



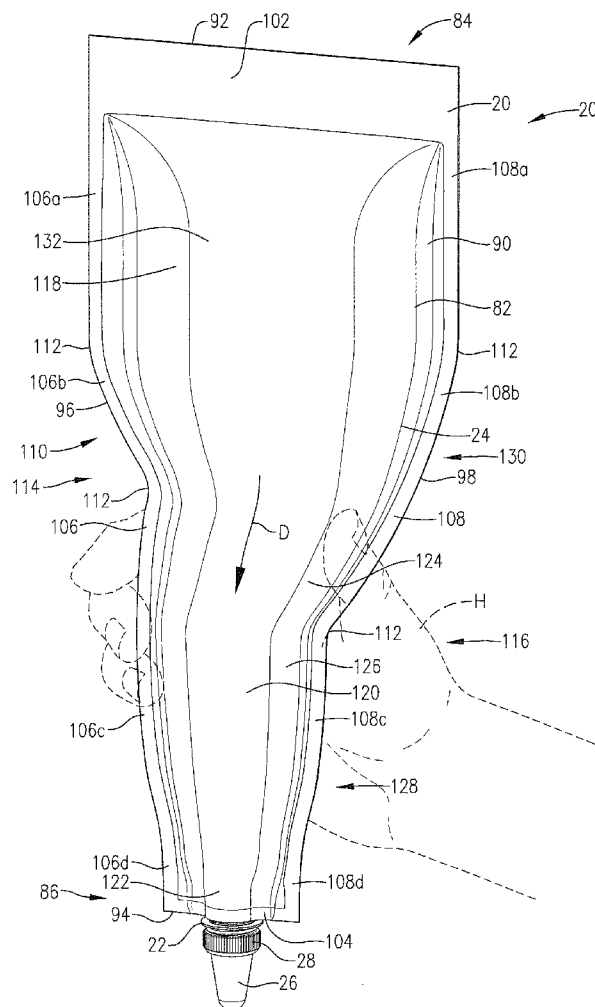
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Ciecorka et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2015/0129609 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 14, 2015**(54) **HANDHELD CONFECTIONARY DISPENSER****Publication Classification**(71) Applicant: **CSM Bakery Products NA, Inc.**,
Tucker, GA (US)(51) **Int. Cl.**
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B65D 35/02 (2006.01)(72) Inventors: **Thomas Ciecorka**, Suwanee, GA (US);
Sarah Key, Buford, GA (US); **Srikant Ramachandran**, Cape Girardeau, MO (US); **Chris Davis**, Cape Girardeau, MO (US)(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **B65D 35/38** (2013.01); **B65D 35/02** (2013.01)(21) Appl. No.: **14/542,028**(22) Filed: **Nov. 14, 2014****Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 61/904,272, filed on Nov. 14, 2013.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A handheld confectionary dispenser includes a flexible pouch that presents an interior chamber and is configured to contain confectionary within the chamber. The pouch defines a reservoir portion, a dispensing portion, and a funnel portion located between the reservoir and dispensing portions. The funnel portion is configured to be grasped within a hand of the user to force confectionary through the dispensing portion when the funnel portion is squeezed. The pouch defines a transition along which the cross-sectional area of the chamber abruptly decreases, with the transition being defined at or adjacent the junction between the reservoir and funnel portions to facilitate bending of the pouch at the transition.



