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(54) **LIGHTER HOLDER**

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(76) Inventors: **Lee Morgan**, Cerritos, CA (US); **Vickie Bui**, Cerritos, CA (US)

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Correspondence Address:

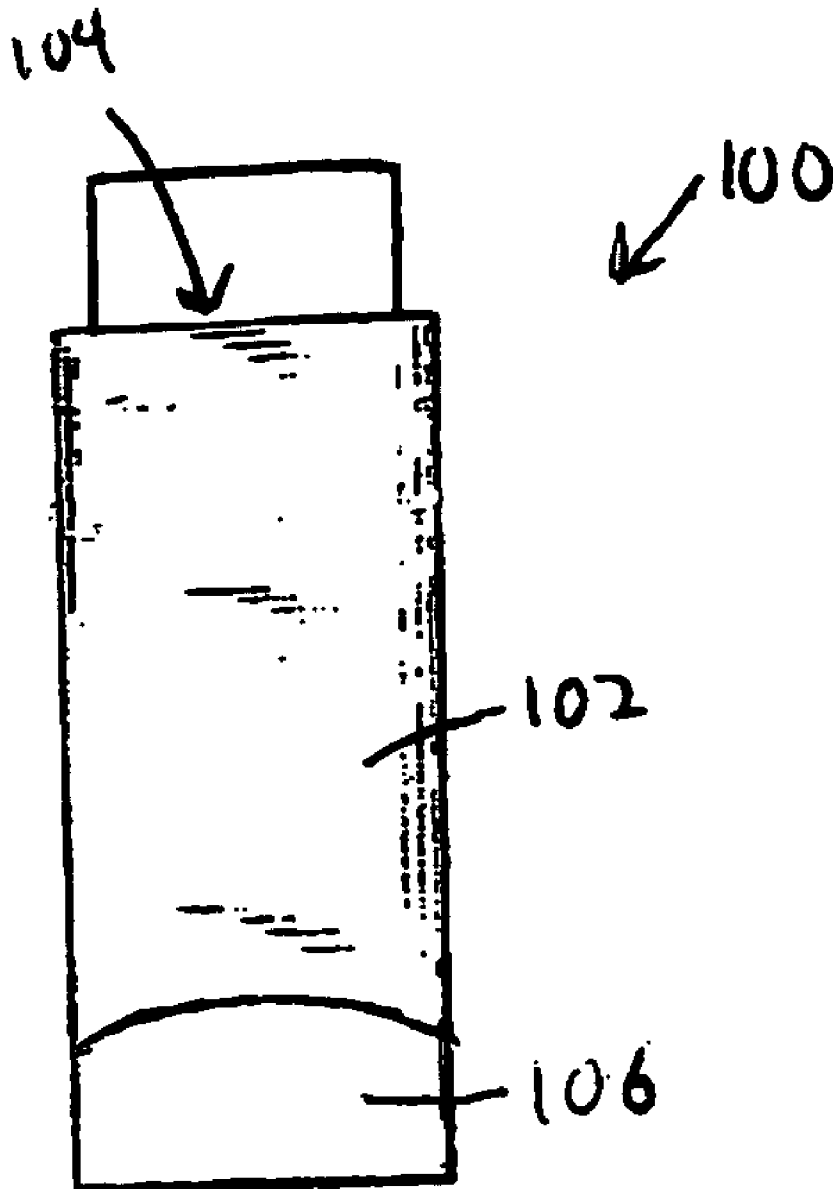
**MACPHERSON KWOK CHEN & HEID LLP**  
**1762 TECHNOLOGY DRIVE, SUITE 226**  
**SAN JOSE, CA 95110 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A lighter holder has a back portion attached to a clip, where the clip secures the lighter holder to a top, bottom, or side of a cigarette pack. An opening on at least the front portion of the lighter holder allows the user to push the lighter out of the holder more easily, which then enables to user to grab the lighter and pull it completely out of the holder.

