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(54) **COMBINED RECEPTACLE AND DISPLAY CARD**

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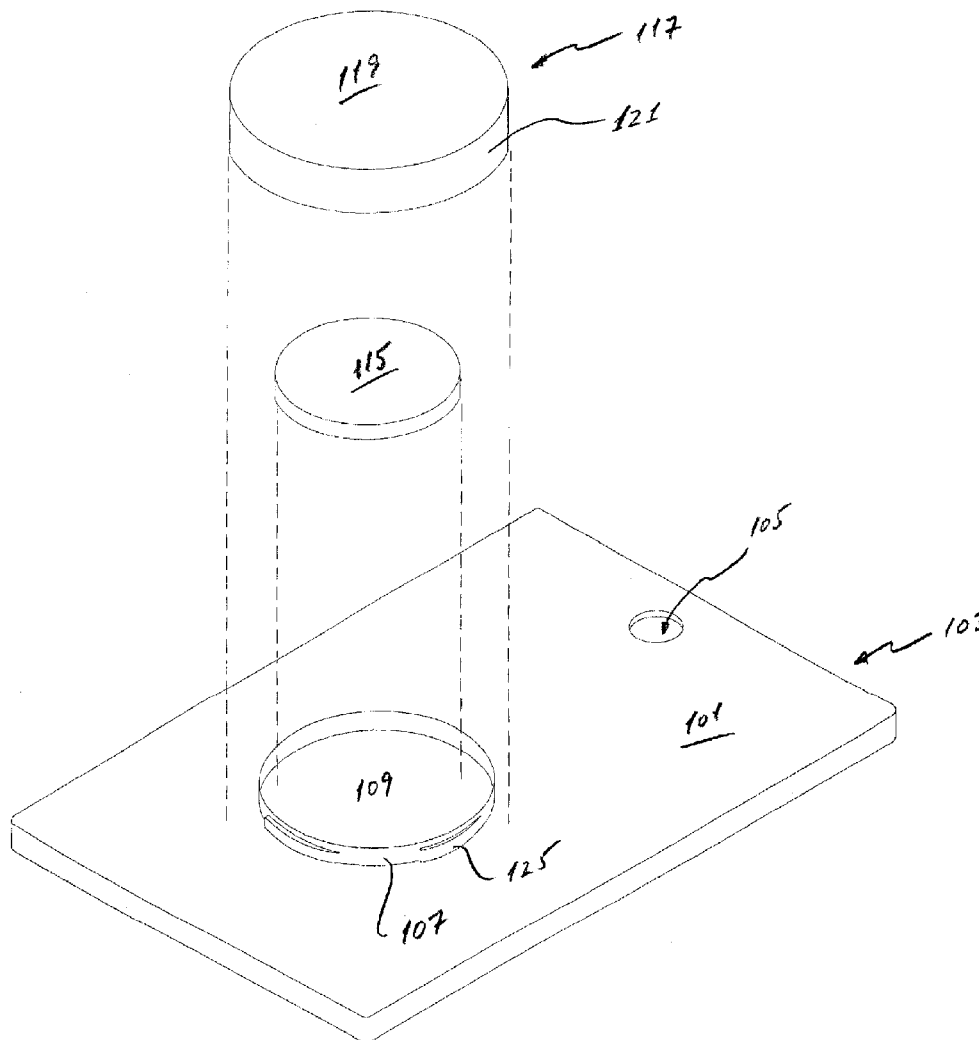
(57) **ABSTRACT**

