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Sutter et al.

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[54] **ARTICLE RECEIVING AND COLLECTING RECEPTACLE ASSEMBLY**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/105 R**; 150/52 A; 150/7

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 71/02**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 206/286, 287, 19; 150/3, 150/7, 52 R, 52 A, 42, 1.5 R; 273/95 R, 105 R, 1.5 R

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A receptacle for receiving and collecting articles includes a member forming an open target for throwing the articles therethrough. The target member supports a container of pliant optically pervious material whereby the contents of the container can be observed by looking through the wall of the container so as to locate any given article disposed within the container. Means for obtaining access to the contents of the container are provided wherein access to the contents may be made at various selected levels while inhibiting inadvertent release of articles from adjacent levels within the container.

10 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures

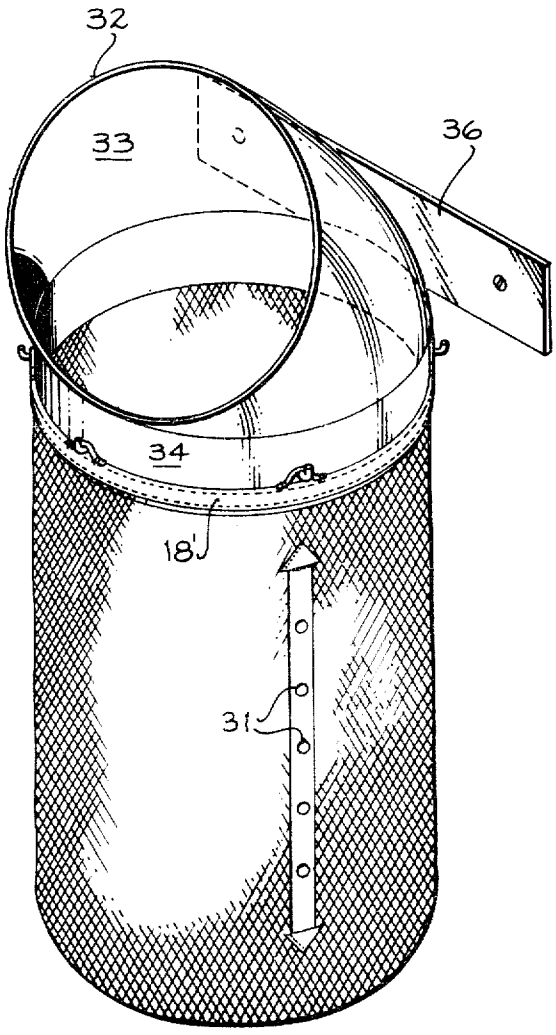
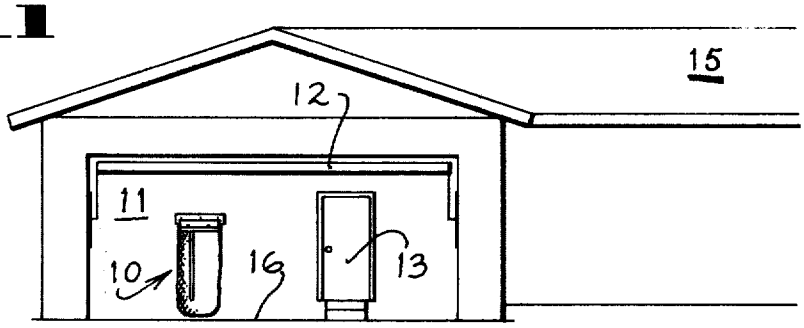


