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(54) **COLLECTOR CARD TRANSPORT AND DISPLAY BOX**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A box of the type for delivering collector cards to a retailer for display and sale is provided. The box combination comprises a rectangular box having a closeable top and bottom end wall connected by upstanding side walls and upstanding face walls, the box defining an interior cavity; a first support member disposed within the cavity adjacent the bottom end wall; a plurality of cards stacked horizontally atop the first support member; and a second support member disposed atop the cards; wherein the first and said second support member and the cards are disposed within the cavity. The combination provides features for resisting discreet theft of the contained cards and for facilitating the display of the invention and collector card information in a vertical format.

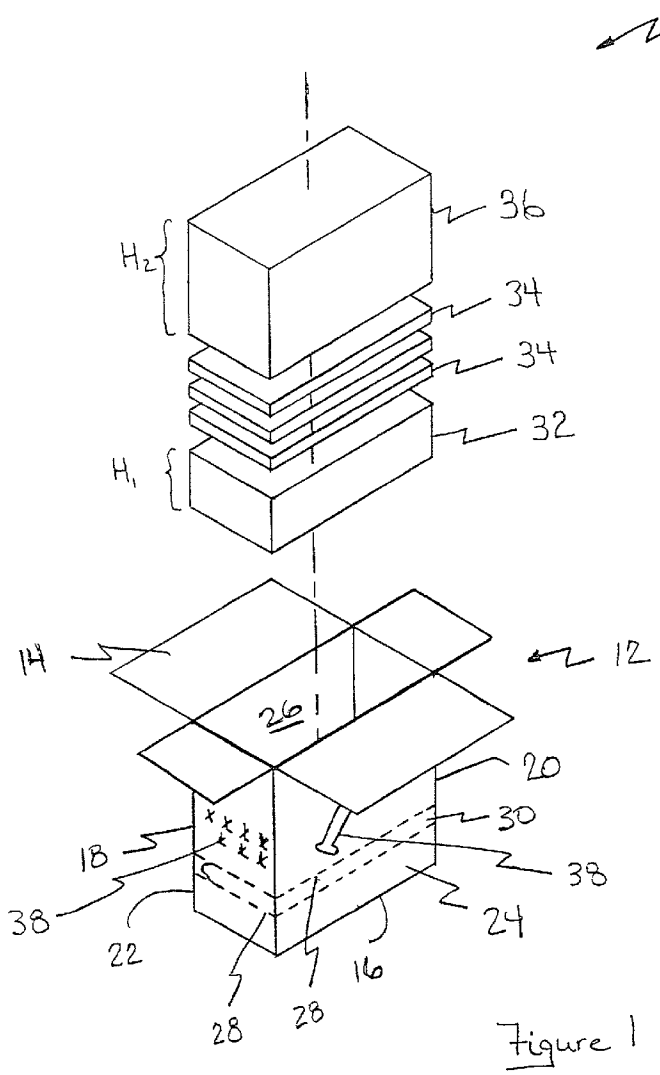


Figure 1

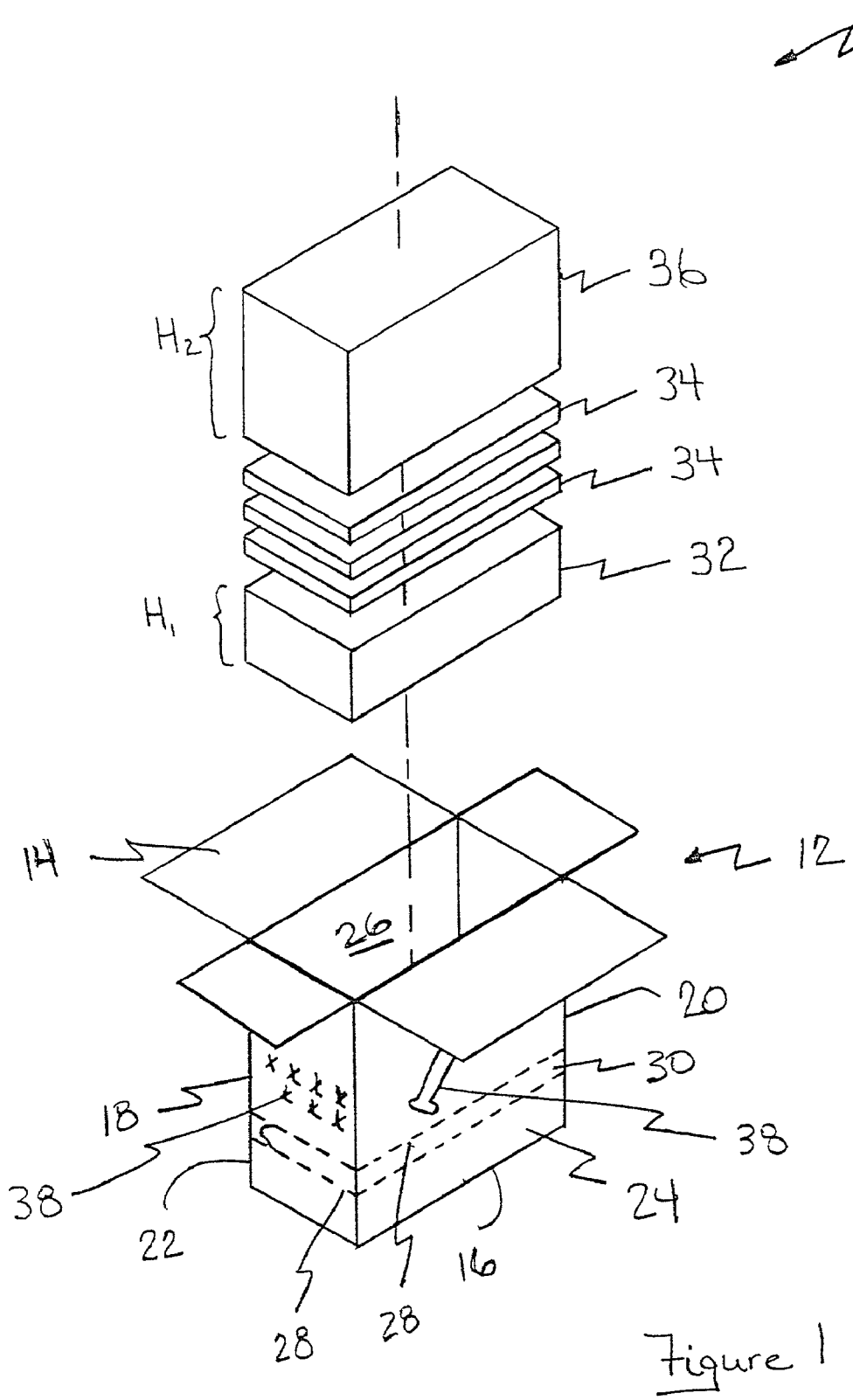


Figure 1

COLLECTOR CARD TRANSPORT AND DISPLAY BOX

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to the field of collectable cards and more particularly to a box for transporting and displaying collectable cards in a retail outlet.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] For decades it has been popular to collect and trade various types of cardstock cards. As the popularity of these cards continues to grow, the diversity of types of cards has also grown. There are now cards ranging from the ever-popular baseball cards, through every major sport, to satirical cards, to cards representing popular characters in cartoons and to the more morbid, o infamous criminal cards. In addition to the number of collectable groups that exist, there are now several different manufacturers and producers of cards.

[0003] Collectors often desire to collect sets of cards within a specific category such as basketball. Other collectors want to collect cards within various topics from a particular manufacturer, such as TOPPS. To cater to these collectors, cards are frequently delivered to retailers in boxes containing several packets of cards. Each packet usually comprises a number of individual cards enclosed in a MYLAR envelope. A box may include packets