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(54) **HOLDER FOR PERSONAL ITEMS**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

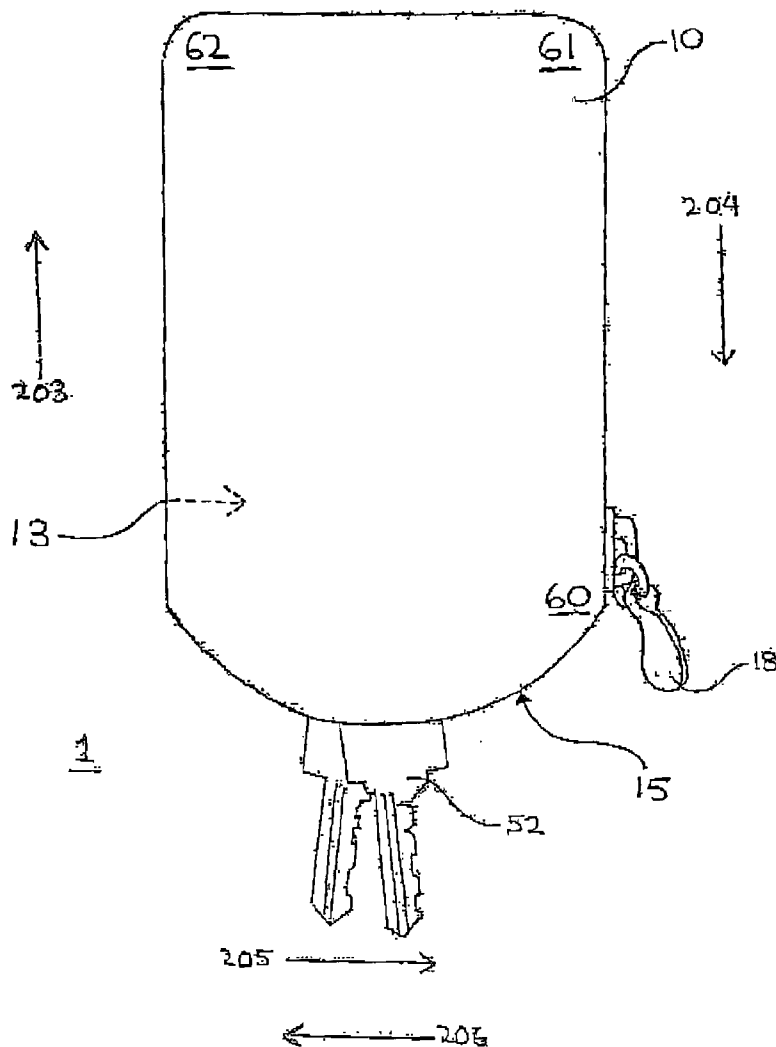
A holder is disclosed for carrying a variety of personal items in a variety of ways. The holder comprises covers which preferably fold between an open configuration and a closed configuration. When in the closed configuration, the covers define a space therebetween which forms an interior of the holder. The holder comprises a retraction member for releasably engaging particular personal items. The retraction member can be adjusted between a retracted position, wherein personal items engaged to the retraction member are located in the interior of the holder, and an extended position, wherein personal items engaged to the retraction member may be located on an exterior of the holder.

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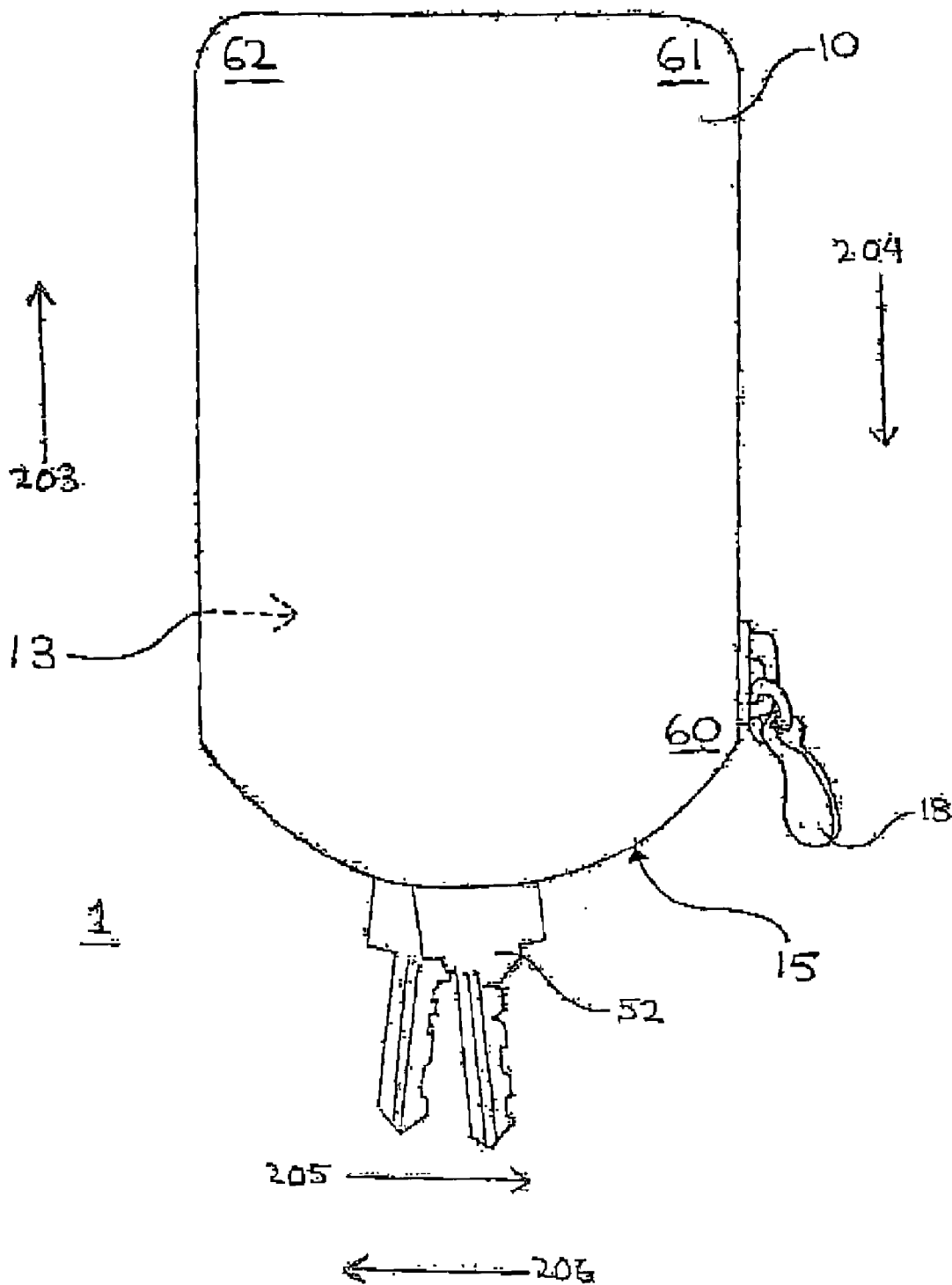


