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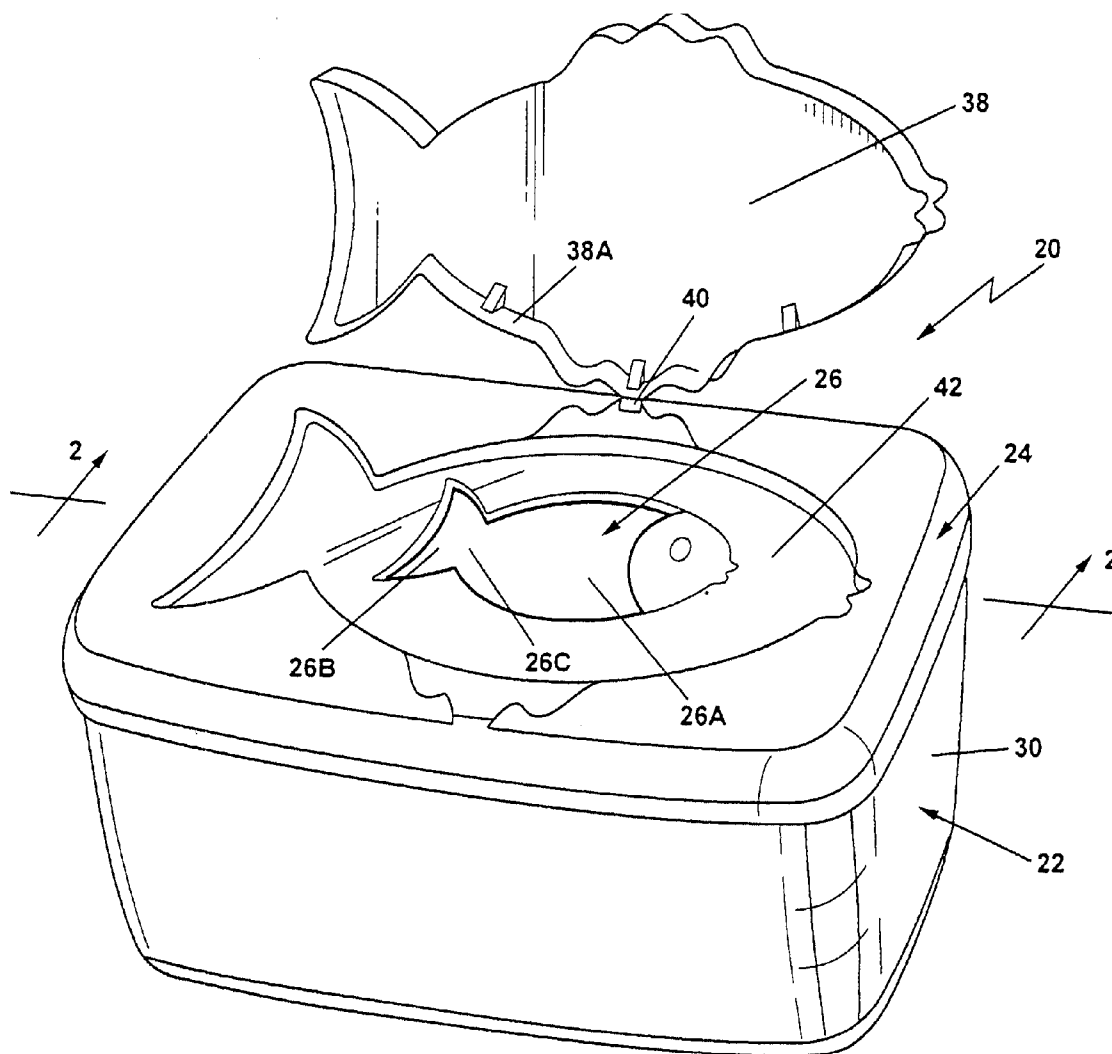
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A container for one-handed pop-up dispensing plural wiping sheets. The container comprises a housing having a hollow interior in which an array of wiping sheets is disposed. The housing includes an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object. The opening has a first portion and a second portion. The first portion is of sufficient size and shape to enable an adult to extend his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array to pull the sheet into it and then slide the sheet into the second portion. The second portion frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from the container.

