

[54] DISPLAY DEVICE

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[56]

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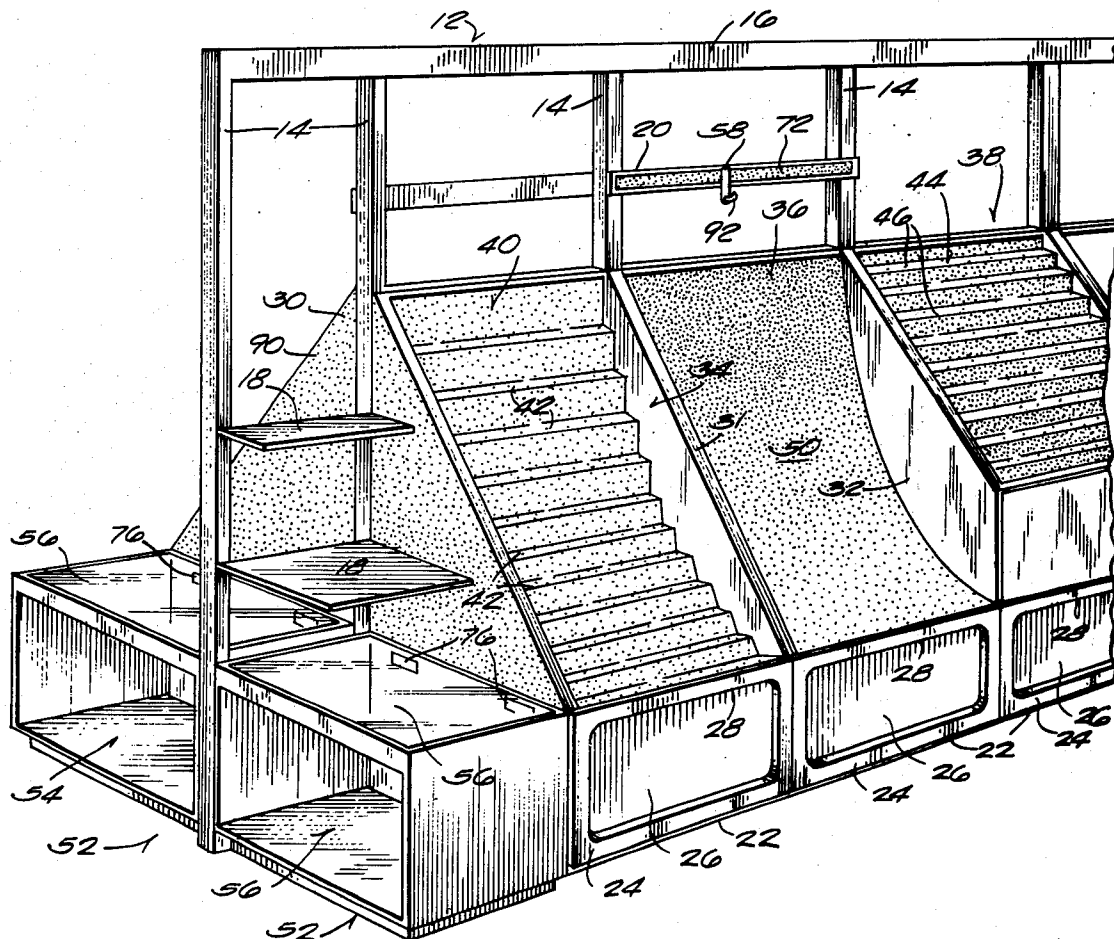