FIGURE 1

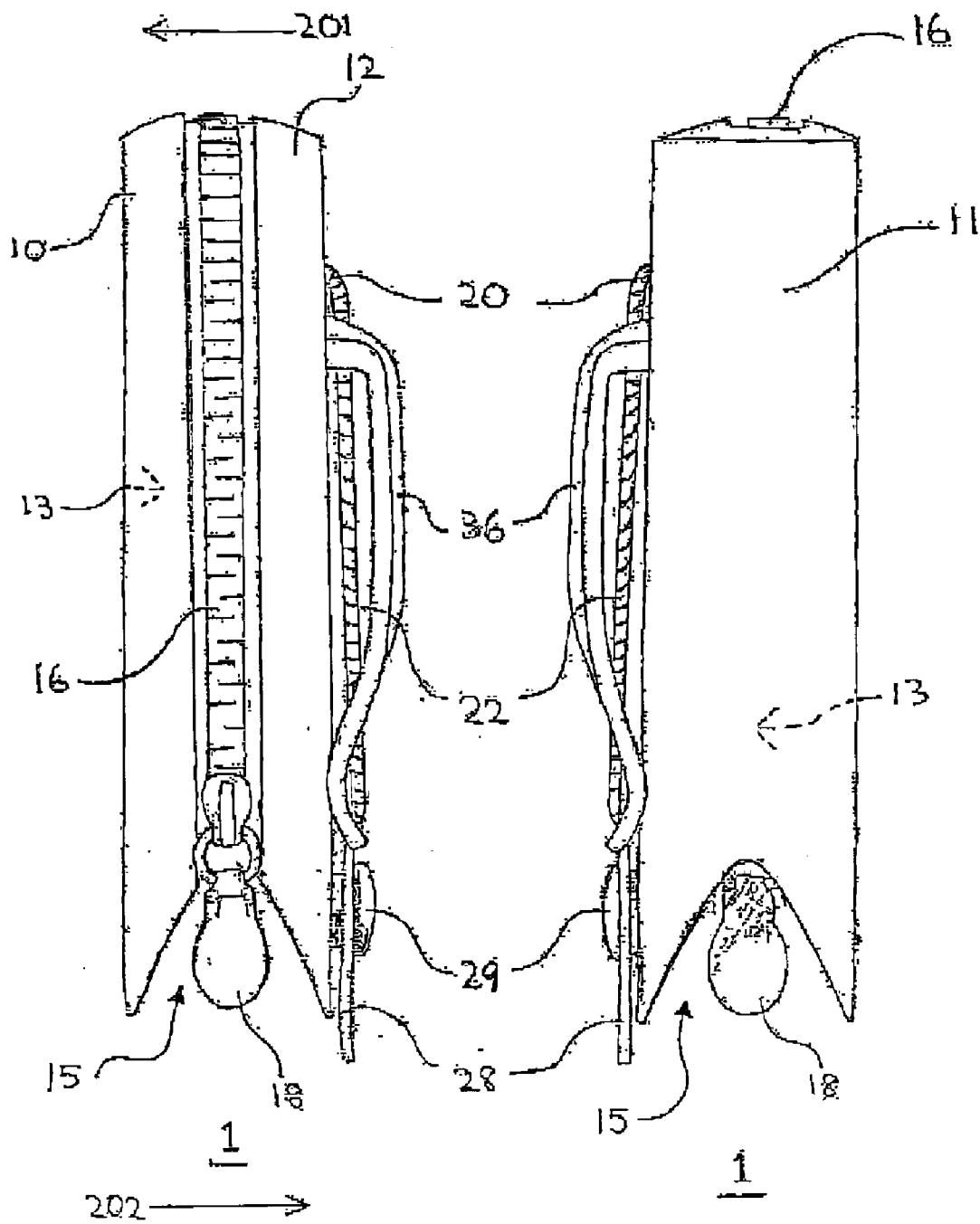
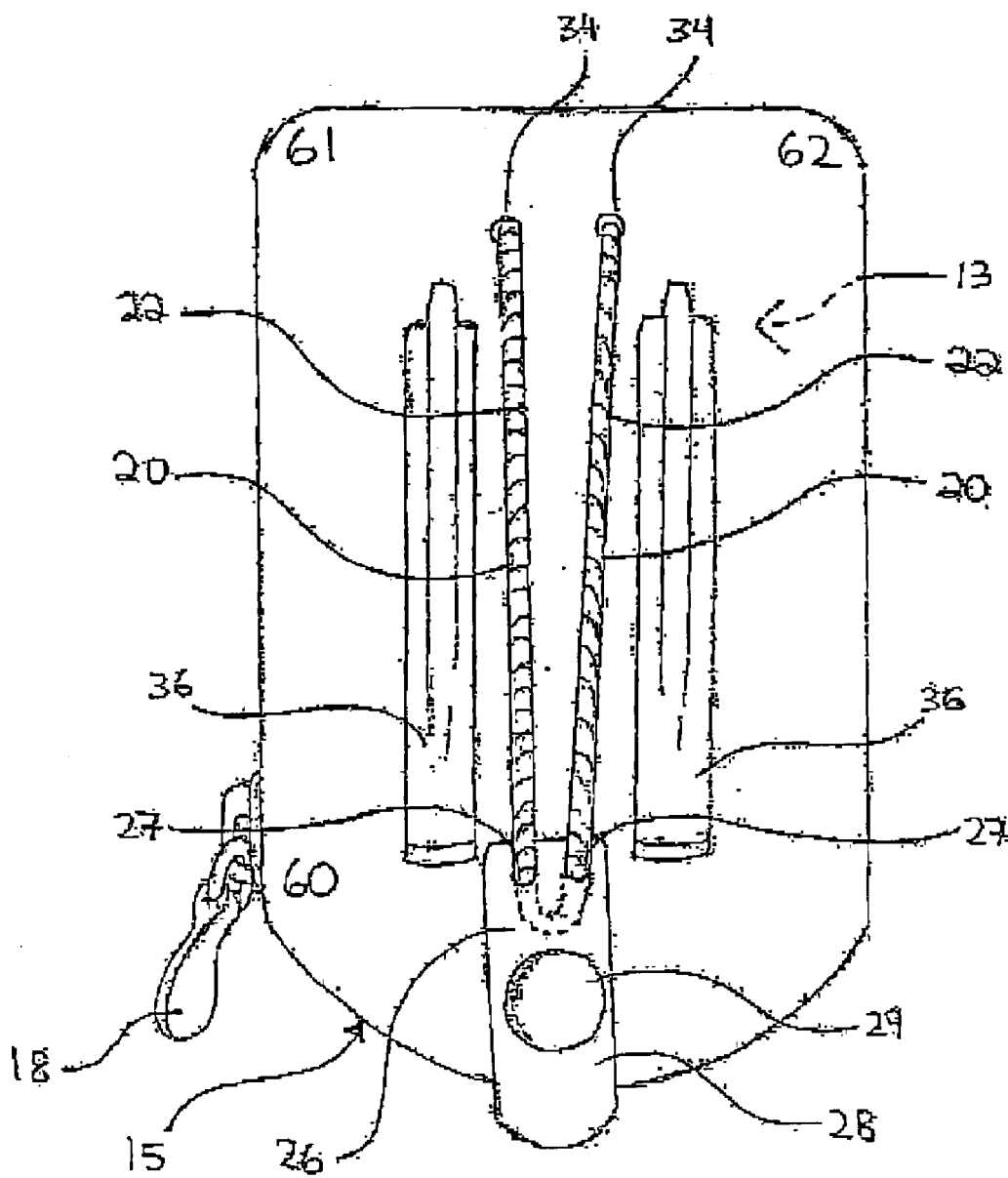


FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3



1

FIGURE 4

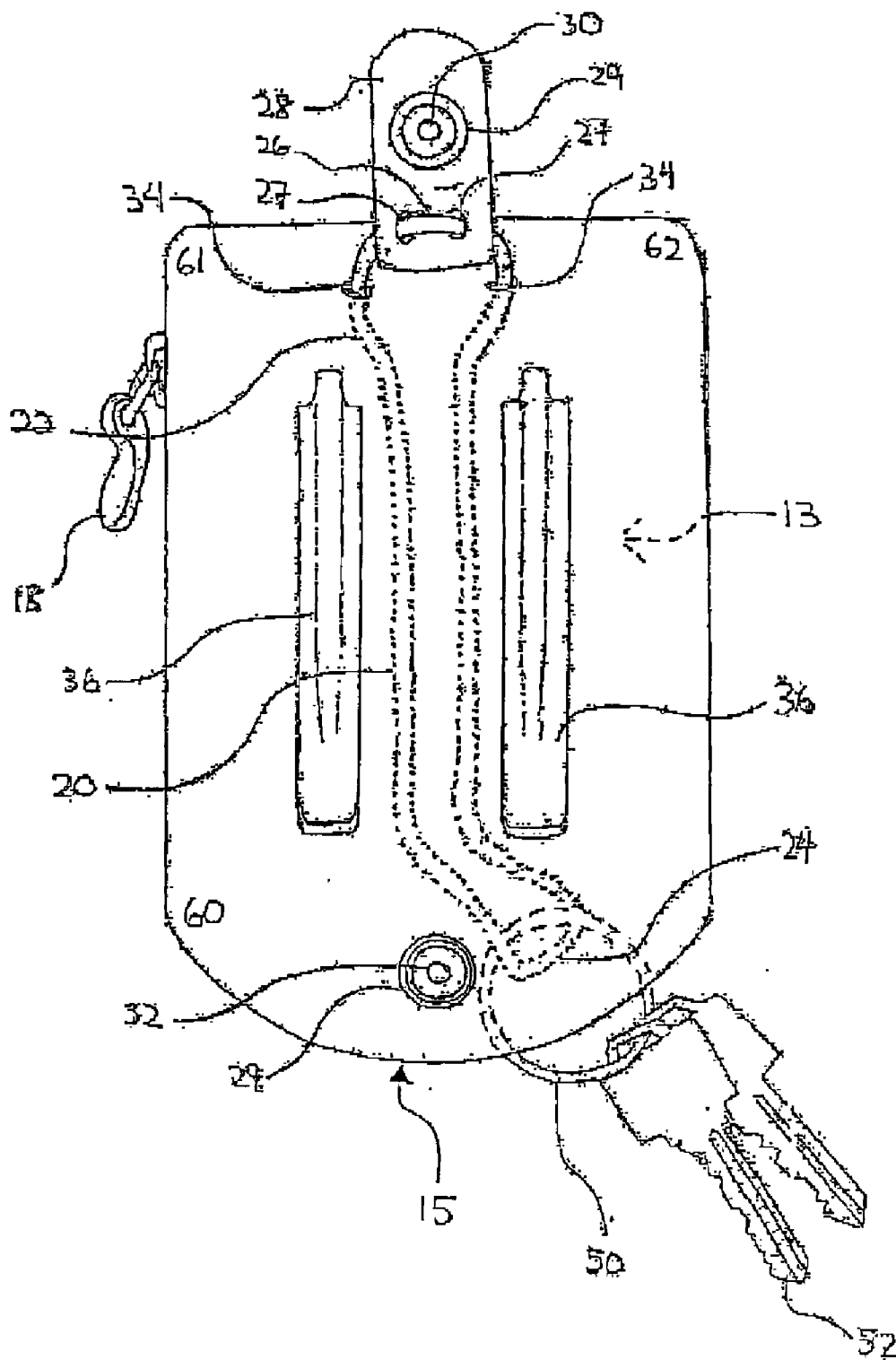


FIGURE 5

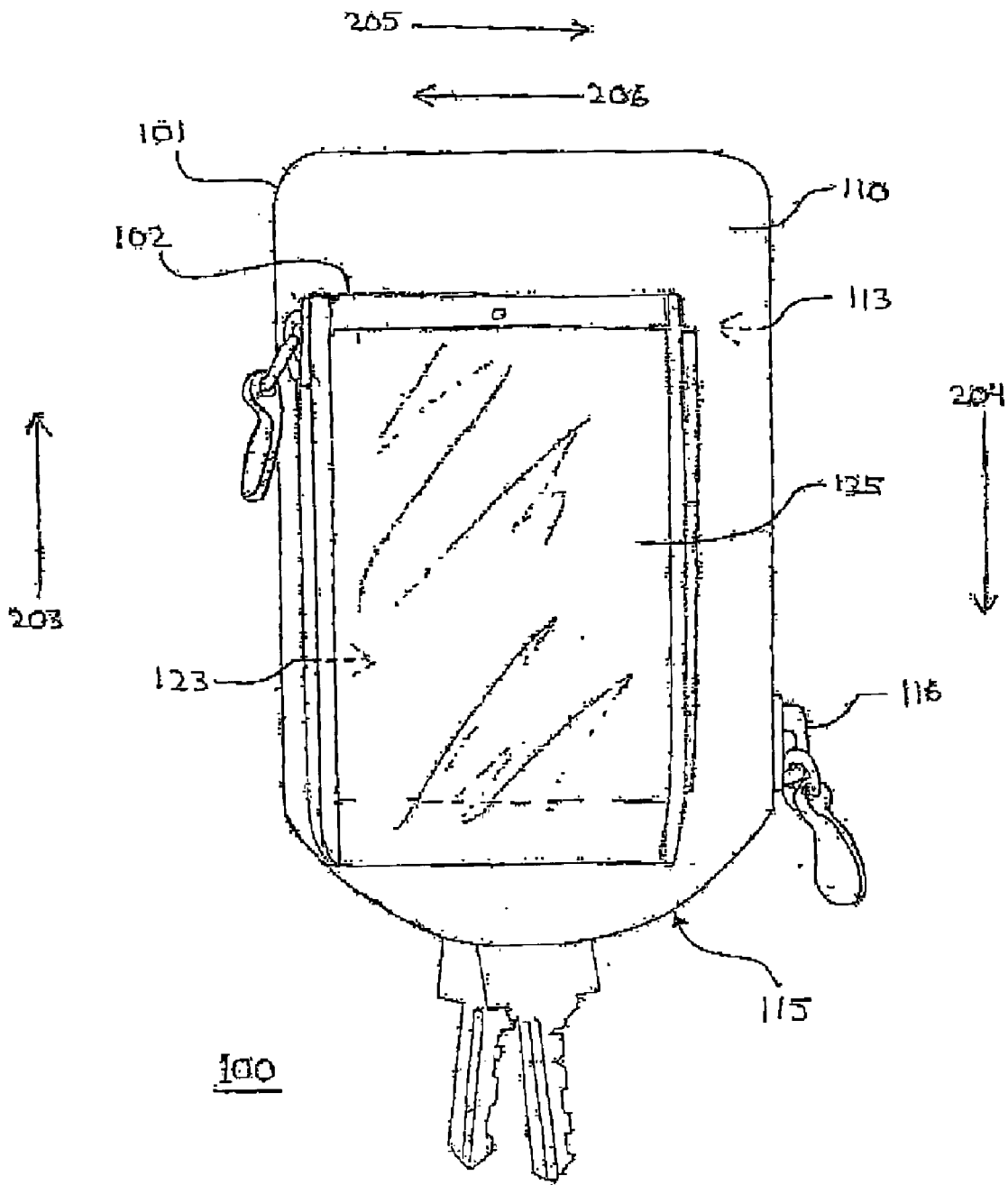


FIGURE 6

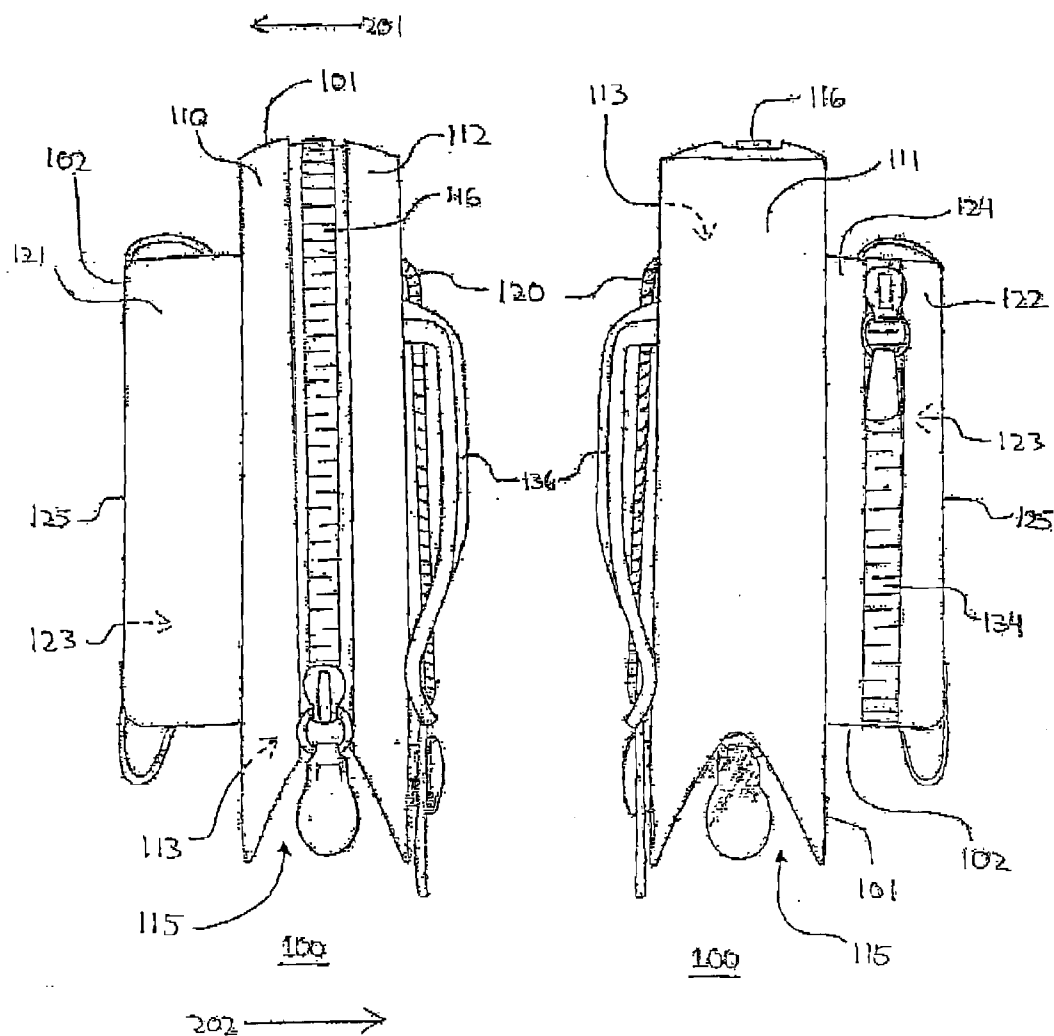


FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8

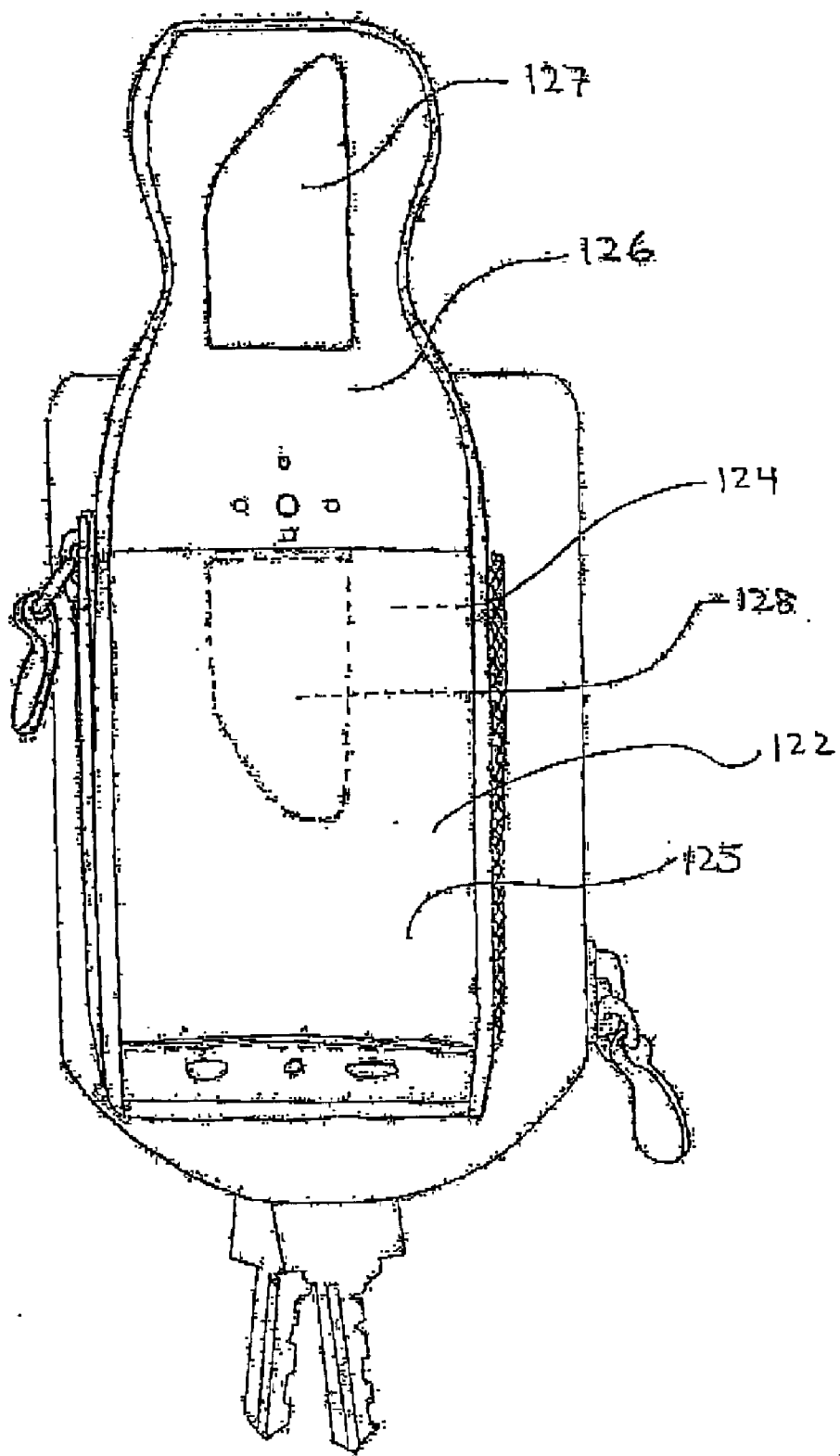


FIGURE 9



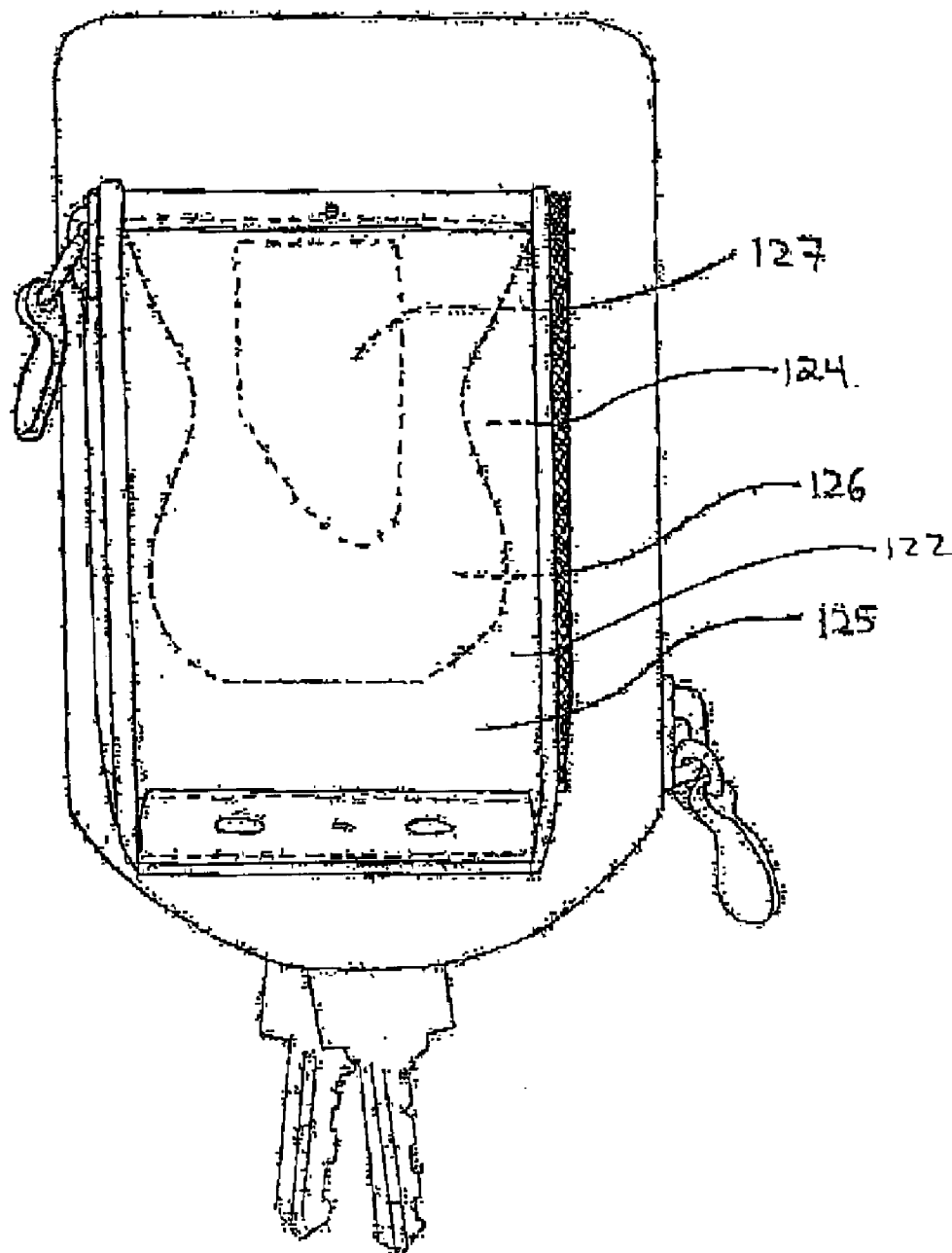


FIGURE 10

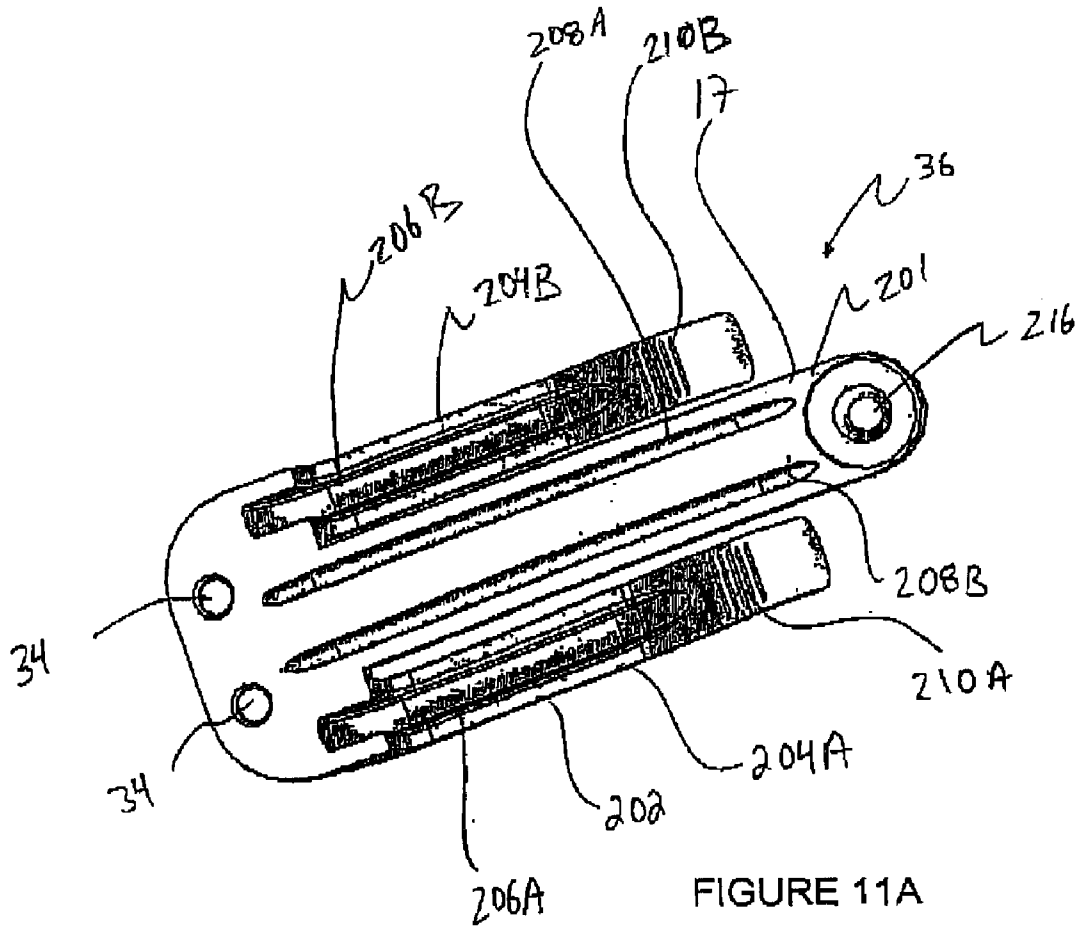


FIGURE 11A

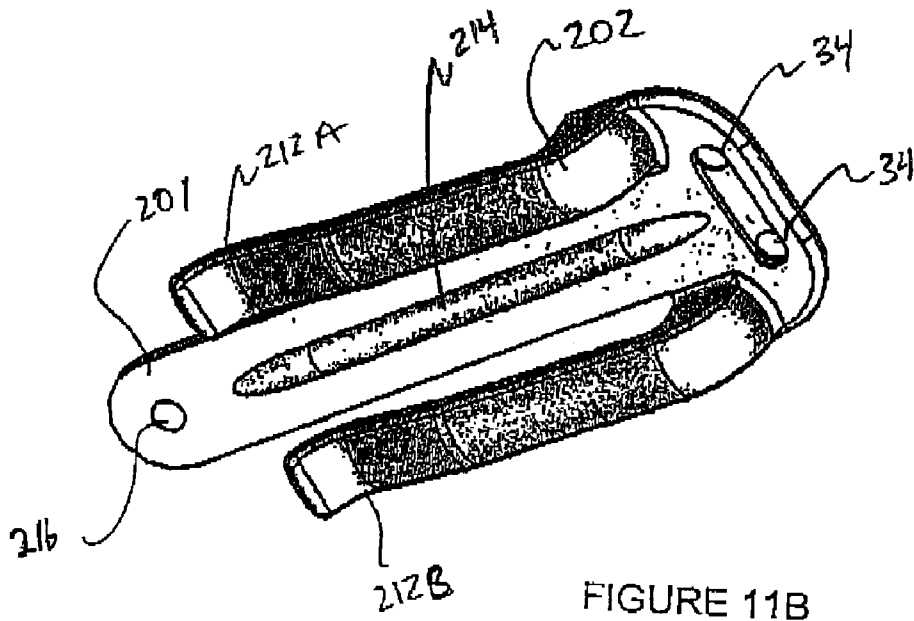


FIGURE 11B

**HOLDER FOR PERSONAL ITEMS**

## TECHNICAL FIELD

**[0001]** This invention relates generally to holders for carrying personal items.

## BACKGROUND

**[0002]** Personal items such as keys, money, identification cards, credit cards, and other small miscellaneous items are typically carried in pockets, wallets, purses, handbags and the like. A number of portable electronic devices are also now commonly carried by individuals. Such devices include mobile phones, pagers, mobile email and internet access devices, electronic organizers, radio frequency identification cards and personal media playback devices. Each of these devices may be provided with a separate customized case.

**[0003]** Most wallets and purses are not adapted to carry larger personal items, such as keychains with several keys or portable electronic devices. Individuals are therefore often forced to carry personal items in two or more places at one time. This can be inconvenient and increases the possibility of misplacing personal items. Handbags and the like have greater carrying capacity than wallets and purses, but they tend to be bulky and do not permit immediate access to a particular personal item. In addition, most existing devices for carrying personal items require both hands to manipulate and access personal items carried therein.

**[0004]** There is a general desire to provide an apparatus that overcomes or at least ameliorates one or more drawbacks with existing devices for carrying personal items.