FIG_1



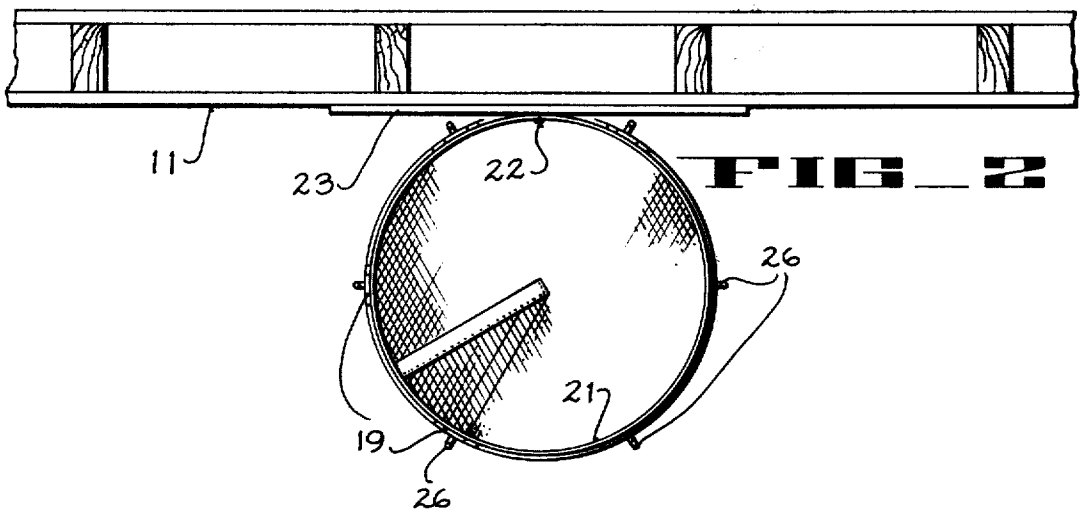


FIG_2

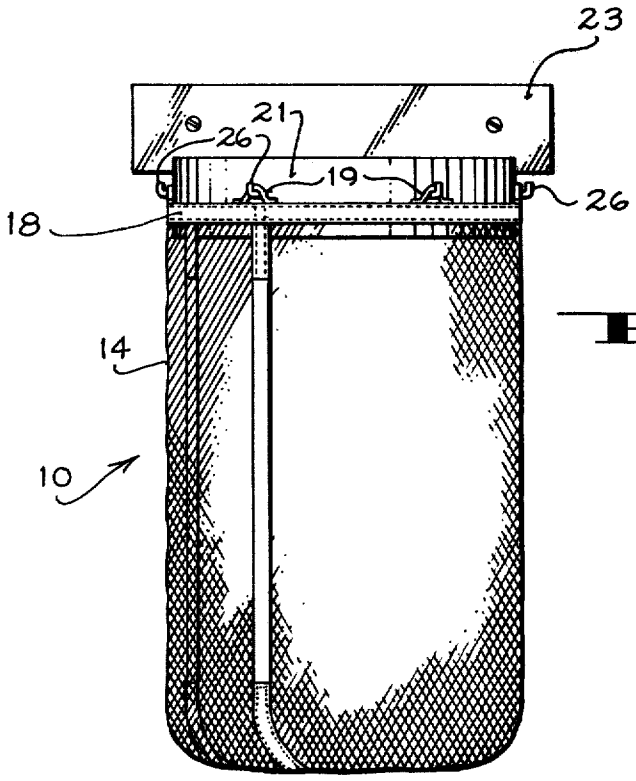


FIG_3

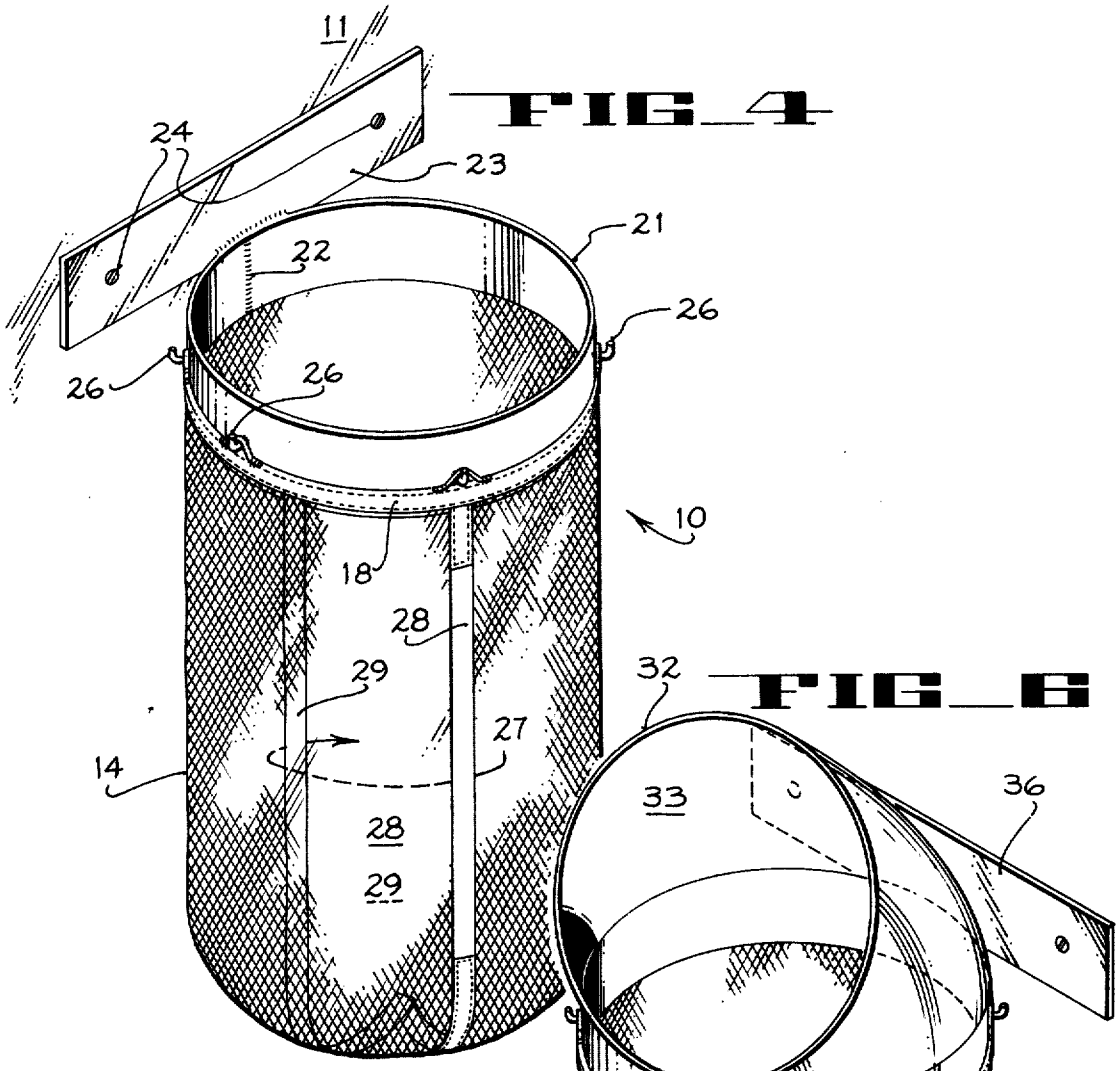


FIG_4

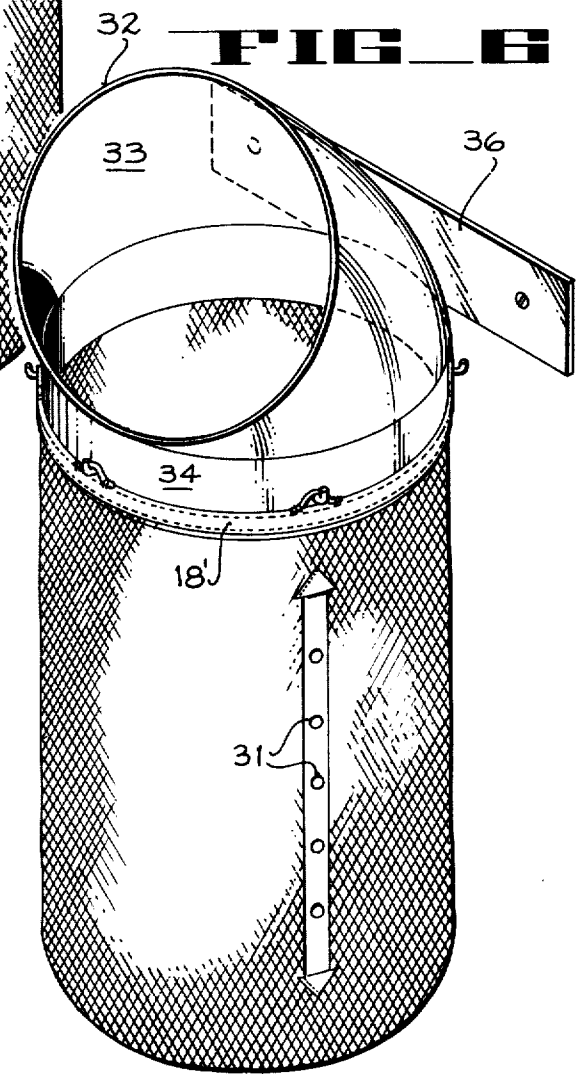


FIG_6

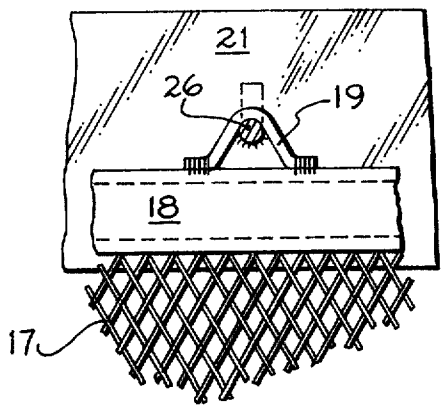


FIG_5

ARTICLE RECEIVING AND COLLECTING RECEPTACLE ASSEMBLY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention pertains to an article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly primarily for storage of articles which may be frequently used but difficult to store in the sense that those who use the articles tend not to put them away afterwards.

Storage of a number of different sized balls and the like, each for a different game, usually is unsatisfactory if they all must be stored in a single bag and put away. The result usually tends to be that these articles do not get put away at all and become lost or are relatively unavailable when needed. Accordingly, remembering exactly where any one of these particular balls or other articles is located becomes a problem and also after completion of using the articles, some times they are left adrift in a garage, for example, or other play area and, in general, the present invention provides an assembly whereby these types of articles can be readily collected in a common place without making it difficult for a person to obtain any given article when needed. The article receiving and collecting assembly is, as disclosed