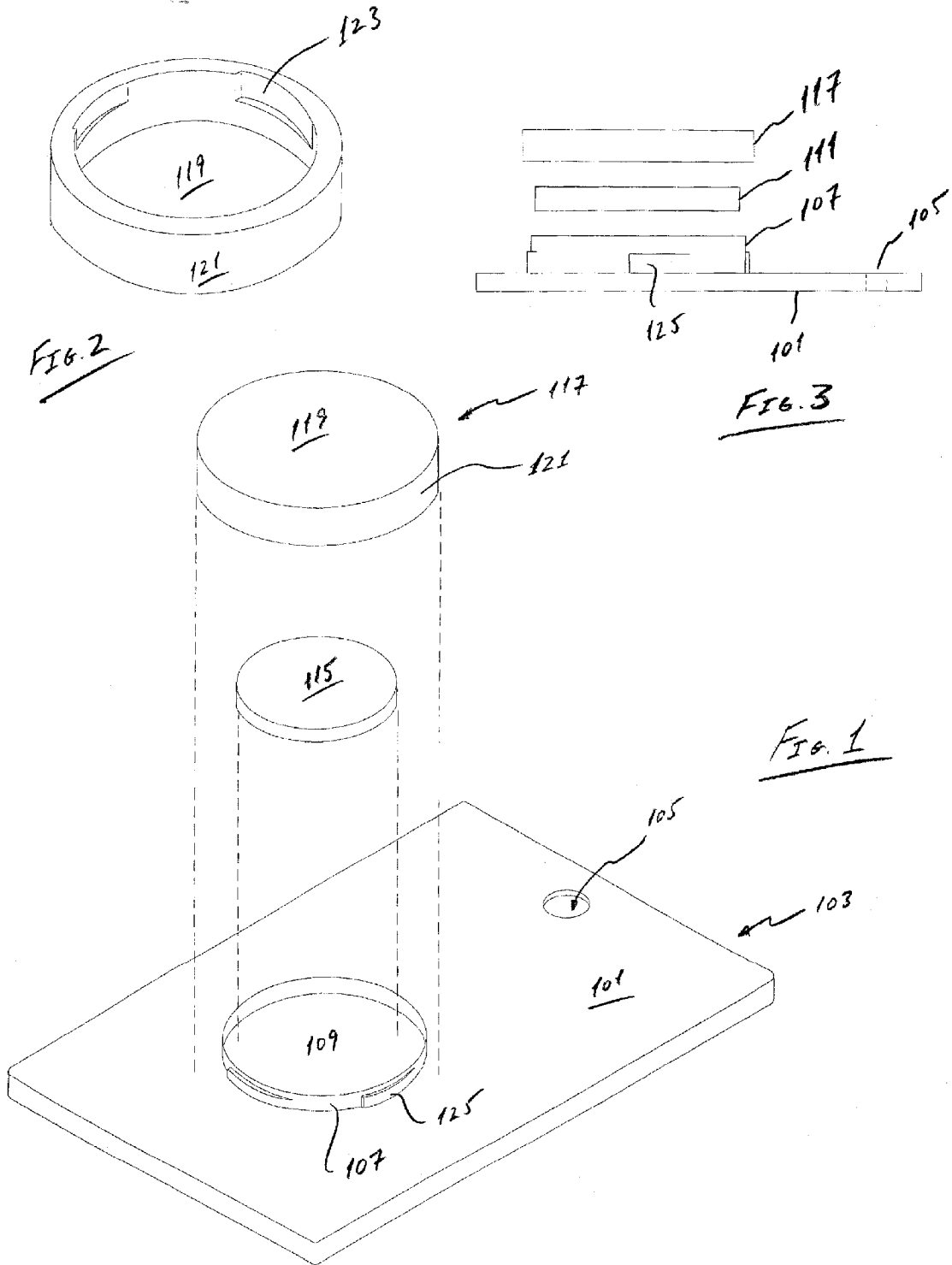
An integrated display card and goods holding container is provided. A well for the goods is formed integrally with the card, the integral structure preferably made of plastic but can be made of wood or metal. A cover is provided for closing the well, such as a screw top. The cover and the card can be provided with structures, such as pawls and catches, so that when the cover is fully engaged with the well, the structures provide evidence of tampering if the cover is removed from the card. Alternatively, or in addition, entire card can be shrink-wrapped or a seal, such as a tamper proof seal, can be placed over the cover.

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(62) Division of application No. 10/392,033, filed on Mar. 19, 2003, now abandoned.





