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Avda. Ramon y Cajal, 78
E-28043 Madrid (ES)(54) **Combination toy and container.**

(57) A combination toy and container comprising a container body (10) defining a fanciful shape of a first set of objects and defining a container opening (12), manually actuable closure (14) apparatus operatively associated with the container opening and defining a fanciful shape of a second object which is normally associated with said first set of objects and a label (13) bearing a fanciful image which defines further a given object from among the first set of objects, said label being adhered to a surface of said container body.

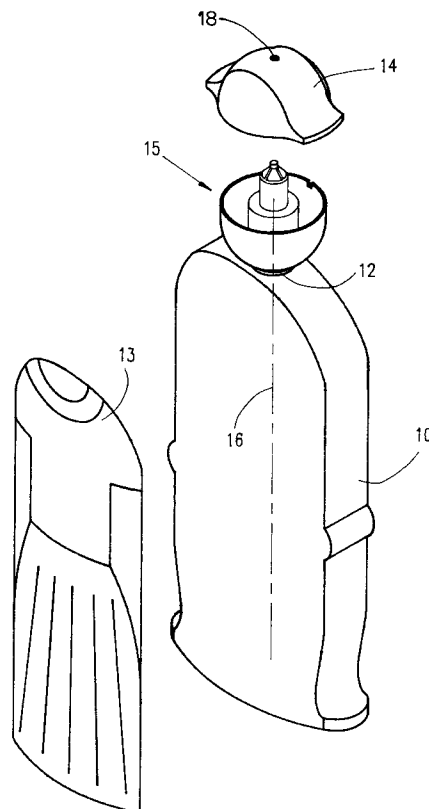


FIG.1

EP 0 568 152 A1

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to toys generally and more particularly to toys which also function as containers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Various types of toys which also function as containers are known. These include dolls of various constructions which function as shampoo containers and boxes for cookies and the like which also are model houses or other objects. A particularly successful example is the container for wet tissues sold under the trademark BABY FUN by the present applicant/assignee.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention seeks to provide a combination toy and container which is readily manufactured at relatively low cost.

There is thus provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a combination toy and container comprising a container body defining a fanciful shape of a first set of objects and defining a container opening, manually actuable closure apparatus operatively associated with the container opening and defining a fanciful shape of a second object which is normally associated with said first set of objects and a label bearing a fanciful image which defines further a given object from among the first set of objects, said label being adhered to a surface of said container body.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, a plurality of differently desired labels may be provided for selectable adherence with a surface of the container body, thereby to enable the container body with label attached to selectively represent a plurality of objects in the first set of objects.

Additionally in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the closure apparatus may be configured in one of a plurality of different configurations, individual ones of which may match individual ones of the plurality of objects.

The container may be for any suitable purpose and may enclose solids, liquids, viscous materials, particulate matter or any suitable object. The objects may be as disparate as wet tissues, shampoo and ice cream, for example. The container opening and associated closure apparatus may be of any suitable configuration, including, for example, a press-fit, screw on/off and hinged arrangement. The shape of the container may be any suitable shape, such as round, cylindrical or generally flat,

for example.

Further in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the closure apparatus may include an axially actuable valve whereby axial raising of the valve apparatus may provide opening of the valve.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be understood and appreciated more fully from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is an exploded view illustration of part of a combination toy and container constructed and operative in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an illustration of the replaceability of fanciful labels and closures on a container body in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3A and 3B are detailed illustrations of valve apparatus forming part of a combination toy and container according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention in respective closed and open operative orientations; and

Figs. 4A, 4B and 4C illustrate containers having three different types of closures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Reference is now made to Figs. 1 - 3B which illustrate a combination toy and container constructed and operative in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The combination toy and container includes a container body 10, which is preferably configured to have a three dimensional fanciful figure in outline and to define a container opening 12 at the neck element of the figure. A label 13, further defining the figure, is preferably adhesively attached to the container body 10. For the purposes of the present specification and claims, the term "label" is used in an unusually broad sense to include a printed image or any other type of coating or layer which is formed onto an outer surface of the container body.

