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(54) **UNIQUE-SHAPED CONTAINER LID**

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(76) Inventors: **Cheryl Moran**, Chestnut Ridge, NY (US); **Lisa Meyers**, Merrick, NY (US)

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Correspondence Address:
**LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK
600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST
WESTFIELD, NJ 07090 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A unique shaped molded lid, lid assembly and container for sealingly enclosing a moist wipe container. The present unique shaped lid comprising a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon. The shaped molded lid, lid assembly and container configuration simulating an icon and optionally at least one cartoon character, one face, one animal or one toy. A hinged base and cover comprising a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon is provided.

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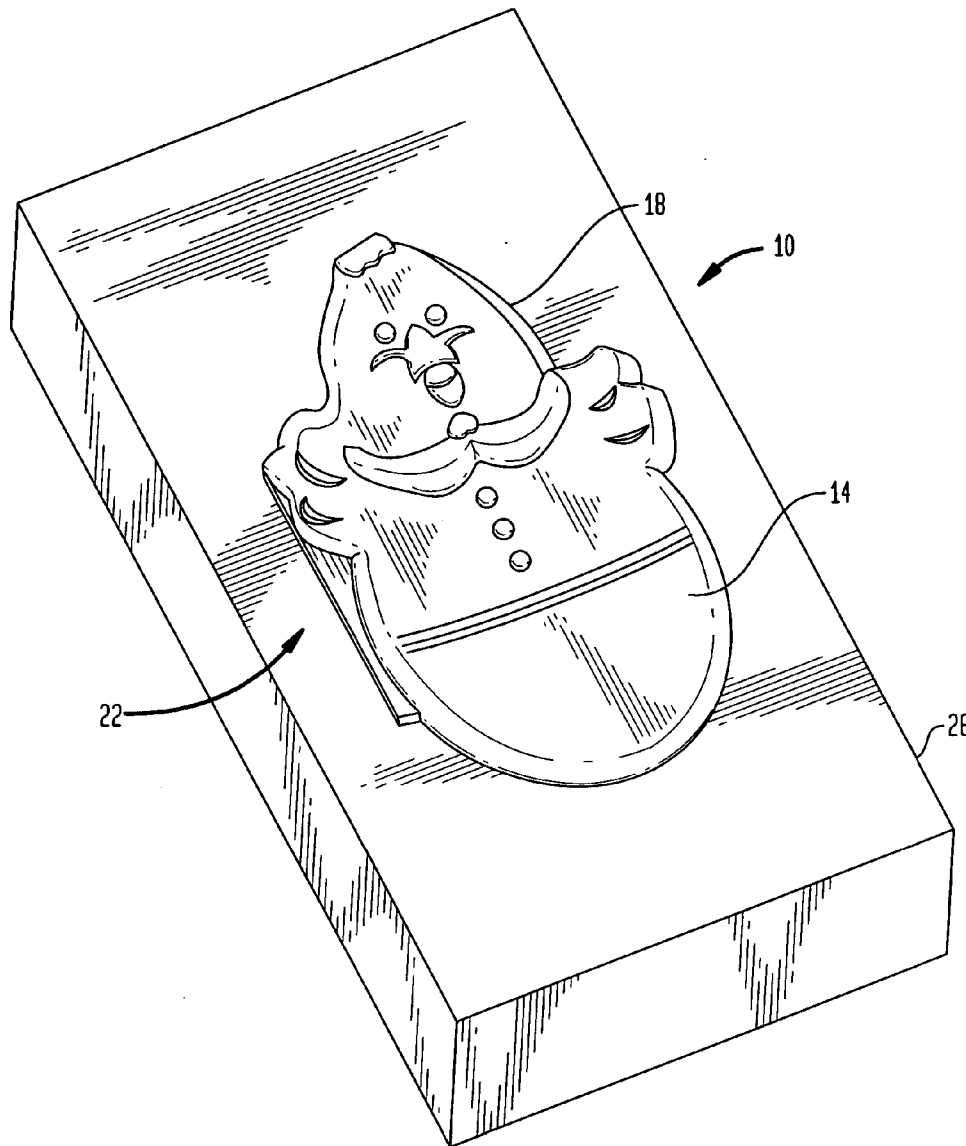