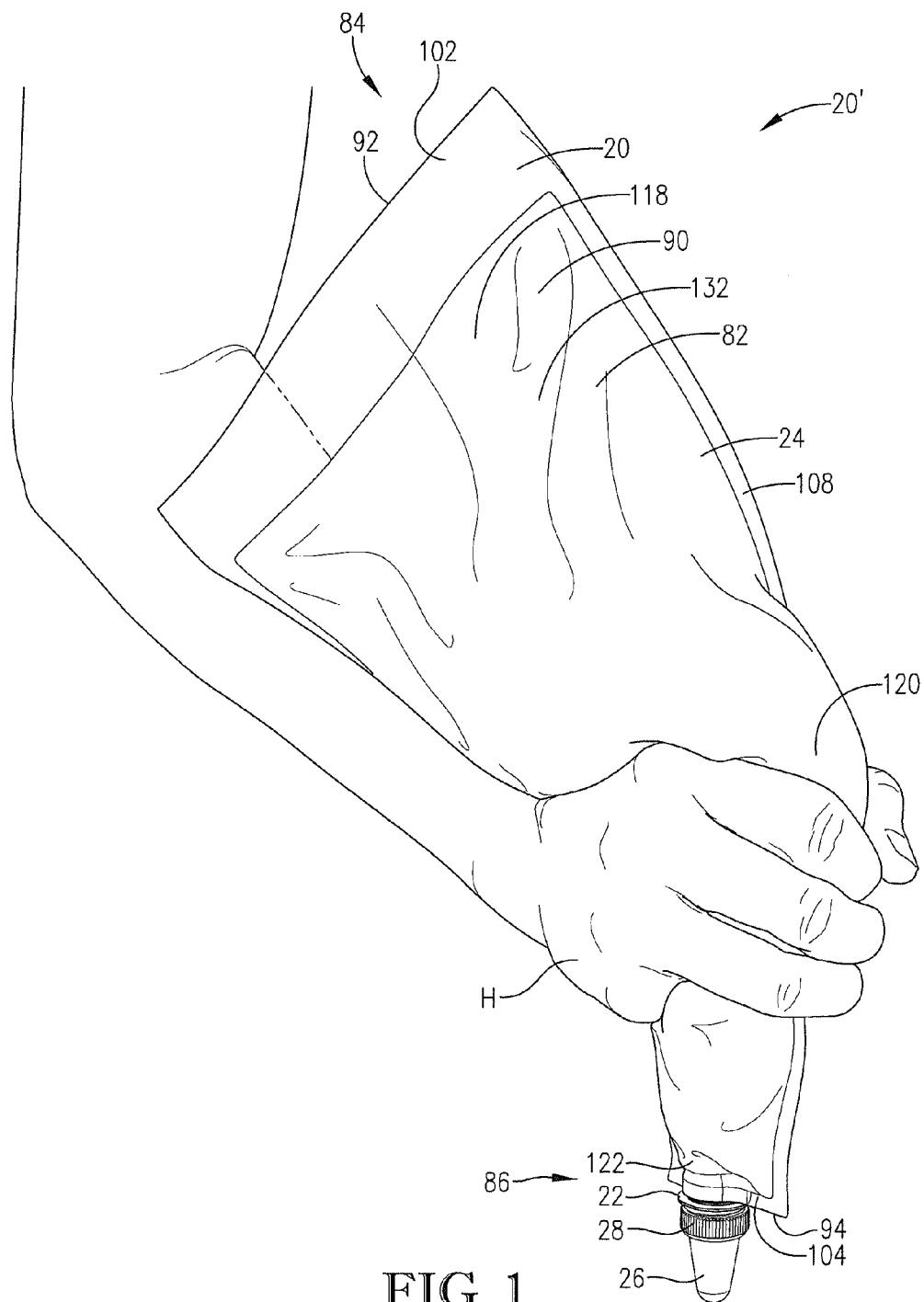


FIG. 1

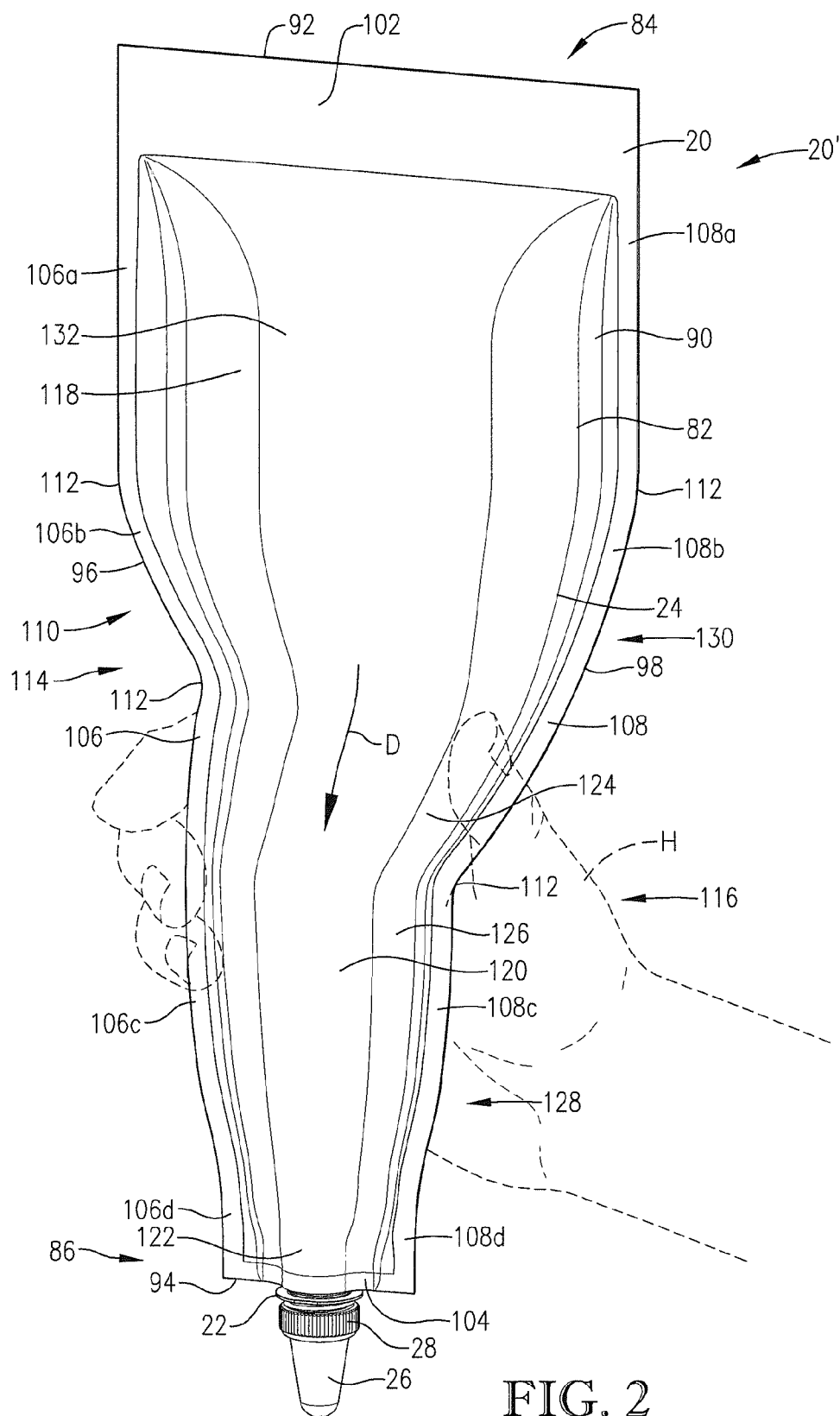


FIG. 2