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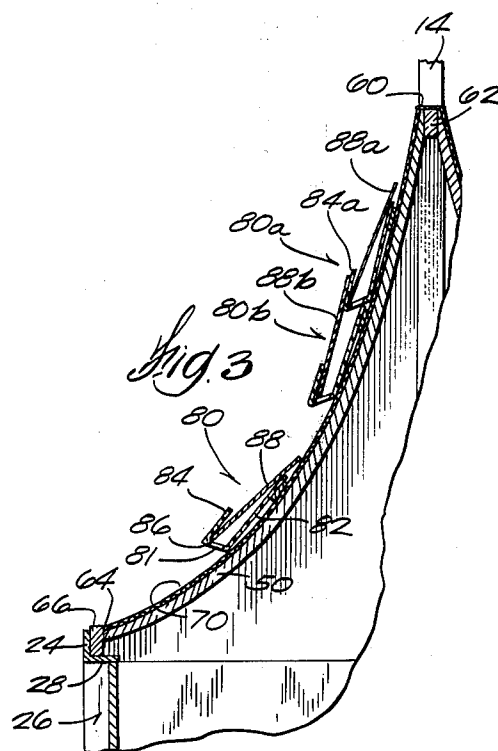
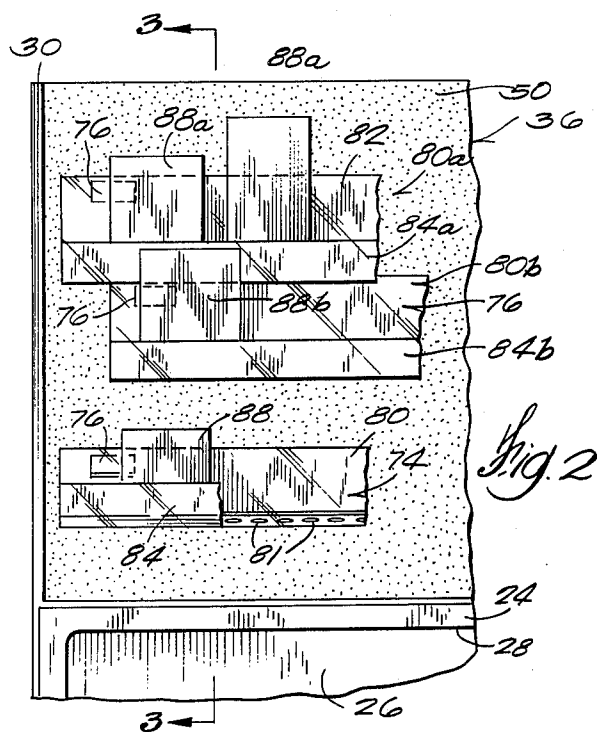
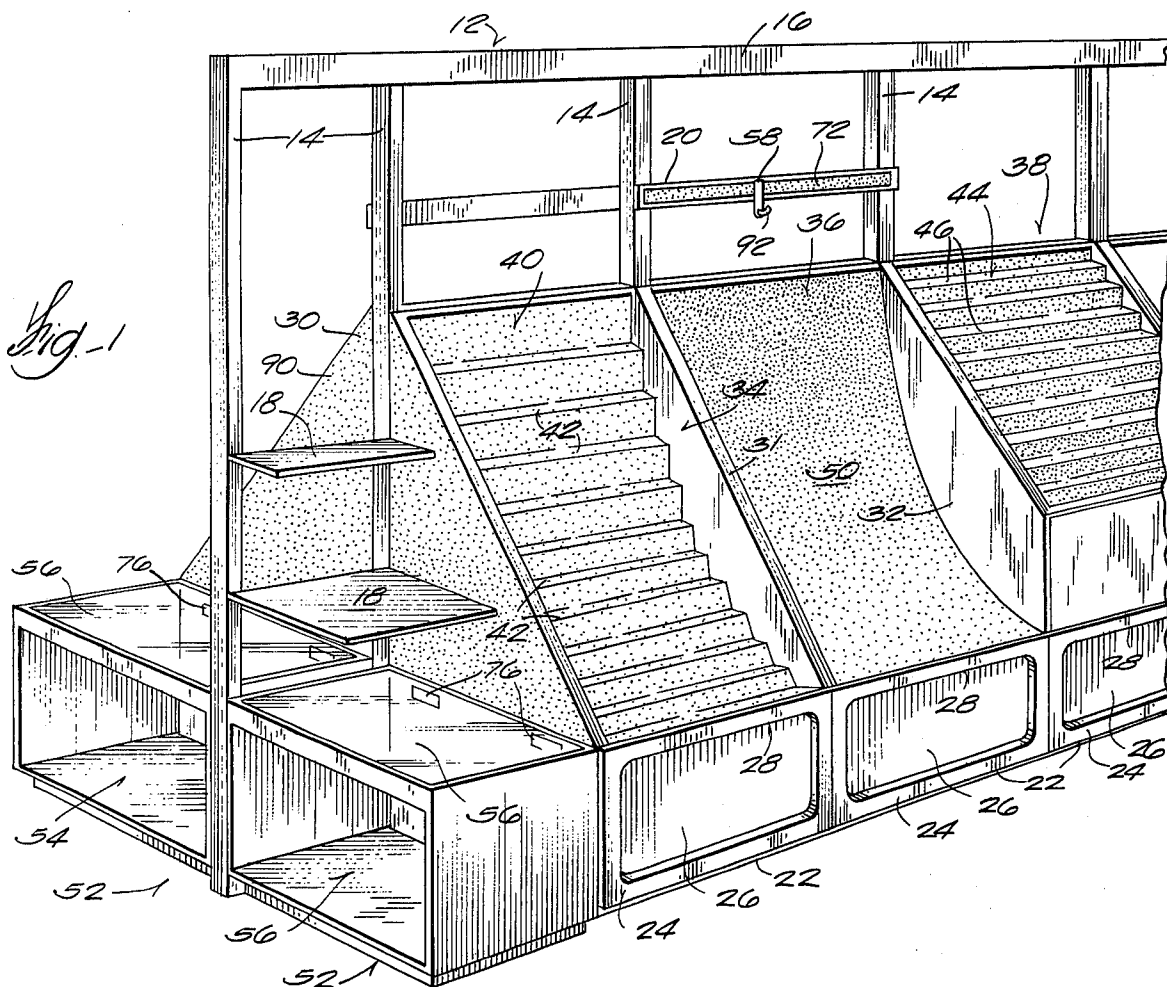
ABSTRACT

