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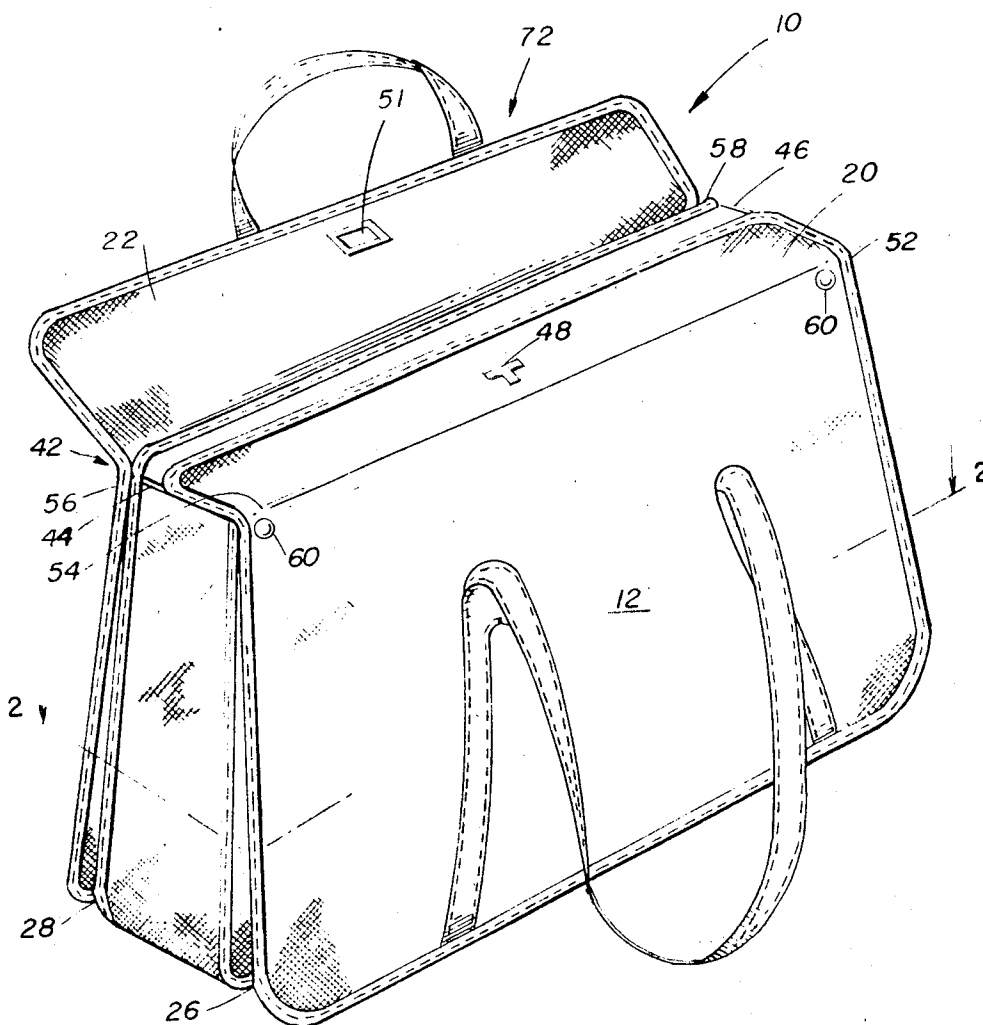
[54] **EXPANDABLE TOTE BAG**
10 Claims, 8 Drawing Figs.

