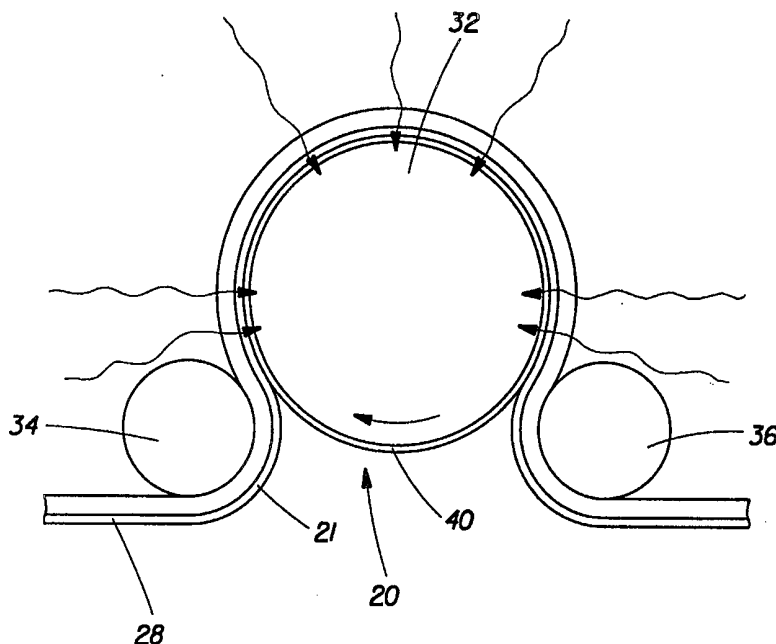




## INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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<b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/IB98/01284 <b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 19 August 1998 (19.08.98) <b>(30) Priority Data:</b> 08/927,952      11 September 1997 (11.09.97)      US <b>(71) Applicant:</b> THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY [US/US]; One Procter & Gamble Plaza, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (US). <b>(72) Inventors:</b> ENSIGN, Donald, Eugene; 7325 Kennedy Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45242 (US). TROKHAN, Paul, Dennis; 1356 Warvel Road, Hamilton, OH 45013 (US). STELLJES, Michael, Gomer, Jr.; 8354 Ashley Hall Court, West Chester, OH 45069 (US). <b>(74) Agents:</b> REED, T., David et al.; The Procter & Gamble Company, 5299 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45217-1087 (US).	<b>(81) Designated States:</b> AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).  <b>Published</b> <i>With international search report.</i>	

**(54) Title:** REDUCED SURFACE ENERGY LIMITING ORIFICE DRYING MEDIUM, PROCESS OF MAKING, AND PROCESS OF MAKING PAPER THEREWITH

**(57) Abstract**

An apparatus for drying an embryonic web. The apparatus comprises a micropore medium having pores therethrough. The pores are the limiting orifice in the air flow used in the drying process. The micropore medium has a surface oriented towards and preferably contacting the web to be dried. This surface has a relatively low surface energy, and preferably a surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter.

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REDUCED SURFACE ENERGY LIMITING ORIFICE DRYING MEDIUM,  
PROCESS OF MAKING,  
AND  
PROCESS OF MAKING PAPER THEREWITH

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an apparatus for absorbent embryonic webs which are through air dried to become a cellulosic fibrous structure and particularly to an apparatus which provides an energy savings during the through air drying process.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Absorbent webs include cellulosic fibrous structures, absorbent foams, etc. Cellulosic fibrous structures have become a staple of everyday life. Cellulosic fibrous structures are found in facial tissues, toilet tissues and paper toweling.

In the manufacture of cellulosic fibrous structures, a slurry of cellulosic fibers dispersed in a liquid carrier is deposited onto a forming wire to form an embryonic web. The resulting wet embryonic web may be dried by any one of or combinations of several known means, each of which drying means will affect the properties of the resulting cellulosic fibrous structure. For example, the drying means and process can influence the softness, caliper, tensile strength, and absorbency of the resulting cellulosic fibrous structure. Also the means and process used to dry the cellulosic fibrous structure affects the rate at which it can be manufactured, without being rate limited by such drying means and process.

An example of one drying means is felt belts. Felt drying belts have long been used to dewater an embryonic cellulosic fibrous structure through capillary flow of the liquid carrier into a permeable felt medium held in contact with the embryonic web. However, dewatering a cellulosic fibrous structure into and by

using a felt belt results in overall uniform compression and compaction of the embryonic cellulosic fibrous structure web to be dried. The resulting paper is often stiff and not soft to the touch.

