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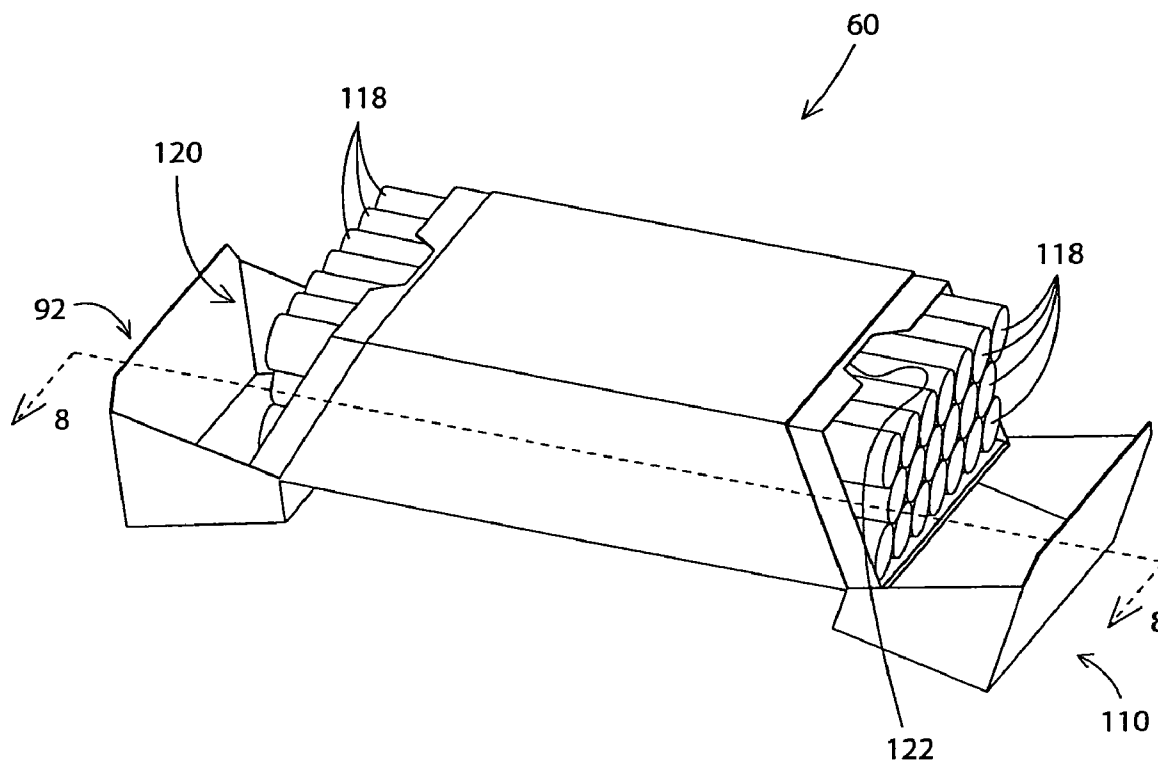
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tobacco product container comprises an outer sleeve, a holder slidable within the outer sleeve and having a first cavity and a second cavity, the first cavity and the second cavity each having a bottom wall and a first end wall, and wherein the first wall extends intermediate the first and second cavities.

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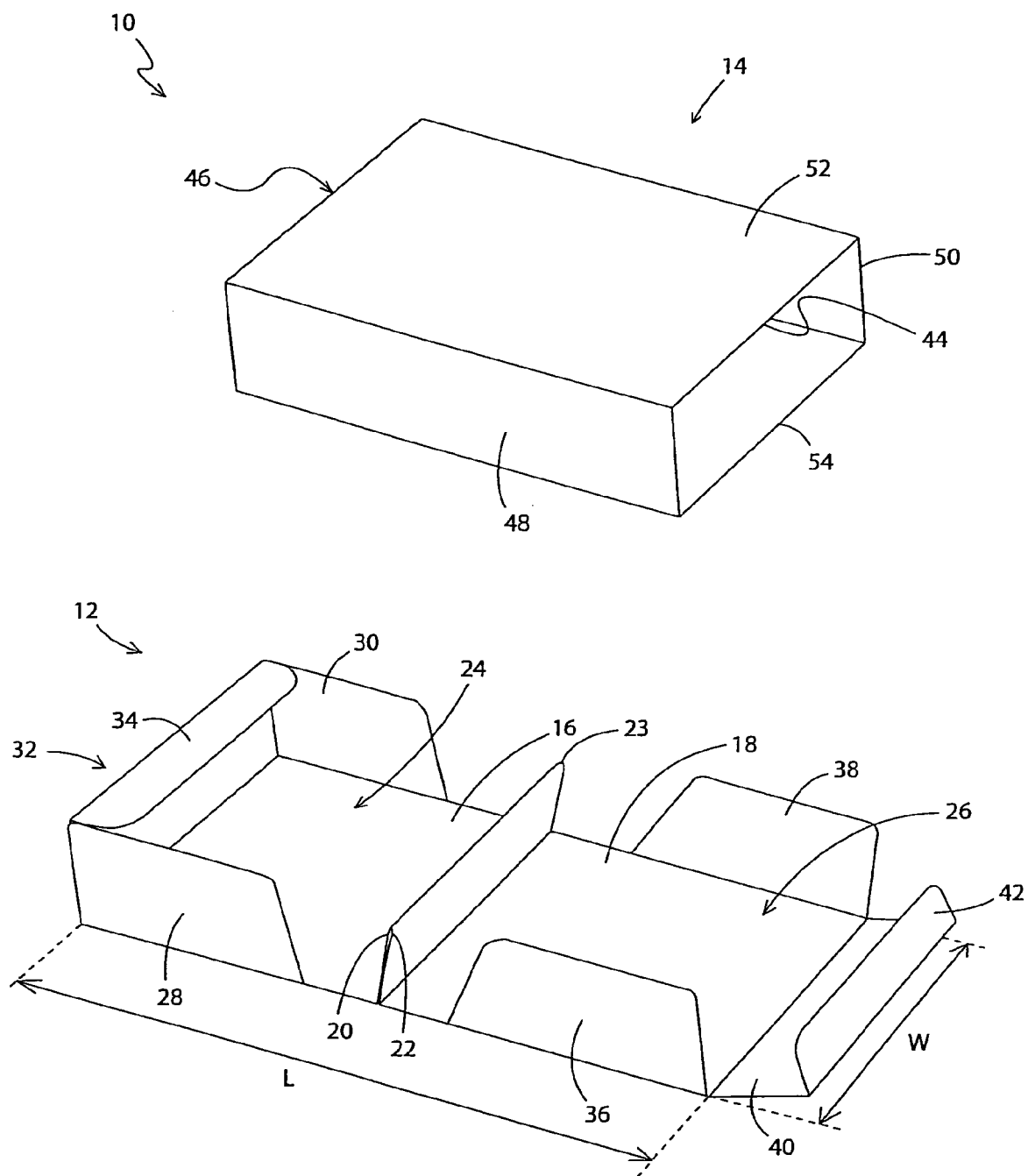


