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(54) **MULTI-PURPOSE ARTICLE CARRIER**

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(75) Inventors: **Zaid MOHAMMAD**, Centreville,
VA (US); **Zeba ALLI**, Centreville,
VA (US)

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(73) Assignee: **SADIA TOYS LLC**, Centreville,
VA (US)

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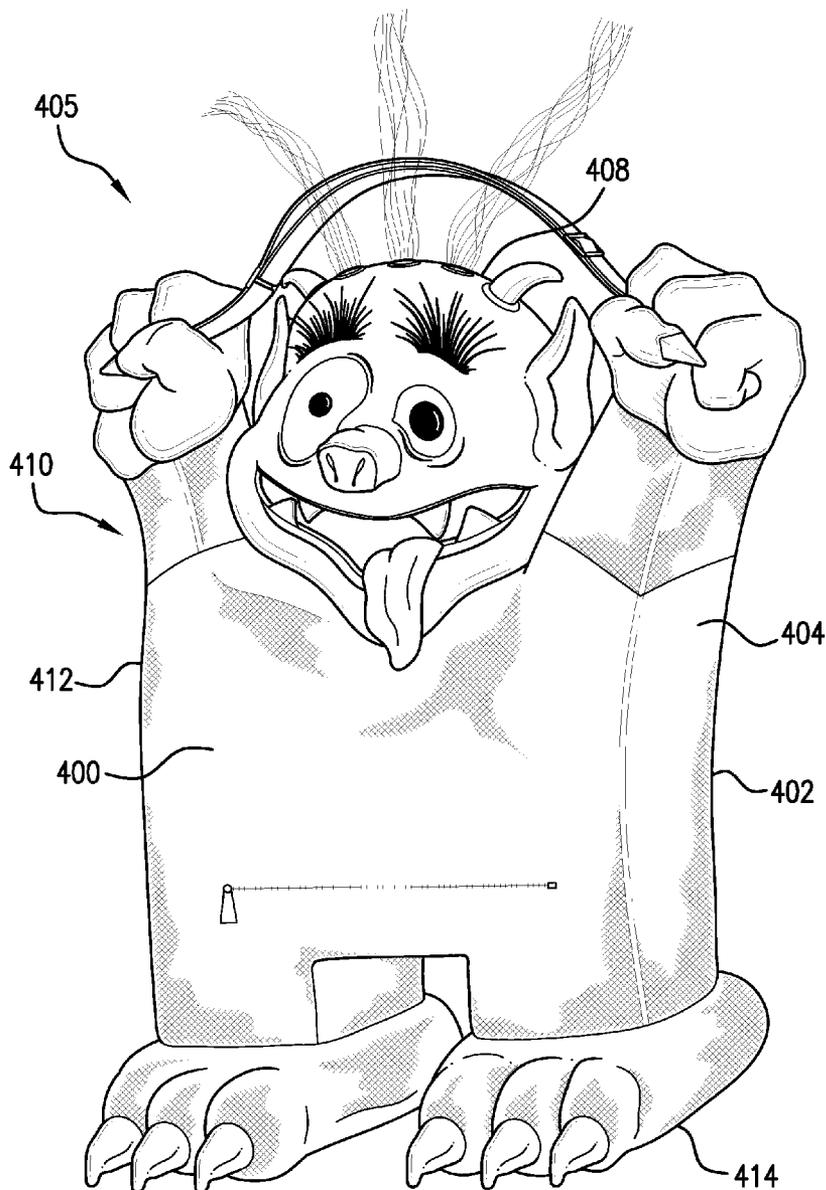
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/443,463, filed on Feb.
16, 2011.

The present invention provides article carriers such as bags, backpacks, and bags that convert into backpacks. The article carriers can be used as trick-or-treat bags for Halloween and can have a fanciful design in the shape of a monster.