Felt belt drying may be assisted by a vacuum, or may be assisted by opposed press rolls. The press rolls maximize the mechanical compression of the felt against the cellulosic fibrous structure. Examples of felt belt drying are illustrated in U.S. Patent 4,329,201 issued May 11, 1982 to Bolton and U.S. Patent 4,888,096 issued December 19, 1989 to Cowan et al.

Drying cellulosic fibrous structures through vacuum dewatering, without the aid of felt belts is known in the art. Vacuum dewatering of the cellulosic fibrous structure mechanically removes moisture from the cellulosic fibrous structure while the moisture is in the liquid form. Furthermore, if used in conjunction with a molding template-type belt, the vacuum deflects discrete regions of the cellulosic fibrous structure into the deflection conduits of the drying belts and strongly contributes to having different amounts of moisture in the various regions of the cellulosic fibrous structure. Similarly, drying a cellulosic fibrous structure through vacuum assisted capillary flow, using a porous cylinder having preferential pore sizes is known in the art as well. Examples of such vacuum driven drying techniques are illustrated in commonly assigned U.S. Patent 4,556,450 issued December 3, 1985 to Chuang et al. and U.S. Patent 4,973,385 issued November 27, 1990 to Jean et al.

In yet another drying process, considerable success has been achieved drying the embryonic web of a cellulosic fibrous structure by through-air drying. In a typical through-air drying process, a foraminous air permeable belt supports the embryonic web to be dried. Hot air flow passes through the cellulosic fibrous structure, then through the permeable belt or vice versa. The air flow principally dries the embryonic web by evaporation. Regions coincident with and deflected

into the foramina in the air permeable belt are preferentially dried. Regions coincident the knuckles in the air permeable belt are dried to a lesser extent by the airflow.

Several improvements to the air permeable belts used in through-air drying have been accomplished in the art. For example, the air permeable belt may be made with a high open area, i.e., at least forty percent. Or, the belt may be made to have reduced air permeability. Reduced air permeability may be accomplished by applying a resinous mixture to obturate the interstices between woven yarns in the belt. The drying belt may be impregnated with metallic particles to increase its thermal conductivity and reduce its emissivity or, alternatively, the drying belt may be constructed from a photosensitive resin comprising a continuous network. The drying belt may be specially adapted for high temperature airflows, of up to about 815 degrees C. (1500 degrees F). Examples of such through-air drying technology are found in U.S. Patent Re. 28,459 reissued July 1, 1975 to Cole et al.; U.S. Patent 4,172,910 issued October 30, 1979 to Rotar; U.S. Patent 4,251,928 issued February 24, 1981 to Rotar et al.; commonly assigned U.S. Patent 4,528,239 issued July 9, 1985 to Trokhan, incorporated herein by reference; and U.S. Patent 4,921,750 issued May 1, 1990 to Todd. Additionally, several attempts have been made in the art to regulate the drying profile of the cellulosic fibrous structure while it is still an embryonic web to be dried. Such attempts may use either the drying belt, or an infrared dryer in combination with a Yankee hood. Examples of profiled drying are illustrated in U.S. Patent 4,583,302 issued April 22, 1986 to Smith and U.S. Patent 4,942,675 issued July 24, 1990 to Sundovist.

The foregoing art, even that specifically addressed to through-air drying, does not address the problems encountered when drying a multi-region cellulosic fibrous structure. For example, a first region of the cellulosic fibrous

structure, having a lesser absolute moisture, density or basis weight than a second region, will typically have relatively greater airflow therethrough than the second region. This relatively greater airflow occurs because the first region of lesser absolute moisture, density or basis weight presents a proportionately lesser flow resistance to the air passing through such region.