(22) Filed: **May 27, 2004**



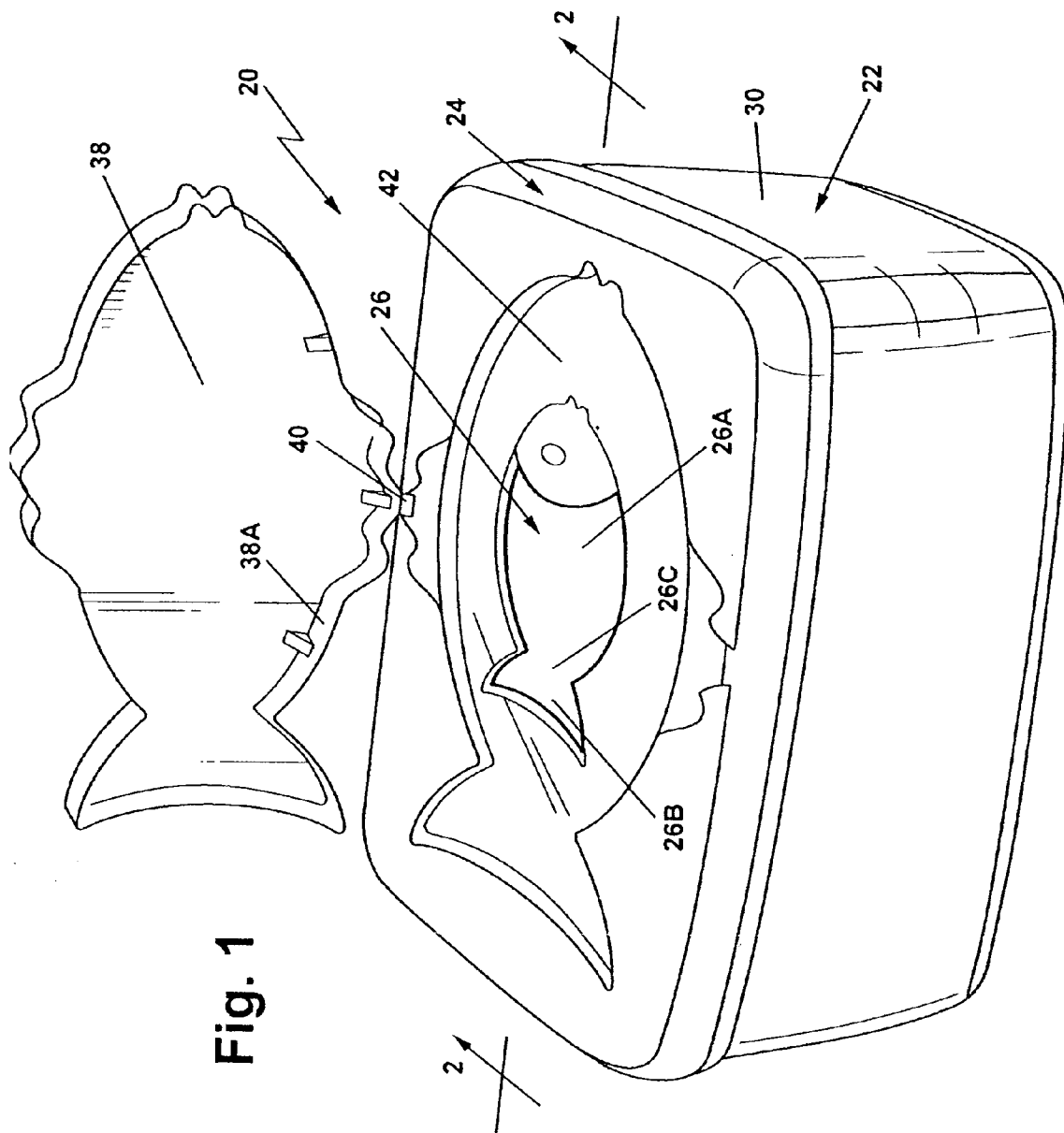
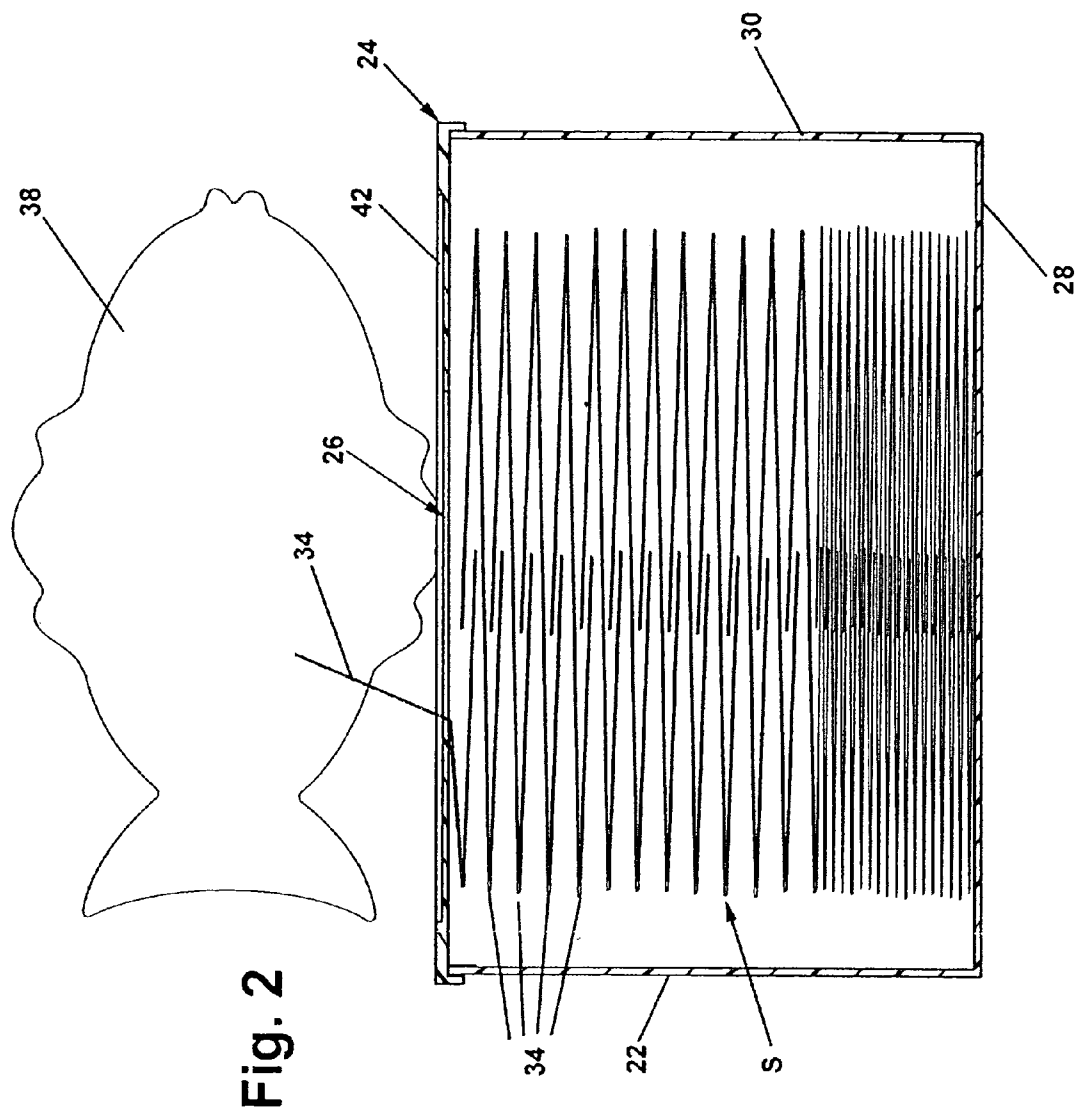