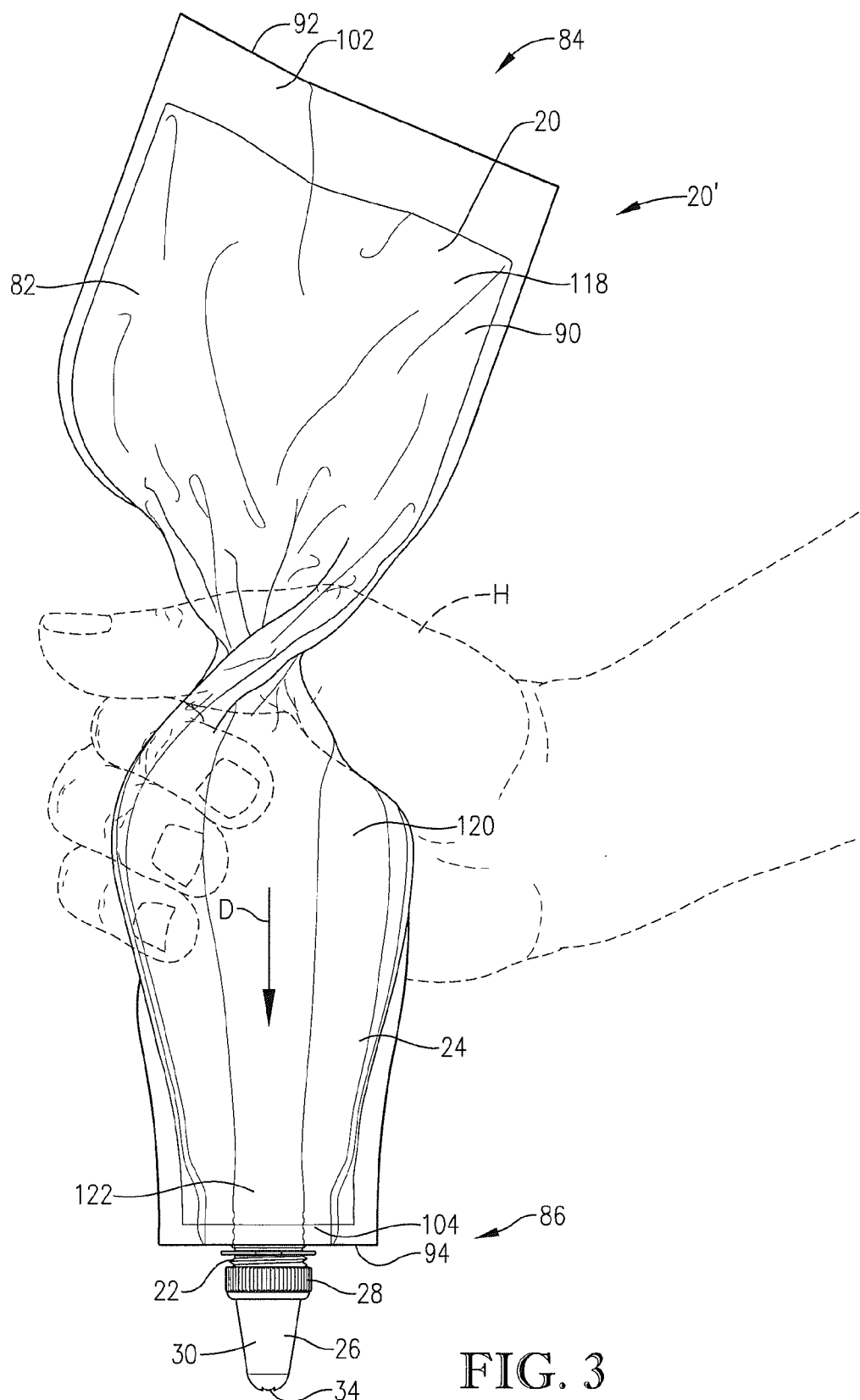
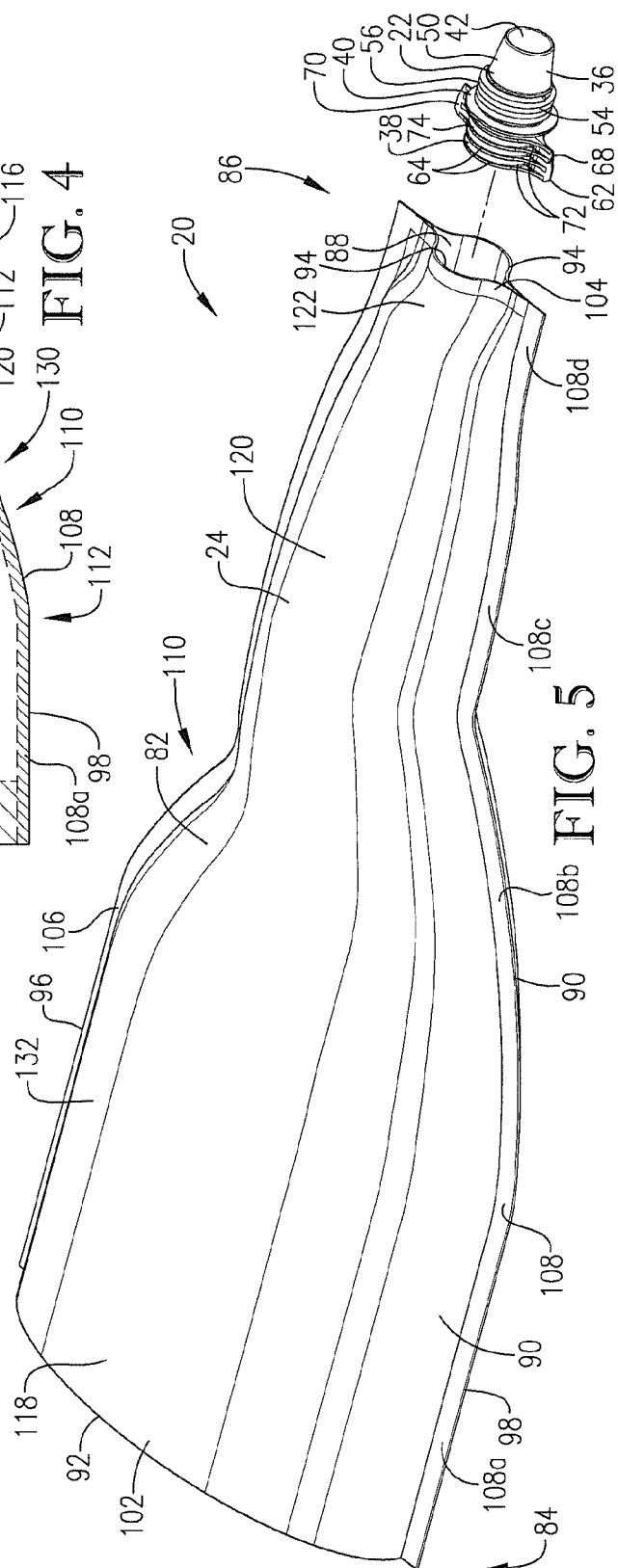
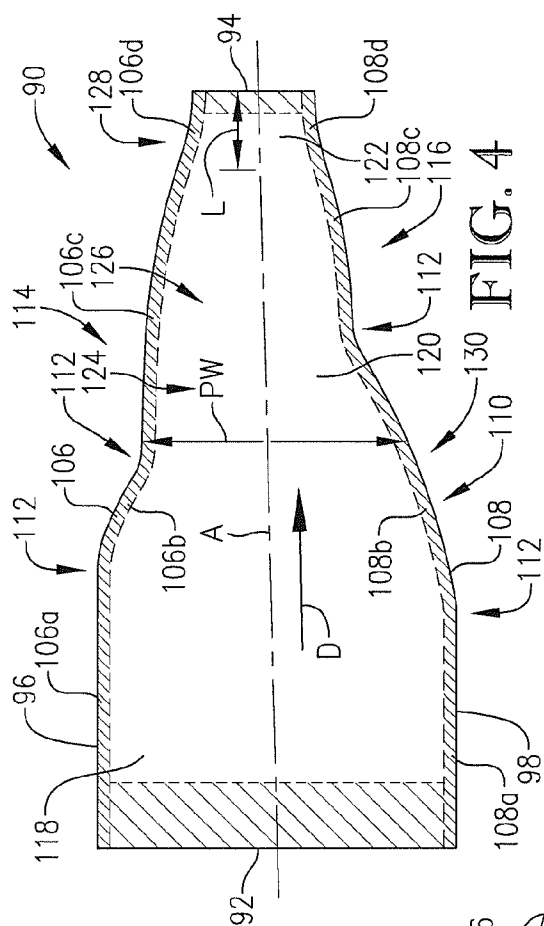