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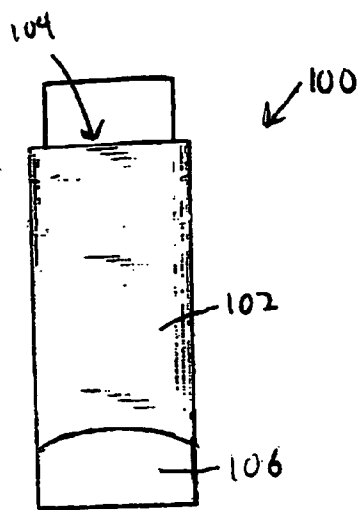


Fig. 1A

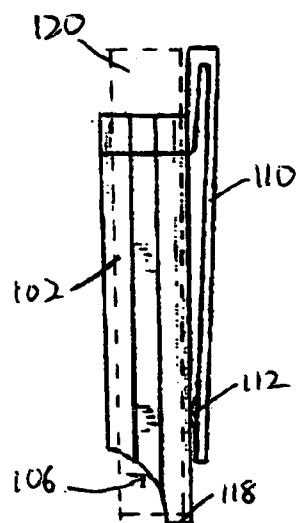


Fig. 1B

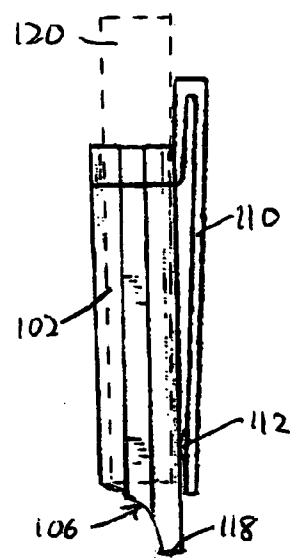


Fig. 1C

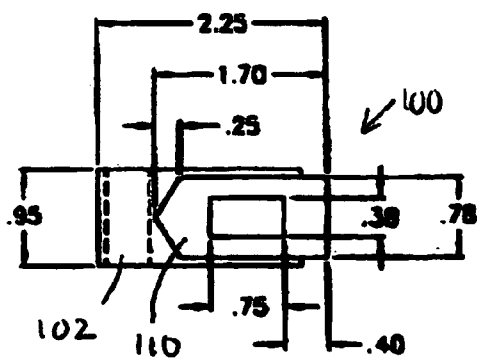


Fig. 1D

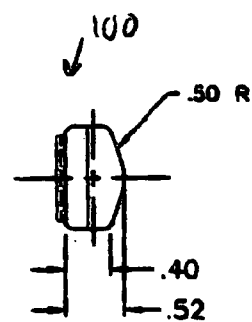
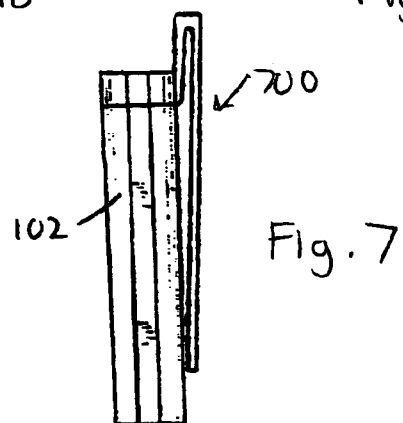
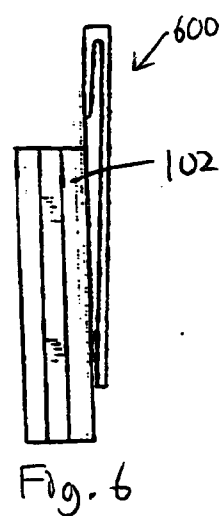
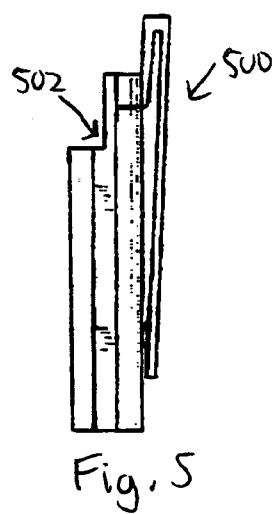
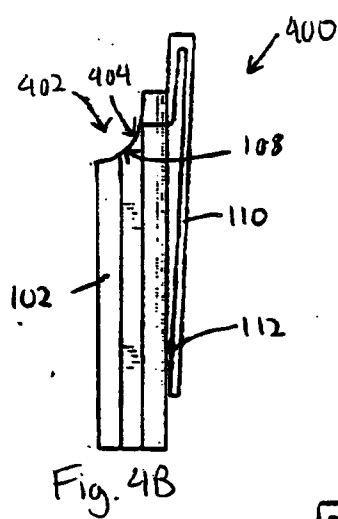
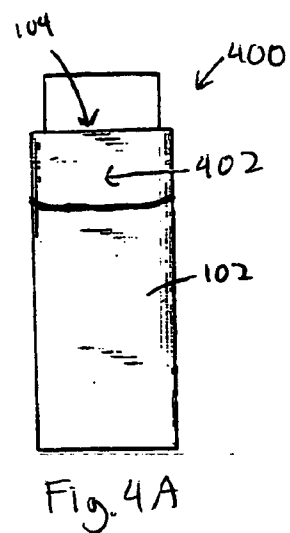
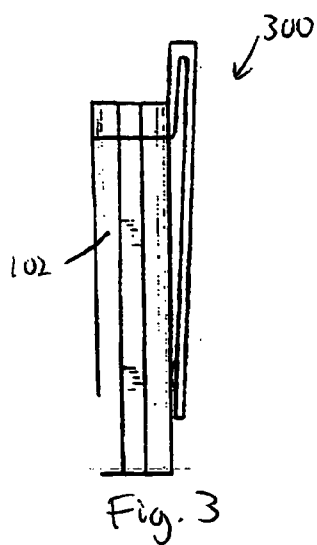
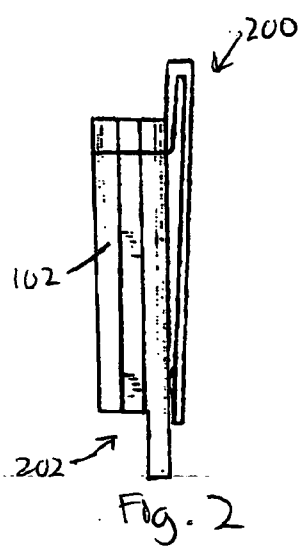


Fig. 1E



## LIGHTER HOLDER

### BACKGROUND

#### [0001] 1. Field of Invention

[0002] The present invention generally relates to lighter holders, and more particularly to lighter holders that can clip on cigarette packages.

#### [0003] 2. Related Art

[0004] The sales and use of cigarettes are substantial throughout the world. Smokers typically take their cigarettes wherever they go, such as in their purses, pockets, jackets, pants, and briefcases to name a few. This gives them the opportunity to smoke wherever and whenever they desire. However, as most smokers know, it is not always easy to locate a match or lighter when you want to smoke. As a result, smokers usually carry something to light their cigarettes, with matches and lighters being the most common.

[0005] Among lighters, disposable butane lighters are widely used to light cigarettes. These disposable lighters are very inexpensive and readily available at most locations where cigarettes are sold. Because of the low cost, smokers do not have to worry about losing the lighters, and as a result, are oftentimes careless in keeping track of the lighters. Consequently, even