United States Patent

Schulte

[15] **3,697,147**

[45] **Oct. 10, 1972**

[54] **SHOWCASE**

[72] Inventor: **Donald W. Schulte,** Grand Rapids, Mich.

[73] Assignee: **American Store Equipment Corporation,** Muskegon, Mich.

[22] Filed: **Jan. 6, 1971**

[21] Appl. No.: **104,256**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **312/111,** 312/114, 312/195, 312/204, 108/64, 248/188.4, 248/188.8, 5/310

[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**F16b 12/00**

[58] **Field of Search**.....312/111, 114, 140, 107, 108, 312/195, 204; 52/311, 312, 316, 511, 512; 248/188.4, 188.8; 5/280, 310; 108/64

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,020,557	3/1912	Hunter	312/114
2,752,215	6/1956	Peiss	312/111
3,031,689	5/1962	Sark	248/188.4 X
3,550,981	12/1970	Cohen	312/111 X
3,588,212	6/1971	Gersch	312/204

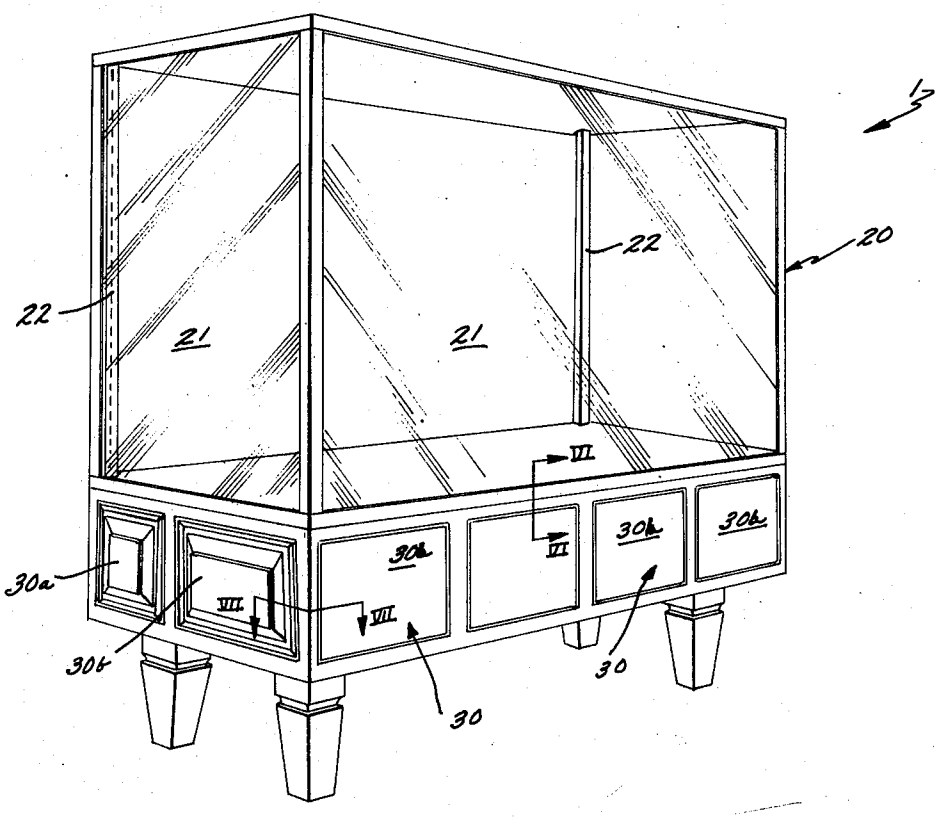
Primary Examiner—James C. Mitchell
Attorney—Price, Heneveld, Huizenga & Cooper

[57] **ABSTRACT**

The showcase has a chipboard base with a frame mounted thereon. The base is dimensioned such that three of its sides are covered by a combination of panels having modularly interrelated dimensions. All of the panels have a wood grain finish and are painted with a non-intumescent fire retardant paint.

The base is supported by tubular metal posts with a leveler guide threaded into the bottom thereof. A decorative sheath designed to blend with the panels is slidably mounted on the post to cover both the tubular metal post and the threaded post of the leveler glide. The back of the showcase includes a trim strip with a flange projecting beyond the side of the base for overlapping a similar flange of an adjacently positioned showcase. The flange is grooved and can be trimmed off along the groove if the showcase is not placed adjacent another.

22 Claims, 14 Drawing Figures



PATENTED OCT 10 1972

3,697,147

SHEET 1 OF 4

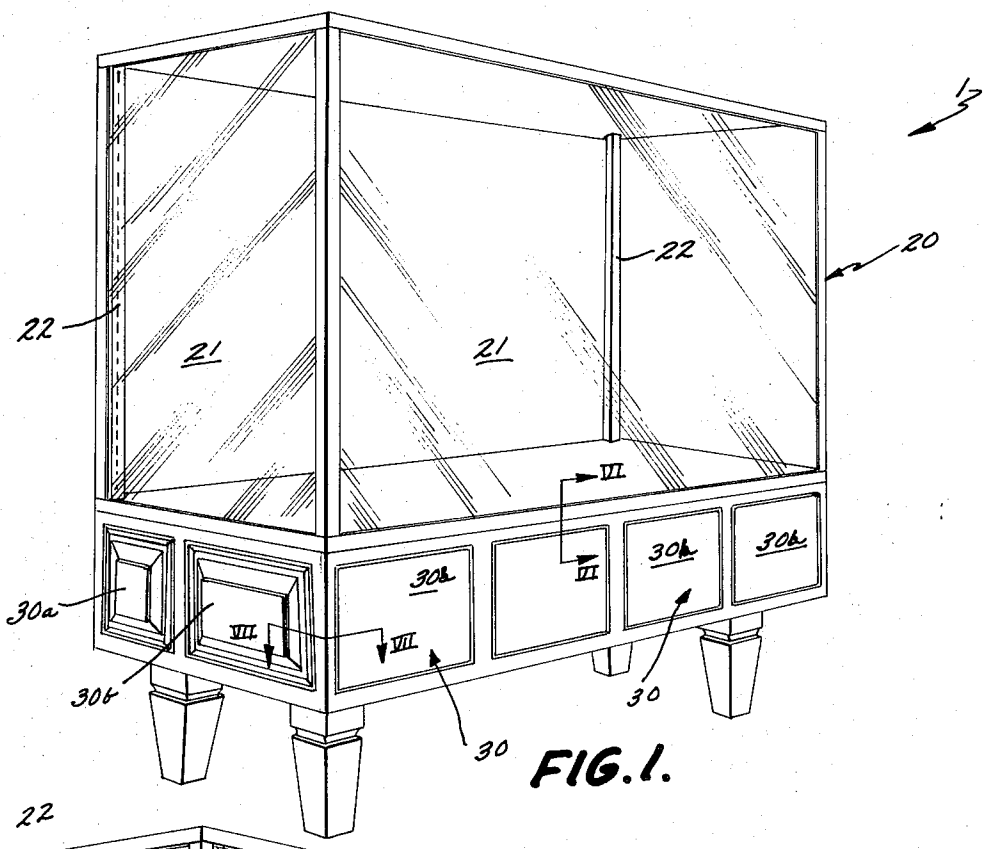


FIG. 1.