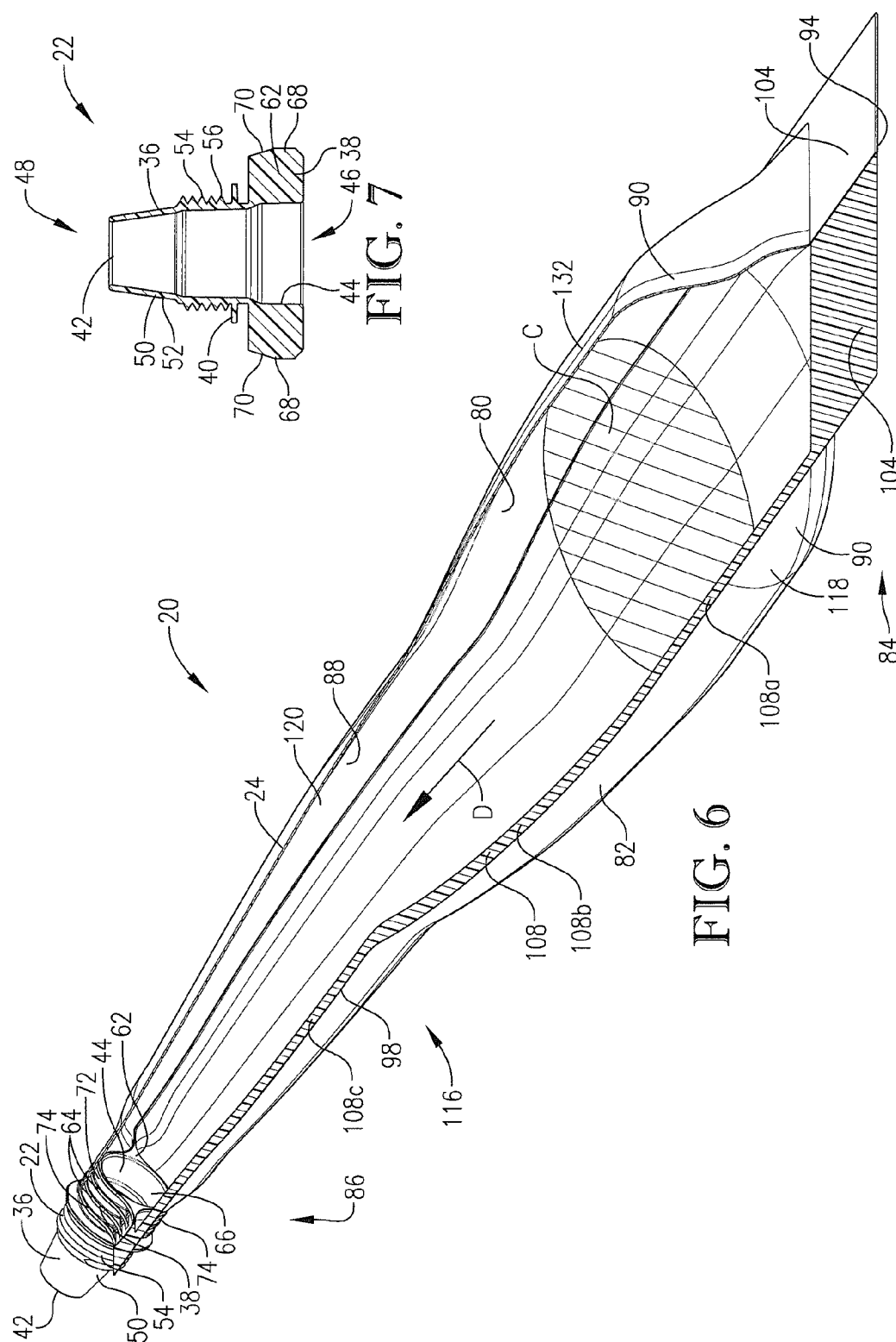
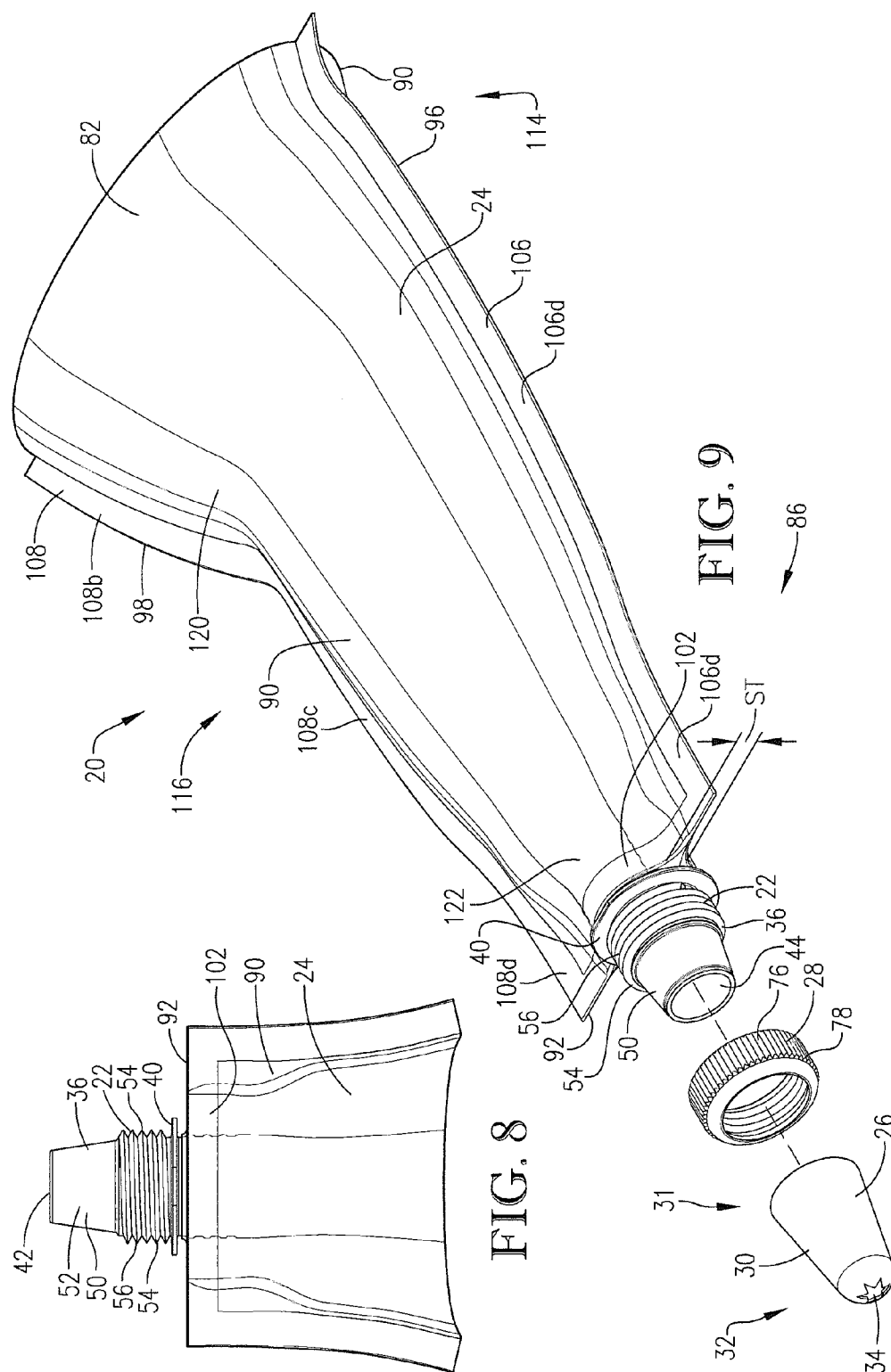


