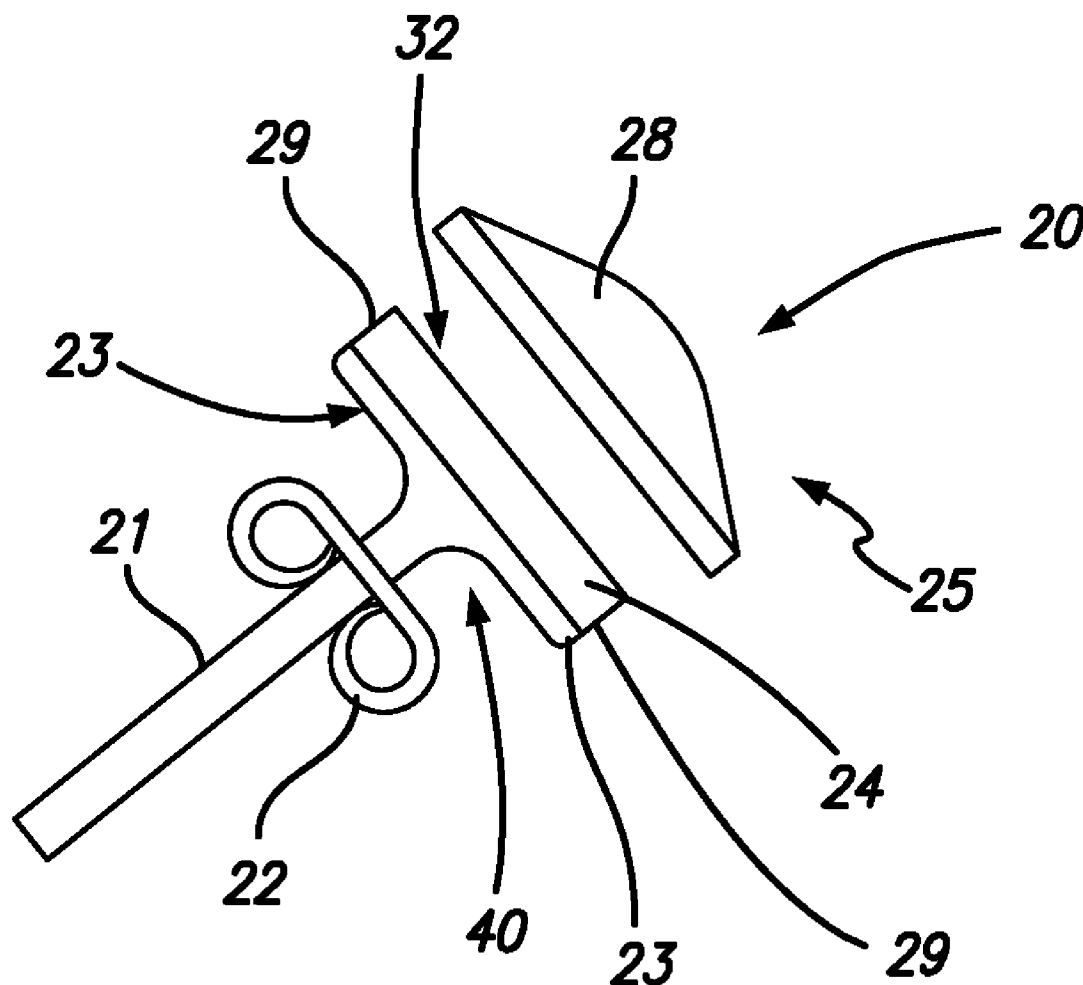




US 20120240623A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Morse(10) **Pub. No.: US 2012/0240623 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 27, 2012**(54) **INTERCHANGEABLE JEWELRY SYSTEM**(52) **U.S. Cl. 63/13; 63/40; 63/12**(76) **Inventor: Amy Morse, Glen Ellyn, IL (US)**(57) **ABSTRACT**(21) **Appl. No.: 13/430,343**(22) **Filed: Mar. 26, 2012****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) **Provisional application No. 61/467,972, filed on Mar. 25, 2011.****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****A44C 7/00** (2006.01)**A44C 25/00** (2006.01)**A44C 15/00** (2006.01)

The present invention includes interchangeable jewelry pieces and an interchangeable jewelry product line comprising at least post style earrings, dangling earrings and pendants for necklaces. All of the jewelry items in the line have a base portion with a magnetic portion designed and dimensioned to receive and magnetically secure an interchangeable decorative cap portion. The decorative caps have a simple functional design making them relatively inexpensive to mass produce. The decorative cap portion includes a receiver portion, a substantially planar decorative material dimensioned for receipt in the receiver portion, a cover portion for protecting the decorative material, and downwardly projecting peripheral rim dimensioned to encompass the peripheral edge of a magnetic portion of the base of each of the pieces of jewelry in the product line.