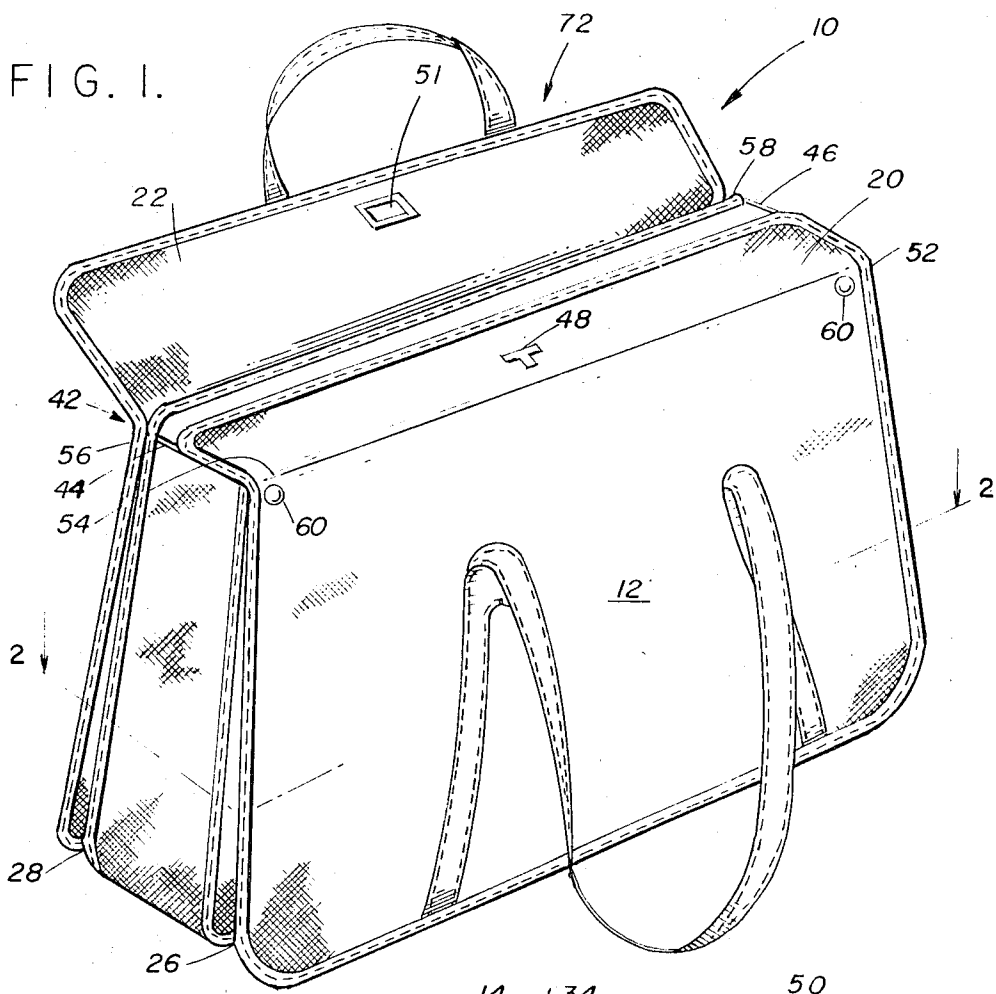
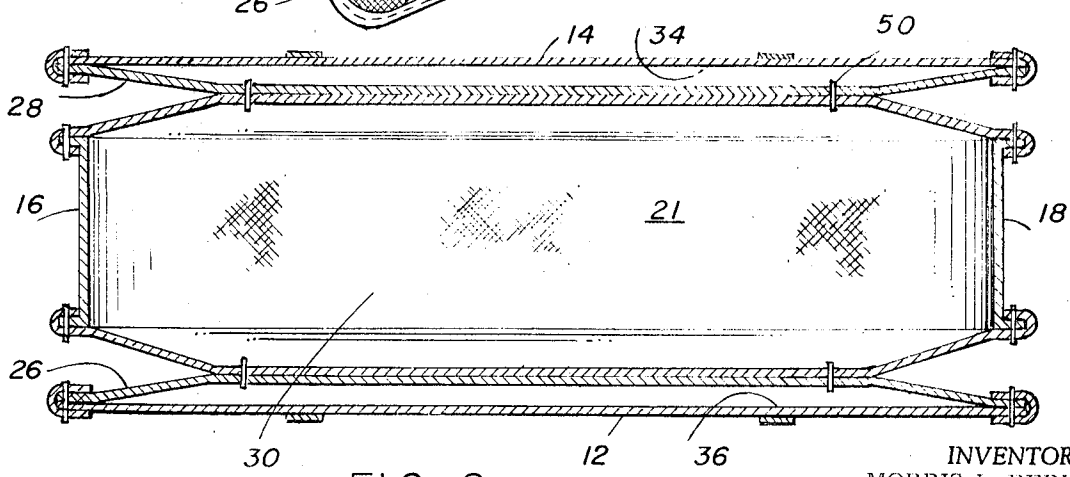
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[50] Field of Search. 190/44, 51,
52; 150/1.6, 30