FIG. 1

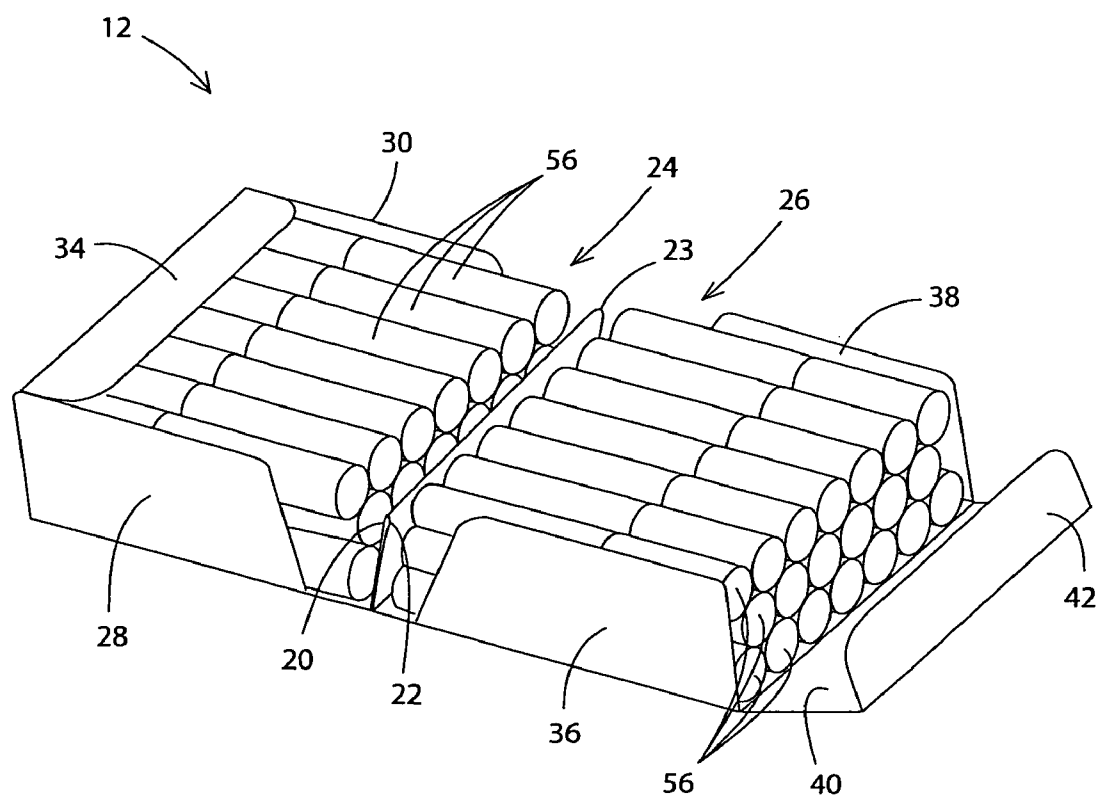


FIG. 2

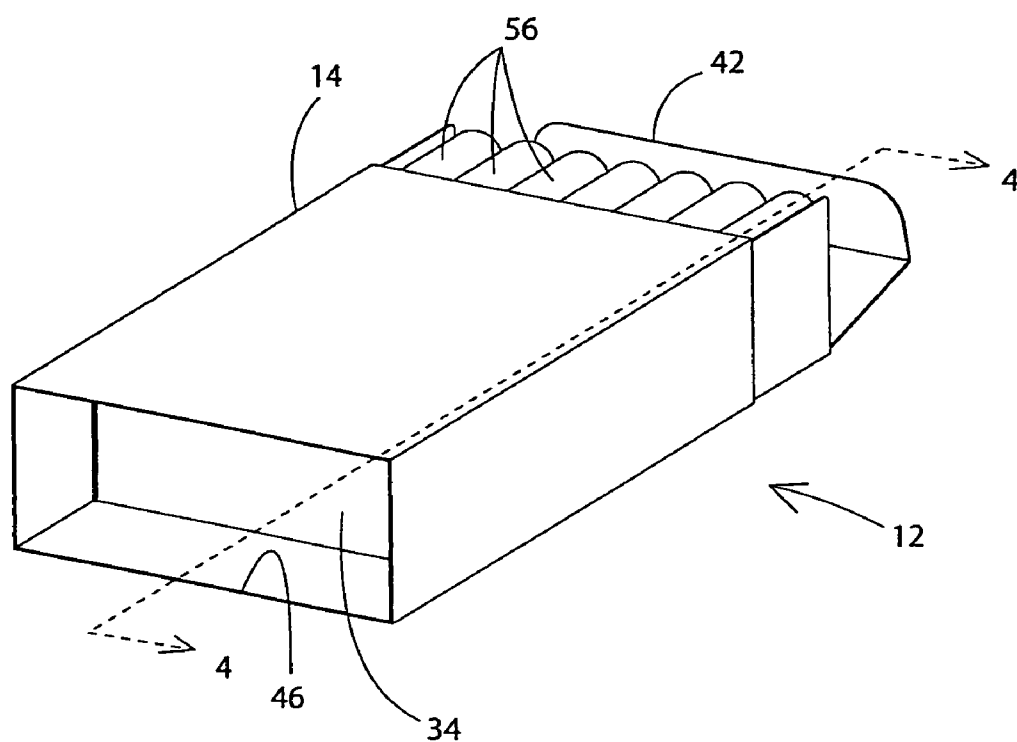


FIG. 3