This problem is exacerbated when a multi-region, multi-elevational cellulosic fibrous structure to be dried is transferred to a Yankee drying drum. On a Yankee drying drum, isolated discrete regions of the cellulosic fibrous structure are in intimate contact with the circumference of a heated cylinder and hot air from a hood is introduced to the surface of the cellulosic fibrous structure opposite the heated cylinder. However, typically the most intimate contact with the Yankee drying drum occurs at the high density or high basis weight regions. After some moisture is removed from the cellulosic fibrous structure, the high density or high basis weight regions are not as dry as the low density or low basis weight regions. Preferential drying of the low density regions occurs by convective transfer of the heat from the airflow in the Yankee drying drum hood. Accordingly, the production rate of the cellulosic fibrous structure must be slowed, to compensate for the greater moisture in the high density or high basis weight region. To allow complete drying of the high density and high basis weight regions of the cellulosic fibrous structure to occur and to prevent scorching or burning of the already dried low density or low basis weight regions by the air from the hood, the Yankee hood air temperature must be decreased and the residence time of the cellulosic fibrous structure in the Yankee hood must be increased, slowing the production rate.

Another drawback to the approaches in the prior art (except those that use mechanical compression, such as felt belts) is that each relies upon supporting the cellulosic fibrous structure to be dried. Airflow is directed towards the

cellulosic fibrous structure and is transferred through the supporting belt, or, alternatively, flows through the drying belt to the cellulosic fibrous structure. Differences in flow resistance through the belt or through the cellulosic fibrous structure, amplify differences in moisture distribution within the cellulosic fibrous structure, and/or creates differences in moisture distribution where none previously existed.

One improvement in the art which addresses this problem is illustrated by commonly assigned U.S. Patent 5,274,930 issued January 4, 1994 to Ensign et al. and disclosing limiting orifice drying of cellulosic fibrous structures in conjunction with through-air drying, which patent is incorporated herein by reference. This patent teaches an apparatus utilizing a micropore drying medium which has a greater flow resistance than the interstices between the fibers of the cellulosic fibrous structure. The micropore medium is therefore the limiting orifice in the through-air drying process so that an equal, or at least a more uniform, moisture distribution is achieved in the drying process.

Yet other improvements in the art which address the drying problems are illustrated by commonly assigned U.S. Patents 5,543,107 issued Aug. 1, 1995 to Ensign et al.; 5,584,126 issued Dec. 19, 1996 to Ensign et al.; and 5,584,128 issued Dec. 17, 1996 to Ensign et al., the disclosures of which patents are incorporated herein by reference. The Ensign et al. '126 and Ensign et al. '128 patents teach multiple zone limiting orifice apparatuses for through air drying cellulosic fibrous structures. However, Ensign et al. '126, Ensign et al. '128, and Ensign et al. '930 do not teach how to minimize pressure drop through the micropore drying medium when encountering liquid or two phase flow. The magnitude of the pressure drop is important. As the pressure drop, at a given flow rate, through the medium decreases, less horsepower is necessary to run the fan(s) which draw air through the apparatus. Reducing fan horsepower is an

important source of energy savings. Conversely, at equivalent horsepower and pressure drop, additional airflow can be drawn through the cellulosic fibrous structure, thereby improving the drying rate. The improved drying rate allows for increased throughput in the papermaking machine.

The limiting orifice through-air-drying apparatus of the Ensign et al. '107 patent teaches having one or more zones with either a subatmospheric pressure or a positive pressure to promote flow in either direction.

Applicants have unexpectedly found a way to treat the micropore drying media of the prior art apparatuses to reduce pressure drop at a constant liquid or two phase flow, or, alternatively, increase liquid or two phase flow at constant pressure drop. Furthermore, it has unexpectedly been found that this invention can be retrofitted to the micropore drying apparatus of the prior art without significant rebuilding.

The apparatus of the present invention may be used to make paper. The paper may be conventionally dried or through air dried. If the paper is to be through air dried, it may be through air dried as described in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,191,609, issued March 4, 1980 to Trokhan; or the aforementioned patent 4,528,239, the disclosures of which patents are incorporated herein by reference. If the paper is conventionally dried, it may be conventionally dried as described in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 5,629,052, issued May 13, 1997 to Trokhan et al., the disclosure of which patent is incorporated herein by reference.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide a limiting orifice through-air drying apparatus having a micropore medium which can be used to produce cellulosic fibrous structures. It is, furthermore, an object of this invention to provide a limiting orifice through-air drying apparatus which reduces the necessary residence time of the embryonic web thereon and/or requires less



energy than had previously been thought in the prior art. Finally, it is an object of this invention to provide a limiting orifice through-air drying apparatus having a micropore medium which is usable with a relevant prior art apparatus, which apparatus preferably is or has at least one zone with a differential pressure greater than the breakthrough pressure.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention comprises a micropore medium for use with papermaking. The papermaking process may comprise through air drying. The micropore medium provides a limiting orifice for air flow through the embryonic web in the drying process. The micropore medium has at least one lamina having a surface contacting the embryonic web. The lamina has pores therethrough.

