United States Patent

Peschcke-Koedt

[15] **3,655,061**

[45] **Apr. 11, 1972**

[54] MERCHANDISING STRUCTURE

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[22] Filed: **June 25, 1970**

[21] Appl. No.: **49,605**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **211/57**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A47f 7/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 211/57, 59, 100, 123, 170, 211/171; 206/78, 80; 248/359, 360; 53/47, 381

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A merchandising structure having a plurality of packages carried on a spindle for selective removal by a customer. The spindle includes means at the distal end preventing withdrawal of the packages over the distal end. The packages include means preventing simple lateral withdrawal of the package from the spindle so as to avoid pilfering. Means are provided for manually rearranging the package for subsequent lateral withdrawal so that operation of the last named means inhibits pilfering by necessitating an additional readily observable operation.

12 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures

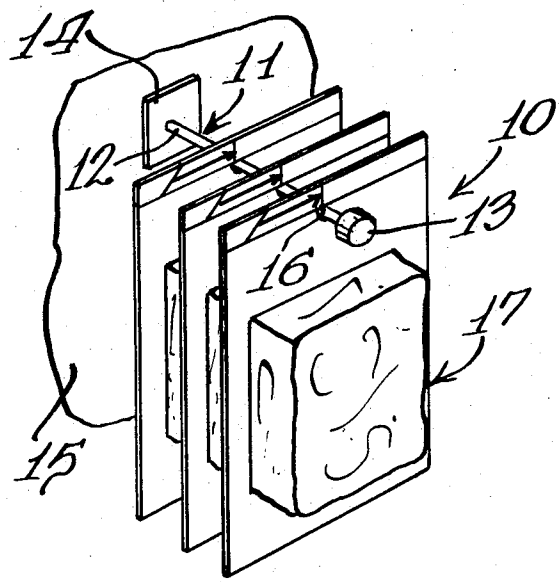


Fig. 1.

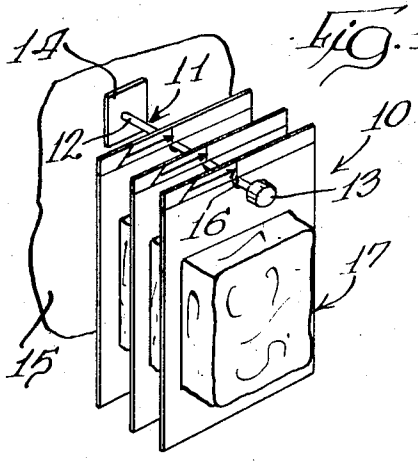


Fig. 2.

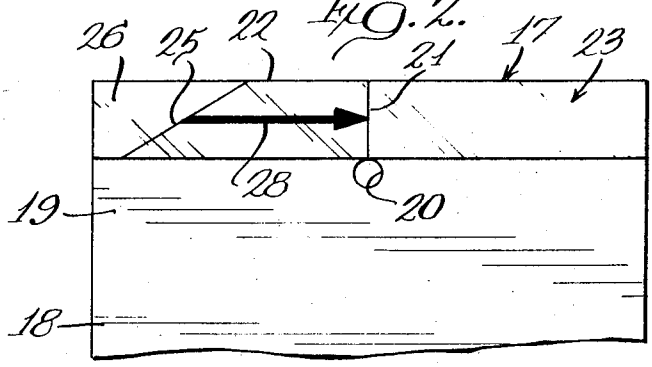


Fig. 3.

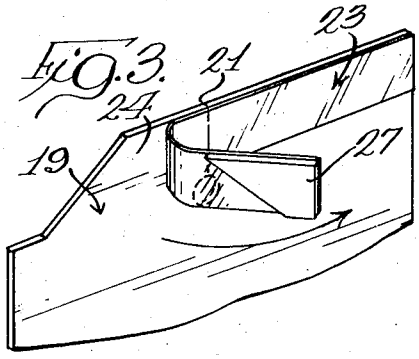


Fig. 4.