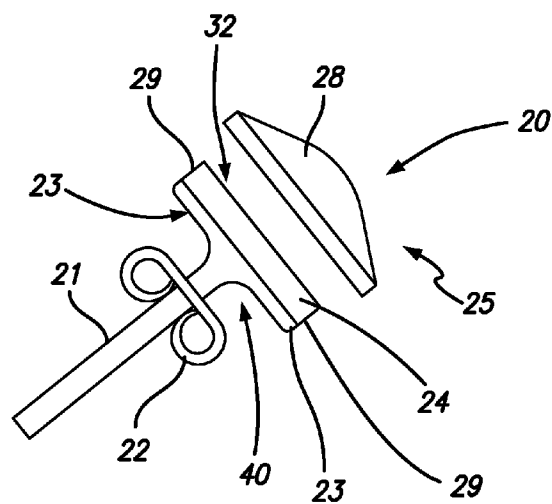


FIG. 1

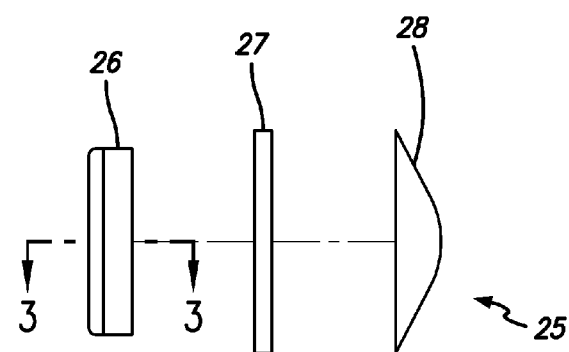


FIG. 2

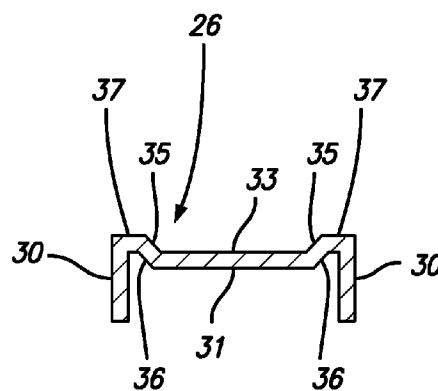


FIG. 3

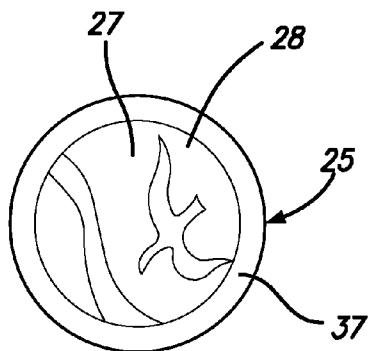


FIG. 4

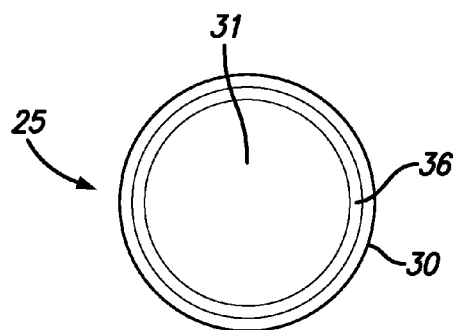


FIG. 5

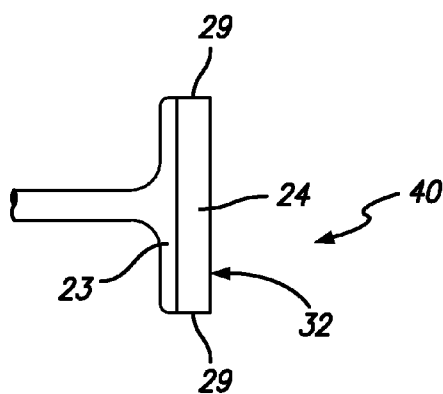


FIG. 6

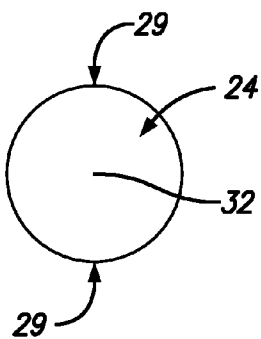


FIG. 7

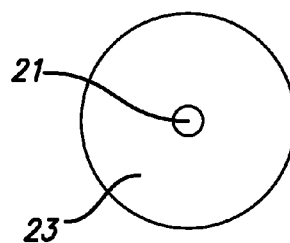


FIG. 8

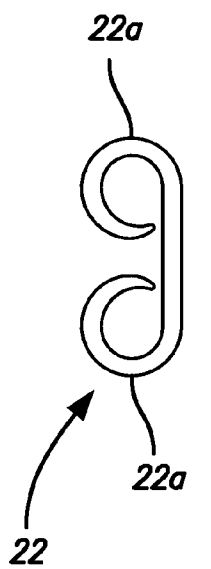


FIG. 9

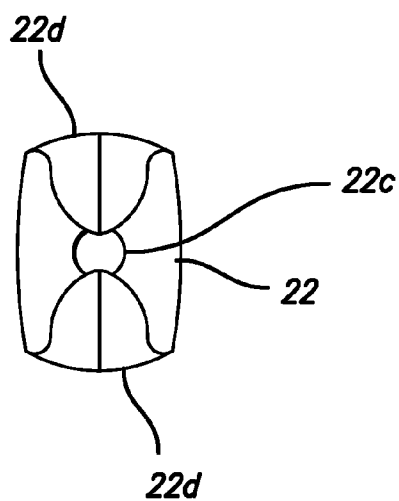


FIG. 10

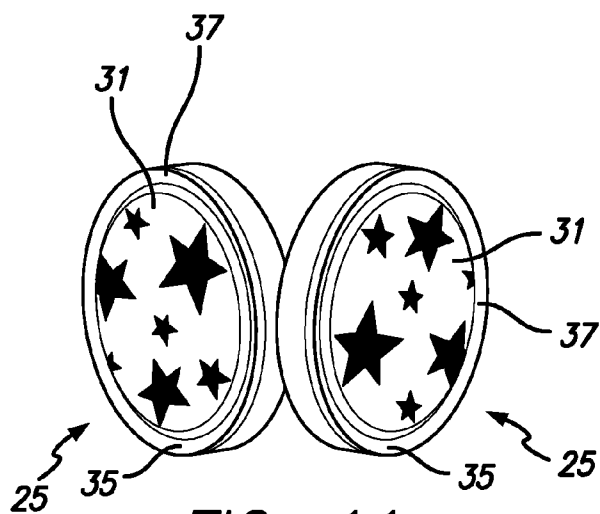


FIG. 11

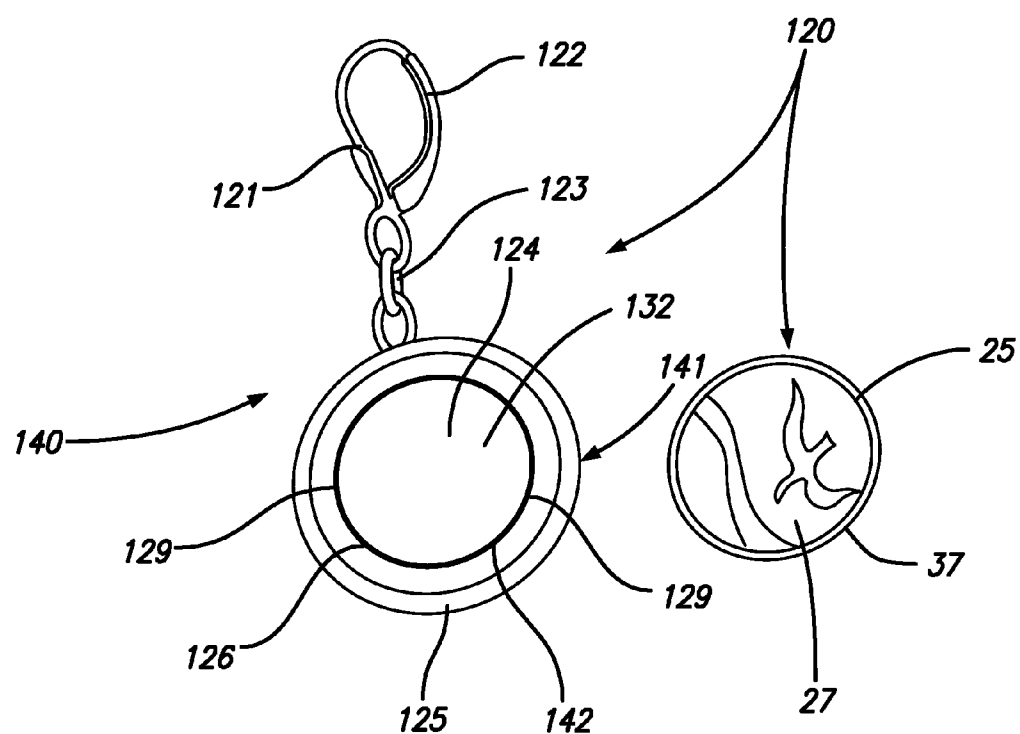


FIG. 12

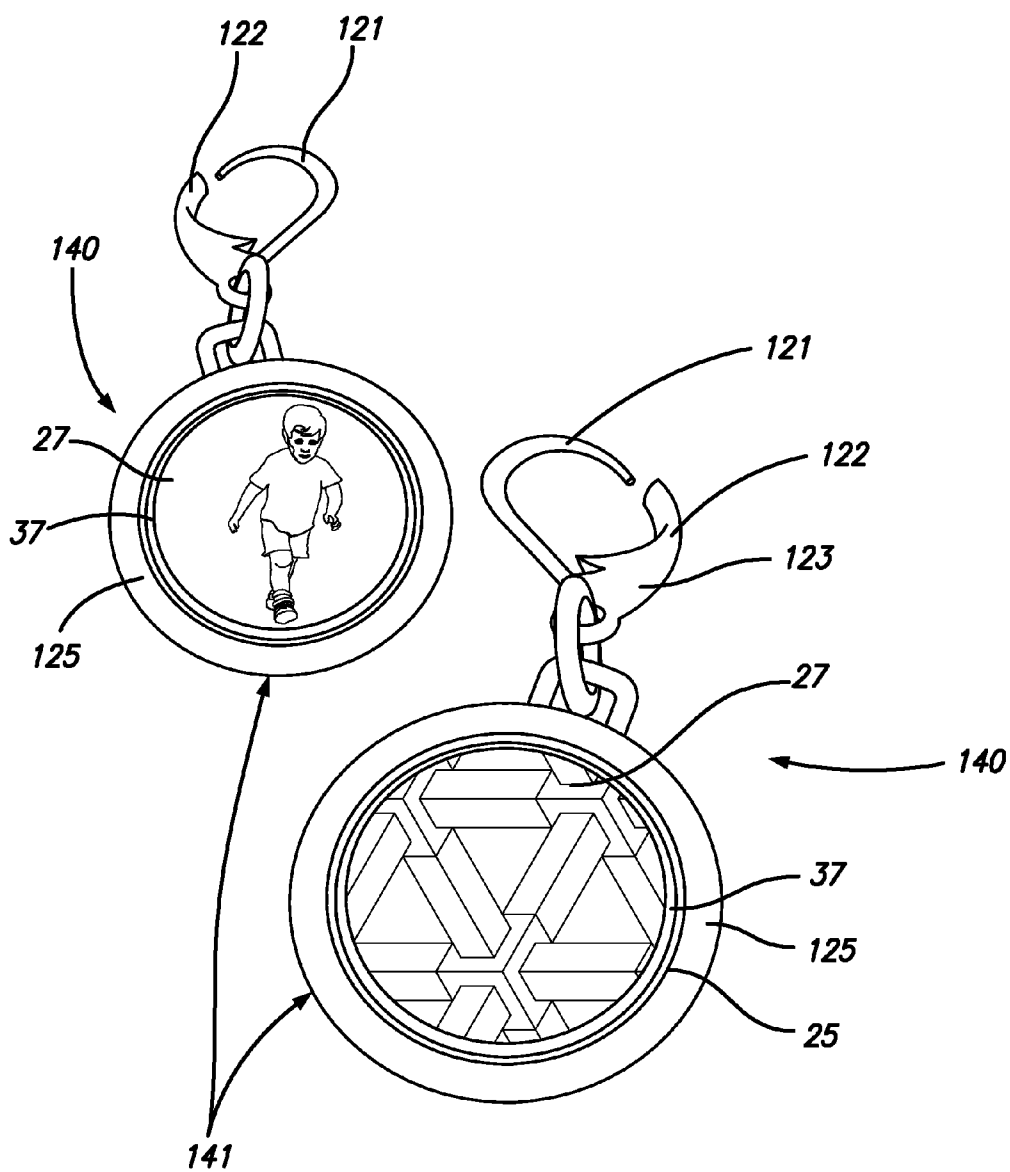


FIG. 13

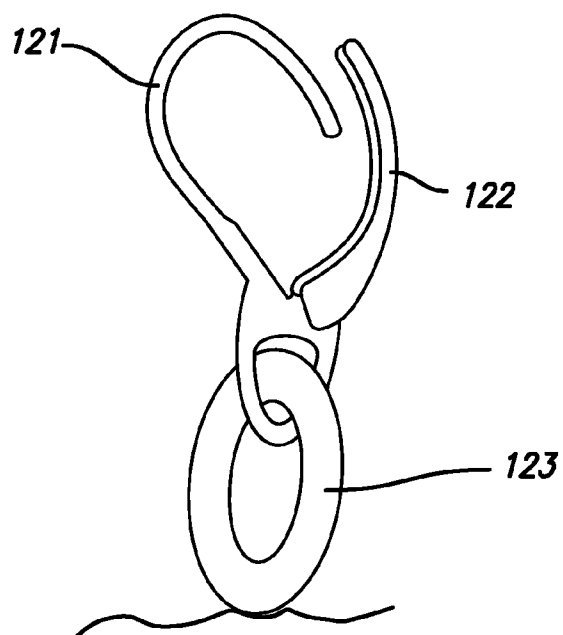


FIG. 14

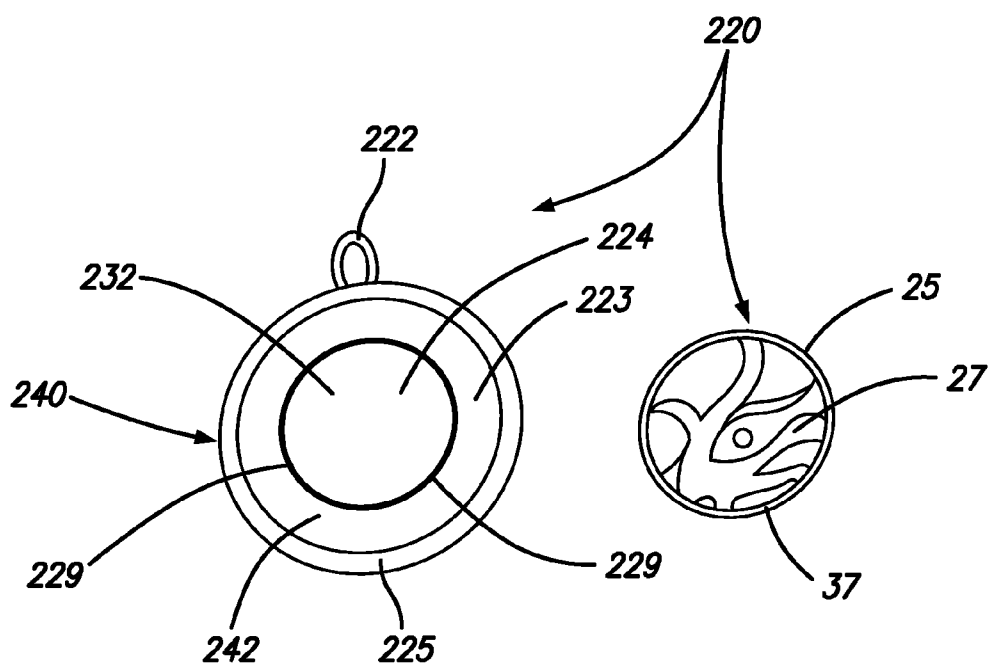


FIG. 15

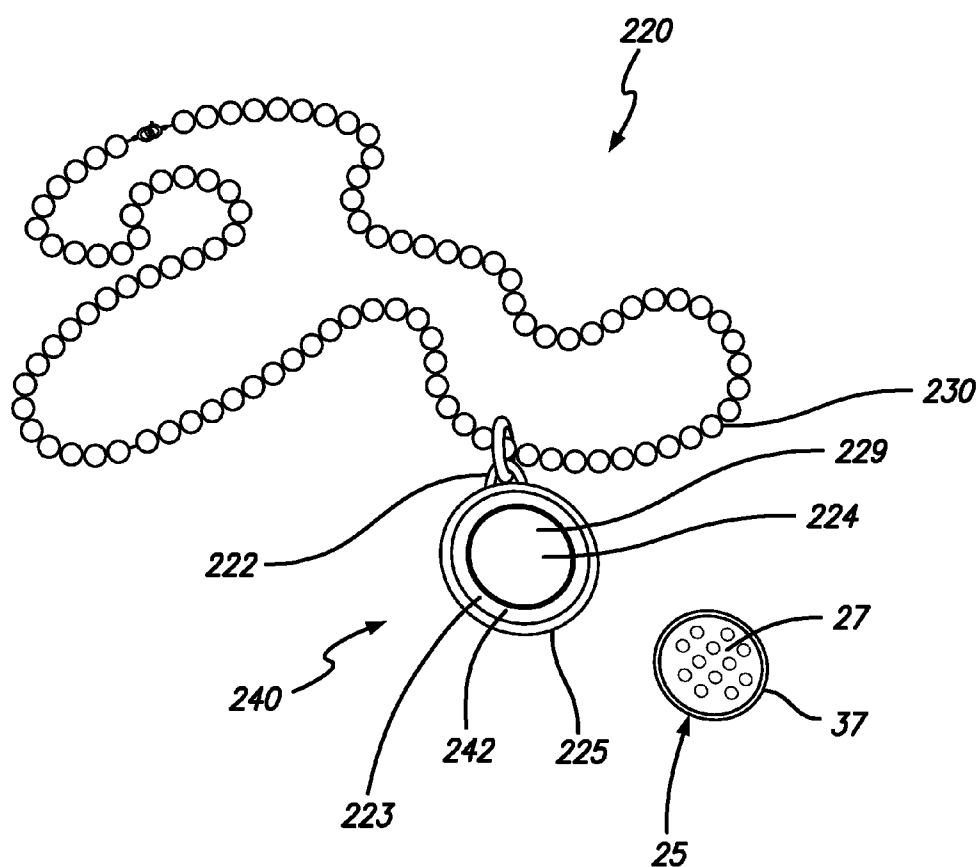


FIG. 16

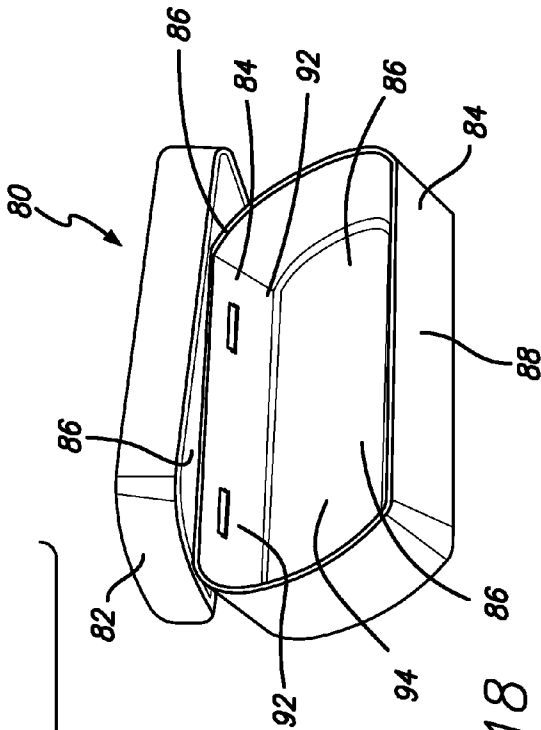
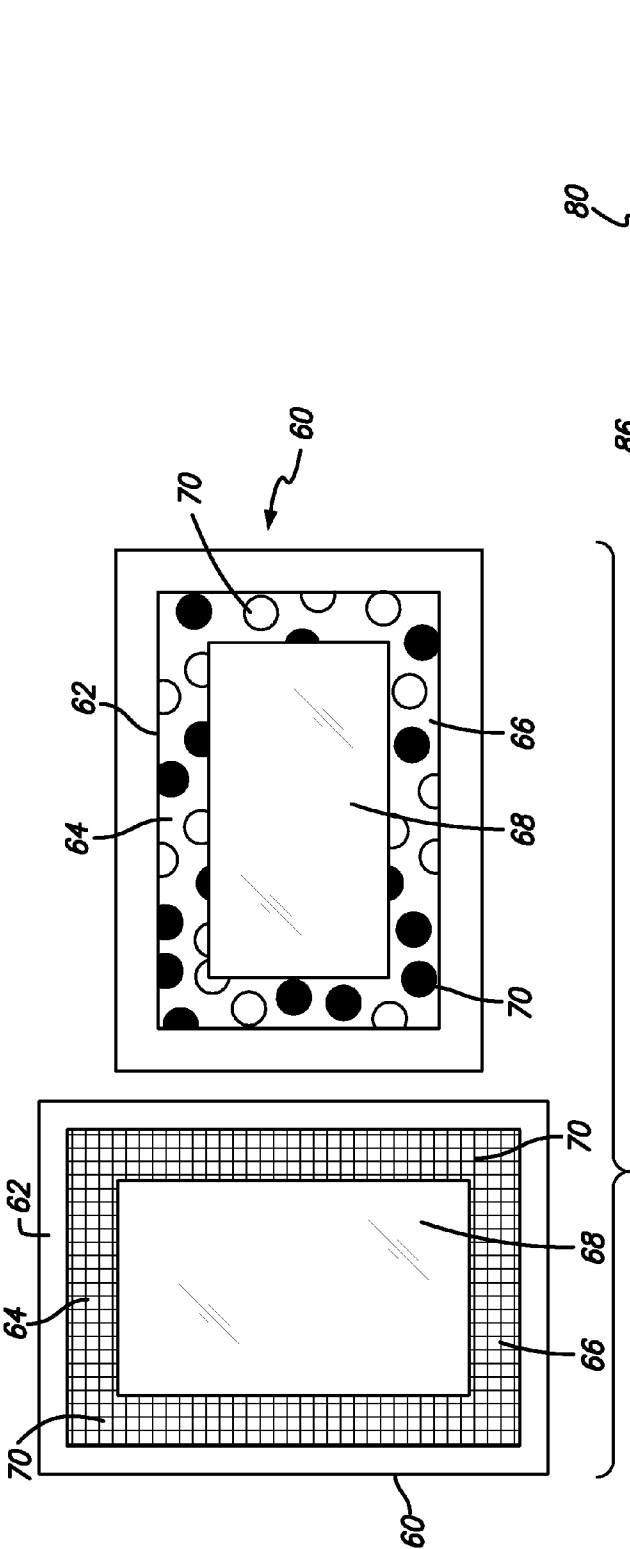