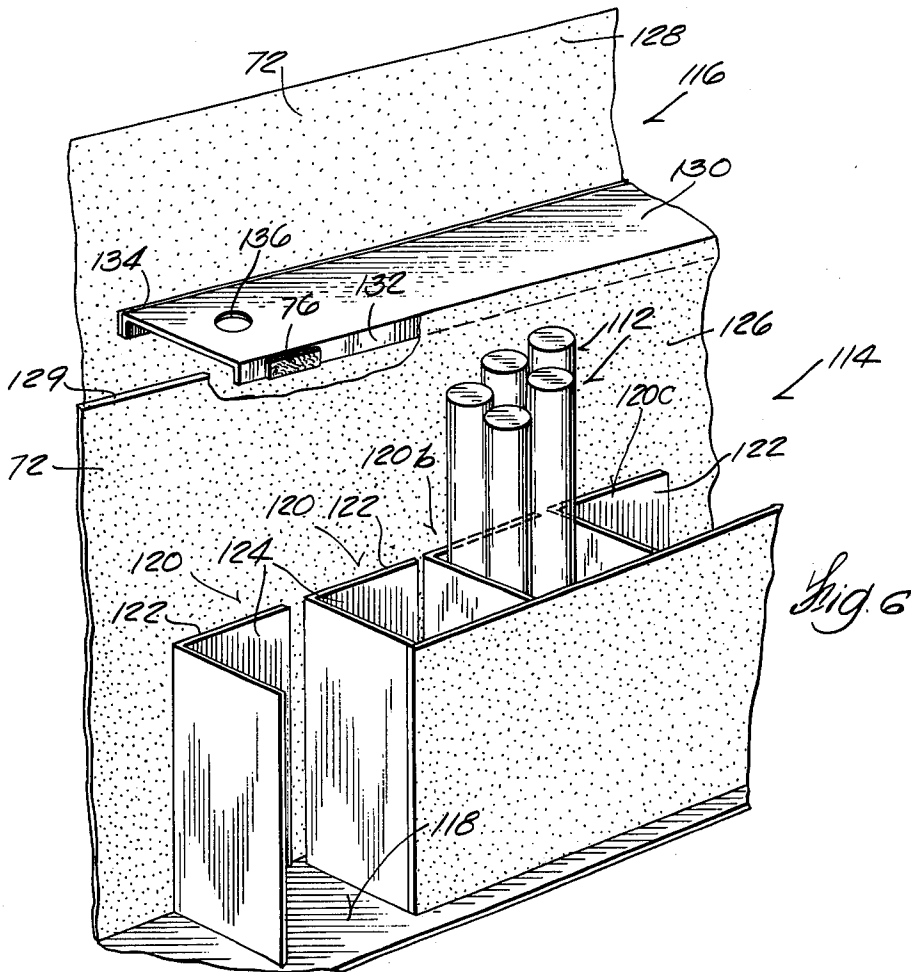
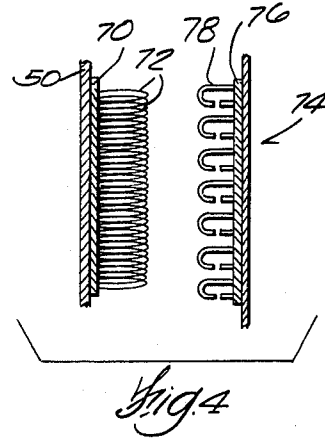
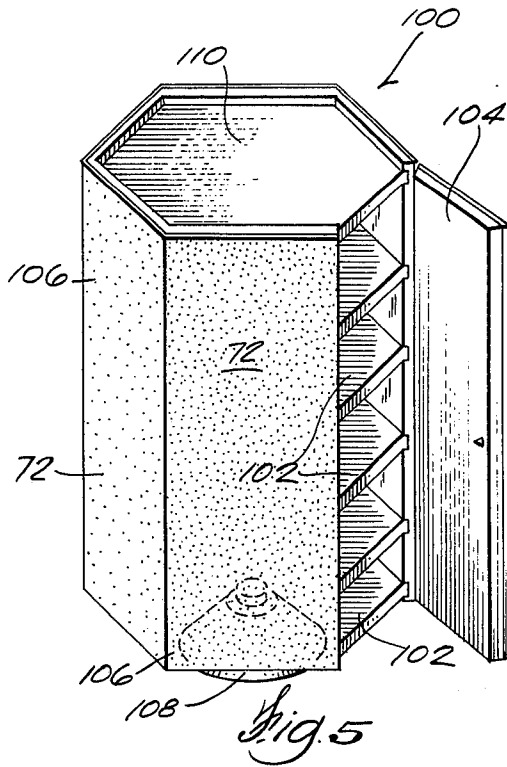
The point-of-purchase display includes a framework on which is mounted one or more display supporting panels covered by a pile fabric having loop elements. Display supports for holding the goods include a rear surface to which is affixed one or more strips of material having a plurality of resiliently deformable hook shaped elements which, when pressed against the pile fabric, become securely but removably entangled therewith.