## SUMMARY OF INVENTION

**[0005]** One aspect of the invention provides a holder for carrying personal items. The holder comprises a front cover and a back cover. Personal items may be carried in an interior of the holder in a space between the front cover and back cover. A flexible or otherwise foldable stay facing connects the front cover and the back cover along a first partial perimeter of the covers. The front cover may be folded relative to the back cover along the stay facing to adjust the holder between a closed configuration and an open configuration. A closure mechanism connects the front cover and the back cover of the holder along a second partial perimeter of the covers. Closing the closure mechanism fixes the holder in its closed configuration and opening the closure mechanism allows the holder to be manipulated to its open configuration. The closure mechanism may comprise a zipper.

**[0006]** The holder comprises a retraction member at least partially disposed in the interior of the holder. One end of the retraction member may releasably engage one or more personal items. The retraction member can be adjusted between a retracted position and an extended position. When the retraction member is adjusted from its extended position toward its retracted position, the personal item(s) engaged by the retraction member are drawn toward the interior of the holder. Adjusting the retraction member from its retracted position toward its extended position permits personal items engaged by the retraction member to move toward the exterior of the holder.

**[0007]** The retraction member may comprise an elongated flexible member. The elongated flexible member may comprise a strap. A carrying end of the flexible member may releasably engage personal items. The carrying end of the

flexible member may be located in the interior of the holder when the retraction member is in its retracted position. The carrying