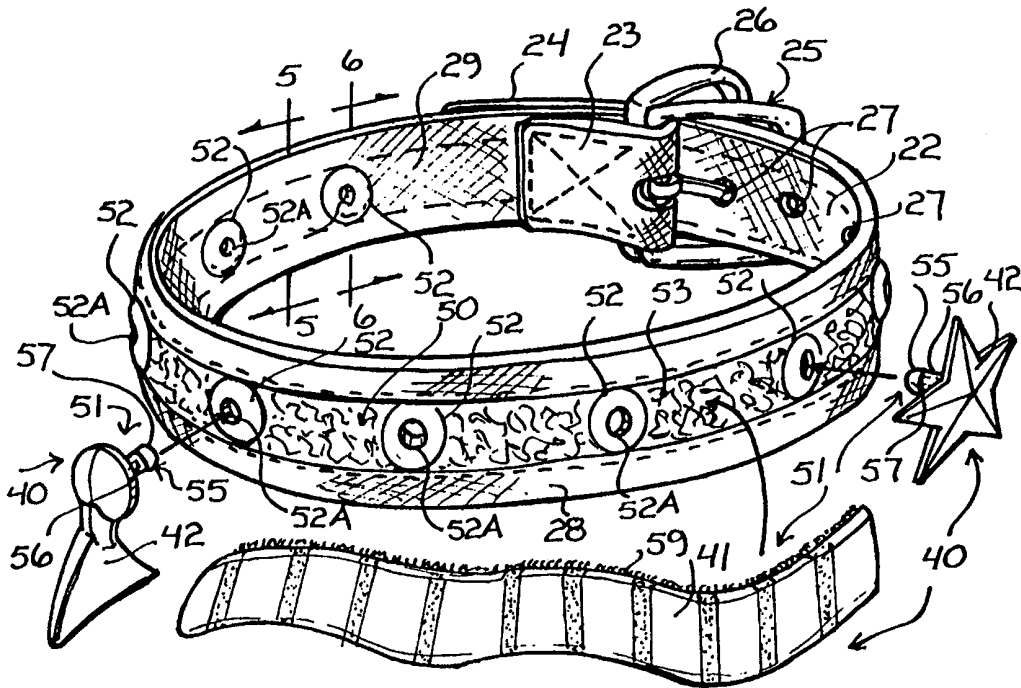




INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US99/27205 (22) International Filing Date: 16 November 1999 (16.11.99) (30) Priority Data: 09/195,866 19 November 1998 (19.11.98) US (63) Related by Continuation (CON) or Continuation-in-Part (CIP) to Earlier Application US 09/195,866 (CON) Filed on 19 November 1998 (19.11.98) (71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: NOGUERO, Elena, M. [US/US]; 3015 W. Michigan Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85053 (US). (74) Agent: PARSONS, Robert, A.; Suite 260, 340 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004 (US).</p>	<p>(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, 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).</p> <p>Published <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i></p>	

(54) Title: DECORATIVE COLLAR AND METHOD OF ALTERING THE APPEARANCE OF A COLLAR



(57) Abstract

Collar apparatus (20) comprising an elongate band (22) engageable so as to be worn and having an appearance and decorative apparatus (40) engageable with the collar for altering the appearance of the collar (20).

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DECORATIVE COLLAR AND METHOD OF ALTERING
THE APPEARANCE OF A COLLAR

Field of the Invention

5

This invention relates generally to collars of the type engagable so as to be worn and, more particularly, to decorative collar apparatus and a method of altering the appearance of a collar.

10

Background of the Invention

People who own pets, such as cats and dogs, normally fasten a collar around the neck of the pet that support, for instance, identification tags, license tags and vaccination tags. Collars of the foregoing type are normally constructed of nylon or leather and may be found in a variety of colors and dimensions. Prior art collars typically comprise structure based primarily on function rather than ornamentation. Because a need exists among pet owners to allow the alteration of the appearance of their pet collars should the need or desire arise, the need for certain new and useful structural innovations to pet collars is apparent.

Accordingly, it would be highly desirable to provide new and improved collar apparatus and methods of allowing pet owners to alter the physical appearance of their pet collars should the need or desire arise.

It is a purpose of the present invention to provide new and improved collar apparatus that is easy to construct.

It is another purpose of the present invention to provide new and improved collar apparatus that is easy to use.

It is still another purpose of the present invention to provide new and improved collar apparatus that is inexpensive.

It is a further purpose of the present invention to provide new and improved collar apparatus that allows a user

to alter the physical appearance of a collar.

Summary of the Invention

5 The above problems and others are at least partially
solved and the above purposes and others are realized in new
and improved collar apparatus and a new and improved method
of altering the appearance of a collar. In a particular
embodiment, collar apparatus of the present invention may
10 generally comprise an elongate band engagable so as to be
worn and having an appearance, and decorative apparatus
engagable with the elongate band for altering the appearance
of the elongate band. In a specific embodiment, the
decorative apparatus may comprise a cover engagable with the
15 elongate band in a wrapped condition. The cover may include
an engagement element and an engagable complementary
engagement element for securing the cover with the elongate
band in the wrapped condition. In other embodiments, the
decorative apparatus comprises one of a decorative elongate
20 member and one or more of a plurality of decorative
ornaments.

