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(54) **MARKETING DEVICE**

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(75) **Inventor: Jared W. Hanlon, Santa Clarita, CA (US)**

(73) **Assignee: PULL'R HOLDING COMPANY, LLC., Elk Grove Village, IL (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

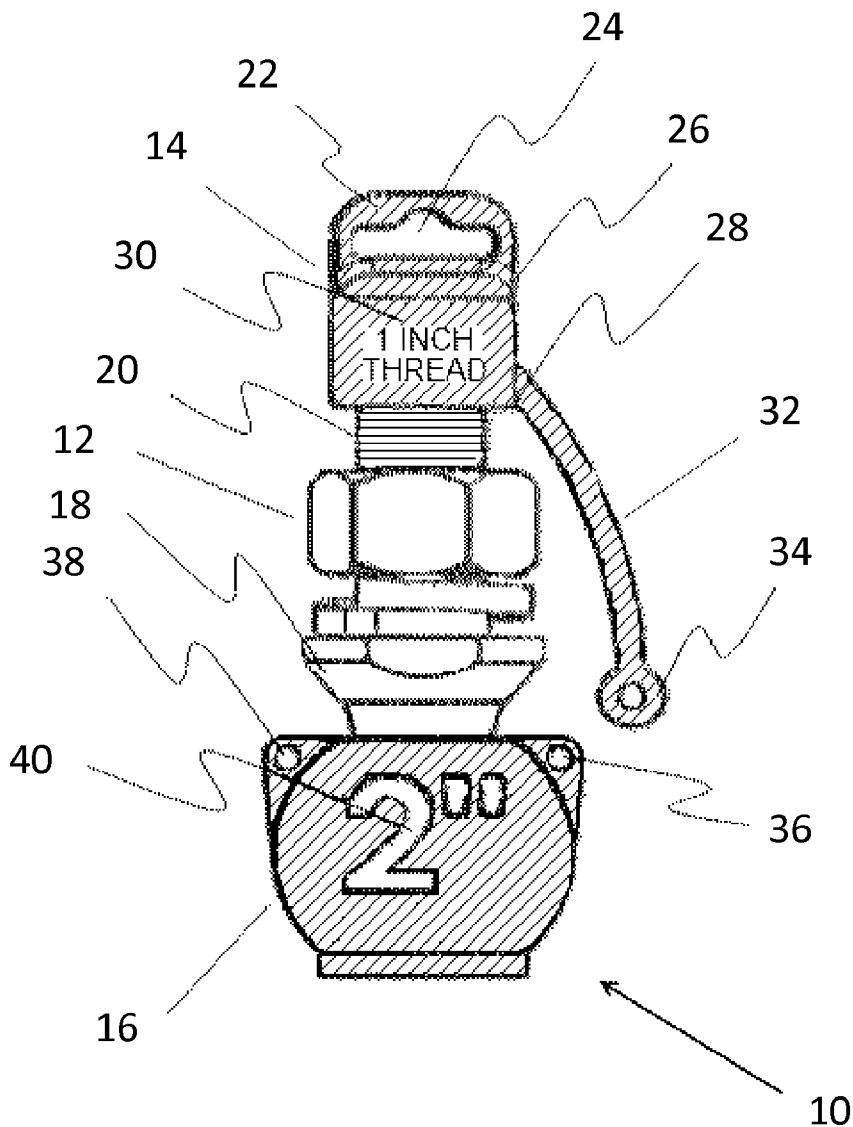
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A marketing device that can protect merchandise from damage, debris, and theft, conveys size information of the merchandise, reusable, and provides an aesthetically pleasing way for display in retail stores comprising a cap, enclosure, and extension in one embodiment, or can be used separately. The cap may further comprise bands, other catching devices, or the like. The enclosure may further include a cavity capable of storing a plurality of trailer hitch balls.

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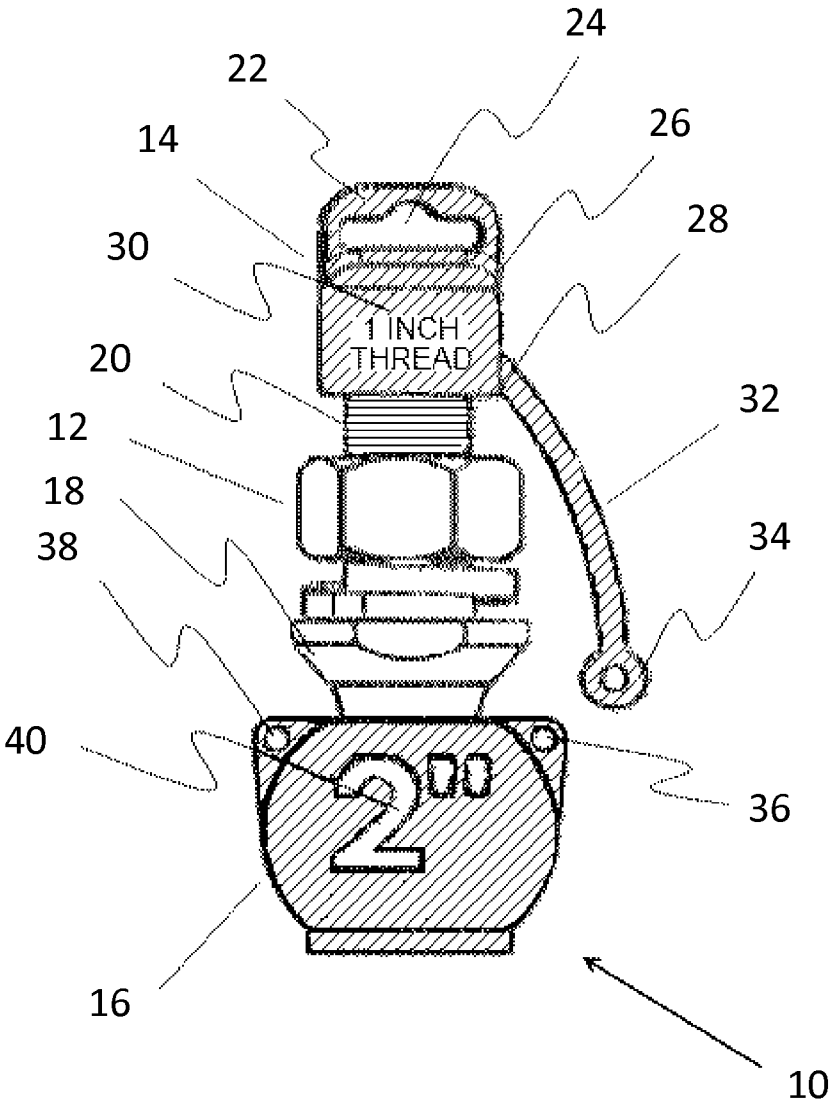