FIG. 1

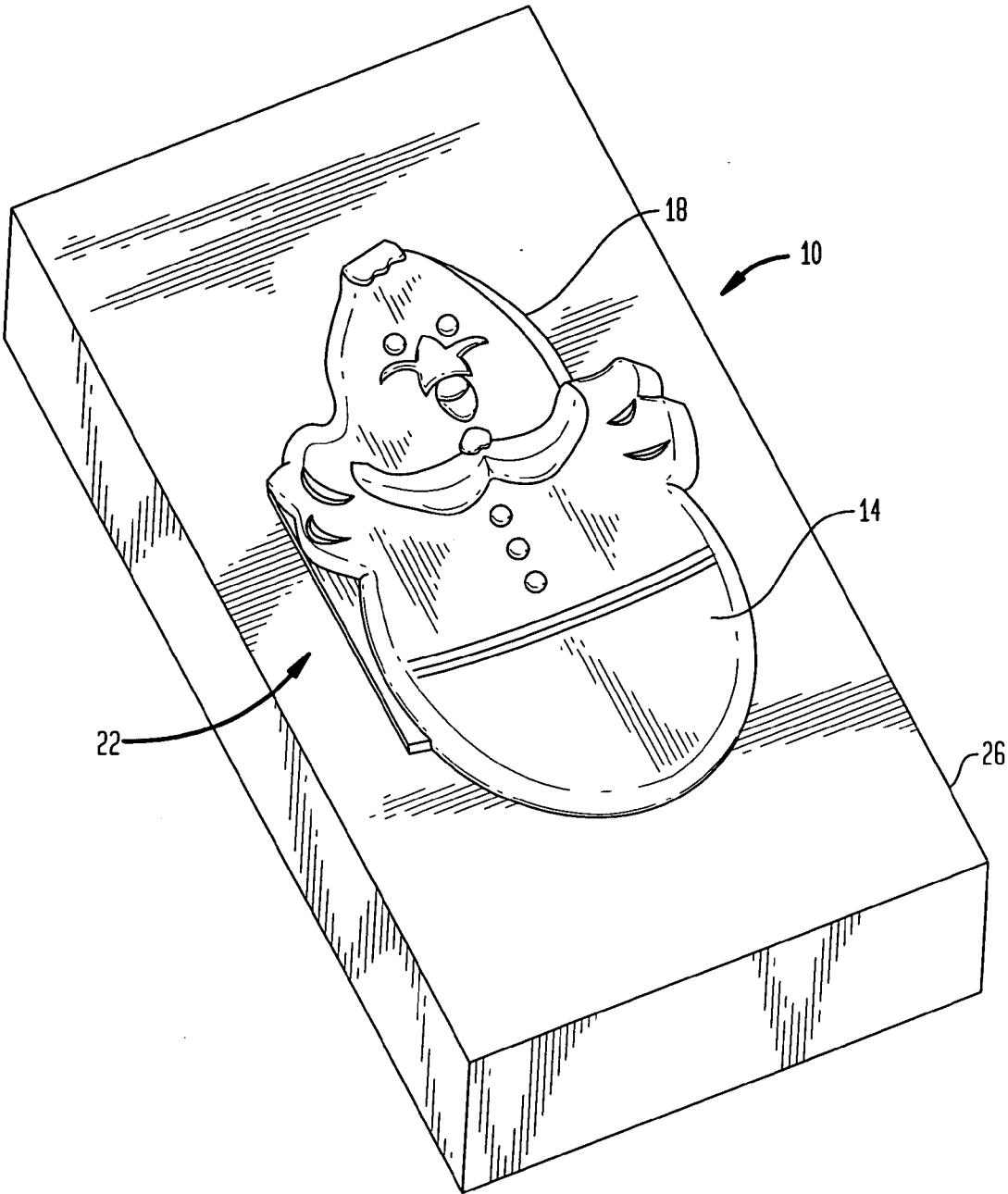


FIG. 2

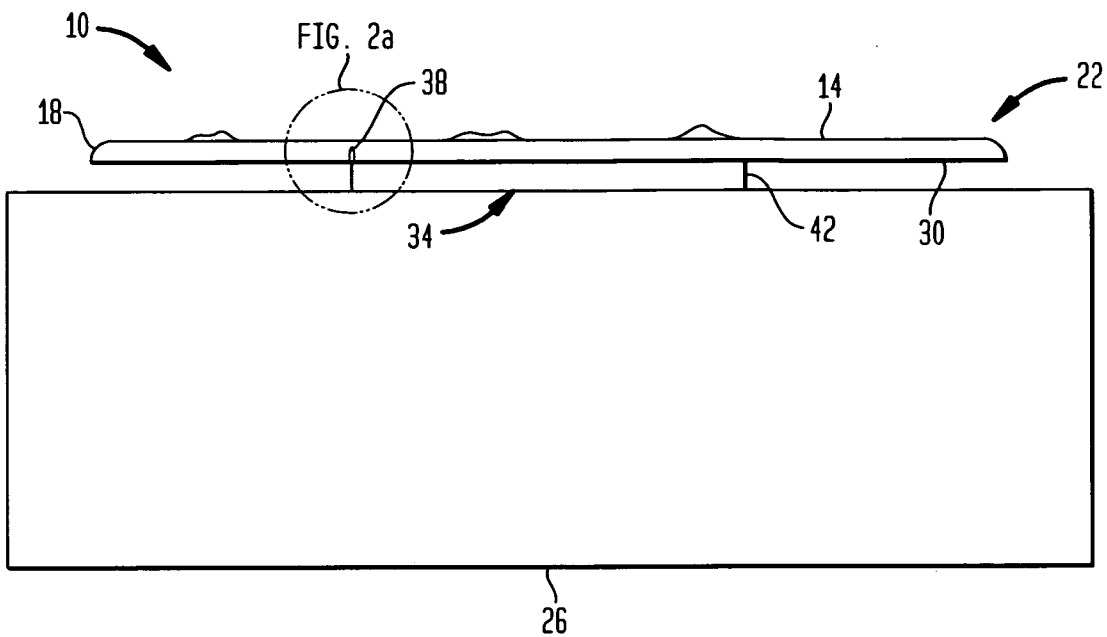
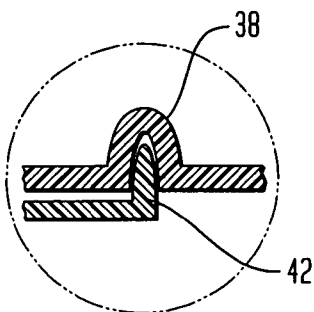


FIG. 2A



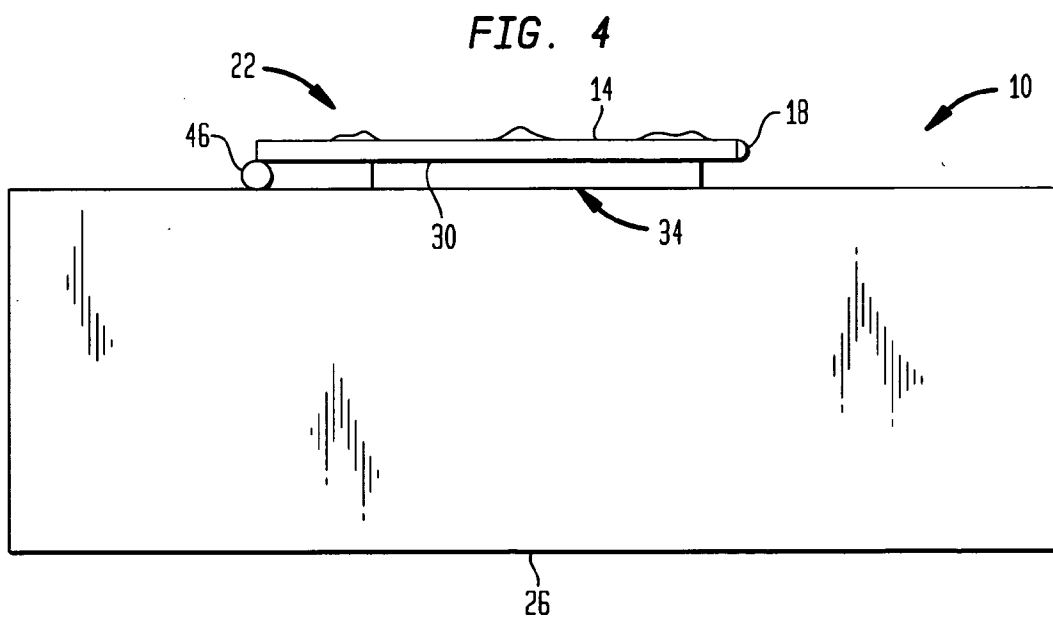
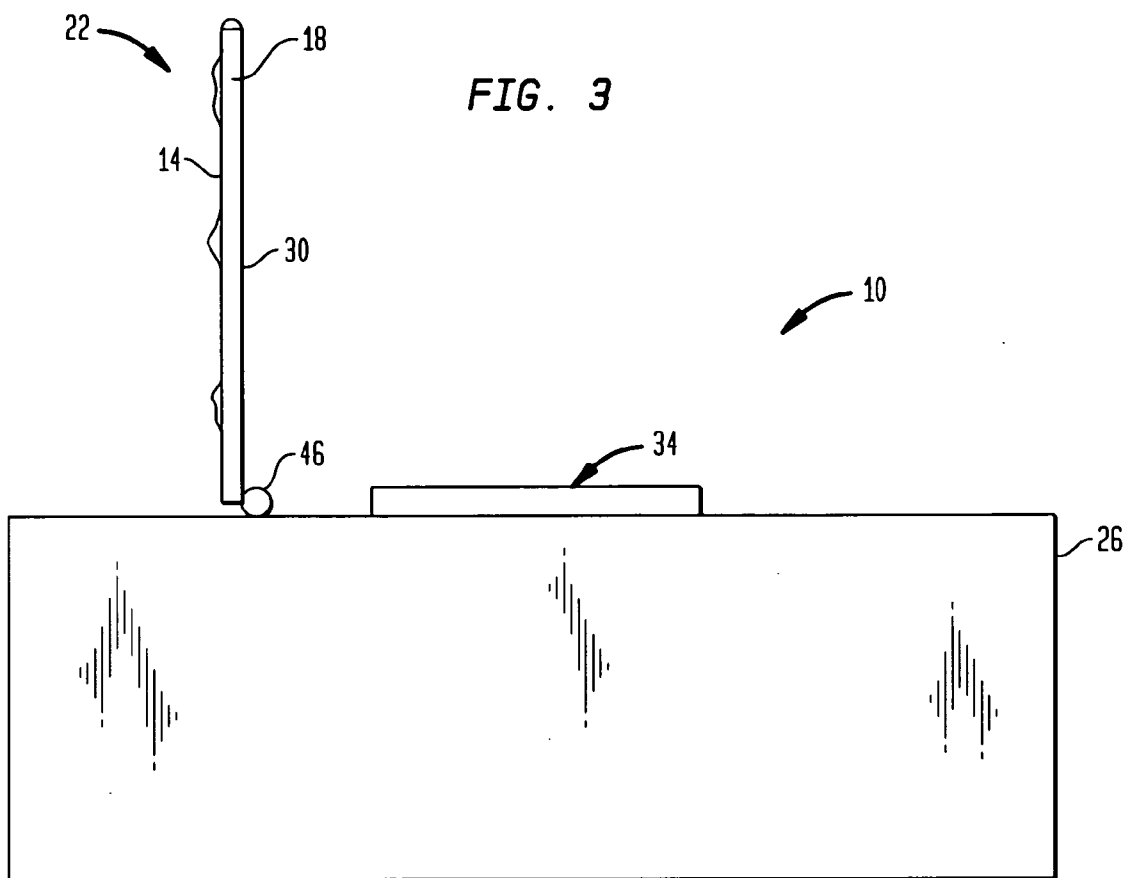