In general, collar apparatus of the present invention
further includes engagement apparatus carried by one of the
elongate band and the decorative apparatus, and engagable
25 complementary engagement apparatus carried by the other one of
the elongate band and the decorative apparatus. The one of
the engagement apparatus and the complementary engagement
apparatus carried by the elongate band may extend along one
of substantially the entire length of the elongate band if
30 desired, and substantially the entire length of the elongate
band and at spaced intervals along a predetermined length of
the elongate band.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

35

The foregoing and further and more specific objects and
advantages of the instant invention will become readily

apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description thereof taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view illustrating collar apparatus shown as it would appear engaged so as to be worn by an animal, collar apparatus comprising an elongate band having engagement apparatus and decorative apparatus having engagable complemental engagement apparatus so as to alter the appearance of the elongate band;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of collar apparatus of Fig. 1 with decorative apparatus shown spaced from the elongate band, decorative apparatus comprising one or more of a decorative elongate member and one or more of a plurality of decorative ornaments;

Fig. 3 is a fragmented perspective view of collar apparatus of Fig. 1 showing decorative apparatus spaced from the elongate band;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the decorative elongate member of Fig. 2 carrying a specific embodiment of complemental engagement apparatus;

Fig. 5 is a sectional view taken along line 5-5 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 6 is a sectional view taken along line 6-6 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 7 is a fragmented perspective view of specific embodiments of engagement and complemental engagement apparatus with decorative apparatus shown spaced from an elongate band;

Fig. 8 is a fragmented perspective view of another embodiment of collar apparatus comprising an elongate band engagable so as to be worn by an animal and decorative apparatus comprising a cover engagable with the elongate band for altering the appearance of the elongate band;

Fig. 9 is a vertical sectional view showing the cover of Fig. 8 as it would appear fastened with the elongate band of Fig. 8;

Fig. 10 is a fragmented perspective view of yet another embodiment of collar apparatus comprising an elongate band engagable so as to be carried by an animal and decorative apparatus comprising a decorative ornament supported by a clip carried by the elongate band; and

Fig. 11 is a perspective view of an embodiment of decorative bracelet shown engaged and worn about a leg of an animal.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention provides, among other things, collar apparatus and a method of altering the appearance of a collar of a type engagable so as to be worn or carried such as around the neck or leg of an animal. Ensuing embodiments of the present invention are easy to construct, easy to implement and use with conventional collars, and provide users with a variety of ways to alter the appearance of a collar should the need or desire arise.

Turning now to the drawings, in which like reference characters indicate corresponding elements throughout the several views, attention is first directed to Fig. 1 illustrating a perspective view of a collar assembly or apparatus 20 shown as it would appear engaged so as to be worn or carried about the neck of an animal 21. Turning to Fig. 2, collar apparatus comprises an elongate band 22 including first and second free ends 23 and 24. Elongate band 22 carries fastening apparatus 25 so as to cause elongate band 22 to be engaged in a continuous condition. Fastening apparatus 25 includes a conventional buckle 26 engagable with a selected one of a plurality of apertures 27 carried by elongate band 22 at spaced intervals, although other fastening structure may be used. For the purposes of orientation, elongate band 22 is generally intended to include an outer or first major surface 28, an inner or second major surface 29, and an appearance.

With continuing attention directed to Fig. 2, collar apparatus 20 further includes decorative apparatus generally designated by the reference character 40 and selectively engagable with elongate band 22 so as to alter the appearance of elongate band 22 and, more particularly, the appearance of first major surface 28. In accordance with the teachings of the present invention, decorative apparatus 40 comprises one of an elongate member 41 and one or more of a plurality of ornaments also shown in Fig. 3 and each designated by the reference character 42. Elongate member 41 and ornaments 42 each express decoration or ornamentation such that when engaged with elongate band 22 change or otherwise alter the general appearance of elongate band 22 and, more particularly, the general appearance of first major surface 28.

To engage selectively one or more of elongate member 41 and one or more of ornaments 42 with elongate band 22 as desired, collar apparatus further includes engagement apparatus 50 carried by elongate band 22 and engagable complementary engagement apparatus carried by elongate member 41 and ornaments 42, complementary engagement apparatus being collectively referred to by the reference character 51. It will be understood that engagement apparatus 50 may be carried by decorative apparatus 40 and complementary engagement apparatus 51 carried by elongate band 22 if desired. In the present embodiment, and with additional reference to Fig. 3, engagement apparatus 50 comprises one or more of a plurality of female engagement elements 52 carried by elongate band 22 at spaced intervals along substantially the entire length of elongate band 22 from first free end 23 to second free end 24, and a loop medium 53 (also shown in Fig. 5) carried by first major surface 29 and extending along substantially the entire length of elongate band 22 from first free end 23 to second free end 24. Each female engagement element 52 comprises an eyelet 52A, and loop medium 53 is a material commonly found under the exemplary

trademark VELCRO® and of which may be fastened with first major surface 28 with a suitable adhesive, etc.