FIG. 3







HANDHELD CONFECTIONARY DISPENSER**RELATED APPLICATION**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/904,272, filed Nov. 14, 2013, entitled **HANDHELD CONFECTIONARY DISPENSER**, which is hereby incorporated in its entirety by reference herein.

BACKGROUND**[0002] 1. Field**

[0003] The present invention relates generally to containers operable to store and dispense food stuffs such as icing, glaze, frosting, filling, and the like. More specifically, embodiments of the present invention concern a confectionary dispenser with a reservoir that is operable to be folded relative to the remainder of the pouch so that the reservoir can rest on a user's forearm.

[0004] 2. Discussion of Prior Art

[0005] Various types of known devices have been used to dispense icing, frosting, fillings, and other spreadable food stuffs. Food stuffs such as icing are commonly dispensed onto cakes, pies, cookies, and other dessert confectionaries, for instance, as an edible decoration. Prior art confectionary dispensing devices include flexible icing pouches having a pouch and a nozzle end. In the usual manner, the pouch contains the spreadable confectionary or other food stuff to be dispensed and a nozzle end through which the food stuff is dispensed in a controlled manner.

[0006] However, prior art icing pouches and other confectionary dispensing devices have been found to exhibit various deficiencies. For instance, prior art reusable icing pouches require a chef or other user to spend a significant amount of time preparing the spreadable confectionary and loading the confectionary into the pouch. Any unused portions of confectionary in the pouch must then be removed from the pouch. Prior to further use, the pouch must then be cleaned using conventional washing techniques. This time consuming process of loading and unloading/cleaning of the pouch is especially problematic if the same pouch is used to apply multiple types and/or colors of confectionary in quick succession (e.g., when different confectionaries are applied to the same cake).

[0007] Furthermore, prior art icing pouches are difficult for a user to support while simultaneously controlling the position of the nozzle end and the flow rate of confectionary out of the pouch. This problem is particularly evident when a conventional pouch is filled with confectionary, such that the pouch becomes top heavy or otherwise presents a weight distribution that is awkward to support. Conventional pouches, particularly when filled, require the user to constantly hold the pouch with both hands so that the weight of the pouch does not cause unintended shifting of the nozzle or undue physical strain on the user (e.g., where awkward weight distribution of the pouch causes the user's hands or arms to become fatigued).

SUMMARY

[0008] The following brief summary is provided to indicate the nature of the subject matter disclosed herein. While certain aspects of the present invention are described below, the summary is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

[0009] Embodiments of the present invention provide a handheld confectionary dispenser that does not suffer from the problems and limitations of the prior art dispensers set forth above.

[0010] A first aspect of the present invention concerns a handheld confectionary dispenser that broadly includes a flexible hollow pouch. The pouch presents an interior chamber, with the pouch being configured to contain confectionary within the chamber. The pouch extends longitudinally to present a dispensing end and an opposite reservoir end. The pouch defines a reservoir portion adjacent the reservoir end, a dispensing portion adjacent the dispensing end, and a funnel portion located between the reservoir and dispensing portions, with the chamber extending continuously between the portions. The chamber has a cross-sectional area that is greatest at the reservoir portion and smallest at the dispensing portion. The funnel portion is configured to be grasped within a hand of the user so that confectionary is forced through the dispensing portion when the funnel portion is squeezed. The reservoir portion is configured to replenish the funnel portion with confectionary when the reservoir portion is selectively compressed. The pouch defines a sharp cross-sectional transition along which the cross-sectional area of the chamber abruptly decreases, with the transition being defined at or adjacent the junction between the reservoir and funnel portions to facilitate bending of the pouch at the transition.

[0011] This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the detailed description. This summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used to limit the scope of the claimed subject matter. Other aspects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description of the embodiments and the accompanying drawing figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

[0012] Preferred embodiments of the invention are described in detail below with reference to the attached drawing figures, wherein:

[0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective of a handheld confectionary dispenser constructed in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, with the dispenser including a fitment and a pouch, showing the dispenser filled with confectionary, grasped along a funnel portion of the pouch, and folded so that a reservoir portion of the pouch is supported on a user's hand, wrist, and forearm;

[0014] FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the handheld confectionary dispenser shown in FIG. 1, illustrating the dispenser filled with confectionary and the pouch being generally unfolded;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a side elevation of the handheld confectionary dispenser similar to FIG. 2, but with the pouch being compressed and twisted along the reservoir portion and the funnel portion to force confectionary out of the pouch;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a cross section of the pouch shown in FIGS. 1-3, with one of the panels of the pouch being removed, and with the depicted panel being shown in a flat condition;

[0017] FIG. 5 is an exploded perspective of the handheld confectionary dispenser shown in FIGS. 1-3, showing the fitment removed from the pouch and a reservoir end of the pouch unsealed;

[0018] FIG. 6 is a fragmentary perspective of the handheld confectionary dispenser shown in FIGS. 1-3 and 5, showing the pouch in the expanded condition, with part of one of panels being removed to depict an empty interior chamber of the dispenser;

[0019] FIG. 7 is a cross section of the fitment shown in FIGS. 1-3, 5, and 6;

[0020] FIG. 8 is an enlarged fragmentary elevation of the handheld confectionary dispenser shown in FIGS. 1-3, 5, and 6, showing the fitment sealed to a dispensing end of the pouch; and

[0021] FIG. 9 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective of the handheld confectionary dispenser shown in FIGS. 1-3, 5, 6, and 8, showing the decorating nozzle and coupling ring removed from the fitment.

[0022] The drawing figures do not limit the present invention to the specific embodiments disclosed and described herein. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon clearly illustrating the principles of the preferred embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0023] Turning initially to FIGS. 1-3, a handheld confectionary dispenser 20 is constructed in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In the usual manner, the dispenser 20 is preferably used to contain icing and selectively distribute the icing on confections and other food stuffs. However, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the dispenser 20 is used to dispense various food stuffs, such as frostings, glazes, fillings, creams, toppings, and other spreadable confectionary substances. The term confectionary as used herein shall be interpreted to include icing, frosting, glaze, filling, cream, toppings, and other similar substances used in the food industry, particularly those that are manually dispensed. The present invention is especially useful in manually dispensing creamy confectionary substances for food decorating purposes.

[0024] As will be discussed, the dispenser 20 is preferably prefilled with confectionary (not shown) and sealed to provide a sealed prefilled dispenser 20'. However, it is within the scope of the present invention where dispenser 20 is filled without being later sealed. It is also within the ambit of the present invention for the dispenser 20 to be distributed unfilled, such that the user fills the dispenser with confectionary as needed. If desired, the dispenser may also be reused. The dispenser 20 broadly includes a fitment 22 and a flexible hollow pouch 24.

[0025] The fitment 22 is preferably designed to permit selective opening and closing of the pouch 24. The fitment 22 is also preferably designed to selectively permit dispensing of confectionary from the pouch 24. Yet further, the illustrated fitment 22 permits a decorating nozzle 26 to be attached to the pouch 24 with a coupler ring 28.

[0026] Turning to FIG. 9, the decorating nozzle 26 is conventional and includes an annular wall 30. In the usual manner, the wall 30 defines a nozzle passage (not shown) that tapers in a downstream direction D (i.e., in a direction toward a downstream dispensing end of the pouch 24) and extends from a flared upstream end 31 that presents an upstream opening (not shown) to a rounded downstream end 32 that presents a discharge opening 34. The discharge opening 34 is sized and shaped to discharge a continuous stream of dispensed confectionary. The confectionary stream, as it

emerges from the discharge opening 34, has a predetermined cross-sectional shape that corresponds to the shape of the discharge opening 34. It will be appreciated that the discharge opening 34 and other features of the nozzle 26 can be alternatively configured to selectively shape or otherwise control the confectionary stream.

