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(54) **JEWELRY WITH INTERHCHANGEABLE
DECORATIVE COMPONENTS**

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(76) Inventor: **Richard Korwin**, New York, NY
(US)

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Correspondence Address:
NORRIS, MCLAUGHLIN & MARCUS, P.A.
875 THIRD AVE, 18TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10022 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

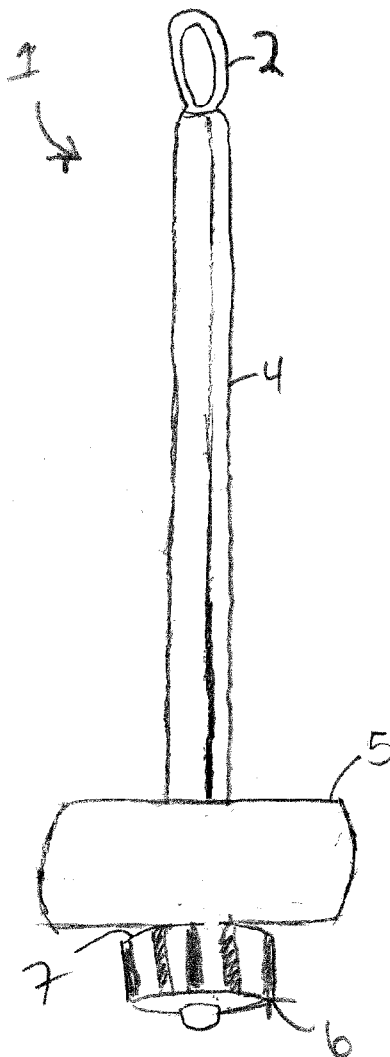
A jewelry item has a post and a decorative component thereon. The post has a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end, a fastening means attached to the upper end and a stopper permanently fixed to the bottom end. A first outer circumference of the fastening means is less than a second outer circumference of the stopper. The decorative component has a central opening with a third inner circumference, wherein the third inner circumference of the decorative component is greater than first outer circumference of the fastening means and less than the second outer circumference of the stopper. The central opening of the decorative component is sized such that the fastening means of the post passes through the central opening of the decorative component and connects the decorative component to the post.

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(60) Provisional application No. 60/954,600, filed on Aug. 8, 2007.