though the smoker may have the cigarettes, the smoker may not be able to locate their lighter to light the cigarette, such as misplacing the lighter or forgetting to bring along the lighter. Thus, it is important for smokers to have their lighter handy and available with their cigarettes.

[0006] To address this problem, there have been many attempts in the past to provide lighter holders that can be attached to a pack of cigarettes. One type of holder attaches to the side of the pack, with some sort of retaining mechanism to hold the lighter. Such holders have a tendency to be bulky since it increases the girth of pack of cigarettes. Also, some types of retention mechanisms do not securely attach to the pack of cigarettes, which results in loss of both the lighter and the holder.

[0007] Another type of holder clips on the top, bottom, or side of a cigarette pack. An example is shown in U.S. Pat. No. D489,478, entitled "Lighter with Clip". Here, the lighter holder has a clip that slides onto a side of the pack to secure the holder to the pack. The holder also has an opening, into which a disposable butane lighter fits. The opening is designed to fit the shape of the butane lighter. A small hole is located at the bottom of the opening to allow the lighter to be more easily inserted into the opening. Without the opening, air would have to escape through the sides as the lighter is inserted, which makes insertion more difficult. Once fully inserted, only a small upper portion of the lighter is exposed. The lighter is then removed by pulling on this small portion. The disadvantage of this design is that the lighter may be difficult to remove, especially when the fit is tight, such as when the holder is new.

