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2,876,899

MERCHANDISE PACKAGE

Original Filed March 29, 1955

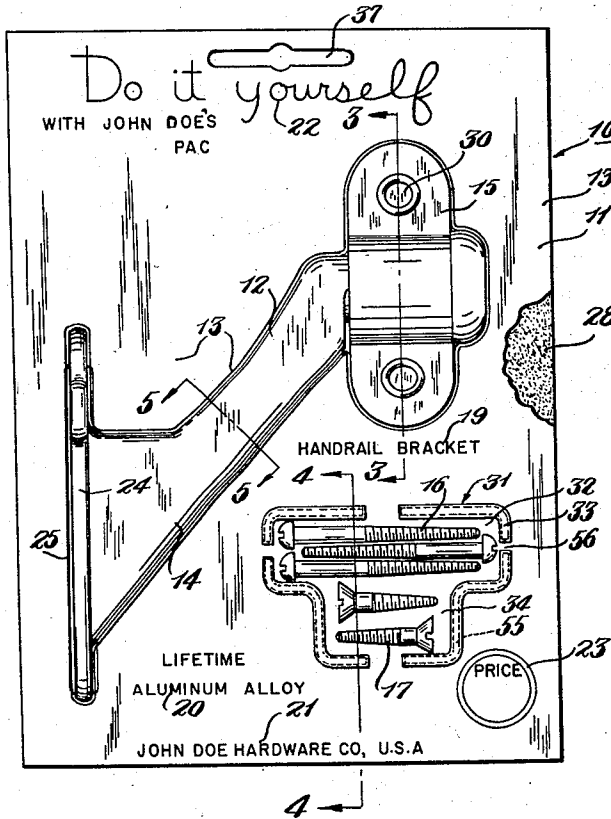


FIG. 1

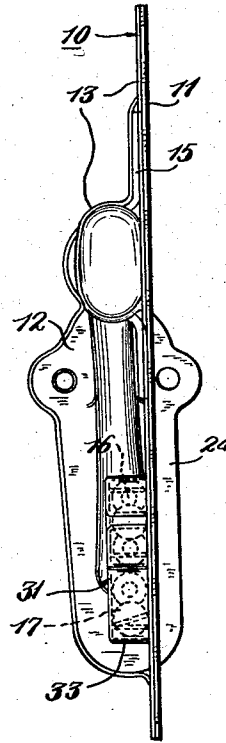


FIG. 2

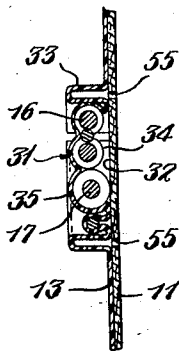


FIG. 4

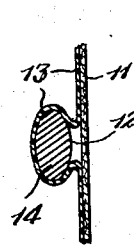
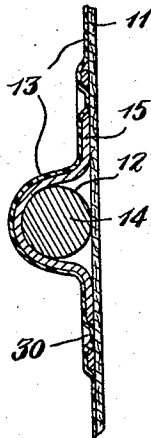


FIG. 5

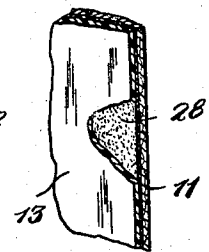


FIG. 6

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ATTORNEYS

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2,876,899

MERCHANDISE PACKAGE

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Original application March 29, 1955, Serial No. 497,500.
Divided and this application June 17, 1957, Serial No. 666,803

4 Claims. (Cl. 206—80)

This invention relates to the packaging of merchandise and provides a merchandise package of a highly advantageous character. The invention is especially useful for merchandise articles of an irregular form, and by way of example, has been disclosed herein as applied to hardware articles but without any intention of limiting the invention solely to that particular use. This application is a division of original application Serial No. 497,500 filed March 29, 1955.

An object of the invention is to provide a merchandise package in which the merchandise is mounted on a relatively stiff support card with a single film-type sheet forming an impervious transparent protective cover or skin extending over the merchandise in shape-conforming engagement therewith and adherently connected to the card, such that the merchandise and card are visible through the skin and are protected by the latter from dust and from becoming soiled or smeared during storage or handling.

Another object is to provide such a merchandise package in which the merchandise or article is connected with the support card solely by the film sheet and can be released from the card in a clean condition by a simple tearing or stripping of the film sheet, the card preferably having a porous-surface characteristic and an adhesion-producing coating thereon for increasing the strength of the adherent connection between the film sheet and the card.