The preferred display support is a clear plastic greeting card tray which is mounted on a slanted or curved panel to illustrate the greeting cards either full faced or overlapped. The fabric preferably includes a design of horizontally extending vertically spaced lines or indicia which facilitate the proper alignment with one of the edges of the tray.

18 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures







DISPLAY DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a point-of-purchase display for lightweight softwear such as greeting cards and the like. More specifically the invention relates to a display which has exceptional utility and flexibility to be readily rearranged to fit constantly changing needs.

For purposes of illustration, the preferred application of the invention is directed to a display primarily used for greeting cards and related merchandise. Obviously, it can be utilized in other similar types of point-of-purchase or store fixture applications.

With the rapid expansion of shopping centers which contain a large number of specialty shops, as well as a general overall expansion in merchandising, there is a significantly increasing burden on merchants to advertise their goods in new and eye-catching fashion. This requires a variety of display devices which represent a substantial investment. Existing greeting card display card furnishings are currently made of cardboard or vacuum-formed plastics. Until recently, space was conserved by displaying the cards on inclined stepped holders so that each row of cards overlapped adjacent rows. However, the more recent trend is to expose the full face of the cards, but this requires new furnishings which are costly. In addition, the turnover time of a particular display arrangement is relatively short today. Present merchandising formats are based on continually changing the display arrangement in order to achieve a sustained interest by the clientele. Present display apparatus cannot permit this except by replacement of the entire display or support being utilized. This is too expensive for most entrepreneurs and hence they are locked into the very limited flexibility of their present furnishings. Yet another drawback of present display devices relates to their overall aesthetic appearance. Essentially, they are designed primarily for function and because of limitations of prior art structures, they necessarily emit a generally sterile appearance.