FIG. 5

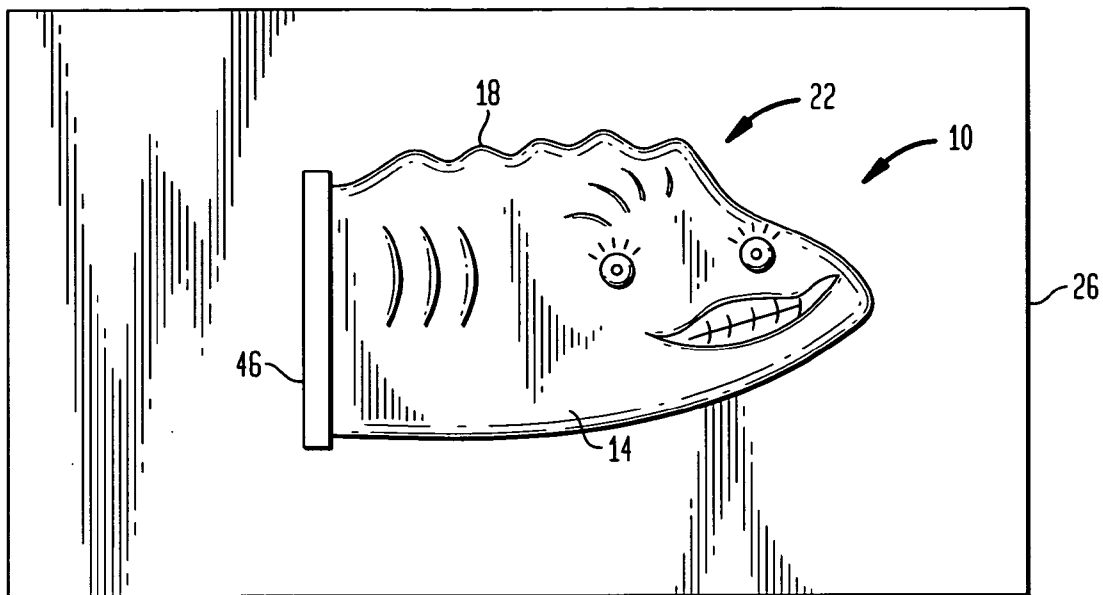


FIG. 6

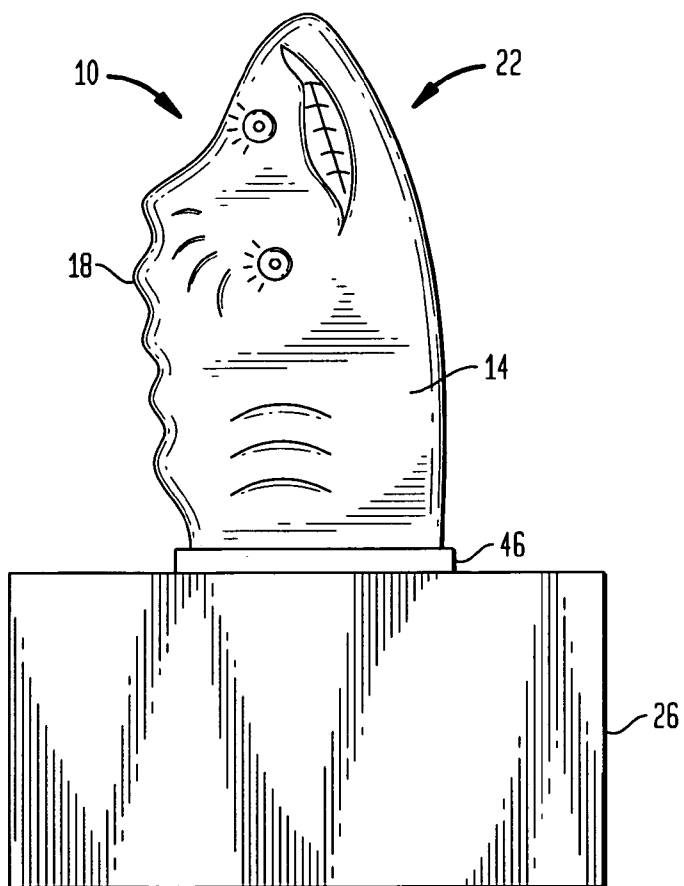


FIG. 7

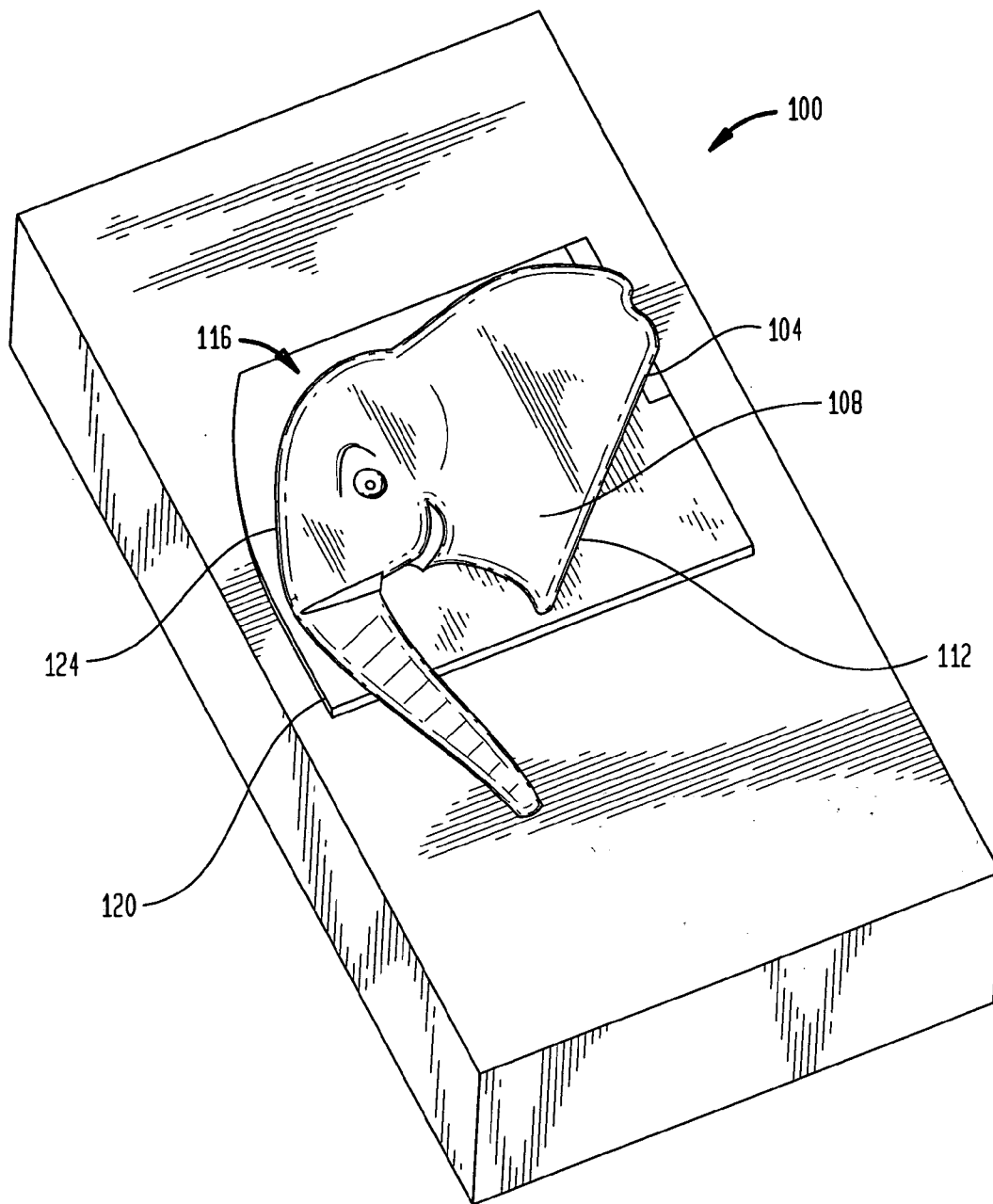


FIG. 8

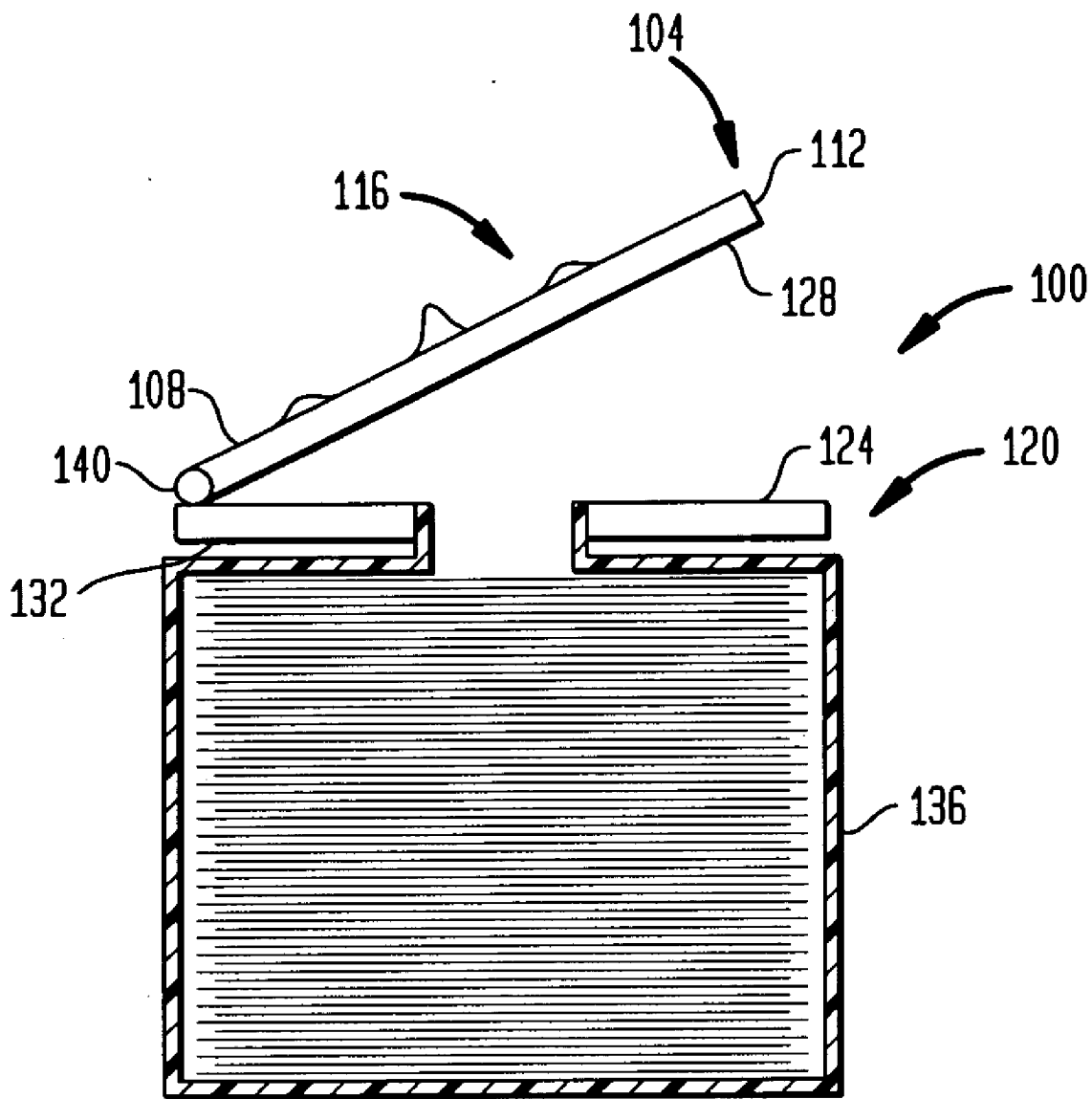


FIG. 9

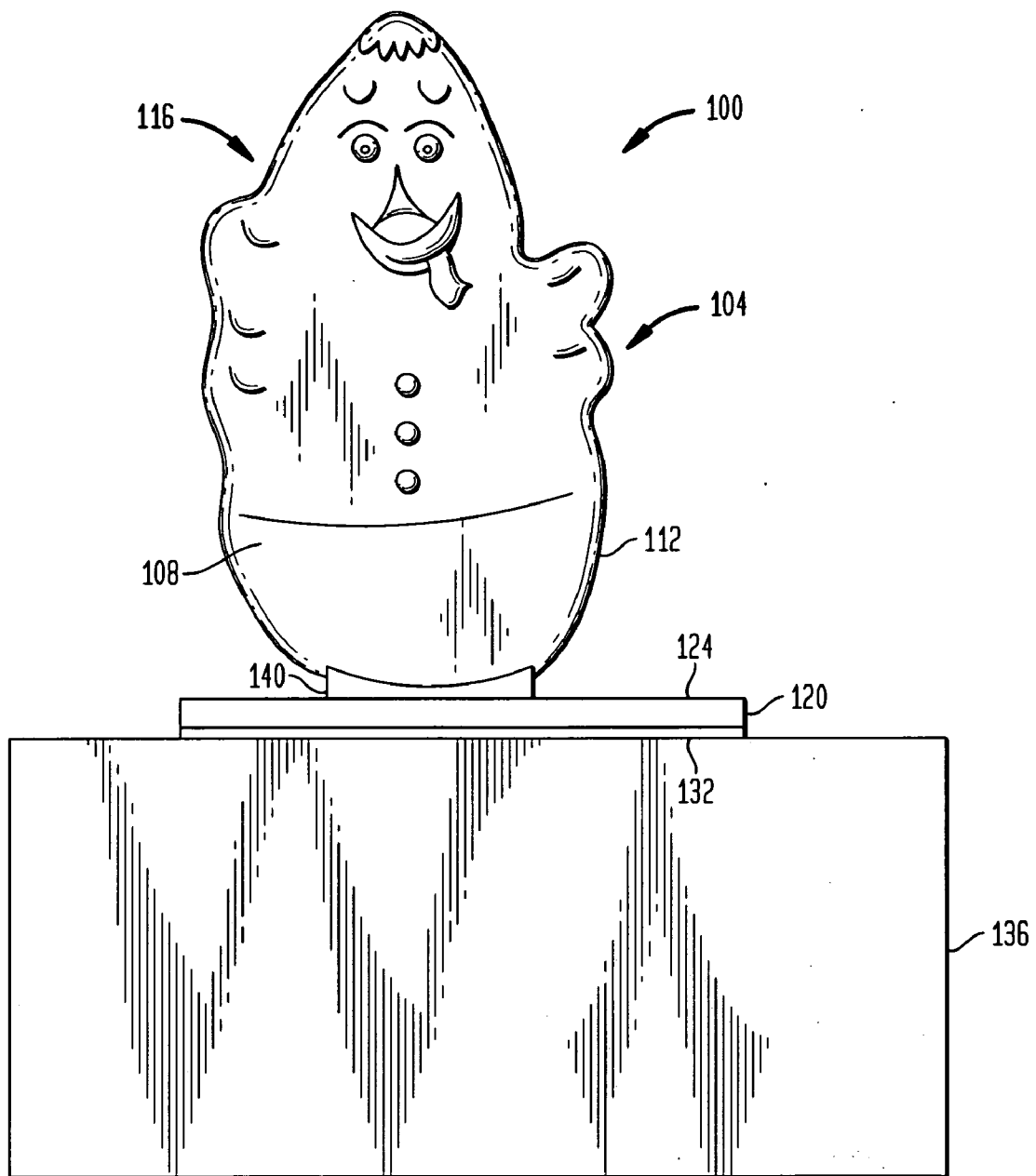


FIG. 10

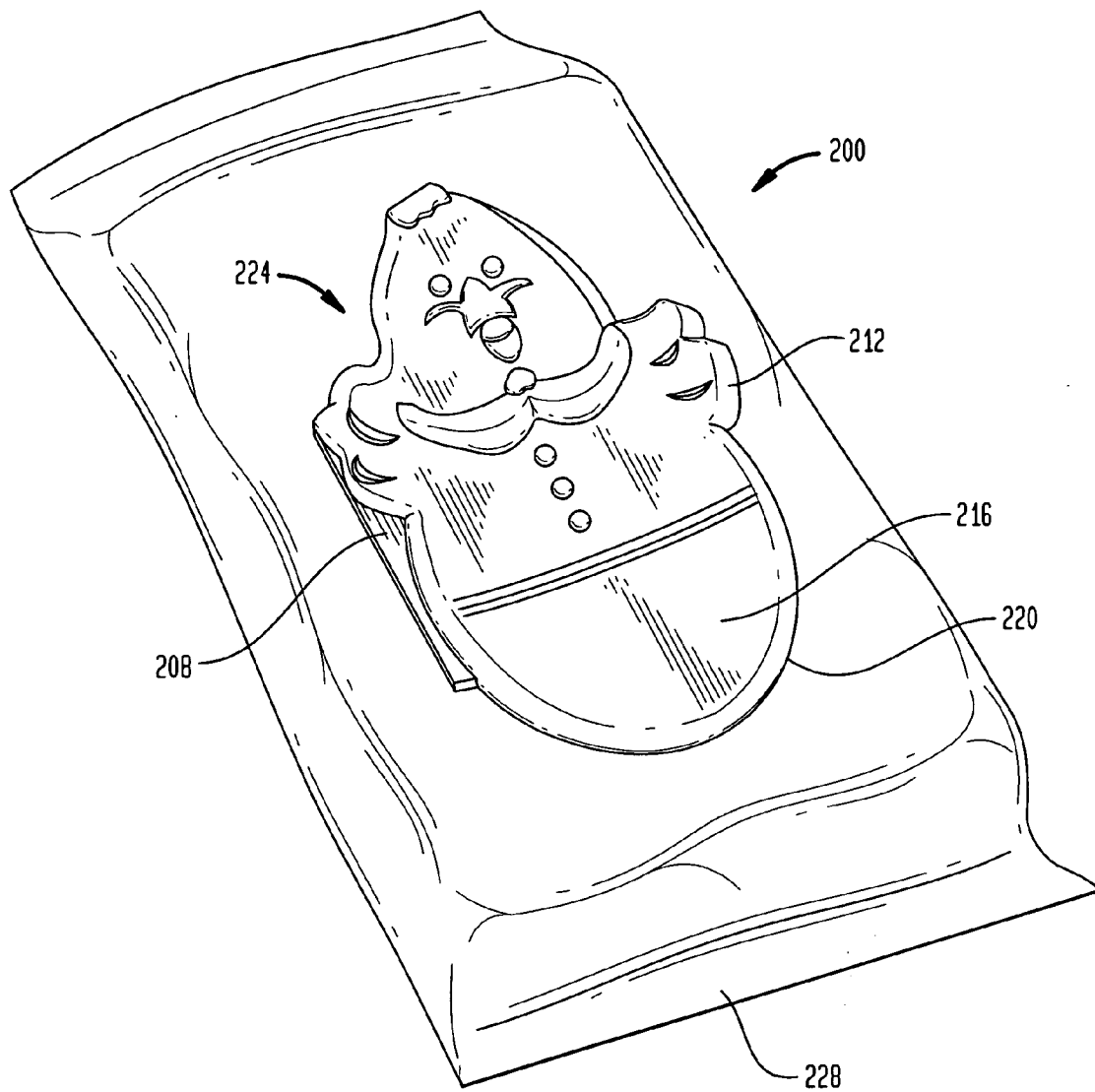


FIG. 11

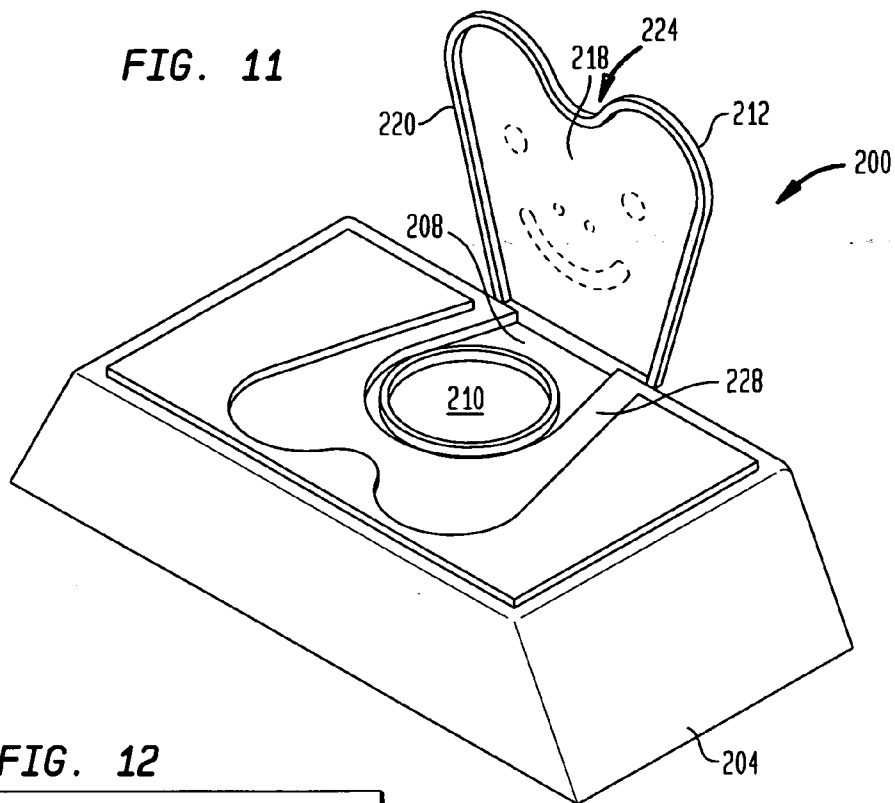


FIG. 12

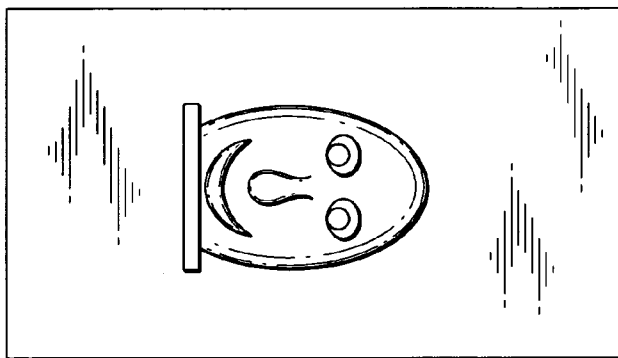


FIG. 13

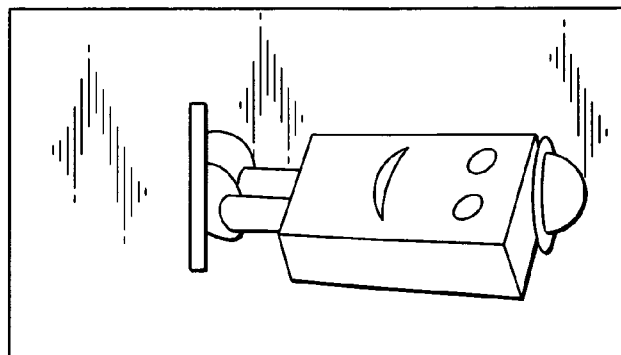


FIG. 16

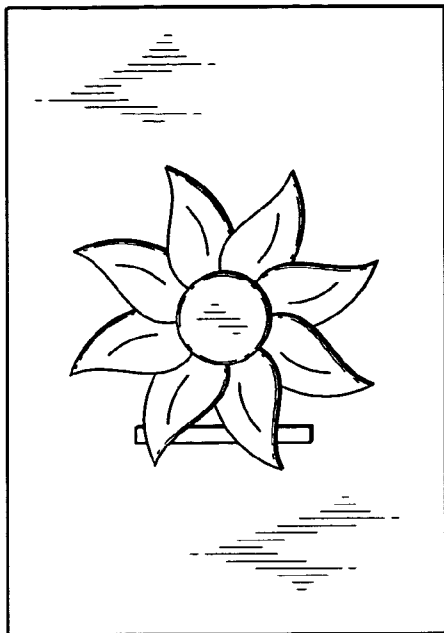


FIG. 17

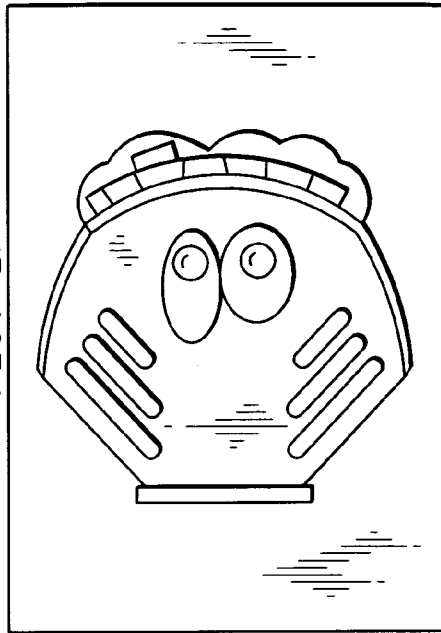
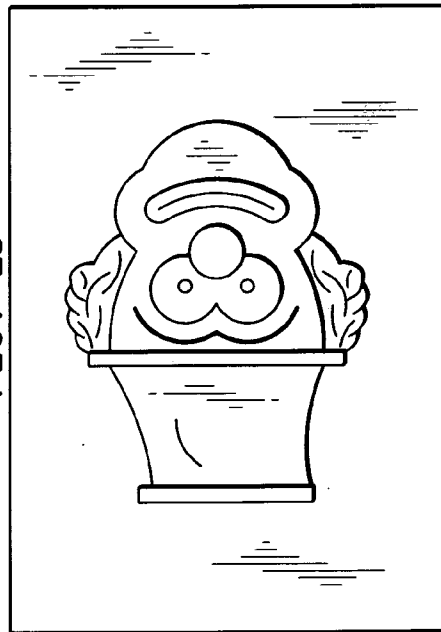


FIG. 14



FIG. 15



UNIQUE-SHAPED CONTAINER LID

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to the art of dispenser-containers for moisturized wipes, and more specifically it relates to unique shaped closures for such containers.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

[0002] The increased demands of personal hygiene, and in particular sanitary precautions in baby care, are among the many reasons why moisturized wipes have become increasingly popular with modern consumers.

[0003] It is necessary for dispensing packages containing moisturized wipes to be provided with an opening in one side thereof through which the wipes may be extracted. It is also necessary for these dispensing packages to be sealed in order to keep the contents sanitary and to prevent excessive evaporation of critical moisturized ingredients from the wipes.

[0004] It is quite common with moisturized wipe packages to use a label type reusable flap attached to the surface of the container as a closure for the dispensing opening. Such a label flap typically has a portion at one end thereof which is permanently affixed to a wall of the container, whereas the rest of the outside periphery of such flap contains a pressure sensitive adhesive for reusable engagement with an area surrounding the dispensing opening.