With the exception of the one of ornaments 42 having the star-shaped body 54 in Fig. 3, complementary engagement apparatus 51 carried by each one of ornaments 42 comprises a male engagement element 55. Each male engagement element 55 includes an elongate shaft 56 extending outwardly from each ornament 42 terminating with an enlarged free end 57. Securing one or more of the ornaments 42 having male engagement element 55 with elongate band 22 involves presenting the male engagement element 55 to elongate band 22 in a direction toward the first major surface 28 and inserting and forcing the enlarged free end 57 of the male engagement element 55 into and through one of eyelets 52. Once inserted as shown in Fig. 6, the given ornament 42 will be secured against first major surface 28 of elongate band 22 with enlarged free end 57, shown positioned adjacent second major surface 29, operative for inhibiting male engagement element 55 from disengaging from the eyelet 52A when collar apparatus 20 is worn. To remove the given ornament 42 from the female engagement element 52, the foregoing operation need only be reversed.

Regarding Fig. 3, complementary engagement apparatus may alternatively comprise, as shown in combination with the ornament having star-shaped body 54, a loop medium 58 commonly found under the exemplary trademark VELCRO®. To mount the star-shaped body 54 ornament 42, one need only engage loop medium 58 with hook medium 53 at a selected position along elongate band 22.

Complementary engagement apparatus 51 carried by elongate member 41 comprises, as shown in Fig. 2, a loop medium 59 also commonly found under the exemplary trademark VELCRO®. To mount elongate member 41 with elongate band 22, one need only engage loop medium 59 with hook medium 53 at a selected position along elongate band 22. Elongate member 41 is preferably constructed of a substantially pliant material to allow it to take the shape of elongate band 22. As an

alternative to loop medium 59, elongate member 41 may be provided as male engagement elements 60 carried at spaced intervals along elongate member 41 as shown in Fig. 4, each male engagement element 60 having substantially the same construction as each male engagement element 55 previously discussed and each engagable with an eyelet 52A in the same manner. It will be generally understood that elongate member 41 may be constructed of a length substantially coextensive with elongate band 22 or other desired length.

It will be generally understood that a variety of fastening mechanisms, such as conventional snap fasteners and the like, may comprise engagement apparatus 50 and complementary engagement apparatus 51. For instance, and with attention directed to Fig. 7, engagement apparatus 50 may comprise a gusset 62 fastened to first major surface 28 of elongate band 22, and complementary engagement apparatus 51 carried by ornament 42 a hook 63 having a spring element 64 movable between a first position for opening hook 63 to allow engagement with gusset 62 and a normal second position for closing hook 63 for retention to gusset 62.

Also in Fig. 7, shown is a specific embodiment of an ornament 42 comprising a carrier 70 having male engagement element 55 for receipt into the opposing eyelet 52A, and a loop medium 71 carried opposite male engagement element 55. Also included is a decorative tag 72, such as a name tag, having a hook medium 73 engagable with loop medium 71. In this regard, male engagement element 55 of carrier 70 may be inserted into eyelet 52A and loop and hook media 71 and 73 engaged for securing decorative tag 72 with carrier 70 adjacent first major surface 28. Loop and hook media 71 and 73 define structure commonly found under the exemplary trademark VECLRO® and their orientations may be reversed.

Turning now to Fig. 8, illustrated is a fragmented perspective view of another embodiment of collar apparatus 80 comprising an elongate band 81 having substantially the same construction as elongate band 22 and an appearance, and decorative apparatus 82 engagable with elongate band 81 to

alter the appearance of elongate band 81. In this embodiment decorative apparatus 82 comprises a cover 83 constructed of a substantially pliant material so as to be engaged with elongate band 81 in a wrapped condition as generally
5 illustrated for substantially engulfing substantially the entire length, or a predetermined length, of elongate band 81. It will be generally understood that cover 82 expresses decoration or ornamentation bearing an appearance different from the appearance of elongate band 81 such that when
10 engaged with elongate band 81 in the wrapped condition, alters all or part of the appearance of elongate band 81.

To secure cover 83 in the wrapped condition as shown in Fig. 9, cover 83 may be provided with an engagement element 84 and an engagable complementary engagement element 85 each
15 carried adjacent one of free ends 86 and 87 of cover 83. In this specific example, engagement element 84 includes a hook member 88 and complementary engagement element 85 includes a loop member 89, each commonly found under the exemplary trademark VELCRO® and each of which may be reversed. Other
20 conventional fastening mechanisms may be used if desired.

Turning now to Fig. 10, illustrated is a fragmented perspective view of another embodiment of collar apparatus 100 comprising an elongate band 101 having substantially the same construction as elongate band 22 and an appearance, and
25 decorative apparatus 102 engagable with elongate band 101 to alter the appearance of elongate band 81. In this embodiment decorative apparatus 102 comprises a clip 103 engagable with elongate band 101 and a decorative ornament 104 carried by clip 103. In this specific embodiment, clip 103 is
30 substantially C-shaped, includes opposing free ends 105 and 106 and may be slipped onto collar 101 from a free end thereof. Alternatively, clip may be constructed of plastic or thin metal to allow a user to deform it onto collar 101. Regardless of how a user installs clip 103 onto collar 101,
35 it is nevertheless preferable to construct clip 103 of a deformable material so then when installed onto collar, free ends 105 and 106 may be deformed to pinch against collar 101

to hold decorative apparatus 102 in place at a selected position.