ABSTRACT: A tote bag adapted to be expandable comprising a pair of opposing front and rear walls and a pair of opposing sides, the bag being bottomed at one end thereof and openable at the other end thereof, each of said front and rear walls being associated with means for increasing the lateral dimension of said bag.





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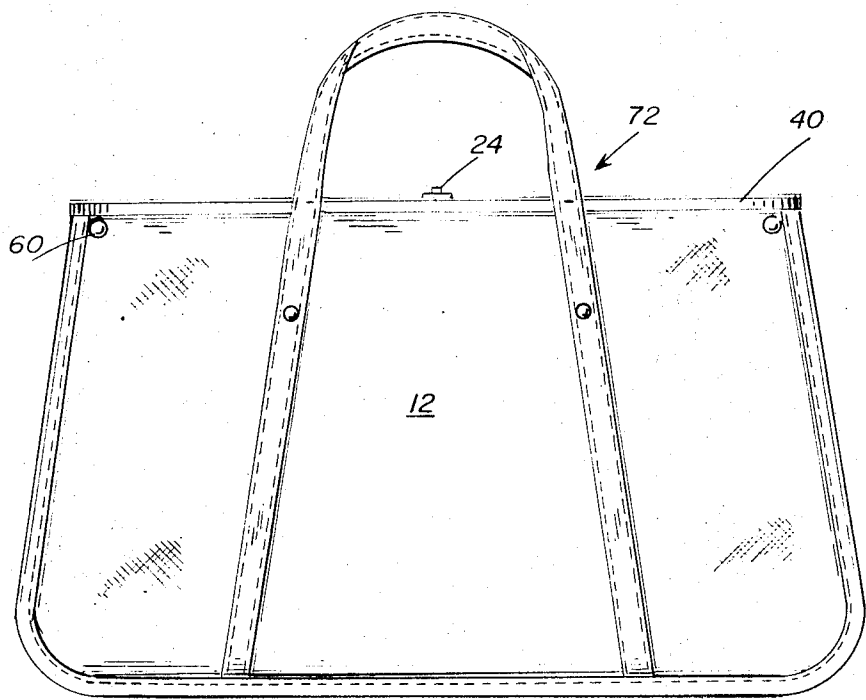


FIG. 3.

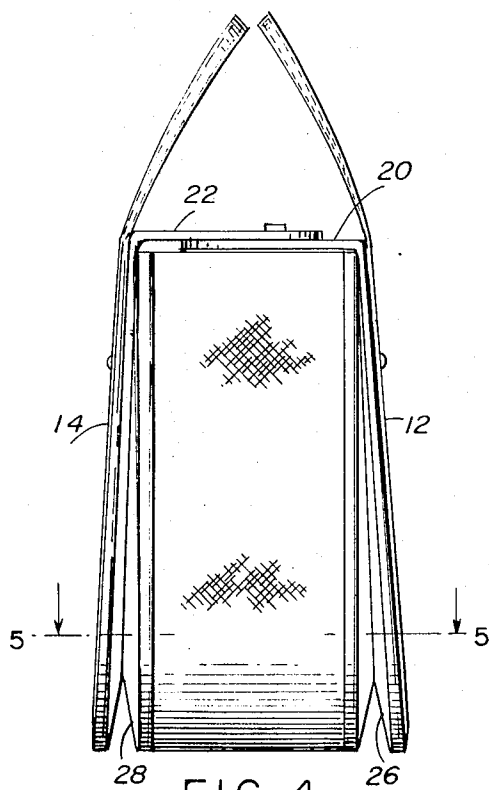


FIG. 4.

