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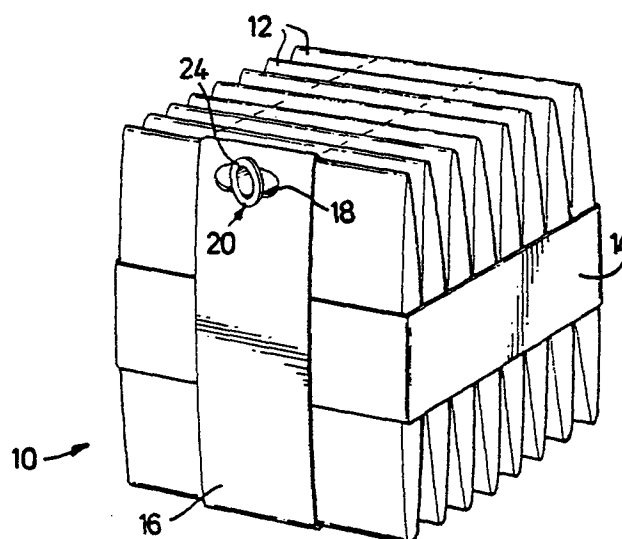
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⑤④ **Display of articles of merchandise.**

⑤⑦ A merchandising package (10) comprising several articles of merchandise (12) held together as a unit, each of said articles having an oval hole (19) for their suspension, and a tubular aligning member (20) with enlarged ends in the form of oval flanges (24) which can be pushed through said holes (19) when the aligning member (20) is in a first orientation with respect to the articles of merchandise (12) but otherwise obstruct removal of the aligning member (20) from said package (10), said aligning member (20) being adapted for sliding onto a rod-like carrier (26) of a display stand (30).



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THIS INVENTION relates to the display of articles of merchandise, and to merchandising packages for facilitating the display of such articles, and it is an object of the invention to facilitate locating a unit of articles of merchandise on a display stand.

According to the invention, there is provided a merchandising package comprising articles of merchandise held together by packing means and/or an elongated carrying member in such a way that the articles of such package can be located on and suspended from a display stand as a unit, the articles being separable when they are on the display stand to allow the articles to be removed separately in the normal course of trade.

In a preferred embodiment the package includes an elongated carrying member for carrying the articles and holding them together as a unit. In case a rod-like carrier is attached to the display stand the carrying member is preferably in the form of a tubular aligning member which facilitates locating the articles on the carrier of the stand. Such an aligning member can pass through holes in the articles and can hold the articles together.

In a preferred embodiment, the carrying member may have enlarged ends of an irregular shape, such as oval-shaped ends, and the articles may have holes through which at least one of these ends may pass, enabling the articles to be located on the carrying member. The articles may have holes of an irregular shape which, when they are in one orientation with respect to the carrying member, allows an article to be removed from the carrying member but otherwise obstructs removal thereof. The carrying member may then be designed so that it will normally adopt a predetermined position once it is on a stand,

this position being such that the carrying member will obstruct the removal of the articles from the carrying member while allowing the articles to be removed from the carrying member by swinging the articles around the carrying member so that the holes pass over a respective end of the carrying member.

The articles of merchandise in the package may comprise products in suitable containers in which the holes are formed.

The present invention also extends to a merchandising display including a stand provided with a plurality of carrying members, and at least one merchandising package comprising a plurality of articles held together as a unit and suspended at least partly by a respective carrying member, the articles being removable separately from the display in the normal course of trade.

In a display, where the merchandising package comprises a tubular aligning member and has been located on and suspended from a rod-like carrier as a unit, any means holding the articles together, including the aligning member, can be removed to allow the articles to be removed separately. If the articles are on a carrying member as part of the unit and itself carrying articles, the carrying member can be left in position as the articles are removed from a stand. Also in case of a tubular aligning member the same can be left in position on a rod-like carrier of the stand as the articles are removed separately.