end of the flexible member may extend outwardly from a lower opening between the front and back covers when the retraction member is in its extended position. A locking end of the flexible member may be located on the exterior of the holder. The locking end of the flexible member may comprise a locking mechanism for releasably coupling the locking end to the back cover and to thereby lock the retraction member in its retracted position. The back cover may comprise one or more holes through which the flexible member slideably extends between the interior and exterior of the holder.

**[0008]** The holder may further comprise attaching means for releasably engaging the holder to a part of the user's clothing. The attaching means may comprise a clip fixed to the back cover of the holder. An exterior portion of the clip may comprise dual prongs between which the flexible member extends. An interior portion of the clip may comprise a rigid spine attached to an interior face of the back cover. An upper part of the spine may comprise one or more holes through which the flexible member may extend between the interior and exterior of the holder. A component of the locking mechanism for releasably coupling the locking end of the flexible member may be fixed to a lower part of the spine and may extend through an opening in the back cover.

**[0009]** The front cover may comprise a transparent sleeve for displaying the contents of the holder.

**[0010]** The holder may comprise a plurality of compartments. A second compartment may be attached to a front cover of a first compartment. The front cover of the second compartment may comprise a transparent sleeve for displaying its contents. The second compartment may be fixed to or releasably coupled to the first compartment. The second compartment may comprise a holder for a specific electronic device, such as a mobile phone, a personal media playback device or a portable email/internet access device.