[0005] With these label type closure packages, it is quite common for the label flap to be completely separated from the container, so that it can be lost after initial opening of the package. In such circumstances, the wipes remaining in the package become exposed to drying and contamination.

[0006] Furthermore, the moisturized ingredients which are associated with the wipes are now vulnerable to excessive evaporation. Thus, it is essential that the structure of the container and lid enable a consumer to use the moisturized tissues without excessive evaporation or leakage of the moisturizing ingredients.

[0007] Still further, it is not uncommon for portable wipe packages, which can be both relatively rigid and non-rigid, to employ small, restricted dispensing slits for the purpose of dispensing individual wipes. It is well known that the task of separating one wipe from another, such as when the wipes do not individually pop up from the surface of the container in which they are maintained, is irritating and sometimes troublesome. Such a condition is particularly difficult where the tissues are baby wipes, for example, or where the wipes are used by a frail or elderly person and must be quickly removed and placed in the extended condition after withdrawal from the container, or where it is necessary for this operation to be carried out with one hand.

[0008] Known closure systems include conventional shaped lids employing simple utilitarian lid shapes, such as circular, and/or rectangular closures.

[0009] Known lid systems do not provide attractive functional seals nor do they provide any assistance in pacifying a fussy baby when a parent or caregiver attempts to wipe a fussy baby, who may in fact react with strong emotion to the prospect of an impending wiping operation.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 6,729,498 discloses a dispenser for dispensing wipes comprising a lid attached to a body. This is typical of a large number of these wipe dispensing products.

[0011] Known lids also fail to provide attractive and functional marketing identifiers which can be of assistance to consumers in immediately recognizing the correct product package on a shelf in a store or in their own home or storage area.

[0012] U.S. Design Pat. D445,329 discloses an ornamental design for a container for wipes. However, this design, like those discussed herein, is applied to a conventional-shaped lid, in this case a square lid, and therefore does not make it possible to render the lid itself into the form of a particular shape or design character.

[0013] Thus, it has been a long felt and unsolved need to provide adaptable, attractive and functional unique shaped closure arrangements for dispensing packages in general, and both relatively rigid and non rigid wipe packages in particular which are capable of dispensing moisturized articles, as well as a reusable closure arrangement that can be opened and resealed to permit withdrawal of individual moisturized wipes without exposing unused wipes to excessive evaporation and contamination.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0014] In accordance with the present invention, these and other objects have been realized by the invention of a shaped molded lid for sealingly enclosing a container aperture comprising an upper surface, a lower surface for sealingly engaging a container aperture and a perimeter surface disposed between upper surface and lower surfaces. The upper surface and perimeter surface combine to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon.

[0015] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one cartoon figure, at least one face, at least one animal, or at least one toy. Preferably, the shaped molded lid includes means for connection to a container.

[0016] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a shaped molded lid assembly for sealingly enclosing a container aperture comprising a cover having an upper surface, a lower surface and a perimeter surface disposed between the upper surface and the lower surface, the upper surface and the perimeter surface combining to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon, and a base having a first surface for sealingly engaging the lower surface of the cover and a second surface for sealingly engaging the container. In a preferred embodiment, the container includes a non-rigid receptacle and the molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one cartoon character, at least one face, at least one animal or at least one toy. Preferably, the shaped molded lid assembly includes means for connecting the cover to the base.

[0017] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a container is provided comprising a relatively rigid base and a relatively rigid cover, the relatively rigid cover being attachable to the relatively rigid base and providing access to the relatively rigid base, the rela-

tively rigid cover including an aperture and a lid for sealingly engaging the cover to seal the aperture, the lid comprising an upper surface, a lower surface for sealingly engaging the cover, and a perimeter surface disposed between the upper surface and lower surface, the upper surface and the perimeter surface combining to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon.