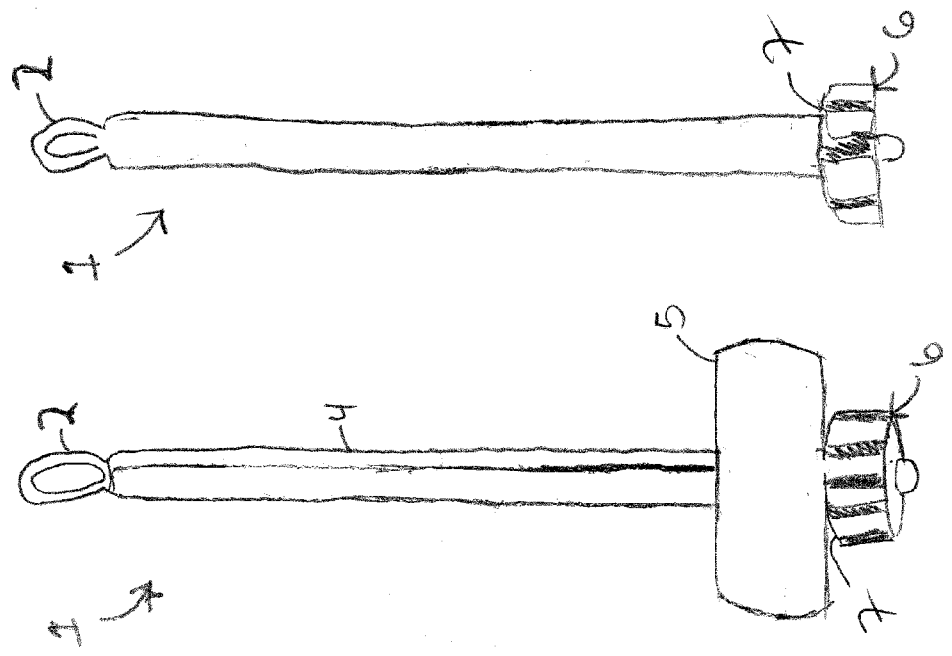
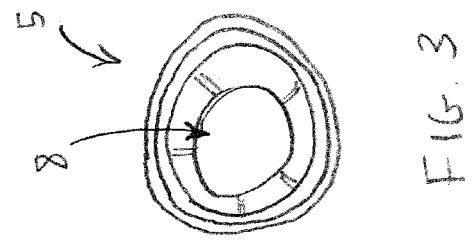
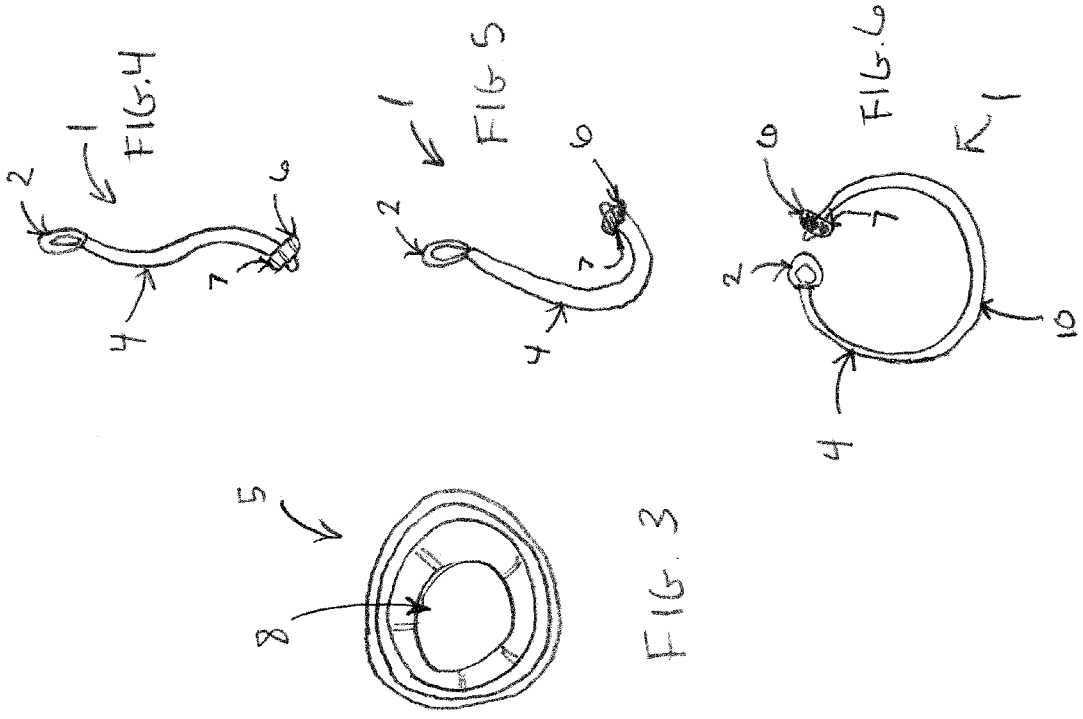


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

JEWELRY WITH INTERCHANGEABLE DECORATIVE COMPONENTS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/954,600, filed Aug. 8, 2007.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The present invention relates generally to the field of ornamental jewelry, and particularly to a mechanism that expedites the process of changing the overall jewelry appearance and utilizes a permanently attached stopper to prevent individual ornamental jewelry decorative components from sliding off the mechanism.

[0003] It has become quite common for people to wear personalized jewelry. Personalized jewelry contains decorative components such as letters, colors, shapes or other forms of decoration. The wearer can choose to manipulate these components in any manner he/she wishes to achieve a desired overall personal look. Many people choose not to purchase personalized jewelry because of the expenses of cost and labor involved in the customization process.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 4,879,882 (hereinafter "the '882 patent") issued Nov. 14, 1989 entitled "Jewelry With Interchangeable Elements" discloses decorative components that include a central hole. The decorative components slide over on the post and are held on a stopper that is manually secured to the bottom of the post. However, because the stopper is not permanently or securely attached to the vertical post with a clutch or threads, this mechanism may fail to completely secure the decorative components potentially causing loss of the decorative components.