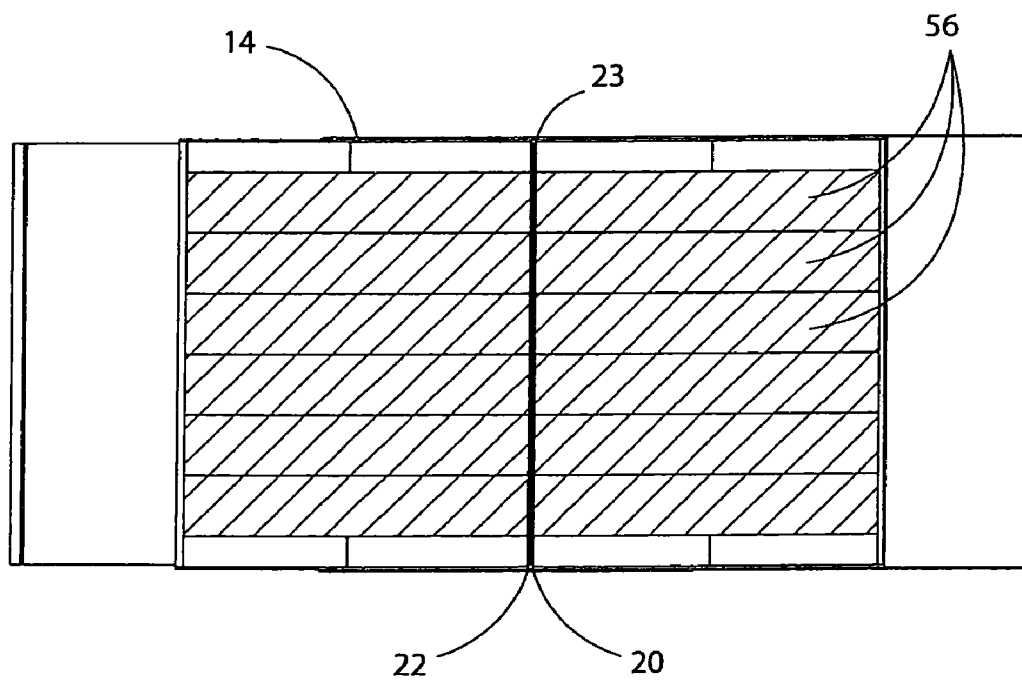


FIG. 4

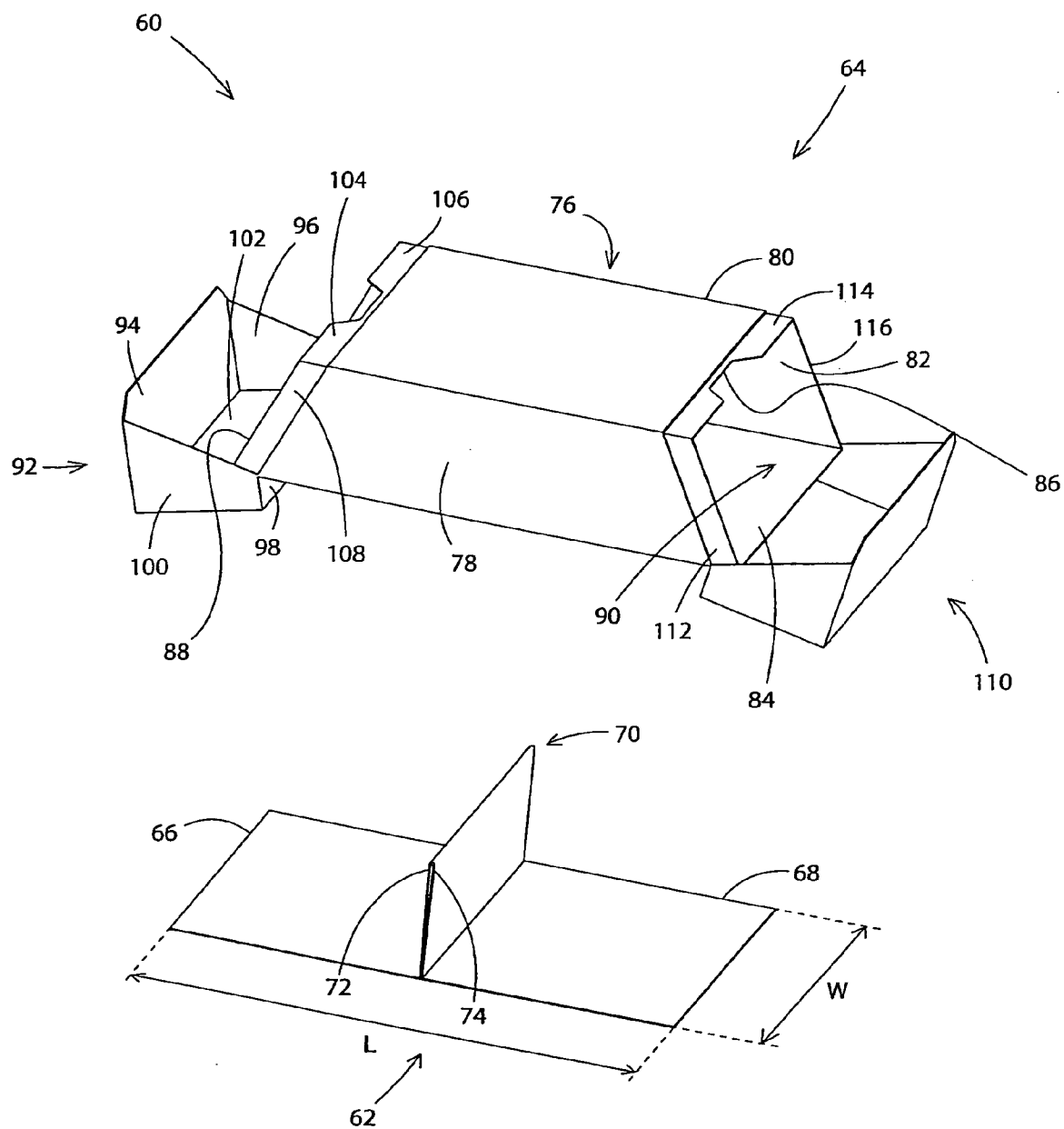


FIG. 5