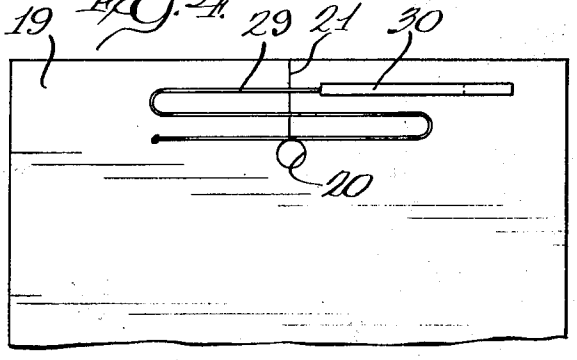


Fig. 5.

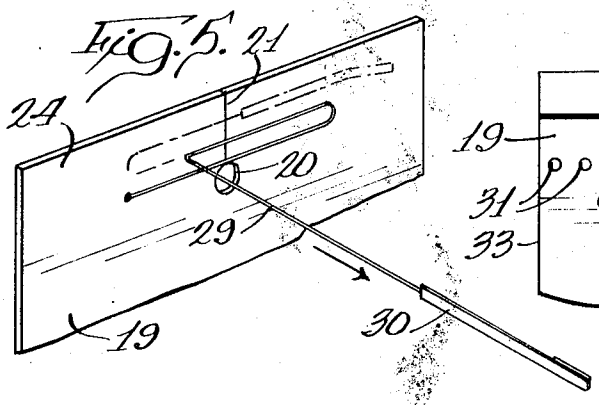


Fig. 6.

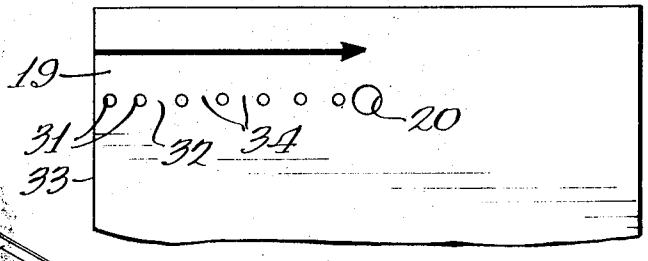
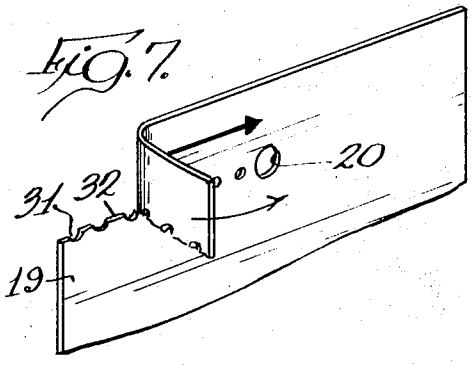


Fig. 7.



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MERCHANDISING STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to merchandising structures and in particular to merchandising structures comprising packages carried on a spindle for improved display and selective removal such as by a customer in a retail merchandising store.

2. Description of the Prior Art

In the conventional spindle type packaging structures, the packages are provided with an aperture permitting the packages to be spindled in a series whereby a customer may remove the forwardmost package by slipping it off the forward, distal end of the spindle. Such a simple removal of the package admits pilfering as a result of the ease with which the package may be removed and surreptitiously appropriated by a customer.

One solution to this problem has been to provide a locking device at the end of the spindle to preclude simple withdrawal of the package over the end. In one form, the locking device is selectively manipulatable permitting it to be temporarily rearranged to permit the withdrawal. Such a manipulatable locking means has the serious disadvantage of relative complexity, high cost, and possibility of jamming and substantial difficulty of withdrawing the package by those not skilled in the manipulation thereof.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprehends an improved merchandising structure which is adapted to avoid such pilfering by requiring a plurality of different manipulations of the package such that the removal of the package from the spindle may be more readily observable. More specifically, the invention comprehends the provision of a merchandising structure wherein the packages are retained on a spindle having a locking means at the distal end effectively precluding simple withdrawal of the package means over the distal end.

Removal of the packages is effected by lateral movement of the package relative to the spindle such that the spindle effectively moves along a separation line provided in a connecting portion of the package. The separation line, however, is maintained against movement of the spindle therealong by a manually operable means. Thus, in one form of the invention, the separation line comprises a slit extending from the aperture to one edge of the package connecting portion. The slit is maintained closed by an element extended across the slit and secured to the connecting portion. In one form, the element comprises a strip of material adhesively bonded to the connecting portion. In another form, the element comprises a cord or similar filamentary element extended across the strip and secured to the connecting portion. In another form, the maintaining means comprises spaces between a plurality of perforations arranged in a line extending from the aperture to an edge of the connecting portion.

