Feb. 17, 1970 L. A. RICHARDS ETAL 3,495,704

TUBULAR CARRIER AND BLANK FOR MAKING SAME

Filed Nov. 22, 1967 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

PRIOR ART

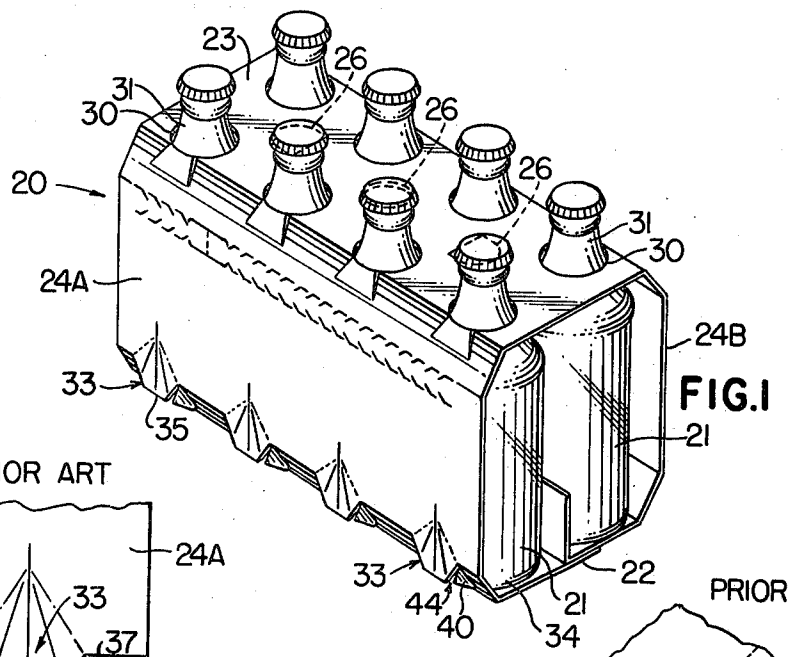


FIG.1

PRIOR ART

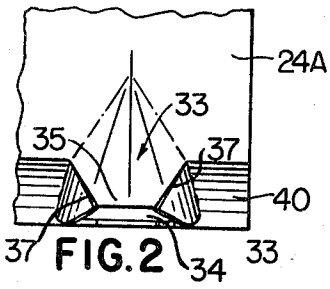


FIG.2

PRIOR ART

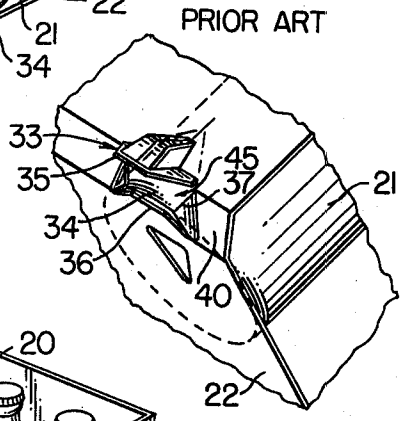


FIG.3

PRIOR ART

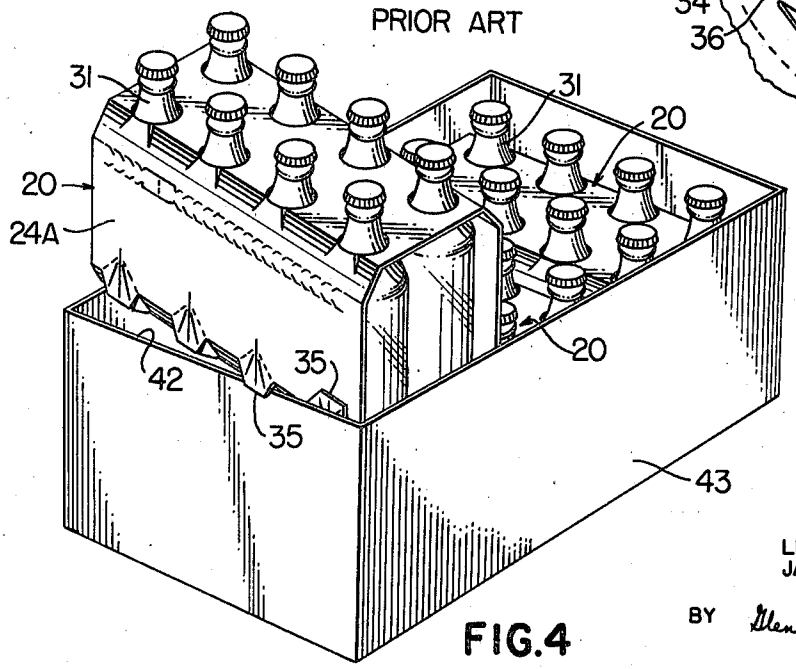


FIG.4

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TUBULAR CARRIER AND BLANK FOR MAKING SAME