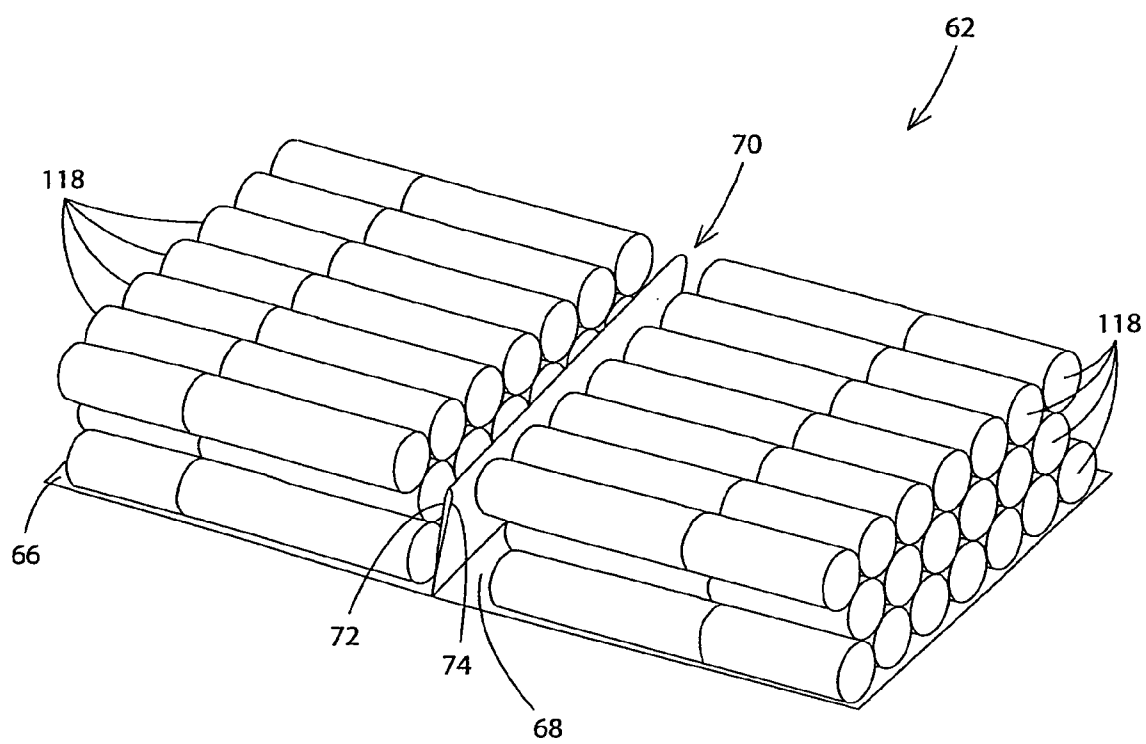
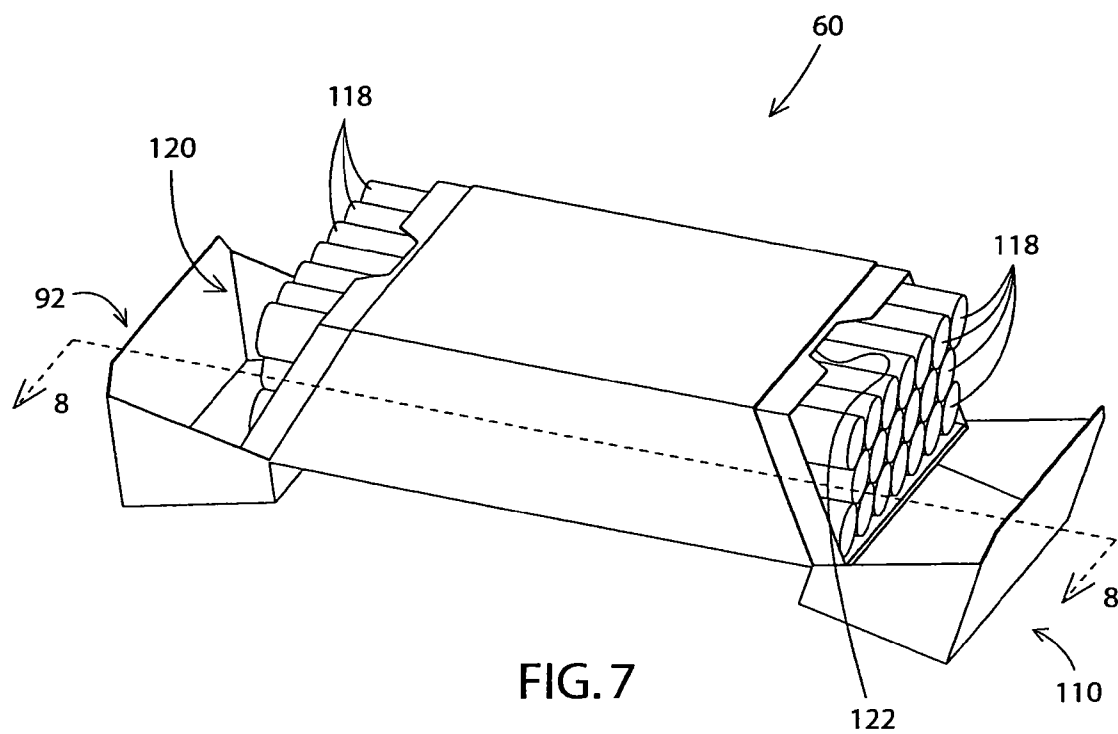
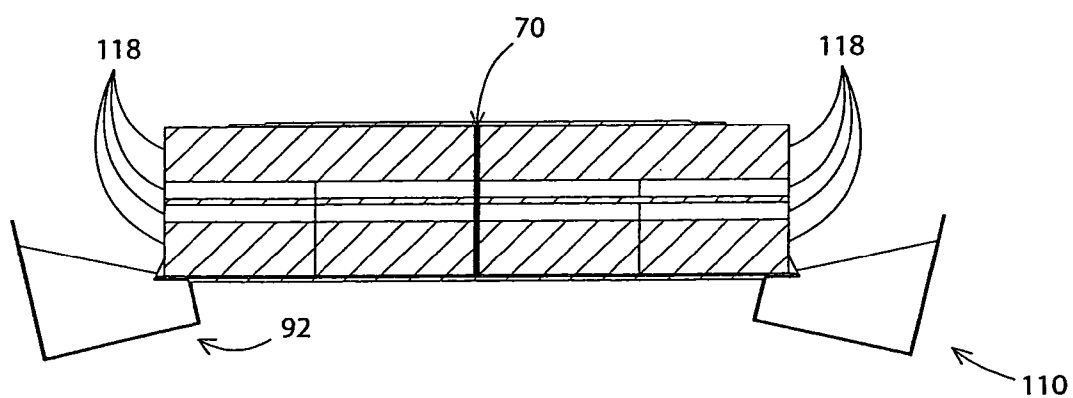


