

Aug. 27, 1963

E. KUGLER

3,101,887

MERCHANDISE PACKAGE AND CONTAINER THEREFOR

Filed April 18, 1960

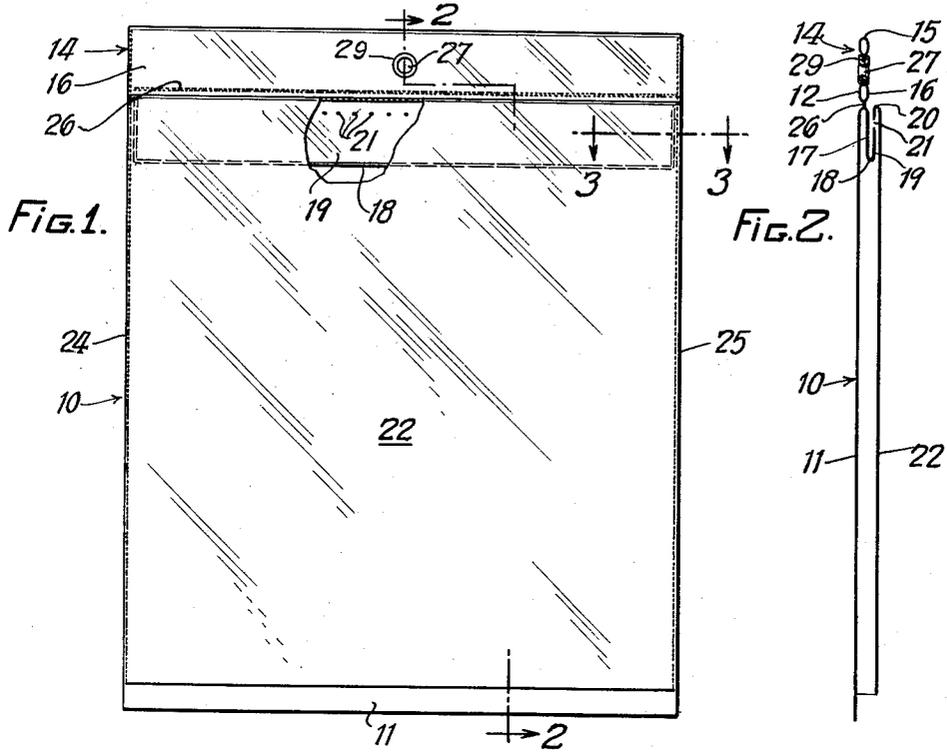


FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

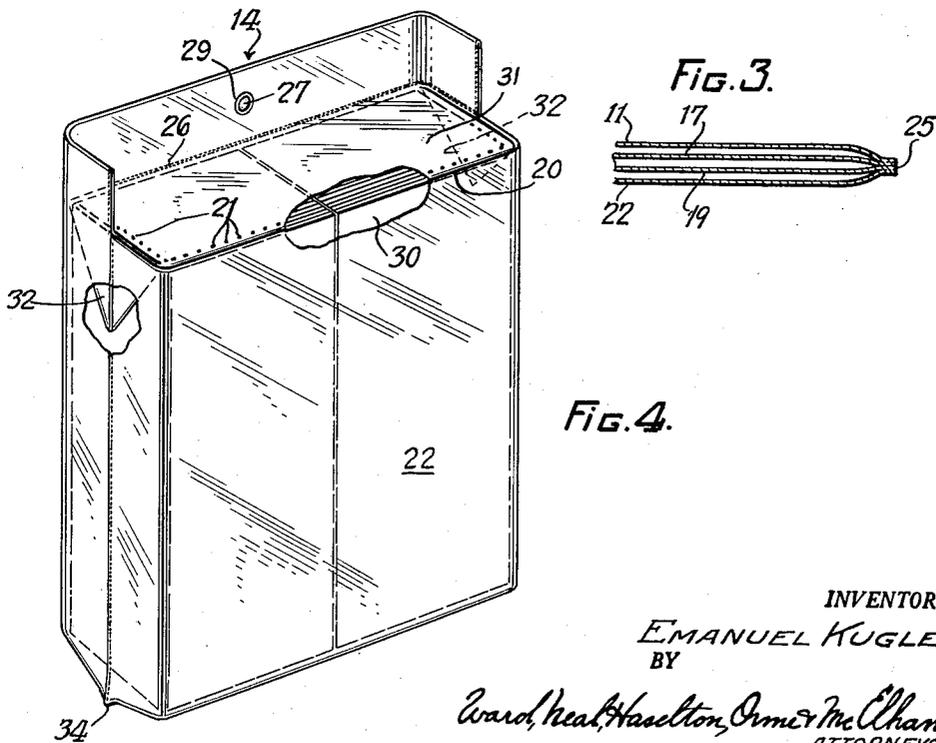


FIG. 3.