Due to the aligning members the packages can be rapidly mounted on a display stand having rod-like carriers. Furthermore, while the articles of merchandise in the packages are held together by the aligning members, theft of individual articles is inhibited.

Although the invention can be applied with particular advantage to articles of merchandise such as pantihose or other hose in suitable containers, other merchandise, such as confectionery, blades, pencils or lighters, can form part of such merchandising packaging.

Two embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which

Figure 1 is a three-dimensional view of a merchandising package according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows a tubular aligning member fitted on a carrier of a display stand;

Figure 3 shows an article of merchandise forming part of the package;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a display stand with a second embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a carrying member for use in the stand according to Figure 4.

Referring firstly to Figure 1, a merchandising package 10 comprises a plurality of articles of merchandise 12 each in the form of a container containing pantihose or other hose. The articles 12 are held together by packing or binding means comprising a generally horizontally extending band 14 wrapped around the articles and having its ends overlapping and bonded together. The packing means also includes a cradle-member 16 extending at least up the front and back of the package 10 and across the bottom of the package for

supporting the lower edges of the articles 12, where required. The member 16 can also extend over the top of the package 10, although this is not shown. The band 14 and cradle member 16 can be connected together, if necessary.

Towards its upper ends at the front and back of the package, the cradle member 16 is provided with an opening 18, and each of the containers of the articles 12 is provided with an opening 19 of identical shape, the openings 18, 19 all being elongate openings having longitudinal axes extending horizontally and all being aligned with one another in the package 10 by a tubular aligning member 20 which extends through the openings 18, 19 of the cradle member and of the articles. The member 20 has a tubular portion 22 of generally oval cross-section and enlarged ends 24 in the form of flanges which are also of generally oval cross-section. In the position shown in Fig. 1 and 2 the longitudinal axes of the channel of the tubular portion 22 and of the enlarged ends 24 extend vertically. The shape and dimension of each of the ends 24 is such that, when properly orientated, the ends 24 can pass through the openings 18, 19 but, in other positions of the ends 24, will not normally pass through the openings without the application of sufficient force to deform the containers of the articles 12.

The shape of the tubular portion 22 of the member 20 is eccentric so that, when the member 22 is mounted on a carrier, such as a rod 26 of a display stand 28 as shown in Fig. 2, the member 20 adopts a position in which the longitudinal axes of the ends 24 extend generally vertically. This means that when a member 20 carrying articles 12 is mounted on the stand with the articles suspended from the member 20 and thus from the rod 26, the length of the

ends 24 will be perpendicular to the lengths of the openings 18.

Normally, a merchandising package 10 such as that shown in Fig. 1, including the member 20 will be produced where the articles of merchandise are made and will contain a suitable number of articles 12, such as 8, 10 or 12 pantihose contained in respective envelopes.

The merchandising package 10 can be supplied to a retail outlet, where the package can be easily located on and suspended from a rod 26 as a unit. due to the fact that all openings 18, 19 are aligned by the member 20.

This will normally result in the member 20 adopting the position shown in Figure 1 with the lengths of the ends 24 of the member extending transversely to the lengths of the openings 18, 19. The member 20 and the binding comprising the band 14 and cradle member 16 can be removed from the articles 12 at about the time that the tubular aligning member 20 is located on the carrier 26, so that the articles are displayed and can be easily removed separately from the member 20. If the member 20 is not removed, the orientation of the openings 18, 19 with respect to the ends 24 inhibits accidental removal of the articles from the member 20, but the articles can be readily removed by turning a respective article through an angle of 90° about the tubular portion 22 of the member 20 and then moving the article so that a respective end 24 passes through the respective opening 18, 19.

The package 10 shown has the advantage that it facilitates quick counting of products, can make theft of individual

articles more difficult because the articles are held together until they are on display, and facilitates location of the articles on a stand for display purposes.