In view of the foregoing, there is a long felt need in the display industry for a support furnishing system which is not only attractive from an economical standpoint but is also capable of significant flexibility in arranging the trays and the like which support the goods in all types of configurations. There is also a need for a display unit which is not only functionally flexible, but also is aesthetically attractive and eye-catching.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the invention, a functionally flexible point-of-purchase display has one or more inclined or upright panels mounted on a frame, the face of each panel being covered by a decorative and functional pile fabric having loop elements. Display supports are detachably connected to the panels by utilizing one or more strips of material on the back surface of the supports, the material having a plurality of resiliently deformable hook shaped elements which, when pressed against the pile fabric, become removably entangled with the loop elements.

Preferably, the fabric is decorative and includes patterned indicia which provide an alignment means for positioning each display support in a selected orientation. The preferred display support is a clear plastic tray for displaying greeting cards and the like. However, various other types of supports for point-of-

purchase display are envisioned, several of which are described and illustrated.

The present invention provides an extremely functionally flexible display not heretofore available in point-of-purchase merchandising displays. The frame and panels are relatively inexpensive. The display supports, which can be mass produced, may quickly be rearranged without manipulation of mechanical fasteners. The display is particularly adapted for point-of-purchase display of soft or lightweight goods prepackaged or otherwise. The variety of types of display supports utilized in accordance with the invention provides a complete display system including store fixtures to meet almost any need.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a fragmentary view in perspective illustrating a point-of-purchase display arrangement in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary front elevational view of a portion of the display illustrated in FIG. 1 utilizing support trays for displaying greeting cards in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view of the display illustrated in FIG. 2 taken along line III—III;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged side elevational view with parts in cross section, illustrating the fastening means positioned in oppositely disposed relation;

FIG. 5 illustrates an alternative type of display provided in accordance with the invention; and

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary perspective view illustrating yet another alternative type of display support utilized in accordance with the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings in detail, FIG. 1 illustrates a point-of-purchase display device 10 comprising a support framework 12 formed of various vertical upright frame members 14 spaced laterally apart and interconnected by one or more cross members 16. Preferably, the members 14 and 16 are extruded from aluminum or the like and include a longitudinally extending opening or trackway along their face (not shown) to permit various ancillary supports such as shelving 18 or cross members 20 to be mechanically fastened or latched to the frame members in such a fashion that they are adjustable vertically. The display is modular in the sense that various component members may be arranged and mounted to framework 12 in arbitrary variety and length depending on the floor space available.

Illustrated in FIG. 1 are various types of modular components which are particularly adaptable for utilization in a greeting card display. The base of display 10 includes a plurality of storage cabinets 22 which are latched at their concealed end to the various uprights 14. Cabinets 22 include a single sliding drawer having a decorative header 24 with a recessed central portion 26. The upper recess face 28 of each of the central openings provides a drawer pull for sliding the drawer inwardly or outwardly of the cabinet. The storage cabinets 26 provide lateral stability for the framework 12 so that the framework provides a stationary support for the remaining components.

Partition panels 30, 31, and 32 are positioned above the storage cabinets and anchored to the uprights 14, forming various types of compartments for different

types of display arrangements. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 1, compartment 34 illustrates a back panel 40 comprising a plurality of tiered steps 42 on which shelves are attached in accordance with the invention, whereby greeting cards and the like are displayed in an overlapping fashion. Compartment 38 is similar to compartment 34 with panel 44 having a shallower incline so that the steps 46 are deeper. Compartment 36 has a back panel 50 which is smooth to permit attachment of various shelving structures and the like in accordance with the invention in any given arbitrary pattern. Panel 50 is concave relative to the front, and has a radius of curvature the significance of which will be described hereinafter.

Other types of display supports illustrated in FIG. 1 are a pair of display cabinets 52 having an open front 54 for displaying various items and a glass top 56 to enhance the total visibility function. These cabinets are portable in the sense that they are detachable from panels 30, the cabinets being attached thereto in accordance with the invention. The various support brackets 20 mentioned earlier are interconnected between adjacent uprights 14 from which hooks 58 or the like can be attached for further display support.