[0018] In accordance with one embodiment of the container aspect of the present invention, the container comprises a non-rigid receptacle. Preferably, the molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one cartoon character, at least one face, at least one animal or at least one toy. Preferably, the container further includes means for connecting the cover to the base.

[0019] As used herein, the term “relatively rigid” is used to mean a level of stiffness commonly associated with materials used to manufacture hard pack wet wipe tubs. Numerically, these materials typically have a flexural modulus, as measured in accordance with ASTM D790 “Standard Test Method for Flexural Properties of Unreinforced and Reinforced Plastics and Electrical Insulating Materials”, of about 500 Newtons per square millimeter or greater, more specifically from about 1100 to 1550 Newtons per square millimeter.

[0020] As used herein, the term “non-rigid receptacle” is used to mean a level of stiffness commonly associated with materials used to manufacture travel pack soft type wet wipe bags. Numerically, these materials typically have a flexural modulus, as measured in accordance with ASTM D790 “Standard Test Method for Flexural Properties of Unreinforced and Reinforced Plastics and Electrical Insulating Materials”, of less than 500 Newtons per square millimeter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] Other advantages and features of the invention described are intended to explain and not to limit the invention, and are illustrated in the drawings in which:

[0022] FIG. 1 is a top, perspective view of a shaped molded lid of the present invention;

[0023] FIG. 2 is a right side, elevational view of the shaped molded lid shown in FIG. 1 in its closed condition, disposed on a hard, rigid container;

[0024] FIG. 2A is a right side, elevational, partial, enlarged view of the designated portion of FIG. 2 shown therein;

[0025] FIG. 3 is a right side, elevational view similar to FIG. 2, showing the shaped molded lid of another embodiment of the present invention, with the lid hinged in its open condition;

[0026] FIG. 4 is a right side, elevational view similar to FIG. 3, showing the shaped molded lid of the container shown in FIG. 3 with the lid in its closed condition;

[0027] FIG. 5 is a top, elevational view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention having a hinged shaped molded lid in its closed condition;

[0028] FIG. 6 is a left side, elevational view of the container shown in FIG. 5, showing the hinged shaped molded lid in its open position;

[0029] FIG. 7 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a shaped molded lid assembly of the present invention.

[0030] FIG. 8 is a right side, elevational view of another embodiment of the shaped molded lid assembly of the present invention;

[0031] FIG. 9 top side elevational view of a further embodiment of the shaped molded lid assembly of the present invention;

[0032] FIG. 10 is a rear side, elevational view of another embodiment of the shaped molded lid assembly of the present invention;

[0033] FIG. 11 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention;

[0034] FIG. 12 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention;

[0035] FIG. 13 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention with the lid in its open position;

[0036] FIG. 14 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention with the lid in its open position;

[0037] FIG. 15 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention;

[0038] FIG. 16 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention; and

[0039] FIG. 17 is a top, perspective view of another embodiment of a container in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0040] Although specific embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the drawings, it should be understood that the embodiments shown are by way of examples only and merely illustrative of but a few of many possible specific embodiments which represent application of the principles of the present invention. Various changes and modifications obvious to one skilled in the art to which the present invention pertains are deemed to be within the spirit, scope and contemplation of the present invention, as further defined in the appended claims.

[0041] One embodiment of a shaped molded lid 10 of the present invention is best illustrated in FIGS. 1-6. The relatively rigid lid 10 includes an upper surface 14 and a perimeter surface 18 which thus combine to form a molded configuration 22 having a shape simulating a cartoon chicken for sealing a relatively rigid container 26. Molded configuration 22 may be made of a wide variety of materials, including plastics, composites, engineering polymers and elastomers. Molded configuration 22 may be molded in one or more pieces and may be produced in any decorative color or combination of colors suitable for the intended product application. Most significantly, however, the lid itself not

only includes a design of a representation of, in this case, a cartoon character, but it also includes a perimeter surface which is specifically shaped to provide that same cartoon character. Thus, the combined elements provide a unique, three-dimensional representation of the cartoon character which itself now also performs the functions of a conventional lid in this configuration.

[0042] Referring to FIG. 2, upper surface 14 and perimeter surface 18 form molded configuration 22. A lower surface 30 sealingly engages a lip 42 which extends upwardly from the upper surface of the container 26, sealing an aperture 34 enclosed within lip 42 to prevent evaporation of moisture from products enclosed within the container 26. That is, the lower surface of the lid 10 abuttingly seals against the lip 42 so as to fully enclose the aperture 34 from which wet wipes may be conventionally withdrawn, as in the pop-up configuration.

[0043] In one manner of providing this sealed configuration, lower surface 30 of unique shaped container lid 10 may include a recess 38 for frictionally engaging a lip 42 of container 26, as shown in FIG. 2A.

[0044] FIGS. 3 and 4 are illustrative of an embodiment of shaped molded lid 10 further including at least one hinge 46 for connecting unique shaped container lid 10 to relatively rigid container 26. The specific hinge mechanism so utilized does not form part of this invention, and a number of such hinges are available in the prior art. These include, for example, the hinges shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,499,626, such as that discussed at column 6, lines 21-53 thereof, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference thereto. Another such hinge mechanism is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,729,498, the disclosure of which is also incorporated herein by reference thereto. Finally, yet another hinge mechanism for attachment to a flexible package is shown in U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0011906, the disclosure of which is also incorporated herein by reference thereto.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 3, at least one hinge 46 connects container 26 to shaped molded lid 10. Hinge 46 may be a pivotal hinge or a living hinge or any other hinge arrangement which allows shaped molded lid 10 to rotate from the open position shown in FIG. 3 where shaped molded lid 10 does not sealingly engage aperture 34, to the closed position shown in FIG. 4. Thus, in the configuration shown in FIG. 3, inner surface 30, outer surface 14 and perimeter surface 18 are positioned such that the user has access to products such as wipes contained within container 26 through aperture 34.

[0046] Referring to FIG. 4, at least one hinge 46 allows rotation of shaped molded lid 10 such that lower surface 30 sealingly engages lip 42 of container 26, thus sealing aperture 30 and prevents evaporation of moisture from products contained within container 26 while presenting the user or the prospective buyer with a unique molded configuration formed by upper surface 14 and perimeter surface 18.

[0047] Referring to FIG. 5, molded configuration 22 of shaped molded relatively rigid lid 10 is shaped like a cartoon fish. The shape of molded configuration 22 may be that of any icon, which is defined as any pictorial representation or any word or graphic symbol whose form suggests a meaning. Most importantly, it has a unique shape which forms part of the overall representation itself. The shape of the icon

thus at least in part forms the icon itself. Molded configuration 22 is formed by the combination of upper surface 14 and perimeter surface 18. At least one hinge 46 allows movement of unique shaped lid 10 for easy access to the contents of container 26. Molded configuration 22 functions as an attractive, easily identifiable icon, thus providing efficient and safe product identification, and additionally providing a baby, for example, an attractive and attention-stimulating representation, and/or a preoccupation toy.

[0048] Referring to FIG. 6, molded configuration 22, formed by the combination of upper surface 14 and perimeter surface 18 is shown in its open position. Access to the contents of container 26 is provided while exposing molded configuration 22 for view of the illustrative cartoon fish icon of shaped molded lid 10. Molded configuration 22 is typically rotated about a hinge to seal and unseal container 26 while providing the attractive baby or children's toy for viewing as embodied in molded configuration 22.

[0049] In another embodiment of the present invention, illustrated in FIGS. 7-8, a shaped molded relatively rigid lid assembly 100 includes a cover 104 having an upper surface 108 and a perimeter surface 112 combining to form a molded configuration 116 having a shape simulating an elephant icon.