[0008] Therefore, there is a need for a lighter holder that overcomes the disadvantages of conventional holders discussed above.

### SUMMARY

[0009] According to one aspect of the present invention, a lighter holder has a lighter holder portion having an opening

configured to hold a conventional lighter and a flexible flap attached to the holder portion in parallel with lighter holder portion. The opening is configured such that a conventional lighter can fit into the opening. An additional opening is provided along the front bottom portion, where a surface extends partially along the bottom portion from the back of the lighter holder to support the lighter. This additional opening allows the user to easily remove the lighter by simply pushing the lighter up and out of the opening, such as the user's thumb. As a result, more of the lighter is exposed through the top portion of the lighter holder, allowing the user to more easily pull the lighter completely out of the holder.

[0010] In one embodiment, the lighter holder portion and the flexible flap are approximately the width of a side or top of a pack of cigarettes. The flap is made of a plastic and is attached to the holder portion by another piece of plastic along the top portion of the holder portion. The free end of the clip is pressed into the body of the holder portion. Thus, the clip can be simply slipped into an opening of the pack of cigarettes and held securely thereto.

[0011] In one embodiment, the lighter holder portion has an approximately elliptical/rectangular opening to fit a conventional disposable butane lighter. The main opening is deep enough such that the lighter is held securely by the holder portion. The additional opening is along at least the front bottom part of the holder portion and is large enough for a user's thumb to contact a sufficiently large area of the lighter to allow easy movement of the lighter out of the main opening. In another embodiment, the additional opening also extends along the sides of the holder portion, where the transition from the front to the sides are curved. This allows the user to easily access the lighter.

[0012] According to another embodiment of the invention, the additional opening is provided along the top portion, away from the flexible flap. This additional opening also allows the user to push the lighter out of opening partially to expose more of the top part of the lighter, enabling the user to easily remove the lighter. In this embodiment, the additional opening along the top also allows simpler insertion since there is more of an opening with which to insert the lighter.

[0013] These and other features and advantages of the present invention will be more readily apparent from the detailed description of the preferred embodiments set forth below taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] **FIG. 1A** is a front view of a lighter holder according to one embodiment of the present invention;

[0015] **FIG. 1B** is a side view of the lighter holder of **FIG. 1A**, with the lighter contained completely within the holder;

[0016] **FIG. 1C** is a side view of the lighter holder of **FIG. 1A**, with the lighter pushed partially out of the holder;

[0017] **FIG. 1D** is a back view of the lighter holder of **FIG. 1A**;

[0018] **FIG. 1E** is a bottom view of the lighter holder of **FIG. 1A**;

[0019] **FIG. 2** is a side view of a lighter holder according to a second embodiment of the invention;

[0020] **FIG. 3** is a side view of a lighter holder according to a third embodiment of the invention;

[0021] **FIG. 4A** is front view of a lighter holder according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] **FIG. 4B** is a side view of the lighter of **FIG. 4A**;

[0023] **FIG. 5** is a side view of a lighter holder according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention;

[0024] **FIG. 6** is a side view of a lighter holder according to a sixth embodiment of the present invention; and

[0025] **FIG. 7** is a side view of a lighter holder according to a seventh embodiment.

[0026] Embodiments of the present invention and their advantages are best understood by referring to the detailed description that follows. It should be appreciated that like reference numerals are used to identify like elements illustrated in one or more of the figures.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0027] **FIGS. 1A-1E** show various views of a lighter holder **100** according to one embodiment of the invention. Lighter holder **100** is a unitary device made of injection molded plastic, although other materials may also be suitable, such as glass-filled plastic, polyethylene or polypropylene having an appropriate density. The physical properties of the material to be used will depend upon, and will influence, the thicknesses of various parts of lighter holder **100**. Lighter holder **100** includes a lighter holder body or portion **102** (**FIGS. 1A-1D**) having an opening **104** at the top for accepting and holding a conventional lighter (not shown). The opening is shaped to snugly fit the lighter. In this embodiment, the opening is a partial elliptical/partial rectangular shape to fit conventional disposable butane lighters. Other shaped openings may also be suitable, depending on the fit and shape of the lighter.