Figure 1

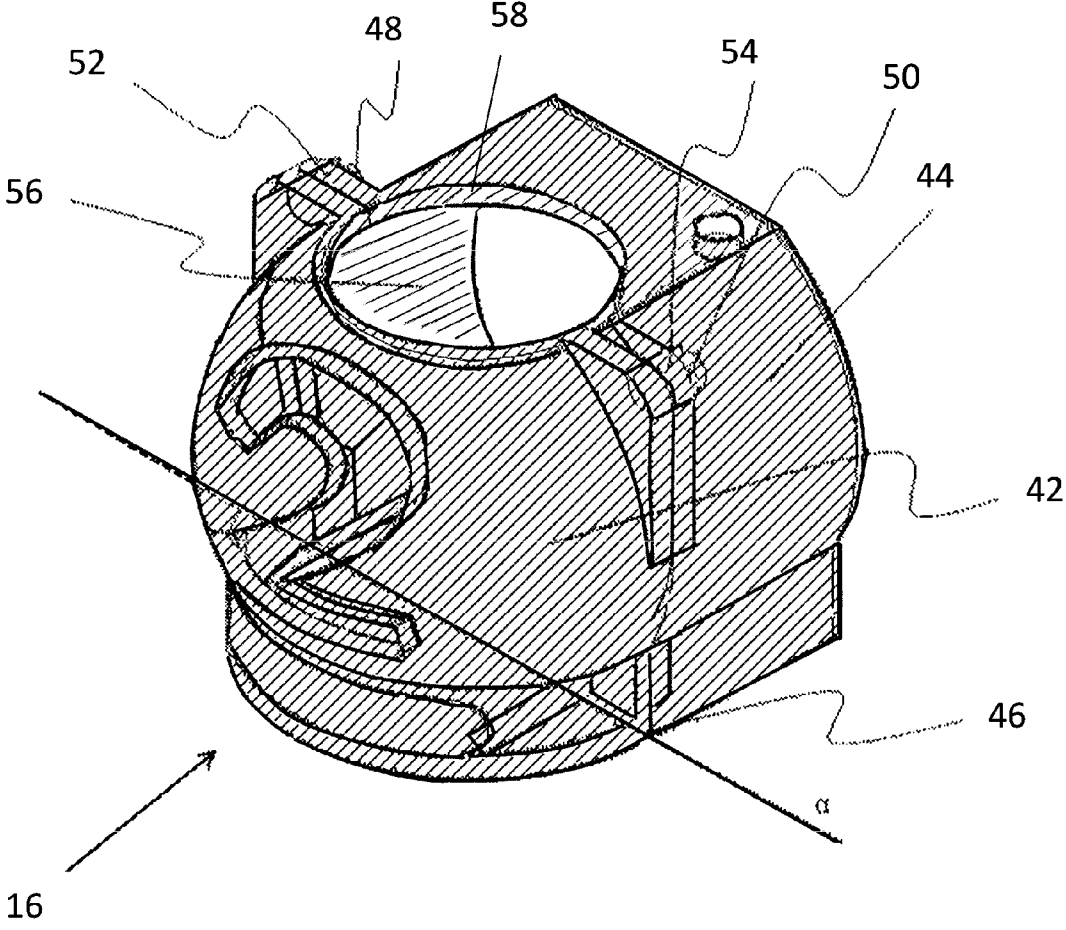
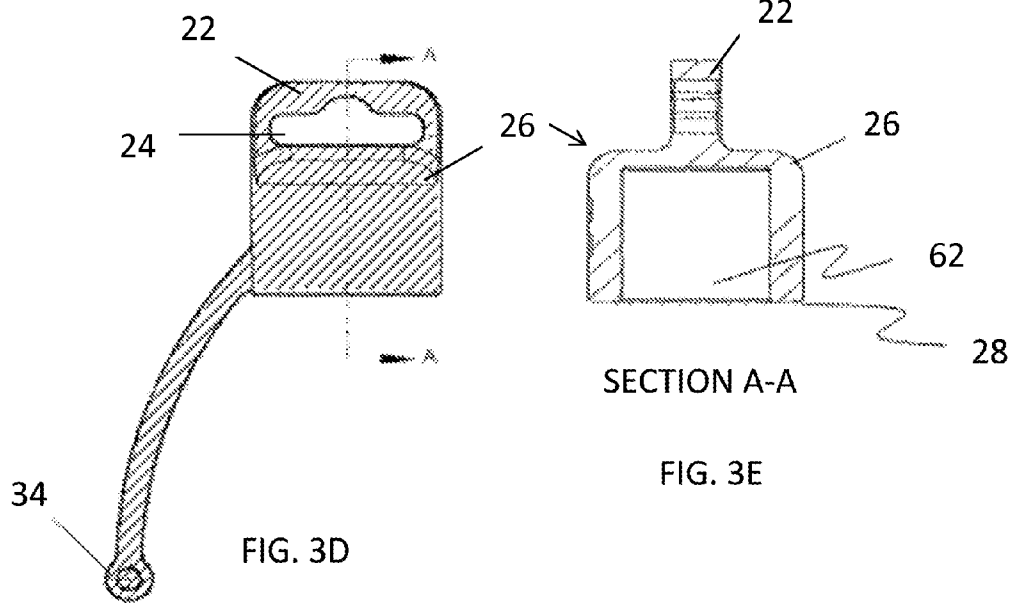
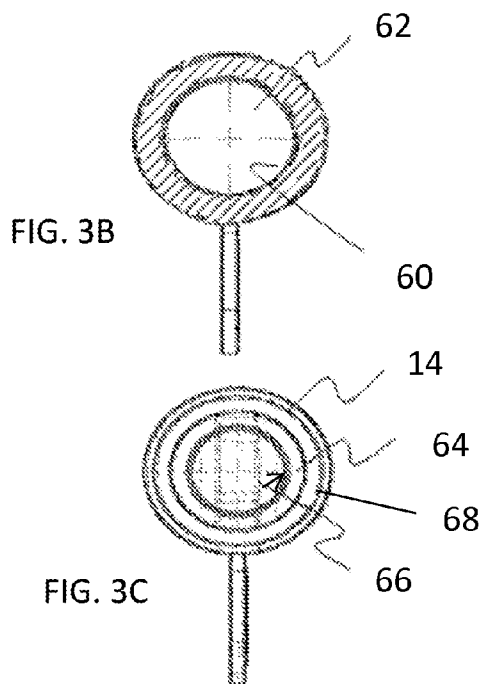
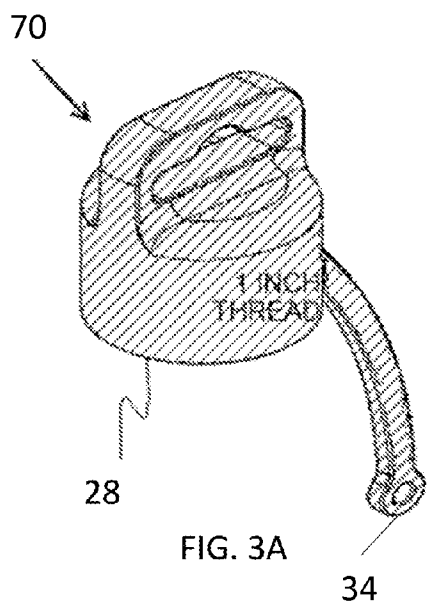


