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(54) Title: BOTTLE FOR DISPENSING INTO A CAPLESS FUEL TANK, METHOD OF USE AND METHOD OF FORMING SAID BOTTLE

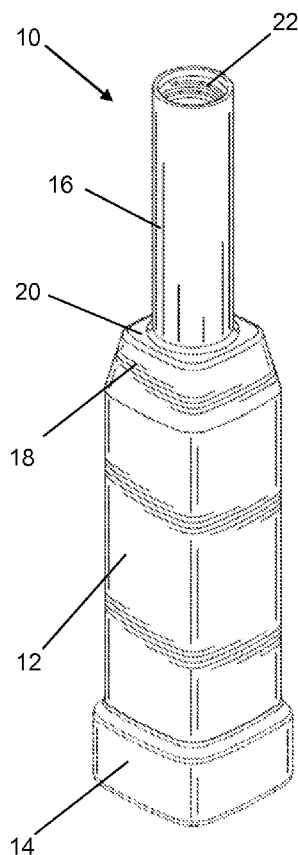


FIG. 2A

(57) Abstract: A bottle (10) for dispensing fluids into a capless filler system, the bottle configured with an elongated smooth neck (16) designed for insertion into a capless filler opening to actuate and displace one or more flapper seals when emptying the fluid into the capless filler. The bottle is sealed with a cap (24) with a first set of screw threads (26) that engages the neck at a top portion with a second set of screw threads (22) on an interior surface of the top portion of the neck. The cap can be a child proof cap. The bottle can be made of plastic that is clear or opaque.



PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

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Declarations under Rule 4.17:

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))
- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))

Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))

BOTTLE FOR DISPENSING INTO A CAPLESS FUEL TANK, METHOD OF USE
AND METHOD OF FORMING SAID BOTTLE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority benefit of US Provisional Application Serial Number 61/980,141 filed April 16, 2014; the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention in general relates to containers, and in particular to a bottle for dispensing fluids directly into a fuel system filler neck equipped with a capless filler.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A recent design trend has been the introduction of capless filler systems for vehicle fuel systems. A capless filler does away with the traditional screw-on fuel cap in favor of an automatic seal which is opened upon the insertion of the nozzle of a fuel hose from a gas station pump. A capless filler has one or more spring loaded flappers that are actuated by the insertion of a nozzle, and the flapper automatically springs back to a closed sealing position with the withdrawal of the inserted nozzle. The seal provided by the spring loaded flapper is generally tighter and more reliable than the traditional screw-on fuel cap, which is important to maintain the pressure in a vehicle fuel system, and to prevent gas fumes from escaping into the environment. FIG. 1 shows a prior art capless filler 64 mounted on the side of a vehicle 62.

[0004] Capless fillers provide several benefits to a user including reducing the chance for a gas smell on their hands, since the user simply flips open the fuel door and inserts the pump nozzle in the opening of the capless filler. Not having a twist-on/off gas cap is one less

contact with a gasoline-vapor odor source, and prevents the discomfort experienced by people with arthritis or other impairments that make the act of twisting a cap awkward or painful. The possibility of a gas cap dangling and scratching the paint during fueling is eliminated, as well as the embarrassment of a forgotten gas cap left dangling or lost if forgotten by the driver after the refueling stop.

[0005] While there are many positive aspects to the use of capless fillers, existing automotive fuel additive packaging, and certain other fuel loading containers are incompatible with the capless mechanism. In general, existing fuel and additive treatment packages and fuel handling containers have external threads that get caught up in the flapper seals, and cannot be retracted after insertion into the filler neck to the gas tank. Furthermore, existing containers are not shaped or contoured for insertion and actuation of flapper seals in a vehicle's capless filler system.

[0006] Thus, there exists a need for containers that are compatible with capless filler systems for manually dispensing fuel, fuel treatments, fuel additives, and engine treatments into the vehicle's fuel system.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] A bottle for dispensing fluids into a capless filler system, the bottle configured with an elongated smooth neck designed for insertion into a capless filler opening to actuate and displace one or more flapper seals when emptying the fluid into the capless filler. The bottle is sealed with a cap with a first set of screw threads that engages the neck at a top portion with a second set of screw threads on an interior surface of the top portion of the neck. The cap may be a child proof cap. The bottle may be made of plastic that is clear or opaque.

[0008] A method of for using the bottle is provided that includes opening the bottle by unscrewing the cap from the elongated smooth neck of the bottle, inserting the elongated smooth neck into the capless filler of a vehicle, and retracting the bottle from the capless filler after introducing a liquid held in the bottle.

[0009] A method for forming a capless filler bottle is provided that includes placing a threaded insert into an injection mold, introducing a thermoplastic into the injection mold, and wherein the threaded insert forms a set of internal threads on an inner top portion of the elongated smooth neck of the bottle. The thermoplastic is introduced by injection or blow molding, where blow molding is by at least one of extrusion blow molding, injection blow molding, and injection stretch blow molding.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] The subject matter that is regarded as the invention is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the claims at the conclusion of the specification. The foregoing and other objects, features, and advantages of the invention are apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0011] FIG. 1 illustrates a view of a typical prior art capless filler system of a vehicle;

[0012] FIG. 2A is a front, upper perspective view of an embodiment of the inventive bottle;

[0013] FIG. 2B is a front view of the bottle depicted in FIG. 2A, where side views and the rear view are identical to that depicted in FIG. 2B;

[0014] FIG. 2C is a top view of the bottle depicted in FIG. 1;

[0015] FIG. 2D is a bottom view of the bottle depicted in FIG. 1;

[0016] FIG. 3A is a front view of the bottle of FIG. 2A with a cap screwed on according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0017] FIG. 3B is a cross-section view along line A-A of FIG. 3A showing the cap attached to the bottle with the cap threads internal to the bottle according to embodiments of the invention;

[0018] FIG. 4A is a front view of a bottle with a series of slots or wedges at the top according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0019] FIG. 4B is a cross-section view along line B-B of FIG. 4A showing internal cap threads molded into the elongated neck of the bottle according to embodiments of the invention;

[0020] FIG. 4C is a top view of the bottle depicted in FIG. 4A;

[0021] FIG. 4D is a bottom view of the bottle depicted in FIG. 4A;

[0022] FIG. 4E is a front view of the bottle of FIG. 4A with a series of slots or wedges in detail B and cross section C-C line at the base according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0023] FIG. 4F is a detail view of a slot from the series of slots or wedges in the top portion of the elongated neck according to embodiments of the invention;

[0024] FIG. 4G is a cross section view along line C-C according to embodiments of the invention;

[0025] FIG. 4H is a perspective view of the bottle of FIGs. 4A and 4E;

[0026] FIG. 5A is a perspective view of the bottle of FIG. 2A with the internal threaded cap attached to the bottle according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0027] FIG. 5B is a detailed perspective view showing the cap of FIG. 5A detached from the internal threads of the bottle according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0028] FIG. 6A is a front perspective view of a clear bottle filled with a liquid that has internal threads for securing a cap and an elongated neck for actuating the flapper seals during insertion into a capless filler according to embodiments of the invention;

[0029] FIG. 6B is a front view of the liquid filled clear bottle of FIG. 6A with the cap removed according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0030] FIG. 7A is a front perspective view of the bottle of FIG. 6A with product labeling applied according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0031] FIG. 7B is a front view of the existing product packaging; and

[0032] FIGs. 8A and 8B illustrate the process of inserting an embodiment of the inventive bottle into a capless filler system.