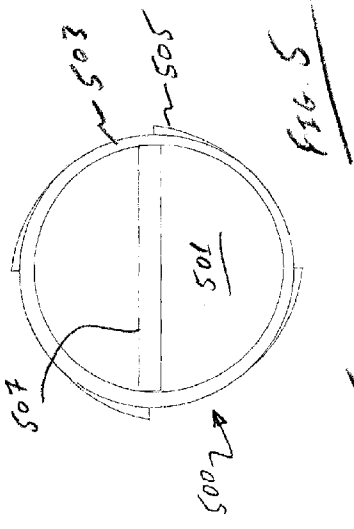


FIG. 5

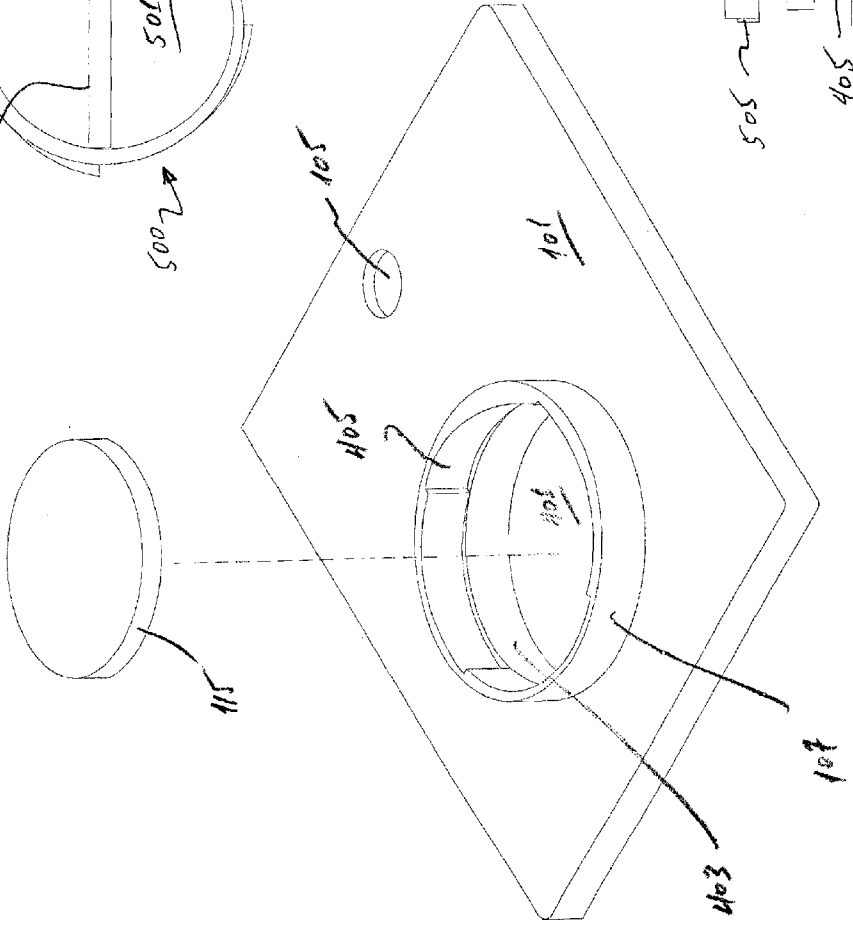


FIG. 4

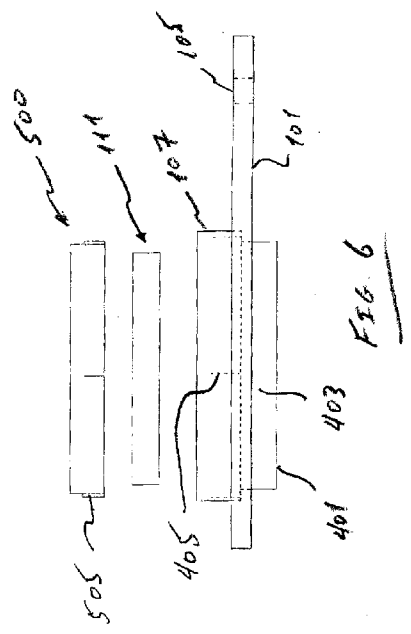


FIG. 6

FIG. 7A

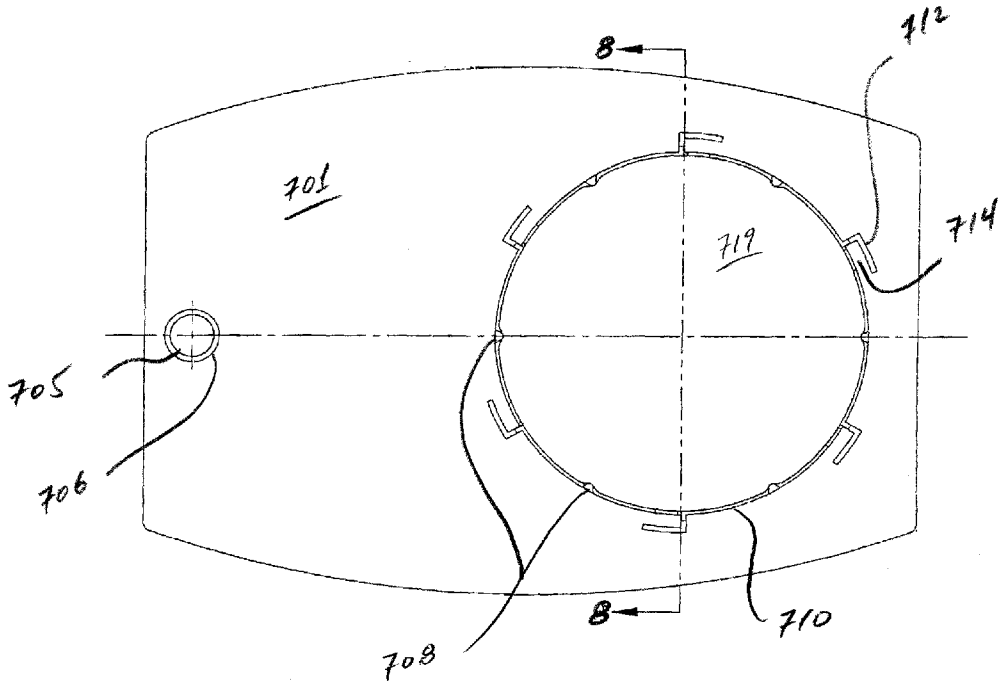


FIG. 7B

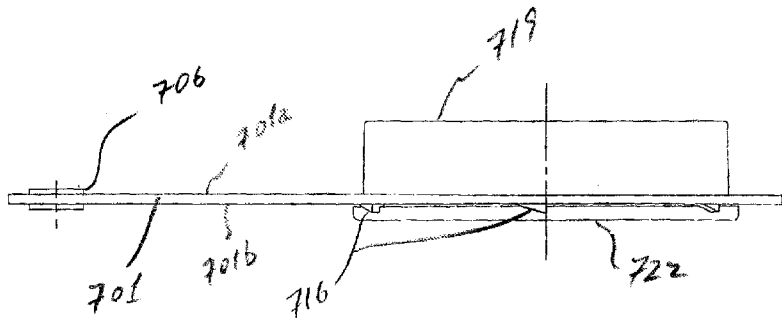


FIG. 8

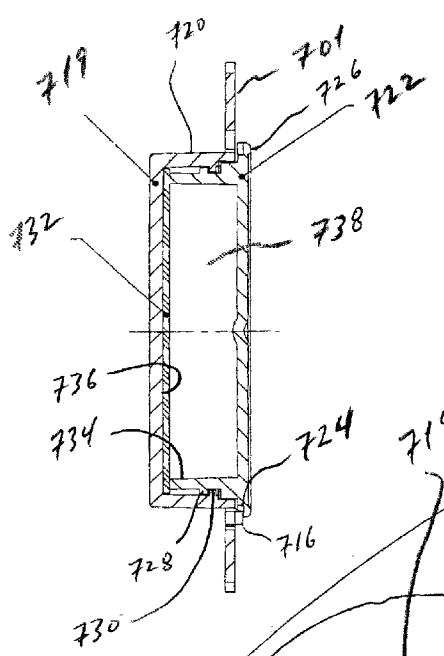


FIG. 7C

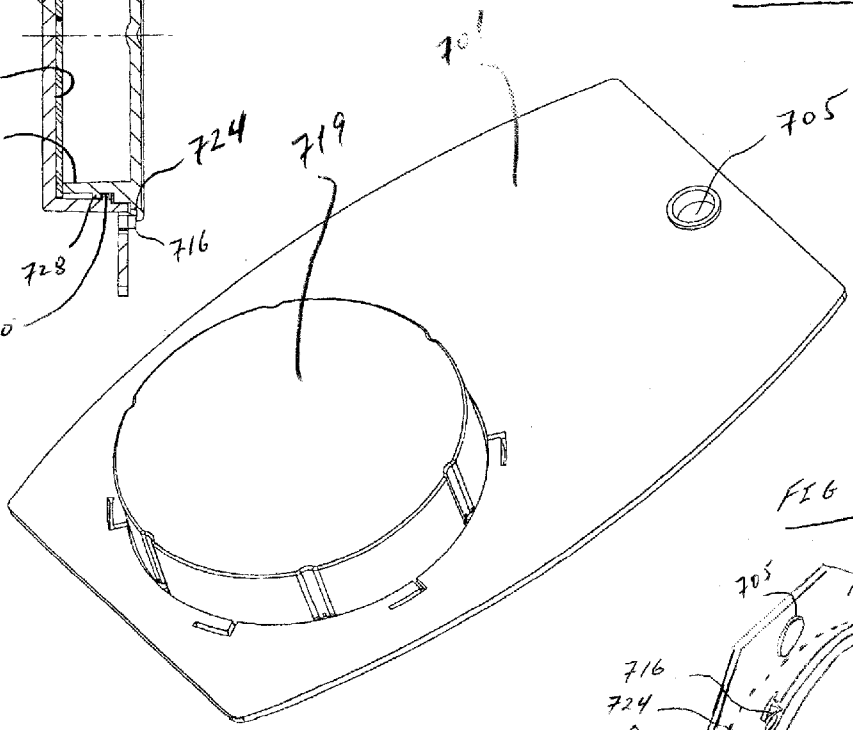
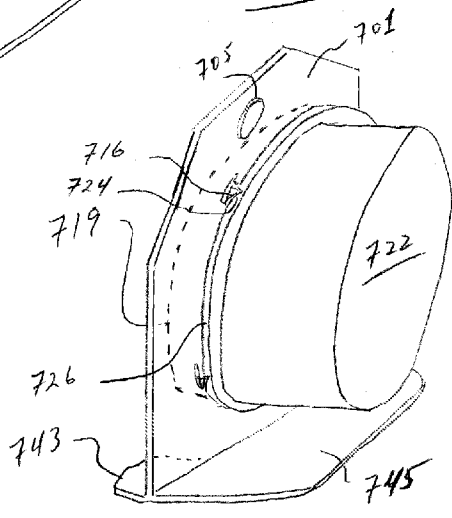


FIG. 9



COMBINED RECEPTACLE AND DISPLAY CARD

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a divisional of application Ser. No. 10/392,033, filed Mar. 19, 2003, now U.S. Pat. No. _____, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This invention relates to a container or receptacle that is also suitable as a display card for a peg board or pull strip.

[0004] 2. State of the Art

[0005] Consumer packaging takes many forms, some of which adapt the packaging to a particular type of display. For example, an item for sale can be blister-packed to a card, or a plastic shell can be stapled or thermoformed onto a card. Such a