Figure 4 shows a stand 30 which is of frame construction and takes the form of a T. Removably or releasably attached to the limbs 32 of the T are a plurality of rods 34. The attachment of the rods to one of the limbs is illustrated by Figure 5. Referring to this figure there is shown the rod 34, one end 35 of which is received in a slot 36 formed in the limb 32. The end 35 of the rod is provided with a groove 38 which engages with a spring biased ball 40 in the slot releasably to hold the rod therein.

The stand 30 is mounted on a base 42 which may be located in front of a counter 44 as can be found in any supermarket. It is preferable that the height of the stand 30 is such that the top thereof is below eye level for security reasons.

Each of the rods 34 will carry a plurality of articles 46, only some of which are illustrated in Figure 4. Each article 46 has a hole 48 to enable the article to be threaded on to a rod.

In use, each rod 34 will have located thereon a plurality of articles 46 to provide a package 50 of the articles. The rods are then releasably attached to the stand in the manner described above. It is preferred that each rod will carry articles of a particular size or type and will be suitably coded, e.g. colour coded. Appropriate slots 36 in the stand will be similarly coded so that it is a simple matter to identify the slot which must receive a particular package 50 of articles.

Customers will remove an article that is desired by simply sliding it off the relevant rod. When a particular package is empty, i.e. all the articles have been removed from the relevant rod, that rod is removed and replaced by a fresh package which includes a rod 34. The packages will be produced at the factory and all the store owner has to do is remove the empty rod 34 and replace it with a fresh package 50 which he purchases from the factory.

The articles 46 may contain any desired product such as pantihose, confectionery, blades, pencils, pens, lighters and the like. The products are typically packaged in bags, sacks, envelopes or the like.

C L A I M S

1. A merchandising package comprising several articles of merchandise held together as a unit, each of said articles having a hole for their suspension, the improvement comprising an elongated carrying member adapted to be removably attached to a display stand, the length of said carrying member being at least equal to the width of the package, and said carrying member being inserted into the holes of the articles of merchandise for aligning the same and holding them together.
2. A package according to claim 1, wherein the carrying member is a tubular aligning member adapted for sliding onto a rod-like carrier of the display stand.
3. A package according to claim 2, wherein the aligning member has enlarged ends, at least one of which may pass through the holes of said articles.
4. A package according to claim 3, wherein the holes of said articles are of a non-round shape and at least one of the enlarged ends of the aligning member has a non-round shape which, when the aligning member is in a predetermined orientation with respect to the articles of merchandise, allows said one end to pass through said holes but otherwise obstructs removal of the aligning member from said package.

5. A package according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the enlarged ends are in the form of flanges.
6. A package according to claim 4, wherein the holes and said one end are of oval shape.
7. A package according to claim 4 or 6, wherein the channel of the aligning member has a non-round cross section.
8. A package according to claim 7, wherein the channel has an oval cross section.
9. A package according to claims 4 and 7, wherein the cross section of the channel and the shape of said one end have longitudinal axes of such orientation with respect to each other that said one end adopts its obstructing position with respect to the holes of the articles of merchandise when the latter and the aligning member are hanging on the carrier member.