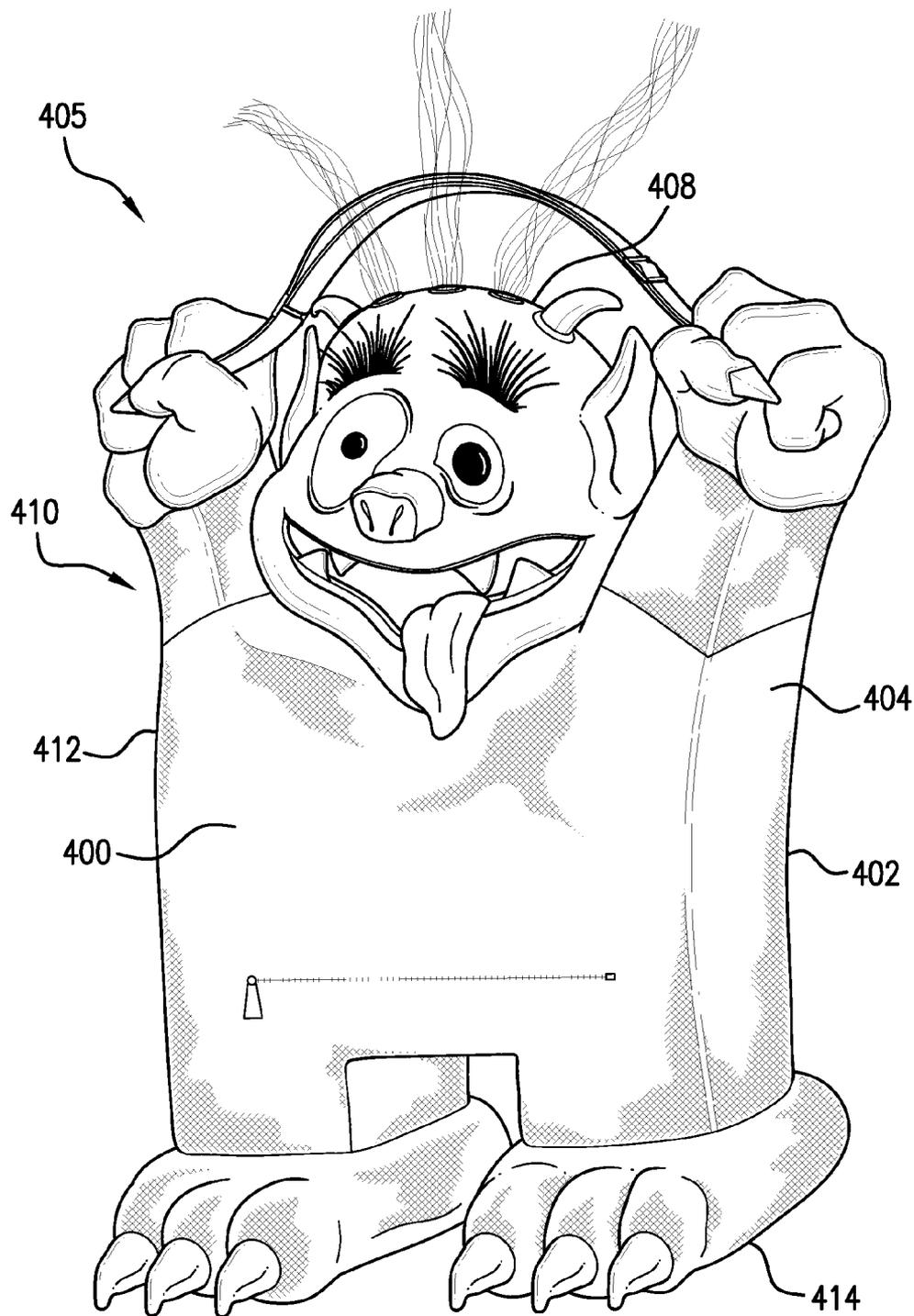


FIG. 1

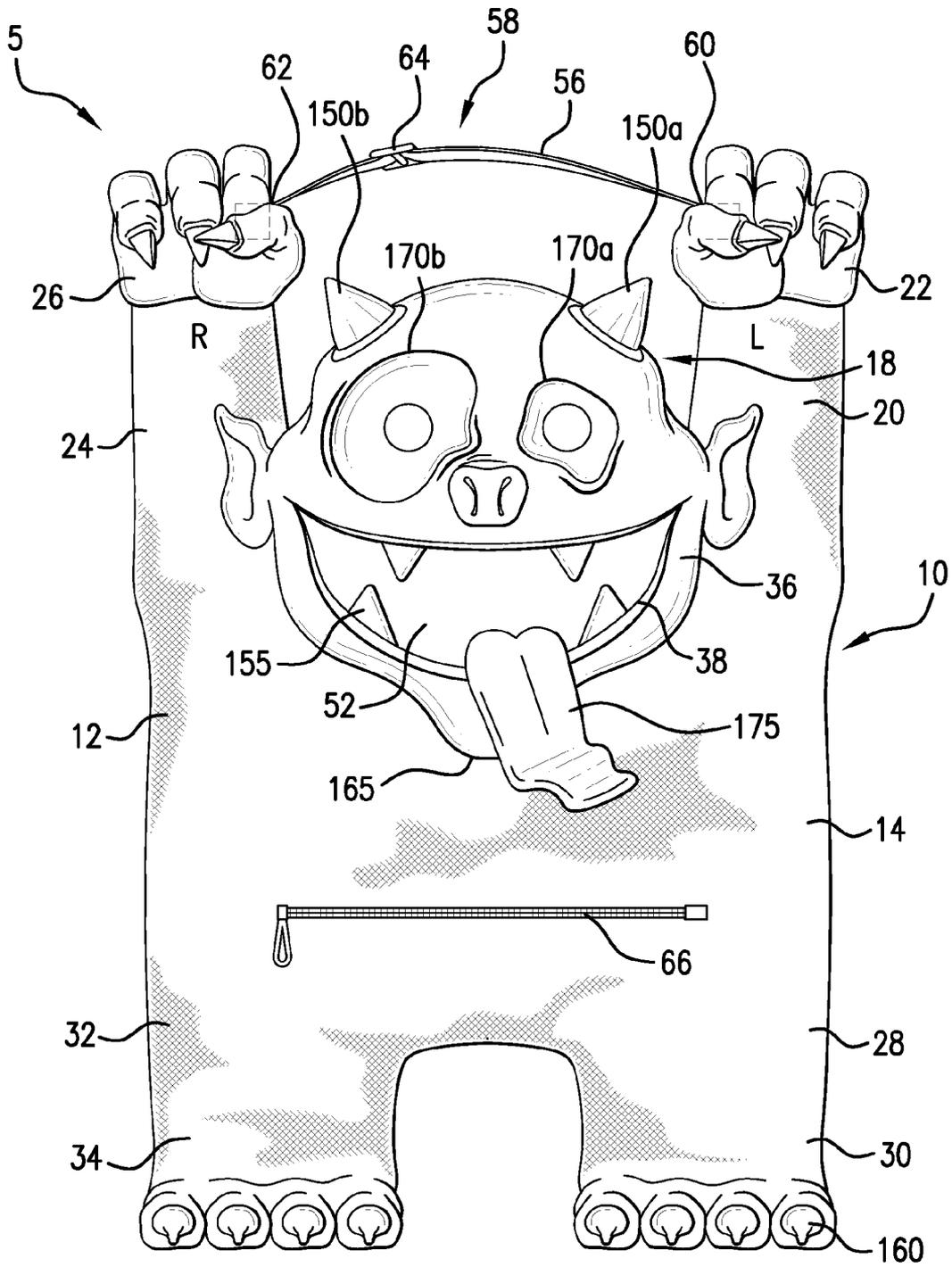


FIG. 2

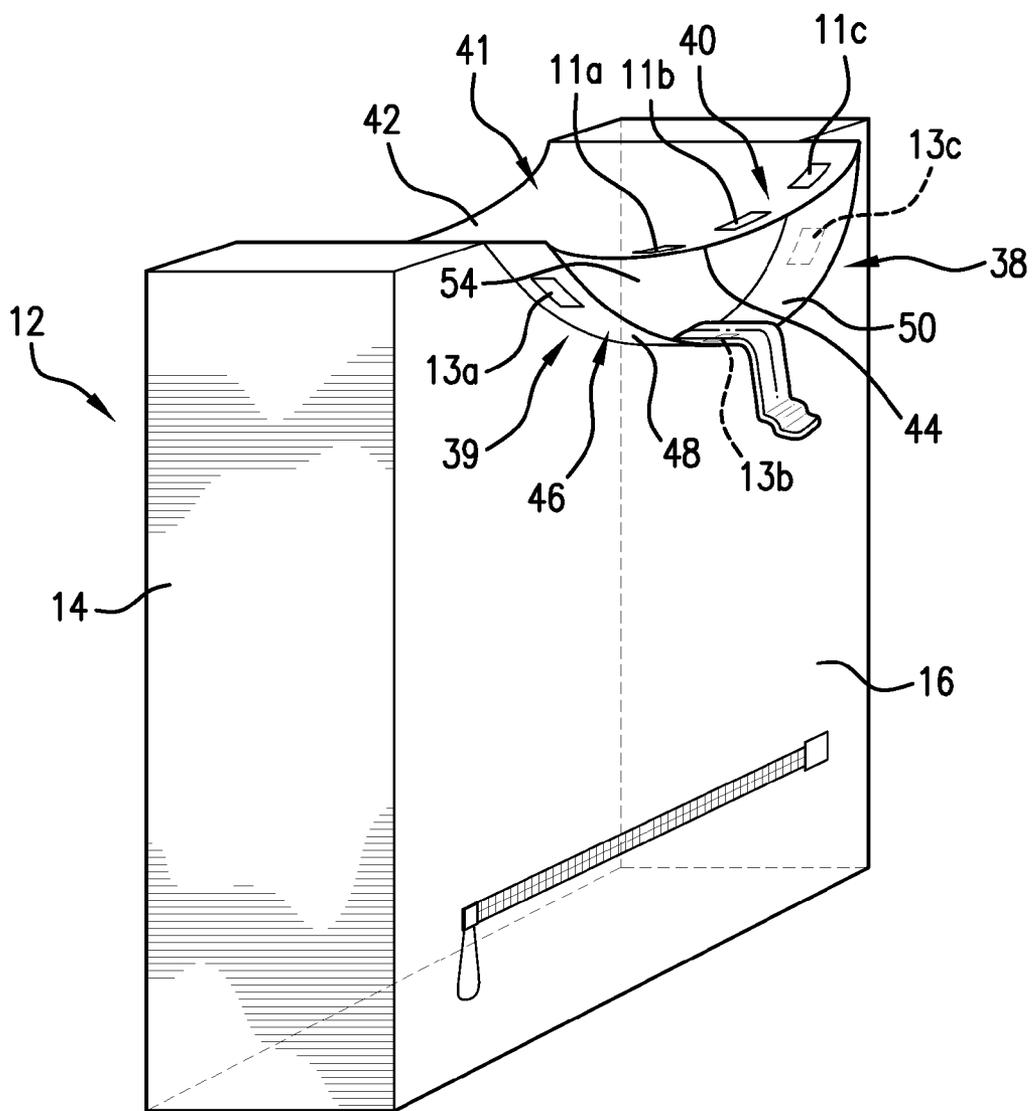


FIG. 3

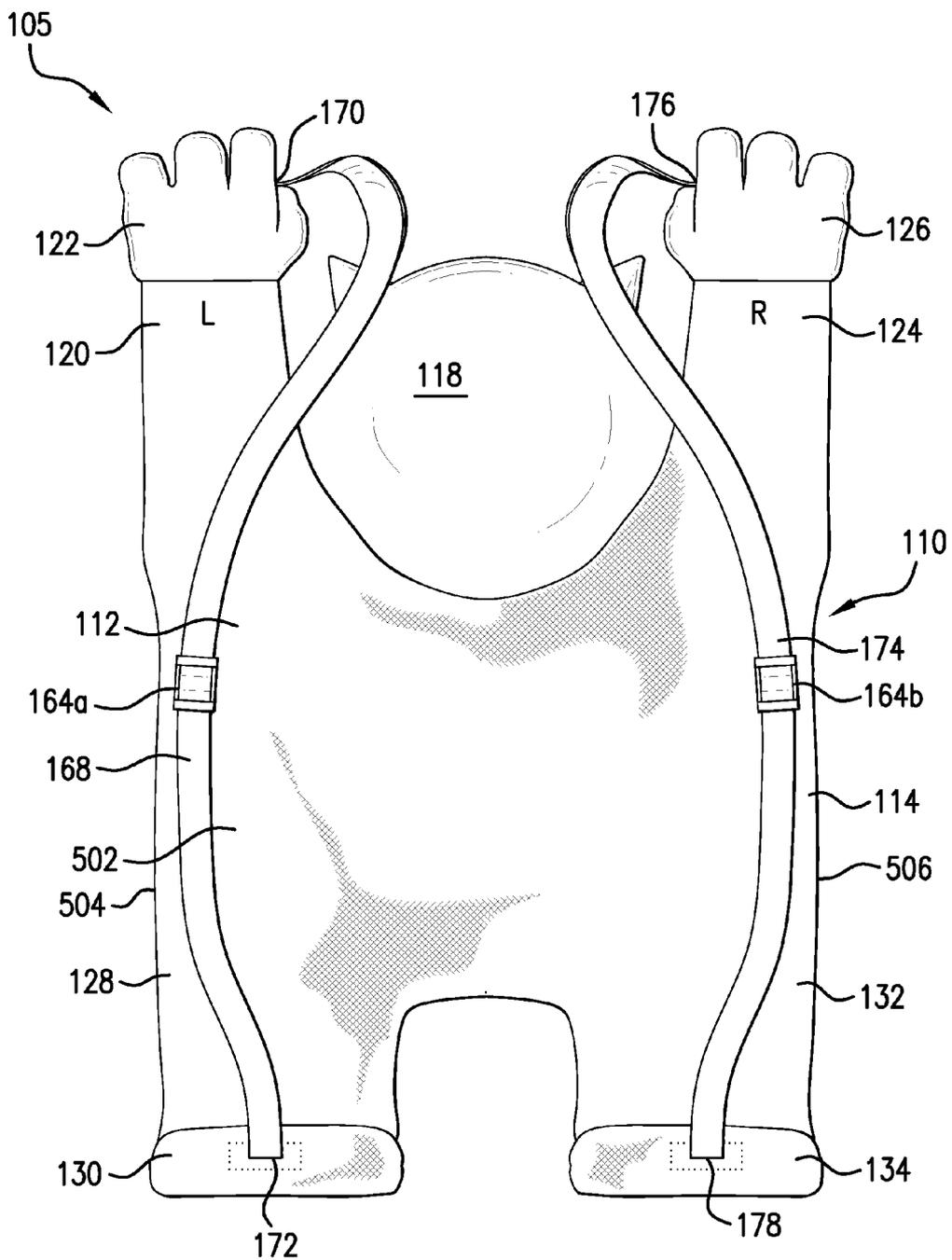


FIG. 4

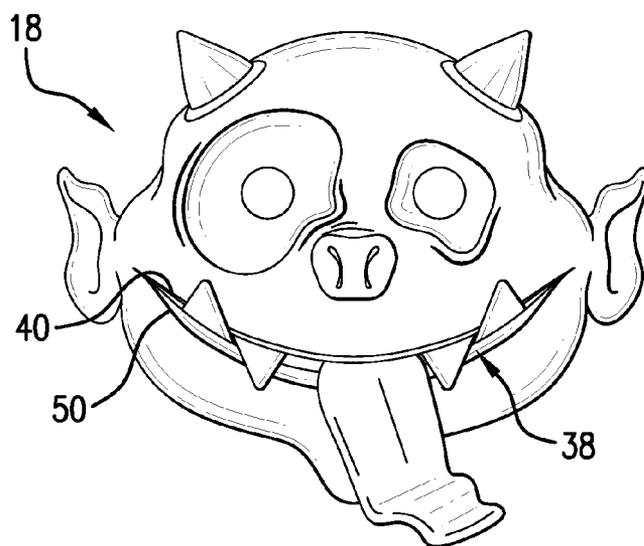


FIG. 5

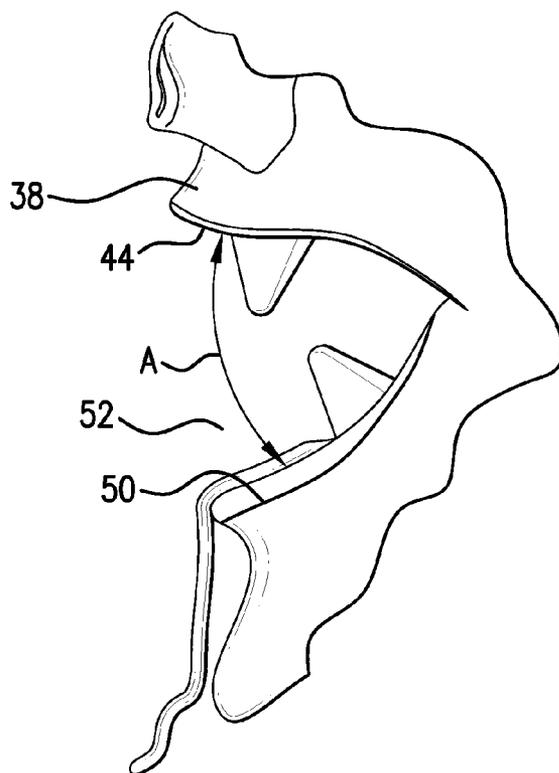


FIG. 6

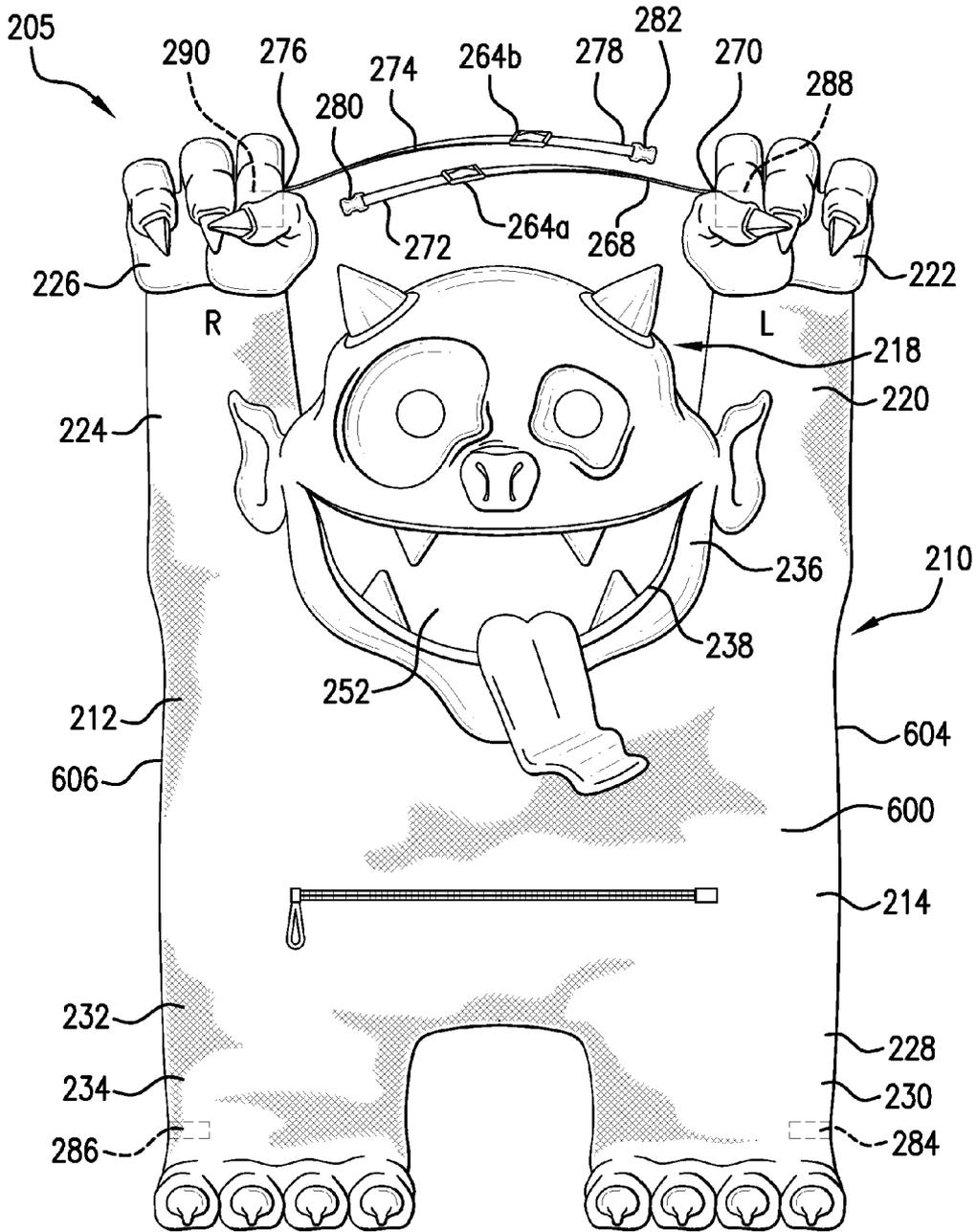