of cards having various combinations of individual cards. Other boxes may contain specific sets of cards, such as all rookie cards, a mixture of rookie and superstar cards, or other combinations or sets. The box containing the packets of cards generally has indicia including designs to identify the manufacturer, collection category and type of cards. Often, marketing designs are provided on the face of the boxes to attract the attention of shopping collectors.

[0004] Prior art retail boxes are typically rectangular and adapted for laying four packets of cards flat in the box. There is usually a large flap on the top of the box to access the cards that are stored in a 2×2 matrix. The increases in card costs has resulted in a decrease in the number of cards placed within a box. These changes have made it increasingly difficult for retail outlets to display, effectively and economically, the boxes of cards. The box configuration is such that the box will no longer stand on end for display.

[0005] Therefore, it will be a benefit to provide a transport and display box that may be displayed vertically even with a small number of cards, increasing visibility and reducing required shelf or counter-space. It will be a further benefit to have a transport and display box that is adapted for standing vertically and resistant to tipping.

[0006] An additional problem with the prior art display and transport boxes is over-anxious collectors and thieves. During transport or while on display the boxes may be "slit" open along the edge of the large flap and packets of cards removed. Slits along the edge of the large flap portion of the box may not be readily noticeable to the retailer or a subsequent purchaser. Therefore, it will be a benefit to have a transport and display box that deters the unnoticed theft of packets from a closed display box.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention addresses the deficiencies of the prior art and provides additional benefits. The present invention provides a collector card transport and display box that is adapted for vertical presentation and resisting tipping. The present invention also provides a collector card transport and display box that is resistant to undetected theft of cards contained within the closed box.