A preferred embodiment of label is a separately printed label which adheres to the container body by means of an adhesive.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, a closure element 14 is mounted on the container body 10 in operative association with the container opening 12. The closure element 14 is preferably formed in the shape of an object which is normally associated with one of a set of fanciful figures whose shape is represented in outline by the configuration of the container body.

For example, where the container body depicts a human body, the closure element may represent a hat. Where different individuals may be represented by different labels, hats matching each of the labels may be provided. Alternatively, the closure element may represent a head of a figure. Alternatively, where the figure on the container body represents an animal, or building, for example, the closure may represent the head or top, or any other suitable part of the animal or building. It is appreciated that the figure represented by the shape of the container body may be any suitable figure. The container body may be of any suitable overall shape, such as round, cylindrical, flat, etc.

The container may be a fluid container or alternatively may be configured to contain any other type of goods. In the illustrated embodiment, a fluid container, for shampoo or the like is provided. In this embodiment, arranged in snap fit engagement with the container opening 12 is a valve stem defining element 15, which is preferably formed with an outer configuration representing the face of a figure. Disposed in snap fit engagement with element 15 and arranged for axial displacement relative thereto along a longitudinal axis 16 is a closure member 14, in the shape of a hat and having an egress aperture 18.

As seen in Fig. 2, it is a particular feature of the present invention that a plurality of different closure members 14 having different fanciful configurations may alternatively and replaceably be mounted on element 15 and a plurality of different fanciful labels 13, each further defining the outline figure of the container body in a different manner, may alternatively and replaceably be mounted on the container body.

Preferably, the combination toy and container is provided with a label 13 and a cap 14 which are complementary in defining a given fanciful figure. A child may interchangeably replace one or both of the label 13 and the cap 14.

Reference is now made specifically to Figs. 3A and 3B, which illustrate the structure and operation of the valve structure provided by elements 14 and 15. Element 15 defines a generally spherical face portion 19, integrally formed with a generally cylindrical tube portion 20 which is generally seated over a corresponding collar portion 22 of the container body 10. The collar portion 22 defines a downwardly and outwardly extending protrusion 24, which is snap fit engaged by an inwardly extending protrusion 26 formed on tube portion 20. This snap fit engagement provides secure but removably mounting of element 15 onto the container body 10.

Integrally formed with tube portion 20 and extending upwardly therefrom is a hollow valve stem portion 28 which terminates in a stopper portion 30,

which is attached to valve stem portion 28 by means of ribs 32. This arrangement allows egress of fluid from the container body 10 via collar portion 22 and valve stem portion 28 via an opening defined by ribs 32.

Closure 14 includes a fancifully shaped hat portion 34 which is integrally formed with a generally cylindrical tube 36. Formed on the inner surface of tube 36 is a protrusion 38 which engages a corresponding protrusion 40 on the outer surface of valve stem portion 28, to prevent inadvertent disengagement of cap element 14 from element 15.

Fig. 3A illustrates a generally closed orientation of the closure 14 relative to element 15. It is seen that the stopper 30 tightly engages aperture 18 to prevent egress of fluid therethrough. Fig. 3B illustrates a generally open orientation of the closure 14, wherein it is displaced axially along axis 16 away from the container body 10 such that stopper 30 does not block aperture 18. In this orientation, fluid exiting via valve stem element 28 past ribs 32 is free to pass through aperture 18.

Figs. 4A, 4B and 4C illustrate container bodies associated with three different types of closure apparatus. In Fig. 4A a snap-on container closure 50 is provided, while in Fig. 4B, a screw-on/off container closure 52 is provided and in Fig. 4C a hinged container closure 54 is provided. It is appreciated that any suitable container closure may be employed.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited by what has been particularly shown and described hereinabove. Rather the scope of the present invention is defined only by the claims which follow:

Claims

1. A combination toy and container comprising:
 - a container body defining a fanciful shape of a first set of objects and defining a container opening;
 - manually actuable closure means operatively associated with the container opening and defining a fanciful shape of a second object which is normally associated with at least one of said first set of objects; and
 - a label bearing a fanciful image which defines further a given object from among the first set of objects, said label being adhered to a surface of said container body.
2. Apparatus according to claim 1 and wherein said label is selected from a plurality of differently desired labels for selectable adherence with a surface of the container body, thereby to enable the container body with label

attached to selectably represent a plurality of objects in the first set of objects.