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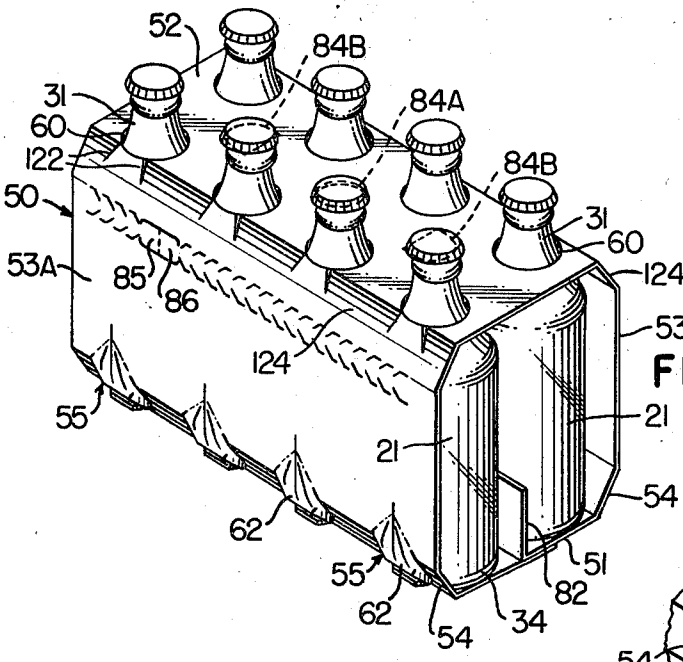


FIG. 5

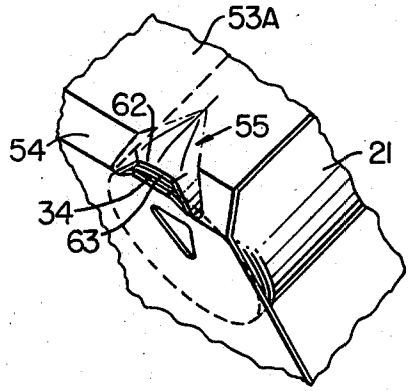


FIG. 6

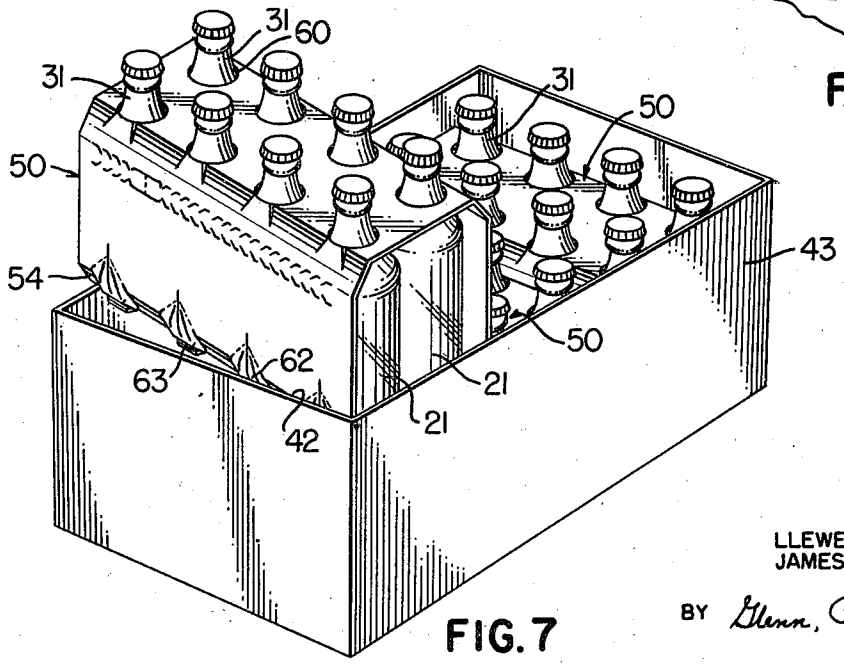


FIG. 7

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TUBULAR CARRIER AND BLANK FOR MAKING SAME