[0033] The detailed description explains the preferred embodiments of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] The present invention has utility as a container or bottle for dispensing fuel, fuel additives, and engine treatments into a fuel system equipped with a capless filler. Embodiments of the inventive bottle have an elongated neck dimensioned to allow insertion into the capless filler opening and to actuate and displace one or more flapper seals along the fuel fill tube leading to the vehicle gas tank. In certain embodiments the elongated neck is terminated with a ledge or flared out area that forms a tangible stopping point when inserting the bottle or container into the capless filler of a vehicle fuel system. Furthermore, the base area of embodiments of the inventive bottle or container is widened to serve as a grab point when the bottle is inserted in the fuel system. Embodiments of the inventive bottle have internal threads at the top inner portion of the elongated bottle neck for engagement with a twist off cap, so as to facilitate removal of the inserted bottle from the capless filler. Existing bottle designs with the threads on the exterior perimeter of a bottle top have a tendency to engage the flapper of a capless filler, and the inserted bottle is then hard to retract and

remove, and may ultimately get stuck. In a specific embodiment of the inventive bottle, the bottle cap may be a child proof cap.

[0035] Embodiments of the inventive container or bottle may be opaque or clear, and formed from various plastics and composites. An example of a thermoplastic that may be used to form embodiments of the inventive bottle is polyethylene terephthalate (PET). Depending on the processing and thermal history of the polyethylene terephthalate, the PET may exist both as an amorphous (transparent) and as a semi-crystalline polymer. The semicrystalline material might appear transparent (particle size < 500 nm) or opaque and white (particle size up to a few microns) depending on its crystal structure and particle size. PET is a recyclable material.

[0036] Embodiments of the inventive bottle may be formed through a blow molding process. Blow molding is a manufacturing process by which hollow plastic parts are formed. In general, there are three main types of blow molding: extrusion blow molding, injection blow molding, and injection stretch blow molding. The blow molding process begins with melting down the plastic and forming it into a parison or in the case of injection and injection stretch blow molding (ISB) a preform. The parison is a tube-like piece of plastic with a hole in one end through which compressed air can pass. The parison is then clamped into a mold and air is blown into it. The air pressure then pushes the plastic out to match the mold. Once the plastic has cooled and hardened the mold opens up and the part is ejected.

[0037] Embodiments of the inventive bottle may be formed by placing a threaded insert into an injection mold. In a specific embodiment, the internal threads on the inner wall of the top portion of the neck may be formed during the molding process with a threaded insert that serves as part of the preform injection mold and then the injection molded preform would be heated and formed into the final form.

[0038] In other embodiments of the inventive bottle, the inner threads may be tapped with a tool following the bottle's formation. And in still other embodiments, the internal threads may be manufactured by creating a separate component, with the threads included, that would then be joined to the top portion of the neck of the container.

[0039] Referring now to the figures, FIGs. 2A-2D, FIGs. 3A and 3B, and FIGs. 5A and 5B are a series of views of an embodiment of the inventive bottle 10. The bottle 10 has a smooth elongated neck 16 with a circular cross-section that has a top end that has internal threads 22 designed to engage a screw on cap 24 with engagement threads 26 as shown in the cross section A-A of FIG. 3B and as shown in FIG. 5B. The internal threads 22 allow the elongated neck 16 to be completely smooth so as to allow for the ease of insertion and extraction of the bottle 10 from the capless filler system without engaging one or more flapper seals. The engagements 27 are for a child proof cap, which when downward pressure is applied allows the cap 24 to be unscrewed. The bottom of the elongated neck terminates in a ledge 20 and a flared out area 18 that forms a tangible stopping point when inserting the bottle 10 or container into the capless filler of a vehicle fuel system. The flared area 18 terminates to form the cross sectional area of the storage portion 12 of the bottle 10. The bottle 10 has a square storage portion 12 as shown in FIGs. 2C and 2D of the top and bottom views, respectively, however other cross sections for the storage portion 12 are also readily available including circular, triangular, hexagonal, etc. The base area 14 of embodiments of the inventive bottle or container is widened to serve as a grab point when the bottle is inserted in the fuel system.

[0040] FIGs. 4A-4H are a series of views of an embodiment of the inventive bottle 70 with one or more slots or wedges 72 in the top portion of the elongated neck 16. The bottle 70 has a smooth elongated neck 16 with a circular cross-section that has a top end that has internal

threads 22A designed to engage a screw on cap with engagement threads (not shown) in the cross section B-B of FIG. 4B. In a specific embodiment, the internal thread 22A has an M-style thread finish with two threads that start 180° apart. The internal threads 22A allow the elongated neck 16 to be smooth so as to allow for the ease of insertion and extraction of the bottle 70 from the capless filler system without engaging one or more flapper seals. The bottom of the elongated neck 16 terminates in a ledge 20 and a flared out area 18 that forms a tangible stopping point when inserting the bottle 70 or container into the capless filler of a vehicle fuel system. The flared area 18 terminates to form the cross sectional area of the storage portion 12 of the bottle 70. The bottle 70 has a square storage portion 12 as shown in FIGs. 4C and 4D of the top and bottom views, respectively, however other cross sections for the storage portion 12 are also readily available including circular, triangular, hexagonal, etc. The base area 14A of embodiments of the inventive bottle or container is widened to serve as a grab point when the bottle is inserted in the fuel system. In some inventive embodiments slot details are provided on the elongated neck 16 that are sufficiently small so as to not to interfere with the insertion or removal of the bottle from a capless system. FIG. 4F is a detail view of the one or more slots or wedges 72 in the top region of the elongated neck 16. The slot 72 may be straight or have a slight upward taper in the shape of a wedge as the slot 72 extend upward toward the lip 74 at the top of the bottle 70. FIG. 4G is a cross section view of the bottom of the base 76 along section C-C of bottle 70 as shown in FIG. 4E. FIG. 4H is a perspective view of the bottle of FIG 4A and FIG. 4E with the threads 22A visible.

[0041] FIGs. 6A and 6B show an embodiment of a clear bottle 30 filled with a liquid in the storage portion 42 terminated in a base 44. The smooth elongated neck 38 has internal threads 36 for engaging and securing a cap 34 with threads 35. The elongated neck 38 actuates or pushes the flapper seals open during insertion into a capless filler according to embodiments

of the invention. The thinner circular elongated neck 38 transitions in region 40 to the wider storage area 42. FIG. 7A shows the bottle 30 fitted with a label 46 for product description of the liquid in the bottle 30. For comparison, an existing bottle 50 that is not suitable for use with capless filler systems is shown in FIG. 7B. The bottle 50 has external threads 54 for engaging a cap 52, and a short and thick neck 56 that terminates in a storage portion 58 and a base 60. The stout neck 56 will not work with a capless filler system, and the external threads 54 would also not work even if the neck 56 were able to reach the flapper seals.

[0042] FIGs. 8A and 8B illustrate the use of the inventive bottle 30 with a capless filler 64 of a vehicle 62. In FIG. 8A a user unscrews the cap 34 from the bottle 30, and in FIG. 8B the user inserts the neck 38 of the bottle 30 into the capless filler 64.