FIG. 18

FIG. 17

INTERCHANGEABLE JEWELRY SYSTEM

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to jewelry items and jewelry sets which include improved interchangeable decorative elements as well as methods of manufacture and use of same.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Prior art attempts to design interchangeable jewelry systems have typically focused on relatively expensive fine jewelry market segment, rather than more affordable costume jewelry market. One example of such prior art systems is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 2,752,764 which shows an earring body having a flat magnet permanently attached to it, surrounded by a collar, the collar having an opening on its periphery. The removable button, or other ornamentation fits into the cap created by collar, and has, on its inside a flat armature which rests on the flat magnet mounted on the body of the earring when the unit is assembled, as shown in FIG. 3 of the '764 patent. The flat armature of the earring body is also made of a magnetizable material so that the earring design includes two magnets of opposite polarity. The ornamentation is disclosed as being a semi-precious or precious stone as is appropriate for a fine jewelry piece. The ornamental portion is held so tightly by the opposite polarity magnets and collar that an aperture is provided through the collar for the purposes of allowing entry of a prying element to permit separation of the ornamentation portion from the body of the body of the earring. The applicant believes that the relatively complex design of the heavy weight clip-on style interchangeable jewelry systems of the '764 patent is too costly to be competitive in the more cost conscious costume jewelry market to which the present invention is primarily directed.