Fig. 1



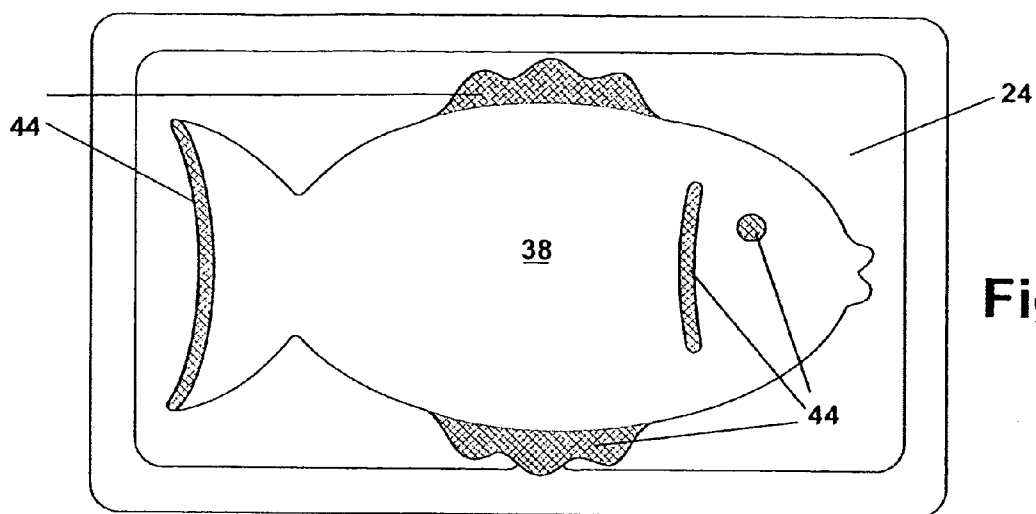


Fig. 3

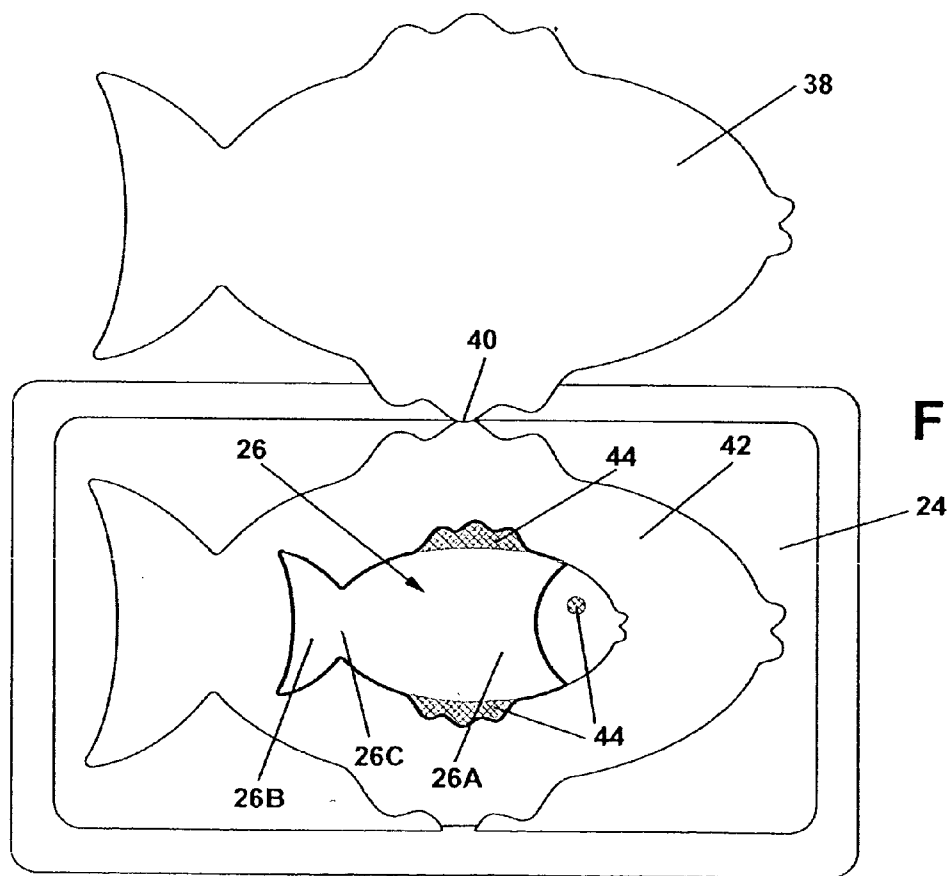


Fig. 4

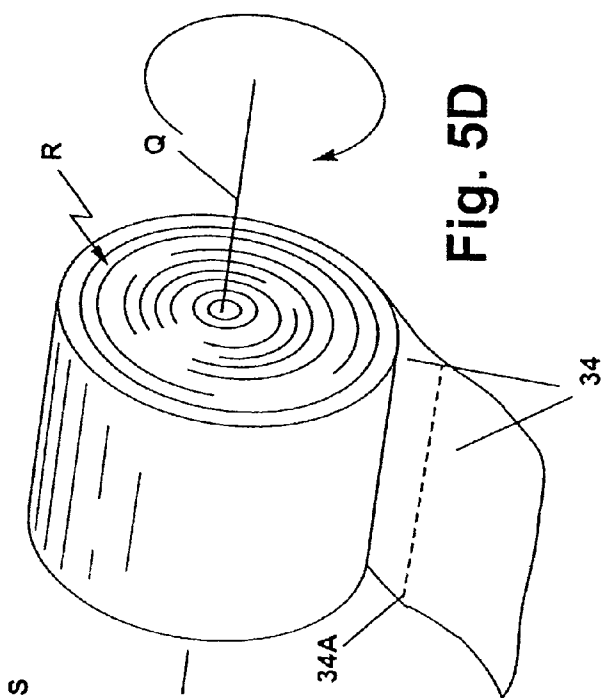


Fig. 5D

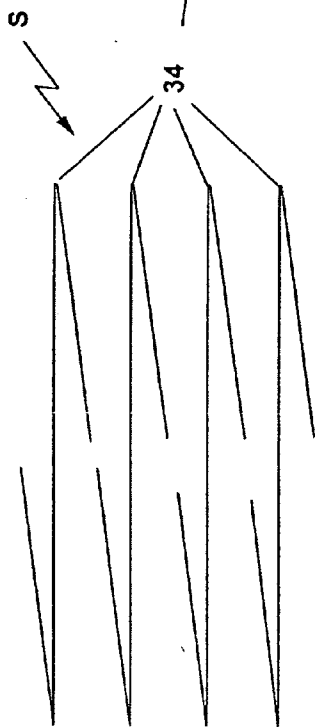


Fig. 5A

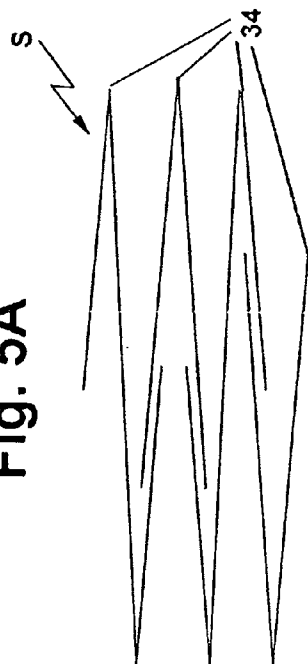


Fig. 5B

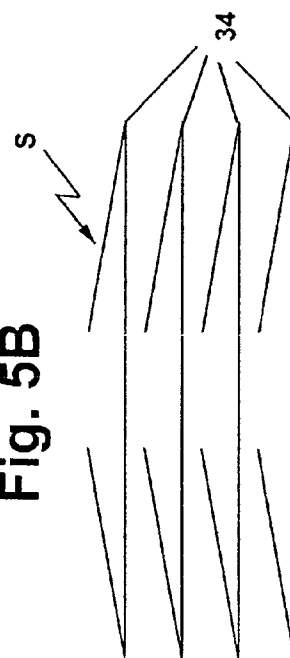


Fig. 5C

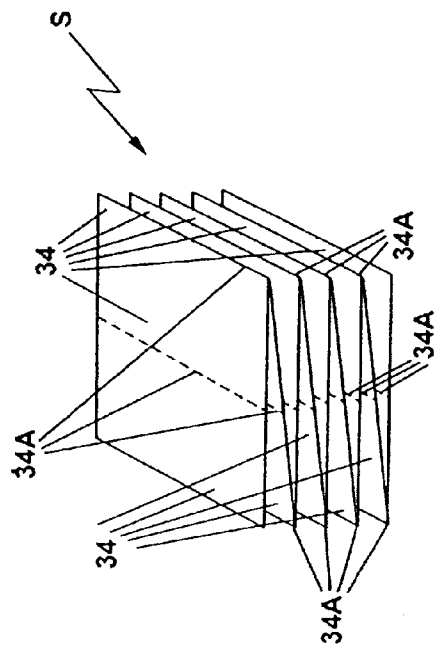


Fig. 5E

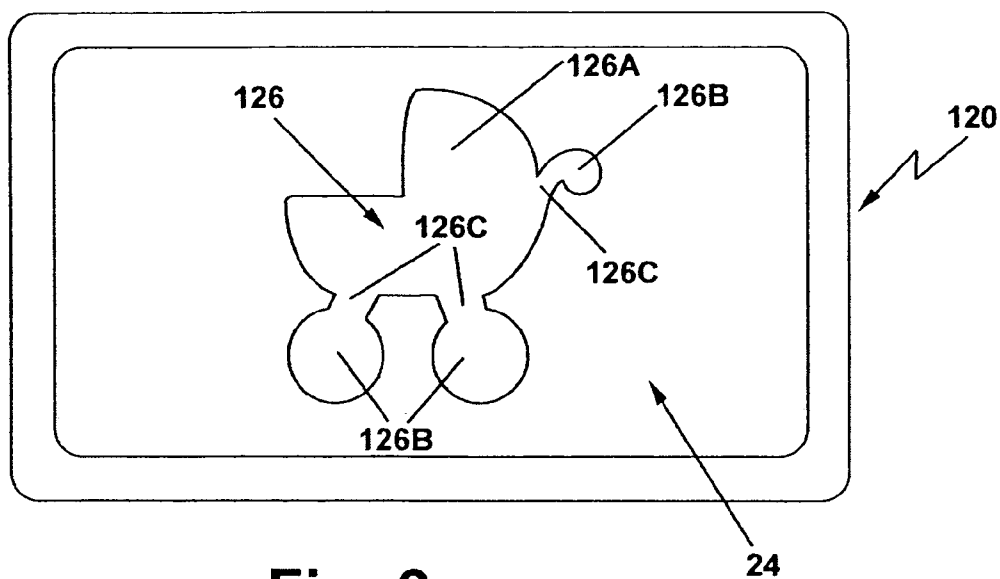


Fig. 6

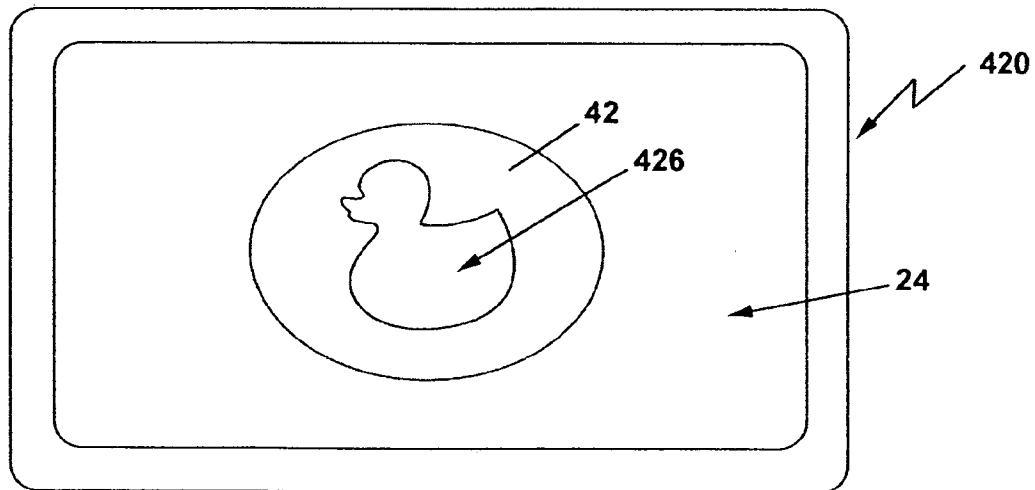


Fig. 7

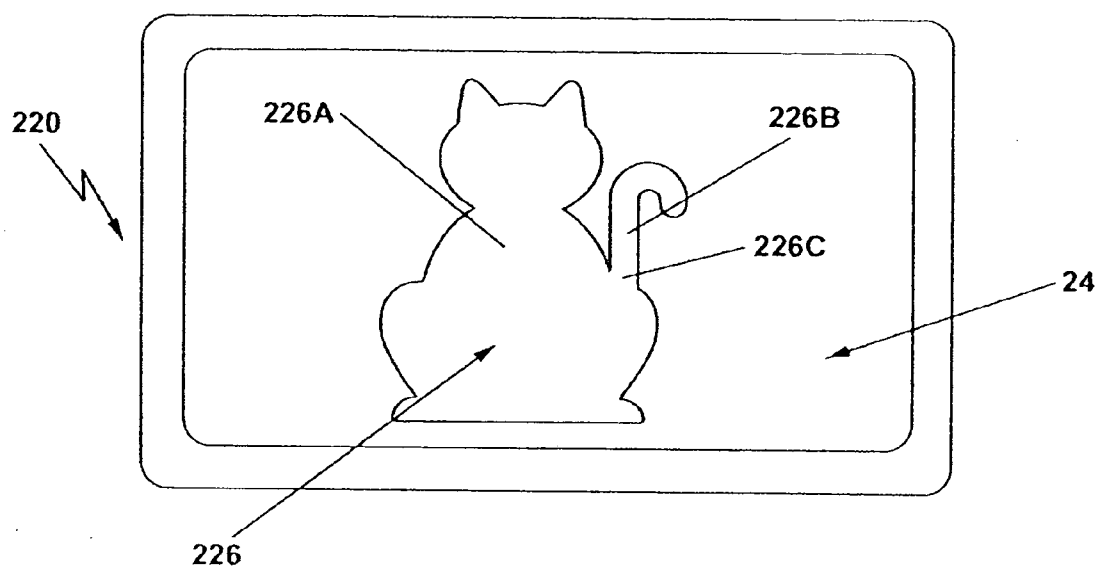


Fig. 8

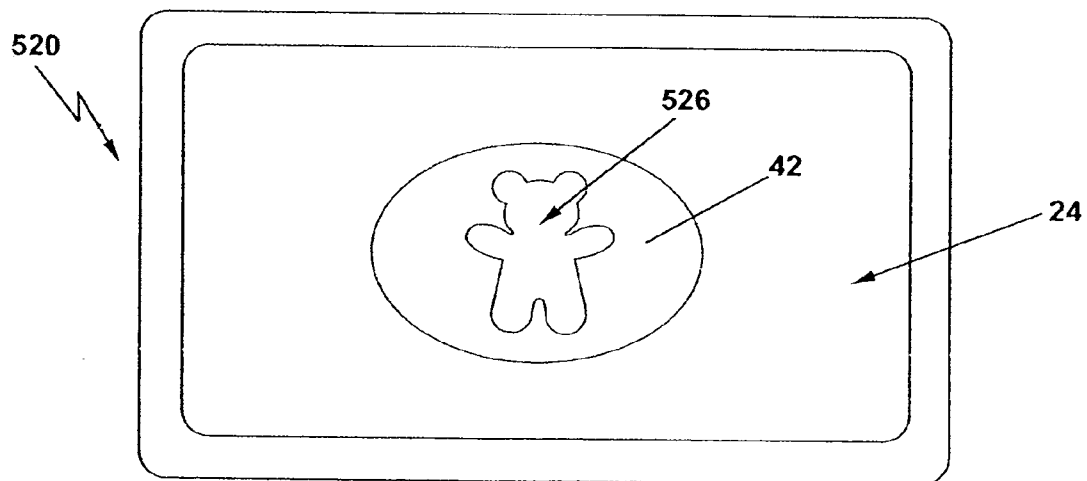


Fig. 9

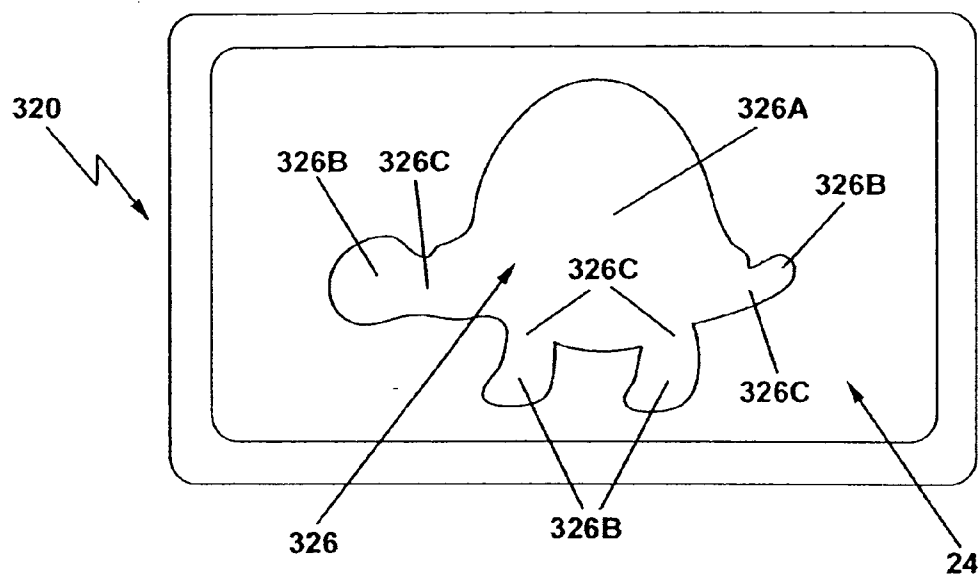


Fig. 10

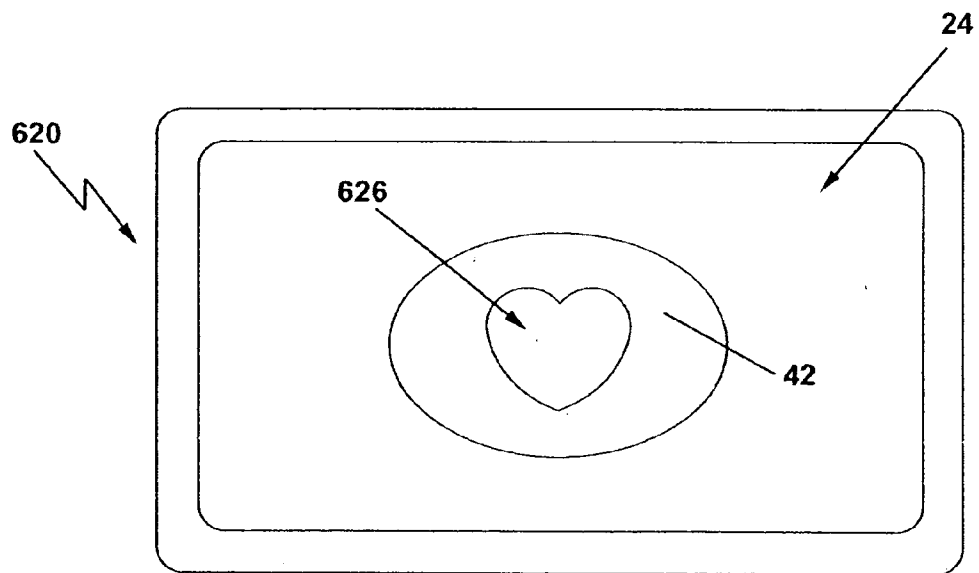


Fig. 11

**CONTAINER FOR DISPENSING PLURAL WET
WIPE SHEETS OR DRY SANITARY TISSUE
SHEETS**

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

[0001] "Not Applicable"

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY
SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

[0002] "Not Applicable"

**INCORPORATION-BY-REFERENCE OF
MATERIAL SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT
DISK**

[0003] "Not Applicable"

SPECIFICATION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] 1. Field of Invention

[0005] This invention relates generally to dispensing of sanitary tissue products, and more particularly, to a dispenser for dispensing wet wipes or dry sanitary tissue wipes for personal hygiene.