A further object is to provide such a merchandise package in which the film sheet is a heat-sensitive sheet and is rendered more or less soft, pliable and elastic by heating and is processed into its covering relation to the merchandise and card by pressure applied to the heated sheet, the pressure preferably being a fluid pressure differential between opposite sides of the film sheet obtainable by applying suction to the underside of the sheet through one or more openings of the card.

Still another object is to provide a merchandise package of the character mentioned above in which the support card has openings therein defining an enclosure area and in which the film sheet extends over, and is adherently connected with, the card with portions of the film sheet rising above the enclosure area and defining a hollow cover for retaining the merchandise thereagainst.

Yet another object is to provide such a merchandise package in which the portions of the film sheet rising above the openings of the card are molded to form side walls of a pocket having the enclosure area as its floor, and in which one or more merchandise articles disposed in the pocket are retained therein by a cover sheet portion extending across the pocket and formed by a portion of the film sheet, the cover sheet portion preferably having a shape-conforming engagement with the merchandise for substantially preventing shifting thereof in the pocket.

This invention further provides a merchandise package of the kind above referred to in which the support card has indicia printed thereon relating to the merchandise

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carried by the card, the indicia being covered by and visible through the film sheet.

The invention can be further briefly summarized as consisting in certain novel combinations and arrangements of parts as are hereinafter described in detail and set out in the claims hereof.

In the accompanying drawing forming a part of this specification:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view showing a merchandise package embodying this invention;

Fig. 2 is a side elevation of the package;

Fig. 3 is a partial transverse section taken through the package on section line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is another partial transverse section taken through the package on section line 4—4 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is still another partial transverse section taken on section line 5—5 of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 6 is a fragmentary view showing a portion of the package on a larger scale.

The merchandise package 10 provided by this invention comprises both a package having the merchandise contained therein and a display means by which the merchandise can be displayed to best advantage for sales purposes. The package 10 comprises a relatively stiff backing sheet or support card 11, a merchandise article 12 carried by the card, and a film sheet 13 extending in continuous relation over the article and card and adherently connected to the card for attaching the article in a mounted relation thereto.

In the embodiment of the package 10 shown in Figs. 1 to 6 inclusive, the merchandise article 12 is a hardware item of an irregular shape. The particular hardware item shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is a handrail bracket comprising a metal bracket member 14 and its attaching strap 15. The merchandise contained in the package 10 is here shown as also comprising a group of loose articles in the form of wood screws 16 for attaching the bracket member 14 to a wall and wood screws 17 for connecting a handrail with the strap 15. The handrail bracket 12 and the screws 16 and 17 are here shown merely by way of example of articles which can be packaged in accordance with the present invention and it will be understood, of course, that the invention is applicable to a great number and wide variety of other merchandise articles.

The support card 11 is preferably of paper, cardboard, or other fibrous sheet material, and is of a sufficient stiffness to retain its substantially flat shape even though the hardware item or items mounted thereon may be of substantial weight, such as the above-mentioned handrail bracket 12. A paperboard mounting card made from hardwood fibres and here represented by the support card 11, has been found to be very satisfactory for the packaging purposes of the present invention.

The support card 11 is here shown as having indicia printed on the upper face thereof relating to the merchandise contained in the package. Such printed indicia may comprise an identifying name 19 for the merchandise article, a designation 20 of the material of which it is made, a designation 21 of the name of the manufacturer or vendor, a designation 22 in the way of instructions for using the merchandise article, and a designation 23 for indicating the selling price of the article.

When the merchandise article 12 has one or more projecting portions thereon, such as the base flange 24 of the bracket member 14 and which might prevent the article from lying closely adjacent the upper or front face of the support card 11, the card can be provided with a suitable opening, such as the slot 25 into which a portion of the base flange 24 extends.

The film sheet or skin 13 extends in continuous relation over the upper face of the support card 11 and over

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the merchandise article or articles thereon. The film sheet 13 conforms to the irregular shape of a substantial portion of the merchandise article 12 and has a substantially skin-tight engagement with those portions along which it extends. Portions of the film sheet 13 also extend over the upper surface of the support card 11 in a flat face-to-face engagement therewith and are adherently connected to the card surface.

The manner in which the film sheet 13 conforms to the shape of the merchandise article 12 is shown in Figs. 2 to 6 inclusive, from which it will be seen that the film sheet follows the contour of the various portions of the merchandise article by lying closely thereagainst with portions of the film sheet extending, to some extent, around and beneath certain portions of the merchandise article as shown in Fig. 5.