The surface of the lamina in contact with the embryonic web and/or the pores in the micropore medium have a surface energy of less than 46, preferably less than 36, and more preferably less than 26 dynes per centimeter. The lamina of the micropore media may be coated to provide such a surface energy, or, alternatively, may be made of a material intrinsically having such surface energy.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a schematic side elevational view of a micropore medium according to the present invention embodied on a pervious cylinder, the thickness being exaggerated for clarity.

Figure 2 is a fragmentary top plan view of a micropore medium according to the present invention showing the various laminae.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to Figure 1, the present invention comprises a limiting orifice though-air-drying apparatus 20 in conjunction with a micropore medium 40. The apparatus 20 and medium 40 may be made according to the aforementioned U.S. Patents 5,274,930; 5,543,107; 5,584,126; 5,584,128; and commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/878,794, filed June 16, 1997 in the names of Ensign et al., the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference. The apparatus 20 comprises a pervious cylinder 32. The micropore medium 40 may circumscribe the pervious cylinder 32. A support member 28, such as a through-air-drying belt or press felt, wraps the pervious cylinder 32 from an inlet roll 34 to a takeoff roll 36, subtending an arc defining a circular segment. This circular segment may be subdivided into multiple zones having mutually different differential pressures relative to the atmospheric pressure. Alternatively, the apparatus 20 may comprise a partitioned vacuum slot, flat or arcuate plates, or an endless belt. The apparatus 20 removes moisture from an embryonic web 21.

Referring to Figure 2, the micropore drying media according to the present invention comprises a plurality of laminae 41-46. The micropore media 40 according to the present invention may have a first lamina 41 which is closest to and contacts the embryonic web 21. Subjacent the first lamina 41 may be one or a plurality of other laminae 42-46. The subjacent laminae 42-46 provide support for the laminae 41-45 and fatigue strength. The laminae 41-46 may have an increasing pore size for the removal of water therethrough, as the subjacent laminae 42-46 are approached. At least the first lamina 41 and more particularly, the surface thereof which contacts the embryonic web 21, has the low surface energy described below. Alternatively, other and all of the laminae 41-46, comprising the medium 40 according to the present invention may be treated to have the low surface energy described below.

The laminae 41-46 each have two surfaces, a first surface and a second surface opposed thereto. The first and second surfaces are in fluid communication with each other by pores therebetween. The first surface, i.e., that which is oriented towards the high pressure or upstream side of the air flow or water flow therethrough, should have a low surface energy according to the present invention and as described below. Also, the pores between the first and second surfaces, particularly those pores which provide limiting orifices in the flow path, should also be provided with a low surface energy surface as described below.

The low surface energy may be accomplished with a surface coating. The coating may be applied after the laminae 41-46 are joined together and sintered, to prevent the deleterious effects of the manufacturing operation on the coating or deleterious effects of the coating on the manufacturing operation.

According to the present invention, the medium 40 is coated in order to reduce pressure drop therethrough for liquid or two phase flow. Particularly, the coating reduces the surface energy of the medium 40, making it more hydrophobic. Any coating or other treatment which reduces the surface energy of the micropore medium 40 is suitable for use with the present invention, although coating the first lamina 41 of the micropore drying medium 40 has been found to be a particularly effective way to reduce the surface energy. Preferably, the surface energy is reduced to less than 46, preferably to less than 36, and more preferably to less than 26 dynes per centimeter.

The surface energy refers to the amount of work necessary to increase the surface area of a liquid on a solid surface. Generally, for solid surfaces, the cosine of the contact angle of a liquid thereon is a monotonic function of the surface tension of the liquid. As the contact angle approaches zero, the surface is more wetted. If the contact angle becomes zero, the solid surface is perfectly

wetted. As the contact angle approaches 180 degrees, the surface approaches a non-wettable condition. It is to be recognized that neither zero nor 180 degree contact angles are observed with water, as may be used in the liquid slurry with the present invention. As used herein surface energy refers to the critical surface tension of the solid surface, and may be empirically found through extrapolation of the relationship between the surface tension of a liquid and its contact angle on a particular surface of interest. Thus, the surface energy of the solid surface is indirectly measured through the surface tension of a liquid thereon. Further discussion of surface energy is found in the Adv. Chem Ser No. 43 (1964) by W. A. Zisman and in Physical Chemistry of Surfaces, Fifth Edition, by Arthur W. Adamson (1990), both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