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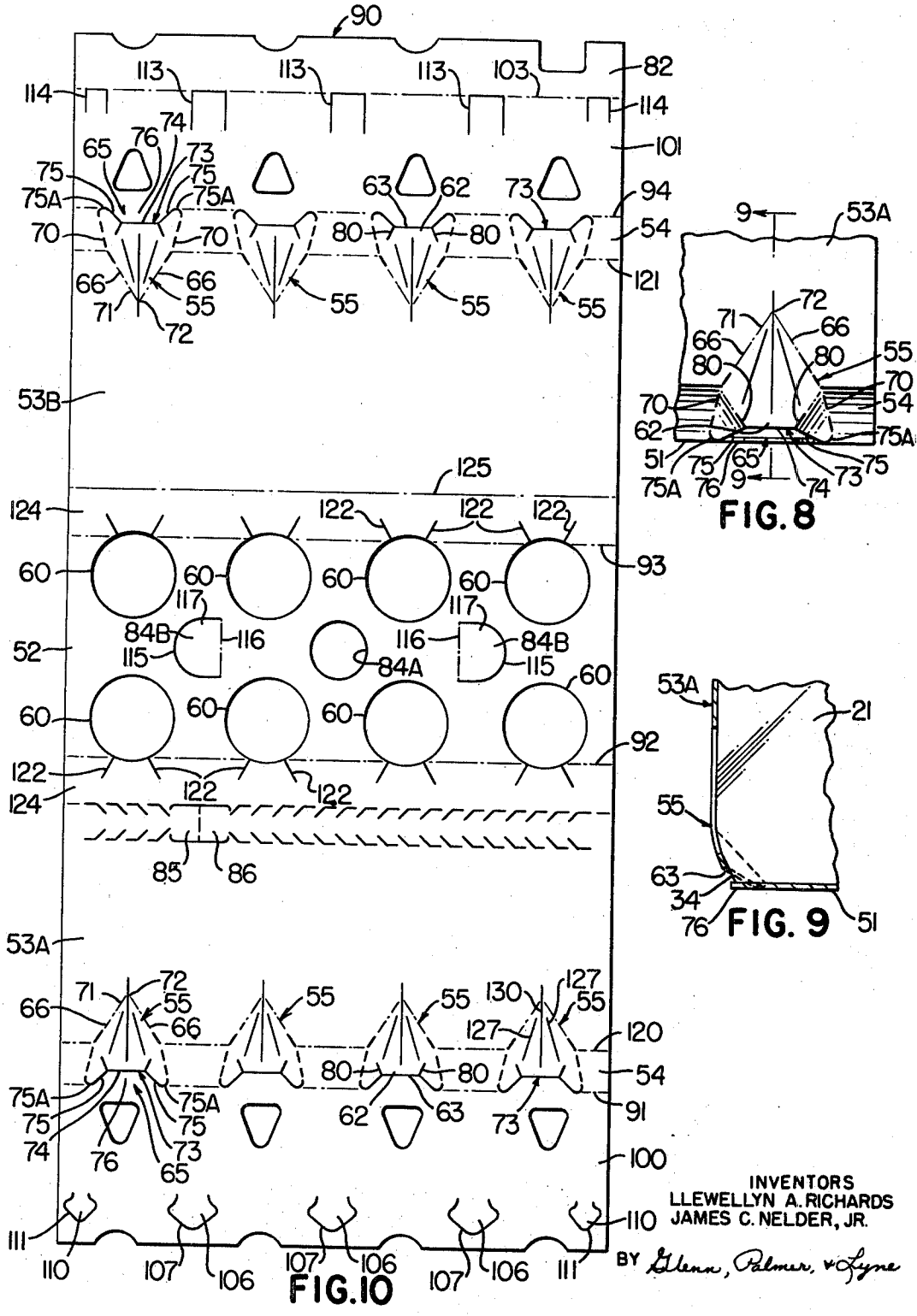


FIG. 10

FIG. 8

FIG. 9

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TUBULAR CARRIER AND BLANK FOR MAKING SAME

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Int. Cl. B65d *21/02, 11/00, 15/24*
U.S. Cl. 206—65 18 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This disclosure relates to an improved paperboard carrier having a tubular configuration and open ends which has a plurality of weakened areas defined in each of its side walls for receiving the heels of associated containers and holding such containers in position within the carrier. Each weakened area provided in each side wall defines a skirt which fits snugly around the heel of its associated container to assure such container is not damaged during handling and to assure that the skirt is not inadvertently caught against other carriers or other structures.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many tubular carriers are in present use which have weakened areas for receiving the heels of associated containers, such as glass bottles, for example, to hold such bottles in position. However, each weakened area in each present carrier has a comparatively long skirt formed therein which creates numerous problems during the handling of present carriers and their associated bottles. In particular, the long skirts provided in present carriers provide less protection for the heel of an adjoining bottle, extend out further from the side wall of an associated carrier, and tend to hang up upon being lowered into an associated shipping carton upon shipping each carrier from a bottling plant and subsequently continue to create problems by hanging up against adjoining carriers as well as other adjoining structures.

SUMMARY

This invention provides an improved carrier for bottle-like containers and an improved blank for making same wherein such carrier has a plurality of weakened areas provided in its side walls and each weakened area includes a comparatively short skirt which hugs tightly against the heel of an adjoining container to provide optimum protection for such heel and adjoining container and assures that the terminal lower edge of the skirt will not hang up during the initial packaging of the carrier in a shipping carton or during subsequent handling of the carrier and its associated containers during merchandising of the product contained within such containers.

Other details, uses and advantages of this invention will become apparent as the following description of the embodiment thereof presented in the accompanying drawings proceeds.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings show a prior art carrier and a present preferred embodiment of this invention, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary prior art carrier which has a plurality of eight bottles positioned therewithin and wherein the heel of each bottle is held in position by an associated weakener area provided in an adjoining side wall of the carrier;

FIGURE 2 is a fragmentary view looking normally toward one of the weakened areas provided in the side wall of the carrier of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary perspective view particularly illustrating a comparatively long skirt comprising the weakened area of the prior art carrier to highlight the ease with which such elongated skirt is susceptible to damage;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view illustrating two prior art carriers in position within a shipping carton and particularly illustrating one of the problems presented by such prior art carriers in attempting to place a third carrier in position within the shipping carton;

FIGURE 5 is a perspective view of the improved carrier of this invention particularly illustrating the tightly hugging skirt comprising each weakened area provided in the carrier for receiving the heel of an associated bottle;

FIGURE 6 is a fragmentary perspective view particularly illustrating the manner in which a given weakened area in the carrier of FIGURE 5 receives the heel of an associated bottle and the manner in which the skirt defined in such weakened area is held snugly against the heel of such bottle;

FIGURE 7 is a perspective view illustrating the ease with which the improved carrier of this invention may be inserted within a shipping carton and against adjoining carriers;

FIGURE 8 is a fragmentary view looking normally toward the weakened area provided adjacent one end of a side wall of the carrier of FIGURE 5;

FIGURE 9 is a sectional view on the line 9—9 of FIGURE 8; and

FIGURE 10 is a plan view of the blank used to make the improved carrier of this invention.