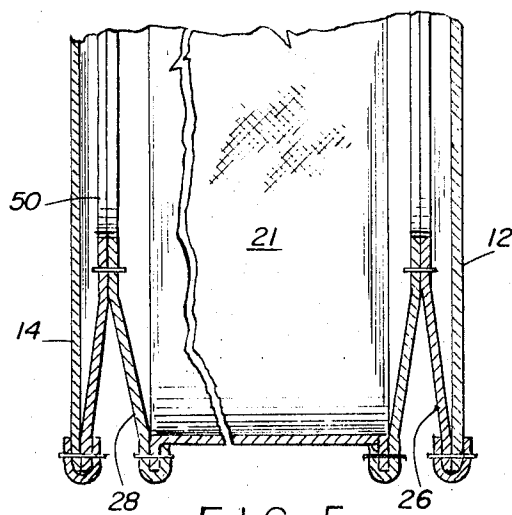


FIG. 5.

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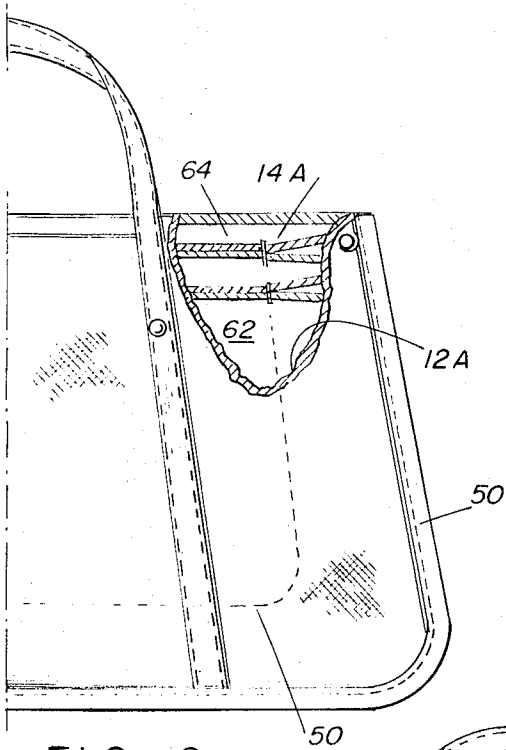


FIG. 6.

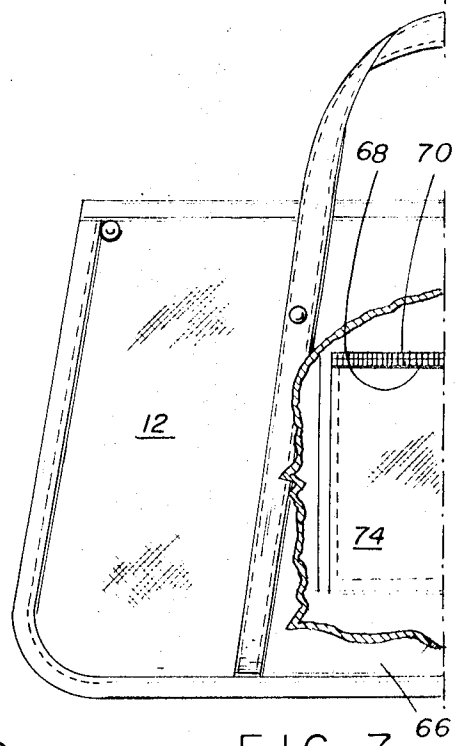


FIG. 7.