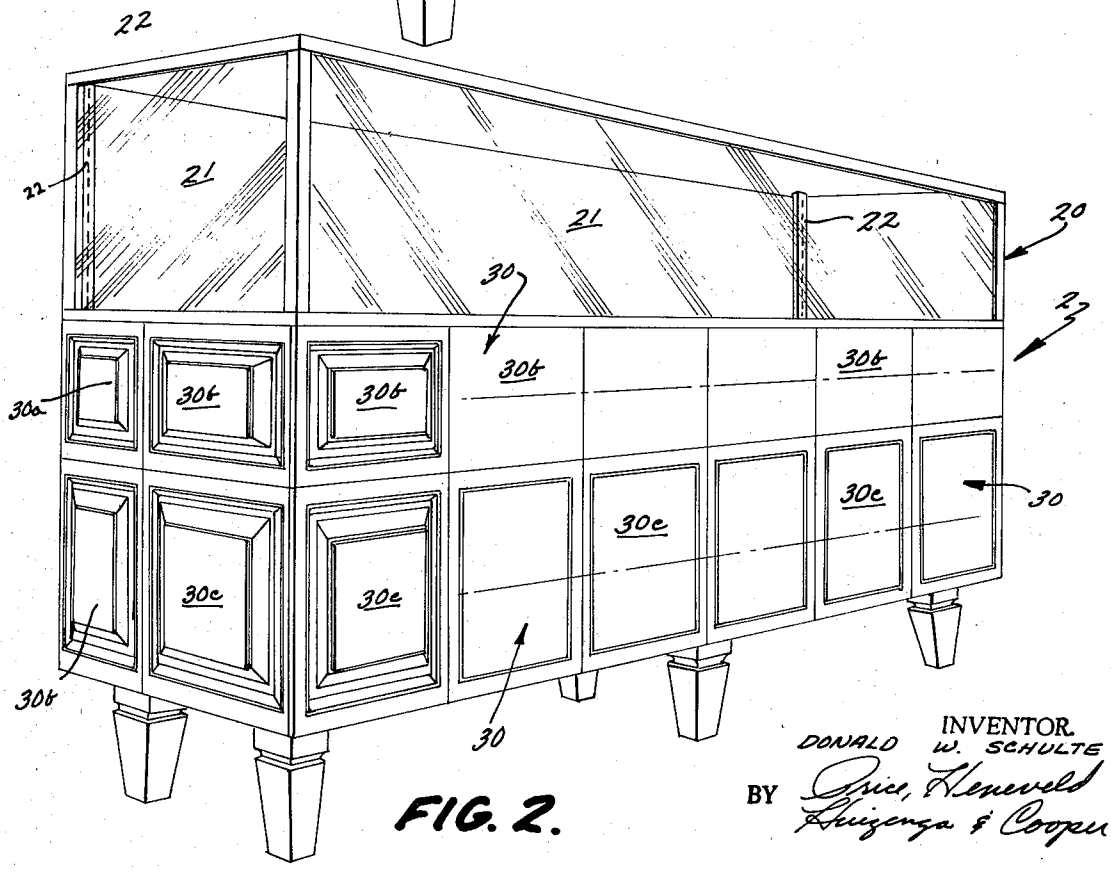


FIG. 2.

INVENTOR.
DONALD W. SCHULTE
BY Price, Heneveld Huizenga & Cooper
ATTORNEYS

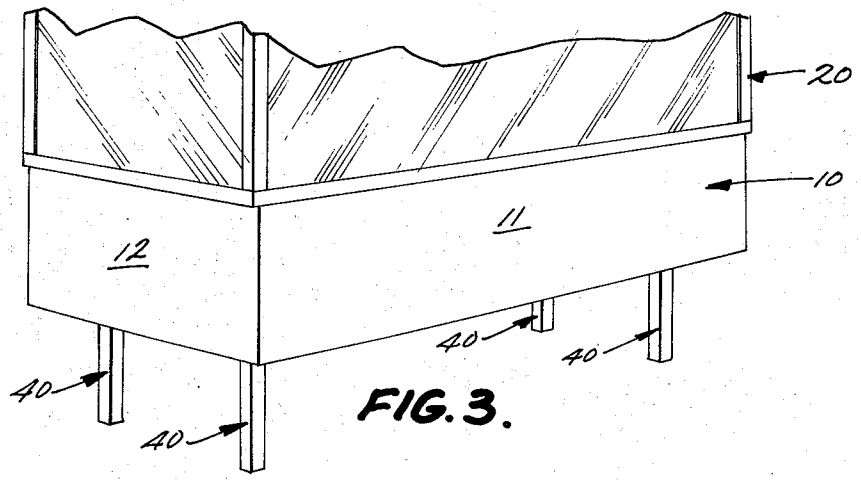


FIG. 3.

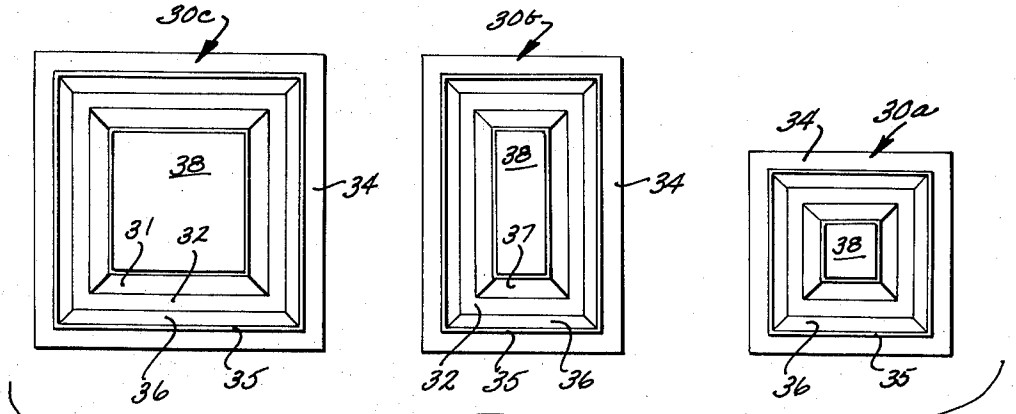


FIG. 4.