FIG. 7

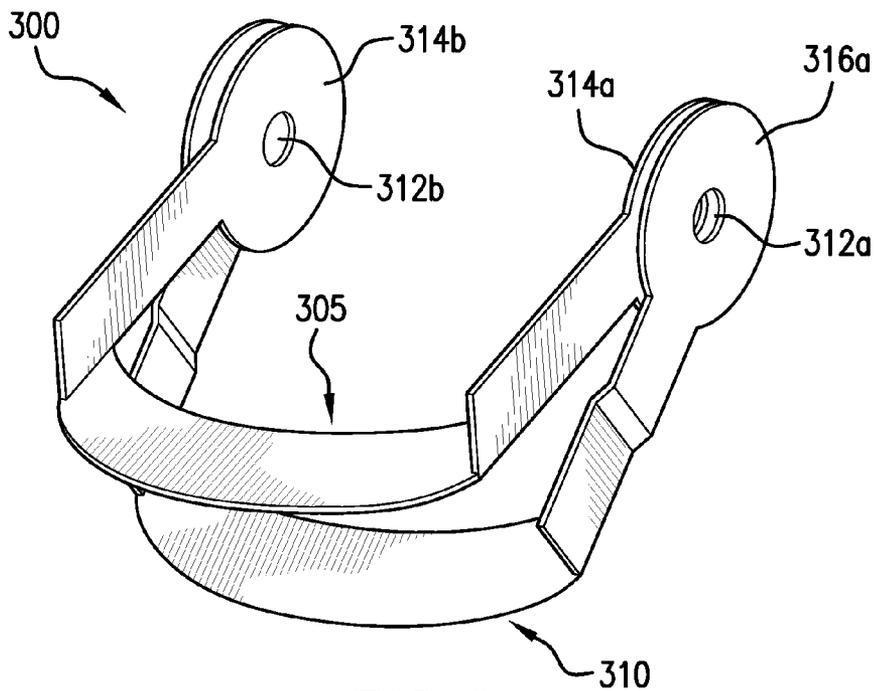


FIG. 9

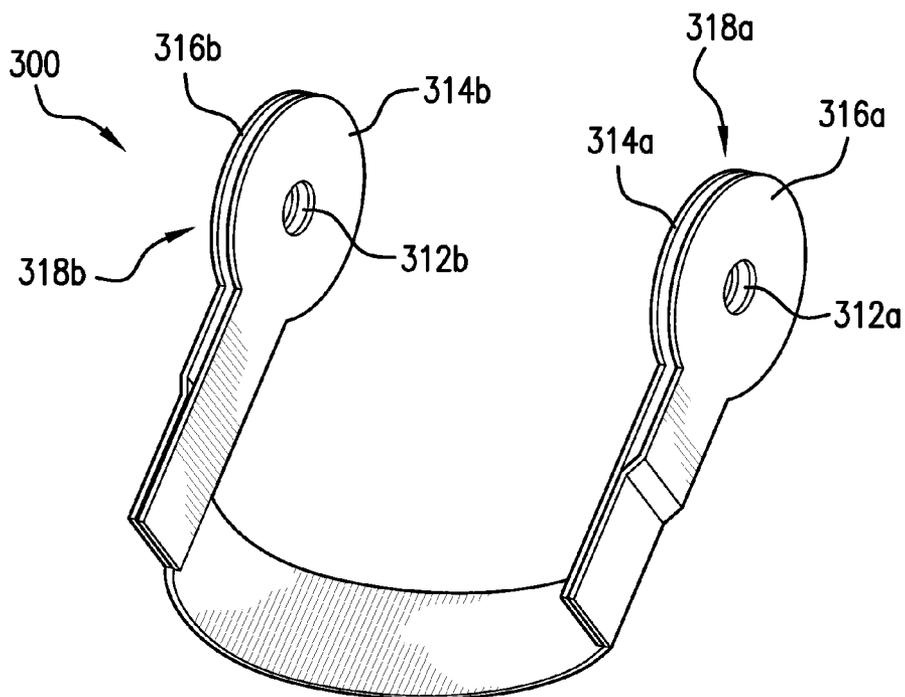


FIG. 10

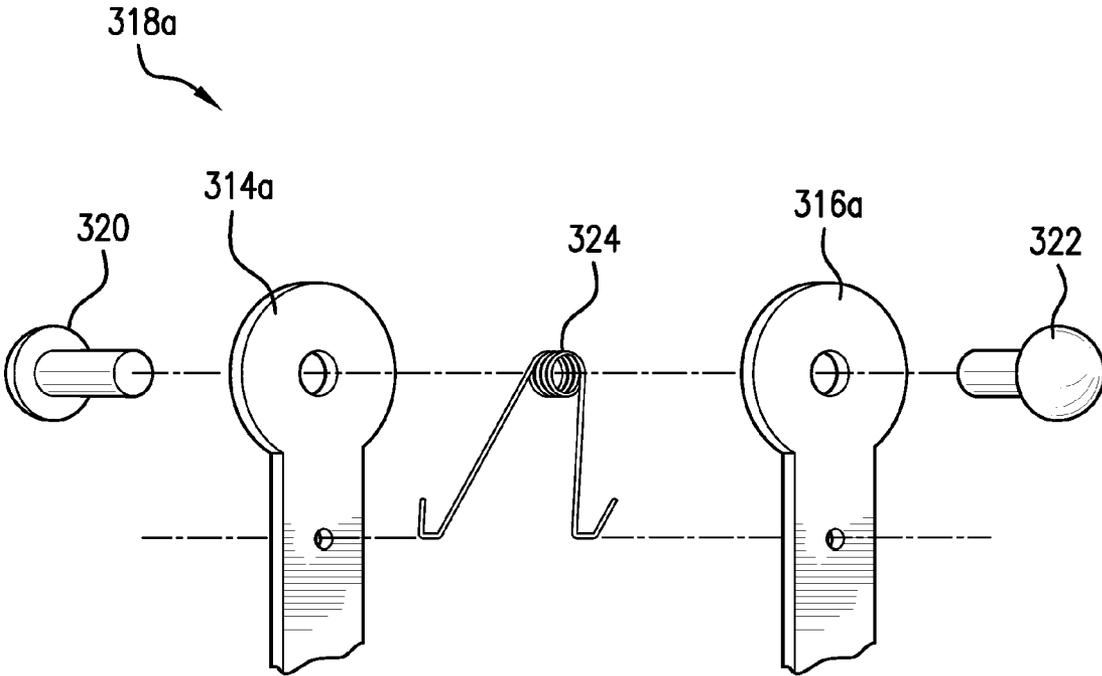


FIG. 11

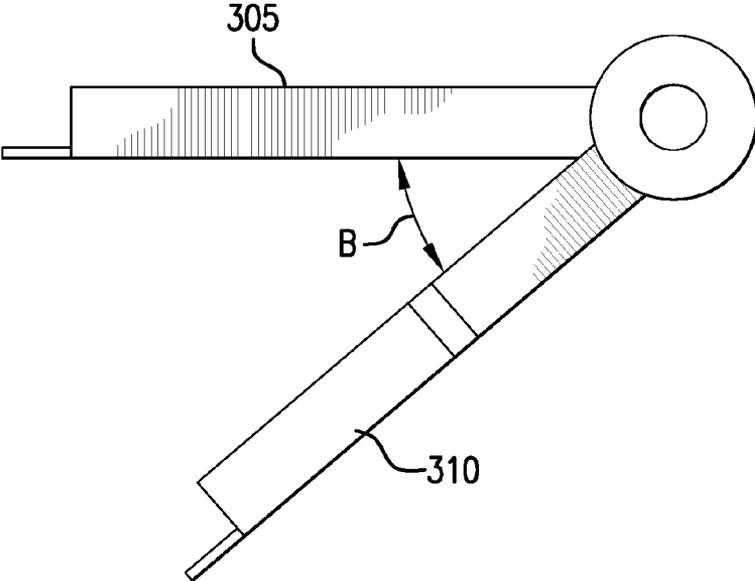


FIG. 12

MULTI-PURPOSE ARTICLE CARRIER

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims priority to U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/443,463 filed Feb. 16, 2011, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to article carriers such as bags; backpacks; and bags that can convert into backpacks.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Trick-or-treating is a popular children’s activity during Halloween. Often children use plain plastic bags to collect and carry the treats they receive during trick-or-treating. Other containers that children use are in the shape of common Halloween themed items such as a pumpkin or have two dimensional common Halloween images such as witches or bats. Such bags and containers have top openings.