The present invention has been described above with reference to a preferred embodiment. However, those skilled
5 in the art will recognize that changes and modifications may be made in the described embodiments without departing from the nature and scope of the present invention. For instance, Fig. 11 is a perspective view of an embodiment of decorative bracelet 110 shown engaged, such as by a conventional snap
10 fastener 111, and worn about a leg of an animal. Decorative bracelet 110 may be constructed having ornamentation designed to match the various embodiments of the decorative apparatus of the present invention as described herein. Various changes and modifications to the embodiment herein chosen for
15 purposes of illustration will readily occur to those skilled in the art. To the extent that such modifications and variations do not depart from the spirit of the invention, they are intended to be included within the scope thereof which is assessed only by a fair interpretation of the
20 following claims.

Having fully described the invention in such clear and concise terms as to enable those skilled in the art to understand and practice the same, the invention claimed is:

10
CLAIMS

1. Collar apparatus, comprising:
an elongate band engagable so as to be worn and having an appearance; and
decorative apparatus engagable with the elongate band for altering the appearance of the elongate band.
2. Collar apparatus of claim 1, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises a cover engagable with the elongate band in a wrapped condition.
3. Collar apparatus of claim 2, wherein the cover further includes:
an engagement element; and
an engagable complementary engagement element for securing the cover with the elongate band in the wrapped condition.
4. Collar apparatus of claim 1, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises a decorative ornament.
5. Collar apparatus of claim 1, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises a decorative elongate member.
6. Collar apparatus of claim 1, further including:
engagement apparatus carried by one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus; and
engagable complementary engagement apparatus carried by the other one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus.
7. Collar apparatus of claim 1, wherein the one of the engagement apparatus and the complementary engagement apparatus carried by the elongate band extends along substantially the entire length of the elongate band.

8. Collar apparatus of claim 1, wherein the decorative apparatus extends one of along substantially the entire length of the elongate band and at spaced intervals along a predetermined length of the elongate band.

9. Collar of claim 1, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises:

a clip engagable with the elongate band; and
a decorative ornament carried by the clip.

10. Collar apparatus, comprising:

an elongate band engagable so as to be worn;
decorative apparatus;
engagement apparatus carried by one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus; and
complemental engagement apparatus carried by the other one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus.

11. Collar apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises a plurality of decorative ornaments.

12. Collar apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decorative apparatus comprises a decorative elongate member.

13. Collar apparatus of claim 12, wherein the decorative elongate member is substantially coextensive with the elongate band.

14. Collar apparatus of claim 12, wherein the one of the engagement element and the complemental engagement element carried by the decorative elongate member extends along substantially the entire length of the decorative elongate member.

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15. Collar apparatus of claim 10, wherein the one of the engagement element and the complementary engagement carried by the elongate band extends along substantially the entire length of the elongate band.

16. In a collar comprising an elongate band engagable so as to be carried and having an appearance, a method of altering the appearance of the collar, comprising the steps of:

providing decorative apparatus; and
engaging the decorative apparatus with the elongate band.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of providing decorative apparatus further includes the step of providing a cover.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of engaging the decorative apparatus with the elongate band further includes the steps of:

wrapping the cover about the elongate band in a wrapped condition; and
securing the band in the wrapped condition.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of engaging the decorative apparatus with the elongate band further includes the step of engaging the decorative apparatus with the elongate band so as to extend one of substantially along the entire length of the elongate band and at spaced intervals along substantially the entire length of the elongate band.