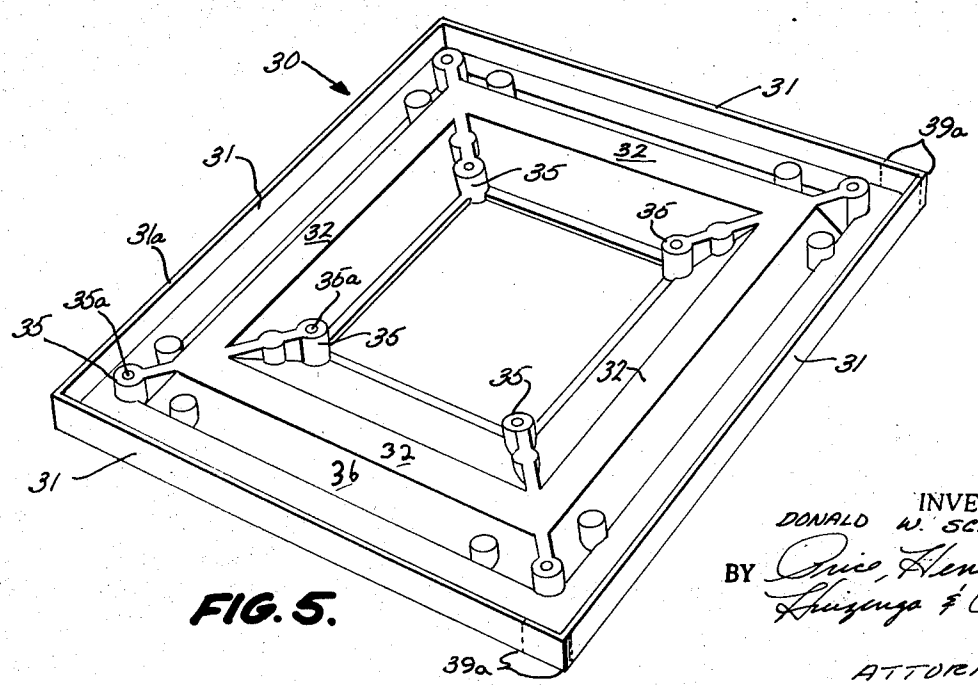


FIG. 5.

INVENTOR.
DONALD W. SCHULTE
BY Price, Heneveld, Huizenga & Cooper
ATTORNEYS

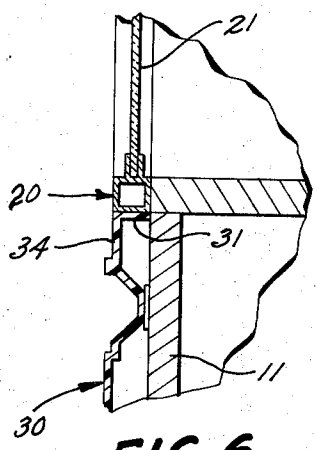


FIG. 6.

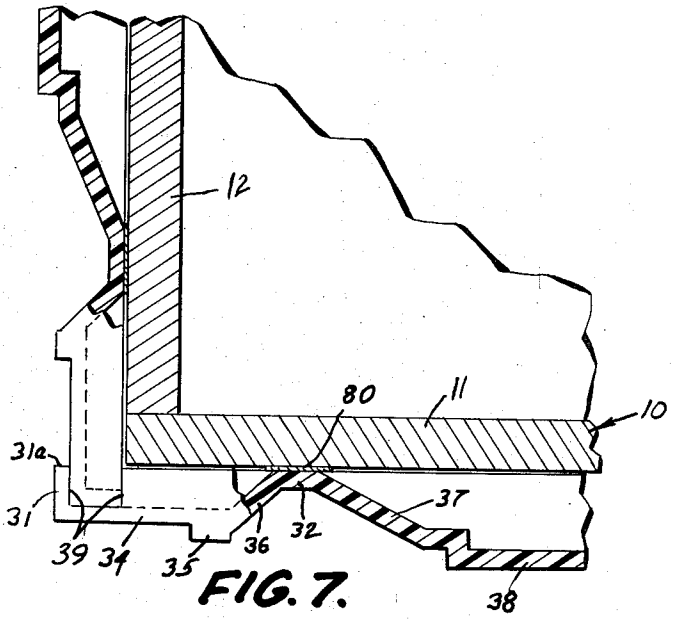


FIG. 7.

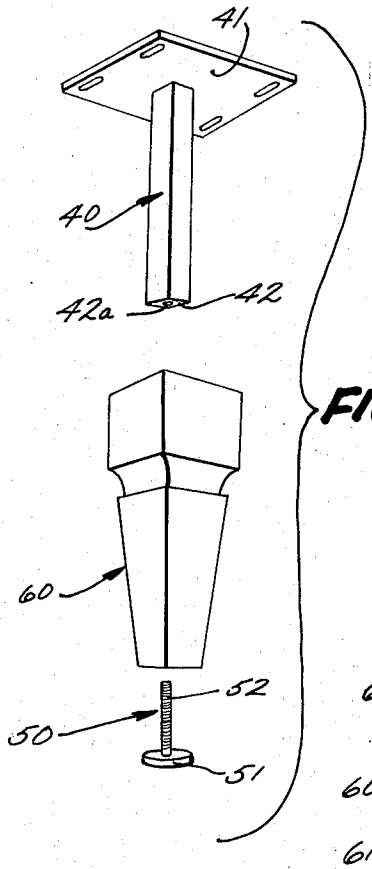


FIG. 8

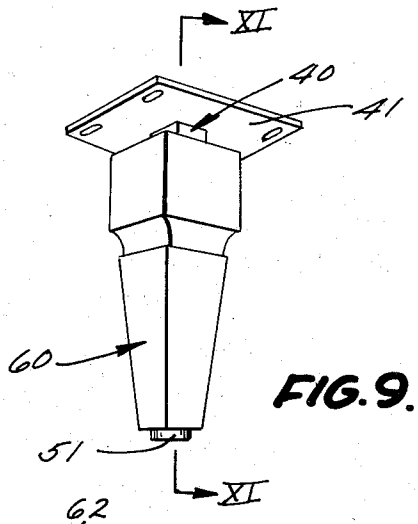


FIG. 9.