[0043] The foregoing description is illustrative of particular embodiments of the invention, but is not meant to be a limitation upon the practice thereof. The following claims, including all equivalents thereof, are intended to define the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. A bottle for dispensing fluids into a capless filler system, said bottle comprising:

an elongated smooth neck configured for insertion into a capless filler opening to actuate and displace one or more flapper seals;

a cap with a first set of screw threads;

a storage portion in fluid communication with a bottom portion of said neck for holding a liquid; and

wherein said neck has a top portion with a second set of screw threads on an interior surface of said top portion configured to engage said first set of screw threads to secure said cap to said neck.

2. The bottle of claim 1 wherein said cap is a child proof cap.

3. The bottle of claim 1 wherein said bottle is clear or opaque.

4. The bottle of claim 1 wherein said bottom portion of said elongated smooth neck further comprises a ledge or flared out area that forms a tangible stopping point when inserting said bottle into the capless filler of a vehicle fuel system.

5. The bottle of claim 1 wherein said elongated smooth neck has a circular cross section.

6. The bottle of claim 1 further comprising a base at a bottom of a storage portion;
and

wherein said storage portion has a top area that is in mechanical communication with said elongated smooth neck.

7. The bottle of claim 1 wherein said bottle is made of plastic.

8. The bottle of claim 7 wherein the plastic is polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

9. A method for using the bottle of claim 1, said method comprising:
opening said bottle by unscrewing the cap from said elongated smooth neck;
inserting said elongated smooth neck into the capless filler; and
retracting said bottle from the capless filler after introducing a liquid held in
said bottle.

10. A method for forming the bottle of claim 1, the method comprising:
placing a threaded insert into an injection mold;
introducing a thermoplastic into the injection mold; and
wherein said threaded insert forms a set of internal threads on an inner top
portion of the elongated smooth neck of the bottle.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the thermoplastic is polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the thermoplastic is blow molded by at least one of extrusion blow molding, injection blow molding, and injection stretch blow molding.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising:

- introducing the thermoplastic as a parison;
- clamping the parison into the injection mold;
- heating the parison and applying air pressure into an opening in the parison to expand to match the mold; and
- removing the formed bottle from the mold after the plastic has hardened following cooling.

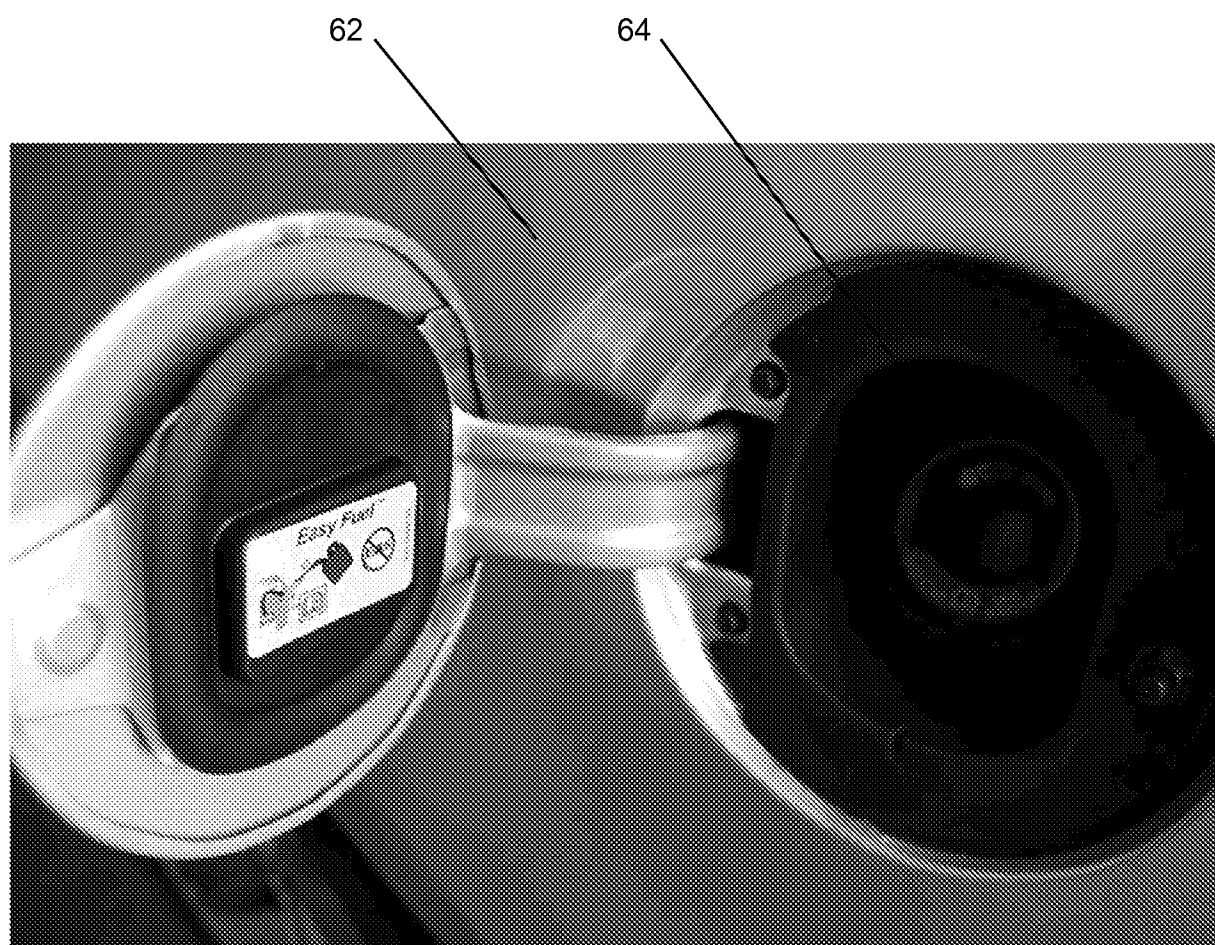


FIG. 1
(Prior Art)