Means for manipulating the strip and filamentary means may be provided at one end thereof comprising a fingertip grasping portion permitting the customer to remove the maintaining element by grasping said portion and pulling the element free of the package connecting portion thereby freeing the separation line for movement of the spindle therealong.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

Other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a merchandising structure embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary enlarged elevation of a package means thereof;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary perspective view of the package means of FIG. 2 with the slit maintaining means partially removed;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary elevation of a modified form of package means for use in the invention;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary perspective view illustrating the maintaining means in a partially remove arrangement;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary elevation of a further modified form of package means for use in the invention; and

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary perspective view thereof with the maintaining means in a partially removed condition.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the exemplary embodiment of the invention as disclosed in FIGS. 1–3 of the drawing, a merchandising structure generally designated **10** is shown to comprise a spindle **11** having a shank portion **12**, an enlarged distal end **13**, and a mounting element **14** for mounting the spindle with the shank extending in a horizontal position from a wall **15**. End portion **13** may comprise a removable cap element secured to the distal end **16** of shank portion **12** as by being threaded thereon. A plurality of package means generally designated **17** is hung from spindle shank **12** by movement over distal end **16** with cap **13** removed therefrom. Upon disposition of the package means on the shank portion, cap **13** may be resecured to the distal end **16** to retain the package elements against withdrawal over the distal end.

As shown in FIG. **2**, package means **17** includes a product-carrying portion **18** and a connecting portion **19** at the upper end of the product-carrying portion. Connecting portion **19** is provided with an aperture **20** adapted to freely receive the spindle shank portion **12**. Connecting portion **19** includes a means defining a separation line **21**, illustratively comprising a slit, extending from the aperture to an upper edge **22** of the package means. Slit **21** is maintained closed against movement of the spindle shank **12** outwardly therethrough by a maintaining means generally designated **23**. As best seen in FIGS. **2** and **3**, the maintaining means may comprise a strip extending across the separation line **21** and adhesively bonded to the front face **24** of connecting portion **19**. The strip illustratively may comprise a strip of plastic tape having an adhesive coating for self-adherance to the connecting portion **19**. A score line **25** may be provided in connecting portion **19** at one corner **26** thereof for defining a fingertip grasping means **27** which, upon separation from the connecting portion **19**, provides means for facilitated removal of the strip **23** by pulling it from the connecting portion surface **24** progressively away from corner **26**.

Upon removal of the strip sufficiently to expose separation line **21**, spindle shank **12** may now be moved upwardly freely therealong, i.e. through the slit, to permit removal of the selective package from spindle means **11**. As corner **26** of connecting portion **19** remains adhesively secured to the end of the strip, the user's fingers do not contact the adhesive portion of the strip thereby providing a facilitated clean removal of the maintaining means.

The use of the scored corner structure is exemplary only, it being understood that other forms of fingertip grasping elements may be employed as will be obvious to those skilled in the art.

To provide facilitated removal of package means **17**, an indicium arrow **28** may be provided on the strip or connecting portion **19**, as desired, to guide the customer in removing the maintaining means strip.

The term "strip" as used herein comprehends any form of element extendable across the separation line **21** for removably maintaining the separation line or slit closed. Thus, another form of strip is illustrated in FIG. **4** to comprise an elongated cord, or similar filamentary element, **29** adhesively bonded to the connecting portion **19** to extend across separation line slit **21** in a back-and-forth manner. At one end of the cord, a fingertip grasping element **30** may be provided for facilitated manipulation of the cord in removing the same from the connecting portion to thereby release the separation line slit for movement of spindle shank portion **12**

therethrough. Such removal of the cord is illustrated in FIG. 5 as one wherein the cord is pulled forwardly from the front surface 24 of the connecting portion to effect the desired removal.