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENT

In order to facilitate the understanding of this invention reference is now made to FIGURES 1–4 of the drawings which depict a prior art carrier **20** and problems associated therewith. In particular, it will be seen that the carrier **20** is in the form of a tubular carrier for carrying a plurality of eight containers or bottles each designated generally by the same reference numeral **21**. The carrier **20** has a bottom wall **22**, a top wall **23**, and a pair of oppositely arranged side walls **24A** and **24B**. The bottles **21** are arranged within carrier **20** in two parallel rows having four bottles in each row and a plurality of three finger receiving openings each designated by the same reference numeral **26** are provided in top wall **23** and each finger receiving opening **26** is arranged to enable insertion of the fingers of one hand therewithin for easy carrying of the carrier.

The carrier **20** has a plurality of substantially circular openings **30** provided in its top wall and each opening **30** is adapted to receive the neck **31** of an associated bottle **21** therethrough. The carrier **20** also has a plurality of weakened areas provided in the lower portion of each of its side walls **24A** and **24B** and the weakened areas in each side wall **24A** and **24B** are substantially identical and are each designated by the reference numeral **33**. Each weakened area **33** is adapted to receive the heel **34** of an associated bottle **21** therewithin to prevent the lower end portion of the bottle **21** from moving with respect to the carrier **20**. Each weakened area **33** provided in carrier **20** has a comparatively long skirt designated by the numeral **35** which is defined at its lower edge by an inverted substantially U-shaped cut **36** and a pair of comparatively elongated cuts each designated by the numeral **37** extending upwardly and in an opposite direction from the downwardly extending leg portions of the U-shaped cut **36**. The cuts **36** and **37** create a substantial length to the skirt **35** which extends outwardly of an inclined portion **40** provided in each side wall **24A** and **24B**, and each inclined portion **40** adjoins bottom

wall 22 and defines the lower end portion of its associated side wall.

The comparatively long skirt 35 of the prior art carrier 20 is susceptible to damage upon being caught against an ajoining carrier or, as illustrated in FIGURE 4 of the drawings, against an edge 42 of an associated shipping carton 43 upon placing a plurality of carriers 20, such as three carriers, in the shipping carton or mother carrier 43 to transport the carriers and associated bottles from a bottling plant, for example.

Each of the comparatively long skirts 35 normally stands away from its associated inclined surface 40 as shown at 44 in FIGURE 1 so that it is easily caught against adjoining structures; furthermore, upon being caught against a carrier or a carton in the manner described above, it is easily bent and deformed so that it extends even further away from its associated side wall 24A or 24B as shown at 45 in FIGURE 3. Thus, it will be appreciated that with the comparatively long skirt 35 provided in carrier 20 a considerable number of problems are created in handling carrier 20 during the packaging of such carrier within shipping carton 43 as well as during the stacking of a plurality of carriers 20 adjoining each other in a retail establishment.

Further, the prior art carrier 20 is of the type commonly used for packaging throwaway glass bottles 21 and the comparatively long skirt 35 exposes a comparatively large area of the heel 34 of the bottle 21 and provides less protection for such heel. The problem is aggravated because throwaway glass bottles are of a more fragile construction which results in considerable breakage of bottles and loss of the product contained therein, as well as creating safety problems due to the numerous sharp pieces of glass created by such breakage.

Thus, it is seen that the prior art carrier 20 is deficient in that it is easily snagged on adjoining structures and thereby produces numerous problems in shipping and handling and provides comparatively little protection for the heel of bottles carried therewithin.

Reference is now made to FIGURES 5–10 of the drawings wherein an exemplary embodiment of the improved carrier of this invention, designated generally by the numeral 50, is illustrated. The improved carrier 50 provides optimum protection for a plurality of containers or bottles carried therewithin and for ease of description such bottles will again each be designated generally by the reference numeral 21, the neck portion of each bottle 21 will be designated by the numeral 31, and the heel of each bottle 21 will be designated by the reference numeral 34.

The carrier 50 has a bottom wall 51, a top wall 52, and a pair of oppositely arranged side walls 53A and 53B which are substantially identical except for a pair of easy-open tear strips provided in one of such side walls; therefore, for ease of presentation corresponding component parts of the side walls 53A and 53B will be designated by the same reference numerals. Each of the side walls 53A and 53B has an inwardly inclined strip which is of substantially rectangular outline and designated by the reference numeral 54 and, as will be apparent from the drawings, each inclined rectangular strip 54 is arranged adjoining the bottom wall 51.

Each side wall 53A and 53B has a plurality of substantially identical weakened areas each designated generally by the reference numeral 55 provided therein and each weakened area 55 has a substantially triangular peripheral outline. The weakened areas 55 are arranged adjacent the lower end portion of their associated side walls and each weakened area 55 is adapted to receive the heel 34 of a bottle 21 thereagainst to hold the heel 34 firmly in position within the carrier 50. The top wall 52 of carrier 50 has a plurality of circular openings 60 provided therein and each opening 60 is adapted to receive the neck 31 of an associated bottle 21 therethrough so that a bottle 21 is supported at its upper end by extending its neck 31 through an associated opening 60 in the top wall 52.