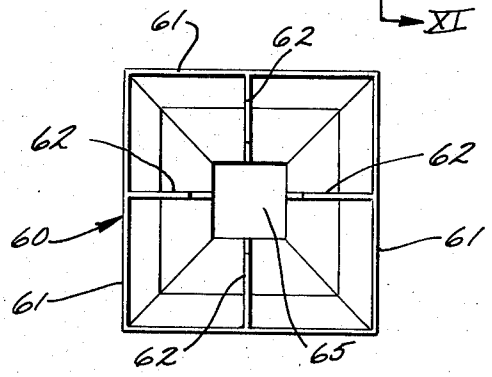


FIG. 10.

INVENTOR.
DONALD W. SCHULTE
BY Craig Hanewald
Luizenga & Cooper
ATTORNEYS

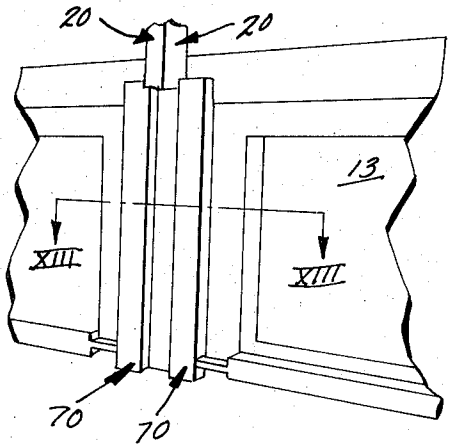


FIG. 12.

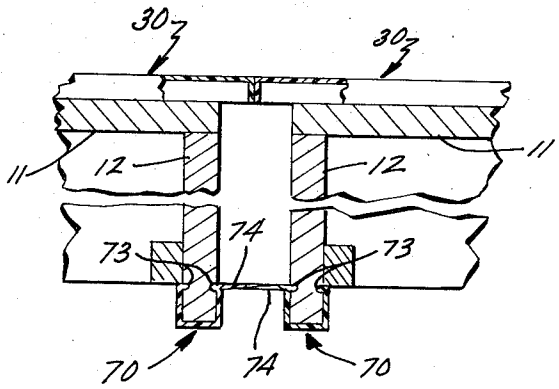


FIG. 13.

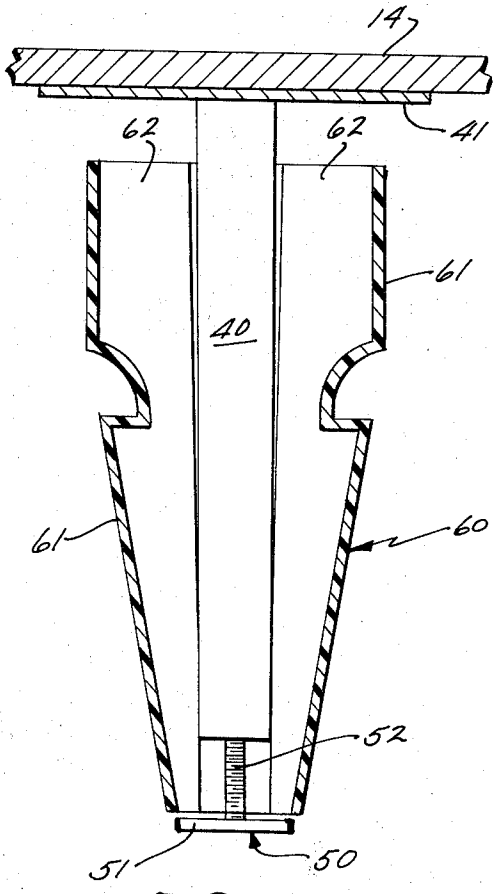


FIG. 11.

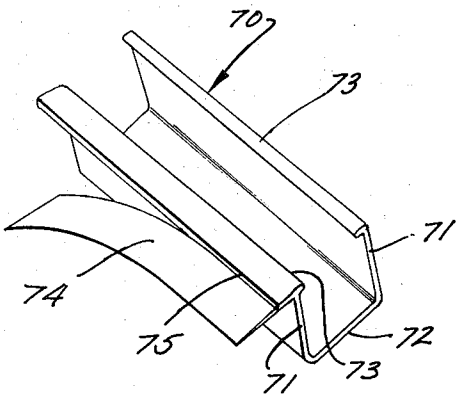


FIG. 14.

INVENTOR.
DONALD W. SCHULTE
BY Grice, Heneveld
Hueneya & Cooper
ATTORNEYS

SHOWCASE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to showcases. The term showcases is used to refer to many different types of merchandise display units, including both open sell selection and completely enclosed units. Particularly, it relates to the decorative bases which support the showcase glass and other fixtures.

Applique panels have been used heretofore to provide decorative surfaces for cabinets and the like. However, to my knowledge, they have not been used to cover the bases of showcases. One reason for this fact may be that a showcase manufacturer must supply a great variety of showcases. Accordingly, the base portions of these showcases come in many different sizes. It would constitute a substantial expense to provide a differently dimensioned applique panel for each of a number of different types of showcases.

Also, these plastic appliques must be resistant to fire in order to be acceptable for use in many areas. It is expensive to construct these panels of fireproof plastic. Fireproof plastic paints could be used, but to my knowledge, no such application of fireproof paint has been made. One reason may be that these panels often have a surface which simulates wood grain. For some reason, fireproof paints tend to obliterate the wood grain and accordingly cannot be used. This may be because of the grainy intumescent particles which are incorporated into the paint.

Yet another reason why decorative applique panels have not been used may be that manufacturers want to keep their base design plain and simple so that it is not incongruous with the tubular legs which are generally used to support the base. It is a significant manufacturing expense to provide decoratively turned wooden legs which would match the ornate appearance of panel appliques.

Thus, for a variety of reasons, showcases which are currently available do not incorporate decorative, plastic panels. Rather they are generally simple in appearance and are constructed of wood and metal.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a base, having a non-decorative surface, which is covered by a plurality of modularly inter-related decorative plastic panels. There are two different types of these panels, similar in design appearance, but having different length and width dimensions. The length and width dimensions of these different types of panels are whole number multiples of the side dimension of an imaginary, square module. The sides of the base which are covered have length and width dimensions which are also approximately whole number multiples of the side dimension of the imaginary module such that the sides can be covered by a combination of the modularly inter-related panels. The term "side dimension" refers to the length of the side of the imaginary square.