card can have a hole to accommodate a peg for display on a pegboard, or an opening to accommodate a pull strip. A "pull strip" is a plastic strip having a plurality of hooks, edges, or other devices that can be inserted through an opening in a card to support the card on the strip, or can be a strip having clips into which display cards are inserted; the retail consumer then merely pulls the card from the strip.

[0006] In the area of drugs and cosmetics, the particular article is typically packaged in a first package, such as a plastic pouch for pills/capsules or a small container or jar for cosmetics (e.g., lip gloss, eye shadow, powder). This first container is then packaged in a second container, such as the above-noted blister packed or thermoformed cards.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In light of the foregoing, it would be beneficial to provide a integrated combined receptacle and display card so that separate packaging is not needed for the goods and also the packaged goods. It would also be beneficial to provide such packaging having a section for the goods that is reclosable or reusable.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is an idealized exploded perspective view of an embodiment of the integral, combined packaging of this invention.

[0009] FIG. 2 is an idealized perspective view of the underside of the closure in FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 3 is an idealized exploded side view of the device in FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 4 is an idealized partially exploded perspective view of another embodiment of the integral, combined packaging of this invention.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a top view of a closure suitable for use with the device in FIG. 4.

[0013] FIG. 6 is an idealized exploded side view of the device in FIG. 1.

[0014] FIGS. 7A through 7C are plan, side, and perspective views of another embodiment of the invention where the card is integral with the cover.

[0015] FIG. 8 is a cross-section taken along line 8-8 in FIG. 7A.