[0005] In addition, the product disclosed in the '882 patent requires the jewelry wearer to remove the stopper from the post in order to change the decorative components or elements. Such a process can be cumbersome when the wearer physically removes the stopper and changes the decorative components because the decorative elements are physically separate from the post. This process can also result in the wearer losing decorative components while attempting to change the look of the jewelry.

SUMMARY

[0006] In embodiments, a jewelry post including a rod having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end, wherein the rod has a midpoint located at the middle of the length between the upper end and the bottom end of the rod is provided. The jewelry post has a fastening means for securing the post to a chain, an earring and/or the like. The fastening means is attached or fixed to the upper end of the post and has a first outer circumference. Moreover, the jewelry post includes a stopper that is permanently attached or fixed to the bottom end of the post, wherein the stopper has a second outer circumference, wherein the second circumference of the stopper is greater than the first circumference of the fastening means, wherein the fastening means, the stopper and the post are integrally formed as a single piece. Alternatively, the fastening means, the stopper and the post may be separately formed and subsequently attached or fixed to each other.

[0007] In embodiments, the rod is curved at least along a portion of the length of the post.

[0008] In embodiments, a distance between an upper end and a bottom end of the rod is less than a distance between the midpoint of the rod and the upper end or the bottom end of the rod.

[0009] In embodiments, the jewelry post also is used in combination with a chain or earring that retains the fastening means of the rod.

[0010] In another embodiment, a jewelry item including a post having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end. The jewelry item has a fastening means for securing the post to a chain, an earring or the like. The fastening means is attached to the upper end and a stopper is fixed at the bottom end. A first outer circumference of the fastening means is less than a second outer circumference of the stopper, wherein the post has a midpoint located at the middle of the length of the post between the upper end and the bottom end of the post. The jewelry item also includes a decorative component having a central opening with a third circumference, wherein the third inner circumference of the decorative component is greater than first outer circumference of the fastening means and less than the second outer circumference of the stopper, wherein the central opening of the decorative component is sized such that the fastening means of the post passes through the central opening of the decorative component and the decorative component is located between the fastening means and the stopper of the post for connecting the decorative component to the post.

[0011] In embodiments, the fastening means, the stopper and the post are integrally formed as a single piece.

[0012] In embodiments, the central opening of the decorative component has a cross sectional shape that is different than a cross-sectional shape of the post.

[0013] In embodiments, the post is curved at least along a portion of the length of the post.

[0014] In embodiments, the decorative component is donut-shaped, ring-shaped, barrel-shaped, cone-shaped, polygonal-shaped or wheel-shaped.

[0015] In embodiments, the jewelry item also includes a chain or an earring that retains the fastening means of the post.

[0016] In yet another embodiment, a method is provided that includes a step of providing a jewelry post having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end of the jewelry post. The jewelry post has a fastening means for securing the jewelry post to a chain, an earring and/or the like. The fastening means is attached to the upper end and a stopper is fixed to the bottom end, wherein the jewelry post has a midpoint located at a middle of the length between the upper end and the bottom end, wherein a first outer circumference of the fastening means is less than a second outer circumference of the stopper. Further, the method includes a step of providing a first decorative component having a central opening, wherein the central opening of the first decorative component has a third inner circumference that is greater than the first outer circumference of the fastening means and less than the second outer circumference of the stopper. Moreover, the method includes the step of sliding the fastening means of the jewelry post through the central opening of the first decorative component, wherein the first decorative component is located on the jewelry post and between the upper end and the bottom end of the jewelry post.

[0017] In embodiments, the fastening means, the stopper and the jewelry post are integrally formed as a single piece.

[0018] In embodiments, the method further includes the step of resting the first decorative component on a top of the stopper of the jewelry post.

[0019] In embodiments, the method further includes the step of attaching the jewelry post to an earring or a chain via the fastening means or other means of the jewelry post.

[0020] In embodiments, the method further includes the step of replacing the first decorative component with a second decorative component.

[0021] In embodiments, the central opening of the first decorative component has a cross-sectional shape that is different than a cross-sectional shape of the jewelry post.

[0022] In embodiments, the post is curved at least along a portion of the length of the post.

[0023] In embodiments, a distance between an upper end and a bottom end of the post is less than a distance between the midpoint of the post and the upper end or the bottom end of the post.