Using the teachings of this invention, a manufacturer can provide a wide variety of different types of showcases having bases of different sizes, but can cover all of those bases using only a few basic types of modularly inter-related panels. Indeed, it has been found that three such panels are sufficient: one being square having twice the side dimension of the imaginary module, the other having twice the width and thrice the length of the imaginary module, and the third having three times the length and three times the width of the imaginary module.

These panels have a wood grain finish. Yet they are fire retardant even through they are not made of fireproof material. I have found that by painting these panels with a non-intumescent fire retardant paint, I can provide the panels with sufficient fire retardants without obliterating the wood grain finish.

Another aspect of the invention, is the provision of a load supporting leg which, although it is simple and unsightly in appearance itself, is encased by a decorative sheath. The load bearing support post includes a means for securing the post to the showcase base. A leveler glide having a pad and a threaded post is threaded into a hole in the base of the support post. A decorative plastic sheath is slidably mounted on the load bearing support post and includes an aperture in its bottom sufficiently large to allow the threaded post of the leveler glide to pass therethrough. This aperture is sufficiently small that the pad of the leveler glide does not pass therethrough and thereby acts to prevent the sheath from falling off of the load bearing support post during handling and shipping.

Thus, the sheath can be provided with any type of decorative appearance which will blend with the decorative appearance of the modularly inter-related panels. Further, the threaded leveler post is completely hidden from view.

Yet another object of the invention comprises the provision of a decorative trim strip for the back of the base which includes a flange projecting laterally therefrom to overlap with a similar flange on a base of a showcase placed adjacent thereto. Where two showcases are to be abutted end-to-end, there is no purpose to be served by placing decorative panels on the end walls. Accordingly, because the frames of the showcases over-hang the bases, an unsightly crack would be created between the bases of the showcase at the back. No such crack would exist at the front because the panels on the front wall of the two showcases abut. The flanges on these trim strips extend laterally to cover this crack and overlap. The flange is made of sufficiently thin material that in the event that a showcase is to be used singly, the flange can readily be trimmed away.

Thus, this invention provides a showcase which is finished with plastic applique panels. These showcases can be used singly or abutted end-to-end. Each leg is encased with a decorative sheath which blends with the ornate design of the panels. These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be further understood and appreciated by reference to the written specification and appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the showcase;

FIG. 2 is a perspective of an alternative type of showcase, also made in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the showcase before the panels have been applied to the base;

FIG. 4. is a front elevation of the three modularly inter-related panels;

FIG. 5 is a rear perspective view of one of the panels;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary cross-section taken along plane VI—VI of FIG. 1;

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary cross-section taken along plane VII—VII of FIG. 1;

FIG. 8 is an exploded perspective view of the load supporting leg post, sheath, and leveler;

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of the assembled load supporting post, sheath, and leveler;

FIG. 10 is a plan view of the sheath;

FIG. 11 is a cross-section taken along plane XI—XI of FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is a rear perspective view of portions of abutting base portions of adjacent showcases;

FIG. 13 is a cross-section taken along plane XIII—XIII of FIG. 12; and

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of the decorative trim strip used at the back of abutting showcases.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In the preferred embodiment, a frame **20** is mounted on a base **10** (FIG. 3). The unfinished surface of three sides of base **10** are then covered with a plurality of modularly inter-related plastic panels **30** (FIGS. 1 and 2). Three types of panels are used (FIG. 4), but all have length and width dimensions which are whole number multiples of the squared dimension of an imaginary square module. Panel **30***a* is a square and has a square dimension which is twice that of the imaginary module. Panel **30***b* has the same width as panel **30***a*, but is three times as long as the square imaginary module. Panel **30***c* is a square having thrice the square dimension of the imaginary square module. Similarly, the length and width of the surfaces of base **10** are also approximately whole number multiples of the length and width of the imaginary module such that it can be covered by a combination of the panels **30***a*, **30***b* and **30***c*. Thus, the base **10** of showcase **1** shown in FIG. 1 and the base **10** of showcase **2** of FIG. 2 are both modularly related to the dimensions of the imaginary square module.

Base **10** is supported by tubular posts **40**. These include levelers **50** threaded into the bottom thereof to facilitate leveling (FIG. 11). Both the post **40** and the threaded post portion of leveler **50** are enclosed by a decorative plastic sheath **60** (FIGS. 11 and 8), which better blends with the design of panels **30** than would post **40**.

When the showcases are abutted endwise, the end walls of base **10** are not covered by panels **30** (FIG. 13). While the frames **20** and the panels **30** at the front of the showcases abut and thereby provide the appearance of a continuous showcase, a crack is left at the rear of abutting showcases. To block this gap, a decorative trim piece **70**, having a laterally extending flange **74**, is secured to the rear of each showcase such that the flanges **74** overlap. This gives a continuous appearance to the back of the showcases (FIGS. 12 and 13).

Base **10** comprises a front wall **11**, a pair of end walls **12** (FIG. 3), and an open back **13** (FIGS. 12). Back **13** is open to provide access to the interior of base **10** for storage purposes. The front wall **11** and the end walls **12** are preferably chipboard since this provides an economical construction material. Base **10** also includes a bottom **14** to which leg posts **40** are attached (FIG. 11).

Frame **20** is a conventional tubular metal frame whose function it is to support various types of display fixtures. Thus, glass windows **21** are supported in frame **20** (FIGS. 1, 2, and 6). Similarly, frame **20** includes integral mounting rails **22** at the rear of the showcase providing means for mounting display shelves (FIGS. 1 and 2).

The panels **30** are molded of styrene. They are given a uniform, thin, cross-sectional width (FIG. 7). Styrene, however, is not a fireproof material and apparently cannot be made so. Even if it could be made fireproof, the cost of doing so would be substantive. Accordingly, the panels are coated with a fire retardant paint. Intumescent fire retardant paints cannot be used because they obliterate the decorative wood grain finish of the panels **30** (see FIG. 2). Accordingly, a non-intumescent fire retardant paint is used to paint the panels **30**.

Three types of panels are provided (FIG. 4). All of the panels **30***a*, **30***b*, and **30***c* are modularly inter-related, based on an imaginary 4 inch square module. Thus, all of the panels have dimensions which are whole number multiples of the side dimension of the module.