**[0011]** Further features and applications of specific embodiments of the invention are described below.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

**[0012]** In drawings which illustrate non-limiting embodiments of the invention:

**[0013]** FIG. 1 is a front plan view of a holder for carrying personal items in accordance with a particular embodiment of the invention;

**[0014]** FIG. 2 is a right side view of the FIG. 1 holder;

**[0015]** FIG. 3 is a left side view of the FIG. 1 holder;

**[0016]** FIG. 4 is a back plan view of the FIG. 1 holder, illustrating a retraction member in its retracted position;

**[0017]** FIG. 5 is a back plan view of the FIG. 1 holder, illustrating the retraction member in its extended position;

**[0018]** FIG. 6 is a front plan view of a holder for carrying personal items in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

**[0019]** FIG. 7 is a right side view of the FIG. 6 holder;

**[0020]** FIG. 8 is a left side view of the FIG. 6 holder;

**[0021]** FIG. 9 is a front plan view of a holder for carrying personal items in accordance with another embodiment of the invention showing a front flap in an open position;

**[0022]** FIG. 10 is a front plan view of the FIG. 9 holder showing the front flap in a closed position; and

**[0023]** FIGS. 11A and 11B are back and front isometric views of a clip-type means for attaching any of the FIG. 1-10 holders to a user's clothing.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**[0024]** Throughout the following description, specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the invention. However, the invention may be practiced without these particulars. In other instances, well known elements have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the invention. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative, rather than a restrictive, sense.

**[0025]** Aspects of the invention provide a holder for carrying a variety of personal items in a variety of ways. The holder comprises covers which preferably fold between an open configuration and a closed configuration. When in the closed configuration, the covers define a space therebetween which forms an interior of the holder. The holder comprises a retraction member for releasably engaging particular personal items. The retraction member can be adjusted between a retracted position, wherein personal items engaged to the retraction member are located in the interior of the holder, and an extended position, wherein personal items engaged to the retraction member may be located on an exterior of the holder.

**[0026]** This description uses a number of directional conventions to clarify its meaning. These directional conventions are illustrated by arrows in the various drawings and include:

**[0027]** "front" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 201 (FIG. 2);

**[0028]** "back" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 202 (FIG. 2);

**[0029]** "upper" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 203 (FIG. 1);

**[0030]** "lower" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 204 (FIG. 1);

**[0031]** "right" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 205 (FIG. 1); and

**[0032]** "left" which refers to directions that have a component oriented in the direction indicated by arrow 206 (FIG. 1).

**[0033]** FIGS. 1 to 5 depict various views of a holder 1 for carrying personal items in accordance with a particular embodiment of the invention. Holder 1 comprises front cover 10 and back cover 12, which are spaced-apart from one another to define an interior 13. Front cover 10 and back cover 12 may be similar in size and may be generally rectangular in shape. Front cover 10 and back cover 12 are fixedly attached at corresponding side edges by a flexible or otherwise foldable stay facing 11. Front cover 10 and back cover 12 are coupled at their opposing side edges and at their upper edges by zipper assembly 16. Stay facing 11 is bendable along its longitudinal axis, such that when zipper assembly 16 is unfastened, stay facing 11 allows front cover 10 and back cover 12 to fold apart from one another to permit a user to access interior 13. As will become apparent from the description of the operation of holder 1 below, stay facing 11 preferably connects the corresponding left side edges of front cover 10 and back cover 12 for right-handed users (FIGS. 2 and 3). In

an alternative embodiment for left-handed users (not shown), stay facing 11 connects the corresponding right side edges of front cover 10 and back cover 12.

**[0034]** In the illustrated embodiment, the lower edges of covers 10, 12 have a convex carved shape (see FIGS. 1 and 4). Preferably, front cover 10 and back cover 12 are not coupled to one another along their lower edges. Furthermore, the lower edges of front cover 10 and back cover 12 are preferably spaced-apart from one another to define lower opening 15 (FIGS. 2 and 3) which provides access to interior 13 of holder 1 via lower opening 15. In other embodiments (not shown), the lower edges of covers 10, 12 may be coupled to one another by zipper assembly 16.

**[0035]** Personal items may be carried in interior 13 (i.e. in the space between front cover 10 and back cover 12). Holder 1 may fiber comprise various storage means (not shown) disposed on the interior surfaces of front cover 10 and back cover 12. Storage means may include, but are not limited to, sleeves, pockets, pouches, hooks, clips, clasps and the like. For example, a pouch may hold coins and other small items. As a further example, a plurality of sleeves may hold credit cards, identification cards, RFID's etc.

**[0036]** In the illustrated embodiment, zipper assembly 16 fastens the side edges of front cover 10 and back cover 12 opposite stay facing 11 and the upper edges of front cover 10 and back cover 12. In the illustrated embodiment, zipper assembly 16 runs along the perimeter of holder 1 from the lower right corner 60 to the upper right corner 61 and from the upper right corner 61 to the upper left corner 62. Zipper assembly 16 permits holder 1 to be adjusted by a user between a closed configuration and an open configuration. Zipper assembly 16 may be adjusted by pulling on zipper tab 18. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that zipper assembly 16 may be substituted with other known closure mechanisms. For example, hook and loop fasteners, clasps, magnetic strips or the like may be used in place of zipper assembly 16.

**[0037]** As shown best in FIGS. 4 and 5, holder 1 comprises a retraction member 20. In the illustrated embodiment, retraction member 20 comprises a flexible member 22. Flexible member 22 slidably extends through two laterally arranged holes 34 through the upper portions of back cover 12 and spine 17 (described below). Preferably, the dimensions of holes 34 are slightly larger than the dimensions of flexible member 22. Retraction member 20 is adjustable between a retracted position (as shown in FIG. 4) and an extended position (as shown in FIG. 5).

**[0038]** In the illustrated embodiment, flexible member 22 of retraction member 20 comprises carrying end 24 and locking end 26. When retraction member 20 is in its retracted position, carrying end 24 is located between front cover 10 and back cover 12 in interior 13 of holder 1. Carrying end 24 may releasably engage personal items such as key ring 50. Key rig 50 may hold keys 52. The types of personal items engaged to carrying end 24 are not limited to keys or key accessories. For example, the device may be magnetic coin holder as described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,812,817. Carrying end 24 may comprise or otherwise be coupled to other devices for carrying other personal items. Such other devices may include clasps, hook and loop fasteners, pouches, zippers, hooks, clips or the like, for example. Other personal items that may be engaged to carrying end 24 (and/or to devices coupled to carrying end 24) include safety whistles, remote-controlled

door openers, penlights, personal alarms, coins and other accessories of the types typically found on key chains, for example.

[0039] Locking end 26 of flexible member 22 is located at the opposite end of flexible member 22 from carrying end 24 (or at some other location on flexible member 22 that is spaced-apart from carrying end 24) on the exterior of holder 1 adjacent the exterior side of back cover 12. In the illustrated embodiment, locking end 26 is looped through two holes 27 at one end of a lock tab 28. In other embodiments, locking end 26 is coupled to lock tab 28 by sewing, glueing or mechanical fasteners, for example.

[0040] In the illustrated embodiment, lock tab 28 locks retraction member 20 in a retracted position by means of snap fastener assembly 29. Snap fastener assembly 29 comprises snap fastener socket 30 disposed on lock tab 28 and snap fastener ball 32 positioned at a lower portion of the exterior side of back cover 12. Preferably, snap fastener ball 32 is coupled to relatively rigid spine 17 (discussed below). Snap fastener socket 30 releasably engages snap fastener ball 32 to lock retraction member 20 in a retracted position.

[0041] In the illustrated embodiment, flexible member 22 comprises a loop of flexible material such as a string, cord or the like. Flexible member 22 need not comprise a loop and may comprise a single strand of material. In some embodiments, flexible member 22 comprises a strap, a chain, strip of flexible material (e.g. braided strapping, leather) or the like. The two holes 34 illustrated in FIGS. 4 and 5 may instead be a single hole, which may be dimensioned for slidable movement of flexible member 22 therethrough. Lock tab 28 and snap fastener assembly 29 may be replaced by other locking mechanisms for coupling locking end 26 of flexible member 22 to back cover 12. Such locking mechanisms may include hook and loop fasteners, clips, zippers, magnets, clasps or the like, for example.

[0042] Holder 1 may be attached to a user's clothing by attaching means 36 disposed on back cover 12 or front cover 10. Attaching means 36 may comprise any mechanism that may be used to attach accessories to a user's clothing.