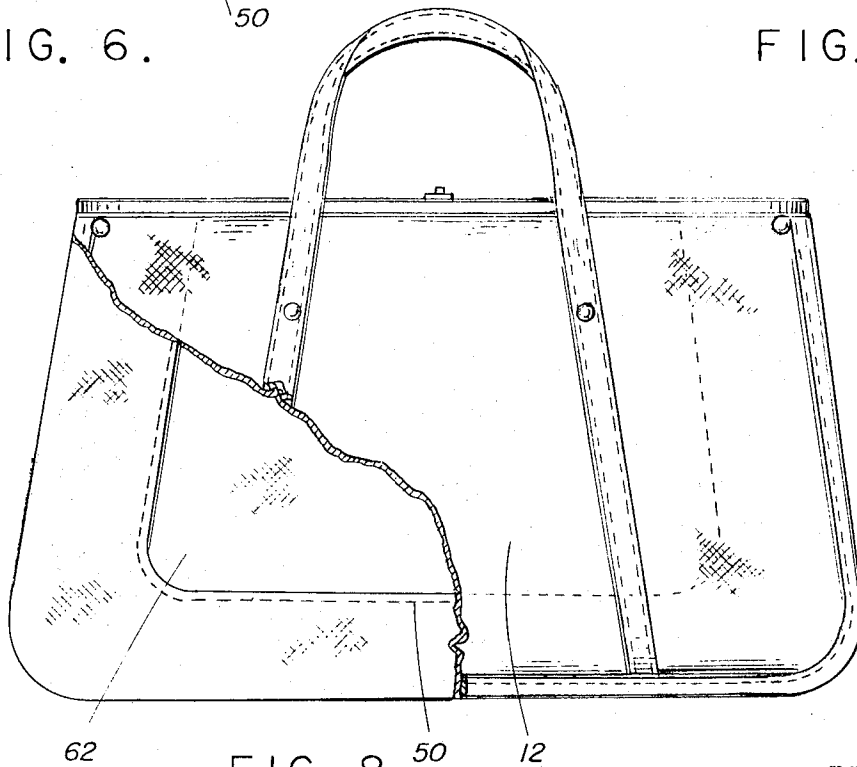


FIG. 8.

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EXPANDABLE TOTE BAG

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

The invention relates to improvements in hand luggage and more specifically to a tote bag which is adapted to be expandable.

2. Description and Prior Art

There are, of course, many types of hand luggage known to the art; some are insulated for carrying perishables, others are provided with pockets for carrying baby bottles, for example, and others are provided with various zipper arrangements which provide for completely opening the bag.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is among one of the principal objectives of the invention to provide a tote bag which will be adapted to be expandable in its lateral dimension. The invention bag comprises a pair of opposing front and rear walls and a pair of opposing sides, the bag being bottomed at one end thereof and openable at the other end thereof, each of said front and rear walls being associated with means for increasing the lateral dimension of said bag. In another embodiment, the bag is provided with interior walls for rendering the interior of the bag in compartmented form, which compartments are connected to the expanding wall means. Access means are also provided through one of the walls communicating with its respective compartments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The invention will be hereinafter more fully described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective showing the inventive bag in its expanded condition.

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken along line 2-2 of FIG. 1 in the direction of the arrows.

FIG. 3 is a front plan view of the inventive bag.

FIG. 4 is an end view of the bag shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a sectional view in fragmented form taken along line 5-5 of FIG. 4 in the direction of the arrows.

FIG. 6 is a fragmented view of one-half of the inventive bag in another embodiment with portions thereof shown partially cut away.

FIG. 7 is a fragmented view of yet another embodiment of the invention showing exterior access means into the interior of the bag provided along a sidewall of the bag.