[0024] In embodiments, the first decorative component is donut-shaped, ring-shaped, barrel-shaped, cone-shaped, polygonal-shaped or wheel-shaped.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] FIG. 1 illustrates a side plan view of a jewelry post and a decorative component in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0026] FIG. 2 illustrates a side plan view of a decorative component in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0027] FIG. 3 illustrates a top plan view of a decorative component in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0028] FIG. 4 illustrates a side plan view of a jewelry post in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0029] FIG. 5 illustrates a side plan view of a jewelry post in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0030] FIG. 6 illustrates a side plan view of a jewelry post in accordance with the present disclosure.

EMBODIMENTS

[0031] The mechanism will now be described with reference to FIGS. 1-6. FIGS. 1 and 2 show a jewelry post 1 which may have a rod 4 vertical and generally perpendicular to a top surface 7 of the stopper 6. Alternatively, the rod 4 may be curved at least along a portion of a length of the rod 4 as shown in FIGS. 4-6. The top end or upper end of the rod 4 terminates with a fastening means 2. The fastening means 2 may be attached or fixed to the upper end of the rod 4 for securing the jewelry post 1 to a chain, an earring and/or the like. The stopper 6 may be attached or fixed to the rod 4. The top surface 7 of the stopper 6 may be adjacent to the fastening means 2 as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2.

[0032] In embodiments, the rod 4, the fastening means 2 and/or the stopper 6 may be integrally formed as a single piece. Alternatively, the rod 4, the fastening means 2 and/or the stopper 6 may be separately formed and subsequently fixed to each other.

[0033] In embodiments, the fastening means 2 may be, for example, a loop as shown in FIGS. 1-6. Alternatively, the fastening means may be, for example, a clasp, a J-shaped hook, an earring clamp and/or the like. It should be understood that fastening means 2 may be any fastening means known to one ordinarily skilled in the art capable of securing the jewelry post 1 to a chain, an earring and/or the like.

[0034] The rod 4 may be a long narrow rod having a cross-sectional shape, such as, for example, a polygon, a circle, an oval, triangle and/or the like. The present disclosure should not be deemed as limited to a specific embodiment of the cross-sectional shape of the rod 4.

[0035] A design element or decorative component 5 may slide over the fastening means 2 on the rod 4 and may rest adjacent the top surface 7 of the stopper 6 at a bottom end of the rod 4 as shown in FIG. 1. The decorative component 5 may be, for example, a donut-shaped, ring-shaped or wheel-shaped. The present disclosure should not be deemed as limited to a specific embodiment of the shape of the decorative component 5.

[0036] FIG. 2 shows an embodiment of the jewelry post 1 without the decorative component 5. The rod 4 shown in FIG. 2 may be vertically oriented and/or may be straight, curved or of any other shape so long as the post is substantially vertical.

[0037] In embodiments, the decorative component 5 may have a shape substantially similar to a donut or a ring as shown in FIG. 3. The decorative component 5 may also be, for example, a decorative wheel. The decorative component 5 may have a central opening 8. In embodiments, a cross-sectional shape of the central opening 8 may be different than the cross-sectional shape of the rod 4.

[0038] FIGS. 4-6 illustrate embodiments of the rod 4, wherein the rod 4 may be curved at least along a portion of the length of the rod 4. In FIGS. 4 and 5, the rod 4 has an S-shape and a C-shape, respectively. The present disclosure should not be deemed as limited to a specific embodiment of the shape of the rod 4 which may be curved at least along a portion of the length of the rod 4.

[0039] FIG. 6 illustrates the jewelry post 1 having a ring-shape. The jewelry post may have a midpoint 10 located at the middle of the length of the rod 4 between the upper end and bottom end of the rod 4. As shown in FIG. 6, a distance between the fastening means 2 at the upper end and stopper 6 at the bottom end is less than a distance between the midpoint 10 of the rod 4 and the fastening means 2 or the stopper 6.

[0040] As shown in FIG. 1, the decorative component 5 slides over the fastening means 2 and on the rod 4 and rests adjacent the top surface 7 of the stopper 6. A user changes the decorative components by sliding them upwardly over the fastening means 2 and off the rod 4. The user may replace the decorative component 5 with other decorative elements having similar central openings as central opening 8 of the decorative component 5. Since the rod 4 and stopper 6 remain integral as a single piece, the process to change such elements is safer and easier to accomplish. In embodiments, multiple decorative elements may be added to reside on the post simultaneously.