[0016] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of that embodiment wherein the has a foot for standing.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0017] As shown in FIG. 1, the device generally comprises a card substrate 101 having a top portion 103 in which an opening 105 is provided for attaching the card to a peg board or strip or other display device. (It should be understood that "top" and "bottom" do not imply respectively a container "cover" and "base", so that in this invention a container "base" can be the "top"). The card substrate is preferably made of a relatively rigid plastic, such as polystyrene, polypropylene, a polyethylene, a vinyl polymer (e.g., PVC), or the like. Nevertheless, the device could be made of metal, wood, or even ceramic. Formed integrally with the card substrate is an upstanding wall 107 connecting to itself effective to provide a well 109 in which goods (powder, pills, lip gloss or lip balm) are stored. Instead of forming the wall integrally with the card, a wall can be attached directly to the card so that the card forms the bottom of the well, but it is preferred that the wall be formed integrally with the card. As shown in FIG. 1, the goods 115 (an idealization) then sit in the well. A closure 117 can also be provided having a top 119 and a depending side wall 121. The closure is secured to the wall 107 and/or to the card 101 around the outside of the wall 107. The closure can be made of the same or a different material than the card and upstanding wall.

[0018] As shown in FIG. 2, the underside of the closure, for example, the closure and the wall may have engageable threads, or as shown in FIG. 2 the closure can have a series of wedge-shaped cutouts 123 and the wall can have a series of wedge-shaped extensions 125 that engage. In this latter embodiment, the cutouts and extensions are aligned so that the closure can be brought over the well, and then the closure is turned (rotated as if being screwed) so that the cutouts and extensions are wedged together.

[0019] FIG. 3 depicts an exploded side view of the device.

[0020] FIG. 4 depicts an exploded perspective view of another embodiment of the invention, in which a recessed well 401 is provided in the card substrate 101. The recessed well is defined by a side wall 403. The cover 111, as in the device shown in FIG. 1, covers the goods 115 disposed in the recessed well having a recessed side wall 403 as well as an upper wall 107 as in the device shown in FIG. 1. On the inside of the side wall 107 are a series of wedge-shaped cutouts 405. Shown in FIG. 5 is a top view of a type of closure 500 for the device shown in FIG. 4, including a base 501 attached to a closure wall 503 from which extend a series of wedge-shaped extensions 505. Thus, the closure is placed on top of the cover and rotated so that the extensions 505 engage the cutouts 405. Of course, as mentioned above, the closure and wall can engage by screw threads. Alternatively, the card substrate can have a series of openings around the wall and the closure can include a series of depending members that pass through the holes and have an opening (e.g., "L"-shaped elements) that can engage the side of the card when the closure is rotated, and allows the closure to be removed when rotated the other way. The closure preferably has a bar 507 suitable for use as a finger hold for rotating the closure for engaging or releasing it from the wall or the card.

[0021] FIG. 6 is an exploded side view of an embodiment of the device shown in FIG. 4.

[0022] Any type of solid or semi-solid material, or individual items, can be stored in the present devices. Exemplary of such items are: cosmetic powders (e.g., eye shadow), gels and semisolids (e.g., lip gloss, lip balm); sunscreen; medications in solid form (e.g., pills, tablets, capsules, gelcaps) or semi-solid form (e.g., cream, ointment, gel, or lotion); spices or condiments, in solid or semisolid form; touch-up or other paint; candy, gum, mints, or the like; or anything else that can be packaged in such a container.

[0023] The closure can be secured in the closed position by gluing the closure to the card, or by shrink-wrapping the entire device. A foil seal can be provided over the cover to protect the goods and/or as a tamper evident device. The portion of the card substrate adjacent the well or recessed well can be scored so that, after purchase, the consumer can remove the goods packaging from the integral card substrate.

[0024] In one embodiment, "integral" means that the card and the goods container are formed from the same material and are unitary. For example, in the device shown in FIG. 1, the card 101, wall 107 with extensions 125 can be formed of a single piece of plastic. Likewise, for the device shown in FIG. 4, the card 101, recessed well 401 with side wall 403, upstanding wall 107 with cutouts 405 can be formed from a single piece of plastic. These single pieces of plastic can be molded as a unitary body. The cover and closure can be molded separately.