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Fig. 1

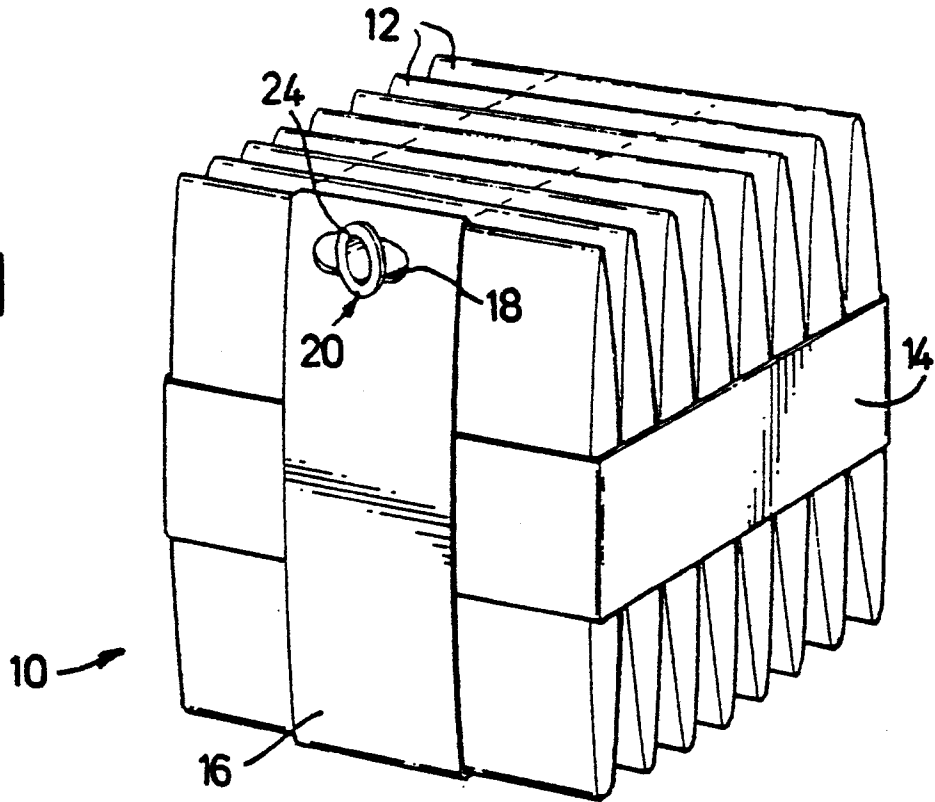


Fig. 2