[0008] Accordingly, a transport and display box of the type for delivering collector cards to a retailer for display and sale is provided. The combination comprises a rectangular box having closeable top and bottom end walls connected by upstanding sidewalls and upstanding face walls, the box defining an interior cavity; a first support member disposed within the cavity adjacent the bottom end wall; a plurality of cards stacked horizontally atop the first support member; and a second support member disposed atop the cards, wherein the first and said second support members and the cards are disposed within the cavity.

[0009] The combination may include a substantially horizontal, perforated strip formed along at least the sidewalls and at least one of the face walls proximate to an end wall. The perforated lines defining the strip may extend around the circumference of the box. The strip provides a means of easily and cleanly opening the box to obtain the cards contained therein. The support member positioned against the end wall closest to the tear strip may have a height so as to extend from the end wall beyond the tear strip. Placing a support member adjacent to the tear strip makes it more difficult for a person to discretely open and obtain cards from the box surreptitiously.

[0010] The support members may be of a lightweight material, such as styrofoam, to reduce shipping costs. The support members may also be of a nature so as to support the box structure and protect the contained cards from bending and damage. Although the present disclosure teaches the use of foam supports, it should be realized that various materials of construction and configurations of supports may be utilized, all falling within the scope of the disclosed and claimed invention.

[0011] For display purposes, it is desired to present the box in a vertical position to provide the largest and most visible surface to potential customers. To facilitate this manner of display, the first support member, located next to the bottom end wall, may be formed so as to have a shorter height than the height of the second support disposed proximate the top end wall of the box. This difference in support height places the heavier cards nearer the bottom end wall, locating the center of gravity of the combination closer to the bottom end wall and resisting tipping of the invention when on display.

[0012] The foregoing has outlined broadly the features and technical advantages of the present invention in order that the detailed description of the invention that follows may be better understood. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be described hereinafter which form the subject of the claims of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] The foregoing and other features of the present invention may be best appreciated with reference to a detailed description of a specific embodiment of the invention, when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0014] **FIG. 1** is an exploded, perspective view of the collector card transport and display box of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A SPECIFIC EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

[0015] **FIG. 1** is an exploded, perspective view of the combination collector card transport and display box, of the present invention, generally designated by the numeral **10**. Box **12** includes a closeable top end wall **14** and bottom end wall **16**, interconnected by sidewalls **18, 20**, and face walls **22, 24**, which define an internal cavity **26**.

[0016] Box **12** is preferably constructed of sturdy card stock that is lightweight to reduce shipping costs. As shown, top end wall **14** includes foldable flaps to allow for packing contents therein and closing. Many variations of closeable boxes **12** may be utilized. A perforated line **28**, or lines **28**, are formed at least through at least one face wall **24** and both side walls **18, 20**, to form a tear strip **30** for ease in opening box **12**.

[0017] Box **12** further includes a first and second support member **32, 36**, and a plurality of collector cards **34**. First member **32** is placed in cavity **26** atop bottom end wall **16**. Cards **34** are placed atop first support member **32**. Cards **34** may comprise a number of cards grouped together and stored in an envelope, such as a MYLAR envelope, for protection. Further, cards **34** or the card envelopes may include other items such as chewing gum or the like. Second support member **36** is placed atop cards **34**. With elements **32, 34** and **36** placed in cavity **26**, box **12** is closed and sealed for transport and display.

[0018] As shown in **FIG. 1**, support members **32, 36** are formed of Styrofoam or similar packing material and shaped to securely fit within cavity **26**. Support members **32, 36** provide structural support to box **12**, protecting cards **34** from damage; create a center of gravity closer to bottom end wall **16** than top end wall **14**; and provide a means of securing against theft.

[0019] Various materials may be utilized to form members **32, 36**, however in a preferred embodiment the members **32, 36** are lightweight and provide structural support for box **12**. The structural support is important for protecting cards **34** from damage during shipping.

[0020] Support members **32, 36** are formed having different heights or thickness. As shown in **FIG. 1**, member **32** has a height, H1, and second member **36** has a height, H2. Height H1 is shorter than height H2. This variation of height between members **32** and **36** moves the center of gravity of transport and display box **12** toward bottom end wall **16**. The center of gravity is determined by the placement of the heaviest part of invention **10**, cards **34**, closer to bottom end wall **16**, while maintaining support for box **12** and protection for cards **34**. This shifting of the center of gravity facilitates vertical display of box **12** resting on bottom end wall **16** and resists tipping.