FIG. 8 is a front plan view partially cut away showing the interior of the bag according to the embodiment shown by FIG. 6.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the FIGS. in detail wherein like parts will be identified by like reference numerals, and specifically to FIGS. 1-6, there is shown therein a tote bag 10 comprising a longitudinal front wall 12 and an opposing longitudinal rear wall 14 and having a pair of opposing transverse sides 16 and 18 connected to the front and rear walls in a manner which will be more fully set forth hereinbelow. The bag 10 is bottomed as at 21 and is open at the top, being adapted to be closeable and openable by means of cooperating flaps 20 and 22 located at the upper end of the bag. Flap 20 is hingedly and preferably integrally connected to the upper end 40 of front wall 12 and flap 22 is similarly hingedly and preferably integrally connected to the upper end 42 of rear wall 14. When the bag is in the closed condition, flap 20 is folded inside flap 22 which resultingly closes the bag, flap 20 being supported by the upper ends 44, 46 of sides 16 and 18, respectively. A conventional locking mechanism 24 may be provided in cooperating fashion upon the two opposing flaps 20 and 22, with a locking key 48 centrally provided on flap 20 and a locking slot 51 provided in a cooperating position on flap 22. The bag may

be made of any suitable flexible material, such as a conventional fabric or plastic.

According to one form of the invention, the bag is adapted to be expandable by providing gusseted interconnecting means between the front wall and rear walls 12 and 14, opposing sides 16 and 18, and bottom 21.

The gusseted interconnecting means further comprise a gusset 26 connecting front wall 12 with side walls 16 and 18 and bottom 21 and a gusset 28 connecting rear wall 14 with sidewalls 16 and 18 and bottom 21. Thus, the gussets 26, 28 resultingly extend into the interior 30 of the bag, as can be readily seen by viewing FIGS. 2 and 4, for example. When the interior 30 of the bag is empty, or only partially filled, the walls 12 and 14 will lie flat against the opposing sides 16 and 18, giving the appearance of a conventional bag. When the bag is filled substantially to its capacity, the sidewalls 12 and 14 will be resultingly expanded by virtue of the pressure brought to bear thereupon by the bulk of the articles contained therein, this expansion being allowed by virtue of the gussets moving outwardly in the direction of the arrows shown in FIG. 4. Thus, the bag is resultingly adapted, according to the invention, to be laterally expandable, and as in the instant case, expandable in its transverse dimension. However, it is to be understood that the inventive concept would be applicable to either a square or rectangular-shaped bag. The connection between each gusset and its respective wall, side and bottom portion is preferably achieved by sewing, as at 50, along the adjoining peripheral edges. However, at each of the upper corners 52, 54 and 56, 58 of front and rear walls 12 and 14, respectively, the sewing is supplemented by a rivet 60 securing the front wall 12, gusset 26 and opposing sides 16, 18, and rear walls 14, gusset 28 and opposing sides 16, 18. The result of this rivetal securement is to render the sidewalls nonexpandable at those said upper corners. In other words, the sidewalls are expandable in a decreasing fashion from the bottom 21 upwardly toward the top of the bag, the greatest expansion being at the bottom of the bag, and so forth.

According to another embodiment of the invention, the gussets 26, 28 which communicate into the interior 30 of the bag, as earlier described, instead of only partially extending into the interior of the bag, may be inwardly and upwardly extended from the stitching border 50 to a position just below the upper edges of the front and rear walls 12 and 14, thereby resultingly forming a pocket or compartment 62, 64 along the inside front wall 12A and rear wall 14A, respectively. Thus, the bag 10, rather than having only a single interior compartment 30, now is multicompartimented. It is to be understood that even though pockets are now formed that the stitching (or other type of securement such as stapling or gluing) must be present at all times in order to maintain the gusseted interconnecting means, described hereinabove, which render the bag expandable.

In another form of the inventive bag, exterior access means into one or both pockets 62, 64 can be provided. The access means can comprise a horizontal slot 68 cut into the exterior face 66 of front wall 12 (or rear wall 14), and preferably the slot is rendered openable and closeable by means of a zipper 70. Another pocket 74, inside pocket 62 or 64, can be sewn into the inside wall 12A or 14A. In the usual construction of the bag, carrying means, comprising a flexible handle 72, are attached to the front and rear walls of the bag. This, of course, would be a desirable construction when the bag would be used for carrying heavier articles; however, in a smaller version of the bag the carrying means would not be essential since the bag could be very easily tucked under the arm of the user.