Figure 2



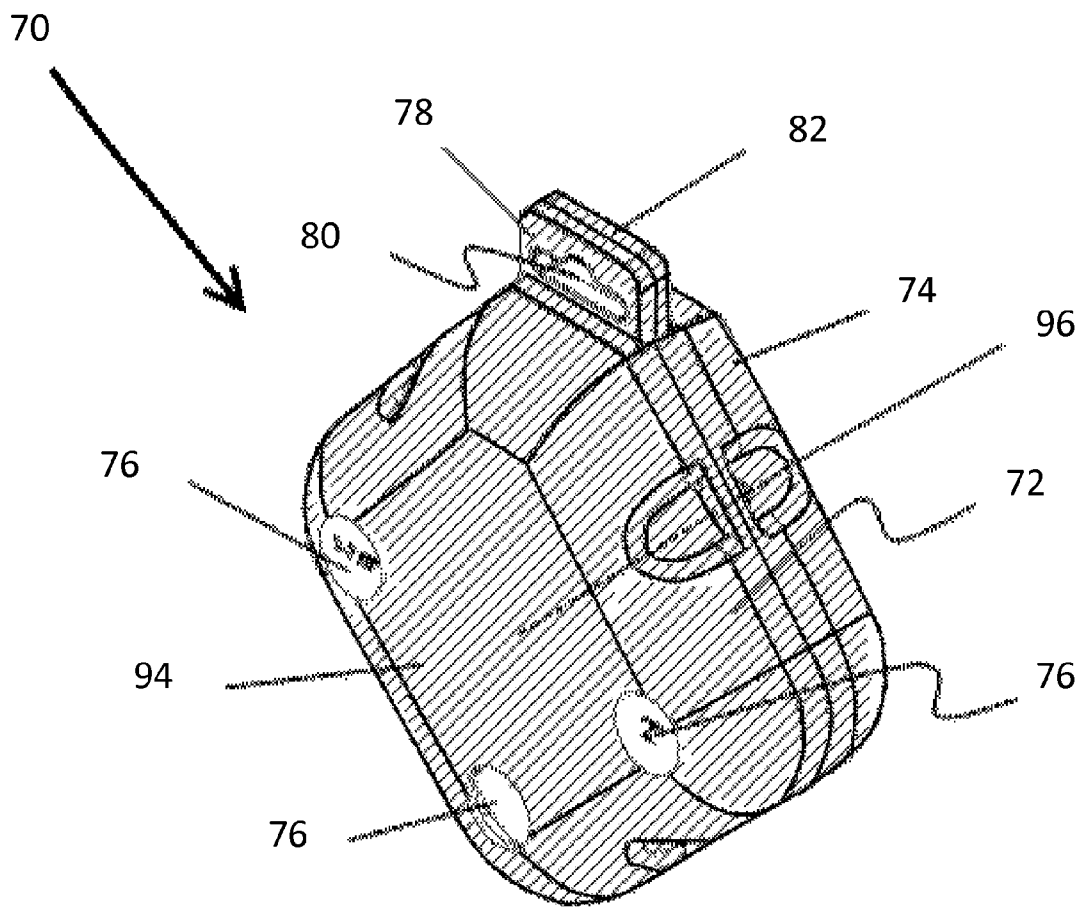


Figure 4A

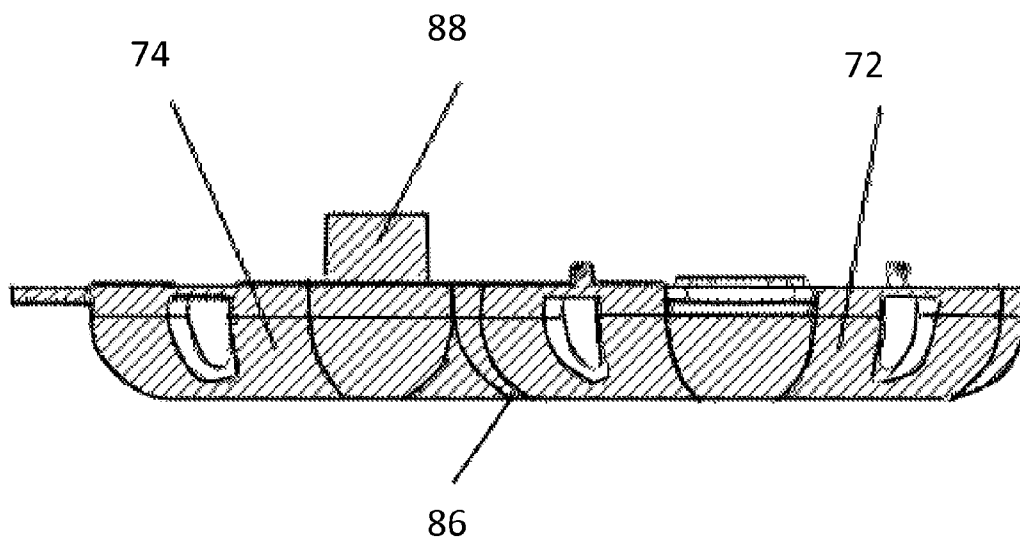


Figure 4B

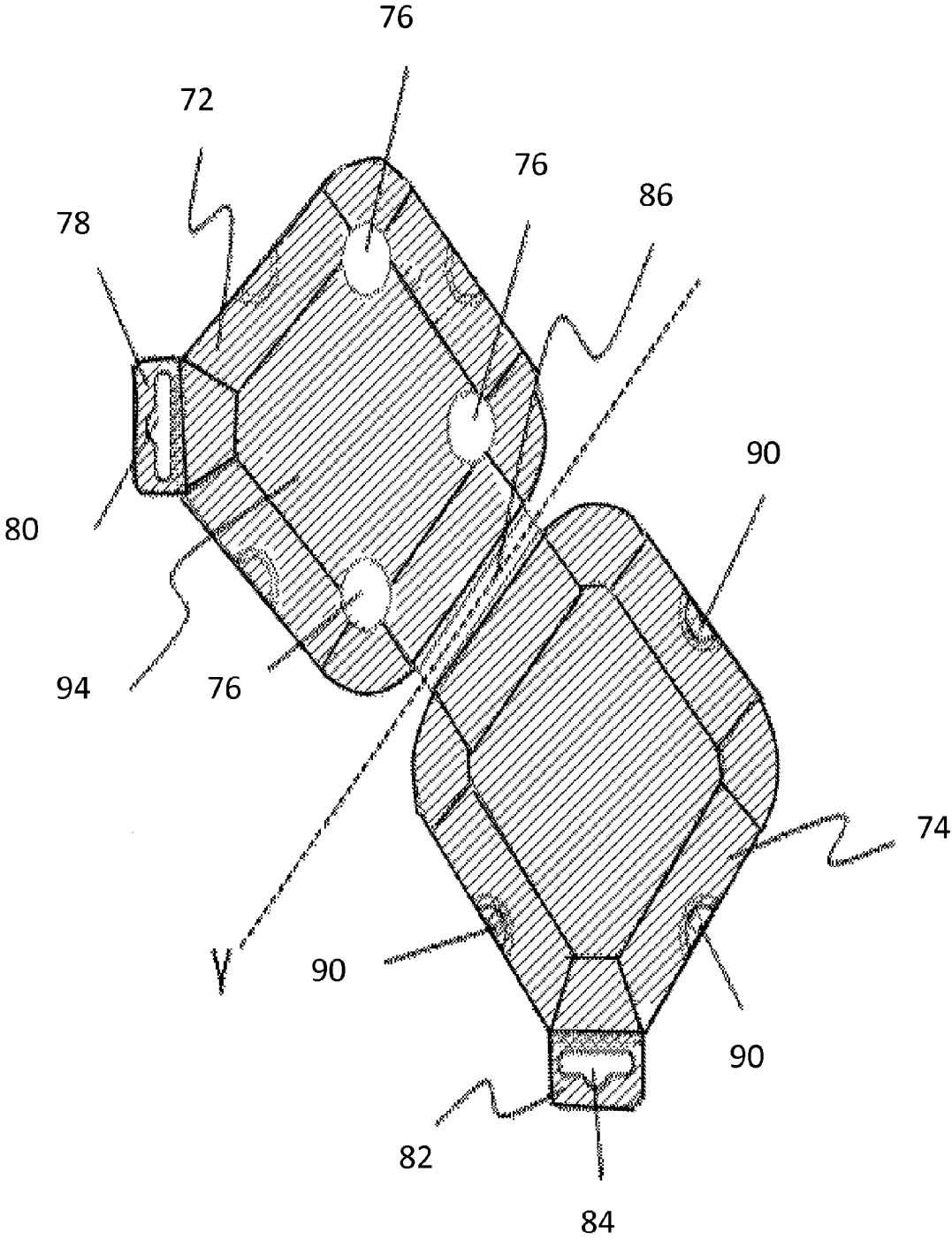


Figure 4C

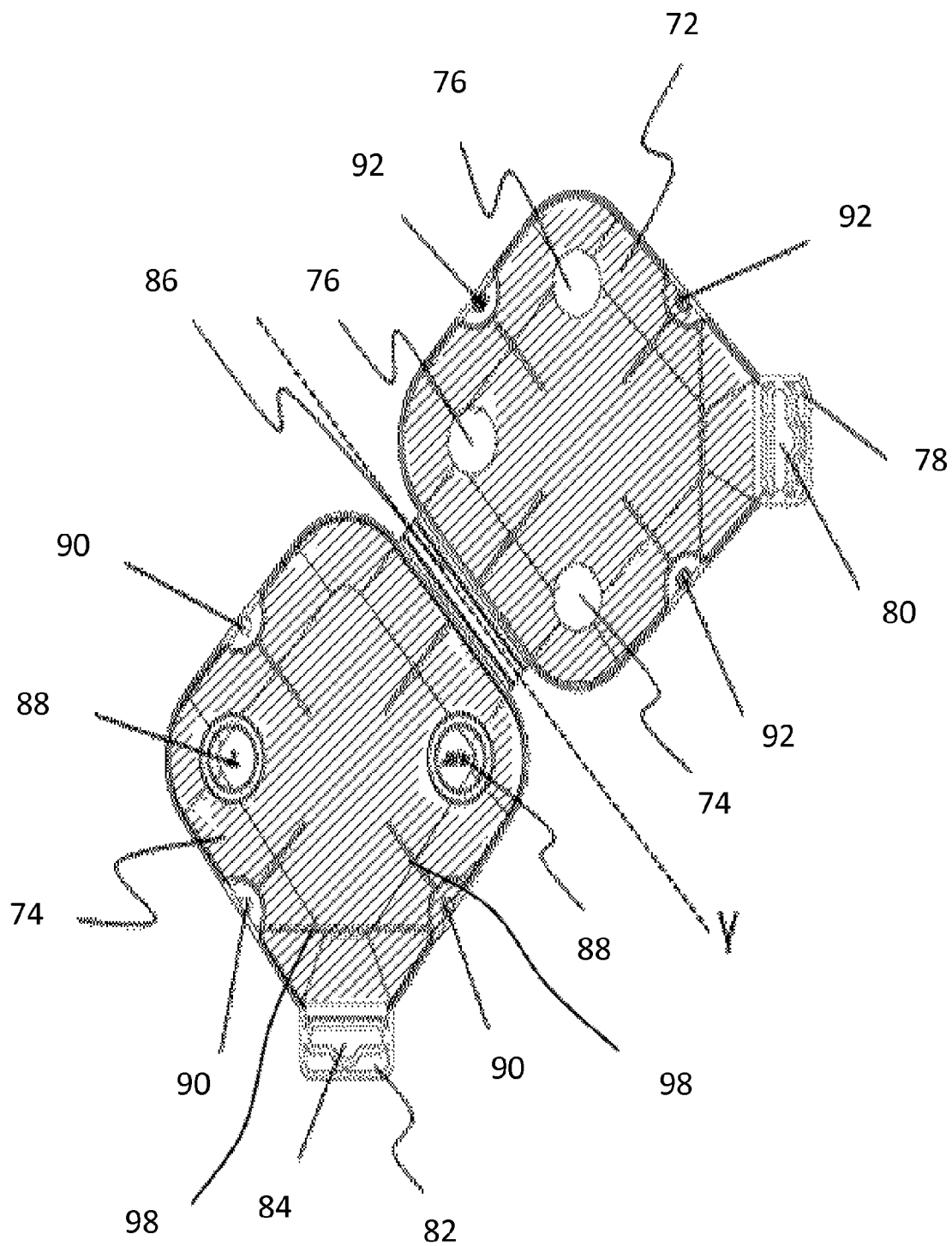