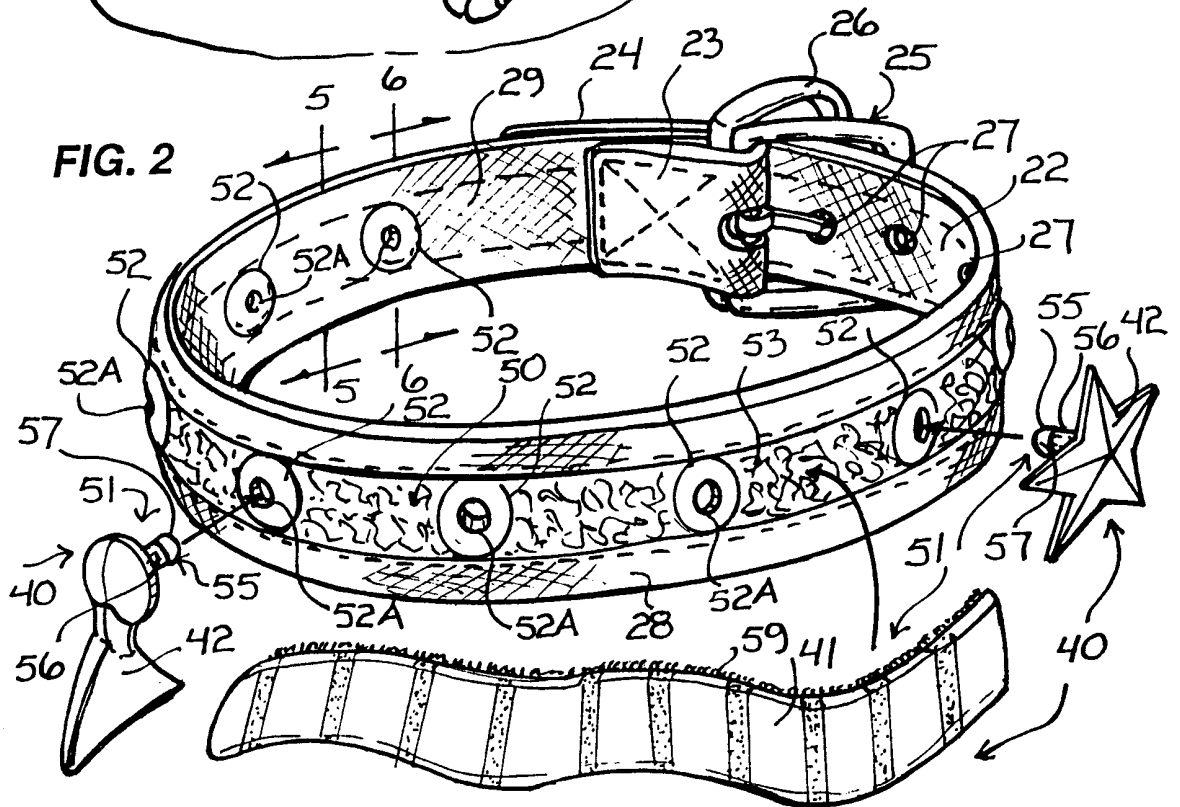
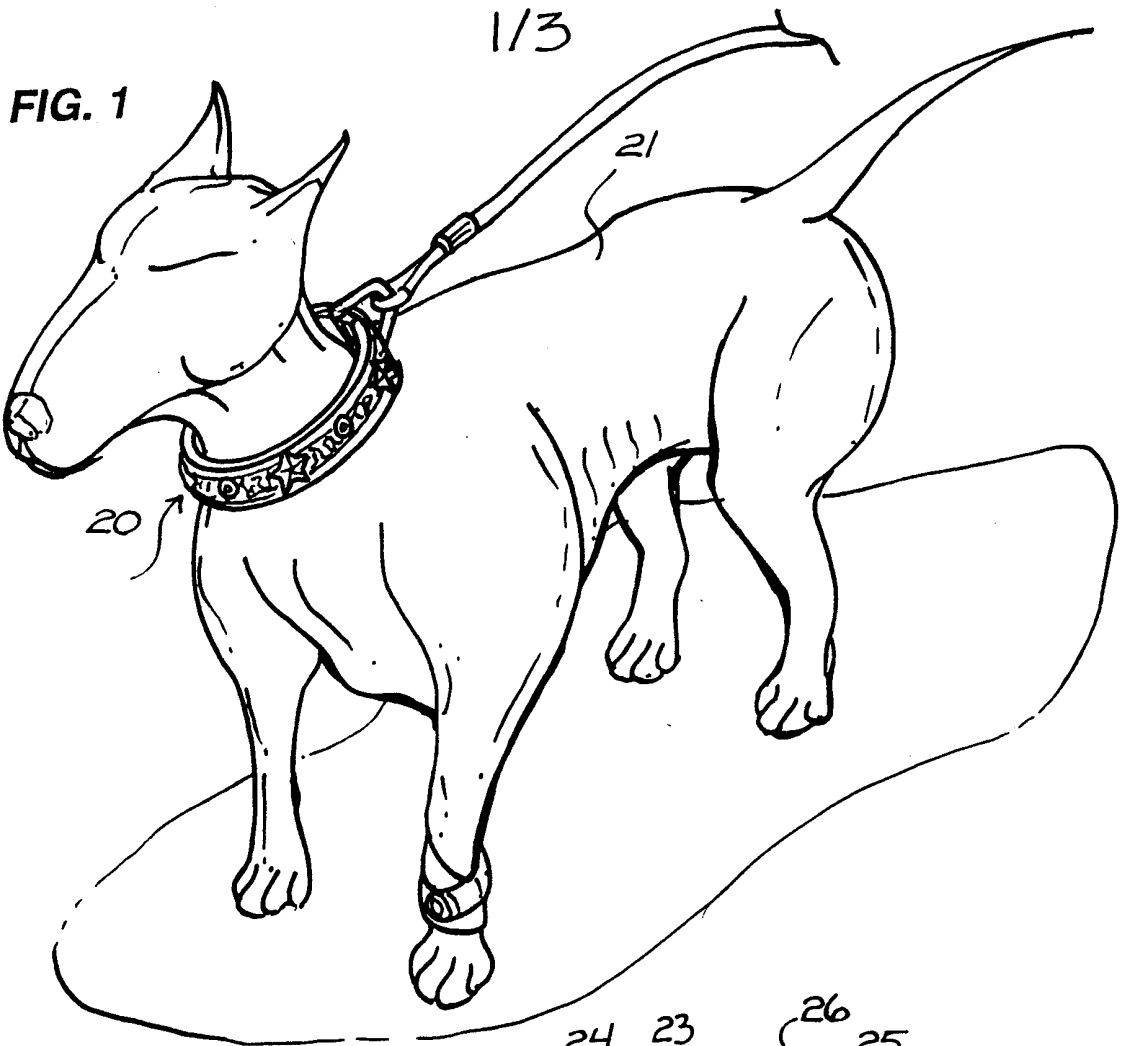
20. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of engaging the decorative apparatus with the elongate band further includes the steps of:

providing one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus with engagement apparatus;

13

providing the other one of the elongate band and the decorative apparatus with complementary engagement apparatus; and

engaging the engagement apparatus with the complementary engagement apparatus.