Some of the multiples are even numbers, i.e. 2, and some are odd numbers, i.e. 3. This enhances the versatility of the system by increasing the dimensions which can be used for base **10**.

Thus, panel **30***a* is a square whose side dimension is twice that of the module square, i.e. 8 inches. Panel **30***b* has a length which is three times that of the module side dimension and a width which is twice that of the module side dimension. Thus, panel **30***b* is preferably 8 by 12 inches. Finally, panel **30***c* is a large square whose side dimension is three times that of the module side. Thus, panel **30***c* is twelve by twelve.

While in the preferred embodiment the system contemplates that the smallest square panel **30***a* has sides twice those of the imaginary module, the smallest square could have the same dimensions as the imaginary module, i.e. one times its side dimension. The rectangular panel **30***b* would then have a length twice that of the side dimension and a width one times that of the side dimension of the imaginary basic module. Panel **30***c* would then be twice the width and twice the length of the imaginary module. This modified system would still have units based on both odd number (1) and even number (2) whole number multiples. Such a variation would be within the broader scope of the invention.

Similarly, the base **10** is constructed with length and width dimensions which are modularly inter-related to those of the modular square to which the panels **30** are related. Just as the panels **30** have dimensions which are whole number multiples of those of the module side, so also do the front wall **11** and end walls **12** of base **10** have length and width dimensions which are whole number multiples of the length and width of the imaginary module square. Actually, this is only approximately so since the front **11** is shorter by slightly more than the thickness of two panels **30** and the end walls **12** are shorter by the thickness of one panel **30** for purposes which will hereinafter be explained. Because of this approximate inter-relationship, the surface of front wall **11** and end wall **12** of base **10** can be covered by

an appropriate combination of panels **30**. Of course, since our smallest panel has twice the length and width of the basic module, the walls **11** and **12** of the base must be at least twice the length and twice the width of the basic module. Referring to FIG. **1**, it will be seen that a plurality of panels **30***b* are used in conjunction with a panel **30***a* to cover the surfaces of front wall **11** and end walls **12**. With respect to showcase **2** shown in FIG. **2**, the panels **30***c* and one panel **30***b* are used to provide a bottom covering numeral for base **10** and a plurality of the panels **30***b* and one panel **30***a* are used to provide a top numeral covering base **10**. Thus, while the bases **10** for the different embodiments **1** and **2** have different dimensions, their dimensions are still modularly inter-related to the dimensions of the imaginary square module in accordance with the teachings of this invention.

Each individual panel **30** includes an edge wall **31** extending around the perimeter thereof which determines the edge thickness of the panel (FIGS. **5** and **7**). The edge wall **31** extends forwardly until it joins a laterally extending front wall **34** which provides a border wall which frames the remainder of the panel (FIGS. **4** and **7**). This wall then joins an inwardly sloping wall **36**, the two walls being joined at a raised, decorative rib portion **35** (FIGS. **4** and **7**). Inclined wall **36** then joins a mounting wall **32** which is generally perpendicular to edge wall **31** (FIGS. **4**, **5** and **7**). For decorative purposes, mounting wall **32** then merges with an outwardly sloped wall **37** which is joined to a raised front wall **38** (FIGS. **4** and **7**).

The surface of mounting wall **32** on the rear side of panel **30** (FIG. **5**) is approximately flush with the rearward edge **31***a* of edge wall **31** (FIGS. **5** and **7**). This places the inside surface of mounting wall **32** close to the surface of base **10** which is to be covered. Accordingly, a piece of two-faced tape **80** is adhered on one side to the inside surface of mounting wall **32** and is adhered at the other side to the chipboard surface of base **10** (FIG. **7**). Thus, it is important that mounting wall **32** be recessed rearwardly a sufficient distance that its rear surface will be approximately flush with the rear edge **31***a* of edge wall **31** in order to facilitate the mounting of panels **30** by means of two-faced tape **80**.

An alternative means for mounting panels **30** is provided by a plurality of mounting bosses **33** (FIG. **5**). Two such bosses **35** are positioned at each corner of panel **30**, on opposite sides of mounting wall **32**. These bosses **35** include apertures **35***a* therein whereby screws can be threaded through the wall **11** or the end walls **12** of base **10** and into the holes **35***a* of mounting bosses **35**. While the primary mounting means is provided by mounting wall **32** in double-faced tape **80**, the alternative mounting bosses **35** are provided in the event that a particular customer desires greater security in the mounting of panels **30** to base **10**. Staples can also be used in conjunction with bosses **35**.

The unique aspect of frame **20** lies in its dimensional relationship to base **10**. Frame **20** hangs over the edge of base **10** at its front wall **11** and end walls **12** by a distance which is equal to the thickness of a panel **30** at its edge wall **31** (FIG. **6**). Thus, at the intersection of panels **30** and frame **20**, the front of frame **20** is generally continuous or flushed with the border **34** of panel **30**. This provides for a showcase which is neat and trim in appearance.

At the corner of base **10** defined by the junction of front wall **11** with side wall **12**, the corner panels on each wall are joined in a unique manner to give the base **10** continuity in appearance. As set forth above, front wall **11** is shorter in length than a whole number multiple of the basic module by slightly more than twice the edge thickness of panels **30**, i.e., the width of edge wall **31**. Thus, the corner panels **30** on front wall **11** overhang front wall **11** by slightly more than the thickness of a panel **30** (FIG. **7**). The top and bottom edge wall of the overhanging corner panel **30** are cut away to form notches **39** (FIGS. **5** and **7**) from the overhanging vertical edge wall **31** for a distance approximately equal to the edge thickness of a panel **30**. In the alternative, the corner panel **30** on end wall **12** is notched similarly at **39***a* (FIG. **5**) except that portions of edge wall **31** and border wall **34** are also cut away at the top and bottom corners of the panel **30**. This allows the corner panel **30** on end wall **12** to be positioned with its overhanging vertical edge wall **31** hidden from view by the overhanging vertical edge wall of panel **30** on front wall **11**. The overhanging vertical edge wall **31** of panel **30** on front wall **11** overlaps a portion of the vertical border wall **34** of corner panel **30** on end wall **12**.

When two showcases are to be abutted end-to-end, no panels **30** are placed on the abutting end walls **12**. The fact that frame **20** overhangs makes it possible to abut the ends of frames **20** tightly together (FIG. **12**) while simultaneously abutting the ends of panel **30** on front wall **11** tightly together (FIG. **13**). Accordingly, this provides the abutted showcases with a trim, continuous appearance where they are abutted together.