Figure 4D



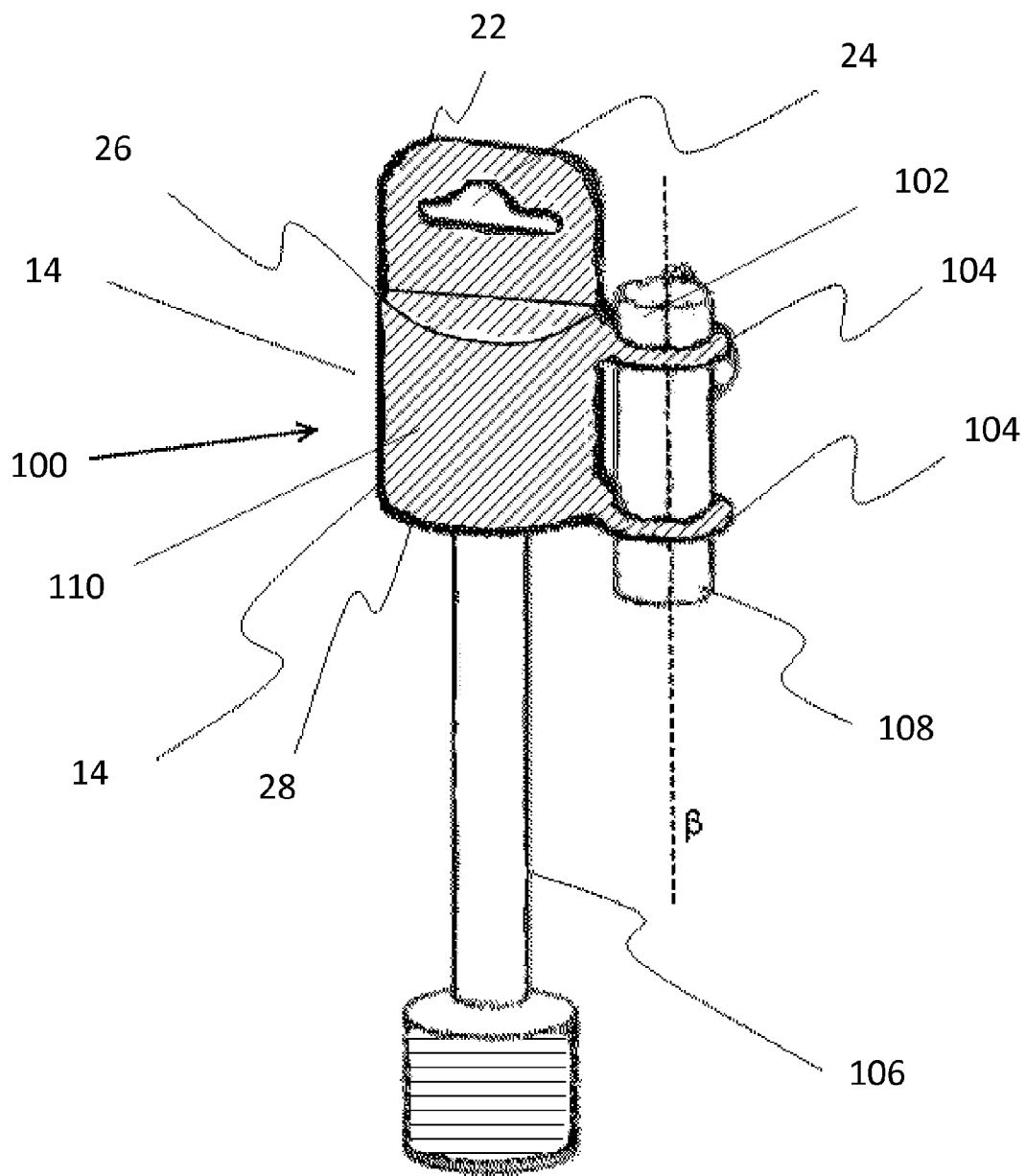
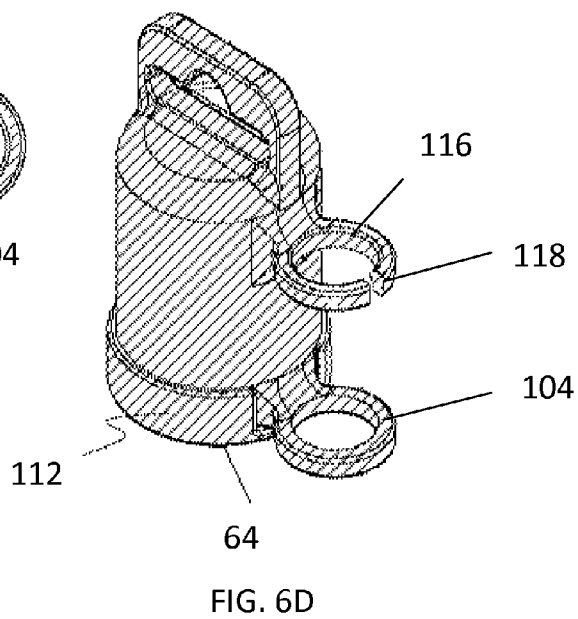
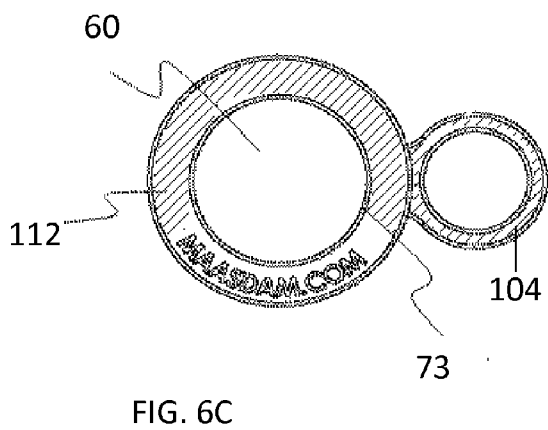
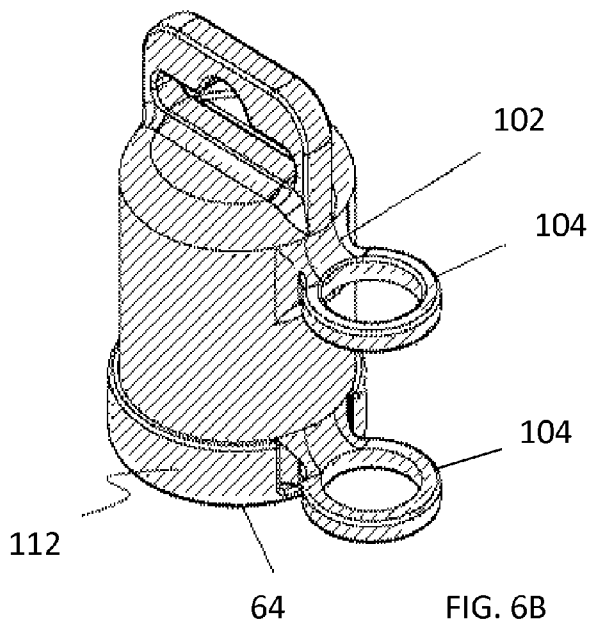
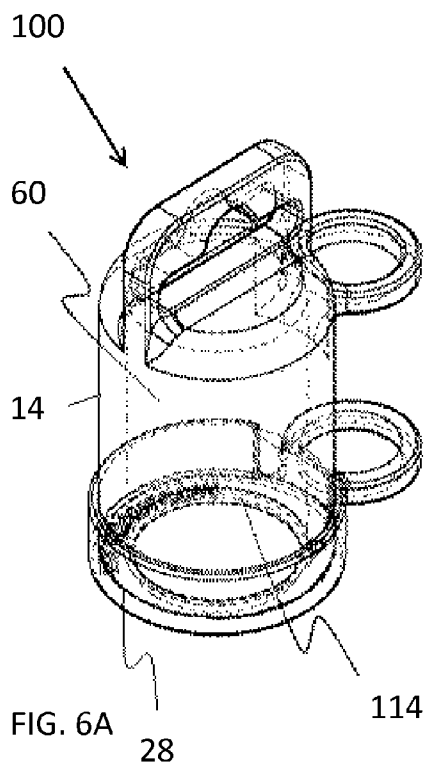