FIG. 6



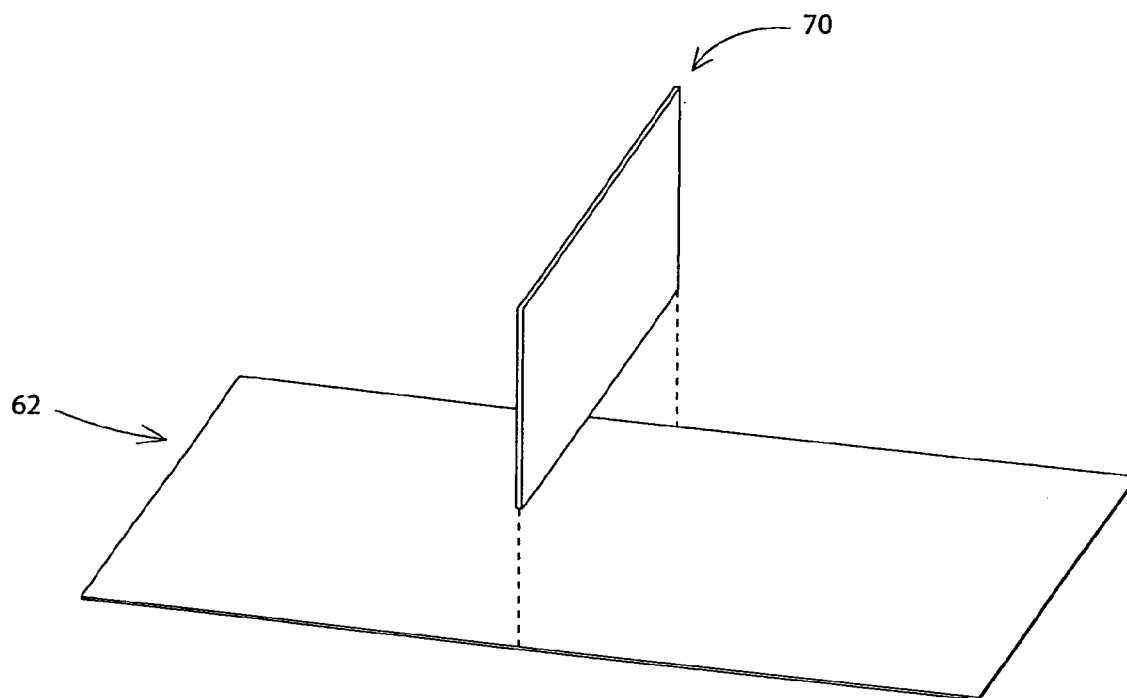


FIG. 9

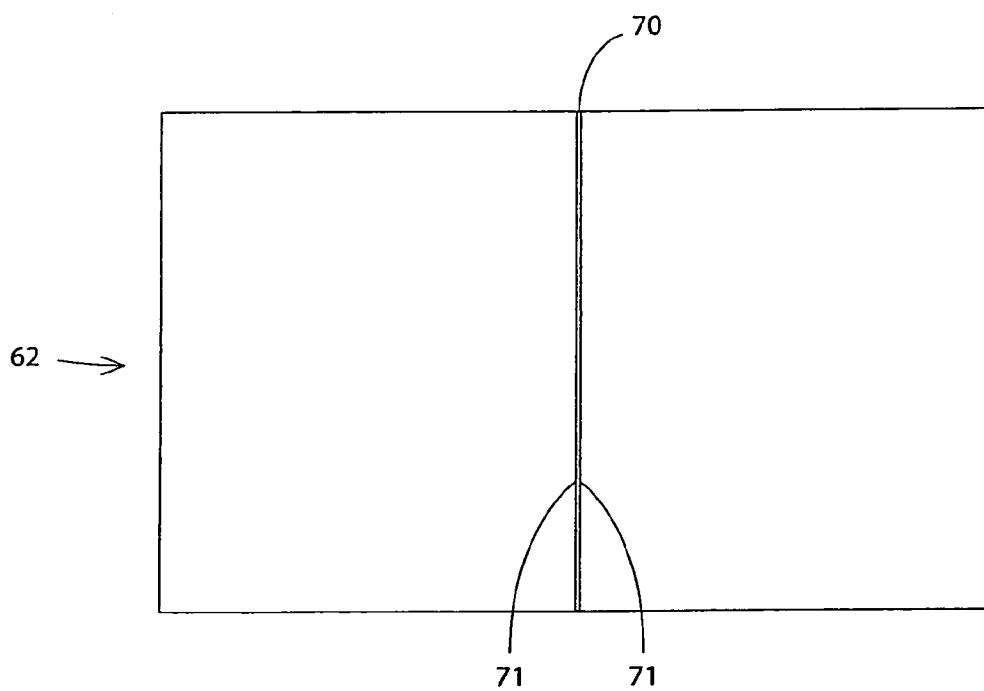


FIG. 10

TOBACCO PRODUCT PACKAGING FOR USE THEREWITH

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Technical Field

[0002] The invention relates generally to consumer product containers. More particularly, the invention relates to tobacco or cigarette containers. Specifically, the invention relates to tobacco or cigarette containers with multiple openings to allow the consumer to access twice as many cigarettes.