[0004] These trick-or-treat bags are often only used for Halloween and are not used for other purposes.

[0005] There is a need for an article carrier, such as a trick-or-treat bag, that serves multiple purposes such as for trick-or-treating activities but also for other functions. There is also a need for more fanciful article carriers for children.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In an embodiment, the present invention provides an article carrier comprising a bag. The bag comprises a body comprising a trunk defining a hollow receptacle and comprising a head. The head comprises a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion, and a bottom portion. The mouth is configured to open and close. The mouth is positioned on the front of the face and defines a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body. The frontal opening is at least sized to receive a confectionary item. The body further comprises a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand; and a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot. The bag further comprises at least one strap that connects the left hand to the right hand to form a handle during use.

[0007] In another embodiment, the present invention provides an article carrier comprising a backpack. The backpack comprises a body comprising a trunk defining a hollow receptacle and comprising a head. The head comprises a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion and a bottom portion. The mouth is configured to open and close. The mouth is positioned on the front of the face and defines a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body. The body further comprises a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand; and a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot. The backpack further comprises a left strap having a first end and a second end, the first end connected to the left hand and the second end connected to either of the left foot or the right foot during use. The backpack further comprises a right strap having a first end and a second end, the first end connected to the right hand and the second end connected to the other one of the left foot or the right foot during use.

[0008] In another embodiment, an article carrier comprises a convertible bag. The convertible bag comprises a body. The body comprises a trunk defining a hollow receptacle and comprises a head. The head comprises a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a bottom portion and a top portion. The mouth is configured to open and close. The mouth is positioned on the front of the face and defines a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body. The frontal opening is at least sized to receive a confectionary item. The face faces frontally during a primary use as a bag and faces rearwardly during a secondary use as a backpack. The body further comprises a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand; and a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot. In a primary assembled configuration, a first strap connects the left hand to the right hand and a second strap connects the right hand to the left hand. In a second assembled configuration, the first strap connects the left hand to the either the left foot or the right foot and the second strap connects the right hand to the other one of the left foot or the right foot.

[0009] In another embodiment, an article carrier comprises a convertible bag. The convertible bag comprises a body. The body comprises a trunk defining a hollow receptacle and comprises a head. The head comprises a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion, and a bottom portion. The mouth is configured to open and close. The mouth is located on the front of the face and defines a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body. The frontal opening is at least sized to receive a confectionary item. The face faces frontally during a primary use as a bag and faces rearwardly during a secondary use as a backpack. The body further comprises a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand, each of the left hand and right hand comprising a fastener; and a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot, each of the left foot and right foot comprising a fastener. The bag further comprises a first strap comprising a fastener and a second strap comprising a fastener, wherein, in a primary assembled configuration, the first strap connects the left hand to the right hand and the second strap connects the right hand to the left hand. In a secondary assembled configuration, the first strap connects the left hand to the either the left foot or the right foot and the second strap connects the right hand to the other one of the left foot or the right foot.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a bag according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a front view of a bag according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a perspective cut-away view of a schematic illustration of a bag according to an embodiment of the present invention showing the interior and exterior regions of the mouth of the bag.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a rear view of a backpack according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a front view of a face of a bag where the mouth is in a closed configuration according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a side view of the mouth depicted in FIG. 1, indicating the angle between the top exterior and bottom exterior surface of the mouth.

[0016] FIG. 7 is a front view of a convertible article carrier according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a top partial view of a mouth's interior according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a jaw device in an open configuration according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the jaw device of FIG. 9 in a closed configuration according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 11 is an exploded view of the ends of a jaw device according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 12 is a side view of a jaw device according to an embodiment of the present invention indicating an angle between an upper jaw and a lower jaw.

[0022] FIG. 13 is a cross-sectional schematic view of the top portion of the head of the bag.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] The present invention relates to article carriers such as bags, backpacks, and bags that convert into backpacks.

[0024] FIG. 1 provides a perspective view of an embodiment of an article carrier 405 comprising a bag 410. Bag 410 comprises a body 412 having a front side 400, a back side 402, a left side 404, a right side (not shown), a top side 408, and a bottom side 410. FIG. 2 provides more details regarding the components of an alternative depiction of a bag according to an embodiment of the present invention. Bag 10 comprises a body 12 having a trunk 14 defining a hollow receptacle 16 as seen in FIG. 3. Referring to FIG. 2, body 12 also comprises a head 18; a left arm 20 comprising a left hand 22; a right arm 24 comprising a right hand 26; a left leg 28 comprising a left foot 30; and a right leg 32 comprising a right foot 34. Head 18 has a face 36 comprising a mouth 38. As seen in more detail in FIG. 3, mouth 38 has an exterior 39 and an interior 41. Mouth 38 also has a top portion 40 having a top interior surface 42 and a top exterior surface 44 as well as an opposing bottom portion 46 having a bottom interior surface 48 and a bottom exterior surface 50. Referring back to FIG. 1 and FIG. 2, mouth 38 is positioned in the frontal plane of body 12, i.e. on the front side 400 of body 12 and more specifically on the front of face 36, similar to the position of a mouth on a human face. As shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 3, in a preferred embodiment, the mouth protrudes outwards away from trunk 14 of body 12. Referring to FIG. 2 and FIG. 3 in combination, mouth 38 defines a frontal opening 52 to passageway 54. Passageway 54 is in communication with hollow receptacle 16 of trunk 14. Mouth 38 is configured to open and close as described in more detail below. FIG. 5 depicts mouth 38 in a closed configuration. Referring back to FIG. 2, bag 10 also comprises at least one strap 56 that is connectable to left hand 22 and right hand 26 to form a handle 58.