Figure 5



**MARKETING DEVICE**

**TECHNICAL FIELD**

[0001] The present disclosure relates generally to marketing devices, and, more particularly, to a marketing device for towing accessories, such as ball hitches, or the like.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] Marketing devices, such as blister packs have been employed to present merchandise in thin, clear plastic casings for displaying a variety of merchandise, specifically tools and tool accessories, in various types of stores. These marketing devices allow retailers to display merchandise in stores for potential buyers to view the merchandise through the clear plastic casings prior to purchasing. Accordingly, marketing devices have been developed for single usage. Such lightweight materials and housing design, commonly made of transparent thin plastic, have produced economical marketing devices.

[0003] While such marketing devices exhibit acceptable display characteristics, they suffer from many disadvantages. Although blister packs provide some insulation to prevent damage, the blister packs provide limited protection for heavier or malleable merchandise. Further, while these devices permit visual inspection of the merchandise contained therein, the blister packs are not reusable or aesthetically pleasing. While able to reduce theft, these devices do not allow consumers to manipulate any components. Additionally, even with satisfactory sales, these devices contribute to greater environmental consequences due to the devices single-use quality.

[0004] As is well known in the marketing art, marketing devices that are aesthetically pleasing and allow consumers to view and manipulate the displayed merchandise are desirable.

[0005] Thus, it is clear that there is an unmet need for a marketing device, for merchandise and in particular for towing accessories, that affords protection from damage, debris, dirt, and theft, and yet reusable and permits the merchandise to be manipulated and displayed in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0006] Briefly described, in an exemplary embodiment, the marketing device of the present disclosure overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages and meets the recognized need for such a device.

[0007] An object of the invention is to protect merchandise and components, from rust, debris and dirt. A feature of the invention is the cap and/or enclosure that sufficiently encase the merchandise. An advantage of the invention is that it prevents rust, debris and dirt from settling on crevices of the merchandise and protects the merchandise from water and liquid contaminants.

[0008] An object of the invention is to protect towing devices, specifically hitch ball merchandise and components, from contamination, grime and dust. A feature of the invention is the cap and/or enclosure sufficiently encloses the towing merchandise. An advantage of the invention is that it prevents corrosion, debris and dirt from settling on crevices of the merchandise and protects the merchandise from water and liquid contaminants.

[0009] Another object of the invention is to allow consumers to manipulate merchandise contained within along with accompanying components. A feature of the invention is that the point of attachment between the hitch-ball and shaft are exposed, as well as accompanying components. An advantage of the invention is that consumers can ensure that replacement hitch-balls, shafts, or components are compatible prior to purchase.

[0010] Yet another object of the invention is to prevent damage to the towing device. A feature of the invention is that it is preferably made of natural or synthetic rubber, plastic, composite. The plastic used for the invention are much thicker and more durable than the plastic used in current marketing devices, such as blister packs. An advantage of the invention is that when dropped, the merchandise is shielded from impact and protected from damage.

[0011] Another object of the invention is to allow display of the merchandise in an aesthetically pleasing manner. A feature of the invention is that the material can be made in a variety of different colors. Another feature of the invention is that it allows indicia by carving or engraving the surface of the marketing device. An advantage of the invention is that the colors can be associated to the size of the towing device, allowing consumers to quickly determine the size of the merchandise without having to continually read the small print on the packaging.

[0012] An object of this invention is to reduce theft of separable components of the merchandise. A feature of the marketing device is that in one embodiment, the invention comprises a cap and an enclosure which is removably connected to the cap. An advantage of the invention is that multiple-component merchandise enclosed between the cap and the enclosure cannot be replaced without visibly damaging the marketing device.

[0013] Still another object of the invention is to reduce theft wherein the merchandise consists of only a single component. A feature of the invention includes either a cap formed from thick plastic or an enclosure using fasteners. An advantage of the invention is that due to the use of thick plastics, the shaft component of the towing device fits extremely tight inside the cap and therefore would be difficult to remove the shaft from the cap in a retail store without drawing attention. Another advantage of the invention is that the enclosure for the hitch-ball uses fasteners which lock the enclosure, requiring significant force to open; as such removing the hitch-ball would draw attention to the thief.

[0014] Yet another object of the invention is to minimize environmental impact. A feature of the invention is that the marketing device is not destroyed once the merchandise is removed from its packaging. An advantage of the invention is that the marketing device can be reused, either by the retail store or the consumer at home since the merchandise can be re-stored in the original packaging.

[0015] Briefly, in one embodiment, the invention is directed to a marketing device comprises a lid and a base defining an enclosure. The lid periphery defining a first region of the lid in hingeable communication with the base, a second region of the periphery defining means for closing the lid to the base, and a plurality of fasteners attached to the second region of the lid to engage with the base. The base periphery defining a first region of the base in hingeable communication with the lid, a second region of the periphery defining means for closing the lid to the base, and a plurality of fasteners engagement means attached to the second region of the base to engage

with the lid fasteners. In one embodiment, the fastener further comprises a split snap-in pin with cantilevered hooks, the pin attached to the lid, and engaging with a fastener aperture formed in the base. The marketing device further comprises a cap having a cavity, a periphery defining an open end, a closed end opposite the open end, an interior, an exterior, a protrusion extending opposite to the open end defining an aperture, an indentation defining an interior rim of the open end; and at least one extension comprising a first end and a second end. The extension can be in the form of a long strip (approximately two to three inches) or a short section of an inch. In one embodiment, the first end of the extension is attached to the exterior of the cap wherein the extension's second end terminates in an extension ring. The enclosure and the cap can be removably connected by the extension, wherein the extension ring is received by one of the fasteners and the hinges are closed when the means for closing the lid to the base. Alternatively, the extension ring of the cap may be attached to an object, such as a piece of merchandise, in order to hold a multiple number of pieces of merchandise together.

**[0016]** The invention also provides a marketing device comprising a cap further comprising a cavity, a periphery defining an open end, a closed end adjacent to the open end, an interior, an exterior, a protrusion distal the open end which defines an aperture, and a lip which defines an interior rim of the open end. The exterior further comprises at least one extension attached to the exterior of the cap. The extension can be in the form of a long strip (approximately two to three inches) or a short section of an inch. In one embodiment, the first end of the extension is attached to the exterior of the cap wherein the extension's second end terminates in an extension ring.