[0043] In the illustrated embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 5, attaching means 36 is disposed on back cover 12 and comprises a clip for attachment to a user's pocket or waistbelt. An exterior component of the clip comprises dual prongs between which flexible member 22 may extend (as shown in FIG. 4). Preferably, at least a portion of the prongs are resiliently biased against an exterior surface of back cover 12. The upper ends of the prongs extend through back cover 12 into interior 13 and connect to (or are integrally formed with) an interior part of the clip comprising a substantially flat, relatively rigid spine 17. Spine 17 is preferably resiliently biased against an interior surface of back cover 12. Spine 17 provides back cover 12 of holder 1 with rigidity which, among other things, facilitates attachment of holder 1 to a user's clothing.

[0044] As shown in the illustrated embodiment, (FIGS. 4 and 5), an upper portion of spine 17 may comprise one or more holes 34 through which flexible member 22 slidably extends. Snap fastener ball 32 may be fixed to a lower portion of the spine and extend through an opening in back cover 12 to releasably engage snap fastener socket 30.

[0045] FIGS. 11A and 11B are back and front isometric views of a clip-type attachment means 36 suitable for use with holder 1 shown separate from the other components of holder 1. FIGS. 11A and 11B represent a particular non-limiting embodiment of clip 36. Clip 36 comprises an interior portion

201 which is located interior to back cover 12 and an exterior portion 202 which is located exterior to back cover 12. Interior portion 201 comprises a spine 17. Spine 17 is penetrated by an aperture 216 for receiving snap fastener ball 32. At the opposite end of interior portion 201, spine 17 is penetrated one or more holes through which flexible member 22 slidably extends. Spine 17 may also incorporate one or more strengthening ridges 208A, 208B, 214 which extend along its longitudinal dimension on its interior and/or exterior sides. Exterior portion 202 comprises a pair of prongs 204A, 204B, which are transversely spaced-apart from one another. Prongs 204A, 204B may each incorporate one or more strengthening ridges which extend along their longitudinal dimensions on their interior and/or exterior sides. Prongs 204A, 204B may also incorporate transversely extending gripping ridges 210A, 210B on their interior sides for helping to grip a user's clothing. Gripping ridges 210A, 210B may be located in a vicinity of the portions 212A, 212B of prongs 204A, 204B that are closest to spine 17.

[0046] In operation, a user may adjust case 1 to its open configuration by pulling zipper tab 18 to manipulate (i.e. open) zipper assembly 16 and by folding front cover 10 away from back cover 12 along stay facing 11. Rigidity provided by spine 17 facilitates the manipulation (i.e. opening and closing) of zipper assembly 16. Preferably, when case 1 is clipped to a user's clothing, the rigidity provided by spine 17 facilitates the manipulation of zipper assembly 16 with one hand (i.e. such that the user does not have to hold case 1 with one hand and manipulate zipper assembly 16 with the other). Personal items may be carried in the storage means in interior 13 of holder 1. For example, the storage means may comprise a sleeve for holding paper money, a pouch for holding coins and clasps for holding a penlight. While case 1 is in its open configuration, personal items, such as key ring 50 and/or keys 52 for example, can also be attached to carrying end 24 of flexible member 22. The user may then adjust case 1 to its closed configuration by folding front cover 10 toward back cover 12 along stay facing 11 and closing zipper assembly 16. Any personal items carried in the storage means of holder 1 and/or attached to carrying end 24 of flexible member 22 are now protectively and securely housed in interior 13 of holder 1. Holder 1 may then be attached to a part of the user's clothing by attaching means 36 to allow "hands-free" carriage of personal items.

[0047] To access the personal items stored in the storage means of holder 1, a user may adjust case 1 to its open configuration as discussed above. Continuing with the previous example, the paper money, coins and/or penlight may now be removed from the sleeve, pouch and clasp, respectively. Key ring 50 and/or keys 52 may also be removed from carrying end 24 of flexible member 22. Once the desired personal items are removed from holder 1, the user may adjust holder 1 to its closed configuration again, as discussed above.

[0048] Personal items may be attached to and detached from retraction member 20 and may even be used while holder 1 is in a closed configuration. A user may access the personal items on carrying end 24 of flexible member 22 by first disengaging snap fastener socket 30 from snap fastener ball 32. When case 1 is clipped to a user's clothing, leverage provided by relatively rigid spine 17 facilitates the simple disengagement of snap fastener socket 30 from snap fastener ball 32 (i.e. without having to detach case 1 from the user's

clothing). Preferably, the rigidity of spine 17 facilitates the disengagement of snap fastener socket 30 from snap fastener ball 32 with one hand.

[0049] Disengagement of snap fastener assembly 29 allows retraction member 20 to be moved to its extended position, where carrying end 24 extends through lower opening 15 to the exterior of holder 1. Gravity may cause retraction member 20 to move to its extended position. When retraction member 20 is in its extended position, personal items, such as key ring 50 and/or keys 52, may be attached to or removed from carrying end 24 even though holder 1 is in its closed configuration. It may also be possible to use some personal items attached to carrying end 24 when retraction member 20 is in its extended position and when case 1 is in its closed configuration. For example, it may be possible to use keys 52 attached to carrying end 24 to unlock locks when retraction member 20 is in its extended position and when case 1 is in its closed configuration.

[0050] When personal items are attached to carrying end 24, they may be safely housed in interior 13 of holder 1 by pulling locking end 26, which causes carrying end 24 (and personal items attached to it) to be pulled into interior 13 of case 1. When carrying end 24 and the personal items attached to it are located in interior 13 of case 1, retraction member 20 is said to be in its retracted position. The user may lock retraction member 20 in its retracted position by engaging snap fastener socket 30 to snap fastener ball 32. Preferably, when case 1 is clipped to a user's clothing, the rigidity of spine 17 allows the user to engage snap fastener socket 30 to snap fastener ball 32 using one hand.

[0051] It is not necessary that holder 1 be in its closed configuration to move retraction member 20 between its extended configuration and its retracted configuration. Retraction member 20 may also be moved between its extended configuration and its retracted configuration when holder 1 is in its open configuration.

[0052] Personal items carried by holder 1 may also be accessed without requiring holder 1 to be detached from the user's clothing. Holder 1 may be adjusted to its open configuration as described above to access any personal items carried in the storage means in interior 13. A user may also adjust retraction member 20 to its extended configuration as described above to access and use personal items attached to carrying end 24. Access to personal items without detaching holder 1 from the user's clothing offers the convenience of adjusting holder 1 between its open and closed configurations, adjusting retraction member 20 between its retracted and extended positions, and accessing the contents of holder 1, all using only one hand. Rigidity provided to holder 1 by spine 17 is particularly important in such one-handed operations.

[0053] For right-handed users, holder 1 can be attached on the right side of the user's waistbelt which enables the user to manipulate holder 1 using only the right hand. Configuring stay facing 11 on the left side of holder 1 allows holder 1 to be opened on the right side of holder 1, which corresponds to the front side of the user. For left-handed users, holder 1 can be attached on the left side of the user's waistbelt with stay facing 11 on the right side of holder 1.

[0054] FIGS. 6 to 8 illustrate a holder 100 according to another embodiment of the invention. Holder 100 differs from holder 1 of FIGS. 1 to 5 in that holder 100 comprises multiple compartments 101 and 102. First compartment 101 of holder 100 is substantially similar to holder 1 described

above in that first compartment 101 comprises a front cover 110, back cover 112, stay facing 111, storage means (not shown) located in its interior 113, lower opening 115, retraction member 120 and attaching means 136. These features of first compartment 101 are substantially similar to corresponding features of holder 1.

[0055] As best shown in FIGS. 7 and 8, second compartment 102 is fixed to front cover 110 of first compartment 101. In other embodiments, second compartment 102 may be releasably and/or pivotally coupled to front cover 110 of first compartment 101 via a suitable coupling mechanism. Non-limiting examples of suitable coupling mechanisms include hook and loop fasteners, pivot joint fasteners, snap fasteners, zipper fasteners, clasps, clips or the like.

[0056] Second compartment 102 comprises its own front cover 122 and back cover 124. In some embodiments, portions of back cover 124 of second compartment 102 are formed from front cover 110 of first compartment 101. Stay facing 121 connects one of the corresponding side edges of front cover 122 and back cover 124. Zipper assembly 134 extends along side edges of front cover 122 and back cover 124 opposite stay facing 121 and along the lower edges of front cover 122 and back cover 124. In other embodiments, other closure mechanisms, such as hook and loop fasteners, clasps, magnets or the like, are used in the place of zipper assembly 134.