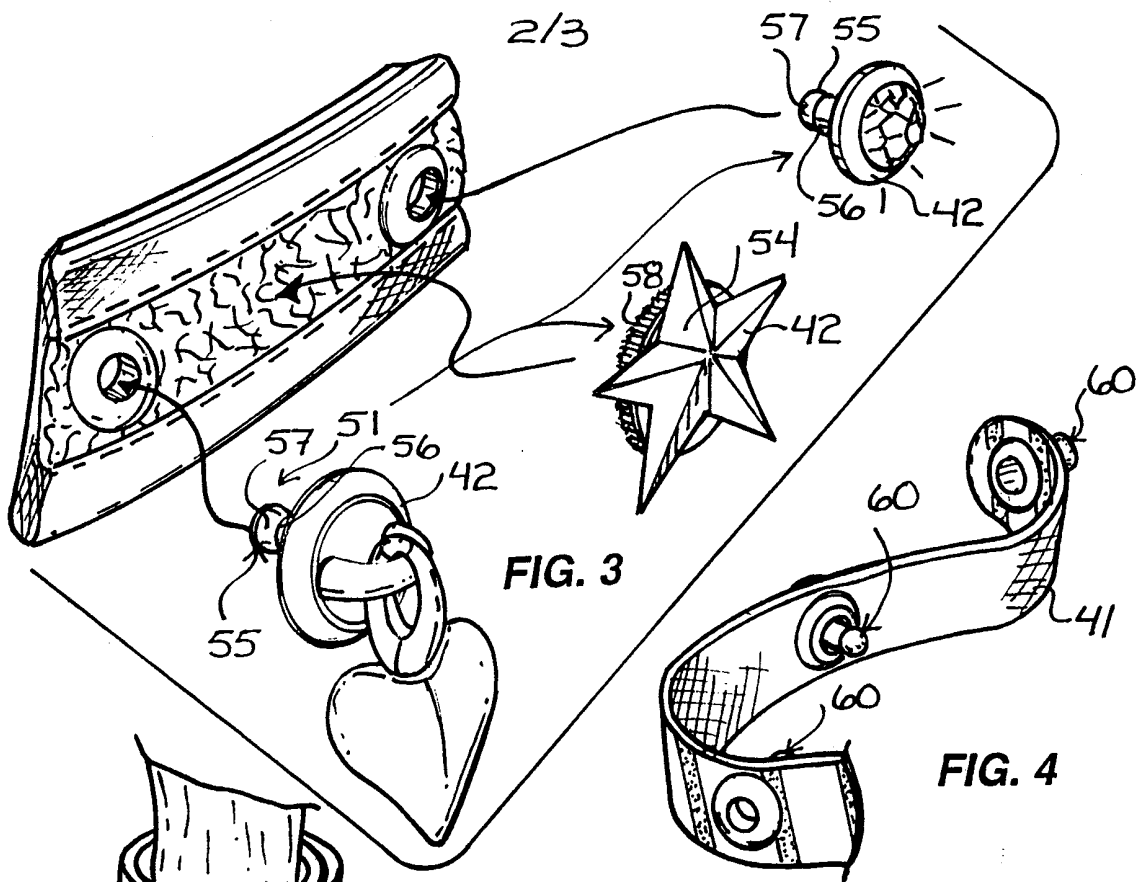


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

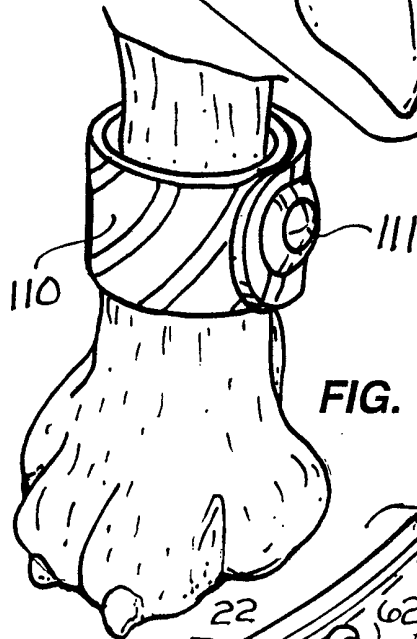


FIG. 11

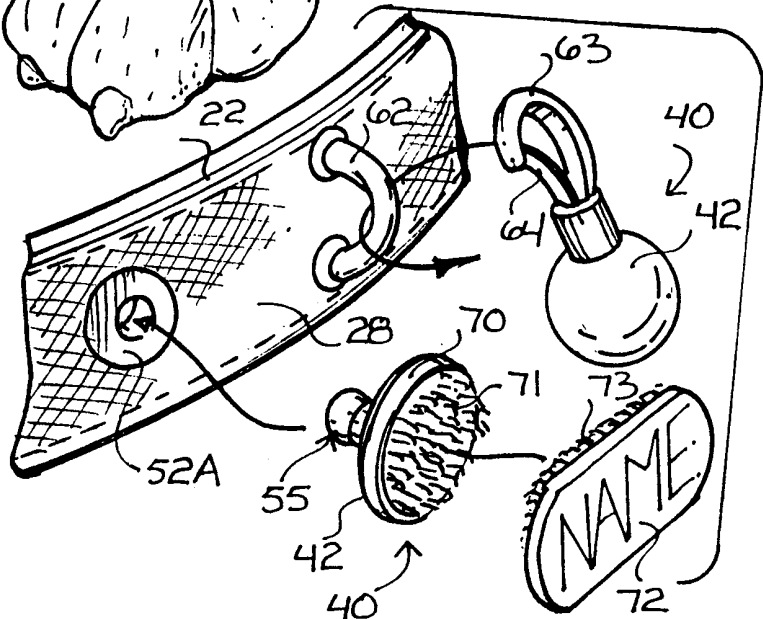


FIG. 7

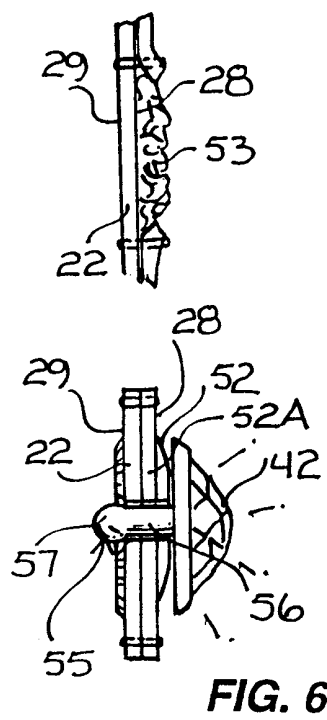


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

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FIG. 8

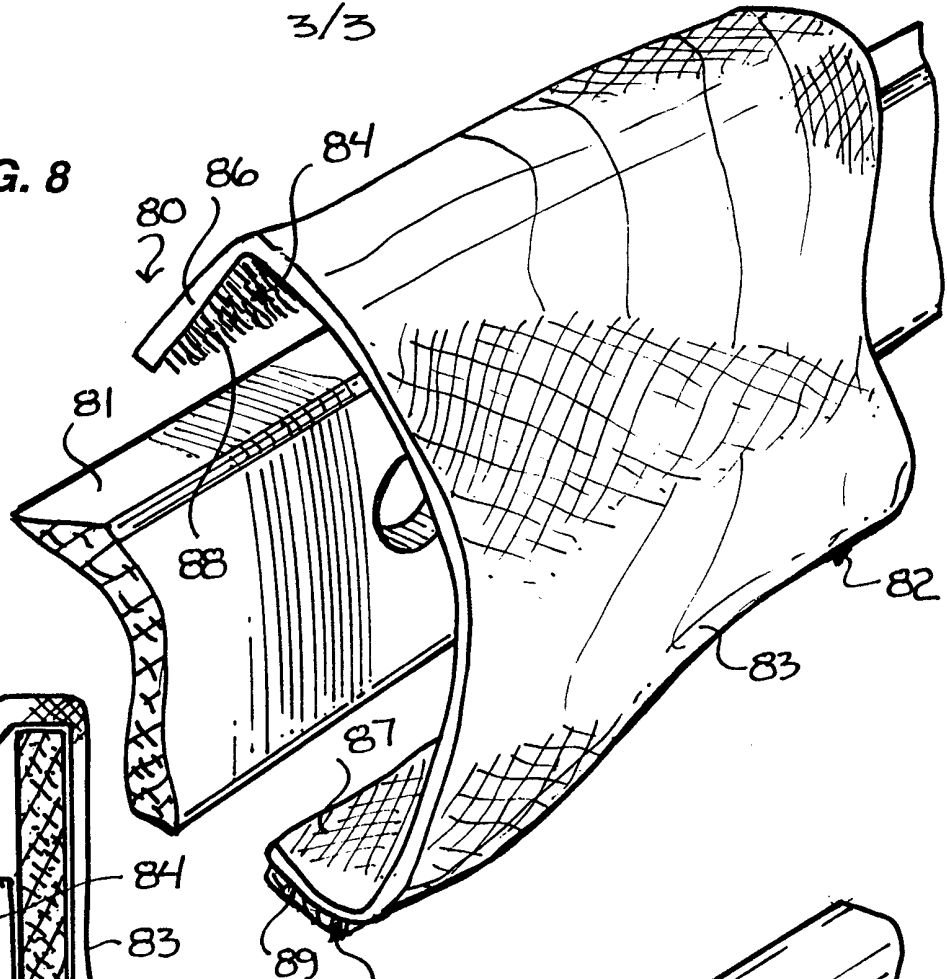


FIG. 9

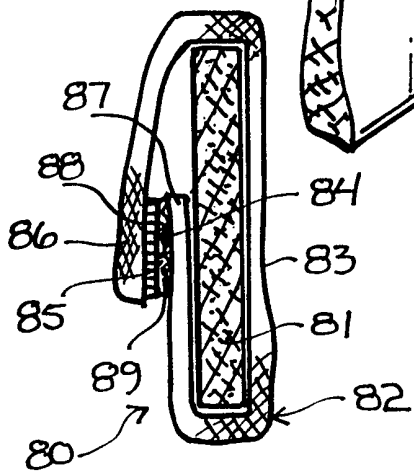
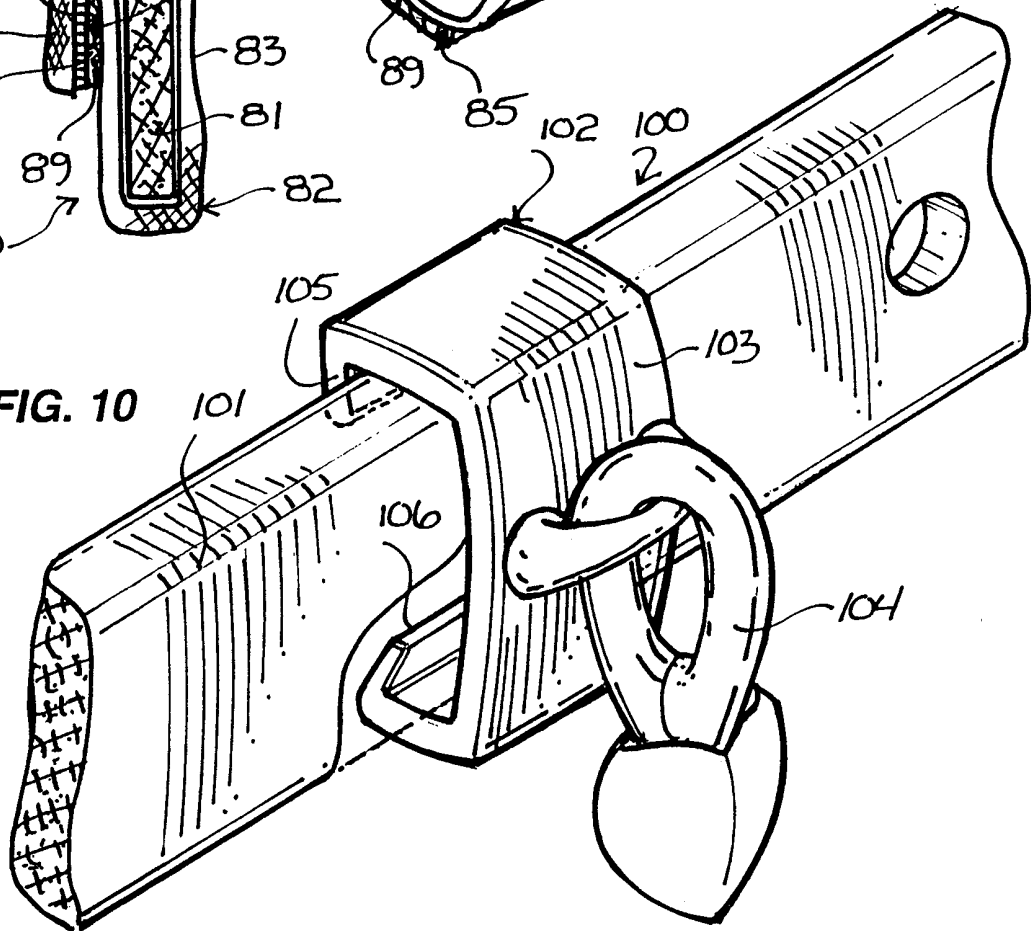


FIG. 10



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/27205

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC(7) :A01K 27/00; A44C 5/00
 US CL :119/856, 860; 63/3.2