[0006] 2. Description of Related Art

[0007] Numerous tissue dispensers are known in the prior art for selectively dispensing baby wipes, hand wipes, household cleaning wipes, industrial wipes, etc. For example, personal hygiene wet wipes are commonly packaged in molded or vacuum formed disposable plastic containers or tubs which are also intended to serve as the dispenser for the wet wipes until the container is empty. Typically the wet wipes are in the form of a stack in the container, with the wet wipes being either in a folded or unfolded configuration. In many cases the wet wipes are coupled together so that the removal of one wet wipe automatically brings the next successive wet wipe into position for dispensation. This is frequently referred to as a "pop-up" arrangement and can be accomplished by inter-folding or interleaving the wipes with one another. A pop-up arrangement can also be accomplished by use of a continuous web, e.g., roll, of sequentially connected wipes making use of perforations to separate the individual wipes from one another.

[0008] The conventional packages which contain wet wipes, such as those described above, are designed to provide a relatively sealed environment to deter the wet wipes from drying out. To that end the packages are typically wrapped with a plastic film or some other material to isolate the contents of the container from the ambient atmosphere. Those packages also typically make use of an aperture through which the wet wipe to be removed is drawn by the user after the film wrapping has been removed. Those containers require that the user insert his/her fingers through the aperture to grasp the topmost wet wipe to pull it into and through the aperture for removal. In some cases the topmost or endmost wet wipe of the supply of wipes is pre-positioned by the manufacturer to be located within the aperture.

[0009] If the wet wipes are coupled together in a pop-up arrangement, e.g., are either interfolded or connected by perforated lines, the pulling of the one wet wipe through the aperture to dispense it automatically draws the next successive wet wipe into the aperture. Thereby, theoretically removing the need for the user to insert his/her fingers through the aperture to get and remove the next successive wet wipe. Notwithstanding that design, in practice, sometimes the removal of one wet wipe fails to bring the next successive wet wipe into the desired position, thereby necessitating the user to insert his/her fingers back into the aperture to remove the next wet wipe. In order to ensure that the user can insert his/her fingers deep enough into the container to reach the then topmost wet wipe, the aperture has to be sufficiently large. Obviously, the larger the aperture, the more likely that content of the container will be exposed to the ambient atmosphere and hence could dry out quicker. Openable/closable lids or slitted flexible membrane windows are sometimes provided over the aperture to close it off when the container is not in use.

[0010] As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, it is frequently desirable that the wet wipe container be arranged to be opened and its wet wipes removed with only one hand of the user, e.g., a mother cleaning up a baby in the process of changing its diaper would like to have one of her hands free to hold the baby, while the other hand removes the wet wipe.

[0011] While the prior art containers for wet wipes are generally suitable for their intended purposes they nevertheless leave something to be desired from one or more of the following standpoints; ease and efficiency of removal of the wet wipes, resistance of the container to the drying out of its contents, aesthetics, etc.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] This invention relates dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing of the sheets from the container. The container comprises a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding the plural wiping sheets in an array.

[0013] In accordance with one aspect of this invention the array of sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array. The housing includes an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object. By non-regular opening it is meant an opening that is not of a recognized geometric shape. Examples of recognized geometric shapes are squares, rectangles, circles, triangles, rhombi, trapezoids, pentagons, hexagons, etc. The opening has a first portion and a second portion. The first portion of the opening is of sufficient size and shape to enable an adult to extend his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array to pull the sheet into the first portion of the opening. The second portion of the opening is contiguous with the first portion of the opening to enable the sheet of the array that is pulled into the first portion of the opening to be slid into the second portion of the opening. The second portion of the opening is sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to

remove that sheet from the container, and to render the next sheet ready for removal, e.g., to bring the next sheet of the array into the second portion of the opening.

[0014] In accordance with another aspect of this invention, the array of sheets are also disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array. The housing in accordance with this aspect of the invention includes an opening having a first portion and a second portion, both of which are exposed together. The first portion of the opening is of a sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array located as far away as approximately 10 centimeters, with the cross sectional area being approximately 8 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located up to 2 centimeters away, or being approximately 12.5 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 3 to 4 centimeters away, or being approximately 18 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 5 to 6 centimeters away, or being approximately 21 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 7 to 8 centimeters away, or being approximately 24 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 9 to 10 centimeters away. With such an arrangement the person can pull the sheet into the first portion of the opening. The second portion of the opening is contiguous with the first portion of the opening to enable a sheet of the array that is pulled by the fingers of the person into the first portion of the opening to slide into the second portion of the opening. The second portion of the opening is sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from the container. The first portion of the opening remains exposed to enable the fingers of the person to be extended therein to grasp the next successive sheet of the array to pull it into the first portion of the opening should such action be desired.

[0015] In accordance with another aspect of this invention the housing is a universal dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing thereof from the container by a person using only one hand. The container comprises a housing having a hollow interior arranged for selective use with two types of wiping sheets. The first type of wiping sheets being an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array exposes the next successive sheet of the array so that it can be removed from the array. The second type of wiping sheets is an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array carries the next successive sheet of the array into position whereupon it can be removed from the array. The housing includes an opening having a first portion and a second portion. The first portion of the opening is of a sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array located as far away as approximately 10 centimeters, with the cross sectional area being approximately 8 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located up to 2 centimeters away, or being approximately 12.5 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 3 to 4 centimeters away, or being approximately 18 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 5 to 6 centimeters away, or being approximately 21 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 7 to 8 centimeters away, or being approximately 24 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 9 to 10 centimeters away.

With such an arrangement the person can pull the sheet into the first portion of the opening. The second portion of the opening is contiguous with the first portion of the opening to enable a sheet of the array that is pulled into the first portion of the opening to slide into the second portion of said opening. The second portion of the opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from the container. The second portion of the opening enables the bringing of the next sheet of the second type of array into the second portion of the opening by the removal of the first sheet of that array.

[0016] In accordance with yet another aspect of this invention the dispensing container for plural wiping sheets is arranged to enable the sequential dispensing of the sheets from it. The container comprises a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding the plural wiping sheets therein in an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array. The housing includes an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object. The opening is sized and shaped to frictionally engage a sheet extended into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from the container, while bringing the next sheet of the array into said opening.

[0017] Other aspects of this invention entail the combination of the above described containers and the plural wiping sheets located therein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] The invention will be described in conjunction with the following drawings in which like reference numerals designate like elements and wherein:

[0019] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of one exemplary preferred embodiment of a container for dispensing plural wet wipe sheets or dry sanitary tissue sheets constructed in accordance with one aspect of this invention to enable a user to insert his/her fingers into the container to retract a wipe therefrom;

[0020] FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken along line 2-2 of FIG. 1, showing an exemplary stack of Z shaped interfolded wet wipes for dispensing from the container;

[0021] FIG. 3 is a reduced size top plan view of the container of FIG. 1, with its outer lid shown in its normally closed condition;

[0022] FIG. 4 is a reduced size top plan view of the container of FIG. 1, with its outer lid shown in its open condition;

[0023] FIG. 5A is a schematic diagram representing an array of non-interfolded z shaped wet wipes for use in various containers of this invention, e.g., those not making use of small iconic openings (like FIGS. 7, 9 and 11);

[0024] FIG. 5B is a schematic diagram representing an array of interfolded Z-V shaped wet wipes for use in any of the containers of this invention;

[0025] FIG. 5C is a schematic diagram representing an array of non-interfolded C shaped wet wipes for use in any of the containers of this invention;