Each substantially triangular weakened area 55 comprises an expansible skirt 62 which is slightly expanded outwardly upon receiving an associated heel 34 of a bottle 21 thereagainst. Each expansible skirt 62 has a lower edge 63 which is held snugly against its adjoining heel 34 and lies substantially coplanar with its associated rectangular strip 54 so as to provide maximum protection for such heel as well as assure that the lower edge 63 is maintained substantially intact during handling of the carrier 50 and its associated bottles 21.

In particular, it will be appreciated that with the edge 63 held snugly against an associated heel 34 and approximately coplanar with its inclined rectangular strip 54 it is a simple matter to stack one carrier 50 against and/or between adjoining carriers or insert carrier 50 in a shipping carton or mother shipper 43 as illustrated in FIGURE 7. Further, there is little likelihood that skirt 62 of carrier 50 will be caught against edge 42 of shipping carton 43, for example. The shipping carton 43 shown in FIGURE 7 with the improved carrier 50 has been identified with the same reference numeral 43 as the carton shown with the prior art carrier and the illustration of FIGURE 7 is similar to the illustration of FIGURE 4 to highlight that the carrier 50 of this invention is readily and easily inserted in position within shipping carton 43 without any tendency for its skirt 62 to hang up.

As seen particularly in FIGURES 8 and 10 of the drawings, each triangular area 55 is defined by a base indicated at 65 which adjoins bottom wall 51 so that a substantial part of its triangular outline, and in particular the lower base portion of its triangular outline, is provided in an associated rectangular strip 54. Each triangular area also has a pair of side edges extending upwardly from the base 65 in a substantially converging manner and each side edge is designated by the reference numeral 66. Each side edge 66 is comprised of a lower portion 70 defined by a plurality of spaced apart slits arranged approximately in a rectilinear path and an upper portion 71 aligned with lower portion 70 and defined by a score line which terminates at a point 72 defining the apex for the associated triangular weakened area 55.

Each weakened area 55 also has a roughly U-shaped cut designated generally by the numeral 73 which extends substantially across the full width of the triangular weakened area 55 and the U-shaped cut 73 has a central base portion 74 which is arranged substantially parallel to bottom wall 51 and in spaced apart relation therefrom and a pair of leg portions each designated by the same reference numeral 75 extending from the opposite end edges of the central base portion 74. The leg portions 75 diverge from each other and each leg portion 75 diverges from its associated end edge of the central base portion 74 and each terminates in an arcuate end 75A which, in effect, defines the intersection of one end of base 65 of the triangular weakened area 55 and its associated upwardly converging side edge 66.

Each U-shaped cut 73 defines a tab 76 which is arranged substantially coplanar with bottom wall 51 of carrier 50 upon placing an associated heel 34 of a bottle 21 within the particular triangular weakened area 55. Each triangular weakened area 55 also comprises a pair of symmetrically arranged slits each designated by the same reference numeral 80 and the slits 80 extend from opposite end edges of the central base portion 74 of U-shaped cut 73 toward an associated converging side edge 66 of the triangular outline weakened area 55. Each slit 80 has a small length as compared to the distance between an end of base portion 74 and an associated side edge 66.

The central portion 74 of the U-shaped cut 73 and the slits 80 cooperate to define the lower edge 63 of skirt 62 and the comparatively small length of slits 80 assure that the lower edge of the skirt 62 is held snugly against

its adjoining heel 34 so as to preclude the possibility that the skirt 62 could be caught against an adjacent carrier or against an edge of a shipping carton, or the like.

Each slit 80 is made in an associated inclined rectangular strip 54 so that it is arranged at an acute included angle with an adjoining leg portion 75 of U-shaped cut 73. Further, it will be seen that each slit 80 is made in its associated rectangular strip 54 so that its terminal end is positioned immediately adjacent the center of rectangular strip 54 thereby further assuring that the lower edge of skirt 62 is arranged inwardly of the vertical portion of its associated side wall. In particular, it will be seen that the lower edge 63 of each skirt 62 is arranged substantially coplanar with rectangular strip 54, as previously mentioned, and considerably within the vertical plane within which the main portion of its associated vertical side wall is arranged.

The carrier 50 is a wraparound tubular carrier which has open ends and has a separator 82 which extends upwardly from the bottom wall 51 to separate the lower end portion of the bottles 21 to prevent the bottles in one row from striking the bottles in an adjacent row. In addition, it will be seen that the carrier 50 has a plurality of three finger receiving openings in its top wall 52 comprised of a central circular opening 84A and a pair of semicircular openings 84B arranged on either side of central opening 84A. The openings 84A and 84B are adapted to receive the fingers of one hand therein to enable easy grasping and carrying of the carrier 50.

As will be appreciated particularly from FIGURES 5, 6, and 9 of the drawings, the bottle 21 is of right circular cylindrical configuration along the main portion thereof, its upper neck 31 is substantially frustoconical, and its heel 34 is of roughly frustoconical configuration and constructed so that the right circular cylindrical main portion of the bottle 21 flows smoothly to define the heel portion 34. Also, it will be seen that the inclined rectangular strip 54 is arranged so that it roughly follows the contour of the main portion of the frustoconical heel 34.