Referring now in detail to FIGS. 2-4, compartment 36 is illustrated wherein the support panel 50 is curved. The panel itself is comprised of a fiberboard or cardboard structure and is attached at its upper margin 60 (FIG. 3) to a cross member 62 which is detachably connected between two adjacent vertical support posts 14. The lower margin 64 is attached to a second cross support member 66 which fits up against drawer header 24 as illustrated. Thus, the unit can be easily broken down and rearranged if desired. The exposed surface of panel 50 is covered by a pile fabric 70, the details of which are illustrated in FIG. 4. The pile fabric 70 has woven within it a number of closely positioned loop elements 72. The loop elements are comprised of a material which is both somewhat rigid and resilient so that it maintains the desired shape. The material is available commercially under the tradename "Velcro" more specific details of which may be had from U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,717,437 and 3,114,951. The fabric 70 is referred to hereinafter as "Velcro" looped material.

A plurality of tray-like shelves 80 are detachably anchored to panel 50 by fixing one or more strips of material 76 to the back side of the shelves. The strips of material 76 are illustrated in FIG. 4 and comprise, in addition to the fabric base, a plurality of closely associated resiliently deformable hook shaped elements 78. The strips are also available commercially under the tradename "Velcro" and are referred to hereinafter as "Velcro" hook material. By pressing the "Velcro" hook material into the "Velcro" loop material, a positive interconnection is obtained between the two materials, requiring a positive force to be applied to detach the two.

The trays 80 (FIGS. 2 and 3) are comprised of a back panel 82 and front panel 84 interconnected by a web or card support portion 86. The front panel 84 is preferably shorter than the back panel 82 to permit projection of a greeting card or the like 88 to be easily displayed and inserted or removed. Preferably, the entire tray 80 is formed of a transparent plastic or polymer so that the front panel 84 does not obstruct the overall display of the card. The strips of "Velcro" hook material 76 are secured to the back side of panel 82 near the upper margin and the tray or shelf is secured to panel

50 by simply pressing on the front side of panel 82 at the locus of strips 76. Generally speaking, only two strips are required for a tray-like shelf 80 having a length under 4 foot. Depending however on the display being supported, more may be desired. A plurality of apertures 81 (FIG. 2) may be formed in web 86 to prevent dust collection.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 3, the curvature of support panel 50 increases toward its lower margin to provide an effective panorama to the eye of the observer, presenting at all locations to the observer a full face exposure. Thus, panel 50 preferably curves toward the vertical at its upper end and toward the horizontal at its lower end. Preferably, the web or card support portion 86 of trays 80 are sloped downwardly as illustrated in FIG. 3 so that the cards more easily lie along the contour or slope of panel 50. The slope also prevents the cards from leaving forwards instead of against the support panel.

The utilization of a smooth panel such as panel 50, be it curved or sloped, allows the individual trays 80 to be positioned in an arbitrary configuration or pattern, e.g., for full face exposure of the greeting cards or overlapped exposure. This is illustrated in FIG. 3 wherein the top trays 80a and 80b are mounted on panel 50 in vertical and abutting relationship such that the greeting cards in tray 80b extend over and abut against front face 84a overlapping greeting card 88a. In the alternative, a significant spacing can be arranged, as illustrated by the lowermost tray 80 in FIG. 3.

Trays similar to tray 80 illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3 are equally applicable for mounting on the tiered arrangements of compartments 34 and 38. These generally provide overlap display of the greeting cards but can be utilized for display of other types of associated merchandise.

The display cabinets 52 illustrated in FIG. 1 although supported on the floor are maintained in their proper position by the utilization of "Velcro" hook strips 76 secured to the back panel of the cabinet by an adhesive or the like. The entire face 90 of the exposed portion of panel 30 is covered with the "Velcro" loop material 72 to permit attachment for location purposes of cabinets 52. Other types of display indicia may also be mounted to the face 90 of panel 30.