However, there will be an opening or gap left at the back of the abutting showcases. This gap is filled and made continuous by means of the trim pieces **70**. Each trim piece is made of a plastic material and comprises a pair of side walls **71** depending upwardly from a base wall **72** to define a channel-shaped member of generally U-shaped cross-section (FIG. **14**). Depending laterally inwardly from the edge of each side wall **71** is a rib **73**. Depending from one side wall **71** is a wide flange **74**. The channel-shaped portion of trim piece **70**, which is defined by side walls **71** and base wall **72**, is fitted over the back edge of end wall **12** (FIG. **13**). The ribs **73** engage and mate with vertical grooves **15** in opposite sides of end wall **12**. Flange **74** projects laterally therefrom in the direction of the adjacent showcase. Since each showcase is provided with a trim piece, the flanges **74** overlap to thereby fill in the gap between the abutting showcases (FIGS. **12** and **13**). Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, it can be seen that each flange **74** is tapered, being wider at its junction with side wall **71** and narrower at its outer edge. This causes the overlapping flanges **74** of abutted showcases to overlap smoothly and continuously, as though they were a single integral member (FIG. **15**).

When the showcase is used singularly or at the end of a line of showcases, then the end wall **12** of base **10** is covered as in showcases **1** and **2** shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**. In this situation, it is desirable to have a flange **74** extending laterally from trim piece **70**. Accordingly, trim piece **70** is constructed of sufficiently thin material that flange **74** can readily be trimmed away from trim piece **70**. In the preferred embodiment, flange **74** includes a groove **75** extending longitudinally of trim piece **70**

spaced a short distance from the junction of flange 74 with side 71. Groove 75 makes it possible to simply tear the bulk of flange 74 away from trim piece 70 in the manner which is demonstrated in FIG. 14.

Base 10 is supported by four load-bearing support posts 40 (FIG. 3). Each support post 40 includes a mounting plate 41 at the top thereof to facilitate its mounting to the bottom 14 of base 10 (FIG. 11). Post 40 itself comprises a tubular piece of metal of generally square cross-section.

The bottom 42 (FIG. 8) of tubular metal post 40 includes a threaded aperture 42*a* therein whereby leveler 50 can be threaded into the base of post 40. Leveler 50 includes a pad 51 and an upwardly projecting threaded post 52 (FIG. 8). It is the threaded post 52 which is threaded into the threaded apertures 42a of post 40.

In actual assembly operations, sheath 60 is slidably mounted on post 40 before leveler 50 is threaded into the bottom 42 thereof. Sheath 60 is molded of styrene plastic or the like and is given a wood grain finish which corresponds to that of panels 30. As with panels 30, it is coated with a non-intumescent fireproof paint. Sheath 60 is slidably mounted on post 40 but is fairly tightly secured thereto by means of four ribs 62, each of which projects inwardly from, at generally right angles to, the outer walls 61 (FIG. 10). Referring to FIG. 11, particularly, it can be seen that the ribs 62 taper inwardly towards one another from top to bottom. Thus, they are more closely spaced together near their bottoms than at their tops. This makes it easy to insert post 40 into sheath 60, but creates a tight fit therewith as post 40 is inserted farther into the interior of sheath 60.

The bottom of sheath 60 comprises an aperture or opening 65 (FIG. 10) which is sufficiently large in diameter that it allows the passage of threaded post 52 of leveler 50 (FIG. 11). However, it is sufficiently small that it does not allow the passage of pad 51 of leveler 50. Accordingly, leveler 50 can be threaded into the base of post 40 while sheath 60 is in place thereon, and pad 51 of leveler 50 will act to hold sheath 60 in place on post 40 even during shipping and handling.

Once the showcase is placed in its location on the store floor, the levelers 50 can be adjusted to provide the showcase with a sound foundation. In order to prevent a portion of the threaded leveler post 52 from showing, sheath 60 can be slid downwardly until it sits tightly on the top of pad 51 (FIGS. 9 and 11). This will leave a slight gap between the top of sheath 60 and post mounting plate 41 (FIG. 9). However, because the supporting leg posts 40 are spaced back from the edge of the base 10 (FIG. 3), this gap will not be visible to the casual observer. An exposed, threaded leveler post 52 would be so visible.

Thus, the decorative panels 30 provide a showcase of exceptionally ornate appearance. The use of the decorative panel 30 is made possible, at least in part, due to the modular inter-relationship of the several different types of panels 30 and the dimensions of base 10. The problem of fireproofing has been solved by painting the surface of the wood grain finish panel 30 with a non-intumescent fire retardant paint. For some reason, the use of this type of fire retardant paint does not cover up the wood grain finish of panels 30.

Thus, the sheath 60 of this invention provides a covering for what would otherwise be a plain and unsightly support leg 40 and leveler 50. The decorative sheath 60 conforms in design to the design of the panel 30 and thereby gives design continuity to the entire showcase.

Due to the overhanging relationship of frame 20 to base 10, the frame 20 and the edges of the panels 30 which abut it provide a generally continuous and flush surface which is pleasing to the eye. Further, it makes possible the tight abutment of adjacent showcases when the end walls 12 thereof are not covered by panels 30. Unsightly gaps at the rear of this showcase are eliminated by decorative trim pieces 70 having laterally projecting flanges 74 which overlap to cover up the gap. Yet, the trim pieces 70 are versatile in that the flanges 74 can be trimmed away when the showcase is to be used singly.

Of course, it will be understood that the above is merely a preferred embodiment of the invention and that many changes and alterations can be made thereof without departing from the broader aspects and spirit of the invention.

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

1. A showcase comprising: a base having at least one wall with a non-decorative surface finish; a frame mounted on said base for supporting display fixtures; a plurality of decorative plastic panels secured to said wall of said base to cover said non-decorative surface; said panels being of at least two different types, similar in design appearance, but having different length and width dimensions; said different types of panels being modularly inter-related in that their length and width dimensions are whole number multiples of the side dimension of an imaginary square module; said wall having length and width dimensions which are approximately whole number multiples of said side dimension of said imaginary square module such that said side is covered by a combination of said different types of panels.

2. The showcase of claim 1 in which all of said panels are of equal thickness at their edges; said frame extending over the edge of said wall of said base a distance approximately equal to said edge thickness of said panels whereby said frame and said panels abutting said frame are generally flush along their line of intersection.