 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)
 U.S. : 119/856, 860, 859, 863; 63/3.1, 3.2; D30/152; D11/201, 3, 6, 7, 8; 224/235, 237, 240
 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 practicable, 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.
X	US 1,127,249 A (HUGHES) 02 February 1915 (02.02.15), Figure 1, lines 36-47.	1, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16
X	US D228,646 S (KISSIN) 16 October 1973 (16.10.73), Figure 1.	1, 4
X	US 5,373,815 A (SAGEBIEL) 20 December 1994 (20.12.94), Figure 1, column 3, lines 31-44.	1, 9
X	US 5,233,942 A (COOPER ET AL.) 10 August 1993 (10.08.93), Figures 1, 3, column 2, lines 41-68.	1, 2
X,P	US 5,878,698 A (LYELL) 09 March 1999 (09.03.99), Figure 4, column 2, lines 60-64.	1, 2, 5, 16-19
X	US 4,836,428 A (EVANS ET AL.) 06 June 1989 (06.06.89), Figure 3, column 3, lines 28-56.	1, 6-8, 10, 12, 14

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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Date of the actual completion of the international search 11 JANUARY 2000	Date of mailing of the international search report 18 APR 2000
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/27205

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US, A 4907729 (HESS, III) 13 March 1990 (13.03.90) figures 1, 2, column 3, lines 25-31, 43-46.	1, 8, 10, 11