The front surfaces of cross bars 20 may also be covered with "Velcro" loop material 72 to permit the suspension of various types of displays, including a hook type support 58 illustrated in FIG. 1. It has been found that the hook portion 92 is best located at the bottom end of its support element, thereby maximizing the shear effect on the "Velcro" interconnection and minimizing any moment forces since separation is most easily achieved in pulling the "Velcro" hook directly out of the "Velcro" loop. If the hook is projected from the upper end of hook 58, a greater moment is created which could cause unintentional separation of the "Velcro" materials.

Referring to FIG. 5, an alternative display embodiment is illustrated which can be utilized independently from or in connection with the display of FIG. 1. A six sided display cabinet 100 is illustrated comprising a plurality of enclosed shelves 102, one of the sides 104 being hinged to form an access door, the remaining panels 106 being stationary. A support base 108 is secured to the bottom shelf for supporting cabinet 100 while at the same time permitting its rotation about

base 108, so that the various panels 106 can be rotated into exposed proximity of the observer. All of the panels 106 including door 104 are covered on their exterior surfaces by the "Velcro" loop material 72. This permits an attractive flexible display by utilizing hooks similar to hooks 58 or other types of display supports to the outer surfaces of cabinet 100, while the interior portion thereof provides an economical storage unit for quick retrieval of reserve stock. Items may also be displayed and supported on top 110. If the height of cabinet 100 is on the order of the height of the various compartments 34, 36 and 38, it could be positioned conveniently at one end thereof. In the alternative, if it is shorter, it could be positioned on a flat support surface built into one of the compartments, the details of which are not shown.

Referring to FIG. 6, an alternative compartment not shown in FIG. 1 is illustrated. This compartment is specifically designed for the display of wrapping paper packaged on long slender tubular elements as represented by reference numeral 112. Such items are typically illustrated and sold in connection with the greeting card format.

If a complete display of wrapping paper is desired, the compartment utilizes a plurality of subcompartments 114, 116, etc. (only two of which are shown). The first compartment 114 includes a support surface 118 on which tubes of wrapping paper, for example, are supported endwise. The subcompartment 114 is divided into a plurality of vertical pigeon hole compartments 120, 120a, 120b, etc., by a number of individual L-shaped dividers 122. The rear panel 124 of each divider includes one or more strips (not shown) of "Velcro" loop material 76, such that the partitions can be easily inserted or removed within the various compartments 114, 116, etc., for installing a display of wrapping paper tubes. Thus, the front panels 126 and 128 of each of the various compartments are covered by the "Velcro" loop material 72 in order to facilitate placement of the various partitions 122.

In many instances, the entire number of compartments similar to compartments 114 and 116 are not utilized for the display of wrapping paper. In these instances, it is desired to provide a shelf extending from a panel, such as panel 128, of one compartment 116, to the upper margin 129 of the compartment panel, such as panel 126, immediately in front thereof. This is provided by a shelf 130 having down turned lips 132 and 134 along both edges thereof. The front lip 132 includes one or more "Velcro" hook strips 76 (FIG. 6) designed to fit directly behind the upper margin 129 of panel 126, while the rear lip 134 includes one or more of the "Velcro" hook strips 76 (not shown) for anchoring the shelf to the rearwardly spaced panel 128. The overlap of the loop material 72 on panel 126 is sufficient to cooperate with the strips 76 on shelf 130. As an alternative, the front lip 132 of shelf 130 could fit over upper margin 129 for supporting the front edge of the shelf. One or more apertures 136 are located in shelf 130 to permit gripping of the shelf for insertion or removal.

In view of the foregoing description, it is evident that a variety of different types of display formats can be arranged utilizing the unique concepts of the hooked material, and thereby permitting quick and easy organization or knock-down of the various displays of the type described above. A completely new approach is pro-

vided to an industry traditionally burdened by high equipment with high investment requirements in equipment with little versatility.