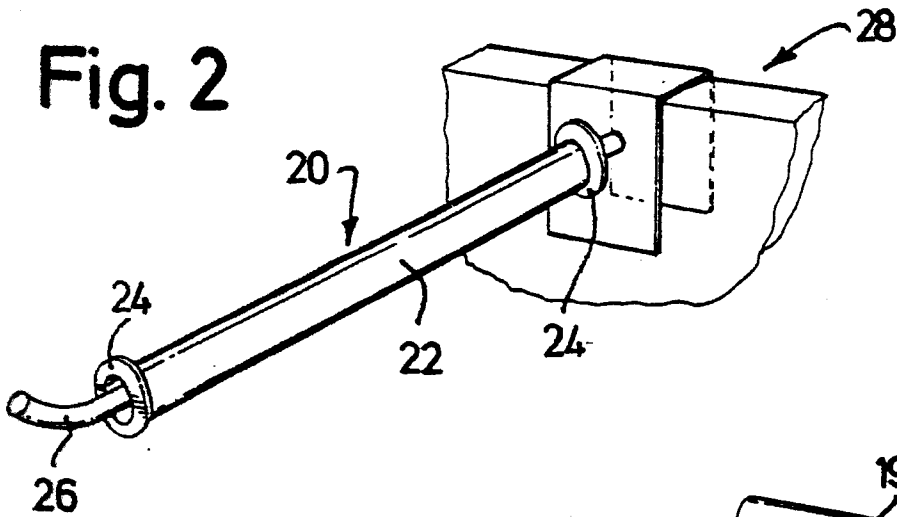


Fig. 3

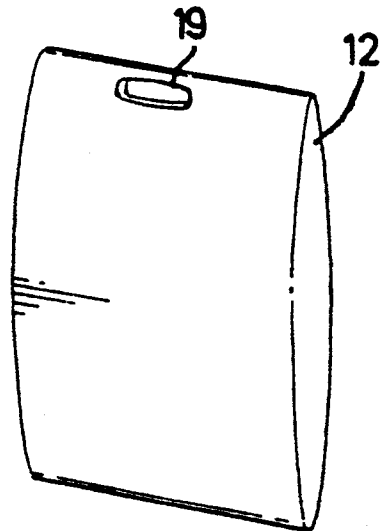


Fig. 4

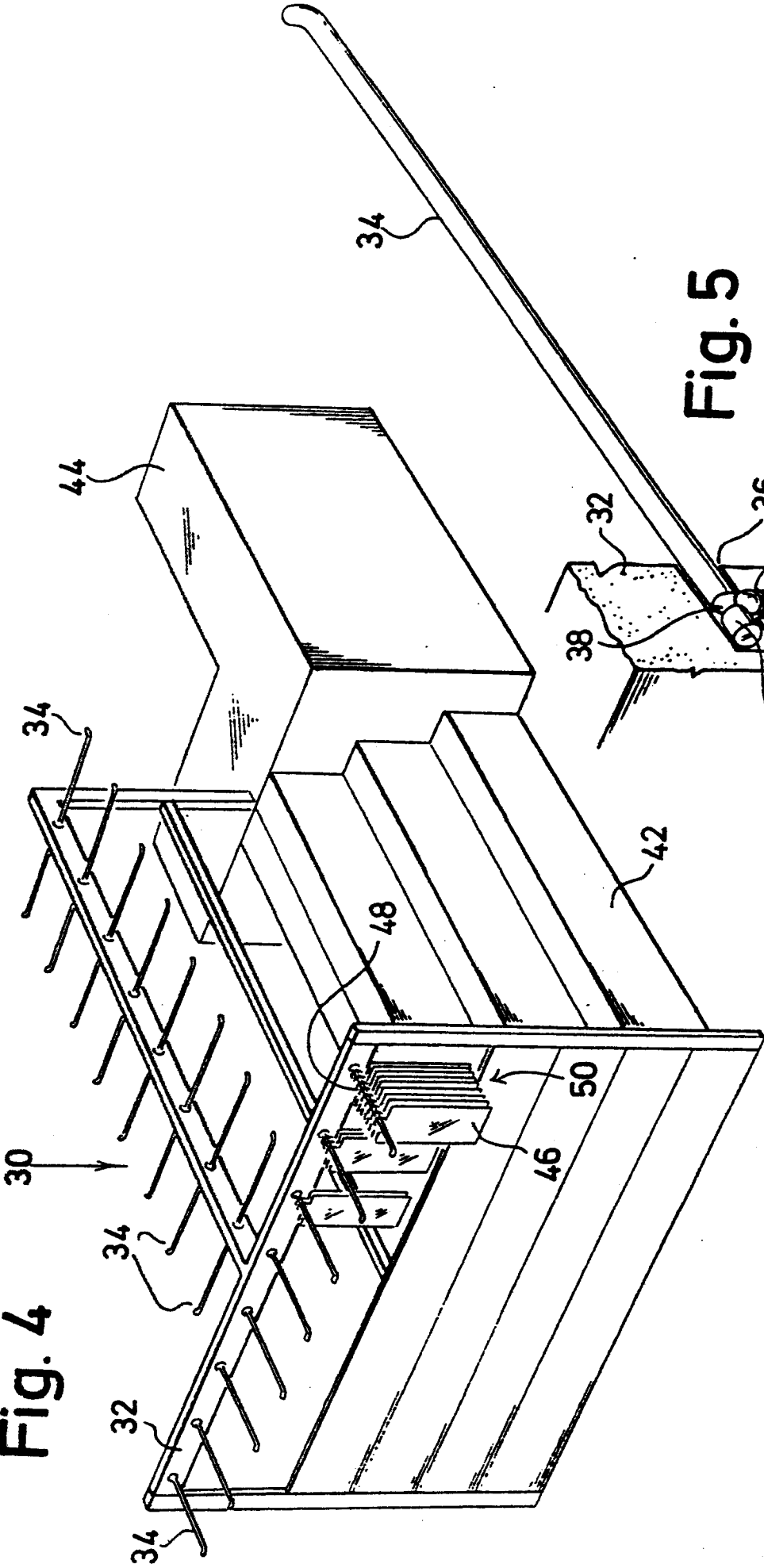


Fig. 5