The surface energy is measured by low surface tension solutions (e.g., isopropanol/water or methanol/water mixtures). Particularly, the surface energy may be measured by applying a calibrated dyne pen to the surface of the medium 40 under consideration. The application should be at least one inch long to ensure a proper reading is obtained. The surface is tested at a temperature of  $70^{\circ} \pm 5^{\circ}$  F. Suitable dyne pens are available from the Control-Cure Company of Chicago, Illinois.

Alternatively, a goniometer may be used, provided that one corrects the results for the surface topography of the laminae 41-46. Generally, as the surface becomes rougher, the apparent contact angle will be less than the true contact angle. If the surface becomes porous, such as occurs with the laminae 41-46 of the present invention, the apparent contact angle is larger than the true contact angle due to the increased liquid-air contact surface.

Nonlimiting and illustrative examples of suitable coatings useful to reduce the surface energy include both fluids and dry film lubricants. Suitable dry film

lubricants include fluorotelomers, such as KRYTOX DF made by the DuPont Corporation of Wilmington, Delaware. The dry film lubricant may be dispersed in fluorinated solvents from the freon family, such as 1, 1-dichloro-1-fluoroethane, or 1, 1, 2-trichloro-1, 2, 2 -trifluoroethane, or isopropyl alcohol, etc. The KRYTOX DF lubricant is preferably heat cured in order to melt the KRYTOX DF lubricant. Heat curing at 600 degrees for a period of 30 minutes has been found suitable for the medium 40 according to the present invention.

Alternatively, the coating material may comprise other low surface energy particles suspended in a liquid carrier. Prophetically, suitable particles include graphite and molybdenum disulfide.

Alternatively, the coating material may comprise a fluid. A polydimethylsiloxane fluid, such as GE Silicones DF 581 available from The General Electric Corporation of Fairfield, Connecticut at one weight percent is a suitable fluid coating material. The polydimethylsiloxane fluid may be dispersed in isopropyl alcohol or hexane. Also, 2-ethyl-1-hexanol has also been found to be a carrier suitable for use with the present invention. After application to the medium 40, the polydimethylsiloxane is heat cured to increase its molecular weight via crosslinking and to evaporate the carrier. Curing for one hour at 500° F has been found suitable for the medium 40 according to the present invention.

The coating materials, dry film or fluid, may be sprayed, printed, brushed, or rolled onto the medium 40. Alternatively, the medium 40 may be immersed in the coating material. A relatively uniform coating is preferred. The dry film coating material is preferably applied in relatively low concentrations, such as 0.5 to 2.0 weight percent. The low concentrations are believed to be important to prevent plugging of the small pores of the laminae 41-46 of the micropore medium 40. Silicone fluid coatings may be applied in concentrations of approximately 0.5 to 10 weight percent, and preferably 1 to 2 weight percent.

Prophetically, organically modified ceramic materials known as ormocers may be used to reduce the surface energy of the medium 40. Ormocers may be made according to the teachings of U.S. Patent No. 5,508,095, issued April 16, 1996, to Allum et al., and incorporated herein by reference. It will be apparent that various dry film lubricants, various fluid coatings, various ormocers, and combinations thereof may be used to reduce the surface energy of the medium 40.

If coatings are used to render the micropore drying medium 40 more hydrophobic and reduce its surface energy, it is important that the coatings do not plug the fine pores of the laminae 41-46, and particularly the first lamina 41 of the medium 40. The laminae 41-46, particularly the first lamina 41, may have pores with dimensions in any one direction smaller than 20 microns and even smaller than 10 microns. The laminae 41-46 may have pores which successively increase in size from the first lamina 41 to the last lamina 46, the last lamina 46 being disposed furthest from the first lamina 41. The aforementioned dry film and fluid coatings have been successfully used without causing plugging of the laminae 41-46. A coating which significantly plugs the pores of the medium 40 is unsuitable. For example, a coating may be unsuitable, if the coating thickness and/or concentration is too great.