[0027] Turning to FIGS. 5-9, the illustrated fitment 22 preferably includes a fitment nozzle body 36, a seal body 38, and a flange 40 that are integrally formed with one another. The nozzle body 36 presents a downstream fitment opening 42. Also, the fitment 22 presents a continuous fitment passage 44 that fluidly communicates with the fitment opening 42. The passage 44 tapers in the downstream direction D and extends from an upstream fitment end 46 to a downstream fitment end 48 (see FIG. 7).

[0028] Turning to FIG. 7, the fitment nozzle body 36 is generally tubular and includes a downstream portion 50 that presents an outer surface 52 that tapers in the downstream direction D. The fitment nozzle body 36 also includes an upstream portion 54 that presents threads 56 to provide a universal threaded connection. The flange 40 is located upstream of the threads 56 and projects radially outwardly from the upstream portion 54.

[0029] Turning to FIGS. 5-7, the seal body 38 is also integrally formed with the fitment nozzle body 36 and is attached to the upstream portion 54. The illustrated seal body 38 preferably includes an elongated base 62 and ribs 64. The base 62 preferably includes a central tubular section 66 and a pair of flanges 68, with the illustrated flanges 68 presenting laterally outermost edges 70 of the seal body 38 (see FIG. 7). The ribs 64 preferably extend along and interconnect the tubular section 66 and flanges 68. The base 62 and ribs 64 cooperatively define lateral channels 72 that extend between adjacent pairs of ribs 64 (see FIG. 5).

[0030] The base 62 and ribs 64 also cooperatively present opposite sealing surfaces 74. The illustrated sealing surfaces 74 preferably extend continuously from one of the outermost edges 70 to the other one of the outermost edges 70. The sealing surfaces 74 cooperate to define a seal body thickness dimension ST that tapers in outboard directions toward the outermost edges 70. As will be discussed, the sealing surfaces 74 are configured to be positioned in sealing engagement with the flexible pouch 24.

[0031] The fitment 22 preferably includes a synthetic resin material. More preferably, the fitment 22 includes a polyolefin material, although other thermoplastic materials could be used without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0032] As mentioned above, the decorating nozzle 26 is selectively attached to the pouch 24 with the coupler ring 28. The nozzle passage receives the fitment 22 and is thereby operable to be mounted on the fitment 22. The discharge opening 34 communicates with the fitment passage 44 when the decorating nozzle 26 is mounted on the fitment 22. It will be appreciated that various decorating nozzles could be selectively mounted on the fitment 22. In the usual manner, the fitment 22 can be used with decorating nozzles having differently sized and shaped discharge openings (e.g., to create different sizes and/or shapes of confectionary).

[0033] Turning to FIG. 9, the coupler ring 28 presents a knurled outer surface 76 and a threaded opening 78 that receives the decorating nozzle 26. With the decorating nozzle 26 mounted on the fitment 22, the coupler ring 28 can be

threaded onto the threaded connection to engage and hold the flared proximal end of the decorating nozzle **26** against the fitment **22**.

[0034] Turning to FIG. 6, the flexible pouch **24** preferably has an elongated hollow shape and presents inner and outer surfaces **80,82** that extend between an upstream reservoir end **84** and a downstream dispensing end **86**. The inner surface **80** defines an interior chamber **88** that is designed to receive and contain confectionary. The flexible pouch **24** can preferably be folded, twisted, squeezed, or otherwise deformed to change the volume of the chamber **88**. In this manner, deformation of the pouch **24** is used to move confectionary through the chamber **88** and/or to urge confectionary out of the chamber **88**. Preferably, confectionary is generally moved through the chamber **88** in the downstream direction D. As will be discussed, the flexible pouch **24** is shaped so that the pouch **24** is convenient for a user to hold and deform, particularly while confectionary is being discharged from the dispenser **20**.

[0035] Turning to FIGS. 4-6, the illustrated flexible pouch **24** includes a pair of opposite flexible pouch panels **90** that cooperatively define the interior chamber **88**. Because the illustrated panels **90** are substantially identically shaped, the panel features described herein refer to both panels **90**.

[0036] Each panel **90** preferably presents end edges **92,94** and side edges **96,98** that extend longitudinally between the end edges **92,94**. The panels **90** also preferably present end margins **102,104** and side margins **106,108**. The end margins **102,104** extend inwardly from the end edges **92,94**, and the side margins **106,108** extend inwardly from the side edges **96,98**. As will be discussed, the panels **90** are preferably sealed along the side margins **106,108** and the end margins **102,104**.

[0037] Turning to FIG. 4, the illustrated side margins **106** preferably include segments **106a,b,c,d** arranged end-to-end. Similarly, side margins **108** preferably include segments **108a,b,c,d** arranged end-to-end. In the downstream direction D, the segments **106b,c,d** and segments **108b,c,d** preferably extend inboard relative to a longitudinal axis A so that a width dimension PW of the panel **90** tapers in the downstream direction D. For instance, the segment **106b** is sharply angled relative to the longitudinal axis A to define a sharp cross-sectional transition **110** along which the width dimension PW abruptly decreases. Preferably, the width dimension PW tapers along the transition **110** to a greater degree than any other location along the panel **90**.

[0038] The width dimension PW is preferably at a maximum value adjacent the upstream reservoir end **84** and at a minimum value adjacent the downstream dispensing end **86**. The transition **110** is preferably spaced between the reservoir and dispensing ends **84,86**.

[0039] Adjacent pairs of segments **106,108** preferably meet to cooperatively define angle locations **112** (see FIG. 4). Also, the segments **106b,c** cooperatively define an upstream recess **114**, and segments **108b,c** cooperatively define a downstream recess **116**. The recesses **114,116** are preferably formed in part by the angle of the corresponding angle locations **112**. In the illustrated embodiment, the angles associated with the recesses are preferably obtuse angles. However, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the recesses **114,116** are alternatively formed. For instance, such recesses could be formed by joining pouch panels that are not superimposed with one another and/or joining pouch panels that are not

identically shaped. Yet further, such recesses could be formed by other processes (e.g., by plastically deforming at least one of the panels).

[0040] The segments **106c,108b,c** preferably comprise convex segments that form convex portions of the side edges **96,98**. The segments **106d,108d** preferably comprise concave segments that form concave portions of the side edges **96,98**. As will be discussed, the side margins **106,108** cooperatively define portions of the flexible pouch **24** and permit the flexible pouch **24** to be conveniently positioned and deformed during use.

[0041] Each panel **90** preferably includes a synthetic resin material. More preferably, each panel **90** includes a polymer material, such as polyethylene and/or polypropylene, but could include one or more alternative materials without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0042] Again, the illustrated panels **90** are preferably substantially identical to one another. However, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the panels **90** have shapes that are different from one another. For instance, it may be beneficial to have differently shaped panels **90** so that the flexible pouch **24** assumes a predetermined three-dimensional shape when filled with confectionary.