FIG. 4.

INVENTOR.

EMANUEL KUGLER.

BY

Ward, Keat, Haseltin, Orme & McChannon
ATTORNEYS.

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3,101,887
**MERCHANDISE PACKAGE AND CONTAINER
 THEREFOR**

Emanuel Kugler, 296 Hungry Harbor Road,
 Valley Stream, N.Y.

Filed Apr. 18, 1960, Ser. No. 22,880

4 Claims. (Cl. 229-62)

This invention relates to merchandise packages and containers therefor, and more particularly, to such packages including containers from which units of merchandise can be individually dispensed.

Heretofore, various articles of manufacture such as paper napkins, tissues and towels, for example, have been packaged in relatively stiff cardboard boxes which were torn or broken to open. In many cases, the merchandise was then transferred from the original container into a separate dispenser from which the units could be drawn one at a time for use.

By my present invention, I provide an improved merchandise package including a container constructed of flexible material which is readily useable as a dispenser.

As a feature of the invention, I provide a container having a closed gusset end and an open opposite end adapted to be closed after filling, a flap extending outwardly beyond the gusset end along the rear side of the container and provided with an opening for hanging the container when filled.

The container is constructed from flexible material and the gusset end may be provided with a readily severable tear line zone extending in a direction across its width. In its preferred embodiment, the container is formed from a single strip of flexible thermoplastic material such as polyethylene which is transparent and may readily be heat sealed where seams are necessary.

As a further feature of the invention, the container is formed of a strip of material which extends continuously to provide the rear wall and hang flap, the gusset end, and the front wall of the container. The folded strip is secured together as by heat sealing along its opposite edges throughout the length of the container body to provide side seams which include the side edges of the gusset. After the container is filled with merchandise through the open end opposite the gusset end, this open end is closed as by heat sealing. As a further aspect of this feature of the invention, the hang flap is formed by extending the material beyond the back wall of the container and then folding it over upon itself so that the hang flap is formed of two plies of material; and these plies are secured together along a seam extending between the side seams and disposed slightly above the gusset end. The opening in the hang flap may of course be reinforced with a grommet or the like.

Actually, the severable tear line zone referred to hereinafter is preferably provided in the closed gusset end of the container and extends along the full width thereof.

There has thus been outlined rather broadly the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject of the claims appended hereto. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception upon which this disclosure is based may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures for carrying out the several purposes of the invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions as do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention, in order to prevent the appropriation of the invention by those skilled in the art.

A specific embodiment of the invention has been chosen for purposes of illustration and description, and is shown in the accompanying drawings forming a part of the specification, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view, partly broken away, of a merchandise container in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 2-2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 3-3 of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a merchandise package illustrating the container of FIG. 1, when filled, and broken away to illustrate a portion of the contents thereof.

Referring now to the drawings and more particularly to FIGS. 1 and 2 thereof, there is shown a container 10 constructed of a single strip of flexible thermoplastic material such as polyethylene film, for example.

From one end, the strip extends upwardly to provide a rear wall 11 of the container. This portion of the strip extends upwardly beyond the upper end of the rear wall to provide a rear ply 12 of a hang flap 14. The strip is then folded over as at 15 to define the top of the flap and extends downwardly to provide a front ply 16 of the flap.

The gusset end of the container is formed by extending the strip downwardly as at 17 in front of the rear wall 11 and below the hang flap 14 to form the rear fold of the gusset. The strip is then folded as at 18 to provide the lower edge of the gusset, and is continued upwardly from the fold 18 to provide the front fold 19 of the gusset. The gusset is terminated by a fold line 20 defining the upper front edge of the container. As shown in FIG. 1, the front fold 19 of the gusset is provided with a line of perforations 21 extending from side to side thereof for a purpose to be later described.