[0003] Another prior art approach to interchangeable jewelry is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,594,871, which shows jewelry pieces with replaceable ornamental elements having a decorative exterior surface and a frame. The '871 patent further discloses that the replaceable ornamental element are readily removable yet securely fixed when engaged to allow the ready substitution of another element having an exterior surface of different decorative character. The '871 patent asserts that the ornamental elements can be incorporated into "a cuff link, an earring, a stud for a tuxedo shirt, a ring or a pendant to the wearer's apparel and/or accessories." The '871 patent further discloses the use of a first magnet fixed to the bottom of said decorative element and least one other magnet being fixed to and arranged within the recessed portion of the frame for securing said decorative element therewithin. The connection between the two portions is so secure that magnetically attached portions of the designs include an aperture extending through the bottom of the recessed portion of the frame for providing access for a stylus for selectively dislodging the decorative element from the frame. In the applicant's view, the jewelry designs of the '871 patent are also too complex and costly for use in the mass market costume jewelry field.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Accordingly, an object of the invention is to provide an interchangeable jewelry system and jewelry pieces having cost efficient designs that can be manufactured for sale as mass market costume jewelry.

[0005] Another object of the invention is to provide a simple and inexpensive interchangeable decorative jewelry elements that can be utilized across different jewelry pieces of a line to provide the opportunity for the jewelry wearer to color coordinate, complement or contrast with clothing, the wearer's physical attributes such as eye color, or other fashion accessories in a cost effective manner.

[0006] Another object of the invention is to provide an inexpensive interchangeable jewelry line having decorative elements designed to be mass producible at sufficiently low cost that they are virtually disposable in order to satisfy the youth costume jewelry market.

[0007] It is a still further object of the invention to provide inexpensive interchangeable decorative elements adapted to detachable mount to standardized jewelry base items so that the end user can purchase different sets of matched decorative elements of the same design in order to create a plurality of different matched sets of jewelry items that have matched design elements all created from the same sets of jewelry base items.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] One embodiment of the present invention includes a jewelry product line comprising at least post style earrings, dangling earrings and pendants for necklaces. All of the jewelry items in the line have a base portion with a magnetic portion designed and dimensioned to receive and magnetically secure an interchangeable decorative cap portion. The decorative caps have a simple functional design making them relatively inexpensive to mass produce. The decorative cap portion includes a receiver portion, a substantially planar decorative material dimensioned for receipt in the receiver portion, a cover portion for protecting the decorative material, and downwardly projecting peripheral rim dimensioned to encompass the peripheral edge of a magnetic portion of the base of each of the pieces of jewelry in the product line. Preferably, the substantially planar decorative material is paper or fabric upon which an attractive design has been printed. In this way, an enormous variety of decorative designs for the decorative cap portion can be easily and cheaply manufactured. Further, the cover portion may be manufactured from a variety of materials that include varying degrees of opacity and/or gloss to provide the decorative element with a different surface finish.

[0009] In another embodiment of the invention, a method of creating a matched set of jewelry pieces to match, contrast, and/or complement a garment, physical attributes of the wearer or fashion accessory is provided. The method includes the steps of (a) providing a plurality of matched sets of interchangeable decorative caps; (b) providing a plurality of interchangeable jewelry bases (including at least a pair of earrings and a jewelry piece other than earrings) each having base portions dimensioned for receipt and releasable coupling with each of the sets of interchangeable decorative caps; (c) selecting a color or pattern from a garment, wearer's physical characteristics, or fashion accessory to match, contrast with or complement; (d) selecting from the plurality of matched sets of decorative caps the matched set that best match, contrast or complement to the selected color or pattern from the garment, wearer's physical characteristics or fashion accessory; (e) selecting from the plurality of interchangeable jewelry bases a plurality of interchangeable jewelry bases to be worn on a particular occasion; and (f) releasably coupling the decorative elements of the selected matched set of decorative

caps to each of the selected plurality of interchangeable jewelry base portions to form a plurality of matched jewelry pieces. Preferably, each of the decorative caps in each of the matched sets are dimensioned to be interchangeable with each of the plurality of jewelry pieces including both earrings and non-earring jewelry pieces such as rings, pendants, necklaces and the like.

[0010] In another preferred embodiment of the invention, an improved pierced post style, earring is provided. The improved post style earring of this embodiment of the invention includes a post portion, backing portion, magnetic portion and an interchangeable cap portion with a design element. The post portion is dimensioned for insertion through the pierced portion of a pierced ear with the backing designed to engage the back surface of the earlobe. The magnetic portion is either permanently joined or integral with the base portion of the earring. The magnetic portion includes a peripheral edge that is dimensioned to be encompassed by an outer rim extending from the back surface of the periphery of the cap portion. At least a portion of the cap portion is formed from a magnetizable material such that the back surface of the cap portion is detachably coupled by force of magnetic attraction to the front surface of the magnetic portion of the base. The outer rim extending from the periphery of the cap portion provides additional security to the detachable coupling between the cap and base portion. Preferably, the outer rim is slightly larger in dimension than the peripheral edge of the magnetic portion so that a gap is formed therebetween which facilitates deliberate removal of the cap from the base portion in order to allow detachable coupling of a new cap with a different design element to the pierced post earring of the invention.

[0011] In still another preferred embodiment of the invention, an improved dangling pierced earring is provided, which includes a clasp portion affixed to a loop portion adapted to pass through a pierced ear, a base portion attached to the loop portion, the base portion having a magnetic portion and an interchangeable cap portion with a design element. The magnetic portion includes a peripheral edge that is dimensioned to be encompassed by an outer rim extending from the back surface of the periphery of the cap portion. At least a portion of the cap portion is formed of a sufficient amount of a magnetizable material that the back surface of the cap portion is detachably coupled by the force of magnetic attraction to the front surface of the magnetic portion of the base. The outer rim extending from the periphery of the cap portion provides security against excessive lateral movement of the cap to prevent inadvertent decoupling between cap and base portion. Preferably, the outer rim is slightly larger in dimension than the peripheral edge of the magnetic portion so that a gap is formed therebetween, which gap facilitates purposeful decoupling of the cap from the base portion in order to detachably couple a new cap with a different design element to the dangling earring of the invention.

[0012] In a still further preferred embodiment of the invention, an improved pendant is provided, which includes a chain attachment, a base portion having a magnetic portion and an interchangeable cap portion with a design element. The magnetic portion includes a peripheral edge that is dimensioned to be encompassed by an outer rim extending from the back surface of the periphery of the cap portion. At least a portion of the cap portion is formed of a sufficient quantity of magnetizable material that the back surface of the cap portion is detachably coupled by the force of magnetic attraction to the

front surface of the magnetic portion of the base. The base portion further including a peripheral ridge extending outwardly from the front surface of the pendant base portion. The outer rim extending from the back surface of the periphery of the cap portion is seated in a channel formed between the outer surface of the magnetic portion and the peripheral ridge on the base portion of the pendant. The seating of the outer rim of the cap in the channel secures the cap from excessive lateral movement to prevent unintentional decoupling of the cap from the base portion of the pendant. Preferably, the outer rim on the back surface of the cap is slightly larger in dimension than the peripheral edge of the magnetic portion and slightly smaller than the dimension of the peripheral ridge so that there is a gap between the outer rim and both the peripheral edge and peripheral ridge forming the channel. The gap facilitates purposeful decoupling of the cap from the base portion of the pendant in order to allow for the detachable coupling of a new cap with a different design element to the pendant of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is an exploded side perspective view of a post-style earring in accordance with one preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0014] FIG. 2 is an exploded side view of the cap portion of the post-style earring of FIG. 1.