**[0017]** In another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a marketing enclosure device comprising a lid and a base. The lid comprises a lid periphery defining a first region of the periphery in hingeable communication with the base, a second region of the periphery defining a means for closing the lid to the base, a protrusion separated from the hingeable communication region, the protrusion which defines an aperture, and a plurality of fasteners attached to the lid and engageable with corresponding fastener means on the base. The base periphery defining a first region of the base in hingeable communication with the lid, a second region of the periphery defining means for closing the base to the lid, and a plurality of fasteners engagement means attached to the second region of the base to engage with the lid fasteners. In one embodiment, the fasteners further comprises a split snap-in pin with cantilevered hooks, the pin attached to the lid and engaging with corresponding apertures formed in the base. A plurality of hollow cylindrical posts or tubes may be formed into the base and extend from the inside bottom of the base to a point proximate to the lid, when the lid and base are in a closed position. The hollow cylindrical posts anchor or secure merchandise within the enclosure to minimize movement of the merchandise. In another embodiment of the invention a plurality of aperture may be formed in the lid and corresponding to the posts formed into the base to permit the customer to view and examine the merchandise elements. In one embodiment of the invention, the number of posts may be varied as needed to stabilize the merchandise contained within the marketing enclosure. In an embodiment of the invention solid posts may be used

**[0018]** These and other features and advantages of the marketing device of the present disclosure will become more

apparent to those ordinarily skilled in the art after reading the following Detailed Description of the Invention and Claims in light of the accompanying drawing Figures.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0019]** Accordingly, the present disclosure will be understood best through consideration of, and with reference to, the following drawings, viewed in conjunction with the Detailed Description of the Invention referring thereto, in which like reference numbers throughout the various drawings designate like structure, and in which:

**[0020]** FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment according to the present disclosure;

**[0021]** FIG. 2 is a detailed view of the enclosure portion of FIG. 1;

**[0022]** FIG. 3A to 3E are detailed view of the cap portion of FIG. 1;

**[0023]** FIGS. 4A to 4D are perspective, side plan, bottom plan and top plan views respectively, of another embodiment according to the present disclosure;

**[0024]** FIG. 5 is a perspective view of yet another embodiment according to the present; and

**[0025]** FIG. 6A, 6B and 6C are perspective and bottom plan view illustrating detailed views of the embodiment of FIG. 5, and FIG. 6D illustrates an alternate embodiment of the invention in perspective view.

**[0026]** It is to be noted that the drawings presented are intended solely for the purpose of illustration and that they are, therefore, neither desired nor intended to limit the scope of the disclosure to any or all of the exact details of construction shown, except insofar as they may be deemed essential to the claimed invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

**[0027]** In describing exemplary embodiments of the marketing device of the present disclosure illustrated in the drawings, specific terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The claimed invention, however, is not intended to be limited to the specific terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish a similar purpose.

**[0028]** Possible embodiments of the present disclosure chosen for purposes of illustration are shown in FIGS. 1-6. Marketing device embodiments depicted in these figures and other embodiments are preferably formed from polymers, natural or synthetic rubber, composite, or the like. In one embodiment, the resilient material is molded, extruded, sculptured or contoured to properly encompass merchandise to be contained therein. In one embodiment, the material from which the marketing device is formed may be flexible. In another embodiment, the material may also be rigid and inflexible. The invention allows the device to encase merchandise, such as, but not limited to towing merchandise, securely in place while on display in stores or in the purchaser's home storage. Use of such material creates marketing devices suitable for consumers to re-use the devices by allowing storage of the towing device back in its original packaging after use in that it protects the merchandise from wear. Additionally, thick plastics are preferable in order to reduce damage by providing protection to merchandise placed on display

or in storage, i.e. when the hitch ball is dropped, the device would cushion the hitch component to prevent breaking, chipping or scratching.

**[0029]** The invented marketing device can be aesthetically pleasing by utilizing different colors including having the material be transparent or semi-transparent. This allows for color coordination with the consumer's car, garage, or workshop. Also, in one embodiment, the colors are coordinated to indicate a specific size, so it will be easier for the consumer to distinguish amongst the available sizes present without having to read the packaging in detail.

**[0030]** Specifically, one of the embodiments of the present disclosure is depicted in FIGS. 1-3. FIG. 1 shows a marketing device 10, for holding merchandise 12, the marketing device 10 comprising two elements, a cap 14 and an enclosure 16. Marketing device 10 is designed to hold merchandise 12 in a secure manner. The embodiment depicted in FIG. 1, wherein the enclosure 16 specifically holds a trailer hitch attachment ball 18; however, this disclosure does not limit the variety of merchandise that this invention can be used to display. In this embodiment, the merchandise consists of two parts: a hitch ball assembly 18 and a shaft 20. Inasmuch as there are two parts to the merchandise 12, the marketing device has two corresponding components; each optimized to hold one of the parts of the merchandise 12. The marketing device 10 cap 14 holds the shaft 20 of the merchandise 12 and the marketing device 10 enclosure 16 holds the hitch ball assembly 18 of the merchandise 12. In another embodiment of the invention, additional caps 14 or enclosures 16 can be used as needed to accommodate various merchandise.

**[0031]** As shown in FIG. 1, cap 14 includes a protrusion 22 defining an aperture 24 extending from the closed end 26 of the cap 14. The shaft 20 is inserted into the open end 28 of cap 14.

**[0032]** Closed end 26 protects the shaft 20 of the towing device from rust, debris and dust build up. Protrusion 22 defining the aperture 24 is an extension of closed end 26, primarily used to facilitate display the merchandise in stores or for storage at home. As such, aperture 24 is defined by protrusion 22 in a way that allows the aperture to receive a display fixture element, such as, but not limited to hooks, pegs, pins, or the like on store display boards or at a purchaser's home.

**[0033]** Additionally, cap 14 preferably defines a region 30 that is located on the face of cap 14 to convey sizing or other information regarding the merchandise held by the cap 14. This region 30 is located on the surface co-planar with the aperture 24, so that when hanged on a display, the information is readily available inasmuch as it faces the viewers. In the preferred embodiment, the cap 14 has a region 30 which indicates the size of the merchandise 12 enclosed by the cap 14. In this embodiment, the size indicator 30 is achieved by etching. In another embodiment of the invention, other means of indicating size can be used such as applying a label or printing.

**[0034]** The cap 14 further preferably includes an extension arm 32. In one embodiment, the extension 32 is permanently attached to a ridge of the open end 28 of the cap 14. In another embodiment, the extension arm 32 is integrally molded with the cap 14. In yet another embodiment, the extension arm 32 is removably attached to the cap 14 through the use of snap fit or other suitable removable attachment means. A free end of the extension arm 32 terminates with an extension loop 34. In another embodiment, the extension arm 32 may be a long

strip (approximately two to three inches, in one embodiment) designed to connect with enclosure 16. In an alternate embodiment the extension arm may be a short arm (approximately one-half to one inch, in one embodiment) extending perpendicular to the side wall of cap 14. In another embodiment of the invention, more than one extension arm 32 may be used.

**[0035]** The extension arm 32 is attached to the cap 14, with the free end of the extension arm 32 defining the extension loop 34, the extension loop 34 is attached to a fastener located in region 36 or 38 of the enclosure 16. As such, if there is any tampering with the merchandise 12, the extension ring 34 will be noticeably deformed.

**[0036]** Turning to the enclosure 16, it is likewise operable to absorb and/or shield the merchandise from the force of an impact, such as an impact that may be caused from dropping the unit 10. Additionally, enclosure 16 has a region 40 conveying information, such as indicating the hitch ball size, in one embodiment. In one embodiment the information is formed in the region 40 by carving, engraving or stamping. In another embodiment the information is provided by a label. In the depicted example, the enclosure 16 is fitted to hold a hitch ball having a diameter of two inches. The carved text reveals the content of the hitch ball inside as opposed to the marking on cap 14, where the size is etched on. On the cap 14, marking but does not pierce through the device entirely to reveal the shaft 20 inside.