[0003] 2. Background Information

[0004] Smoking tobacco dates back to at least Native Americans of North and South America and maybe even further. Tobacco can be inhaled in a variety of forms, including cigars, pipe, or cigarettes. The pre-formed cigarette has become the most popular form of tobacco due to its mild taste and ready-to-consume packaging. In particular, with roll-your-own cigarettes and pipe smoking, the consumer must pack loose tobacco in a pipe or rolling papers. This then requires the consumer to carry a package of rolling papers or a pipe, as well as a container of loose tobacco. Thus the roll-your-own cigarettes and pipe are unpopular forms of tobacco use because they are more time consuming to prepare and cumbersome processes.

[0005] The pre-formed cigarette generally includes a tightly rolled smoking paper with tobacco throughout the length of the paper. At one end, a filter is installed and secured to the paper with an adhesive. The other opposing end is left open and arranged to allow the consumer to light the cigarette for smoking. The traditional cigarette is approximately 90 to 100 mm (3.5 to 4 inches) in length with the filter attached. Further, a cigarette pack traditionally holds 20 cigarettes, each located within the pack with the filter end facing upwards towards the pack opening.

[0006] Two types of cigarette packs predominate. The first is the "flip top box", aptly named for the way the box opens. The flip top box is generally rectangular and has a sealed bottom end and a rotatable door at the opposing end. The rotatable door is integrated into the box and receives the name "flip top" because the top end of the box flips open to expose the filters of the cigarettes. The second type of cigarette pack is the "slider box" which includes an outer sleeve and a cigarette holder. The cigarette holder is stored within the outer sleeve to protect the cigarettes from damage and can be slid in either direction to expose the cigarettes.

[0007] The health concerns of smoking have steadily increased as the medical profession better understands the effects tobacco consumption has on the body. A recent legislative push has been to reduce passive or involuntary smoking, or inhalation of cigarette smoke by someone who is not smoking, in public places. To this end, laws in some of Canada and the United States, prohibits smoking in public places as well as within 20 feet of an entrance to any public place. Accordingly, smokers are required to go outside, at least 20 feet from any entrance in order to smoke in some communities. In very hot or cold environments, walking outside and 20 feet from any entrance to smoke means that the smoker may smoke less than a full cigarette since the smoker is extremely hot or cold.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention broadly comprises a tobacco product container including an outer sleeve, a holder slidable

within the outer sleeve and having a first cavity and a second cavity, the first cavity and the second cavity each having a bottom wall and a first end wall, and wherein the first wall extends intermediate the first and second cavities. A second end wall is carried by one of the holder and the outer sleeve. A pair of sidewalls extending intermediate the first and second end walls and in which the first and second end walls, the sidewalls, and the bottom walls define each cavity, respectively. Further, the first and second cavities are equal in size and there are 20 cigarettes in each of the first and second cavities. Each of the second end walls pivots to provide access to one of the cavities.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The preferred embodiments of the invention, illustrative of the best modes in which Applicants have contemplated applying the principles of the invention, are set forth in the following description and are shown in the drawings.

[0010] FIG. 1 is an exploded perspective view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product container;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product holder with cigarettes;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product holder partially located within an outer sleeve;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product container taken generally about line 4-4 in FIG. 3;

[0014] FIG. 5 is an exploded perspective view of another preferred embodiment tobacco product with the holder separated from the housing;

[0015] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of another preferred embodiment tobacco product holder with cigarettes;

[0016] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of another preferred embodiment tobacco product with the holder and cigarettes located within the housing;

[0017] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of another preferred embodiment tobacco product container taken generally about line 8-8 in FIG. 7;

[0018] FIG. 9 is an exploded perspective view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product holder; and,

[0019] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment tobacco product holder with the central end wall adhesively secured to the holder.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0020] At the outset, it should be appreciated that like drawing numbers on different drawing views identify identical, or functionally similar, structural elements of the invention. While the present invention is described with respect to what is presently considered to be the preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention as claimed is not limited to the disclosed aspects.

[0021] Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood to one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although any methods, devices or materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the invention, the preferred methods, devices, and materials are now described.

[0022] The tobacco product container of the present invention is indicated generally at 10, as is particularly shown in

FIGS. 1 through 10. As particularly shown in FIG. 1, a preferred embodiment container 10 includes a holder 12 and an outer sleeve 14.

[0023] Holder 12 is preferably composed of a single piece of paperboard and includes a first bottom wall 16 and a second bottom wall 18. A first end wall 20 is connected to first bottom wall 16 and extends generally perpendicular from the first end wall, while a second end wall 22 extends generally perpendicular from second bottom wall 18. In an alternative embodiment first end wall 20 and second end wall 22 are combined into a single piece, whereby a first side of the end wall is directed towards and parallel to first bottom wall 16 and a second side of the end wall is directed towards and parallel to second bottom wall 18. Holder 12 has a length L and a width W approximately equal to a traditional pack of cigarettes. First end wall 20 and second end wall 22 preferably connect at a top seam 23. In the alternative embodiment, the combined end wall may be secured to the first and second bottom walls with an adhesive, locking tab, or other suitable connection arrangement as seen in FIGS. 9 and 10.