[0028] As seen from **FIGS. 1A-1D**, holder body **102** is formed with an additional opening **106** along the front and side of the bottom portion of holder body **102**. This additional opening **106** enables the user to more easily remove the lighter once it is inserted into opening **104**, as will be discussed below. As seen from **FIGS. 1B and 1C**, additional opening **106** has a curved portion **108** and does not extend completely through the side of holder body **102**. Further, additional opening **106** does not extend completely to the back of holder body **102**. A surface **118** extends partially from the back of holder body **102** to prevent the lighter from falling through holder body **102**.

[0029] Referring to **FIGS. 1A-1D**, lighter holder **100** also includes a flap **110** attached to the upper portion of holder body **102**. Flap **110** can be formed unitarily with holder body **102**. From the attached portion of holder body **102**, flap **110** extends upward to a length such that the lighter, when fully inserted into holder body **102**, does not protrude past the top of flap **110**. Flap **110** then extends down at an angle and into holder body **102**. In other words, flap **110** is not parallel to holder body **102**. The bottom of flap **110** is pressed against holder body **102**. Flap **110** is flexible such that flap **110** can be moved away from holder body **102** to slide a portion of

the top (or bottom) of the pack of cigarettes between flap **110** and holder body **102**. A small protrusion **112** may be formed on the inner surface of flap **110** to help secure the cigarette pack to lighter holder **100**.

[0030] In one type of use, lighter holder **100** is held in one hand, while a pack of cigarettes is held in another hand. Flap **110** is slid into an opening on the side of a top of the pack of cigarettes. Holder body **102** is now secured to the top of the pack of cigarettes. Referring to **FIG. 1B**, a lighter **120** can then be inserted into lighter holder **100** by simply pushing the lighter into opening **104**. The lighter can also be placed into lighter holder **100** prior to attaching lighter holder **100** to the pack of cigarettes. Lighter **120** is now secured to the pack of cigarettes, which greatly minimizes the chances of misplacing or forgetting the lighter. As seen from **FIG. 1B**, a bottom portion of lighter **120** is exposed along the bottom portion of holder body **102**, and a top portion of lighter **102** is exposed through the top portion of holder body **102**.

[0031] To remove lighter **120** from lighter holder **100**, the user can place a thumb onto lighter **120** through additional opening **106** and push the lighter partly out of holder body **102**. A much larger area is now available for the user to grab and remove the lighter completely, as shown in **FIG. 1C**. Thus, the lighter can be much more easily removed with the present invention than with conventional lighter holders.

[0032] **FIG. 2** is a side view of a lighter holder **200** according to a second embodiment of the present invention. Lighter holder **200** is similar to lighter holder **100** of **FIGS. 1A-1E**, except that the additional opening does not have a curved portion, but instead has an angled portion **202**, e.g., 90°. Depending on design and/or manufacturing issues, this may be desirable over a curved portion.

[0033] **FIG. 3** is a side view of a lighter holder **300** according to a third embodiment of the present invention. Lighter holder **300** is similar to lighter holder **100**, except that the additional opening is only at the front of holder body **102** and does not extend at all into the sides. In this embodiment, the user can only use the exposed front portion to move the lighter partially out of holder body **102** for eventual removal. However, for design and/or manufacturing factors, this may be desirable.

[0034] **FIGS. 4A and 4B** are front and side views of a lighter holder **400** according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, lighter holder **400** has an additional opening **402** along the front and side of the top of holder body **102**, instead of the bottom. Additional opening **402** has a curved portion **404** and does not extend completely through the side of holder body **102**. Other features are similar to lighter holder **100** and thus descriptions will be omitted where redundant.

[0035] In one type of use, to remove the lighter from lighter holder **400**, the user can place a thumb onto the lighter through additional opening **402** and push the lighter partly out of holder body **102**. The main difference with this embodiment is that the pushing is along a side portion of the lighter, instead of the bottom portion. However, similar to the previous embodiments, a much larger area is now available for the user to grab and remove the lighter completely. With the present embodiment, the partial side openings also enable the user to grab the lighter through these

openings and pull the lighter out completely. Thus, the lighter can be much more easily removed with the present invention than with conventional lighter holders.