Thus, in accord with the objectives of the invention, there is provided a novel tote bag which, by virtue of its new construction, has been adapted to be expandable thereby creating a highly utilizable luggage piece.

We claim:

1. An expandable tote bag comprising a pair of opposing planar front and rear walls and a pair of opposing planar sides, said bag including a planar bottom at one end thereof and

being openable at the other end thereof, said bottom being secured to said opposing sides with said bottom and opposing sides being provided with similar widths to define a rectangular-shaped bag, said bag being closeable and openable by means of cooperating planar flaps, said flaps being hingedly connected to upper ends of said front and rear walls with said flaps being supported by upper ends of said opposing sides in the closed position, wherein one flap folds inside another flap, each of said front and rear walls being associated with means for increasing the lateral dimension of said bag.

2. A bag according to claim 1, wherein said bag is adapted to be expandable by providing gusseted interconnecting means between said front and rear walls, said opposing sides and said bottom.

3. A bag according to claim 2, wherein means secure upper corners of said front and rear walls to said opposing sides to render said gusseted interconnecting means nonexpandable at said upper corners, said bag thus being expandable in a decreasing fashion from said bottom upwardly toward the openable other end thereof with greatest expansion being at said bottom of said bag.

4. A bag according to claim 3, wherein said gusseted interconnecting means further comprise a first gusset connecting said front wall with said opposing sides and said bottom and a second gusset connecting said rear wall with said opposing sides and said bottom.

5. A bag according to claim 4, wherein said gussets are secured to said front wall, rear wall opposing sides and bottom by means of stitching.

6. A bag according to claim 4, wherein each of said gussets is inwardly and upwardly extended into the interior of said bag forming a pair of separate compartments therein, each lying along the respective inside portions of said front and rear walls.

7. A bag according to claim 6, wherein exterior access means are provided communicating into at least one of said compartments.

8. A bag according to claim 6, wherein a pocket is provided in association with said exterior access means inside at least one of said compartments.

9. An expandable tote bag comprising a pair of opposing longitudinal front and rear walls and a pair of opposing transverse sides, said bag being bottomed at one end thereof and openable at the other end thereof, each of said front and rear walls being associated with means for increasing the transverse dimension of said bag, said increasing means including gussets disposed between and interconnecting said front and rear walls, said opposing sides and said bottom, and means securing upper corners of said front and rear walls to said opposing sides to render said gussets nonexpandable at said upper corners, said bag thus being expandable in a decreasing fashion from said bottom upwardly toward the openable other end thereof with greatest expansion being at said bottom of said bag.

10. An expandable tote bag comprising a pair of opposing front and rear walls and a pair of opposing sides, said bag being bottomed at one end thereof and openable at the other end thereof, each of said front and rear walls being associated with means for increasing the lateral dimension of said bag, said bag being adapted to be expandable by providing gusseted interconnecting means between said front and rear walls, said opposing sides and said bottom, said gusseted interconnecting means further comprise a first gusset connecting said front wall with said opposing sides and said bottom and a second gusset connecting said rear wall with said opposing sides and said bottom wherein each of said gussets is inwardly and upwardly extended into the interior of said bag forming a pair of separate compartments therein, each lying along the respective inside portions of said front and rear walls and wherein exterior access means are provided communicating into at least one of said compartments, a pocket being provided in association with said exterior access means inside at least one of said compartments, and means securing upper corners of said front wall to said opposing sides and securing upper corners of said rear wall to said opposing sides to render said first and second gussets, respectively, nonexpandable at said upper corners, said bag thus being expandable in a decreasing fashion from said bottom upwardly toward the openable other end thereof with greatest expansion being at said bottom of said bag.

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