[0025] FIG. 7A is a plan view of one embodiment wherein the top 719 is integral with the card 701, the card having an opening 705 further defined by a collar 706 from which the card can be hung (such as from a display peg). The top is attached to the card by a plurality of bridges 708, and otherwise separated from the card by a plurality of scores 710 alternating with the bridges along the circumference of the top. The unitary, integral card and top are preferably made of plastic, such as a polyalkylene (e.g., polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene), polyamide (e.g., a Nylon), or any other polymer sufficiently rigid to hold its shape, be scored (or support other retention means), be displayed, and the top separated from the scoring as required for the instant device to be functional (e.g., a polystyrene, polycarbonate, or polyacrylate, optionally plasticized). Separate L-shaped scores connecting with the circumferential scores are made to define fingers 714 also extending circumferentially around the top. As shown in FIG. 7B, the card 701 has a front side 701 a and a rear side 701 b. The part of the finger on the rear side defines an extending pawl 716 that engages the bottom 722. As shown in FIG. 8, a cross-section taken along line 8-8 of FIG. 7A, each pawl engages a depression or catch 724 formed in a circumferential flange 726 around the bottom (the part of the container not molded integrally with the card). Corresponding threads in the bottom 728 and the top 730 engage to enable the bottom to be screwed into the top. As the bottom is tightened, the pawls eventually engage the depressions to lock the bottom in place. Preferably, a sealing layer or liner 732 is disposed between the top of the side wall 734 of the bottom portion and the inside of the top wall 736 of the top. The side wall of the bottom portion, along with the bottom, define an interior space 738 in which the goods (not shown) are stored. Preferably, the travel of the bottom into the top is very small, so that the thread need only comprise a fraction of the length of the circumference.

[0026] The card faces 701a and/or 701b can be printed with advertising and/or directional use instructions for the product, and preferably include instructions for detaching the sealed compact from the card.

[0027] Of course, depending on the display desired, the device can be designed with face 701a or face 701b as the front (the other being the back), even though the invention has been described above as the "top" being integral with the card. Additionally, the integrated card/top and the bottom can be made from different, or differently colored, plastics.

[0028] A further embodiment is shown in FIG. 9, a perspective view of an embodiment similar to that shown in FIGS. 7A, 7B, and 7C and including supporting feet, enabling a merchant to display the device hung on a board or stood on a shelf, as desired, or changed between the two display modes. The base 722 is the portion of the container that is filled with product, and so, as seen in FIG. 8, has a portion with an inside wall (734) forming a smaller diameter opening to be filled. The top 719 has an outside side wall (720 in FIG. 8) sealing with the inside side wall (734) of the base. In contrast to the embodiment shown in FIG. 8, wherein the inside wall has an extent similar to the outside wall, in FIG. 9 the main portion of the container, the base (722), extends away from the cover well beyond the flange (726). The embodiment in FIG. 9 is also notable because of the pairs of feet 743 and 745 extending orthogonally from the card 701 front and rear surfaces, respectively, towards the cover and the base, respectively. As shown in FIG. 9, the front foot is actually a pair of separate feet, one at the bottom of each edge of the card, and only one 743 being shown in the view. The rear foot 745 is shown as a continuous single foot, but likewise can be made using pair of feet (i.e., without the material in the center portion). Depending on the center of gravity of the filled device, and aesthetic considerations, one of ordinary skill in the art can determine whether both front and back feet are needed, and the width and length of any foot needed. The entire card including the foot preferably is molded as single piece as shown. Alternatively, a foot portion can be provided to snap on to a card as shown in FIGS. 7A-7C, or be provided with a groove into which glue can be applied and the card inserted into the groove. Having both an opening (705) allowing the card to be hung and feet allows the merchant the flexibility to display the article hung on a board, stood/displayed on a shelf or other flat surface, and the ability to display some product in each location, or to display the product in the location that seems to garner the most purchases. As shown, the perimeter of the display card in FIG. 9 has a single bottom and two sides, and a top perimeter having three edges. Although the feet are shown made integrally with the card, and though not preferred, a separate foot stand can be attached to the bottom. The opening can be defined by score lines so that the merchant can punch out the opening defined by the score lines only if desired.

[0029] In the use of such an embodiment, the goods are placed in the bottom portion, the sealing liner applied, and the bottom screwed into the top portion integral with the card; any printing on the integrated card/top having been done previously. The card is displayed, and after purchase by the consumer, the compact container with the bottom sealed to the top is broken away from the card by breaking the bridges interleaved with the score lines. After the container is separated from the card, it can be used as a typical cosmetics compact.