herein, also usable in conjunction with the storage and dispensing of balls and other articles as, for example, in a gymnasium or other athletic location where various sizes of balls are required to be maintained, or where children store many different toys, such as in a garage or closet or on a patio or at the side of a swimming pool.

Heretofore, the problem has been that when all of the balls, toys or other articles are stored in the same place, such as a large toy box, it has been necessary to look through a relatively large stack of toys or other articles in order to find the desired one.

Further, it has been observed that by providing an appropriate storage facility of the kind disclosed herein wherein any particular given article is readily available without having to search through a relatively large number of stored articles and by arranging the storage facility in the form of an open target through which a person can throw the articles, such as balls and the like, upon terminating activity, there is a stronger likelihood that the balls or toys will be put away and not be lost. Accordingly, it has been observed to be advantageous to make something of a game of throwing the balls into the target (and hence into the storage container) if at the same time access to any given ball at any given time is provided.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND OBJECTS

In general, there has been provided a member forming an open target for throwing articles therethrough, such as balls of various sizes, while the member is secured to a wall. A container of pliant material having an open end is secured to the target member to support the open end of the container aligned therewith. Finally, means are provided for coupling the container to the target member so as to collect articles therein thrown through the target member. In addition to the above and in a particularly preferred embodiment, the container includes means for obtaining access to the contents of the container via the side wall thereof to permit removal of the contents from the container at various levels selected therein while inhibiting inadvertent release of articles from adjacent levels.

In general, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved article receiving and collecting storage arrangement, preferably for use above floor level.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly for storage of articles wherein a portion of the assembly comprises a target through which the articles can be thrown into the receptacle.

A further object of the invention is to provide apparatus of the kind described above wherein inspection of the contents of the receptacle can be made visually from an external position thereto together with means for permitting access into the container at various levels so as to permit selection and simple removal of a particular article as desired.