The film sheet 13 adheres strongly to the support card 11 as a skin or film extending over the major portion of the upper face of the card and, by reason of the strong adherent attachment of the film sheet to the card and the close-fitting engagement of the film sheet with the merchandise article 12, it will be seen that the film sheet connects the merchandise article securely to the card, such that the article will be retained on the card until it is intended to be removed therefrom and, while on the card, will be held against substantially any movement of the article relative to the card.

The film sheet 13 is a substantially impervious transparent plastic sheet, for example, a sheet of cellulosic material, such as cellulose acetate, cellulose acetate butyrate or the like and can be on the order of 10 mils in thickness. The film sheet 13 is also a heat-sensitive sheet material which can be rendered soft, pliable and somewhat elastic by the application of heat thereto. When the film sheet 13 has been heated sufficiently to render the same soft, pliable and somewhat elastic, it can be readily processed into the above-described substantially skin-tight shape-conforming engagement with the merchandise article 12 and into the flat adherent engagement with the surface of the support card 11.

Since the film sheet 13 forms a connecting means and cover for the merchandise article 12 and the support card 11 which is transparent, the article and the indicia printed on the support card can be readily seen through the film sheet by a prospective purchaser inspecting the merchandise package. Likewise, since the film sheet is impervious and has a smooth and glossy surface characteristic, dust or other foreign matter will not be likely to adhere to the package, and hence, the likelihood of the merchandise or card becoming smeared or soiled is substantially eliminated. Because of these protective characteristics of the film sheet 13, the package 10 will retain a clean and satisfactory appearance for a considerable period of time during which the merchandise will be displayed to maximum advantage to customers.

The film sheet 13, although relatively tough and strong and having a normally tight adherence to the support card 11, can however, be stripped from the card and merchandise article by a stripping action started on the film sheet at a point adjacent an extreme edge of the support card. Such stripping of the film sheet from the card immediately releases the merchandise article for its intended use. The film sheet 13 does not adhere to the article itself but has a holding action on the article primarily by reason of its shape-conforming and substantially skin-tight engagement therewith.

For increasing the adhesive connection of the film sheet 13 with the upper face of the support card 11, such upper face is provided with a so-called heat-seal coating 28. The coating 28 is an adhesion-producing coating of a heat-sensitive character in that it becomes tacky upon being heated. When the coating 28 has thus been rendered tacky by heating thereof, the pressing of the film sheet 13 against the face of the support card will result in a strong adhesive connection therebetween.

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The heat-sensitive coating 28 can be a relatively thin layer of a suitable adhesive, such as a lacquer or pyroxylin. The heat-sensitive coating 28 can be applied to the surface of the support card 11 by spraying thereon in a liquid form, or by means of a roller device, or by brushing. The coating 28 unites strongly with the support card and forms a connecting medium between the card and the film sheet 13.

The attachment of the film sheet 13 to the support card 11 can be further strengthened by employing for the support card a sheet material having a porous surface characteristic. When the support card has such a porous surface characteristic, the heat-softened film sheet 13 will become interlocked with the porous support card during the processing of the film sheet thereon. When a support card having such a porous surface characteristic is also treated with the heat-sensitive coating material 28, that material becomes impregnated into the support card to further strengthen the adhesive connection between the film sheet and the card. A fibrous support card, such as one made from the above-mentioned hardwood fibres, has this desirable porous surface characteristic.

When the merchandise article being mounted on the card has one or more openings formed in portions of the article lying adjacent the card surface, such as the openings 30 of the connecting strap 15, corresponding portions of the film sheet 13 extend into such openings and are adherently connected with the support card through such openings. The portions of the film sheet which are thus connected with the card through the openings 30 of the merchandise article, also serve to connect the article to the card in a manner which prevents any relative shifting between the article and the card.

When the merchandise contained in the package 10 consists of, or includes, a plurality of loose individual articles such as the screws 16 and 17, the package is constructed so as to include a hollow cover member 31 by which such loose articles are securely held adjacent an enclosure area 32 of the support card 11. The cover member 31 is formed by shaped or molded portions of the film sheet 13 and comprises molded wall and cover portions 33 and 35. The wall portions 33 are hollow and extend above the surface of the support card 11 and form side walls of a pocket 34 in which the articles 16 and 17 are disposed. The floor of the pocket 34 is formed by the enclosure area 32 of the card which is surrounded, or partially surrounded, by the upstanding side walls 33.