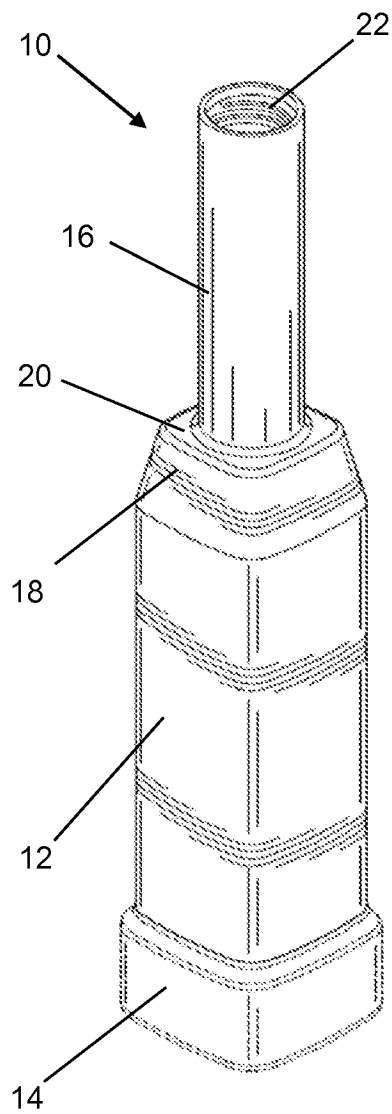


FIG. 2A

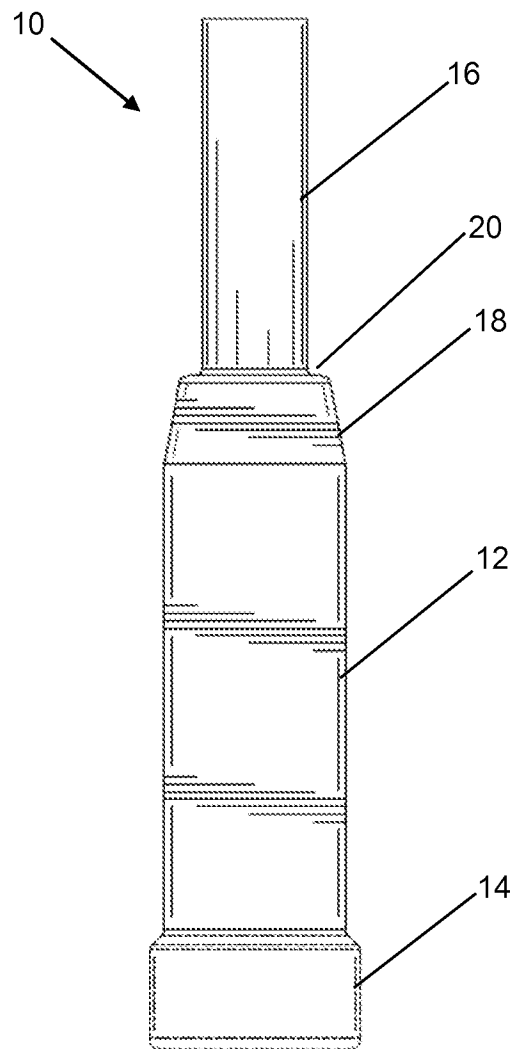


FIG. 2B

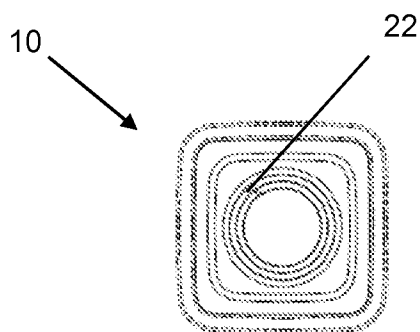


FIG. 2C

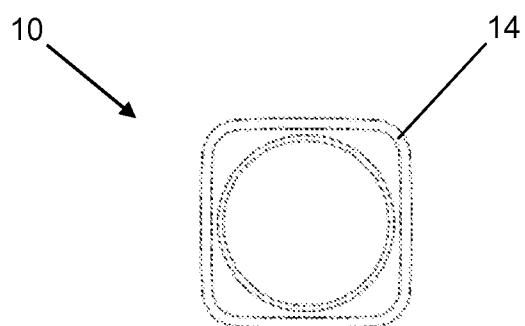


FIG. 2D

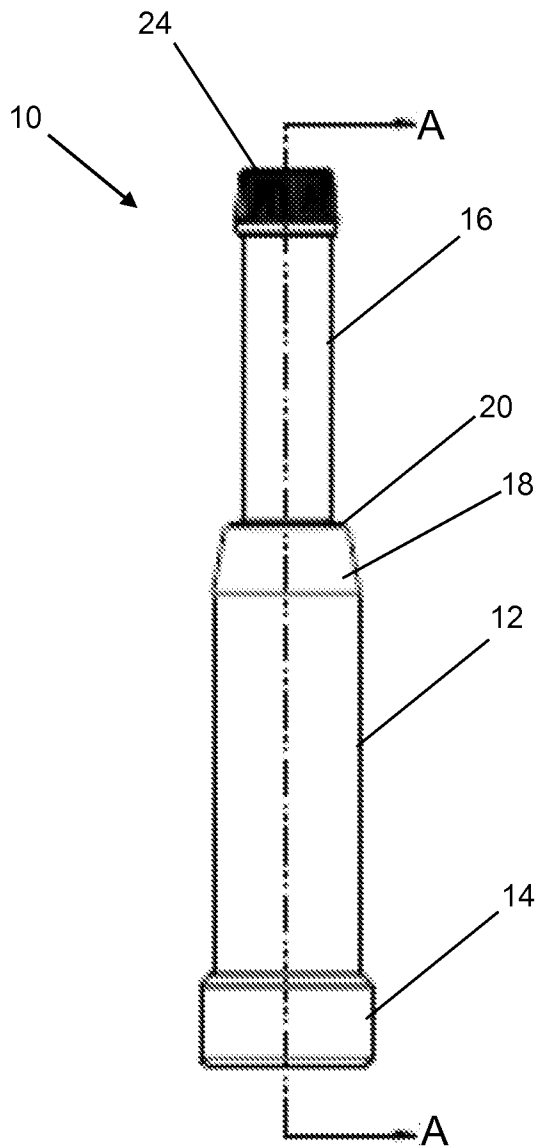


FIG. 3A

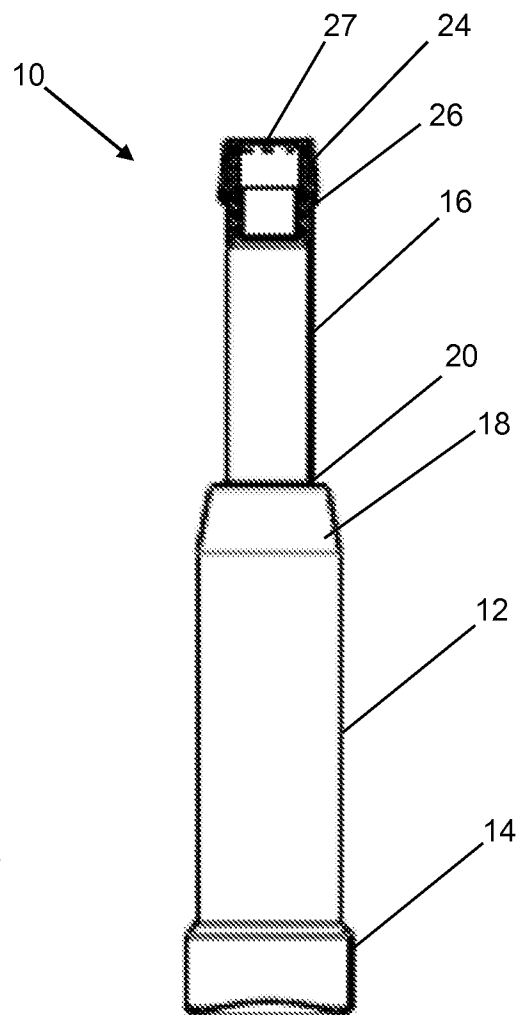


FIG. 3B
SECTION A-A