The foregoing and other objects will be more readily evident from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments when considered in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** shows a diagrammatic representation of a garage attached to a house and containing an article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly according to the invention;

FIG. **2** shows a top plan view partially in section of an article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly according to the invention;

FIG. **3** shows a front elevation view of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** shows a perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIGS. **2** and **3**;

FIG. **5** shows an enlarged detail of FIG. **4** disclosing means for attaching the collecting receptacle to the supporting means of FIG. **4**;

FIG. **6** shows a perspective view according to another embodiment of the invention

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly **10** of a type shown in FIG. **4** is shown in FIG. **1** in a typical application. Accordingly, assembly **10** is mounted to the back wall **11** within a garage. For purposes of orientation in FIG. **1**, a one piece liftable garage door **12** is shown in its raised position and the back door **13** of house **15** is located for entry through wall **11**.

It is to be appreciated, of course, that assembly **10** can also be used in gymnasiums and in any other suitable location where articles, such as where a number of various sizes of balls (or other articles) need to be collected while remaining available for use as desired.

Accordingly, assembly **10** is mounted at a height whereby the container **14** is free and clear of the underlying floor **16** and also at a height serving to provide reasonable access thereto via the side thereof when articles are thrown into the open end of container **14**.

Container **14** preferably is in the form of a bag formed of pliable material having substantial strength, such as Nylon brand or other strong material, woven into a sufficiently open weave (as shown in FIG. **5**) to permit visual inspection of the contents of the bag from outside by looking through the interstices **17** formed between the strands of the material.

Bag **14** preferably includes a reinforced upper end edge margin **18** or band to which is sewn a plurality of spaced fabric loops **19.** In the alternative, bag **14** may be attached to hooks **26** merely by insertion of the hooks into interstices **17.**

From the foregoing, it will be readily evident that container or bag **14** permits the interior thereof to be readily inspected from outside the bag by simply "looking through the side of the bag." Accordingly, this characteristic of being able to look into the bag through its wall and thereby observe the contents of the bag is referred to hereinafter as the bag material being "optically pervious".

An annular, semi-rigid support and guide member **21** for carrying bag **14** is formed by welding together the opposite ends of a short length of relatively narrow sheet metal as shown at **22.** The weld also can serve to attach member **21** to a support bracket **23** formed with openings therein to receive screws **24** for attaching bracket **23** to support the member **21** to project outwardly away from a broad, unobstructed portion of wall **11.** The band forming support member **21** carries a plurality of radially outwardly protruding hooks **26** formed with an upwardly turned outer end. Hooks **26** are readily spot welded to the material of member **21** in positions corresponding to the locations of loops **19** for supporting same.

Means for obtaining access to the contents of bag **14** through the side of the bag for removal of the contents from the bag at various selected levels includes an access opening **27** characterized by a naturally self-closing, overlapping flap portion **28, 29.**

It has been observed that when access is desired to be made into bag **14** via opening **27** formed between the overlapping panels **28, 29,** access is inherently automatically limited substantially to the region of entry where the two panels are separated as indicated by the arrow **27.** Accordingly, access into the bag **14** does not cause a complete discharge of the entire contents of the bag while seeking to obtain only a single ball or other article from the bag.

More positive means may, however, be employed to directly define the location of the access opening by means of the snaps **31** employed on a fly-type opening as shown in FIG. **6,** extending substantially along the length of the bag.

Assembly **10,** as shown in FIGS. **1** and **4,** can be utilized to make something of a game of picking up balls or toys or other articles which may have been strewn about a play area, or, at the least, can serve to provide some interest in pursuing what otherwise may be felt to be a chore. Accordingly, the open top of member **21** forms an open target disposed to protrude outwardly from something of a "backboard" constituted by the entire wall **11** to which the assembly **10** is mounted. Accordingly, balls can be readily thrown into the bag from virtually any distance within the play area. Later the contents can be identified from outside of the bag and obtained by merely reaching through the overlapping naturally closing access opening formed by the two panels **28, 29** without fear of discharging the entire contents of the bag.