[0015] FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the cap portion of FIG. 2 taken along lines 3-3.

[0016] FIG. 4 is a front plan view of the cap portion in FIG. 2.

[0017] FIG. 5 is a back plan view of the cap portion shown in FIG. 2.

[0018] FIG. 6 is a partial side view of the base portion of the post-style earring of FIG. 1.

[0019] FIG. 7 is a top plan view of the base portion shown in FIG. 6.

[0020] FIG. 8 is a bottom plan view of the base portion shown in FIG. 6.

[0021] FIG. 9 is a side elevation view of the backing portion shown in FIG. 1.

[0022] FIG. 10 is a top plan view of backing portion shown in FIG. 9.

[0023] FIG. 11 is a partially exploded plan view of a dangling earring in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the interchangeable jewelry of the invention.

[0024] FIG. 12 is a plan view of a dangling earring in accordance with in accordance with FIG. 11 with the hinge shown in the open position.

[0025] FIG. 13 is a partially exploded plan view of an interchangeable pendant in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0026] FIG. 14 is a carrier for multiple matched sets of the decorative cap portions in accordance with another embodiment of the invention,

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0027] A first embodiment of the invention is shown in FIGS. 1-9, which depict an interchangeable post-style earring 20 of the invention. This style earring includes a base 40 including a post portion 21, backing 22, planar surface 23, and magnetic portion 24. The base portion 40 is releasably coupled to decorative cap 25. The post 21 is for placement

through a pierced ear with backing 22 designed to engage the back surface of the earlobe and planar surface 23 contacting the front surface of the earlobe. A magnetic portion 24 is permanently joined to the planar surface 23 in the embodiment shown in FIGS. 1-5, but the base portion and magnetic portion could be integrally formed in one piece. The magnetic portion 24 has a peripheral edge 29 which is dimensioned for receipt within an outer rim 30 formed at the periphery of the back surface 31 of the decorative cap portion 25. The back surface 31 of the decorative cap 25 is held against the front surface 32 of the magnetic portion 24 by the force of magnetic attraction since the receiver portion 26 of the decorative cap 25 is formed from a magnetizable material. When outer rim 30 engages peripheral edge 29, it helps to seat the decorative cap portion on the magnetic portion 24. Preferably, the inner diameter of the outer rim 30 is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the magnetic portion 24 so that a small gap is formed between the peripheral edge 29 of the magnetic portion 24 and the outer rim 30 of the decorative cap 25. The presence of this gap facilitates purposeful decoupling of the decorative cap 25 from the base 40 of the earring 20. The preferred gap is about 1 mm with gaps of about 0.5 mm to 1.5 mm being acceptable. Magnet 24 preferably has an external diameter of 10 mm, with external diameters between about 9 mm and 11 mm being acceptable. Cap 25 preferably has an internal diameter of about 11 mm with between about 10.5 mm and 12 mm being acceptable, and cap 25 further has a preferred external diameter of about 12 mm with 11.5 to 13 mm being acceptable.

[0028] The receiver portion 26 of the cap portion (best seen in FIG. 3) can be formed from a variety of magnetizable metal materials including alloys of iron, nickel, cobalt and/or manganese. The receiver portion may be molded from liquefied metal by a forging process or molded from a flowable metallic powder by metal injection molding. Alternately, the receiver 26 can be formed stamped from metal disk blanks of magnetizable metallic material. Preferably, the receivers of the invention can be manufactured with different surface finishes and colors. For this purpose, coloring agents may be added to the liquefied or flowable magnetizable material prior to molding. Alternately, the receivers of the invention may also be brushed or dipped in a surface finish agent after molding to provide an antique finish or a brushed metal look.

[0029] As can be best seen in FIGS. 2-5, the decorative cap 25 includes a thin layer of decorative material 27 that is permanently affixed or adhered to the front surface 33 of the cap. The decorative material 27 may be any thin layer of material that is inherently decorative (such as a thin sliced layer of a semi-precious gemstone) or may be any material that can receive a decorative pattern thereon. In order to minimize the cost of production for the mass market or youth market, the preferred decorative material 27 is a paper piece upon which an attractive decorative pattern has been printed. If the decorative material 27 is paper, it is preferably enclosed by cover 28, which is either transparent or translucent. The cover 28 may be made from a material that imparts a gloss, sheen, brushed metallic look or other desirable surface finish to the decorative material 27. The cover 28 can be omitted if the decorative material is sufficiently durable to be exposed directly to the environment and if its surface finish is sufficiently aesthetically appealing. Referring now to FIG. 3, the receiver portion 33 of the decorative cap 25 is slightly recessed from raised edge 37 and joined to the receiver portion 33 by transition portion 35. The inner-diameter of

receiver portion 33 is slightly larger than the outer diameter of decorative element 27. The dimensions and arrangement of the inwardly angled transition portion 35 help to center and seat the decorative element 27 in the receiver portion 33. The outer diameter of cover 28 is slightly smaller than the inner dimension of the raised edge 37. The cover portion 28 may be deposited as a flowable liquid resin that cover the entire decorative element 27 and at least a portion of the transition portion 35, but is deposited in a small enough quantity that it does not cover the raised edge 37. The flowable liquid resin would then be cured to harden it and assist in bonding it to the decorative element 27 and transition portion 35. Alternately, the cover 28 can be a thin translucent or transparent plastic disk that is adhesively affixed to decorative element 27 and/or transition portion 35.

[0030] The decorative cap 25 of the stud earring 20 is dimensioned to be interchangeable with the other interchangeable jewelry bases in the jewelry pieces or matched sets of the invention, for example, the dangling earring base 140 of FIG. 11 or the pendant jewelry base 240 of FIG. 12. To accomplish the interchangeable nature of these jewelry pieces, the peripheral edges 129 and 229 of the magnet 124 of dangling earring 120 (FIG. 11) and magnet 224 of pendant 220 (FIG. 12) are dimensioned to be slightly smaller than the outer peripheral dimension of outer rim 30 of decorative cap portion 25. In this way, the same decorative cap 25 can be used interchangeably with each of these three different jewelry bases 40, 140, and 240 to form three different jewelry pieces 20, 120, and 220.