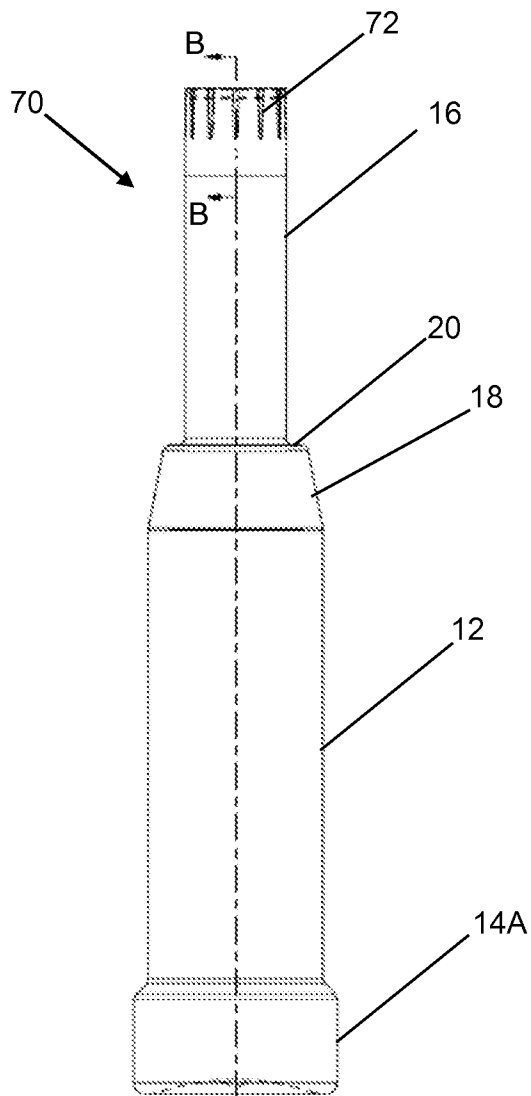


FIG. 4A

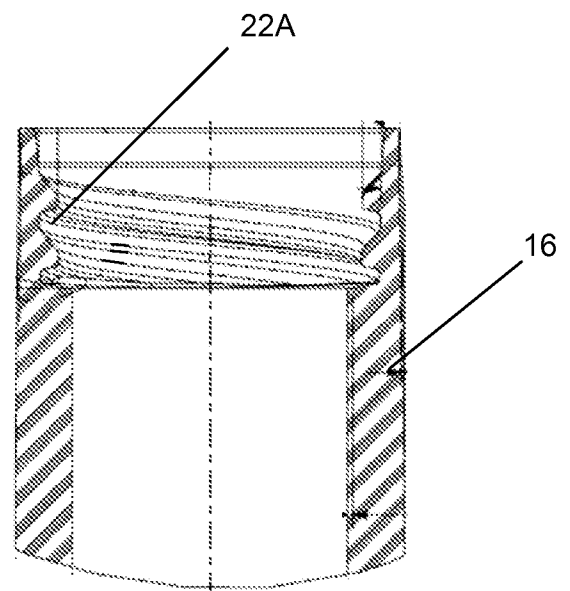


FIG. 4B
SECTION B-B

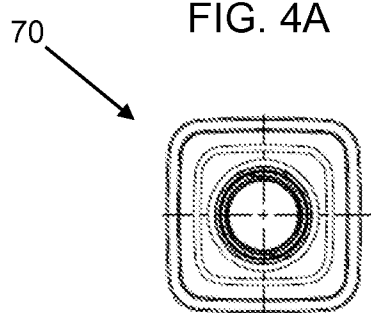


FIG. 4C

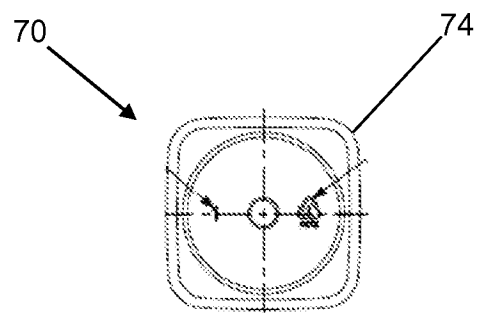


FIG. 4D

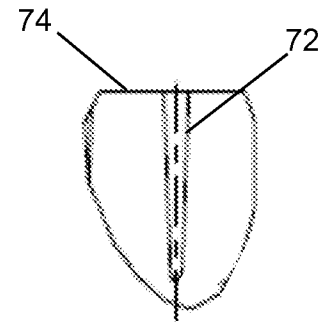
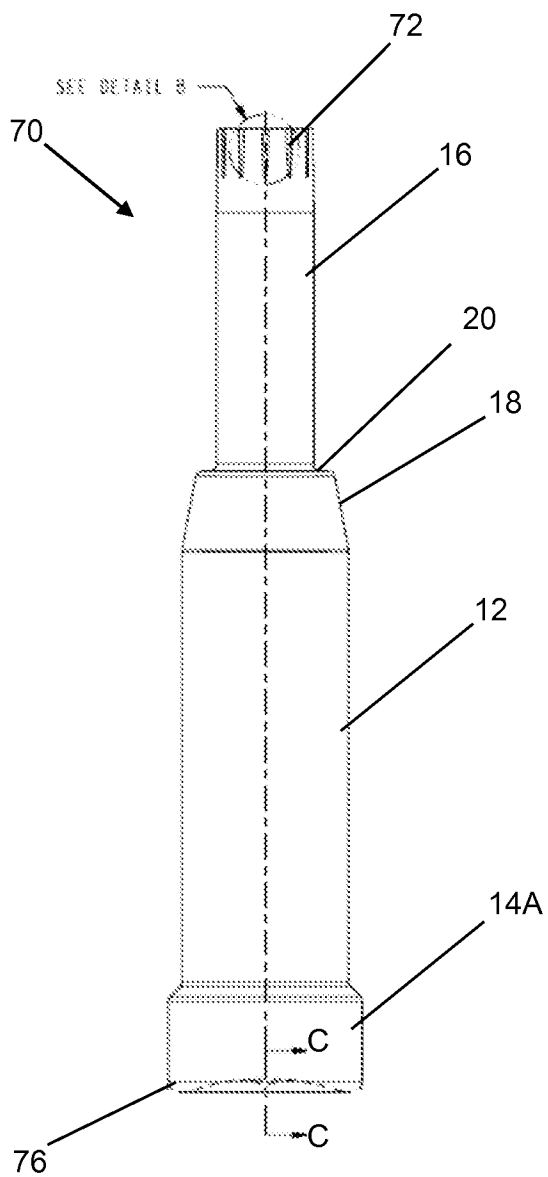
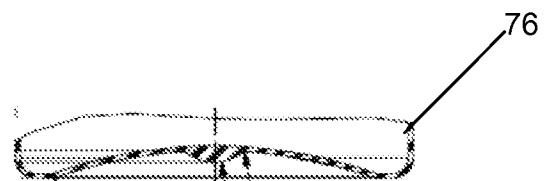