[0043] Turning to FIGS. 5, 6, and 9, the panels **90** cooperate so that the flexible pouch **24** is convenient for a user to hold and deform. When joined together, the illustrated panels **90** are preferably superimposed and are in substantial registration with one another so that corresponding side margins **106,108** and end margins **102,104** can be joined together. The panels **90** are preferably joined together along the side margins **106,108** and end margins **102,104** using a conventional heat seal process. However, the panels **90** could be alternatively joined (e.g., by adhering the panels **90** to one another with an adhesive) without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0044] Preferably, the flexible pouch **24** includes a pair of panels **90**. However, it is also within the scope of the present invention where the flexible pouch **24** includes more than two panels that cooperatively define the chamber **88**. Yet further, the flexible pouch **24** could be formed by a single panel without departing from the scope of the present invention. For instance, the single panel could comprise a flexible piece of tubular material that is formed with or without a longitudinal seam extending between the end margins **102,104**. If desired, the panels **90** could be formed end-to-end on a single sheet such that only the side margins require sealing connection (the ends would already be integrally joined) and the pouch **24** is filled through the fitment **22**.

[0045] Turning to FIGS. 4-6, the illustrated panels **90** are preferably shaped and joined so that the flexible pouch **24** includes a reservoir portion **118**, a funnel portion **120**, and a dispensing portion **122**. The chamber **88** preferably extends continuously between the portions **118,120,122**.

[0046] The end margins **102,104** are selectively joined by heat sealing to close the reservoir end **84** of the reservoir portion **118**. Thus, the reservoir end **84** can be closed after the internal chamber **88** is filled with confectionary.

[0047] The funnel portion **120** preferably includes upstream and downstream sections **124,126** separated by the angle location associated with downstream recess **116** (see FIGS. 2 and 4). The funnel portion **120** is operable to receive confectionary and be grasped within a user's hand H so that the user can squeeze, compress, twist, or otherwise deform the funnel portion **120**. For instance, by simply squeezing the

funnel section 120 within the user's hand H, the user can force confectionary from the funnel portion 120, through the dispensing portion 122, and through the fitment 22 while maintaining precise control of the confectionary stream.

[0048] As will be discussed, the dispensing portion 122 provides the end margins 104 for sealing the pouch 24 to the fitment 22. The dispensing portion 122 also serves as a transitional region of the pouch 24 between the funnel portion 120 and the fitment 22. Thus, the dispensing portion 122 preferably presents a relatively short longitudinal length dimension L (see FIG. 4). More preferably, the length dimension L of the dispensing portion 122 preferably has a maximum value of about two inches (2"). However, the dispensing portion 122 could be alternatively configured without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0049] Turning to FIGS. 2 and 4, the dispensing portion 122 and funnel portion 120 meet along a lateral junction 128. The lateral junction 128 is preferably adjacent to the location where the concave segments 106c, 108c meet the corresponding convex segments 106d, 108d of the side margins 106, 108.

[0050] The reservoir portion 118 is designed to contain a reserve of confectionary that can be selectively moved from the reservoir portion 118 to the funnel portion 120. Preferably, the reservoir portion 118 is operable to be selectively grasped by the user's hand H to squeeze, compress, twist, or otherwise deform the reservoir portion 118. Thus, the reservoir portion 118 is configured to replenish the funnel portion 120 with confectionary when the reservoir portion 118 is selectively compressed or otherwise deformed.

[0051] The funnel portion 120 and the reservoir portion 118 meet along a lateral junction 130. In the illustrated embodiment, the lateral junction 130 is preferably adjacent the angle location 112 associated with the upstream recess 114.

[0052] The width dimension PW of the pouch 24 generally tapers in the downstream direction D along most of the length of the pouch 24. Preferably, the reservoir portion 118 includes a constant area section 132 along which the pouch 24 does not taper. Along the funnel portion 120, the pouch 24 preferably tapers in the downstream direction D. Preferably, the upstream section 124 of the funnel portion 120 tapers at a greater rate than the downstream section 126 of the funnel portion 120. Preferably, the pouch 24 also tapers in the downstream direction D along the dispensing portion 122. More preferably, the pouch 24 tapers along the dispensing portion 122 at a substantially even rate. However, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the pouch 24 has an alternative tapering arrangement.

[0053] As a result, when the pouch 24 is in a completely expanded condition (see FIG. 6) the interior chamber 88 presents a cross-sectional area C that is preferably at its greatest along the reservoir portion 118 and at its smallest along the dispensing portion 122. The reservoir portion 118 preferably has a greater interior chamber volume than the funnel portion 120. Similarly, the funnel portion 120 preferably has a greater interior chamber volume than the dispensing portion 122.

[0054] Along the constant area section 132, the cross-sectional area C is generally constant. Also, along the sharp cross-sectional transition 110, the cross-sectional area C preferably abruptly decreases in the downstream direction D when the pouch 24 is in the expanded condition. Preferably, the pouch 24 tapers along the transition 110 to a greater degree than any other location along the pouch 24. The cross-sectional area C progressively decreases along the dispensing portion 122 toward the dispensing end 86.

[0055] The outer surface 82 preferably presents the upstream recess 114 within the reservoir 118 and funnel portions 120 and the downstream recess 116 within at least the funnel portion 120. Preferably, the upstream and downstream sections 124, 126 of the funnel portion 120 cooperatively define the downstream recess 116. The upstream recess 114 preferably faces in a direction opposite to the direction in which the downstream recess 116 faces. Also, the upstream and downstream recesses 114, 116 are preferably spaced longitudinally along the pouch 24.

[0056] In the illustrated embodiment, the recesses 114, 116 are located to allow the user's hand H to be positioned with the thumb along the recess 116 and at least one of the three middle fingers along the recess 114 (see FIG. 2). However, it will be appreciated that the pouch 24 can be grasped within the user's hand H in alternative orientations without departing from the scope of the present invention. Furthermore, the upstream and downstream recesses 114, 116 could be alternatively positioned and/or configured without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0057] The transition 110 is preferably defined within the reservoir portion 118 immediately adjacent the funnel portion 120. More preferably, the transition 110 is defined at or adjacent the lateral junction 130 between the reservoir portion 118 and the funnel portion 120. The illustrated transition 110 is preferably configured to facilitate bending of the pouch 24 between the reservoir and funnel portions 118, 120. However, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the transition 110 is alternatively configured and/or positioned along the length of the pouch 24. Furthermore, the pouch 24 could include more than one transition to provide for suitable operation of the dispenser 20.

[0058] It has been surprisingly found that bending of the pouch 24 along the transition 110 reduces the risk of undesired backflow of confectionary from the funnel portion 120 to the reservoir portion 118. Furthermore, bending of the pouch 24 along the transition 110 facilitates resting of the reservoir portion 118 on the wrist and forearm of the user in a manner that is comfortable, balanced, and controllable for the user (e.g., when the funnel portion 120 is grasped by the user as shown in FIG. 1). Finally, such bending of the pouch 24 has also been found to restrict unintended flow of confectionary from the reservoir portion 118 to the funnel portion 120.

[0059] Again, the dispensing portion 122 preferably provides the end margins 104 for sealing the pouch 24 to the fitment 22. In particular, the sealing surfaces 74 are configured to be positioned in sealing engagement with the pouch 24 along the end margins 104. The end margins 104 are fitted around the seal body 38, with the end edges 92, 94 positioned adjacent to the flange 40. In this position, the dispensing portion 122 can be heat sealed to the seal body 38 to form an airtight joint between the pouch 24 and the fitment 22. Thus, with the pouch 24 and fitment 22 sealed to one another, the dispenser 20 can be filled with confectionary.