[0031] Furthermore, the interchangeability feature allows for the matching of multiple interchangeable base jewelry pieces with sets of caps bearing the same design. Thus, a customer who has purchased multiple interchangeable bases of the invention could also purchase a set of four identical caps and have matching earring (either with the dangling or post type earring) and a pendant to wear as a matched set. The purchase and use of multiple sets of matched decorative caps each having the same decorative elements within a set, but different decorative elements between different matched sets, allows the purchaser to inexpensively match, contrast and/or complement a garment, physical attribute of the wearer or fashion accessory. The decorative cap in a matched set can be worn with any of the different interchangeable jewelry bases of the invention whether post-style earrings, dangling earrings, pendants, rings (not shown), or necklaces (not shown). Thus the wearer can choose a matched set of decorative caps that best matches, contrasts with or complements a given garment, wearer's physical characteristic, or accessory from among the plurality of matched sets of decorative caps. Then, the wearer can create the matched set of jewelry items by choosing a plurality of interchangeable jewelry bases for receipt of one of the matched set of decorative caps. Next, the selected set of decorative caps is detachably coupled to the selected set of interchangeable jewelry bases to form a matched set of jewelry pieces. Furthermore, the matched sets of decorative caps can be organized and held for easy storage and visualization on a magnetic board 60 illustrated in FIG. 13. This allows the owner of the decorative jewelry pieces to easily visualize the possible matches and/or combination of mismatched cap sets that the owner may utilize. For example, the owner may decide to use mismatched decorative cap sets that share a common design theme, color or pattern. Moreover, the magnetic board 60 is sufficiently portable that the entire unit with all the decorative cap sets can be packed in a

suitcase so that the owner has the full range of choices of decorative caps when traveling. This can facilitate the process of packing for a trip by allowing the owner to bring a full range of matched decorative cap sets. In this way, the owner can avoid the laborious task of selecting complementary or matching jewelry for each outfit packed for a trip.

[0032] Turning to FIGS. 6-10 which best show base portion 40 of the earring 20, magnetic portion 24 is preferably formed from a permanent magnet that is formed from a rare earth alloy such as Neodymium or Samarium alloys, but may also be formed of iron oxide, strontium carbonate, or barium carbonate (ceramic magnetic materials), Alinco (alloys of Aluminum, Nickel and Cobalt). Permanent Magnet 24 is affixed to planar surface 23 via a suitable industrial adhesive. Base portion 40 is preferably formed of a material matched in color and surface treatment with cap 25. Typically, both the receiver portion 26 of decorative cap 25 and the base 23 are formed from a nickel alloy to provide a shiny surface finish and provide corrosion resistance to the jewelry.

[0033] The backing portion 22 (best seen in FIGS. 9-10) is formed from a thin, resilient metallic blank which retains a spring like memory when arms 22a are curled inwardly to form a narrow gap therebetween for receipt of post 21 of base 23. Post 21 has a slightly larger external diameter than the narrow gap so that arms 22a grasp post 21 when it is inserted through aperture 22c. Further, arms 22a each have a central groove 22d that helps to center and align 21 when it is passing between spring arms 21a. Backing portion 22 also preferably includes a pair of small peripheral apertures (not shown) which are designed to be received by a pair of retainers to facilitate bending of the arms 22a during manufacture of same. The earring backing may be formed from thin metallic blanks that are bent into the curled arm position by inserting the blank into posts and then bending them over a pair of rod structures to form spring arms 21a.

[0034] FIG. 11 depicts the interchangeable dangling earring 120 in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention. The earring 120 includes an interchangeable base portion 140, which consists of a clasp 121 joined to a loop 124 for passing through a pierced ear and being secured thereto, a link portion joining the 141 for joining the clasp 122 and loop 124 to the dangling portion 141. The magnetic portion 124 is dimensioned for releasably coupling with the decorative cap 25 previously described above. The magnetic portion 124 is preferably adhered to the dangling portion 141 via an adhesive and magnetic portion 124 includes a peripheral edge 129 that is dimensioned to encompass by the outer rim 30 of the decorative cap 25. The outer rim 30 extends from the back surface 31 of the decorative cap 25. Preferably, the inner diameter of the outer rim 30 is sufficiently larger than the outer diameter of the peripheral edge 129 of the permanent magnetic 124 to form a gap therebetween, which is sufficiently large to facilitate removal of the decorative cap 25 from the earring 120, but sufficiently small to prevent excessive lateral movement of the decorative cap in order to prevent unintentional decoupling of the decorative cap 25 from earring base 140. Dangling portion 141 and linking portion 123 are preferably manufactured utilizing metals with similar coloration, gloss, and surface finishes. Dangling portion 14 is formed by similar processes and utilizing similar materials as set forth above for base portion 40.

[0035] Turning to FIG. 12 which depicts the interchangeable dangling earring 220 in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention. The earring 220 includes

an interchangeable base portion 240, which consists of a clasp 11 joined to a loop 124 for passing through a pierced ear and being secured thereto, a link portion joining the 141 for joining the clasp 122 and loop 124 to the dangling portion 141, which includes magnetic portion 124 and to which decorative cap 25 can be releasably coupled. The magnetic portion 24 is preferably adhered to the dangling portion 141 via an adhesive and magnetic portion 124 includes a peripheral edge 129 that is dimensioned to encompass by the outer rim 30 of the decorative cap 25. The outer rim 30 extends from the back surface 31 of the decorative cap 25. Preferably, the inner diameter of the outer rim 30 is sufficiently larger than the outer diameter of the peripheral edge 129 of the permanent magnetic 124 to form a gap therebetween, which is sufficiently large to assist in removal of the decorative cap 25 from the earring 120, but sufficiently small to prevent excessive lateral movement of the decorative cap to assist in preventing unintentional decoupling of the decorative cap 25 from earring base 140. The preferred gap is about 1 mm with gaps of about 0.5 mm to 1.5 mm being acceptable. Magnet 124 preferably has an external diameter of 10 mm, with external diameters between about 9 mm and 11 mm being acceptable. Cap 25 preferably has an internal diameter of about 11 mm with between about 10.5 mm and 12 mm being acceptable, and cap 25 further has a preferred external diameter of about 12 mm with 11.5 to 13 mm being acceptable. Dangling portion 141 and linking portion 123 are preferably manufactured utilizing metals with similar coloration, glass, and surface finishes. Dangling portion 141 may be formed by similar processes and utilizing similar materials as set forth above for base portion 40 of the embodiment of FIGS. 1-10.

[0036] The backing portion 122 (best seen in FIGS. 11 and 12) of the dangling earring 120 is formed from a thin, resilient wire piece 121 joined to a hinging portion 122, which is spring biased toward wire piece 121, when in the closed position shown in FIG. 11. In the open position shown in FIG. 12, the wire portion may be passed through the pierced portion of the wearer's ear and then closed to secure the earring to the wearer's ear. Wire portion 121, hinging portion 122 and linking portion 123 may all be formed of similar materials as dangling portion 123.

[0037] FIG. 13 depicts the interchangeable pendant 220 in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention. The pendant 220 includes an interchangeable base portion 240, which consists of a loop portion 222 for connection to a chain (not shown) for passing over the wearer's head and around their neck, and a magnetic portion 224. The interchangeable base 240 is designed to be releasably coupled to decorative cap 25. The magnetic portion 224 is preferably adhered to the pendant portion 241 via an adhesive and magnetic portion 224 includes a peripheral edge 129 that is dimensioned to encompass by the outer rim 30 of the decorative cap 25. The outer rim 30 extends from the back surface 31 of the decorative cap 25. Preferably, the inner diameter of the outer rim 30 is sufficiently larger than the outer diameter of the peripheral edge 129 of the permanent magnetic 224 to form a gap therebetween, which is sufficiently large to assist in removal of the decorative cap 25 from the earring 120, but sufficiently small to prevent excessive lateral movement of the decorative cap to assist in preventing unintentional decoupling of the decorative cap 25 from earring base 140. The preferred gap is about 1 mm with gaps of about 0.5 mm to 1.5 mm being acceptable. Magnet 224 preferably has an external diameter of 10 mm, with external diameters between about 9

mm and 11 mm being acceptable. Cap **25** preferably has an internal diameter of about 11 mm with between about 10.5 mm and 12 mm being acceptable, and cap **25** further has a preferred external diameter of about 12 mm with 11.5 to 13 mm being acceptable. Pendant base portion **241** is preferably manufactured utilizing metals with similar coloration, glass, and surface finishes. Pendant base portion **241** may be formed by similar processes and utilizing s [text missing or illegible when filed]

[0038] Of course other jewelry pieces such as rings or necklaces can be fashioned to releasably and interchangeably couple with the decorative caps of the invention. Such pieces would of necessity include a permanent magnet which is dimensioned to include a peripheral edge that is encompassed by the outer rim **30** of the decorative cap **25**.