[0036] **FIG. 5** is a side view of a lighter holder **500** according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention. Lighter holder **500** is similar to lighter holder **400** of **FIGS. 4A and 4B**, except that the additional opening does not have a curved portion, but instead has an angled portion **502**, e.g., 90°. Depending on design and/or manufacturing issues, this may be desirable over a curved portion.

[0037] **FIG. 6** is a side view of a lighter holder **600** according to a sixth embodiment. Again, lighter holder **600** is similar to previous embodiments, except that the additional opening on the side extends completely, instead of partially, to the back of holder body **102**. This exposes a larger area on the lighter for the user to grab and remove the lighter.

[0038] **FIG. 7** is a side view of a lighter holder **700** according to a seventh embodiment of the present invention. Lighter holder **700** is similar to lighter holder **400**, except that the additional opening is only at the front of holder body **102** and does not extend at all into the sides. In this embodiment, the user can only use the exposed front portion to move the lighter partially out of holder body **102** for eventual removal. However, for design and/or manufacturing factors, this may be desirable.

[0039] Having thus described embodiments of the present invention, persons skilled in the art will recognize that changes may be made in form and detail without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, the above description shows openings on both sides of the lighter holder. However, only one side may have an opening, whether partial or complete. Thus the invention is limited only by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A lighter holder, comprising:
  - two opposing side portions;
  - a back portion connecting the two side portions;
  - a front portion connecting the two side portions and having a length less than the length of the back portion to create a first opening along the top bottom area of the lighter holder;
  - a bottom portion partially extending from the back portion and connecting the side and back portions, wherein the bottom, side, back, and front portions form a cavity configured to accept a lighter; and
  - a flap portion connected to the top of the back portion and angled inward toward a lower area of the back portion.
2. The lighter holder of claim 1, wherein at least one side portion has a length less than the length of the back portion to create a second opening along a bottom side area of the lighter holder.
3. The lighter holder of claim 2, wherein both side portions have a length less than the length of the back portion to create a second opening along both top bottom areas of the lighter holder.

4. The lighter holder of claim 1, wherein the flap portion extends above the top of the back portion.

5. The lighter holder of claim 1, wherein the bottom portion extends completely to the front portion.

6. The lighter holder of claim 2, wherein the second opening extends partially along the bottom side area.

7. The lighter holder of claim 1, wherein the second opening extends completely to the back portion.

8. The lighter holder of claim 2, wherein the interface between the first and second openings is curved.

9. The lighter holder of claim 2, wherein the interface between the first and second openings is angled.

10. A lighter holder, comprising:

two opposing side portions;

a back portion connecting the two side portions;

a front portion connecting the two side portions and having a length less than the length of the back portion to create a first opening along the top front area of the lighter holder;

a bottom portion connecting the side, back, and front portions, wherein the bottom, side, back, and front portions form a cavity configured to accept a lighter; and

a flap portion connected to the top of the back portion and angled inward toward a lower area of the back portion.

11. The lighter holder of claim 10, wherein at least one side portion has a length less than the length of the back portion to create a second opening along a top side area of the lighter holder.

12. The lighter holder of claim 11, wherein both side portions have a length less than the length of the back portion to create a second opening along both top side areas of the lighter holder.

13. The lighter holder of claim 11, wherein the second opening extends completely to the back portion.

14. The lighter holder of claim 11, wherein the second opening extends partially along the top side area.

15. The lighter holder of claim 11, wherein the interface between the first and second openings is curved.

16. The lighter holder of claim 11, wherein the interface between the first and second openings is angled.

17. A method of removing a lighter from a lighter holder, the method comprising:

pushing the lighter through an first opening on a front portion of the lighter holder; and

grasping an upper portion of the lighter; and

pulling the lighter completely out of the lighter holder.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the pushing is by a user's thumb.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the first opening is along an upper portion of the lighter holder.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the first opening is along a lower portion of the lighter holder.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the pushing is also through an opening along a bottom portion of the lighter holder.

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