[0021] Another aspect of the invention is the ability to provide a means for deterring theft of cards **34** from box **12**, in particular during transit or when on display. As shown, tear strip **30** is located proximate bottom end **16** of box **12**. It should be realized that perforations **28** and tear strip **30** may be formed proximate top end wall **24** as well. Those skilled in the art will appreciate the problem of thieves removing a pack or two of cards **34** from a box **12** of cards without paying a fee. One common way of obtaining cards **34** without permission and without notice is to utilize a sharp object to slit a perforated line **28** or a corner of the box **12** to squeeze a pack or two of cards **34** out of box **12**. In this manner, it is not readily apparent that box **12** has been opened.

[0022] The present invention addresses these situations by providing a support members **32, 36** at the top and bottom of the box **12**. In this way, slits at the top and bottom edges of the box **12** do not expose cards **34**. The bottom support member **32** extends beyond tear strip **30**. As shown in **FIG. 1, H1**, has a height so as to extend from bottom end wall **16** beyond tear strip **30**. If and when a person attempts to slit perforated line **28** to squeeze out a packet of cards **34**, support member **32** will be encountered, forcing the perpetrator to either end the effort or take more drastic and less discrete actions to steal cards **34**.

[0023] Invention **10** may also include indicia and designs **38** on the exterior of box **12**. The designs and indicia **38** may be oriented for vertical display of invention **10**. The ability to display invention **10** vertically assures the distributor of cards **34** the most visibility possible, and allows the retailer to more efficiently display cards **34** on shelves and counter tops. Administrative markings, such as product or UPC codes, may be placed on the top and bottom card walls **14, 16**.

[0024] Although a specific embodiment of the invention has been described herein in some level of detail, it is to be understood that this has been done solely to illustrate various aspects and features of the invention and is not limiting with respect to the scope of the invention. It is contemplated that various substitutions, alterations, and/or modifications, including but not limited to those specifically discussed herein, may be made to the disclosed embodiment without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. In a collector card box, the combination comprising:

a rectangular box having a top end wall and bottom end wall connected by upstanding side walls and upstanding face walls, said box defining an interior cavity;

a first support member adjacent said bottom end wall;

a plurality of cards stacked horizontally atop said first support member; and

a second support member disposed atop said cards;

wherein said first and said second support member and said cards are disposed within said cavity.

2. The combination of claim 1 further including a substantially horizontal, perforated strip formed along at least said side walls and one said face wall proximate one of said end walls.

3. The combination of claim 2 wherein one of said support members extends beyond said perforated strip.

4. The combination of claim 1 wherein said first support member has a shorter height than said second member whereby the center of gravity of said box is located closer to said bottom end wall than said top end wall.

5. The combination of claim 4 further including a substantially horizontal, perforated strip along at least said sidewalls and one said face wall proximate one of said end walls.

6. The combination of claim 5 wherein one of said support members extends beyond said perforated strip.

7. The combination of claim 1 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

8. The combination of claim 2 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

9. The combination of claim 3 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

10. The combination of claim 4 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

11. The combination of claim 10 further including a substantially horizontal, perforated strip along at least said sidewalls and one said face wall proximate one of said end walls.

12. The combination of claim 11 wherein one of said support members extends beyond said perforated strip.

13. In a collector card box, the combination comprising:

a rectangular box having a closeable top and bottom end wall connected by upstanding side walls and upstanding face walls, said box defining an interior cavity;

a substantially horizontal, perforated strip formed along at least said sidewalls and one said face wall proximate one of said end walls.

a first support member disposed within said cavity adjacent said bottom end wall;

a plurality of cards stacked horizontally atop said first support member within said cavity; and

a second support member disposed atop said cards within said cavity adjacent said top end wall.

14. The combination of claim 13 wherein said perforated strip is located adjacent to one of said support members.

15. The combination of claim 13 wherein said first support member has a surface area less than the surface area of said second member.

16. The combination of claim 14 wherein said first support member has a weight less than the weight of said second member whereby the center of gravity of said box is located closer to said bottom end wall than said top end wall.

17. The combination of claim 13 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

18. The combination of claim 15 wherein said first and said second support members are formed of the substantially same lightweight material.

19. The combination of claim 16 wherein said first and second support members are formed of different lightweight materials.

20. In a collector card box, the combination comprising:

a rectangular box having a closeable top and bottom end wall connected by upstanding side walls and upstanding face walls, said box defining an interior cavity;

a substantially horizontal, perforated strip formed along at least said sidewalls and one said face wall proximate one of said end walls.

a first support member disposed within said cavity adjacent said bottom end wall;

a plurality of cards stacked horizontally atop said first support member; and

a second support member having a greater height than said first support member, said second member disposed atop said cards;

wherein said first and said second support member and said cards are disposed within said cavity;

wherein said first and said second support member are formed of substantially the same lightweight material; and

wherein one of said support members is located adjacent to said perforated strip.

21. The combination of claim 19 further including indicia on at least one face wall.

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