[0025] Bag 10 can serve as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag that a user uses to collect confectionary items from providers of such treats. When mouth 38 is open as seen in FIG. 2, a provider delivers a confectionary item through frontal opening 52 and the confectionary item treat travels down passageway 54 into receptacle 16, which can later be emptied. Therefore, frontal opening 52 is at least sized to receive a typical confectionary item distributed during trick-or-treating on Halloween such as, for example, a hard or soft candy piece. Frontal opening 52 can also be sized larger to receive other Halloween treats such as food articles including, for example, candy bars, chip bags, and treat bags containing multiple

confectionary items. Frontal opening 15 can also be sized to receive non-food articles such as, for example, pencils, stickers, and erasers. At the minimum, however, frontal opening 52 is sized to receive typical confectionary items distributed during trick-or-treating on Halloween. Referring to FIG. 6, which is a side view of mouth 38, when mouth 38 is in an open configuration, the angle A between the top exterior surface 42 and the bottom exterior surface 50 can be between about 2 degrees and about 270 degrees. After a provider delivers confectionary items through frontal opening 52, mouth 38 can be closed, as depicted in FIG. 5, to prevent the confectionary items from falling out of mouth 38.

[0026] Referring back to FIG. 2, when a user assembles article carrier 5 described above for use, strap 56 is connected to left hand 22 and right hand 26 and serves as handle 58. Article carrier 5 thus serves as a bag with an upright handle in this embodiment and can be used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag. Strap 58 has a first end 60 and a second end 62. First end 60 is connected to left hand 22 and second end 62 is connected to right hand 26 during use. Strap 56 can be fixedly connected to hands 22 and 26 or releasably connected to hands 22 or 26 during use. In terms of being "fixedly connected," strap 56 can be sewn or glued, for example, to hands 22 and 26 such that strap 56 is not intended to be removed from hands 22 and 26 and cannot be removed from hands 22 and 26 without damaging, to some degree, the integrity of bag 10 such that bag 10 can no longer serve its intended purpose.

[0027] In terms of being "releasably connected," hands 22 and 26 can be connected to one another via strap 56 such that strap 56 can be disconnected from hands 22 and 26 without damaging the integrity of bag 10 such that bag 10 can no longer serve its intended purpose. For example, the left and right hands can have respective fasteners, disposed thereon that cooperate with fasteners disposed on the strap to connect the strap to the left and right hands. In particular, the left hand and the right hand can each have a respective female fastener disposed thereon and the first and second ends of the strap can each have respective male fasteners disposed thereon that engage the female fasteners of the left and right hand to connect the hands. Of course, other releasable fasteners could be used such as VELCRO, magnets, snaps, buttons, clips, etc.

[0028] Bag 10 can also have a clip 64 positioned on strap 56 that can allow the length of strap 56 to be adjusted. Such clips are well known in the art.

[0029] Referring again to FIG. 2, the body of the bag can have a slot that the user can open or close by manipulating a closure mechanism in communication with the slot, which is shown in FIG. 2 as zipper 66. This closeable slot allows the user to remove the contents of the bag. This is particularly useful when the bag is used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag since the closure mechanism allows the user to close the bag when the user is collecting Halloween treats and open the bag when the user is ready to empty the articles from the bag. The slot is shown in FIG. 2 as being positioned on the "stomach" of the trunk of the bag but can be positioned in another area of the body. Further, although the closure mechanism depicted in FIG. 1 is a zipper, other closure mechanisms may be used such as, for example, VELCRO, snaps, buttons, magnets, clips, etc.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 4, in another embodiment, the present invention provides an article carrier 105 that is a backpack 110. FIG. 4 is a rear view of backpack 110. Backpack 110 has similar components to bag 10 shown in FIG. 2. In other words, backpack 110 has a body 112 having a front

side (not shown), a back side 502, a left side 504 and a right side 506. Body 112 comprises a trunk 114 defining a hollow receptacle similar to hollow receptacle 16 shown in FIG. 3. Body 112 also comprises a head 118; a left arm 120 comprising a left hand 122; a right arm 124 comprising a right hand 126; a left leg 128 comprising a left foot 130; and a right leg 132 comprising a right foot 134. Head 118 has a face (not shown) comprising a mouth (not shown). Similar to mouth 38 depicted in FIG. 3, the mouth of backpack 110 has an interior and exterior and a top portion having a top interior surface and a top exterior surface as well as an opposing bottom portion having a bottom interior surface and a bottom exterior surface. The mouth of backpack 110 is positioned in the frontal plane of body 112, i.e. on the front side of body 112 and more specifically on the front of the face, similar to the position of a mouth on a human face. However, because this embodiment of an article carrier is a backpack, when the backpack is in use (i.e. a user wears the backpack), the face will be facing away from the user's back. Similar to the embodiments shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 3, in a preferred embodiment, the mouth protrudes outwards away from trunk 114 of body 112. Similar to the embodiment depicted in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, the mouth of backpack 110 defines a frontal opening to a passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of trunk 114. Further as described above, the mouth is configured to open and close as described in more detail below.

[0031] Referring back to FIG. 4, backpack 110 also comprises a left strap 168 having a first end 170 and a second end 172. First end 170 is connected to left hand 122 and second end 172 is connected to left foot 130 in the embodiment depicted in FIG. 4, but second end 172 could be connected to right foot 134. Backpack 110 further comprises a right strap 174 having a first end 176 and a second end 178. First end 176 is connected to right hand 126 and second end 178 is connected to right foot 134 in the embodiment depicted in FIG. 4, but second end 178 could be connected to left foot 130. If the second end 172 of left strap 168 is connected to right foot 134 and the second end 178 of right strap 174 is connected to left foot 130, then the straps would have a "criss-cross" arrangement during use. As mentioned above, during use, the straps of backpack 110 are positioned about the shoulders of the user and at least part of the body is against the user's back and the face of the body is facing away from the user's back.

[0032] As with bag 10 shown in FIG. 2, the left and right straps of backpack 110 can be fixedly connected or releasably connected to the respective hands and/or feet of body 112. Specifically, as shown in FIG. 4, first end 170 and second end 172 of left strap 168 can be fixedly connected to left hand 122 and left foot 130 respectively. Similarly, first end 176 and second end 178 of right strap 174 can be fixedly connected to right hand 126 and right foot 134 respectively. Alternatively, first end 170 and second end 172 of left strap 168 can be releasably connected to left hand and left foot respectively. Similarly, first end 176 and second end 178 of right strap 174 can be releasably connected to right hand 126 and right foot 134 respectively. Still alternatively, first end 170 of left strap 168 can be fixedly connected to left hand 122 and second end 172 of left strap 168 can be releasably connected to left foot 130. Similarly, first end 176 of right strap 174 can be fixedly connected to right hand 126 and second end 178 of right strap 174 can be releasably connected to right foot 134. Still other combinations are possible in terms of the straps being fixedly or releasably connected to the hands and feet of body 112. For

example, the straps can be fixedly or releasably connected to the hands and feet of body 112 such that one of the left or right strap crosses over the other of the left or right strap during use.