Rather than coating the surface of one or more laminae 41-46 of the medium 40 to reduce the surface energy as described above, prophetically the medium 40 could be made of a material intrinsically having a low surface energy. Although stainless steels have been described in the incorporated patents as suitable materials for the laminae 41-46, the laminae 41-46, particularly the first lamina 41, could be made of or impregnated with a low surface energy material such as tetrafluoroethylene, commonly sold by DuPont Corporation of Wilmington, Delaware under the tradename TEFLON or low

surface energy extruded plastics, such as polyesters or polypropylenes. It will be apparent that materials intrinsically having a relatively low surface energy may be coated as described above, to provide an even lower surface energy.

In yet another alternative embodiment, the apparatus 20 needs only to have a through-air drying zone and may eliminate the capillary drying zone. Such an apparatus 20 is believed useful in conjunction with the present invention

In another variation, one of the intermediate laminae 42-45 may have the smallest pores therethrough. In this embodiment, the intermediate lamina 42-45 having the smallest pores will determine the flow resistance of the medium 40, rather than the first lamina 41. In such an embodiment, it is important that the intermediate laminae 42-45 having the greatest flow resistance be provided with the low surface energy described above. It will be recognized that, similar to the embodiments described above, the low surface energy surface need only be disposed on the high pressure (i.e., upstream) side and in the limiting orifice of the pores of that lamina 41-45.

The apparatus 20 according to the present invention may be used in conjunction with a papermaking belt which yields a cellulosic fibrous structure having plural densities and/or plural basis weights. The papermaking belt and cellulosic fibrous structure may be made according to any of commonly assigned U. S. patents 4,191,609, issued March 4, 1980 to Trokhan; 4,514,345, issued April 30, 1985 to Johnson et al.; 4,528,239, issued July 9, 1985 to Trokhan; 4,529,480, issued July 16, 1985 to Trokhan; 5,245,025, issued September 14, 1993 to Trokhan et al.; 5,275,700, issued January 4, 1994 to Trokhan; 5,328,565, issued July 12, 1994 to Rasch et al.; 5,334,289, issued August 2, 1994 to Trokhan et al.; 5,364,504, issued November 15, 1995 to Smurkoski et al.; 5,527,428, issued June 18, 1996 to Trokhan et al.; 5,554,467, issued

September 18, 1996 to Trokhan et al.; and 5,628,879, issued May 13, 1997 to Ayers et al.

In another embodiment, the papermaking belt may be a felt, also referred to as a press felt as is known in the art, and as taught by commonly assigned U.S. Patent 5,556,509, issued September 17, 1996 to Trokhan et al. and PCT Application WO 96/00812, published January 11, 1996 in the names of Trokhan et al., the disclosures of which patent and application are incorporated herein by reference.

Additionally, the paper dried on the micropore medium 40 according to the present invention may have multiple basis weights, as disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. Patents 5,534,326, issued July 9, 1996 to Trokhan et al. and 5,503,715, issued April 2, 1996 to Trokhan et al., the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference, or according to European Patent Application WO 96/35018, published Nov. 7, 1996 in the names of Kamps et al. The paper dried on the micropore medium 40 according to the present invention may be made using other papermaking belts as well. For example, prophetically, the belts disclosed in European Patent Application WO 97/24487, published July 10, 1997 in the names of Kaufman et al. and European Patent Application 0 677 612 A2, published Oct. 18, 1995 in the names of Wendt et al. may be utilized. As well, other papermaking technologies may be utilized in conjunction with the papermaking machinery supporting and the paper made according to the micropore medium 40 of the present invention. Prophetically, suitable additional papermaking technologies include those disclosed in U.S. Patents 5,411,636, issued May 2, 1995 to Hermans et al.; 5,601,871, issued Feb. 11, 1997 to Krzysik et al.; 5,607,551, issued March 4, 1997 to Farrington, Jr. et al.; and European Patent Application 0 617 164, published Sept. 28, 1994, in the names of Hyland et al.



The embryonic web may be completely dried on the apparatus 20 according to the present invention. Alternatively, the embryonic web may be finally dried on a Yankee drying drum as is known in the art. Alternatively, the cellulosic fibrous structure may be finally dried without using a Yankee drying drum.