[0060] Subsequently, the reservoir end 84 can be heat sealed closed. In this manner, the dispenser 20 can be prefilled with confectionary and sealed for later sale, storage, transportation, and use as the sealed prefilled dispenser 20'.

[0061] However, it is also within the ambit of the present invention where the dispenser 20 is not sealed and prefilled prior to dispensing confectionary. Rather, it is within the ambit of the present invention where the dispenser 20 is filled with confectionary and the dispenser 20 is then used to dispense the confectionary without sealing the reservoir end 84.

[0062] In using the dispenser 20 to provide the sealed pre-filled dispenser 20', the panels 90 are cut and located in superimposed relationship with one another. The panels 90 are then heat sealed along the side margins 106,108 to form the pouch 24. The seal body 38 of the fitment 22 is then inserted into the dispensing end 86 of the pouch 24 so that the pouch 24 and fitment 22 can be heat sealed to one another.

[0063] With the fitment 22 and pouch 24 sealed to one another, the chamber 88 of the dispenser 20 can be filled with confectionary. The reservoir end 84 of the filled dispenser 20 can then be sealed for subsequent sale, storage, transportation, and use of the sealed pre-filled dispenser 20'. As previously noted, the side margins 106,108 and reservoir end 84 could alternatively be first sealed such that the pouch 24 is filled through the dispensing end 86.

[0064] In using sealed pre-filled dispenser 20', the decorating nozzle 26 can be secured onto the fitment 22 with the coupler ring 28 so that the decorating nozzle 26 is in fluid communication with the passage 44 of the fitment 22 and the chamber 88.

[0065] The dispenser 20 can be held by the user by positioning the funnel portion 120 within the user's hand H. In one suitable arrangement, the funnel portion 120 is held with the user's thumb and pinkie on one side of the funnel portion 120 and the middle three fingers on the opposite side of the funnel portion 120 (see FIG. 1). The pouch 24 can then be folded about the transition 110 so that the reservoir portion 118 rests on the user's hand H, wrist, and forearm. In this manner, the user can comfortably support the reservoir portion 118 while simultaneously squeezing the funnel portion 120 to dispense confectionary. In other words, this configuration permits one handed manipulation of the dispenser 20. The user may, however, conveniently squeeze the reservoir portion 118 with the opposite (free) hand when it is necessary to replenish the funnel portion 120 with confectionary.

[0066] As the confectionary is squeezed out of the funnel portion 120, this arrangement permits confectionary in the reservoir portion 118 to fall into the funnel portion 120. However, the user can conveniently use his or her other hand (not shown) to selectively squeeze the reservoir portion 118 to force confectionary to move from the reservoir portion 118 to the funnel portion 120.

[0067] Although the above description presents features of preferred embodiments of the present invention, other preferred embodiments may also be created in keeping with the principles of the invention. Such other preferred embodiments may, for instance, be provided with features drawn from one or more of the embodiments described above. Yet further, such other preferred embodiments may include features from multiple embodiments described above, particularly where such features are compatible for use together despite having been presented independently as part of separate embodiments in the above description.

[0068] The preferred forms of the invention described above are to be used as illustration only, and should not be utilized in a limiting sense in interpreting the scope of the present invention. Obvious modifications to the exemplary embodiments, as hereinabove set forth, could be readily made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

[0069] The inventors hereby state their intent to rely on the Doctrine of Equivalents to determine and assess the reasonably fair scope of the present invention as pertains to any

apparatus not materially departing from but outside the literal scope of the invention as set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A handheld confectionary dispenser comprising:
 - a flexible hollow pouch presenting an interior chamber, with the pouch being configured to contain confectionary within the chamber,
 - said pouch extending longitudinally to present a dispensing end and an opposite reservoir end,
 - said pouch defining a reservoir portion adjacent the reservoir end, a dispensing portion adjacent the dispensing end, and a funnel portion located between the reservoir and dispensing portions, with the chamber extending continuously between the portions,
 - said chamber having a cross-sectional area that is greatest at the reservoir portion and smallest at the dispensing portion,
 - said funnel portion being configured to be grasped within a hand of the user so that confectionary is forced through the dispensing portion when the funnel portion is squeezed,
 - said reservoir portion being configured to replenish the funnel portion with confectionary when the reservoir portion is selectively compressed,
 - said pouch defining a sharp cross-sectional transition along which the cross-sectional area of the chamber abruptly decreases, with the transition being defined at or adjacent the junction between the reservoir and funnel portions to facilitate bending of the pouch at the transition.
2. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,
 - said transition being defined within the reservoir portion immediately adjacent the funnel portion.
3. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,
 - said pouch tapering along the transition to a greater degree than elsewhere along the reservoir portion and the funnel portion.
4. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,
 - said pouch including inner and outer surfaces, with the inner surface defining the chamber,
 - said outer surface presenting an upstream recess adjacent the transition.
5. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 4,
 - said outer surface defining a downstream recess facing a generally opposite direction from the upstream recess, said recesses being spaced longitudinally along the pouch.
6. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,
 - said pouch including inner and outer surfaces, with the inner surface defining the chamber,
 - said outer surface presenting a recess within the funnel portion.
7. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 6,
 - said funnel portion including upstream and downstream sections that cooperatively define the recess,
 - said pouch tapering along the upstream section of the funnel portion at a greater rate than the downstream section of the funnel portion.

8. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said reservoir portion including a section thereof along which the cross-sectional area of the chamber is generally constant.

9. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said cross-sectional area of the chamber progressively decreasing along the dispensing portion toward the dispensing end.

10. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 9,

said pouch tapering along the dispensing portion at a substantially even rate.

11. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 10,

said pouch being defined by a pair of superimposed panels sealingly interconnected along side margins thereof, said side margins each being generally straight and extending along a substantially constant angle along the dispensing portion.

12. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said dispensing portion presenting a maximum length of about two inches.

13. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said reservoir portion of the pouch having a greater interior chamber volume than the funnel portion,
said funnel portion of the pouch having a greater interior chamber volume than the dispensing portion.

14. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said reservoir end being closed,
said pouch being prefilled with confectionary.

15. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said pouch being defined by a pair of superimposed panels that are sealingly interconnected along side margins, said transition being defined by an angled segment along at least one of the side margins.

16. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 15,

said pouch including inner and outer surfaces, with the inner surface defining the chamber,
said angled segment cooperating with an adjacent segment of the at least one of the side margins to define an upstream recess in the outer surface.

17. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 16,

said outer surface defining a downstream recess facing a generally opposite direction from the upstream recess, said recesses being spaced longitudinally along the pouch.

18. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 1,

said dispensing end of the pouch being open; and
a dispensing fitment sealingly coupled to the dispensing end.

19. The handheld confectionary dispenser as claimed in claim 18,

said dispensing fitment including a universal threaded connection for use with a variety of dispensing nozzles.

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