After the gusset end of the container is formed, the strip is further continued downwardly from the fold line 20 to provide a front wall 22.

The side edges 24 and 25 of the strip, are secured together as by heat sealing along the full length of the container, including the hang flap 14; and the plies of the hang flap 14 are also secured as by heat sealing along a seam 26 slightly above the gusset end of the container. In sealing the side edges 24 and 25, it will be noted that the side edges of the extension or rear gusset fold 17 and front gusset fold 19 are also sealed in the seam thus formed, as shown in FIG. 3.

The hang flap 14 is provided with a central opening 27 which may be reinforced by a metal grommet 29.

To fill the container 10 with merchandise, the front and rear walls 11 and 22 are separated at their free ends and the merchandise, such as the paper napkins 30 illustrated in FIG. 4, is inserted therethrough. The container may, of course, be inverted for this purpose, placing the open end thereof at the top. As the napkins 30 reach the gusset end of the container, the gusset rear fold 17 and front fold 19 are drawn apart and ultimately assume a substantially coplanar disposition to form an upper wall 31 (FIG. 4). Since the side edges of the rear fold 17 and front fold 19 are sealed to the side edges 24 and 25 of the rear and front walls 11 and 22, the areas of the rear fold 17 and front fold 19 adjacent these side edges are automatically folded into triangular tucks 32 (only one being shown) as in FIG. 4, located under the seamed side edges 24 and 25. The thickness of the napkins of course causes the rear and front walls, and thus the hang flap as well, to fold around the vertical corners thereof and the upper wall 31 merges into the front wall 22 at the horizontal fold line 20. The free edges of the rear and front walls may then be brought together and closed as by a heat sealed seam, the end of which is shown at 34 in FIG. 4.

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Thus, the merchandise is completely sealed within the container and is ready for shipment as a merchandise package. The hang flap may of course be folded down against the top wall 31 prior to use of the container as a dispenser.

When it is desired to utilize the merchandise package as a dispenser, the same may be suspended by the reinforced hole 27 in the hang flap and the top wall 31 may be easily opened along the line of perforations 21, thus exposing the napkins for individual or plural removal as needed.

From the foregoing description, it will be seen that I have contributed a merchandise container constructed of flexible material which is readily useable as a dispenser. It will also be appreciated that the container of the present invention may be constructed of a single sheet of such material and includes a closed gusset end, an open opposite end and a hang flap extending outwardly beyond the gusset end along the rear side of the container.

I believe that the construction and operation of my novel merchandise container will now be understood, and that the advantages of my invention will be fully appreciated by those persons skilled in the art.

I now claim:

1. A merchandise container comprising a body portion having a gusset closed upper end, an open lower end and a multi-ply hang flap extending upwardly beyond said closed end, said container being constructed from a single strip of material extending upwardly to provide a rear wall of the container body and therebeyond to provide a rear ply of the hang flap, then folded over to define the top of the flap and downwardly to provide a front ply of said flap and therebeyond in front of the rear wall to form a rear fold of the gusset, then folded to provide the lower edge of the gusset, thence upwardly to provide a front fold of the gusset, then folded over to define the upper front edge of the container and then downwardly throughout the length of the front wall of the container body, said gusset extending the width of said container and being positioned between said front and rear walls within

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said container, the folded strip being secured together along its opposite side edges throughout the length of the container body to provide side seams which include the side edges of the gusset.

2. A merchandise container as set forth in claim 1 in which the side edges of the folded strip are secured together the full length of the container including the hang flap and in which the plies of the hang flap are further secured together along a seam extending between the side seams and disposed slightly above the gusset top of the container body and the hang flap is provided with a reinforced opening therethrough.

3. A merchandise container comprising a front wall and an opposed rear wall attached together along the lengths of respective opposite side edges thereof to form respective side seams of said container, spreadable gusset means folded between said front and rear walls extending the width of said container between said side seams and forming a closed upper end of said container, the respective opposite side edges of said gusset means being attached to the respective of said side seams, an open opposite end adapted to be closed after filling of said container, and a flap extending outwardly beyond said upper end substantially within the plane of said rear wall.

4. A merchandise container as set forth in claim 3, in which said closed end is provided with a readily severable tear line zone extending across the container width substantially adjacent said front wall.

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