[0024] In accordance with one of the main features of the present invention, first end wall 20 and second end wall 22 extend from the first and second bottom walls to divide holder 12 into a first cavity 24 and a second cavity 26. First cavity 24 is further defined by a side wall 28 and a side wall 30 extending generally perpendicularly from first bottom wall 16. Side walls 28 and 30 may be spaced apart from first end wall 20 and are separated by a third end wall 32 which is pivotally secured to first bottom wall 16. Third end wall 32 also has first tab 34 extending generally perpendicular and towards first cavity 24 from the end of third end wall 32 which is distal first bottom wall 16. Accordingly, first cavity 24 is formed by the inner surfaces of first bottom wall 16, first end wall 20, side walls 28 and 30, third end wall 32, and tab 34. Although side walls 28 and 30 are shown and described as being spaced apart from first end wall 20 in a preferred embodiment, it is within the spirit and scope of the present invention as claimed for side walls 28 and 30 to extend the entire length of cavity 24.

[0025] Opposite first cavity 24 and first bottom wall 16 is second cavity 26 and second bottom wall 18. Second cavity 26 is structurally similar to first cavity 24 and includes a side wall 36 extending generally perpendicularly from second bottom wall 18 and a side wall 38 extending generally perpendicularly from second bottom wall 18. Side walls 36 and 38 also are preferably spaced apart from second end wall 22, but may abut second end wall 22 if desired. Pivotally secured to second bottom wall 18 at the end distal second end wall 22 is a fourth end wall 40. At the upper part of fourth end wall 40, a tab 42 is secured and directed inward towards cavity 26. Fourth end wall 40 also functions to separate side walls 36 and 38. Thus, second cavity 26 is formed by the inner surfaces of second bottom wall 18, second end wall 22, side walls 36 and 38, fourth end wall 40, and tab 42.

[0026] Outer sleeve 14 includes an access opening 44 and an access opening 46 on opposing ends. Access openings 44 and 46 are formed by walls 48, 50, 52, and 54, each having the same length. In a preferred embodiment, outer sleeve 14 is generally rectangular in shape, however any suitable shape may be used so long as outer sleeve 14 is complementarily shaped to receive holder 12. Further, outer sleeve 14 must be slightly larger and longer than holder 12 to allow the holder to slide within the outer sleeve as well as seal first cavity 24 and second cavity 26. Outer sleeve 14 is preferably composed of

a single piece of paperboard which is formed and secured with a layer of adhesive at the point where the free ends are joined (not shown).

[0027] Averting to FIG. 2, holder 12 is shown with a plurality of cigarettes 56 located within first cavity 24 and second cavity 26. Cigarettes 56 are generally shorter in length than traditional cigarettes and preferably approximately 35-55 millimeters in length. Accordingly, first cavity 24 and second cavity 26 are slightly longer than cigarettes 56 so that the cigarettes are completely contained within their respective cavity. While the present invention is described with reference to cigarettes, any similarly situated tobacco product can be used, including but not limited to, cigars, cigarillos, and hand rolled cigarettes.

[0028] Having described the structure of the preferred embodiment, a preferred method of operation will be described in detail and should be read in light of FIGS. 1 through 4. The first and second cavities are interposed by end walls 20 and 22 to provide two distinctly separate cavities for storing cigarettes 56. First cavity 24 and second cavity 26 are supplied with cigarettes 56 disposed such that the filter, if applicable, of each cigarette is directed towards third end wall 32 or fourth end wall 40. In particular, the filters of cigarettes within first cavity 24 are directed towards third end wall 32, while the filters of cigarettes within second cavity 26 are directed towards fourth end wall 40.

[0029] When holder 12 is located completely within outer sleeve 14, only third end wall 32 and fourth end wall 40 of holder 12 are visible. To remove a cigarette, the user presses either third end wall 32 or fourth end wall 40 to expose cigarettes 56. Specifically, in order to expose cigarettes located in first cavity 24, the purchaser will push fourth end wall 40 so that first cavity 24 extends beyond access opening 46 and tab 34 and third end wall 32 can be pivoted downward and away from the cigarettes. In a similar fashion, in order to expose cigarettes located in second cavity 26, the purchaser will push third end wall 32 so that second cavity 26 extends beyond access opening 44 and tab 42 and fourth end wall 40 can be pivoted downward and away from the cigarettes. To close the tobacco product container, the user simply pivots the appropriate end wall back to the original position and pushes the opposite end wall, be it third end wall 32 or fourth end wall 40 until both first cavity 24 and second cavity 26 are completely surrounded by outer sleeve 14.

[0030] Having now described the structure and operation of the first embodiment, only those portions of the remaining embodiment which are different from the first embodiment are described in detail. Likewise, similar numerals refer to similar parts throughout the various embodiments.

[0031] In accordance with a second embodiment of the invention shown specifically in FIGS. 5 through 10, a tobacco product container 60 includes a holder 62 and a housing 64.

[0032] Holder 62 includes a first bottom wall 66 and a second bottom wall 68. Holder 62 has a length L and a width W approximately equal to a traditional pack of cigarettes. A central end wall 70 is disposed across the width of holder 62 and at the middle of length L. In a preferred embodiment, central end wall 70 includes a first end wall 72 and a second end wall 74 proximate one another. The first end wall extends generally perpendicular from first bottom wall 66, while the second end wall extends generally perpendicular from second bottom wall 68.

[0033] In accordance with another main feature of the present invention, housing 64 includes a body 76 with a cavity

86 defined by an inner surface of walls **78**, **80**, **82**, and **84**. At one end of housing **64** is an access opening **88** and at the opposite end of housing **64** is an access opening **90**. Access openings **88** and **90** are preferably slash cut to provide the purchaser easy access to all of the cigarettes with minimal effort. For example, the slash cut design allows removal of the front cigarettes when the container is initially opened, which would otherwise be difficult due to the tight packing of cigarettes within the cavity.