[0026] FIG. 5D is a schematic diagram representing a roll constituting a sequential array of wet wipes for use in any of the containers of this invention;

[0027] FIG. 5E is a schematic diagram representing a stack of wipes which are connected to one another by frangible (e.g., perforated) lines for use in any of the containers of this invention;

[0028] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of an alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention which is constructed to enable a user to insert his/her fingers into the container to retract a wipe therefrom;

[0029] FIG. 7 is a top plan view of a another alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention, with the container of this embodiment being arranged to have a wipe initially disposed within an opening for removal therefrom;

[0030] FIG. 8 is a top plan view of still another alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention which is constructed to enable a user to insert his/her fingers into the container to retract a wipe therefrom;

[0031] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of still another alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention, with the container of this embodiment being arranged to have a wipe initially disposed within an opening for removal therefrom;

[0032] FIG. 10 is a top plan view of still another alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention which is constructed to enable a user to insert his/her fingers into the container to retract a wipe therefrom; and

[0033] FIG. 11 is a top plan view of yet another alternative embodiment of a container constructed in accordance with this invention, with the container of this embodiment being arranged to have a wipe initially disposed within an opening for removal therefrom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Referring to FIG. 1, there is shown at 20 in FIG. 1 a dispensing container constructed in accordance with this invention. The container 20 basically comprises a hollow vessel or tub 22 and a cover 24, which together form a housing containing the plural wipes. The wipes are of conventional construction, e.g., each comprises a sheet of tissue-like material that is either wetted with a wetting agent or unwetted. The sheets are provided in an array, i.e., in the form of a stack, like shown in FIGS. 2, 5A, 5B and 5C, or a roll R, like shown in FIG. 5D, for disposition within the tub. The sheets of the stack S may be interfolded or otherwise coupled together such as shown in FIGS. 2 and 5B. The sheets of the roll R are connected to one another by plural perforated or frangible lines 34A (FIG. 5D), so that they can be separated from one another.

[0035] The cover 24 includes an orifice or opening 26, to be described in detail later, through which individual wipes of the stack S or roll R are withdrawn one at a time. In particular, in this embodiment (and in other embodiments to be described later) the opening is of an iconic shape (to be described later) and of a desired cross sectional area to enable a user to insert his/her fingers into the container to grasp a wet wipe and to pull it into the opening to be either left in the opening for subsequent removal or to remove it in one step and with a single hand. In other embodiments the opening is of an iconic shape, but is smaller so that the user cannot insert his/her fingers therethrough. In such a case the wipe is pre-positioned within the container by the manufacturer.

[0036] The tub itself includes a base wall 28 (FIG. 2) from which plural sidewalls 30 project upward to form a hollow interior space 32. The stack S of plural of individual wet wipes (or dry tissue wipes) 34 is disposed within the interior space 32 of the tub on the base wall 28. The number of wipes 34 in the stack S and/or the height of the sidewalls 30 are such that the top-most wipe 34 of the stack S is preferably located closely adjacent the top edge of the sidewalls 30 and the opening 26 in the cover 24. If the supply of wipes is in the form of a roll R, like that shown in FIG. 5D, the roll R is mounted within the interior of the tub by means (not shown) so that the roll may be rotated about its axis X to enable the endmost sheet of it to be drawn into the opening 26 by the user inserting his/her fingers through the opening to grasp that endmost wipe.

[0037] The cover 24 is preferably releasably secured to the tub 22 at the top marginal edges of the sidewalls 30, as shown in FIG. 2, but may, if desired, be fixedly secured to the tub after the tub has been filled with the stack S or roll R of wipes 34. In the former arrangement, the tub can be refilled with a new stack S or roll R of wipes once all of the wipes originally located within the tub have been dispensed, thereby permitting reuse of the container.

[0038] As will be seen in the discussion to follow, the container 20 of the subject invention is arranged to enable a user to insert his/her fingers through the opening 26 to withdraw the topmost wipe 34 of the stack S or the endmost wipe 34 of the roll R into, through and out of the opening so that the wipe can be used for its desired purpose. If the wipes are arranged in a pop-up arrangement, e.g., the wipes of the stack S are interfolded or otherwise coupled together, or if a roll R of wipes is used, the removal of the topmost wipe of the stack S or the endmost wipe of the roll R from the container brings the next successive wipe into the opening 26 to be available for removal when desired. If the wipes are not in a pop-up arrangement, the removal of the topmost wipe from the stack S or the endmost wipe of the roll R leaves the next successive wipe of the stack or the endmost wipe of the roll in position located below and not extending into the opening. Hence to remove that wipe from the stack or roll the user will have to reinsert his/her fingers through the opening to grasp that wipe to pull it into, through and out the opening.

[0039] Irrespective of whether or not the container will dispense the wipes in a pop-up manner or will require the user to insert his/her fingers to grasp each wipe to remove it from the container, in order to maintain the sanitariness and freshness of the wipes, the container 20 preferably includes

an openable/closable lid **38**. The lid **38** can be a part of the container or be separate member. In the embodiment shown in **FIG. 1**, the lid **38** is a generally planar member having a peripheral sidewall **38A** projecting downward therefrom and forms an integral part of the container. The lid **38** is pivotably connected to the cover **24** by a hinge, e.g., a living hinge, **40** disposed at the sidewall **38A**.

[0040] In the embodiment shown herein the tub's cover **24** includes a recess **42** (**FIG. 2**) of the same peripheral shape as the periphery of the lid **38**, so that the lid can be pivoted downward about the hinge **40** to be disposed within the recess **42**, thereby closing off the opening **26**, as shown in **FIG. 3**. The lid can be pivoted upward about hinge **40** from the closed position shown in **FIG. 3** to the open position shown in **FIGS. 1, 2** and **4**, wherein the opening **26** is exposed so that a wipe **34** can be dispensed from the container **20**. If the lid is a separate component, it can be removed by pulling it out of the recess **42**, to thereby expose the opening **26** so that a wipe can be withdrawn, and then replaced into the recess to close the opening.

[0041] It should be pointed out at this juncture that the lid need not be arranged to fit within a recess within the cover, e.g., the cover may include a raised wall of the same peripheral shape as the lid and onto which the lid snap-fits. Other arrangements for the lid are also contemplated. In fact, the use of a lid for covering the opening is not mandatory, although it is preferable.

[0042] The cross-sectional area of the opening **26** (or a portion of it to be described later) is selected so that it is sufficiently small to deter the ingress of air or contaminants into the interior of the container when the lid is open (assuming that the container has a lid), yet sufficiently large that the user can insert two or more of his/her fingers into it to grasp the topmost or endmost wipe, irrespective of the distance of that wipe from the opening. Moreover, the opening **26** is preferably of an aesthetically pleasing iconic shape representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object, e.g., a fanciful fish as shown in **FIGS. 1-4**. Other examples of such shapes are other animals, such as teddy bears, turtles, pussy cats, elephants, etc., baby nursery items, such as bottles, rattles, etc., other objects, e.g., hearts, stars, flowers, pinwheels, etc. Those shapes, in addition to the various shapes shown specifically herein, are merely exemplary of the myriad of different iconic shapes that can be accommodated by the subject invention.

[0043] In the interest of aesthetics, the lid **38** is preferably of a similar shape to the opening **26**, albeit of a greater area to fully cover the opening. Moreover, portions of the lid **38** may be texturized, e.g., roughened, as shown by the cross-hatched portions **44** of the lid in **FIG. 3**, to facilitate the grasping of the lid to pivot it upward or downward to open or close the lid as the case may be. The cross-hatching also enhances the aesthetics of the container. Portions of the recess **42** adjacent the opening **26** may also be texturized in the interest of aesthetics.