Although several embodiments have been shown and described in detail, it will be obvious to those having ordinary skill in this art that the details of construction of these particular embodiments may be modified in a great many ways without departing from the unique concept presented. It is therefore intended that the invention be limited only by the scope of the appended claims rather than by particular details of construction shown, except as specifically stated in the claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A point-of-purchase display for relatively lightweight display goods comprising: a frame; at least one relatively large display supporting panel means connected to said frame, the exposed face of said panel means being substantially completely covered by a pile fabric having loop elements; at least one moveable display support including means specifically for holding the display goods, said display support having a rear surface; at least one strip of material having a plurality of resiliently deformable hook shaped elements incorporated therewith, said one strip being affixed to the rear surface of said display support whereby said display support can be removably and selectively affixed to the exposed face of said panel by pressing said hook shaped elements into removable entanglement with said loop elements.

2. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said display support includes a horizontally extending margin and said fabric includes a pattern having a plurality of vertically spaced horizontally extending indicia, said indicia forming a means to horizontally align the horizontally extending margin of said display support.

3. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said panel has a stepped cross section forming a plurality of continuous steps of alternating vertical and horizontal face surfaces.

4. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said panel is flat and supported by said frame at an incline.

5. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said panel has a continuous smooth concave face having a radius of curvature, the upper portion of said panel curving toward the vertical and the lower portion curving toward the horizontal.

6. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein a plurality of said panels are joined together on a subframe rotatably mounted on said frame, said plurality of panels being interconnected together along their side edges to form a multi-sided shaped enclosure.

7. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 6 wherein one of said plurality of panels is hingedly joined to another of said panels to provide access to the interior of said multi-sided enclosure.

8. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said display support is comprised of an elongated tray having a back panel, a web extending outwardly from the lower margin of said back panel and an upturned lip extending upwardly from the outer margin of said web, said back panel, web and lip forming an elongated trough for supporting and holding display goods.

9. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 8 wherein said web includes means defining a plurality of openings spaced along its length.

10. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 8 wherein said web is inclined downwardly from the lower margin of said back panel, and the upper portion of said back panel extends above said lip portion.

11. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 8 wherein said tray is comprised of a transparent lightweight material.

12. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein said display support is comprised of a support plate and a wire-like rod extending outwardly from said plate forming a hook of arbitrary length.

13. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 12 wherein said rod is anchored to the front lower portion of said plate and said strip material of hook shaped elements is affixed to the upper rear face portion of said plate.

14. A point-of-purchase display according to claim 1 wherein a plurality of said supporting panels are spaced laterally from each other in a tiered and parallel configuration whereby stepped display pockets are formed for displaying relatively narrow elongated goods in overlapped fashion, said display support comprising a shelf member positionable behind the upper margin of one of said spaced supporting panels and a plurality of strips of hook shaped material secured to its front and rear surface for anchoring said shelf horizontally intermediate two spaced supporting panels foreshortening one of said display pockets.

15. A point-of-purchase display for relatively lightweight display goods comprising: an upstanding display furnishing having a generally triangular cross section defining a back, end walls and at least one relatively large front support panel, said end walls and support panel having their exposed surfaces substantially com-

pletely covered by a pile fabric having loop elements, said fabric including a pattern having a plurality of vertically spaced horizontally extending indicia; at least one display support including means specifically for holding the display goods, said display support having a rear surface and a horizontally extending margin; and at least one strip of material having a plurality of resiliently deformable hook shaped elements incorporated therewith, said strip being affixed to the rear surface of said display support whereby said display support can be removably affixed to the face of said fabric by pressing said hook shaped elements into removable entanglement with said loop elements of said fabric, said display support being aligned horizontally with said horizontally extending indicia on said fabric.

16. The display according to claim 15 wherein said front panel is inclined outwardly and downwardly, said display support being comprised of an elongated tray having a back panel, a web extending outwardly from the lower margin of said back panel, said web being inclined relative to said back panel at essentially the same angle of incline of said supporting panel, and an upturned lip extending upwardly from the outer margin of said web generally parallel to said back panel of said tray, said back panel, web and lip forming an elongated trough for supporting and holding display goods.

17. The display according to claim 16 wherein said tray is comprised of a transparent lightweight material.

18. The display according to claim 15 wherein said display is comprised of a pair of upstanding display furnishings having a generally triangular cross section, the backs of said furnishings being positioned in abutment with each other back-to-back such that such display is characterized by a general A-shape having oppositely faced support panels whereby said display is effective to support display goods from all sides.

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