FIG. 4F



SECTION C-C

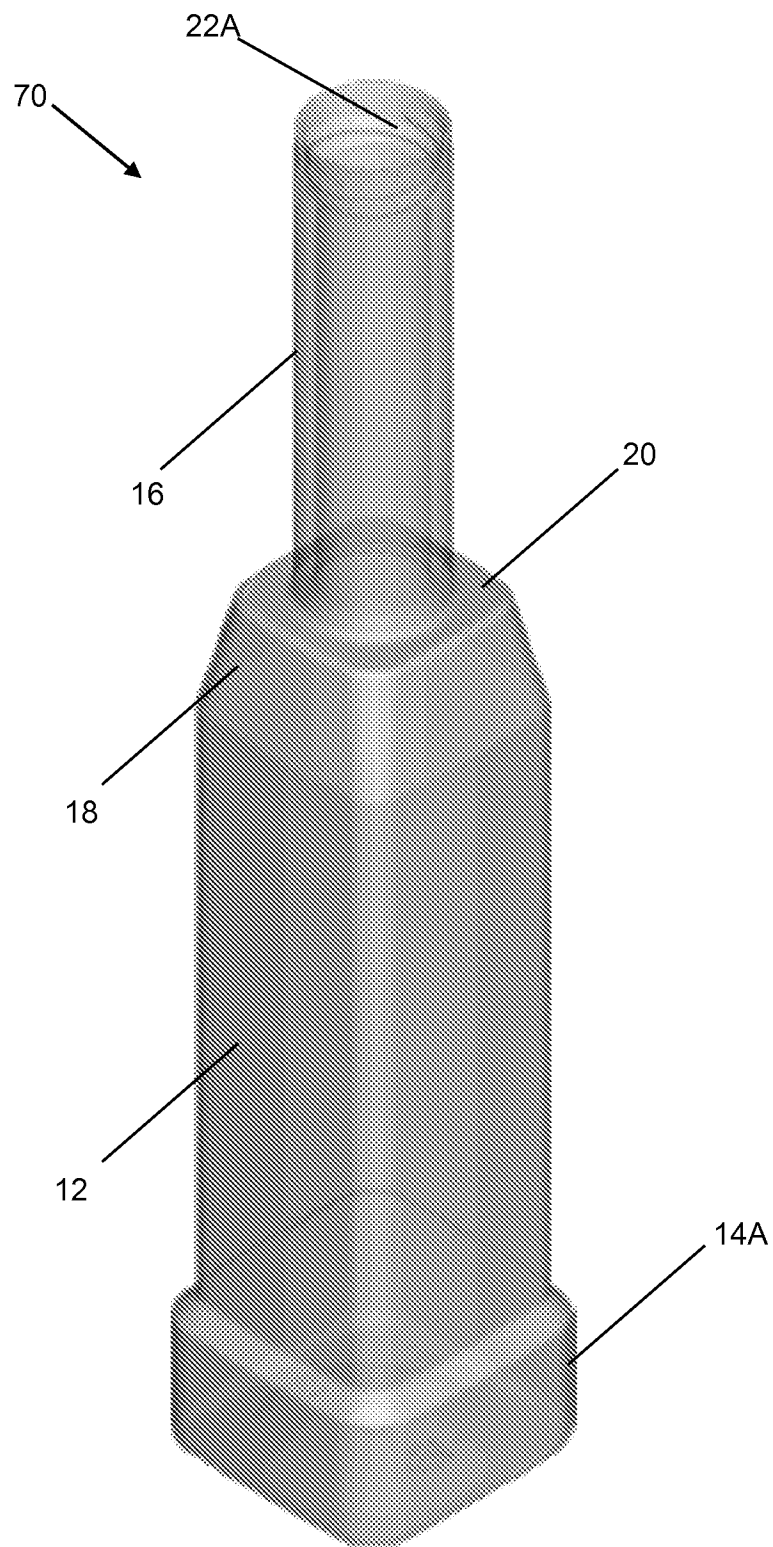


FIG. 4H

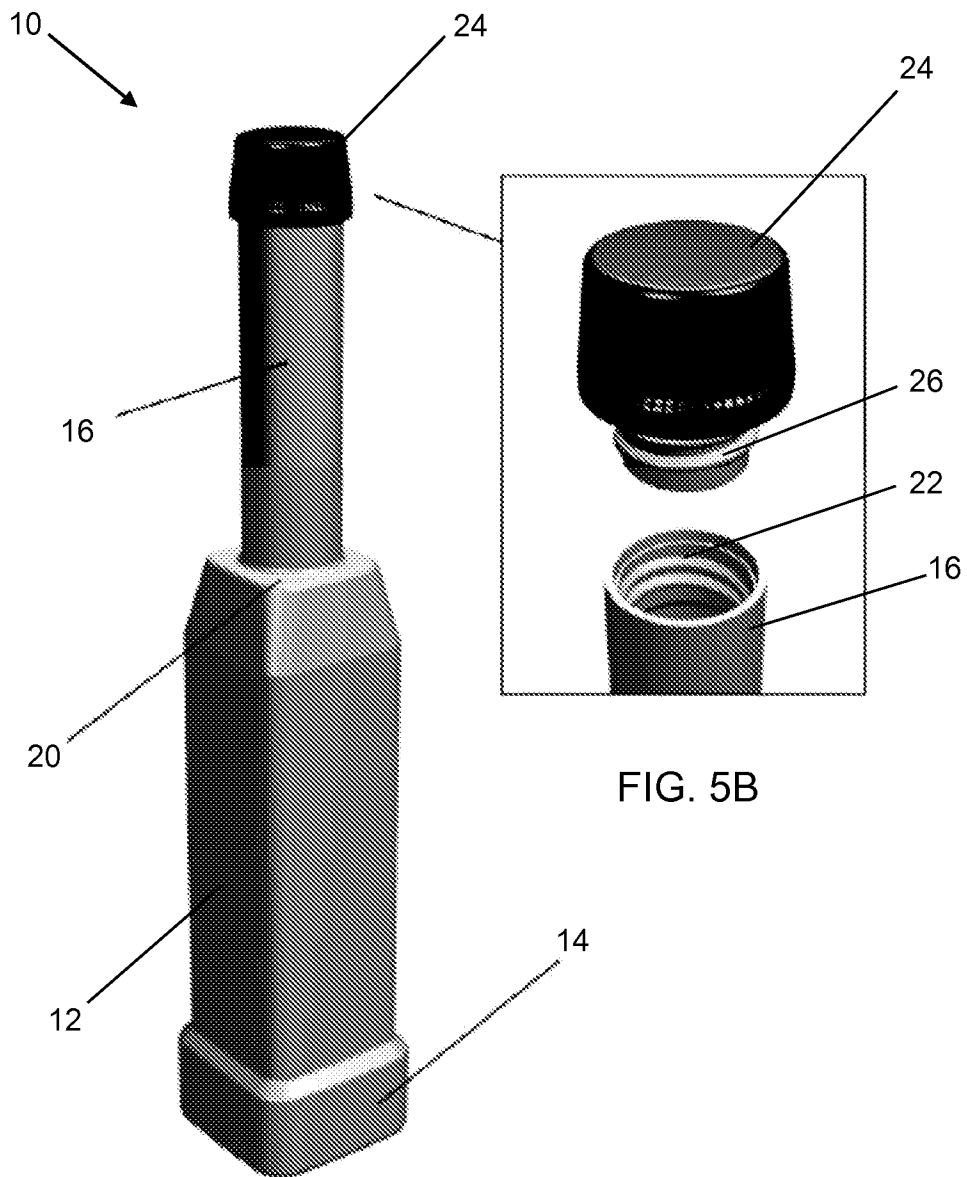


FIG. 5A

FIG. 5B

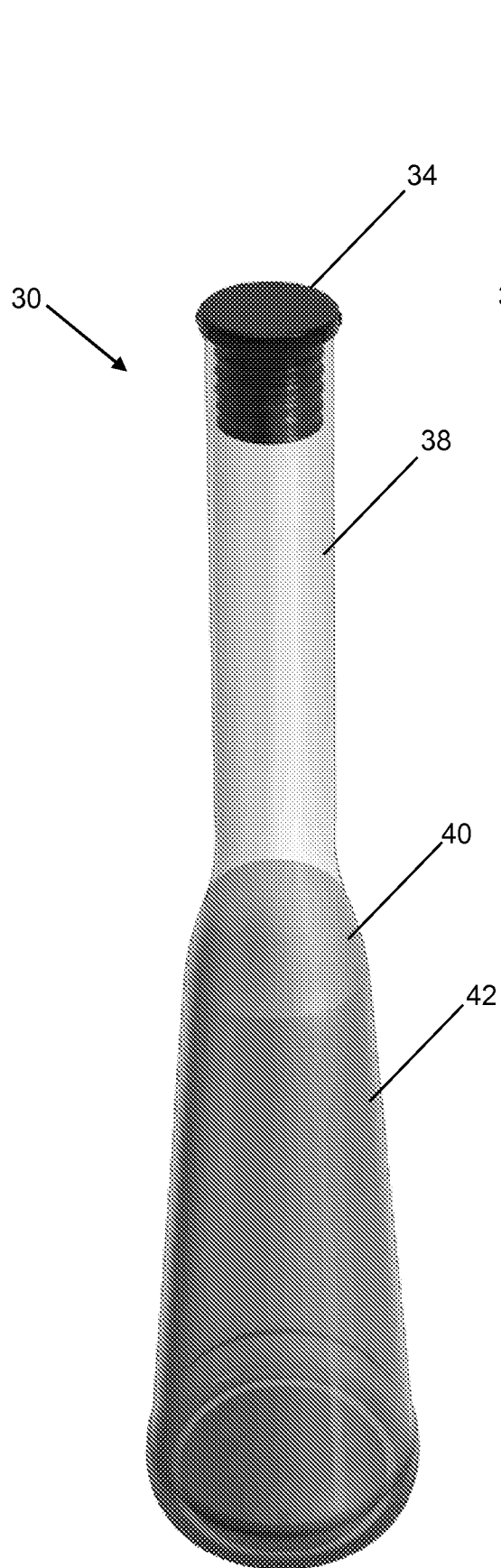


FIG. 6A

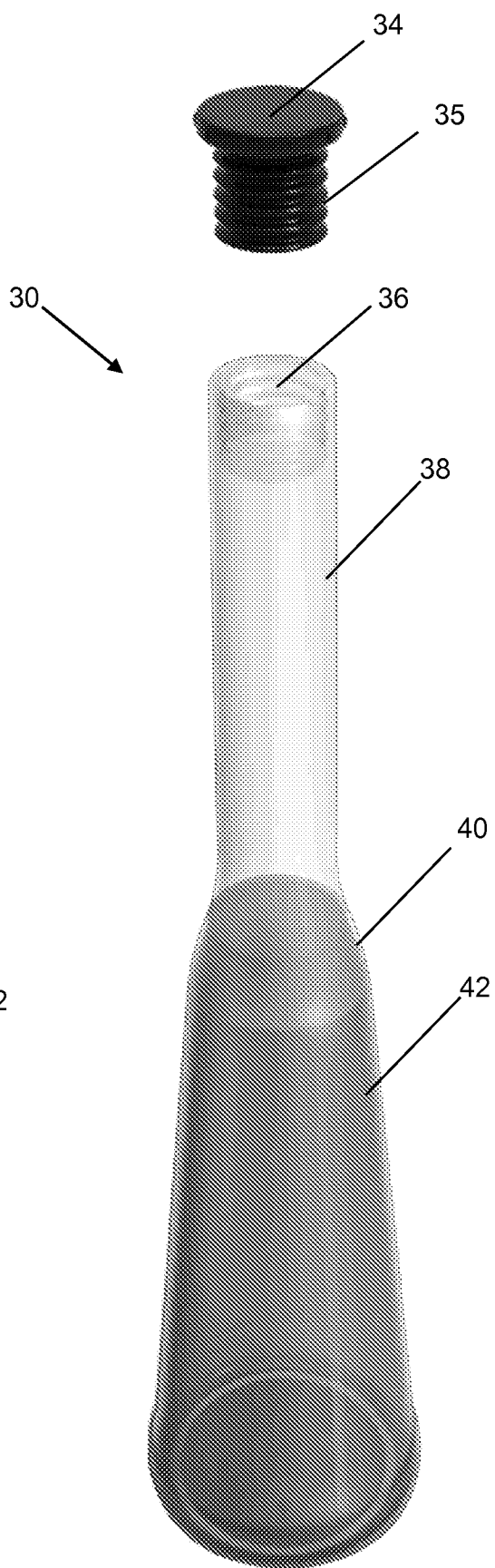


FIG. 6B

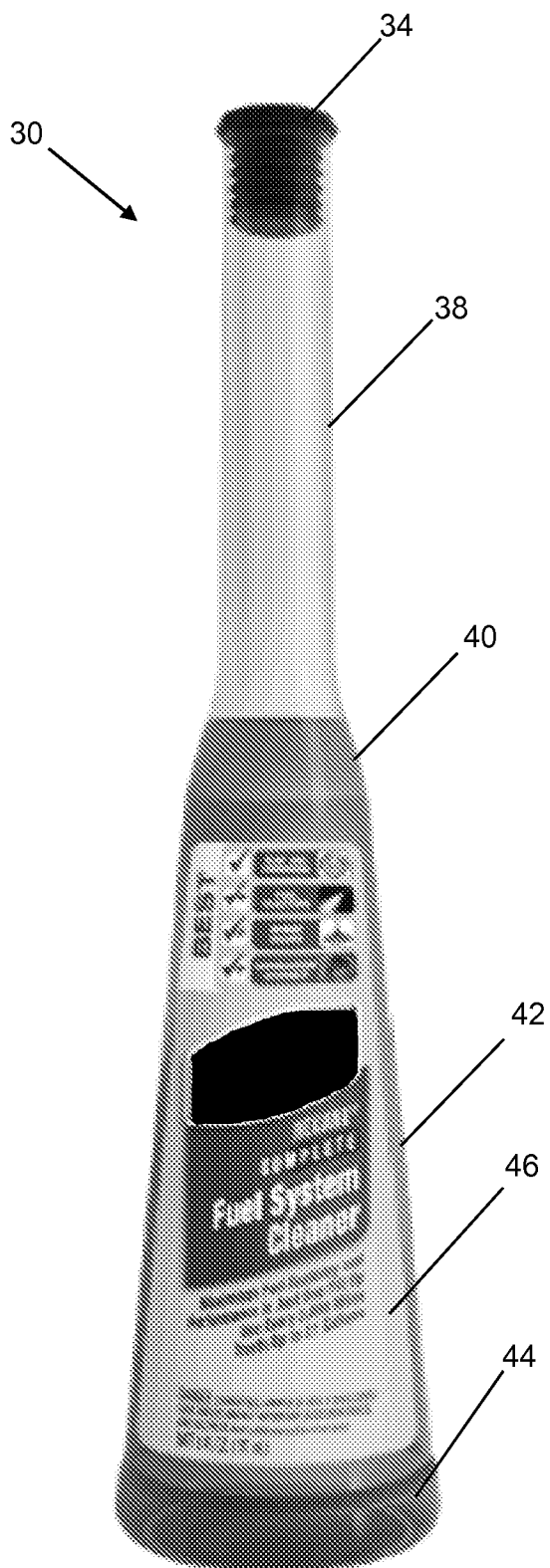


FIG. 7A

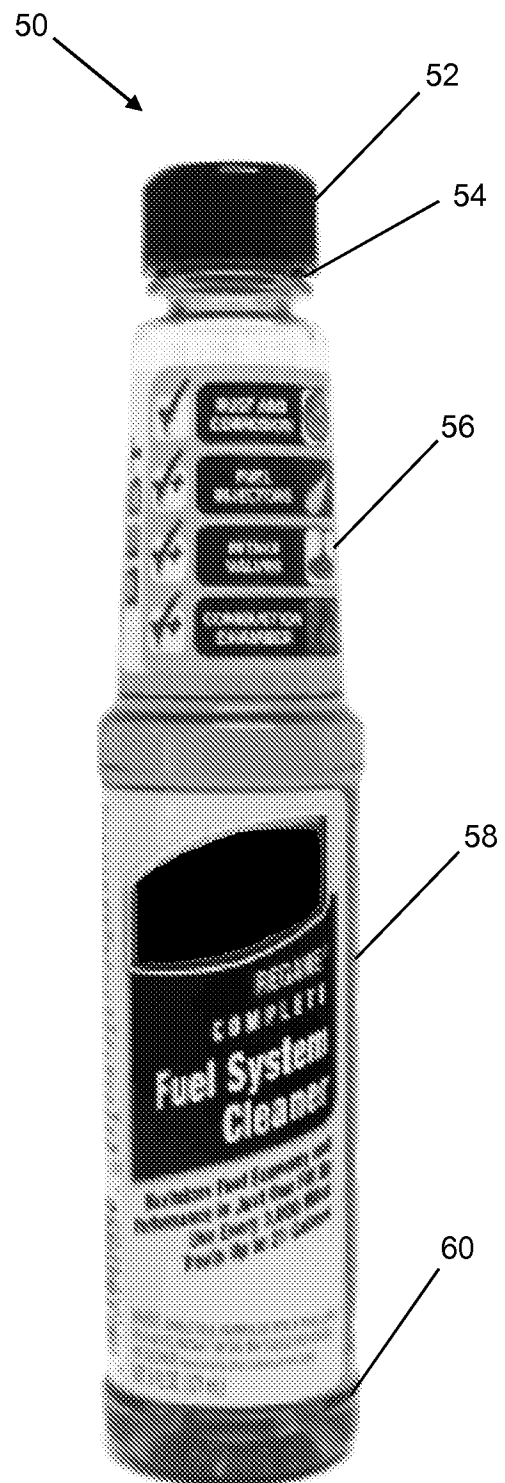


FIG. 7B
(Prior Art)

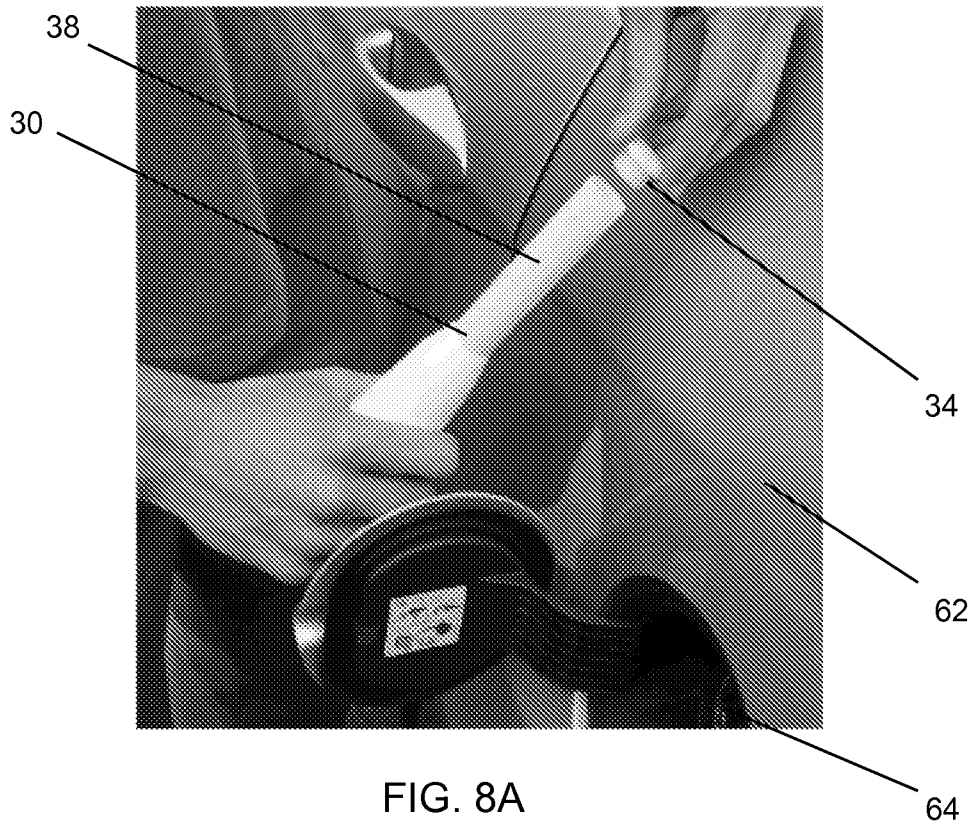