[0039] Other modifications or variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings of the invention. The invention may be practiced in other forms than described herein and be covered by the scope of the claims for this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An interchangeable jewelry product line comprising:
 - at least post style earrings, dangling earrings and pendants for necklaces, each of the jewelry items in the line having:
 - a base portion with a magnet, the magnetic portion have a peripheral edge of predetermined dimensions; and
 - an interchangeable decorative cap including, (a) a substantially planar, mass produced decorative material, (b) a substantially planar receiver portion dimensioned for receipt of the decorative material, (c) a cover portion for protecting the decorative material, and (d) a downwardly projecting peripheral rim dimensioned to encompass the peripheral edge of predetermined dimensions of the magnet of the base of each of the jewelry items in the jewelry product line to facilitate releasable magnetic attachment of an interchangeable decorative cap to the base of each of the jewelry items in the line.
2. The jewelry product line of claim **1** wherein the decorative material is made from a fabric upon which an attractive design is printed.
3. The jewelry product line of claim **1** wherein the decorative material is made from a fabric upon which an attractive design is painted.
4. The jewelry product line of claim **1** wherein the decorative material is made from paper upon which an attractive design is printed.
5. The jewelry product line of claim **1** wherein the decorative material is made from a paper upon which an attractive design is painted.
6. The jewelry product line of claim **1** wherein the base portion of each of the jewelry items in the line have magnets with substantially the same peripheral dimensions and wherein each of the downwardly projecting peripheral rims of the decorative cap portions is dimensioned to be slightly larger than the peripheral edge dimensions of the magnet of each base portions such that a slight gap remains between the downwardly projecting peripheral rims and the periphery of the magnets which allows manual tilting of the cap relative to the base to facilitate purposeful removal of the decorative caps from the base portions.
7. An interchangeable decorative cap for detachably mounting to a base portion of one or more piece(s) of deco-

rative jewelry, the base portion having a magnet to releasably magnetically secure the interchangeable decorative cap, the magnet of the base portion having peripheral edges of preselected dimensions, the interchangeable decorative cap comprising:

- a substantially planar, mass produced decorative material having predetermined external dimensions;
 - a receiver portion having a first planar surface larger than the predetermined external dimension of the decorative material for receipt of the decorative material thereon, the receiver portion having a substantially planar back surface including a magnetizable material for releasably magnetically mounting to the magnet on the base portion;
 - a substantially transparent cover portion for protecting the decorative material and having a substantially planar surface for contacting the decorative material; and,
 - a downwardly projecting peripheral rim extending from the back surface of the receiver portion which is dimensioned to encompass the peripheral edges of the magnet of the base portion.
8. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **7** wherein the internal dimensions of the downwardly projecting peripheral rim of the cap is selected to be sufficiently close to the outer peripheral dimensions of the magnet of the base to prevent the cap from inadvertently sliding laterally off of the base when detachably mounted thereon.
 9. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **8** wherein the internal dimensions of the downwardly projecting peripheral rim of the cap is selected to be sufficiently larger than the outer peripheral dimension of the magnet of the base to form a gap therebetween whereby the cap may be tilted slightly by hand relative to the base to facilitate purposeful removal of the cap from the base.
 10. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **7** wherein the downwardly projecting rim extending from the back surface of the receiver portion is annular and has an internal diameter that is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the magnet of the base portion and wherein the magnet is cylindrical in shape and has a standardized height and standardized outer diameter for each of the bases of a line of different jewelry items so that the decorative cap can be detachably magnetically coupled to and interchanged between each of the different jewelry items in the line.
 11. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **7** wherein the decorative material has a decorative pattern applied to at least one of its surfaces, wherein the receiver portion is stamped from a metal blank, and wherein the cover portion is formed from a flowable thermoplastic resin.
 12. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **7** wherein the decorative material is disk shaped and further including an adhesive for fixing the decorative material to the first planar surface of the receiver portion and a raised annular edge having an internal diameter slightly greater than the outer diameter of the decorative material.
 13. The interchangeable decorative cap of claim **7** wherein the substantially transparent cover portion has a curved glossy exterior surface to provide the decorative material with a jewel like sparkle.
 14. An improved pierced post style, earring for mounting detachable decorative caps comprising:
 - a post portion dimensioned for insertion through the pierced portion of a wearer's earlobe;

a backing portion for engagement with the backside of the wearer's earlobe in order to secure the post portion of the earring to the wearer's earlobe;

a magnet joined to the post portion and having a substantially planar top surface and a peripheral edge with predetermined dimensions; and

an interchangeable cap having a design element mounted to a decorative surface of the cap and having an outer rim extending downwardly from the periphery of a non-decorative surface of the cap, the outer rim being dimensioned to encompass the peripheral edge of the magnet to prevent the cap from inadvertently sliding off of the earring.

15. An improved dangling, pierced earring for mounting detachable decorative caps comprising:

a loop portion dimensioned to pass through the pierced aperture of a pierced ear;

a clasp portion affixed to loop portion having an open position for passing a portion of the loop through the aperture in the wearer's pierced ear and a closed position for securing the loop to the wearer's pierced ear;

a base portion attached to the loop portion, the base portion having (a) a cylindrical magnet with a predetermined height and predetermined outside diameter and (b) an interchangeable cap portion having (i) a design element on a front surface of the cap, (ii) a planar, magnetizable portion on a back surface of the cap, (ii) and downwardly extending peripheral rim extending from the back sur-

face of the cap, the downwardly extending peripheral rim having an inside diameter slightly larger than the outside diameter of the cylindrical magnet.

16. An improved pendant for mounting detachable decorative caps comprising:

a chain attachment for linking to a chain portion dimensioned to drape around a wearer's neck;

a base portion connected to the chain attachment, the base portion having (a) a cylindrical magnet with a predetermined height and predetermined outside diameter affixed to the front surface of the base portion, (b) an annular peripheral ridge extending outwardly from the front surface, the space between the peripheral edge of the cylindrical magnet and the annular ridge defining an annular channel in the base portion and (c) a detachable cap portion having (i) a design element on a front surface of the cap, (ii) a planar, magnetizable portion on a back surface of the cap, (iii) and downwardly extending peripheral rim extending from the back surface of the cap, the downwardly extending peripheral rim having an inside diameter slightly larger than the outside diameter of the cylindrical magnet and having an outer diameter slightly less than the inner diameter of the annular peripheral ridge whereby the peripheral rim of the cap fits within the annular channel of the base when detachable mounted thereto.

* * * * *