Another form of separation line is illustrated in FIG. 6 to comprise a series of perforations 31 arranged along a preselected line 32 extending from aperture 20 to a side edge 33 of the connecting portion. The lands 34 between the perforations define the maintaining means as they comprise portions of the structure effectively retaining the separation line defined by perforations 31 against removal of the spindle shank therealong. To effect such movement of the spindle shank along line 31, the customer must tear connecting portion 19 along line 32 by means of the weakened structure afforded by perforations 31, as shown in FIG. 7. Upon effecting a tear along the entire line 32, the separation line is freed for movement of the shank laterally from aperture 20 therealong.

Thus, in each of the different embodiments of the invention, relative movement of the spindle shank laterally from the aperture 20 is prevented until such time as the customer conducts a preliminary operation to free a maintained separation line extending from the aperture to an edge of the package means. This operation must be effected in a positive manner so that its execution is readily discernible. Such a discernible operation effectively limits facility of pilfering and the like while yet a customer wishing to obtain a packaged product 17 may easily execute the operation and withdrawal of the package from the spindle shank, as desired.

The placement of the package means 17 on the spindle shank is readily effected by a simple ready removal of cap 13 permitting the package means to be installed in the normal manner over the distal end 16 of the spindle shank. Simple replacement of cap 13 once again restores the merchandising structure to the pilfer-proof arrangement as discussed above and as shown in FIG. 1. Each of the embodiments functions in a generally similar manner with different forms of control means for maintaining the withdrawal slit closed against movement of the spindle shank until such time as the customer effects a positive operation of removal.

The foregoing disclosure of specific embodiments is illustrative of the broad inventive concepts comprehended by the invention.

I claim:

1. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and control means removably carried by said package means connecting portion for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong, said control means being manually separable from said connecting portion for releasing said separation line means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means.

2. The package means of claim 1 wherein said means releasably maintaining said separation line comprises a strip secured to the said connecting portion across said separation line.

3. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; a strip removably secured to said connecting portion across said separation line for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means; and means defining a fingertip grasping portion for effecting a manual removal of said strip to free said separation line for said subsequent relative movement.

4. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and a tape adhesively secured to said connecting portion across said separation line for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means.

5. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and a flexible filamentary element secured to said connecting portion across said separation line for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means.

6. The package means of claim 5 further including a fingertip grasping element secured to one end of said element for effecting a manual removal of said strip to free said separation line for said subsequent relative movement.

7. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means

with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and means releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means, said separation line comprising a plurality of perforations and said means releasably maintaining said separation line comprising lands extending between said perforations.

8. The package means of claim **7** wherein said separation line extends from one side edge of said package means, said relative movement comprising a horizontal movement.

9. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and a strip removably secured to said connecting portion across said separation line for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means, said connecting portion further defining a separable portion secured to a portion of said strip spaced from said separation line permitting said separable portion to be separated from the package means and be utilized as a finger-tip grasping portion for effecting manual removal of said strip to free said separation line for said subsequent relative movement.

10. For use in a merchandising structure having spindle means provided with a shank portion and an enlarged end portion, package means comprising: a product-carrying portion; a connecting portion having means defining an aperture, the spindle means shank portion being extended through said aperture for carrying the package means on the spindle means with the spindle means enlarged end portion preventing withdrawal of the package means from the spindle means by movement of said connecting portion axially over the spindle end portion; means defining a separation line in said connecting portion extending from one edge thereof to said aperture for permitting movement of said connecting portion laterally from the spindle shank portion as a result of relative movement of the spindle shank portion from said aperture along said separation line; and a strip removably secured to said connecting portion across said separation line for releasably maintaining said separation line against said relative movement of the spindle shank portion therealong requiring a manual release of said maintaining means to permit a subsequent said relative movement of the spindle shank portion for removing the package means from the spindle means, said connecting portion further defining a separable portion secured to a corner portion of said strip spaced from said separation line permitting said separable portion to be separated from the package means and be utilized as a fingertip grasping portion for effecting manual removal of said strip to free said separation line for said subsequent relative movement.

11. The package means of claim **1** wherein said enlarged end portion of the spindle means comprises a tip element removably secured to a distal end of said shank means.

12. The package means of claim **1** wherein said separation line extends vertically upwardly from said aperture.

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