FIG. 8A

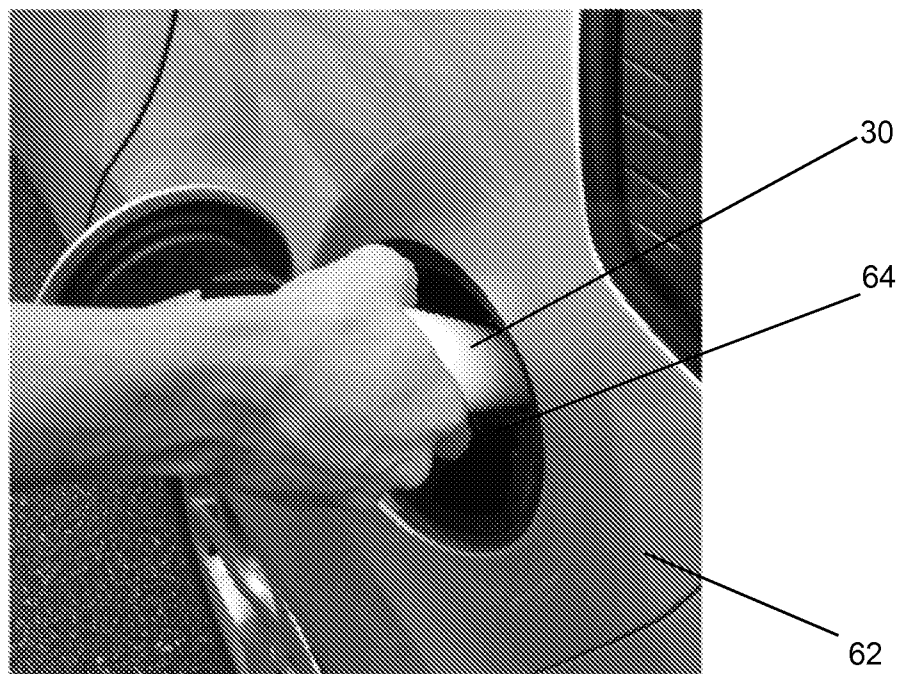


FIG. 8B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2015/025841A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. B65D1/02
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2013/292425 A1 (MULRY PATRICK E [US] ET AL) 7 November 2013 (2013-11-07) abstract; figures 1,2 paragraphs [0002] - [0004], [0011] - [0013], [0016], [0021], [0022] -----	1-13



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

19 May 2015

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29/05/2015

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Authorized officer

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2015/025841

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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