The cover portion 35 extends across the pocket 34 and is formed by another portion of the film sheet 13 which is integrally connected with the portions of the film sheet which define the side walls 33. The cover sheet 35 extends down into the pocket 34 for varying distances by reason of its having a shape-conforming engagement with the articles 16 and 17 and by reason of the fact that portions of the cover sheet also extend down into existing spaces between the articles in the pocket. The cover sheet 35 retains the articles 16 and 17 in the pocket 34, and also by reason of its shape-conforming engagement with the articles, holds the same against shifting or rattling in the pocket.

The merchandise package 10 can be produced as an individual package or, can be produced in a connected relation to other similar packages by the use of a support card of large area and from which support card the individual packages are severed after the film sheet 13 has been processed over the articles and support card.

If desired, the support card of the package 10 can be provided with a suitable opening or slot 37 adjacent one edge thereof for use in hanging the merchandise package, or a group of such packages, on a hook or on a suitable projection of a wall or rack.

Many of the advantages of the merchandise package 10 have already been described above, but in general it will now be understood that as provided by this invention, the

merchandise package represents a very satisfactory and economical way of packaging hardware articles or other merchandise items, such that they will be visibly and strikingly displayed to prospective purchasers and, at the same time, the articles and the display card will be effectively protected against dust and against soiling or smearing which would detract from the attractive appearance of the merchandise. It will now also be seen that the transparent impervious heat-sensitive film sheet with its skin-tight engagement with the merchandise article and its strong adherent connection to the surface of the support card, firmly attaches the merchandise article to the card in a manner to prevent relative shifting therebetween, but still permits the merchandise to be readily removed from the card by a tearing or stripping away of the film sheet.

Although the merchandise package herein disclosed may be formed by various processes and by the use of various kinds of equipment, a suitable apparatus is disclosed in the above-identified original application which contains claims to such apparatus and to a method.

From the accompanying drawings and the foregoing detailed description, it will now be readily understood that this invention provides a merchandise package in which the merchandise is carried by a support card and is displayed to advantage through a transparent protective film which secures the merchandise to the card but is adapted to be readily stripped or torn away to release the merchandise.

Although the invention has been illustrated and described in detail herein, it should not be regarded as being limited correspondingly in scope since it is intended to be inclusive of all variations and modifications coming within the terms of the claims hereof.

Having thus described my invention, I claim:

1. A package comprising, a support card having openings therein and an enclosure area on one face of the card and surrounded by said openings, merchandise supported by the card and disposed in overlying relation to said enclosure area, and transparent plastic sheet material holding said merchandise in place on the card, said sheet material having portions thereof lying against and forming an adherently-connected cover layer on said one face and also having deformed other portions forming a hollow cover means extending over the enclosure area for retaining said merchandise in said enclosure area, said hollow cover means being formed in part by walls projecting from said one face in alignment with said openings and extending around the perimeter of said enclosure area.

2. A package of the character described comprising, a relatively stiff support card having a group of openings therein and an enclosure area on the upper face of the

card, said group of openings being disposed in a surrounding relation to said enclosure area, a transparent film adherently connected to said upper face and having deformed portions rising above said openings as upright side walls and defining a pocket having said enclosure area as its floor, and merchandise articles in said pocket, other portions of said film defining a cover portion extending between and connected with said side walls for retaining said articles in said pocket, said cover portion having shape-conforming engagement with said articles for substantially preventing shifting of the articles in said pocket.

3. In a package of the character described, a support card having a display area and an adjacent enclosure area on one face thereof, said card having openings therein surrounding said enclosure area, merchandise supported by said card and comprising an article lying against said display area and a group of articles disposed in overlying relation to said enclosure area, and transparent plastic sheet material holding said merchandise in place on the card, said sheet material forming a substantially skin-tight film extending in continuous relation over said article and said display area and adherently connected to said one face with portions of said sheet material rising from said one face above said openings and forming a hollow cover means for retaining said group of articles in said enclosure area.

4. A package comprising, a support card having an enclosure area on one face of the card, articles supported by the card and disposed in overlying relation to said enclosure area, and an adherent film of plastic material holding said articles in place on the card, said film having portions thereof lying against and forming an adherently-connected cover layer on said one face and also having deformed other portions comprising hollow walls projecting from said one face and forming a barrier means extending around the perimeter of said enclosure area for retaining said articles in said enclosure area, said sheet material having another portion thereof connected with said hollow walls and forming a cover portion extending across said enclosure area.

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