**[0037]** In one embodiment the enclosure 16 is fabricated from a lower density material than the cap 14. Inasmuch as enclosure 16 is fabricated from a less dense material than cap 14, the size indicator carving can more easily be made such that the underlying contents can be revealed. Whereas, the material from which the cap is fabricated would require more effort to carving away the material to reveals the contents contained in the cap 14. The aforementioned are merely examples and do not limit the types of carvings or size indicators that may be utilized with this invention.

**[0038]** The extension 32 removably connects the cap 14 to the enclosure 16. Cap 14 and enclosure 16 can be connected using extension arm 32, extension ring 34, along with a fastener located at regions 36 and 38. Prior to closing and locking enclosure 16 using both fasteners located in regions 36 and 38, the fastener located at regions 36 or 38 is threaded through extension ring 34.

**[0039]** As shown in FIG. 2, enclosure 16 incorporates a means for closing the enclosure using fasteners located at regions 36 and 38, as depicted in FIG. 2. Specifically, the enclosure 16 is comprised of a lid 42 and a base 44 connected by a hinge 46, with fasteners 48 and 50 at the enclosure's periphery to lock the enclosure 16 in a closed position. Using hinge 46, the lid 42 and base 44 pivots on axis  $\alpha$  towards each other to the closing position. The fasteners 48 and 50 are threaded through the enclosure's fastener receiver apertures 52 and 54 respectively. The mechanisms of fasteners 48 and 50 lock the enclosure in its closed position. In one embodiment, the fasteners further comprise a split snap-in pin with cantilevered hooks, the pin attached to the lid and engaging with corresponding fastener receivers (apertures) 52 and 54 formed in the base.

**[0040]** Furthermore, hinge 46 allows enclosure to open and close along the axis  $\alpha$ . The lid 42 and the base 44, when closed, forms cavity 56 which is adapted to receive merchandise through collar 58. In an embodiment of the invention the merchandise is the trailer hitch ball 18

[0041] FIGS. 3A to 3E depict details of cap 14. One end of the cap 14 is the open end 28. The opening 60 as shown in FIG. 3B, functions to receive and secure in position a shaft 20 of the merchandise 12 shown in FIG. 1. The cap 14 is sized to engage with the shaft 20 and secure the merchandise in position. The tight fit between the cap 14 and shaft 20 make it difficult to remove the shaft 20 from the cap, thereby reducing tampering with the merchandise. Cap 14 is operable to absorb and/or shield from impact force, such as those that may be caused by the marketing device 10 falling from a display. Therefore, cap 14 substantially reduces potential damage to the merchandise. Additionally, FIGS. 3B and 3C depict the bottom views of the cap 14 showing two embodiments of cavity 62. In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. 3B the cavity for a shaft defines an opening 60 having a diameter of one-inch.

[0042] Often towing accessories are available in a variety of sizes. In the case of trailer hitch devices; there are a number of different thread sizes depending on the size of vehicle that will be towed. For example, the shaft portion of a trailer hitch device can have a diameter of one inch, three-quarter inch, one-half inch and so on. An insert adapted to receive a smaller sized thread is added to the cap. Use of an insert prevents the manufacturer from having to generate a new cap mold for each size thread. Generating a tube insert is much simpler and cost efficient.

[0043] To adapt the cap 14 for smaller-sized threads, such as a three-quarter inch thread, a tubular insert 64 is added to the cavity 62 wherein the tubular insert 64 merchandise-contacting surface 66 is adapted to engage the smaller-sized thread, as shown in FIG. 3C. A gap 68 is formed between the cap 14 and insert 62. The insert 62 may be fused or attached to the cap 14 with an adhesive. The cross sectional view of the cap 14 from FIG. 3D along axis A-A is shown in FIG. 3E, dividing the cap longitudinally. The cavity 62 is the region where the shaft component of the merchandise is contained. The closed end 26 of cap 14 prevents dirt, debris, or rust that may collect on the shaft while not in use.

[0044] A different embodiment of the invention is illustrated by FIGS. 4A-4D. FIGS. 4A to 4D illustrate perspective, side plan, bottom plan and top plan views respectively. Shown therein is a marketing device 70. In FIG. 4A, the device 70 comprises a lid portion 72 and a base 74. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 4A, the lid portion 72 defines multiple apertures 76 arranged in proximity to three of the four corners of the marketing device 70. In another embodiment the apertures may be located in different positions on the lid portion in order to provide limited access to merchandise contained therein. The embodiment in FIG. 4A-4D, illustrates the marketing device 70 with three apertures 76, however, a greater or lesser number of apertures may be used, depending on the end use for the marketing device 70. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the corner closest to the protrusion 78 on the lid 72 does not feature a corresponding aperture 76. FIGS. 4B (side view), 4C (bottom) and 4D (top) depict the exterior and interior views of the invention in its open configuration. As shown in FIG. 4C, the protrusion 78 defines an aperture 80 on lid 72. The protrusion 82 defines an aperture 84 on base 74. The lid portion 72 is connected to the base portion 74 by hinge 86, as shown in FIG. 4C and 4D. Multiple tubular inserts 88 are attached to the base portion 74 of marketing device 70, as needed to stabilize the merchandise and help to hold merchandise in position for display. In an alternate embodiment, the tubular insert 88 may be formed from the base portion 74.

The particular embodiment shown in FIG. 4A-4D shows two tubular inserts 88. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4B-4D, the base portion 74 defines two tubular inserts 88 which are permanently affixed at the corners at the 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions, with the 12 o'clock being the protrusion 80 on lid 72 and protrusion 82 on base 74. Furthermore, fastener apertures 90, on the base 74, in this embodiment, are adapted to receive fasteners 92, located on the lid portion 72 in this embodiment, once device 70 is in the closed position.

[0045] The apertures 76 permit consumers to view and directly interact with the merchandise, specifically in this instance trailer hitch balls. The tubular inserts 88 are adapted to receive different sized hitch balls from the towing device. In one embodiment, the tubular inserts 88 may be of standard size to reduce cost associated with retooling. In another embodiment, the diameter of the tubular inserts 88 may be varied to suitably contain different sized trailer hitch balls depending on the size range to be displayed. In another embodiment of the invention fewer or additional tubular inserts may be used as needed. In an embodiment of the invention the tubular inserts 88 may be hollow cylinders. In an embodiment of the invention the tubular inserts 88 may be solid posts. Furthermore, tubular inserts 88 may indicate the size of the specific hitch ball that it holds through its hollow opening by a carving on the interior of the shell 56. A region 94 on the exterior of the lid 72, shown in FIG. 4A, is designed to convey information about the contents, and can indicate hitch ball sizes, in one embodiment. Size indication can be by etching, carving, a label, or the like. These are merely examples and do not limit the number of other indicators that can be used.

[0046] The device 70 further incorporates a means for closing the enclosure by folding the lid portion 72 onto the base 74 along the hinge 86, and using fasteners 92, to engage with the fastener apertures 90, as shown in FIG. 4A. The device 70 is comprised of a lid 72 and a base 74 connected by a hinge 86, with fasteners 92 at the device's periphery to lock the device 70 in a closed position. Once lid 72 and base 74 pivots on axis  $\gamma$  towards each other to its closing position, using hinge 86, and fasteners 92 is threaded through the fastener apertures 90 and locks the device in its closed position. In an embodiment of the invention, the fasteners are split snap-in pins with cantilevered hooks. In its closed position, apertures 84 in the lid 72 and apertures 80 in the base 74 substantially align with each other; as such the apertures in combination are adapted to receive display fixture element, such as, but not limited to hooks, pegs, pin, or the like on display boards in stores or at home.

[0047] In its closed position, an internal cavity 96 is formed. Cavity 96 is adapted to hold merchandise with multiple components, such as interchangeable hitch systems containing more hitch balls of varying sizes. Structural dividers or ribs 98 may be added to provide additional structural integrity and to restrict movement of merchandise items.

[0048] Yet another embodiment is a marketing device 100, as shown in FIG. 5. The marketing device 100, as shown in FIG. 5 is similar to the cap 14, shown in FIG. 1; therefore, similar elements will be labeled with like numbers in FIG. 5. The device 100 comprises a cap portion 14 having a closed end 26 and an open end 28. The closed end 26 further comprises a protrusion 22 defining an aperture 24 adapted to receive display fixture elements, such as, but not limited to hooks, pegs, pins or the like, on point of sale displays or for private home garage use. Adjoining marketing device 100 is a

plurality of shorter extensions **102** attached to cap portion **14** and terminating in extension rings **104**. As depicted in FIG. 5, the extension rings **104** are adapted to receive a component of the merchandise **106** and reduce the possibility of components being stolen or lost. In other embodiments, there may be a single catch, or the like, that is used to hold and secure an article.