[0057] A user may carry additional personal items, such as cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, personal media players and other portable electronic devices, in an interior 123 of second compartment 102. Second compartment 102 is adjustable between a closed configuration and an open configuration. To adjust second compartment 102 from its closed configuration to its open configuration, a user undoes zipper assembly 134 and folds front cover 122 relative back cover 124 by bending stay facing 121. When second compartment 102 is in its open configuration, a user may access personal items carried in and/or add new personal items to interior 123 of second compartment 102. Adjusting second compartment 102 from its open configuration to its closed configuration involves folding front cover 122 relative to back cover 124 and closing zipper assembly 134.

[0058] Front cover 122 may comprise a transparent sleeve 125 for displaying, for example, a business card bearing a company logo or the input keys/buttons of an electronic device, such as a cellular telephone, a pager or a personal media playback device. In one embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 9 and 10, the upper portion of front cover 122 extends into, or is otherwise coupled to, a flap 126 that folds over second compartment 102 to close off the upper edges of second compartment 102. Flap 126 and a portion of back cover 124 may be provided with hook and loop fasteners 127, 128 to form a releasable closure mechanism for flap 126. In other embodiments, flap 126 and back cover 124 comprise other releasable closure mechanisms for engaging one another, such as magnetic closures, clasps, snap fasteners or the like. In still other embodiments (not shown), flap 126 extends from (or is otherwise fixed to) back cover 124 (or front cover 110 of first compartment 101) and has a closure mechanism for releasably engaging front cover 124 of second compartment 102.

[0059] As will be apparent to those skilled in the art in the light of the foregoing disclosure, many alterations and modifications are possible in the practice of this invention without departing from the spirit or scope thereof. For example:

[0060] The front and back covers of holder **1** and the front and back covers of first compartment **101** and second compartment **102** of holder **100** may have a variety of ergonomic shapes. For example, the shape of the covers can be oval, circular, or square.

[0061] Holders **1**, **100** may be constructed of a pliable material such as flexible plastic, vinyl, neoprene, hydrofoam or leather. In alternative embodiments, holders **1** and **100** may be constructed of more rigid materials such as rigid plastic.

[0062] Holders **1**, **100** or parts of holders **1**, **100** may be constructed of a transparent material such as clear vinyl, for example.

[0063] Holder **100** may comprise more than two compartments. For example, holder **100** may comprise a third compartment that, along with second compartment **102**, attaches to front cover **122** of first compartment **101**.

[0064] Retraction members **20** and **120** can comprise other types of retraction members having other retraction mechanisms. For example, retraction members may comprise a spring-loaded spool disposed entirely within holder **1** or first compartment **101**.

[0065] In some embodiments, second compartment **102** of holder **100** is sold separately from the remainder of case **100**. In such embodiments, second compartment **102** may be particularly designed (e.g. dimensioned) for a particular brand of electronic device. For example, a variety of second compartments **102** may be sold for different types of cellular telephones or different types of personal media playback devices. Holder **100** may be sold as a kit with a fastener or coupling mechanism which permits a second compartment **102** (sold separately) to be coupled thereto. Such a kit may function with second compartments produced by different manufacturers.

What is claimed is:

1. A holder for personal items, the holder comprising:
  - a partial enclosure for holding personal items in an interior thereof, the partial enclosure comprising a front cover and a back cover, the front and back covers spaced-apart from one another along at least one edge of the enclosure to define an enclosure opening; and
  - a retraction member having a carrying end for engaging personal items, the retraction member adjustable between: a retracted position wherein the carrying end is located in the interior of the enclosure; and an extended position wherein the carrying end is permitted to move through the enclosure opening to an exterior of the enclosure;

the enclosure opening located on a lower edge of the enclosure, thereby permitting gravity to move the carrying end through the enclosure opening when the retraction member changes from its retracted position to its extended position;

the retraction member comprising a flexible member which extends through one of the front and back covers, the carrying end located on the flexible member and the flexible member also having a locking end located on the exterior of the enclosure.
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. A holder according to claim **27** wherein the locking end comprises a first portion of a locking mechanism for releasably coupling the locking end to the one of the front and back covers such that, when the locking end is coupled to the one of the front and back covers, the retraction member is locked

in its retracted position and when the locking end is released from the one of the front and back covers, the retraction member is permitted to move to its extended position.

5.-8. (canceled)

9. A holder according to claim **4** wherein a second portion of the locking mechanism is attached to the spine portion and projects from the spine portion through the back cover to the exterior of the enclosure for releasably coupling to the first portion of the locking mechanism.

10. A holder according to claim **9** wherein the clip comprises a pair of prongs spaced-apart from one another and wherein the second portion of the locking mechanism extends to the exterior of the enclosure in a location between the pair of prongs, such that, when the retraction member is in its retracted position, the locking end of the flexible member extends between the pair of prongs to couple the first portion of the locking mechanism to the second portion of the locking mechanism.

11. A holder according to claim **9** wherein the clip comprises a pair of prongs spaced-apart from one another and wherein, when the retraction member is in its retracted position, the flexible member extends between the pair of prongs to couple the first portion of the locking mechanism to the second portion of the locking mechanism.

12. A holder according to claim **11** wherein the enclosure comprises a stay facing connecting the front cover to the back cover, the stay facing foldable to adjust the enclosure between: a closed configuration wherein the front cover is folded toward the back cover to define the interior of the enclosure; and an open configuration wherein the front cover is folded away from the back cover to expose inner surfaces of the front and back covers.

13. (canceled)

14. A holder according to claim **12** wherein the stay facing extends along a first partial perimeter of the enclosure, the first partial perimeter comprising a first side edge of the enclosure.

15. (canceled)

16. A holder according to claim **14** comprising a closure mechanism for releasably connecting the front cover to the back cover such that, when the front and back covers are connected, the enclosure is locked in its closed configuration.

17. A holder according to claim **16** wherein the closure mechanism extends along a second partial perimeter of the enclosure, the second partial perimeter comprising a second side edge of the enclosure opposite the first side edge.

18. (canceled)

19. A holder according to claim **18** wherein the second partial perimeter also extends along an upper edge of the enclosure.

20. A holder according to claim **11** comprising a secondary compartment releasably coupleable to the enclosure.

21. A holder according to claim **20** wherein the secondary compartment comprises a front surface and a rear surface, the rear surface releasably coupleable to an exterior surface of the front cover of the enclosure.

22. A holder according to claim **21** wherein the front surface of the secondary compartment is functionally transparent.

23. A holder according to claim **22** wherein the releasable coupling between the rear surface of the secondary compartment and the exterior surface of the front cover of the enclosure comprises a pivot joint which permits pivotal movement of the secondary compartment relative to the enclosure.

24.-26. (canceled)

27. A holder according to claim 1 comprising attaching means for releasably attaching the holder to a user's clothing, the attaching means comprising a clip which extends from the interior of the enclosure to the exterior of the enclosure, the clip comprising at least one prong portion on the exterior of the enclosure and at least one spine portion which extends along, and is attached to, the back cover in the interior of the enclosure wherein the flexible member extends through one or more apertures in the spine portion, the one or more apertures dimensioned to permit slidable movement of the flexible member therethrough.

28. A holder according to claim 1 wherein the enclosure comprises a stay facing connecting the front cover to the back cover, the stay facing foldable to adjust the enclosure between: a closed configuration wherein the front cover is folded toward the back cover to define the interior of the enclosure; and an open configuration wherein the front cover is folded away from the back cover to expose inner surfaces of the front and back covers.

29. A holder according to claim 28 wherein at least one of the front cover and the back cover comprises personal item storage means on the inner surface thereof.

30. A holder according to claim 29 wherein the stay facing extends along a first partial perimeter of the enclosure, the first partial perimeter comprising a first side edge of the enclosure.

31. (canceled)

32. A holder according to claim 30 comprising a closure mechanism for releasably connecting the front cover to the back cover such that, when the front and back covers are connected, the enclosure is locked in its closed configuration.

33. A holder according to claim 32 wherein the closure mechanism extends along a second partial perimeter of the enclosure, the second partial perimeter comprising a second side edge of the enclosure opposite the first side edge.

34. (canceled)

35. A holder according to claim 33 wherein the second partial perimeter also extends along an upper edge of the enclosure.

36. (canceled)

37. A holder according to claim 1 comprising a secondary compartment releasably coupleable to the enclosure.

38. A holder according to claim 37 wherein the secondary compartment comprises a front surface and a rear surface, the rear surface releasably coupleable to an exterior surface of the front cover of the enclosure.

39. A holder according to claim 38 wherein the front surface of the secondary compartment is functionally transparent.

40. A holder according to claim 39 wherein the releasable coupling between the rear surface of the secondary compartment and the exterior surface of the front cover of the enclosure comprises a pivot joint which permits pivotal movement of the secondary compartment relative to the enclosure.

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