The carrier 50 is in the form of a wraparound carrier having a tubular configuration, as previously mentioned and having open ends. The carrier 50 may be fastened in position in an automatic assembly operation wherein a single piece rectangular blank comprising carrier 50 is fastened in position by lowering it toward bottles 21 so that the necks 31 of bottles 21 extend through openings 60 with the bottles properly arranged in two parallel rows on an assembly line. With the carrier 50 thus positioned around the necks 31 it is then wrapped around the bottles 21 and suitably fastened utilizing integral mechanical locking tabs comprising carrier 50 and such tabs are inserted through cooperating cuts provided in the carrier bottom wall after first extending the separator 82 between the two rows of bottles comprising the package construction around which carrier 50 is wrapped. The detailed description of the fastening tabs and associated cuts will be made later in this specification in connection with the description of the single piece blank used to make carrier 50.

Inasmuch as carrier 50 is, in effect, wrapped around and fastened in position around a plurality of bottles 21, easy-open means is provided for opening the carrier 50 and such easy-open means is provided in the form of a pair of elongated tear strips designated by the reference numerals 85 and 86 and provided in at least one of the side walls. The tear strips 85 and 86 are of known construction and in this example of the invention are defined in only side wall 53A and formed by a plurality of cooperating aligned slits provided in the side wall 53A.

Carrier 50 can be formed in any suitable manner and made from any suitable foldable material. It is preferably formed from the blank 90 illustrated in FIGURE 10 of the drawings. Blank 90 is made of paperboard, or the like, and may have a side such as the exposed surface thereof laminated with metallic foil, such as aluminum-containing metallic foil, or the like, suitably colored, embossed, imprinted, or remaining plain, as desired.

The description of blank 90 will proceed by describing primarily those structural portions which were not previously described in detail in connection with the description of the carrier 50. However, where a previous detailed description was made in connection with the carrier, such description will not be repeated in connection with the blank and corresponding component portions of blank 90 will be designated by the same reference numerals as in carrier 50.

Blank 90 is of rectangular peripheral outline and is suitably cut and scored and adapted to be assembled to define the resulting carrier 50 of this invention and comprises a plurality of parallel spaced apart score lines designated by the numerals 91, 92, 93, and 94 which define the top wall 52 between score lines 92 and 93, side wall 53A between score lines 91 and 92, and side wall 53B between score lines 93 and 94. The blank 90 also has an extension flap 100 extending outwardly of score line 91 and another extension flap 101 extending outwardly of score line 94. The extension flaps 100 and 101 are adapted to be folded into a common plane and suitably fastened together to define bottom wall 51 and the extension flap 101 also has a rectangular terminal end portion 82 which extends outwardly of another score line 103 and the terminal end portion 82 is adapted to be inserted in position as a separator between a pair of parallel rows of bottles 21 in the resulting carrier 50 as previously described in connection with the detailed description of the carrier 50.

As will be apparent from FIGURE 10 of the drawings extension flap 100 has a plurality of three centrally arranged and comparatively large locking tabs 106 defined therein and each locking tab 106 is defined by a substantially arrowhead-shaped cut 107. In addition a pair of smaller locking tabs 110 are provided adjacent the opposite ends of the extension flap 100 and the locking tabs 110 are defined by an arrowhead-shaped cut 111 which is similar to the arrowhead cut 107 and of smaller size.

A plurality of cooperating U-shaped cuts are provided in extension flap 101 and include three centrally arranged U-shaped cuts each designated by the same reference numeral 113 and a pair of smaller U-shaped cuts each designated by the numeral 114 and arranged adjacent the opposite ends of extension flap 101. The cuts 113 and 114 are adapted to receive an associated arrowhead-shaped locking tab 106 and 110 respectively upon wrapping the carton 50 made from blank 90 around its associated bottles 21 and then pushing the locking tabs in position to provide a positive fastening action which does not require separate fasteners such as staples, adhesives, or the like. The fastening action may be achieved in a known manner and utilizing automatic fastening means such as push rods which engage the locking tabs 106 and 110 and push them in locking position through their associated U-shaped cups after first folding separator 82 in position, then folding extension flap 101 against its row of bottles 21, and then placing extension flap 100 against and outwardly of extension flap 101 and pushing the locking tabs in locking position.

As previously described in connection with the description of carrier 50 three finger receiving openings are provided in the top wall 52 and defined by a central cutout or opening 84A and a pair of openings 84B on either side thereof. Each finger receiving opening 84B is defined by a C-shaped cut 115 which has a score line 116 extending between the terminal ends of the cut 115 so as to define a foldable flap 117 which is folded inwardly to define an associated opening 84B.

As previously mentioned a plurality of openings 60 are provided in top wall 52 and as well be apparent from FIGURE 10 a pair of slits each designated by the same

reference numeral **122** is provided in association with each opening **60** to assure that the resulting carrier **50** may be installed in position about its associated bottles **21** without tearing. Only a few representative slits **122** have been designated in FIGURE 10.

The blank **90** has a pair of tear strips **85** and **86** provided in its side wall **53A**. However, as previously indicated it will be appreciated that tear strips may be provided in side wall **53B** instead of side wall **53A** or in both side walls **53A** and **53B**.

The rectangular strip **54** provided in each side **53A** and **53B** was previously described in connection with carrier **50**. The strip **54** for side wall **53A** is defined by score line **91** and a score line **120**. Similarly the strip **54** for side wall **53B** is defined by score line **94** and a score line **121**.