[0034] Access opening **88** is enclosed by a first lid **92**. First lid **92** is pivotally connected to wall **84** and encloses one end of cavity **86** when first lid **92** is rotated to the closed position. First lid **92** includes side walls **94**, **96**, **98**, and **100**, as well as a top wall **102**. In particular, first lid **92** is pivotally connected to wall **84** at side wall **98**, while top wall **102** is connected to each of side walls **94**, **96**, **98**, and **100**. Side walls **94**, **96**, and **100** each also have an inner portion which slidably engages with sealing walls **104**, **106**, and **108** respectively. In this arrangement, the sliding engagement of the inner portions with the sealing walls frictionally engages the side walls and the first lid to prevent the first lid from accidentally opening, as well as keeping the cigarettes fresh.

[0035] A second lid **110** is located on the end of housing **64** that is opposite both first lid **92** and access opening **88**. Second lid **110** functions identical to first lid **92**. In a preferred embodiment, second lid **110** is also pivotally connected to wall **84** and slidably engages with sealing walls **112**, **114**, and **116** similar to sliding walls **104**, **106**, and **108** as previously detailed. In an alternative embodiment, first lid **92** or second lid **110** may be pivotally connected to wall **78**, wall **80**, or wall **82** to provide a lid which rotates in a different direction.

[0036] Averting to FIGS. **6**, **7**, and **8**, holder **62** is shown with cigarettes **118** resting on first bottom wall **66** and second bottom wall **68** and separated by central end wall **70**. Further, when holder **62** is located within housing **64**, central end wall **70** functions as a divider, creating a first cavity **120** and a second cavity **122**. Since central wall **70** effectively separates the tobacco product container into multiple cavities which can only be opened from their own respective lid (first lid **92** or second lid **110**), the present invention provides two tobacco product containers in the size of a traditional cigarette pack. Similar to the first preferred embodiment, first cavity **120** and second cavity **122** are supplied with cigarettes **118** disposed such that the filter, if applicable, of each cigarette is directed towards first lid **92** or second lid **110**. In particular, the filters of cigarettes within first cavity **120** are directed towards first lid **92**, while the filters of cigarettes within second cavity **122** are directed towards second lid **110**.

[0037] Averting to FIG. **9**, holder **62** is shown separated from central end wall **70**. While in FIG. **10**, central end wall **70** is seen secured to holder **62** with an adhesive **71** on both sides of central end wall **70**. Adhesive is either placed on holder **62** and the central end wall is located on the holder, or adhesive is placed on central end wall **70** and the central end wall is located on holder **62**. Thus, the central end wall **70** and the two cavities are at least partially formed by two pieces, the central end wall and holder **62**.

[0038] The length and width of both embodiments are generally equal to a traditional cigarette pack. Therefore the purchaser will be familiar with the size and shape, but will receive twice as many cigarettes which are approximately half the length of a traditional cigarette. Thus, traditional vending machines and sales displays may be used without

modification. Due to the smaller size, the consumer will inhale less nicotine and tar. Further, the shorter length will allow the consumer to quickly smoke a cigarette outside without wasting the unused portion due to being excessively hot or cold.

[0039] Accordingly, the tobacco product container is an effective, safe, inexpensive, and efficient device that achieves all the enumerated objectives of the invention, provides for eliminating difficulties encountered with prior art devices, systems, and methods, and solves problems and obtains new results in the art.

[0040] In the foregoing description, certain terms have been used for brevity, clearness, and understanding; but no unnecessary limitations are to be implied therefrom beyond the requirement of the prior art, because such terms are used for descriptive purposes and are intended to be broadly construed.

[0041] Moreover, the description and illustration of the invention is by way of example, and the scope of the invention is not limited to the exact details shown or described.

[0042] Having now described the features, discoveries, and principles of the invention, the manner in which the tobacco product container is constructed and used, the characteristics of the construction, and the advantageous new and useful results obtained; the new and useful structures, devices, elements, arrangement, parts, and combinations are set forth in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A tobacco product container comprising:

an outer sleeve;
a holder slidable within the outer sleeve and having a first cavity and a second cavity;
the first cavity and the second cavity each having a bottom wall and a first end wall; and,
wherein the first wall extends intermediate the first and second cavities.

2. The tobacco product container as defined in claim 1 further comprising a second end wall extending upwardly from each cavity opposite the first end wall.

3. The tobacco product container as defined in claim 2 in which the second end wall is carried by one of the holder and the outer sleeve.

4. The tobacco product container as defined in claim 3 further comprising a pair of sidewalls extending intermediate the first and second end walls and in which the first and second end walls, the sidewalls, and the bottom walls define each cavity respectively.

5. The tobacco product container as defined in claim 2 in which the first and second cavities are equal in size.

6. The tobacco product container as defined in claim 2 in which each cavity is in the range of from 35 millimeters to 55 millimeters in length.

7. The tobacco product container of claim 6 further comprising a plurality of cigarettes adapted to fit within the first or second cavity.

8. The tobacco product container of claim 7 in which the plurality of cigarettes each have a length in the range of from 35 millimeters to 55 millimeters in length.

9. The tobacco product container of claim 8 in which there are 20 cigarettes in each of the first and second cavities.

10. The tobacco product container of claim **1** wherein the holder is formed from a single piece.

11. The tobacco product container of claim **2** wherein each of the second end walls pivots to provide access to one of the cavities.

12. The tobacco product container as defined in claim **11** in which the outer sleeve further comprises a rectangular body having a first end and a second end, and in which each of the first and second ends define an access opening, and in which the body defines an interior space whereby each access opening provides accessibility to the interior space.

13. The tobacco product container as defined in claim **12** in which the first and second ends are opposed, and in which the access opening of the first end allows access to the first cavity of the holder, and the access opening of the second end allows access to the second cavity of the holder.

14. The tobacco product container as defined in claim **13** in which one second end wall extends over the access opening of the first end, and one second end wall extends over the access opening of the second end.

15. The tobacco product container as defined in claim **14** in which the second end walls are carried by the holder.

16. The tobacco product container defined in claim **14** in which the second end walls are carried by the outer sleeve.

17. The tobacco product container of claim **1** wherein the outer sleeve and the holder are composed of paperboard.

18. The tobacco product container of claim **1** wherein the first end wall is a second piece secured to the holder.

19. The tobacco product container of claim **1** wherein the first end wall is secured to the holder with an adhesive.

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