3. Apparatus according to either of claims 1 and 2 and wherein said valve apparatus is selected from a plurality of different configurations, individual ones of which match individual ones of the plurality of objects. 5
4. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims and wherein the valve means includes an axially actuatable valve whereby axial displacement relative of the valve means provides opening of the valve. 10

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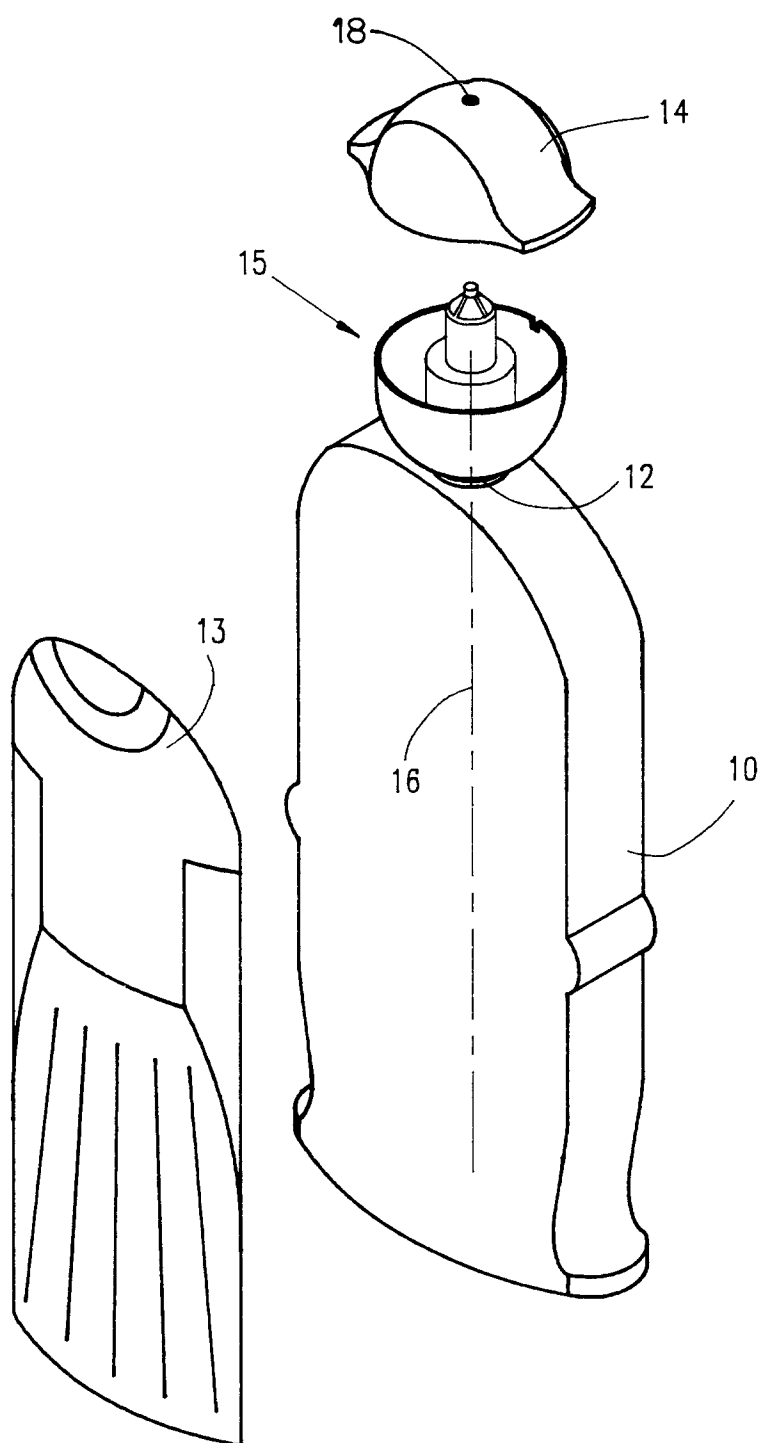
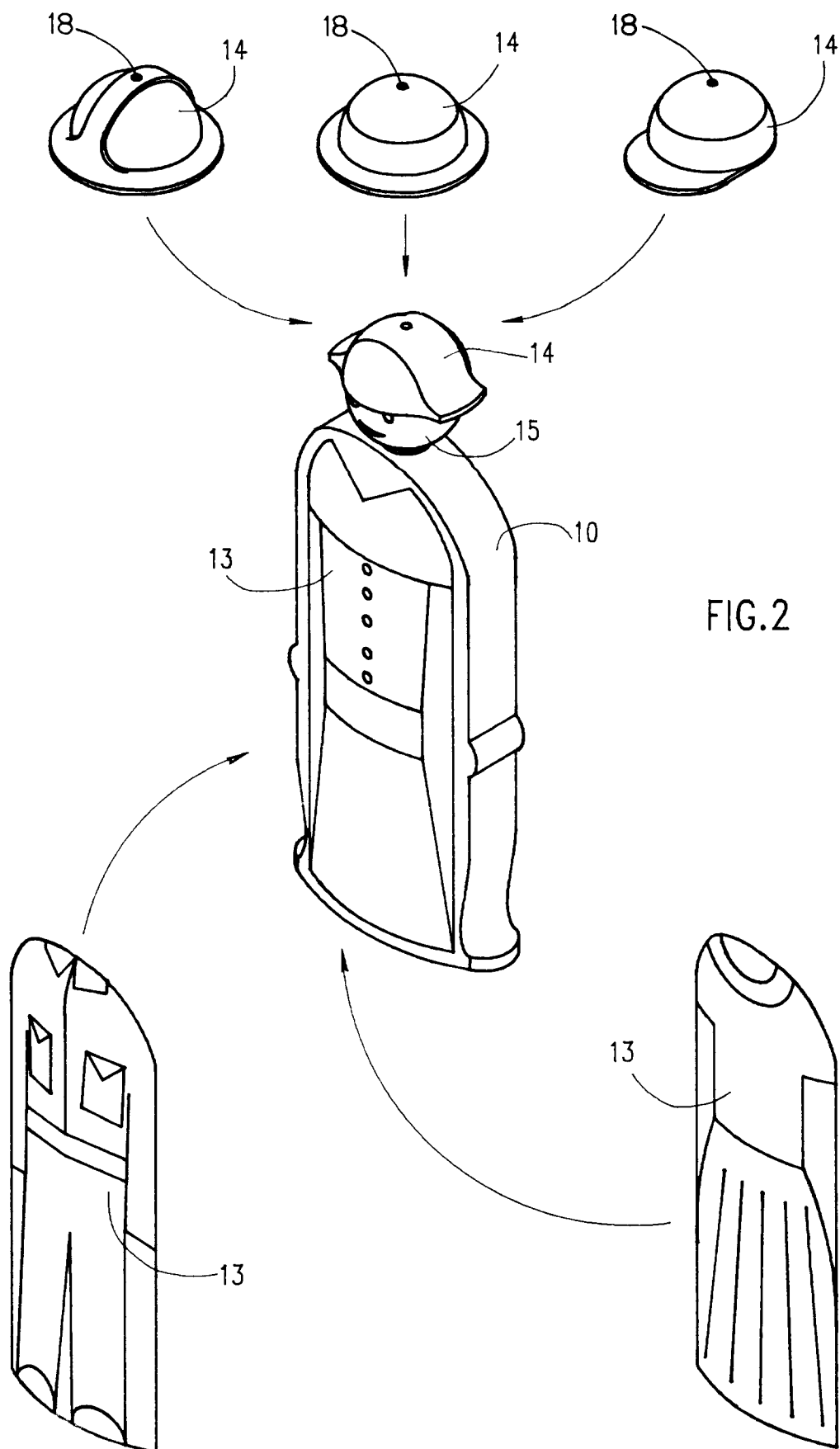