[0030] Prior to separating the compact from the card, the unitary top/card with the screwed-in bottom secured by the

pawls is a tamper-evident container. Once the bottom is screwed into the top and engaged by the pawls, there is no need for an additional seal (such as a shrink wrap or clamshell). Further, the bottom cannot be unscrewed without damaging the pawls and/or the card, thereby evidencing tampering. When so sealed, the device is securely sealed and remains a unitary article until the combined top/bottom container is separated from the card by the consumer.

[0031] In the preferred embodiment the container or receptacle is attached to the card by a plurality of bridges disposed around the perimeter of the container, preferably on the outside side wall, alternating with scores (or openings) separating the container from the card. The purpose of the bridges is to provide a solid retention between the container and the card that will survive packing, shipping, and other handling. Other retention means include a thinner or thinning region of solid plastic instead of the bridges and scores, or in substitution for some or all of the bridges. A thinner or thinning region can be created during the molding of the integral bottom and card, or can be formed later by compressing the area in a die (and heating, if the material is thermoplastic). The function of the retention means is to retain the integrally molded container part and to allow, through reasonable force, the consumer to separate the container from the card. The tolerance of the retention means should be such that the pawls engaging the non-integrally molded portion cannot be disengaged therefrom due to resiliency or flexibility of the means.

[0032] Because the card and container can be made of a moldable plastic, the card can be molded to include a recess, or an upstanding wall (like collar 706) defining an area where an RFID tag can be attached to the card. Similarly, the base and/or cover, depending on which portion faces away from the consumer when the device is displayed, can be provided with a similarly molded area in which an RFID or other theft-deterrent type device can be affixed.

[0033] The foregoing description is meant to be illustrative and not limiting. Various changes, modifications, and additions may become apparent to the skilled artisan upon a perusal of this specification, and such are meant to be within the scope and spirit of the invention as defined by the claims.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A combined integral display card and goods container, comprising:
 - A. a card substrate;
 - B. a goods container integral and unitary with the card, and comprising:
 - i. a wall upstanding from the card defining a well for containing said goods; and
 - ii. a closure mechanically cooperating with the wall or the card, or both, to close the well.
- 2. The container of claim 1, wherein the well is recessed to the other side of the card.
- 3. The container of claim 1, wherein the closure cooperates with the outside of the wall.
- 4. The container of claim 1, wherein the closure cooperates with the inside of the wall.
- 5. The container of claim 1, further comprising a recessed well extending below the card.

6. The container of claim 1, further comprising an opening providing for attachment of said container to a display device.

7. The container of claim 5, further comprising an opening providing for attachment of said container to a display device.

8. A combination container and display card, comprising:

- A. a display card having a top portion defined by an opening through the card suitable for accepting a display peg and a bottom portion having one or more feet adapted for supporting the display card in a standing orientation on a surface;
- B. a container top portion having a top wall from which extends a downstanding side wall, the free end for the side wall defining a bottom opening of the container, the side wall having an outer surface being formed integrally with the display card and attached thereto by retention means, and able to cooperatively engage a bottom portion; and
- C. a bottom portion of the container able to cooperatively engage and close with said top.

9. The device of claim 8, wherein the bottom and the display card mechanically engage in a cooperating manner to prevent the bottom from being removed from the display card.

10. The device of claim 8, wherein at least one of the display card and the bottom includes a plurality of pawls and the other includes a plurality of catches for engaging the pawls.

11. The device of claim 8, wherein the container and the card are made from polypropylene.

12. The device of claim 8, wherein the retention means comprises plurality of scores and bridges disposed about a perimeter defined by the side wall.

13. The device of claim 8, wherein the display card has at least one foot extending orthogonally from the card away from the front surface, the back surface, or both.

14. The device of claim 8, wherein the opening by which the card can be hung has a collar.

15. The device of claim 13, wherein the display card comprises at least one foot extending orthogonally away from each of the front and back surfaces.

16. A combination container and display card, comprising: a display card; and a container structurally attached to the display card by a frangible retention means, the container having opposing first and second portions cooperating to provide a sealed container, the container permanently separable from the display card leaving only the container by breaking the frangible retention means.

17. The combination container and display card of claim 16, wherein the display card further comprises a foot for free-standing display.

18. The combination container and display card of claim 16, wherein the display card further comprises an opening by which the card can be hung.

19. The combination container and display card of claim 17, wherein the display card further comprises an opening by which the card can be hung.