The cellulosic fibrous structure may also be foreshortened as is known in the art. Foreshortening can be accomplished with a Yankee drying drum, or other cylinder, via creping with a doctor blade as is well known in the art. Creping may be accomplished according to commonly assigned U.S. Patent 4,919,756, issued April 24, 1992 to Sawdai, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. Alternatively or additionally, foreshortening may be accomplished via wet microcontraction as taught in commonly assigned U.S. Patent 4,440,597, issued April 3, 1984 to Wells et al., the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

What is claimed is:

1. A micropore medium for use with a limiting orifice through air drying papermaking apparatus, said micropore medium comprising a limiting orifice for air flow through an embryonic web, said micropore medium having at least one lamina, said lamina having first and second opposed surfaces and pores therebetween, said first surface being oriented towards said embryonic web and a second surface opposed thereto, said first surface of said lamina and said pores having a surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter, and preferably said pores have a surface energy of less than 36 dynes per centimeter, and more preferably said pores have a surface energy of less than 26 dynes per centimeter.
2. A medium according to Claim 1 wherein said first surface of said lamina comprises a coating, wherein said coating provides said surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter.
3. A medium according to Claim 2 wherein said coating is selected from the group consisting of fluorotelomers, polysiloxanes, ormocers, and combinations thereof.
4. A medium according to Claim 1 wherein said first lamina comprises a material intrinsically having a surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter, and preferably said pores have a surface energy of less than 36 dynes per centimeter, and more preferably said pores have a surface energy of less than 26 dynes per centimeter.
5. A medium according to Claims 1, 2, 3, and 4 wherein said apparatus comprises a pervious cylinder and said first surface of said first lamina contacts said embryonic web, and preferably said medium comprises a plurality of laminae, each said lamina having pores therethrough, said

pores of said laminae successively increasing in size from said first lamina having said first surface which contacts said web to the last of said laminae, said last of said laminae being disposed furthest from said first lamina.

6. A process for making a micropore medium, said process comprising the steps of:

providing a limiting orifice through air drying lamina having two surfaces and pores therebetween, a first surface and a second surface opposed thereto; and

coating said first surface and said pores of said lamina with a coating, said coating having a surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter.

7. A process according to Claim 6 further comprising the step of joining said first lamina in face-to-face relationship with at least one other lamina, said step of joining said laminae being performed prior to said step of coating said first surface and said pores of said first lamina.
8. A process according to Claim 7 wherein said second lamina has two surfaces, a first surface oriented towards said first lamina and a second surface opposed thereto, and further comprising the step of coating said first surface and said pores of said second lamina.
9. A process for making a tissue paper, said process comprising the steps of:  
providing an embryonic web;  
providing a micropore medium, said micropore medium having a pore size which provides a limiting orifice for air flow through said embryonic web, said medium having a surface energy of less than 46 dynes per centimeter;  
disposing said embryonic web on said micropore medium;

passing air through said embryonic web and said micropore medium,  
whereby said micropore medium is the limiting orifice for air flow  
through said embryonic web to thereby remove water from said  
embryonic web; and  
removing said embryonic web from said micropore medium.

10. A process according to Claim 9 wherein said embryonic web is  
substantially dry upon removal from said micropore medium, and  
preferably further comprising the steps of:  
providing a Yankee drying drum;  
drying said embryonic web on said Yankee drying drum; and  
creping said embryonic web from said Yankee drying drum.