Each side wall also has an inclined portion provided in the upper part thereof and each inclined portion is defined by a strip which is designated by the same reference numeral **124**. The strip **124** in side wall **53B** extends between score line **93** and a score line **125** while the strip in side wall **53A** is arranged between score line **92** and the aligned cuts defining the upper edges of the tear strips **85** and **86**.

As will be apparent from FIGURE 10 of the drawings the score lines **91** and **94** defining the lower edge of side walls **53A** and **53B** representively are discontinuous and comprised of a plurality of sections aligned in a substantially rectilinear path. Each score line **91** and **94** is interrupted by a plurality of U-shaped cuts **73** and each U-shaped cut **73** comprises an associated weakened area **55**. In addition, the score lines **120** and **124** are each defined by a plurality of aligned discontinuous sections arranged in a substantially rectilinear path and such sections are arranged on opposite sides of each weakened area **55**.

Each substantially triangular weakened area **55** further comprises a pair of upwardly converging cuts each designated by the same reference numeral **127** which extend upwardly from a location arranged inwardly of and spaced above the terminal ends of an associated slit **80**. The upwardly converging cuts **127** comprise an upper portion of the outwardly expansible skirt **62**. In addition, a longer cut **130** is provided between the cuts **127** in each triangular area **55** and the cut **130**, in effect, bisects the angle defined by the cuts **127** and has a portion which extends above the apex shown at **72** of its associated substantially triangular weakened area **55**.

Thus it is seen that the improved carrier **50** made from blank **90** provides optimum protection for containers such as glass bottles carried therewithin and may be readily transported and handled with minimum likelihood of snagging weakened areas provided therein for receiving the heels of its associated bottles to thereby avoid problems of the type encountered in handling presently known carriers.

What is claimed is:

1. In combination: a carrier and a plurality of containers arranged in a pair of parallel side-by-side rows and each container having a bottom heel, said carrier comprising, a bottom wall, a top wall and a pair of oppositely arranged side walls fastened between said bottom and top walls, each of said side walls having an inwardly inclined strip adjoining said bottom wall and a plurality of weakened areas adjacent the lower end portion of each side wall, each weakened area comprising an expansible skirt which is slightly expanded outwardly upon receiving an associated heel of a container thereagainst to hold said associated heel firmly in position within said carrier, and each expandible skirt having a lower edge which is held snugly against its adjoining heel and substantially coplanar with its associated inclined strip to provide maximum protection for said heel and assures said lower edge and skirt is maintained substantially intact during handling of said carrier and its containers.

2. A combination as set forth in claim **1** in which said carrier comprises a paperboard carrier and each of said weakened areas provided in each side wall thereof is approximately triangular in peripheral outline and has a base which is arranged adjoining said bottom wall so that a substantial part of each triangular weakened area is provided in an associated inclined strip.

3. A combination as set forth in claim **1** in which said carrier comprises a paperboard carrier and each of said weakened areas provided in each side wall thereof has a substantial portion thereof defined in an associated inclined strip and each weakened area comprises an inverted roughly U-shaped cut extending substantially across the full width of its associated area and having a central base portion arranged substantially parallel to said bottom wall and in spaced apart relation therefrom, said U-shaped cut having a pair of leg portions extending from the opposite ends of said central base portion so as to engage said bottom wall, and said roughly U-shaped cut defining a tab which is folded coplanar with said bottom wall upon placing an associated heel thereagainst and said central base portion of said cut defining said lower edge of said skirt.

4. A combination as set forth in claim **1** in which each of said containers has a main body of right circular cylindrical configuration which terminates in a heel of roughly frustoconical configuration and said inclined strip adjoins and approximately coincides with the contour of the main part of said frustoconical heel.

5. A combination as set forth in claim **4** in which said plurality of containers comprise a plurality of throw-away glass bottles and said carrier has the lower edge of each skirt defined therein snugly held in position against an associated bottle so there is less likelihood of damaging said bottle.

6. A combination as set forth in claim **1** in which said carrier comprises a paperboard carrier and each of said weakened areas provided in each side wall thereof comprises, an approximately triangular peripheral outline defined by a base and a pair of side edges extending upwardly from said base, said base being arranged adjoining said bottom wall so that a substantial part of each triangular weakened area is provided in an associated inclined strip, an inverted roughly U-shaped cut extending substantially across the full width of its associated area and having a central base portion arranged substantially parallel to said bottom wall and in spaced apart relation therefrom, said U-shaped cut having a pair of leg portions extending from the opposite ends of said central base portion so as to engage said bottom wall, said roughly U-shaped cut defining a tab which is folded coplanar with said bottom wall upon placing an associated heel theregainst, and a pair of symmetrically arranged slits in said inclined strip extending from the opposite ends of said central base portion, each slit extending from its associated end toward an associated one of said side edges of said triangular outline weakened area and having a small length compared to the distance between each end and its adjacent side edge, and said central base portion of said U-shaped cut and said slits defining said lower edge of said skirt and said small length of each slit assuring said lower edge of said skirt is held snugly against its adjoining heel.