3. The showcase of claim 2 in which said base comprises a pair of end walls joining said one wall to define corners for said base; said one wall having a length which is less than a whole number multiple of said side dimension of said imaginary module by slightly more than twice said edge thickness of said panels; said end walls of said base having length and width dimensions which are approximately equal to whole number multiples of said side dimension of said imaginary square module with the length of each of said end walls being less than said whole number multiple by approximately said edge thickness of said panels; said end walls being covered by said plurality of panels; said frame overhanging said end walls by a distance approximately equal to said edge thickness of said panels; each of said panels having a peripheral edge wall extending forwardly to a front wall which extends laterally inwardly therefrom; at least one of said panels on said one wall of said base being a corner panel, disposed at said

corner and extending beyond on said corner by slightly more than said edge thickness of said panels; the top edge wall and the bottom edge wall of said corner panel being notched from the vertical edge wall disposed beyond said corner a distance approximately equal to said thickness of said panels; at least one of said panels covering said end wall being mounted at said corner such that it extends into said notches in said corner panel and is overlapped by said vertical edge wall of said corner panel which is disposed beyond said corner.

4. The showcase of claim 1 in which said panels have a decorative wood grain finish and are coated with a non-intumescent fire retardant paint.

5. The showcase of claim 1 in which said panels have a thin cross-section and have a peripheral edge wall extending rearwardly from a first front wall; said first front wall joining a rearwardly projecting second wall which joins a mounting wall which is generally perpendicular to said peripheral edge wall; said mounting wall being recessed a sufficient distance from said first front wall that its rear surface is approximately flush with the rear edge of said edge wall of said panel; said panel being secured to said base by means of two-faced adhesive tape which is adhered on one side to said rear surface of said mounting wall of said panel and on its other side to said base.

6. The showcase of claim 5 in which said panel also comprises screw mounting bosses on the rear side thereof whereby said panel can be alternatively bolted to said base or secured thereto by said two-faced tape.

7. The showcase of claim 1 in which three types of panels are provided for covering said base; one of said panels comprising a square having twice the side dimension of said imaginary square module; the second of said panels comprising a rectangle having a width equal to twice said side dimension of said imaginary module and a length equal to three times said side dimension of said imaginary square module; said third panel comprising a square having a side dimension which is three times the side dimension of said imaginary square module.

8. The showcase of claim 7 in which said imaginary square module has a side dimension of 4 inches.

9. The showcase of claim 1 which comprises: a load bearing support post; means for securing said post to the underside of said base; a leveler glide having a pad and a threaded post extending upwardly therefrom; a decorative, plastic sheath, having a decorative appearance compatible with the decorative appearance of said panels, being slidably mounted on said load bearing support post for encapsulating said post and at least a portion of said leveler glide.

10. The showcase of claim 9 in which said sheath has an aperture in the bottom thereof sufficiently large to allow said threaded post of said leveler glide to pass therethrough for threading into the bottom of said load bearing support post; said aperture being too small to allow passage of said pad therethrough, whereby said pad prevents said sheath from sliding off said leg during shipping and handling.

11. The showcase of claim 9 in which said decorative, plastic sheath has inwardly projecting ribs for engaging said post whereby said sheath is slidably and snugly mounted on said post.

12. The showcase of claim 11 in which said ribs are tapered at their inside edges adjacent said support post; said inside edges being farther apart at the top of said sheath to facilitate insertion of said support post into said sheath, but being closer together at the bottom of said sheath whereby said ribs snugly engage said post at the bottom of said sheath.

13. The showcase of claim 2 in which said one wall is joined to a pair of end walls at either end of said base; said one wall having a length which is less than a whole number multiple of said side dimension of said imaginary module by approximately twice said edge thickness of said panels; said panels covering said one wall at the ends thereof extending beyond the junction of said one wall with said end walls by a distance approximately equal to said edge thickness of said panels; said frame overhanging said end walls by a distance approximately equal to said edge thickness of said panels whereby when a pair of said showcases are abutted endwise, their frames and their panels at the ends of said one wall abut; a decorative trim piece having a channel-shaped portion and a laterally extending flange portion being mounted on the rear edge of at least one of said end walls which is spaced from said one wall; said channel-shaped portion including a pair of spaced side walls joined together by a base wall, said channel-shaped portion of said trim piece being fitted over said rear edge of said one of said end walls to effectuate said connection therewith; said flange extending laterally from that side wall of said trim piece which embraces the exterior surface of said end wall whereby said flange extends into the gap formed between abutting showcases when they are placed in endwise abutment.

14. The showcase of claim 13 which further comprises: a base having a front wall and two rearwardly projecting end walls; a decorative trim piece having a channel-shaped portion and a laterally extending flange portion; said channel-shaped portion including a pair of spaced side walls joined together by a base wall; said channel-shaped portion of said trim piece being fitted over the rear edge of one of said end walls of said showcase; said flange extending laterally from that side wall of said trim piece which embraces the exterior surface of said end wall whereby said flange extends into any gap formed between abutting showcases.

15. The showcase of claim 13 in which said flange is tapered, being wider at its junction with said side wall of said trim piece and being narrower at its outer edge.

16. The showcase of claim 13 in which said trim piece is constructed of thin plastic material whereby said flange can be trimmed away when desired.

17. The showcase of claim 1 in which said whole number multiples include both odd and even numbers.

18. A showcase comprising: a base having a front wall and two rearwardly projecting end walls; a decorative trim piece having a channel-shaped portion and a laterally extending flange portion; said channel-shaped portion including a pair of spaced side walls joined together by a base wall; said channel-shaped portion of said trim piece being fitted over the rear edge of one of said end walls of said showcase; said flange extending laterally from that side wall of said trim piece which embraces the exterior surface of said end wall whereby said flange extends into any gap formed between abutting showcases.

19. The showcase of claim 18 in which said trim piece is constructed of thin plastic material whereby said flange can be trimmed away when desired.

20. The showcase of claim 18 in which said flange includes a groove extending longitudinally of said trim piece whereby said flange can readily be trimmed away from the remainder of said trim piece.

21. The showcase of claim 18 in which said flange is tapered, being wider at its junction with said side wall

of said trim piece and being narrower at its outer edge.

22. The showcase of claim 21 in which said side walls of said trim piece include ribs projecting laterally inwardly towards one another; said one of said end walls having a vertical groove therein on its inner and outer surface, each of which is matingly engaged by one of said ribs on said trim piece.

* * * * *