[0044] Turning now to the exemplary embodiment of the opening **26** shown in **FIGS. 1-4**, it can be seen that the fish shaped opening includes has a larger cross-sectional area first portion **26A** and a smaller cross-sectional area second portion **26B**. In this particular embodiment the first portion **26A** of the opening **26** defines the body of the fish, while the second portion **26B** defines the tail of the fish. The interface

26C between the first and second portions, **26A** and **26B**, respectively, is necked down. The first portion **26A** of the opening **26** is of a sufficient size and shape to enable an adult to extend his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one wipe of the array to pull it into the first portion of the opening. The second portion **26B** of the opening is contiguous with the first portion of the opening to enable the wipe of the array that is pulled into the first portion of the opening to be slid through the necked down portion **26C** into the second portion of the opening as shown in **FIG. 2**. The second portion **26B** of the opening is considerably smaller than the first portion **26A** so that at least portions of its periphery frictionally engage the wipe slid into it. If the wipes are interfolded or otherwise coupled together, e.g., are secured to each other by perforated or otherwise frangible lines **34A**, the drawing of the topmost (or endmost) wipe out of the opening portion **26B** carries the next successive wipe therein and separates the topmost (or endmost) wipe from the next successive wipe, so that it can be used. This entire operation can be readily carried out by the user with a single hand.

[0045] If the sheets are not arranged in a pop-up fashion, e.g., are not interfolded or otherwise coupled together, the removal of the topmost or endmost wipe does not carry the next successive wipe into the opening. With such an arrangement the user will have to insert his/her fingers through the larger, first portion **26A** of the opening **26** to grasp the now topmost or endmost wipe **34** to pull it into that opening. If the user wishes to use the wipe immediately it can be removed by merely pulling it all the way out of the opening. If however, the user merely wants to set up the container **20** so that a fresh wipe is readily available at some future time without necessitating insertion of his/her fingers into the opening portion **26A** to remove it (i.e., to pre-position the wipe for subsequent removal) all the user has to do is slide the wipe that is to be pre-positioned through the necked down portion **26C** into the second portion **26B** of the opening. Also, sometimes non-interfolded wipes stick together unintentionally. In those cases the user can pull the topmost wipe through **26C, 26B** to separate the top wipe from the next wipe. The frictional engagement will tend to hold the wipe in that position until it is to be removed. If the container includes a lid **38**, the lid can be pivoted down to cover the pre-positioned wipe in the opening portion **26B** to maintain its moistness and freshness.

[0046] In **FIGS. 6, 8** and **10** there are shown three alternative embodiments, **120, 220** and **320** of the container **20** described above. Each of the containers **120, 220** and **320** is of the same basic construction as the container **20** except for the shape of its opening and lid and the omission of a lid **38** (e.g., the container may not include a lid or includes a removable lid that has been removed). If desired, the containers can include pivotably hinged lids **38** like those described earlier. In the interest of brevity the common components of the embodiments **20, 120, 220** and **320** will be given the same reference numbers and the details of their construction and operation will not be reiterated. The container **120** includes an opening **126** in the shape of a baby buggy having a first portion **126A** making up the basket of the buggy, and second portions **126B** making up the handle and wheels of the buggy with necked down portions **126C** serving as the interface between the first and second portions. The container **220** includes an opening **226** in the shape of a pussy cat having a first portion **226A** making up the body and head of the pussy cat, a second portion **226B**

making up the tail of the pussy cat and a necked down portion **226C** serving as the interface between the first and second portions. The container **320** includes an opening **326** in the shape of a turtle having a first portion **326A** making up the body of the turtle, and second portions **326B** making up the head, legs and tail of the turtle the necked down portions **326C** serve as the interface between the first and the various second portions.

[0047] In all of the container embodiments **20**, **120**, **220** and **320** the first portion **26A**, **126A**, **226A** and **326A** of the openings **26**, **126**, **226** and **326**, respectively, is of a sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one wipe of the array located therein as far away as approximately 10 centimeters. In particular, if the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located up to 2 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 8 square centimeters (e.g., 4 centimeters by 2 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert his/her thumb and index finger or his/her index and middle finger therethrough. If the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located 3-4 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 12.5 square centimeters (e.g., 5 centimeters by 2.5 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert his/her index and middle finger therethrough. If the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located 5-6 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 18 square centimeters (e.g., 6 centimeters by 3 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert three fingers, except for his/her thumb and pinky therethrough. If the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located 7-8 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 21 square centimeters (e.g., 7 centimeters by 3 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert three fingers, except for his/her thumb and pinky therethrough. If the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located 9-10 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 24 square centimeters (e.g., 8 centimeters by 3 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert four fingers, except for his/her thumb therethrough. If the container is constructed or the stack/roll is configured so that the topmost or endmost of the sheets of the array is located greater than 10 centimeters away from the opening, the cross sectional area of the first portion of the opening can be approximately 27 square centimeters (e.g., 9 centimeters by 3 centimeters). This arrangement will allow the user to insert his/her entire hand therethrough.

[0048] In **FIGS. 7, 9** and **11** there are shown three alternative embodiments of containers **420**, **520** and **620**, respectively, constructed in accordance with this invention. Those containers are of identical construction to the container **20**, except for the size and shape of their openings. These containers are shown without lids and can be so constructed, or can be constructed to have removable lids or integral

pivotably hinged lids, if desired. Like the embodiments **20**, **120**, **220** and **320**, each opening of the embodiments **420**, **520** and **620** is of an aesthetically pleasing iconic shape representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object. In the interest of brevity the common components of the embodiments **20**, **420**, **520** and **620** will be given the same reference numbers and the details of their construction and operation will not be reiterated. As can be seen container **420** includes a fanciful duck shaped opening **426** as shown in **FIG. 7**. The opening **426** is located within a recess **42** to receive a lid (not shown). The lid in this embodiment is of an oval shape. Container **520** includes a fanciful teddy bear shaped opening **526** located within an oval recess **42** as shown in **FIG. 9**. Container **620** includes a fanciful heart shaped opening **626** located within an oval recess **42** as shown in **FIG. 11**. Each of the openings **426**, **526** and **626** is too small to enable the user to insert his/her fingers therethrough to grasp and retract a wipe **34** located within the container. Thus, in the embodiments of **FIGS. 7, 9** and **11**, the wipe **34** is pre-positioned in the opening by the manufacturer or by the user upon first use of the product or in a setup step by the user. The wipes are interfolded or otherwise coupled together so that the removal of the topmost or endmost wipe of the array automatically brings the next successive wipe of the array into the opening.

[0049] While the invention has been described in detail and with reference to specific examples thereof, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing of the sheets from said container, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding the plural wiping sheets therein in an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array, said housing including an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object, said opening having a first portion and a second portion, said first portion of said opening being of sufficient size and shape to enable an adult to extend his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array to pull the sheet into said first portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being contiguous with said first portion of said opening to enable the sheet of the array that is pulled into said first portion of said opening to be slid into said second portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from said container and to render the next sheet ready for removal.

2. The dispensing container of claim 1 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

3. The dispensing container of claim 1 wherein the wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is

constructed to deter the drying of the wetting agent while the wiping sheets are located within the hollow interior.

4. The dispensing container of claim 3 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

5. The dispensing container of claim 3 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to inner lid to cover said opening.

6. The dispensing container of claim 5 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

7. The dispensing container of claim 5 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

8. The dispensing container of claim 7 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

9. The dispensing container of claim 6 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

10. The dispensing container of claim 9 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

11. A dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing thereof from said container by a person using only one hand, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding the plural wiping sheets therein in an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array, said housing including an opening having a first portion and a second portion, both of which are exposed together, said first portion of said opening being of a sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array located as far away as approximately 10 centimeters, said cross sectional area being approximately 8 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located up to 2 centimeters away, or being approximately 12.5 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 3 to 4 centimeters away, or being approximately 18 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 5 to 6 centimeters away, or being approximately 21 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 7 to 8 centimeters away, or being approximately 24 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 9 to 10 centimeters away, whereupon the person can pull the sheet into said first portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being contiguous with said first portion of said opening to enable a sheet of the array that is pulled by the fingers of the person into said first portion of said opening to slide into said second portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from said container, said first portion of said opening remaining exposed to enable the fingers of the person to be extended therein to grasp the next

successive sheet of the array to pull it into said first portion of said opening should such action be desired.