7. A combination as set forth in claim **6** in which said carrier further comprises a wraparound tubular carrier having open ends, a separator extending upwardly from said bottom wall for separating the lower end portion of said pair of rows of containers, and mechanical locking tabs providing the sole means for holding said carrier together and fastened in position around said containers.

8. A combination as set forth in claim **6** in which said carrier further comprises a plurality of circular openings in said top wall arranged in a pair of parallel rows and

each adapted to receive the neck of an associated container therethrough, a separator extending upwardly from said bottom wall for separating the lower end portion of said rows of containers, and at least one finger-receiving opening in said top wall for grasping and carrying said carrier.

9. A combination as set forth in claim 6 in which each of said slits is arranged at an acute included angle with an adjoining leg portion of said U-shaped cut.

10. A combination as set forth in claim 9 in which each slit is formed so that its terminal end is positioned immediately adjacent the center of the inclined strip in which it is formed thereby further assuring that the lower edge of its associated skirt is arranged inwardly of the vertical portion of its associated side wall.

11. A combination as set forth in claim 9 in which each weakened area further comprises a pair of upwardly converging cuts each extending upwardly from a location arranged inwardly of and spaced above the terminal end of an associated slit, said upwardly converging cuts comprising the outwardly expansible portion of said skirt.

12. A combination as set forth in claim 11 in which each of said slits is arranged at an acute included angle with an adjoining leg portion of said U-shaped out and each slit is formed so that its terminal end is positioned immediately adjacent the center of the inclined strip in which it is formed thereby further assuring that the lower edge of its associated skirt is arranged inwardly of the vertical portion of its associated side wall.

13. A paperboard blank being cut and scored and adapted to be assembled to define a resulting carrier for a plurality of containers adapted to be arranged in a pair of parallel side-by-side rows in said resulting carrier and each container having a bottom heel, said blank comprising a top wall, a pair of side walls foldably fastened along opposite side edges of said top wall, a pair of extension flaps each extending outwardly of an associated side wall and adapted to be partially overlapped and fastened together to define a bottom wall for said resulting carrier, each of said side walls having a rectangular strip which adjoins and is inwardly inclined toward said bottom wall in said resulting carrier, a plurality of weakened areas in each side wall arranged adjacent the lower end portion thereof in said resulting carrier, each weakened area comprising an expansible skirt which is adapted to be slightly expanded outwardly in said resulting carrier to receive an associated heel of a container thereagainst to hold said associated heel firmly in position within said resulting carrier, and each expansible skirt having a lower edge which is held snugly against the adjoining heel of an associated container in said resulting carrier and substantially coplanar with its associated inclined rectangular strip to provide maximum protection for said heel and assure said lower edge of said skirt is maintained substantially intact during handling of said resulting carrier and the containers carried therewithin, each of said weakened areas provided in each side wall comprising, an approximately triangular peripheral outline defined by a base and a pair of side edges extending upwardly from said base, said base being arranged adjoining said bottom wall of said resulting carrier so that a substantial part of each triangular weakened area is provided in an asscoiated rectangular strip, an inverted roughly U-shaped cut extending substantially across the full width of its associated weakened area and having a central base portion arranged substantially parallel to said bottom wall of said resulting carrier and in spaced apart relation therefrom, said U-shaped cut having a pair of leg portions extending from the opposite ends of said central base portion so as to engage an associated extension flap comprising said bottom wall of said resulting carrier and said roughly U-shaped cut defining a tab which is folded coplanar with said bottom wall in said resulting carrier upon placing an associated heel thereagainst, and a pair of symmetrically arranged slits in said rectangular strip extending from the opposite ends of said central base portion, each slit extending from its associated end toward an associated one of said side edges of said triangular outline weakened area and having a small length compared to the distance between said end and its associated adjacent side edge, said central base portion of said U-shaped cut and said slits defining said lower edge of said skirt and said small length assuring said lower edge of said skirt is held snugly against its associated heel in said resulting carrier.

14. A blank as set forth in claim 13 and having a rectangular peripheral outline and being adapted to be assembled to define said resulting carrier having a tubular configuration and open ends, said blank having integral mechanical locking tabs provided in one of said extension flaps and cooperating tab receiving cuts in the other of said extension flaps, and said mechanical locking tabs providing the sole means for holding said resulting carrier fastened together.

15. A blank as set forth in claim 14 further comprising, a plurality of circular openings in said top wall arranged in parallel rows and each being adapted to receive the neck of an associated container therethrough in said resulting carrier, a separator flap extending outwardly of one of said extension flaps, said separator flap being adapted to extend upwardly from said bottom wall in said resulting carrier to separate the lower end portion of said rows of containers, and at least one finger-receiving opening in said top wall for grasping and carrying said resulting carrier and its containers.

16. A blank as set forth in claim 14 in which each of said slits is arranged at an acute angle with an adjoining leg portion of said U-shaped cut.

17. A blank as set forth in claim 16 in which each slit is formed so that its terminal end is positioned immediately adjacent the center of a rectangular strip in which it is formed thereby further assuring that the lower edge of its associated skirt is arranged inwardly of the vertical portion of its associated side wall in said resulting carrier.

18. A blank as set forth in claim 17 in which each weakened area further comprises a pair of upwardly converging cuts each extending upwardly from a location arranged inwardly of and spaced above the terminal end of an associated slit, said upwardly converging cuts comprising the outwardly expansible portion of said skirt in said resulting carrier.

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