[0041] The fastening means 2 of the post 1 can be attached to an earring (not shown in the figures) or can allow a chain (not shown in the figures) to pass there through to enable the post 1 and decorative component 5 to serve as a pendant.

[0042] It will be appreciated that several of the above-disclosed and other features and functions, or alternatives thereof, may be desirably combined into many other different systems or applications. Also, various presently unforeseen or unanticipated alternatives, modifications, variations or improvements therein may be subsequently made by those skilled in the art, and are also intended to be encompassed by the following claims.

[0043] In this regard, the invention also comprises a combination of a chain or earring with the inventive jewelry post 1 and the decorative component 5.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A jewelry post comprising:
 - a rod having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end, wherein the rod has a midpoint located at the middle of the length between the upper end and the bottom end of the rod;
 - fastening means for securing the jewelry post to a chain or an earring is attached to the upper end of the post, wherein the fastening means has a first outer circumference; and
 - a stopper attached to the bottom end of the post, wherein the stopper has a second outer circumference, wherein the second outer circumference of the stopper is greater than the first outer circumference of the fastening means.
- 2. The jewelry post according to claim 1, wherein the fastening means, the stopper and the post are integrally formed as a single piece.
- 3. The jewelry post according to claim 1, wherein the rod is curved at least along a portion of the length of the rod.
- 4. The jewelry post according to claim 1, wherein the rod is ring-shaped in profile.
- 5. A jewelry item comprising the jewelry post according to claim 1 used in combination with a chain or an earring that retains the fastening means of the jewelry post.
- 6. A jewelry item comprising:
 - a post having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end, wherein the fastening means is attached to the upper end and a stopper is fixed to the bottom end, a first outer circumference of the fastening means is less than a second outer circumference of the stopper; and
 - a decorative component having a central opening with a third inner circumference, wherein the third inner circumference of the decorative component is greater than first outer circumference of the fastening means and less than the second outer circumference of the stopper, wherein the central opening of the decorative component is sized such that the fastening means of the post passes through the central opening of the decorative component and connects the decorative component to the post.
- 7. The jewelry item according to claim 6, wherein the fastening means, the stopper and the post are integrally formed as a single piece.
- 8. The jewelry item according to claim 6, wherein the central opening of the decorative component has a cross-sectional shape that is different than a cross sectional shape of the post.
- 9. The jewelry item according to claim 6, wherein the post is curved at least along a portion of the length of the post.

10. The jewelry item according to claim 6, wherein the post is ring-shaped in profile.

11. The jewelry item according to claim 6, wherein the decorative component is donut-shaped, ring-shaped, barrel-shaped, cone-shaped, polygonal-shaped or wheel-shaped.

12. An ornamental jewelry item comprising the jewelry item according to claim 6 in combination with a chain or an earring that retains of the fastening means of the post.

13. A method comprising the steps of:

- providing a jewelry post having a length defined between an upper end and a bottom end of the jewelry post, wherein fastening means for securing the jewelry post to a chain or an earring is attached to the upper end and a stopper is fixed to the bottom end, wherein the jewelry post has a midpoint located at a middle of the length between the upper end and the bottom end, wherein a first outer circumference of the fastening means is less than a second outer circumference of the stopper;

- providing a first decorative component having a central opening, wherein the central opening of the first decorative component has a third inner circumference that is greater than the first outer circumference of the fastening means and less than the second outer circumference of the stopper; and

- sliding the fastening means of the jewelry post through the central opening of the first decorative component, wherein the first decorative component is located on the jewelry post between the upper end and the bottom end of the jewelry post.

14. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

- resting the first decorative component adjacent a top surface of the stopper of the jewelry post.

15. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

- attaching the jewelry post to an earring or a chain via the fastening means of the jewelry post.

16. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

- replacing the first decorative component with a second decorative component.

17. The method according to claim 13, wherein the central opening of the first decorative component has a cross-sectional shape that is different than a cross sectional shape of the post.

18. The method according to claim 13, wherein the post is curved at least along a portion of the length of the post.

19. The method according to claim 13, wherein the post is ring-shaped in profile.

20. The method according to claim 13, wherein the first decorative component is donut-shaped, ring-shaped, barrel-shaped, cone-shaped, polygonal-shaped or wheel-shaped.

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