[0049] Device **100** is designed to secure merchandise consisting of two components, a shaft **106** and an additional component **108**. The additional component **108** can be hitch pins, pin clips, adapters, etc. Device **100** further functions to receive and secure merchandise components **106** and **108** in position. Cap portion **14** is operable to absorb and/or shield from impact forces, such as those that may be caused by the unit dropping from a display. Therefore, the device **100** substantially reduces any potential damage to the components **106** and shaft **108**.

[0050] In the illustrated embodiment there are two rings **104**, placed in parallel to each other, the centers of the rings **104** are aligned such that a straight-line  $\beta$  passes through the center points of the rings **104**. Additionally, marketing device **100** preferably has a region **110** indicating the size of the merchandise in a similar manner as shown in FIG. 1. A variety of means can be used to indicate size, such as carving, attaching labels, or printing.

[0051] FIGS. 6A to 6C depict perspective and bottom plan views illustrating the features of one embodiment of the marketing device **100** to secure merchandise. The shaft component is inserted through the open end **28** and into cavity **60**. However, in one embodiment, the shaft **106**, as shown in FIG. 5, is secured in place by an addition of a tubular cover **112** that fits around the open end **28** of cap **14**. The tubular cover **112** allows the passage of the shaft component into the cavity **60**. The shaft component is held in place with lip **114**, created by the tubular cover **112** having an opening with a slightly smaller radius than the open end **28**. A second merchandise article **108**, as shown in FIG. 5, is held by a solid ring **104** and a partial or open ring **116** with gap **118**, as shown in FIG. 6D. The combination of the solid ring **104** and open ring **114** allow the article to be removed without damaging the marketing device while making removal of the article difficult. In another embodiment, the tubular insert may be in the form of a separate component that is affixed to the cap **14** with an appropriate industrial adhesive. In one embodiment LOC-TITE adhesive from the Henkel Corporation's polymer adhesives line is used, such as but not limited to, product numbers H4800, 330, H 4100 and 3032, 322, 3301 and 3321. In another embodiment of the invention component part may be attached by fusing or melting the separate component to the cap **14**.

[0052] The cap **14** of marketing device **100** provide protection to merchandise and reduce theft by combining related merchandise components together in display unit that permit customer access, while providing evidence of tampering. The cap, enclosure and marketing device are formed from any commercial available material having sufficient structural strength and rigidity. The cap, enclosure and marketing device are former from polymers, such as, but not limited to, polyethylene, polypropylene, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The polymers may be filled or unfilled. Depending on the polymer selected, the coloration may be varied by varying the concentration of the material. In another embodiment, standard polymer dyes, such as, but not limited to, azo dyes, acid dyes and dispersed

dyes may be used. Alternatively, polymer compatible pigments such as, but not limited to, organic, inorganic or metallic based pigments may be used.

[0053] In an embodiment of the invention, the cap, enclosure and marketing device are fabricated from polymers and are formed to a thickness from about 0.5 mm to about 5.0 millimeters (mm). The device may be formed from thicker or thinner polymer layers, as needed, based on cost and product requirements. Additionally, plasticizers or processing aid may be added to the polymer to improve durability and impact absorbing properties.

#### Anti-Theft Mechanism

[0054] Items placed on product display are subjected to theft. The invented device is better able to protect the merchandise from theft. For example, blister packs are made of thin plastic and can be opened relatively easily. Some marketing devices are simply held by a single staple, which is easy to overcome and open the package. The invented method reduces the risk of the merchandise being separated from its packaging and end up lost or stolen.

[0055] Specifically, due to differences in air pressure inside and outside of the cap, a greater force is required to remove the shaft. As such, it is much more difficult to steal the merchandise from within its packaging, as compared to marketing devices which are made of more delicate plastics that can easily be opened and the merchandise contained within stolen. Additionally, the mechanism used to fasten the enclosure securely holds the merchandise within and therefore makes it extremely difficult to split open the enclosure and steal the components. As such, a thief would call attention to himself if he or she attempts to pry open the device to steal the contents. If both cap and enclosure are used together, an extension connects the two portions to prevent the separate components from being permanently detached and misplaced.

[0056] Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that within disclosures are exemplary only and that various other alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the scope and spirit of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments as illustrated herein, but is only limited by the following claims.

1. A marketing device, for display of multiple merchandise articles on a display fixture element, the marketing device comprising:

- a. a cap comprising a cavity having an interior, an exterior surface, a base, a periphery wall defining an open end, a closed end opposite said open end, an indentation defining an interior rim adjacent said open end; and
- b. at least one means for joining the cap to an a means for holding comprising a first end and a second end, wherein said joining means first end is attached to said exterior of said cap wherein said means for joining second end is connected to the means for holding;

wherein said interior rim of said cap open end engages and is removably connected to at least one article and said holding means engages with a second article thereby holding at least two articles together as a unit.

2. The marketing device of claim 1, further comprising a protrusion extending from said closed end of the cap the protrusion defining an aperture for attaching to a display fixture element.

3. The marketing device of claim 1 wherein the means for holding includes a solid ring.

4. The marketing device of claim 1 wherein the means for holding includes an open ring.

5. The marketing device of claim 1, wherein said cap further comprises a cylinder affixed to the interior of said cavity said cylinder substantially parallel to said cap interior.

6. The marketing device of claim 5, wherein said cylinder is in spaced apart relation to the periphery wall forming a gap between the periphery wall and the cylinder.

7. The marketing device of claim 1, wherein the thickness of the peripheral wall varies thereby providing a section of the cap with a reduced interior diameter.

8. The marketing device of claim 2, wherein said aperture defined by said protrusion is adapted to be received by a hook on a merchandise display.

9. The marketing device of claim 2 wherein said plurality of bands has a periphery defining an opening adapted to receive additional components of the merchandise.

10. The marketing device of claim 1, further comprising an enclosure comprising a lid and a base, a lid periphery defining a first region of said periphery in hingeable communication with the base, a second region of said periphery defining means for closing the lid to the base, a plurality of fasteners attached to the second region of the lid which engage with the base and secure the lid to the base, thereby forming a cavity to contain a second article; and

wherein the means for joining of the extension engages with the enclosure thereby attaching the cap to the enclosure.

11. The marketing device of claim 5, further comprising means for indicating the size of article contained within the marketing device wherein a region of said lid defines first identifying indicia and a region on said exterior of said cap defining second identifying indicia.

12. The marketing device of claim 5, wherein said cavity conforms to the shape of the second {third} article.

13. The marketing device of claim 7, wherein the cavity is a spherical shape.

14. The marketing device of claim 5, further comprising means for indicating the size of the article contained within the marketing device wherein a region of said lid defines first identifying indicia and a region on said exterior of said cap defining second identifying indicia.

15. A marketing device comprising a lid and a shell, the lid and shell having an interior and exterior surface, a lid periphery defining a first region of said periphery in hingeable communication with the shell, a second region of said periphery defining means for closing the lid to the shell, a protrusion opposite said hingeable communication defining an aperture, a plurality of fasteners attached to the shell along its periphery, wherein said fasteners further comprises a lateral spring bias mechanism and wherein said hinges are closed when said means for closing the lid to the shell receive said lateral spring bias.

16. The marketing device of claim 15, wherein at least a cavity is created once said enclosure hinges are closed and latched in a closed configuration using said fasteners.

17. The marketing device of claim 15, further comprising means to indicate the size of merchandise contained within the marketing device wherein a region of said lid defines identifying indicia.

18. The marketing device of claim 15, wherein said aperture defined by said protrusion is adapted to be received by a hook on a merchandise display.

19. The marketing device of claim 16 further comprising a plurality of apertures in the lid to provide access to the cavity and a plurality of tubular members attached to the interior surface of the base and extending into the cavity.

20. The marketing device of claim 19 wherein the tubular members correspond to the apertures formed in the lid.

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