According to another embodiment shown in FIG. **6,** the target which previously consisted of a horizontally oriented hoop-like support member **21** has been arranged to provide an upwardly oriented target defined by the periphery **32** of hood **33.** Hood **33** can, for example, be made of plastic along with a plastic annular base portion **34** corresponding to member **21** above, or in the alternative, can be formed as an insert to be used in conjunction with the construction shown in FIG. **4** whereby the direction from which the balls can be thrown into the bag can be limited by merely rotating the inserted base of hood **33** within the annular member **21.**

Finally, in FIG. **6,** a support bracket **36** for mounting the assembly shown has been formed as an integral part of base **34.**

Use of the hood **33** has been observed to provide more interest to the "game" of throwing balls and other articles through its open target region.

From the foregoing, it will be readily evident that there has been provided an improved article receiving and collecting assembly wherein any given article collected within the receptacle can be identified simply by looking through the receptacle and thereafter access to that particular article is readily available without danger of discharging the full contents of the receptacle.

We claim:

1. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly comprising an annular, semi-rigid support and guide member, means coupled to said member for supporting said member to project outwardly away from a broad, unobstructed portion of a supporting wall surface of a room or compartment and serving to provide a target through which articles to be collected can be passed, an optically pervious container open at one end thereof, means for supporting said container to depend downwardly from said guide member with the open end of said container carried by said member with said open end aligned in article-receiving relation thereto, and means for obtaining access to the contents of said container through the side of said container to permit removal of said contents from the container at various selected levels therein.

2. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly according to claim **1** wherein said container comprises a bag of pliant material having a sufficiently open weave thereto to permit observation of the contents of the bag from outside the bag.

3. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly according to claim **1** wherein said container comprises a bag of pliant open weave material and wherein said access opening is characterized by naturally self-closing, overlapping flap portions.

4. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly according to claim **1** wherein said means for supporting said container comprises hooks carried by said member.

5. For use with an article receiving and collecting assembly a bag of optically pervious pliant material serving to permit inspection of the contents of the bag directly through the side of the bag from a position outside of the bag, said bag being sufficiently open at one end to receive articles thrown therethrough and closed at the other for retaining the articles, means forming an access opening in the side of said bag, said opening being disposed and arranged to permit removal of the contents of the bag at selected levels therein, and means disposed about and carried by said open end for engaging supports for holding the bag therefrom in an open condition.

6. In a room the combination comprising a wall of the room, a member adapted to be secured to said wall and

forming an open target for throwing articles therethrough, a container of pliant material having an open end and a closed end, said member being sufficiently rigid to retain its physical shape and to support said container, means coupling the open end of said container to said target member to collect and store articles thrown through said target member, and means other than said open or closed ends forming an access passage into said container for removing articles from within said container.

7. The combination according to claim 6 wherein said container includes an access opening in the side thereof extending along a major portion of its length and serving to permit access to the contents of said container for removal thereof at various levels therein.

8. The combination according to claim 6 wherein said container comprises a bag of pliant material, said material having a sufficiently open weave thereto to permit inspection therethrough of the contents of said bag from outside of the bag.

9. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly comprising an annular, semi-rigid support and guide member, means coupled to said member for supporting said member to project outwardly away from a broad, unobstructed portion of a supporting wall surface of a room or compartment and serving to provide a target through which articles to be collected can be passed, an optically pervious container open at one end thereof, means for supporting said container to depend downwardly from said guide member with the open end of said container carried by said member with said open end aligned in article-receiving relation thereto, and means for obtaining access to the contents of said container through the side of said container to permit removal of said contents from the container at various selected levels therein while inhibiting inadvertent release of articles from adjacent levels.

10. An article receiving and collecting receptacle assembly comprising an annular, semi-rigid support and guide member, means coupled to said member for supporting said member to project outwardly away from a broad, unobstructed portion of a supporting wall surface of a room or compartment and serving to provide a target through which articles to be collected can be passed, said member comprising a hood extending upwardly and away from said wall surface to orient said target in an upstanding position, an optically pervious container open at one end thereof, means for supporting said container to depend downwardly from said guide member with the open end of said container carried by said member with said open end aligned in article-receiving relation thereto, and means for obtaining access to the contents of said container through the side of said container to permit removal of said contents from the container at various selected levels therein.

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