12. The dispensing container of claim 11 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

13. The dispensing container of claim 11 wherein the wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of the wetting agent while the wiping sheets are located within said hollow interior of said housing.

14. The dispensing container of claim 13 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

15. The dispensing container of claim 13 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to said inner lid to cover said opening.

16. The dispensing container of claim 15 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

17. The dispensing container of claim 15 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

18. The dispensing container of claim 17 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

19. The dispensing container of claim 16 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

20. The dispensing container of claim 19 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

21. A universal dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing thereof from said container by a person using only one hand, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior arranged for selective use with two types of wiping sheets, the first type of wiping sheets being an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array exposes the next successive sheet of the array so that it can be removed from the array, the second type of wiping sheets being an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array carries the next successive sheet of the array into position whereupon it can be removed from the array, said housing including an opening having a first portion and a second portion, said first portion of said opening being of a sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array located as far away as approximately 10 centimeters, said cross sectional area being approximately 8 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located up to 2 centimeters away, or being approximately 12.5 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 3 to 4 centimeters away, or being approximately 18 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 5 to 6 centimeters away, or being approximately 21 square centi-

meters for a sheet of the array located from 7 to 8 centimeters away, or being approximately 24 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 9 to 10 centimeters away, whereupon the person can pull the sheet into said first portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being contiguous with said first portion of said opening to enable a sheet of the array that is pulled into said first portion of said opening to slide into said second portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage the sheet slid into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove that sheet from said container and to render the next sheet ready for removal.

22. The universal dispensing container of claim 21 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

23. The universal dispensing container of claim 21 wherein the wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of the wetting agent while the wiping sheets are located within said hollow interior of said housing.

24. The universal dispensing container of claim 23 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

25. The universal dispensing container of claim 23 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to said inner lid to cover said opening.

26. The universal dispensing container of claim 25 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

27. The universal dispensing container of claim 25 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

28. The universal dispensing container of claim 27 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

29. The universal dispensing container of claim 26 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

30. The universal dispensing container of claim 29 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

31. A dispensing container for plural wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing of the sheets from said container, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding the plural wiping sheets therein in an array wherein the sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from the array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from the array, said housing including an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object, said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage a sheet extended into it to cause that sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in

the array to remove that sheet from said container, while bringing the next sheet of the array into said opening.

32. The dispensing container of claim 31 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

33. The dispensing container of claim 31 wherein the wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of the wetting agent while the wiping sheets are located within the hollow interior of said housing.

34. The dispensing container of claim 33 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

35. The dispensing container of claim 33 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to inner lid to cover said opening.

36. The dispensing container of claim 35 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

37. The dispensing container of claim 35 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

38. The dispensing container of claim 37 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

39. The dispensing container of claim 36 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

40. The dispensing container of claim 39 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

41. In combination a dispensing container and plural wiping sheets, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior, said plural wiping sheets being located within said interior of said housing in an array wherein said sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from said array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from said array, said housing being adapted to enable the sequential dispensing of said sheets therefrom and including an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object, said opening having a first portion and a second portion, said first portion of said opening being of sufficient size and shape to enable an adult to extend his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of said array to pull said sheet into said first portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being contiguous with said first portion of said opening to enable said sheet of said array that is pulled into said first portion of said opening to be slid into said second portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage said sheet slid into it to cause said sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in the array to remove said sheet from said container, while bringing the next sheet of said array into said second portion of said opening.

42. The combination of claim 41 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

43. The combination of claim 41 wherein said wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of said wetting agent while said wiping sheets are located within said hollow interior of said housing.

44. The combination of claim 43 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable said array of said wiping sheets to be located therein.

45. The combination of claim 43 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to said inner lid to cover said opening.

46. The combination of claim 45 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable said array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

47. The combination of claim 45 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

48. The combination of claim 47 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

49. The combination of claim 46 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

50. The combination of claim 49 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

51. The combination of claim 41 wherein said sheets of said array are in the form of a stack of sheets.

52. The combination of claim 51 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interleaved.

53. The combination of claim 51 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

54. The combination of claim 41 wherein said sheets of said array are in a roll.

55. The combination of claim 54 wherein said sheets of said roll are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

56. In combination a container and a plurality of wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing thereof from said container by a person using only one hand, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior, said plural wiping sheets being located within said interior of said housing in an array wherein said sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from said array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from said array, said housing being adapted to enable the sequential dispensing of said sheets therefrom and including an opening having a first portion and a second portion, both of which are exposed together, said first portion of said opening being of sufficient shape and cross sectional area to enable an adult person to extend at least two of his/her fingers therethrough to grasp one sheet of the array located as far away as approximately 10 centimeters, said cross sectional area being approximately 8

square centimeters for a sheet of the array located up to 2 centimeters away, or being approximately 12.5 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 3 to 4 centimeters away, or being approximately 18 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 5 to 6 centimeters away, or being approximately 21 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 7 to 8 centimeters away, or being approximately 24 square centimeters for a sheet of the array located from 9 to 10 centimeters away, whereupon the person can pull said sheet into said first portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being contiguous with said first portion of said opening to enable said sheet of said array that is pulled into said first portion of said opening to slide into said second portion of said opening, said second portion of said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage said sheet to cause said sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in said array to remove said sheet from said container, said first portion of said opening remaining exposed to enable the fingers of the person to be extended therein to grasp said next sheet of the array to pull it into said first portion of said opening should such action be desired.

57. The combination of claim 56 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

58. The combination of claim 56 wherein said wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of said wetting agent while the wiping sheets are located within the hollow interior of said housing.

59. The combination of claim 58 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

60. The combination of claim 58 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to inner lid to cover said opening.

61. The combination of claim 60 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

62. The combination of claim 60 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

63. The combination of claim 62 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

64. The combination of claim 61 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

65. The combination of claim 64 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

66. The combination of claim 56 wherein said sheets of said array are in the form of a stack of sheets.

67. The combination of claim 66 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interleaved.

68. The combination of claim 66 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

69. The combination of claim 56 wherein said sheets of said array are in a roll.

70. The combination of claim 69 wherein said sheets of said roll are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

71. In combination a container and a plurality of wiping sheets to enable the sequential dispensing of said sheets from said container, said container comprising a housing having a hollow interior arranged for holding said plural wiping sheets therein in an array wherein said sheets are disposed with respect to one another sequentially so that removal of one sheet from said array renders the next successive sheet suitable for removal from said array, said housing including an aesthetically pleasing opening whose perimeter defines a non-regular shaped icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object, said opening being sized and shaped to frictionally engage a sheet extended into it to cause said sheet to be separated from the remaining sheets in said array to remove said sheet from said container, while bringing the next sheet of said array into said opening.

72. The combination of claim 71 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable said array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

73. The combination of claim 71 wherein said wiping sheets include a wetting agent and wherein said container is constructed to deter the drying of said wetting agent while said wiping sheets are located within the hollow interior of said housing.

74. The combination of claim 73 wherein said housing additionally comprises a lid, said lid being movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable said array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

75. The combination of claim 73 wherein said housing additionally comprises an outer lid and an inner lid, said opening being located in said inner lid, said outer lid being movable with respect to inner lid to cover said opening.

76. The combination of claim 75 wherein said outer and inner lids are movable with respect to said housing to expose said hollow interior of said housing to enable the array of wiping sheets to be located therein.

77. The combination of claim 75 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

78. The combination of claim 77 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

79. The combination of claim 76 wherein said outer lid defines an icon representing a realistic, fanciful or otherwise ornamental object.

80. The combination of claim 79 wherein said object defined by said outer lid corresponds to or is related to the object defined by said opening.

81. The combination of claim 71 wherein said sheets of said array are in the form of a stack of sheets.

82. The combination of claim 81 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interleaved.

83. The combination of claim 81 wherein said sheets of said stack of sheets are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

84. The combination of claim 71 wherein said sheets of said array are in a roll.

85. The combination of claim 84 wherein said sheets of said roll are interconnected to one another by respective frangible lines.

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