FIG.1



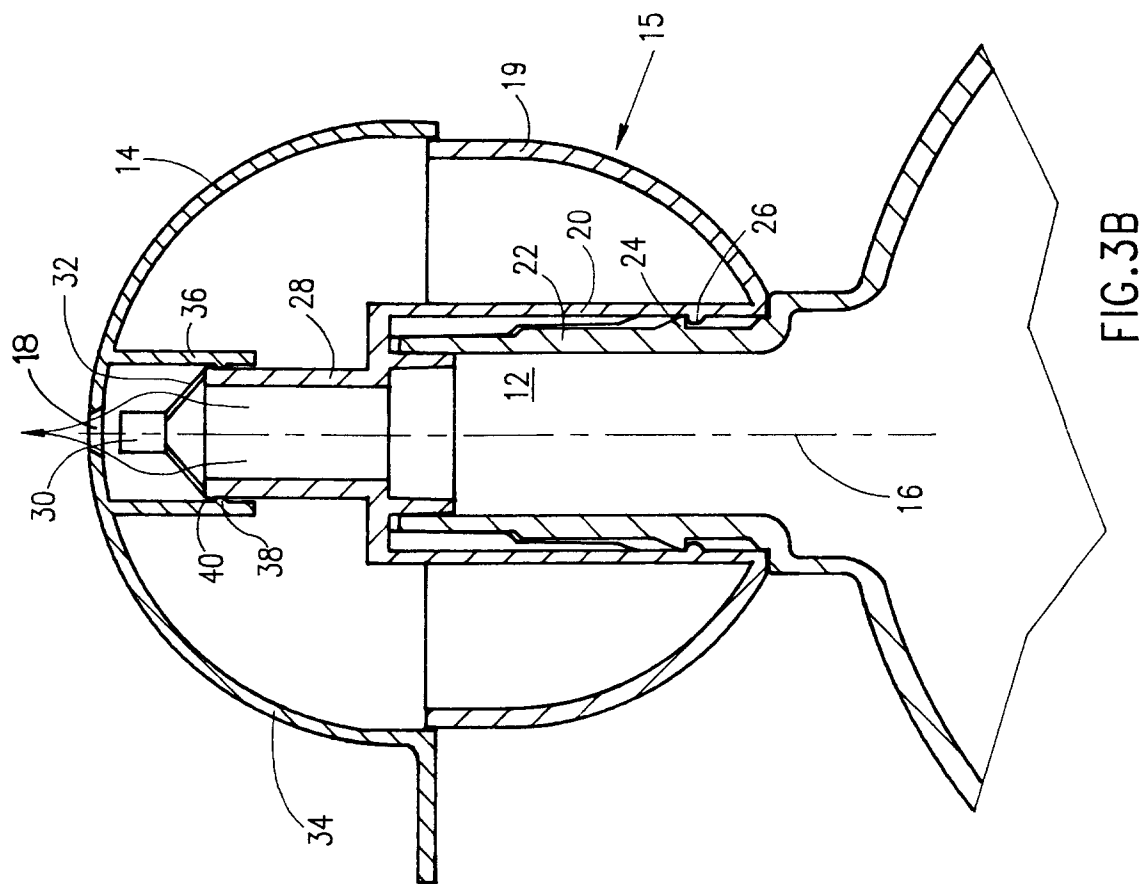


FIG. 3B

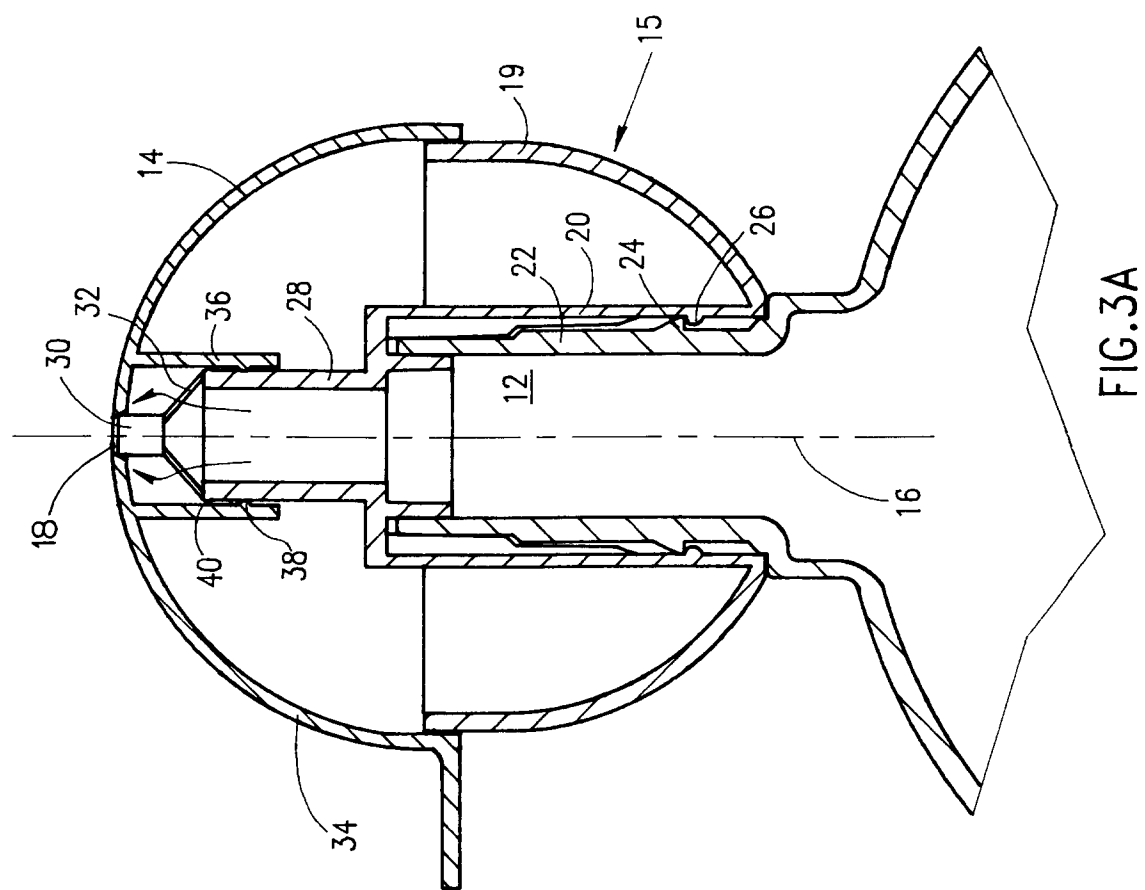
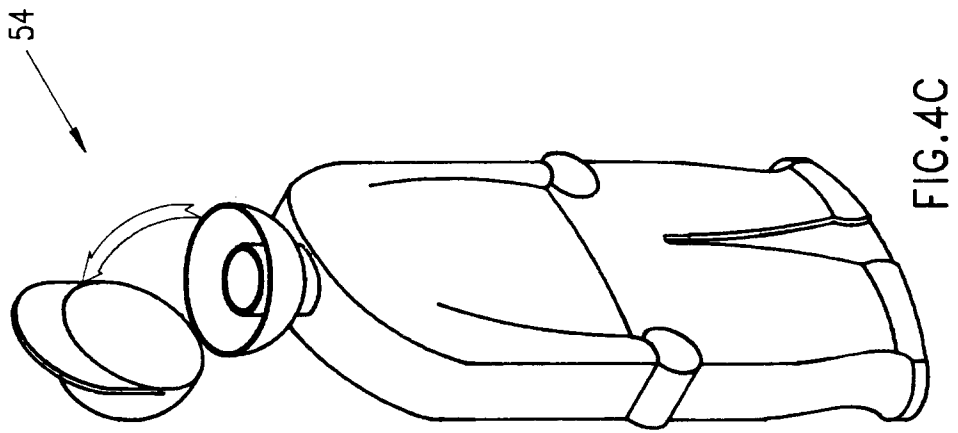
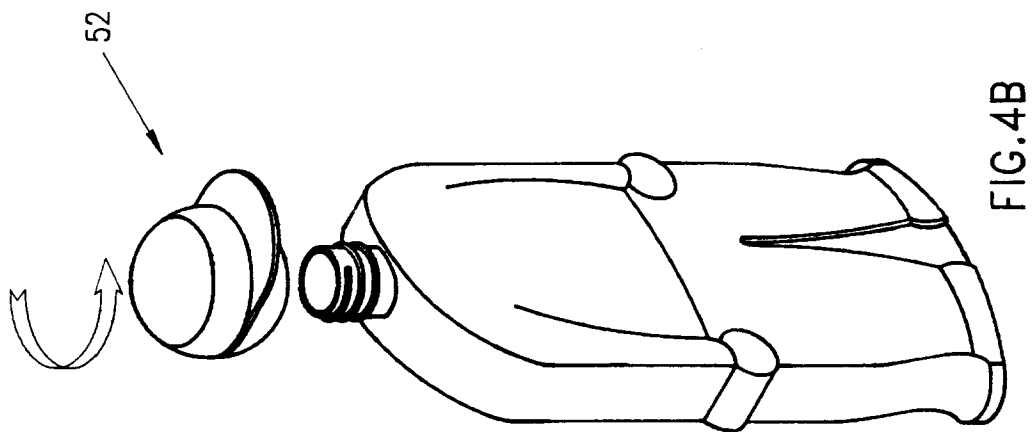
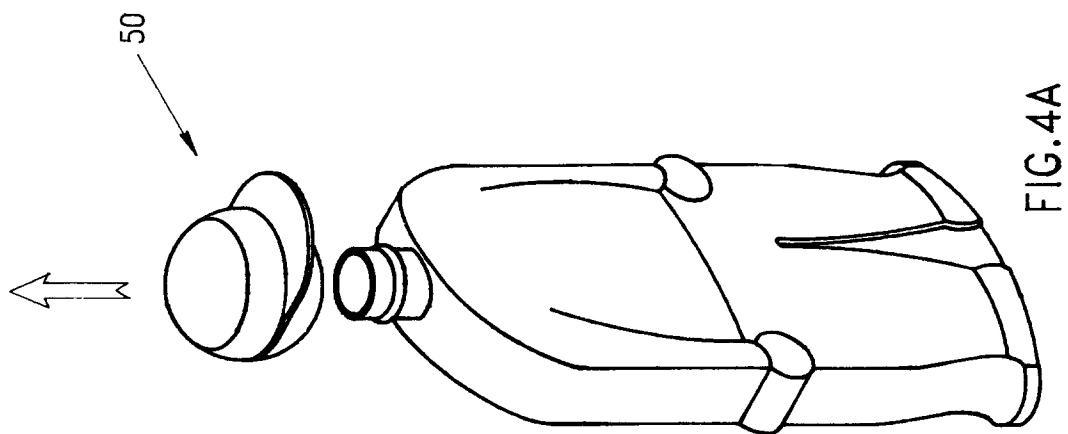


FIG. 3A





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 93 20 1176

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
X	US-A-3 837 111 (GODFREY ET AL) * the whole document * ---	1,2	B65D1/02 B65D81/36
X	DE-A-3 408 586 (PLASZCZYNSKI) * the whole document * ---	1	
A	US-A-2 532 729 (MILLSTEIN) * the whole document * ---	1	
A	EP-A-0 360 019 (HENKEL KOMMANDITGESELLSCHAFT) * column 5, line 15 - line 30; figure 2 * -----	4	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			B65D A63H A63F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 11 AUGUST 1993	Examiner LEONG, C. Y.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	