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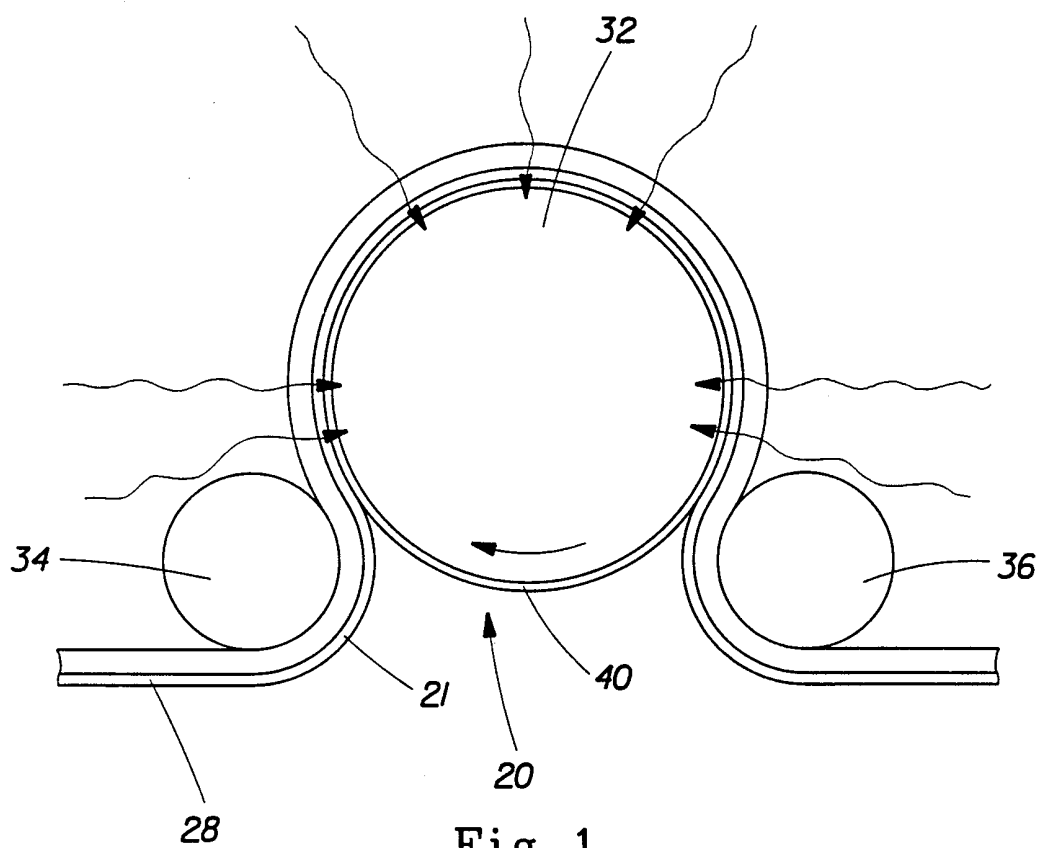


Fig. 1

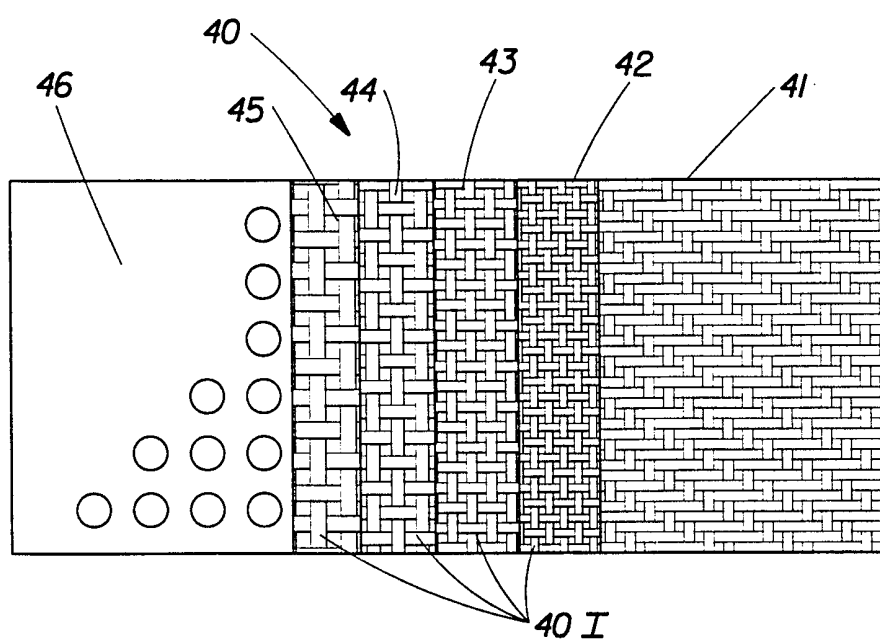


Fig. 2

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/IB 98/01284

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
IPC 6 D21F5/18 D21F11/14

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

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 D21F

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

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

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 3 121 660 A (E. H. HALL) 18 February 1964 see the whole document ---	1-3, 6
A	EP 0 211 471 A (ASTEN GROUP) 25 February 1987 see the whole document ---	1, 4
A	WO 94 00636 A (THE PROCTOR & GAMBLE COMPANY) 6 January 1994 see the whole document ---	5, 9
A	EP 0 103 376 A (THE WIGGINS TEAPE GROUP) 21 March 1984 -----	

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 November 1998

Date of mailing of the international search report

20/11/1998

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

information on patent family members

International Application No

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