[0050] Referring to FIG. 8, shaped molded lid assembly 100 includes cover 104 having upper surface 108 and perimeter surface 112 which combine to form a molded configuration 116 having a shape simulating an elephant icon. This is preferably a three-dimensional shape, as can be seen in FIG. 8, to provide even a more realistic and attractive icon for the purposes of this invention. A base 120 has a first surface 124 for sealingly engaging a lower surface 128 of cover 104 and a second surface 132 for sealingly engaging a container 136. At least one hinge 140 may be used to connect cover 104 to base 120 such that cover 104 may be rotated to sealing engage and disengage first surface 124 of base 120. At least one hinge may be single piece, multi piece or a plastic living hinge or any hinge or hinges as generally known in the mechanical hinge arts, and as discussed above.

[0051] Yet another embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. 9. In this embodiment, which is similar to that shown in FIG. 1, a modified shape simulating a cartoon chicken is utilized. As shown in the open configuration of FIG. 9, the relatively rigid lid 100 includes an upper surface 108 and a perimeter surface 112, and the lid 100 is attached to relatively rigid container 136. In this case, the base 120 has a first surface 124 for sealingly engaging a lower surface of the cover 104 to base 120 such that the cover 104 may be rotated to sealingly engage and disengage first surface 124 of base 120. The hinge 140 as discussed above accomplishes these results.

[0052] As depicted in FIG. 10, the present invention includes a container 200 comprising a non-rigid receptacle 228 and a relatively rigid cover 208 attachable to relatively rigid base 204 for providing access to non-rigid receptacle 228. Relatively rigid cover 208 includes an aperture and a lid 212 for sealingly engaging cover 208 to seal the aperture. Lid 212 comprises an upper surface 216 and a lower surface for sealingly engaging cover 208, and a perimeter surface 220 disposed between the upper surface 216 and lower surface. The upper surface 216 and the perimeter surface 220 combine to form a molded configuration 224 having a

shape simulating an icon, in this case once again the cartoon character representing a chicken. Non-rigid receptacle **228** may be made of any relatively thin walled and substantially impervious to moisture polymer or paper product as usually employed in the soft pack or travel pack tissue and moist wipe packaging arts.

[0053] Referring to FIG. 11 the present invention includes a container **200** comprising a relatively rigid base **204** and a relatively rigid cover **208** attachable to relatively rigid base **204** and for providing access to relatively rigid base **204**. Relatively rigid cover **208** includes an aperture **210** and a lid **212** for sealingly engaging cover **208** to seal aperture **210**. Lid **212** comprises an upper surface and a lower surface **218** for sealingly engaging cover **208**, and a perimeter surface **220** disposed between the upper surface and lower surface **218**. The upper surface and the perimeter surface **220** combine to form a molded configuration **224** having a shape simulating an icon, in this case a heart-shaped face for another cartoon-type character. Optionally, at least one living hinge **228** or at least one mechanical hinge connects cover **208** to relatively rigid base **204**.

[0054] FIGS. 12-17 merely represent alternative icon configurations for the covers used in accordance with the present invention. Thus, these various additional icons, as well as many others which are readily conceivable, can be substituted for any of the other icons which are specifically disclosed and discussed in connection with FIGS. 1-11. These additional icons include, as examples hereof, the carton face of FIG. 12, the carton figure of FIG. 13, the cow of FIG. 14, the clown face of FIG. 15, the flower of FIG. 16, and the cartoon face of FIG. 17. Again, a variety of other types of icons can be readily incorporated into the present invention.

[0055] Any suitably rigid and substantially impermeable material or materials can be used to form shaped molded lid **10**, shaped molded lid assembly **100** or container **200**. Molded plastics are particularly suitable because of the low production cost, high production rate and wide variety of shapes, sizes, colors and textures which may be produced.

[0056] The benefits of the present invention are numerous. Containers may be sealed efficiently to prevent evaporation while at the same time providing the user with an easily identifiable molded configuration such as a clown, an animal, a well-known cartoon character, a flower, or any other icon.

[0057] While babies may cry at the prospect of being cleaned with wipes withdrawn from containers with standard lids, the present unique shaped lid can distract a baby's attention by appearing to be a toy or familiar friendly cartoon character. Some babies will look forward to having their bottoms wiped because the present invention provides an attractive and colorful distraction to the wiping operation and transforms what is often a difficult sanitary necessity into a playtime operation.

[0058] In addition, consumers and wipe users can easily identify their favorite wipes when shopping and will appreciate the savings in shopping time and increased efficiency.

[0059] The present invention will also save time in the home by pacifying fussy babies' or children's anxiety about being wiped and allowing the wiper to operate more quickly and efficiently.

[0060] The present invention also provides a much needed safety feature in aiding the user to identify the proper wipes to use for a given operation. With the glut of moist wipes on the market, including wipes for glass cleaning or tire restoration, use of the wrong wipe could be dangerous. As many wipe products come in generic containers with unrecognizable lids, the loss of a label or a person unable to read or having poor eyesight may select the wrong wipe. The unique shaped lid avoids this problem completely as consumers can instantly recognize an unusual unique shaped lid, associate the lid with the proper product for a given use and avoid the dangerous use of the wrong wipe for a given operation.

[0061] The present invention also offers consumers and manufacturers a low cost, economical solution to the problem of incorporating a multipurpose molded configuration with a shape simulating an icon into a container.

[0062] By incorporation of a multifunctional lid of the present invention, which may be used for sealing, decoration, amusement, distraction of babies and toddlers, marketing and safety identification, manufacturers of packaging and consumers will benefit alike.

[0063] Numerous characteristics and advantages have been set forth in the foregoing description, together with the details of the structure and the function. The disclosure, however, is illustrative only, and changes may be made in detail, especially in the manner of shape, size, color and arrangement of parts within the principle of the invention, to the full extent indicated by the broad general meaning of the terms in which the appended claims are expressed.

[0064] Although the invention herein has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles and applications of the present invention. It is therefore to be understood that numerous modifications may be made to the illustrative embodiments and that other arrangements may be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

1. A shaped molded lid for sealingly enclosing a container aperture comprising:

an upper surface;

a lower surface for sealingly engaging said container about said container aperture; and

a perimeter surface disposed between said upper surface and said lower surface, said upper surface and said perimeter surface combining to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon.

2. The shaped molded lid of claim 1 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one cartoon figure.

3. The shaped molded lid of claim 1 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one face.

4. The shaped molded lid of claim 1 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one animal.

5. The shaped molded lid of claim 1 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one toy.

6. The shaped molded lid of claim 1 further including means for connecting said shaped molded lid to said container.

7. A shaped molded lid assembly for sealingly enclosing a container aperture comprising:

a cover having an upper surface, a lower surface and a perimeter surface disposed between said upper surface and said lower surface, said upper surface and said perimeter surface combining to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon; and

a base having a first surface for sealingly engaging said lower surface of said cover and a second surface for sealingly engaging said container.

8. The shaped molded lid assembly of claim 7 wherein said container comprises a non-rigid receptacle.

9. The shaped molded lid assembly of claim 7 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon surface comprising at least one cartoon figure.

10. The shaped molded lid assembly of claim 7 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one face.

11. The shaped molded lid of claim 7 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one animal.

12. The shaped molded lid of claim 7 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one toy.

13. The shaped molded lid assembly of claim 7 further including means for connecting said cover to said base.

14. A container comprising:

a relatively rigid base; and

a relatively rigid cover attachable to said relatively rigid base and providing access to said relatively rigid base, said relatively rigid cover including an aperture, and a lid for sealingly engaging said cover to seal said aperture, said lid comprising an upper surface, a lower surface for sealingly engaging said cover, and a perimeter surface disposed between said upper surface and said lower surface, said upper surface and said perimeter surface combining to form a molded configuration having a shape simulating an icon.

15. The container of claim 14 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon surface comprising at least one cartoon character.

16. The container of claim 14 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one face.

17. The container of claim 14 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one animal.

18. The container of claim 14 wherein said molded configuration has a shape simulating an icon comprising at least one toy.

19. The container of claim 14 further including means for connecting said relatively rigid base to said relatively rigid cover.

* * * * *