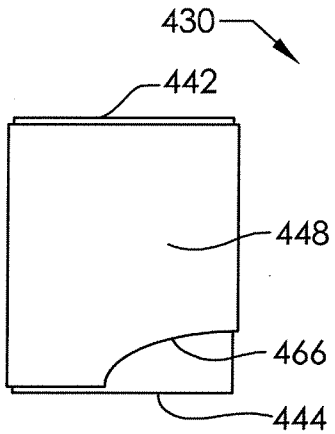

FIG. 29

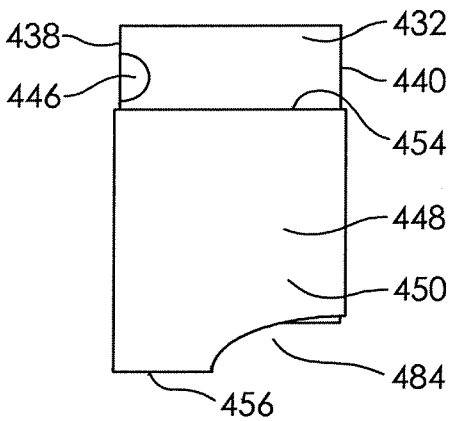

FIG. 30

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2015/027864

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. B65D5/72 B65D5/38
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	FR 2 785 872 A1 (PACKART [FR]) 19 May 2000 (2000-05-19) page 29, line 12 - line 22; figures 23-25	1-3, 11-13
X	DE 198 46 027 A1 (HEER HANSPETER [CH]) 13 April 2000 (2000-04-13) column 3, line 20 - column 4, line 24; figures 1-3	1-3, 11-13
X	DE 203 02 162 U1 (ZEILER AG SPREITENBACH [CH]) 17 June 2004 (2004-06-17) paragraph [0005] - paragraph [0008]; figures 1-3	1-3, 11-13

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
2 July 2015	15/09/2015

Name and mailing address of the ISA/	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Vesterholm, Mika

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2015/027864

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.

2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.

3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☒ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-3, 11-13

Remark on Protest

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No
PCT/US2015/027864

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
FR 2785872 A1	19-05-2000	NONE	
DE 19846027 A1	13-04-2000	NONE	
DE 20302162 U1	17-06-2004	DE 20302162 U1	17-06-2004
		FR 2850952 A3	13-08-2004

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. claims: 1-3, 11-13

   How to provide a package having a slidable box

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2. claims: 5, 9, 10, 15, 18

   How to allow visual observation of a dispensing hole of a package

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3. claims: 4, 14

   How to facilitate pushing of a box in a sleeve

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4. claims: 6, 16

   How to prevent sliding movement of the box in a sleeve

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5. claims: 7, 8, 17

   How to delimit the sliding of a box in a sleeve