[0033] As described above with respect to bag 10, in terms of releasably connecting the hands and feet right of the body, the hands and feet can have fasteners disposed thereon that cooperate with fasteners disposed on the straps. For example, the left strap can have a fastener disposed thereon and the left and/or right foot can have a cooperating fastener disposed thereon. Similarly the right strap can have a fastener disposed thereon and the left and/or right foot can have a cooperating fastener disposed thereon. Any suitable fastener can be used such as male/female fasteners, VELCRO, snaps, magnets, buttons, clips, etc.

[0034] As shown in FIG. 4 and similar to the embodiment of bag 10 described above, backpack 110 can also have clips 164a and 264b positioned on straps 168 and 174 that can allow the length of the straps to be adjusted. Such clips are well known in the art.

[0035] Backpack 110 can also serve as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag that a user uses to collect confectionary items from providers of such treats. As with the embodiment of bag 10 described above, when the mouth is open, a provider can deliver a confectionary item through the frontal opening of the mouth of the backpack and the confectionary item travels down the passageway into the receptacle of trunk 114, which can later be emptied. Therefore, in a preferred embodiment, the frontal opening is at least sized to receive a typical confectionary item distributed during trick-or-treating on Halloween as described above. For example, the angle between the top exterior surface and bottom exterior surface of the mouth can be between about 2 degrees and about 270 degrees when the mouth is in an open configuration. After a provider delivers confectionary items through the frontal opening, the mouth can be closed to prevent the confectionary items from falling out of the mouth.

[0036] In certain embodiments, particularly when backpack 110 is also used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag, backpack 110 can include a third strap that is fixedly or releasably connectable to the left and right hands 122 and 126. For example, the ends of the third strap can have fasteners that cooperate with fasteners in the left and right hands to connect the hands and form a handle. In such an embodiment, the user wears the backpack while traveling from house to house during Halloween and then when approaching a house to receive a Halloween treat, the user removes the backpack and holds the handle with the mouth of the face of the body of the backpack facing the provider of the Halloween treat. If the user desires to use backpack 110 for other purposes, the third strap can be releasably connectable to the hands as described above such that the user can remove the third strap.

[0037] Further, similar to the embodiment of bag 10 described above, backpack 110 can have a slot that the user can open or close by manipulating a closure mechanism in communication with the slot, which is shown in FIG. 2 as zipper 66. This closeable slot allows the user to remove the contents of the bag. This is particularly useful when the bag is used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag since the closure mechanism allows the user to close the bag when the user is collecting Halloween treats and open the bag when the user is ready to empty the articles from the bag. The slot is shown in FIG. 2 as being positioned on the "stomach" of the trunk of the bag but can be positioned in another area of the body. Further, although the closure mechanism depicted in FIG. 2 is

a zipper, other closure mechanisms may be used such as, for example, VELCRO, snaps, buttons, magnets, clips, etc

[0038] Referring to FIG. 7, another embodiment of the present invention provides a convertible article carrier. In such an embodiment, the article carrier comprises a bag that can be converted to a backpack and has similar components to bag 10 and 110 described above. In other words, convertible bag 210 has a body 212 having a front side 600, a back side (not shown), a left side 604 and a right side 606. Convertible bag 210 comprises a body 212. Body 212 comprises a trunk 214 defining a hollow receptacle similar to the hollow receptacle shown in FIG. 3. Body 212 also comprises a head 218; a left arm 220 comprising a left hand 222; a right arm 224 comprising a right hand 226; a left leg 228 comprising a left foot 230; a right leg 232 comprising a right foot 234. Head 218 has a face 236 comprising a mouth 238. Similar to mouth 38 depicted in FIG. 3, the mouth of convertible bag 210 has an interior and an exterior and a top portion having a top interior surface and a top exterior surface as well as an opposing bottom portion having a bottom interior surface and a bottom exterior surface. Mouth 238 of convertible bag 210 is positioned in the frontal plane of body 212, i.e. on the front side of body 212 and more specifically on the front of face 236, similar to the position of a mouth on a human face. During a primary use of convertible bag 210, when it is used as a bag, face 236 faces frontally. During a secondary use, when convertible bag 210 is used as a backpack, face 236 faces rearwardly away from the user's back. Similar to the embodiments shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 3, in a preferred embodiment, mouth 238 protrudes outwards away from trunk 214 of body 212. Similar to the embodiments depicted in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, mouth 238 of convertible bag 210 defines a frontal opening 252 to a passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of trunk 214. As with the other described embodiments, mouth 238 is configured to open and close.

[0039] Referring back to FIG. 7, convertible bag 210 also comprises a first strap 268 and second strap 274. First strap 268 has a first end 270 and a second end 272; second strap 274 has a first end 276 and a second end 278. During a primary assembled configuration when convertible bag 210 is used as a bag, first end 270 of first strap 268 is connected to left hand 222 and second end 272 is connected to right hand 226. First end 276 of second strap 274 is connected to right hand 226 and second end 278 is connected to left hand 226. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 4, first ends 270 and 276 are fixedly connected to their respective hands and second ends 272 and 278 are releasably connectable to their respective hands. In alternative embodiments, first ends 270 and 276 are also releasably connectable to their respective hands. In a secondary assembled configuration when convertible bag 210 is used as a backpack, second end 272 of first strap 268 is releasably connected to either left foot 230 or right foot 234 and second end 278 of second strap 274 is releasably connected to the other one of left foot 230 or right foot 234. If second end 272 of first strap 268 is connected to right foot 234 and second end 278 of second strap 274 is connected to left foot 230, then the straps would have a "criss-cross" arrangement. As mentioned above, during a secondary use when convertible bag 210 is in a secondary assembled configuration and used as a backpack, the straps are positioned about the shoulders of the user and at least part of the body of convertible bag 210 is against the user's back and the face of the body is facing away from the user's back.

[0040] Referring again to FIG. 7, in order for first and second straps 268 and 274 to be releasably connectable to the hands and feet of body 212 of convertible bag 210, first strap 268 can have a fastener 280 disposed thereon and second strap 274 can have a fastener 282 disposed thereon. Left hand 222 can have a cooperating fastener 288 disposed thereon; right hand 226 can have a cooperating fastener 290 disposed thereon; left foot 230 can have a cooperating fastener 284 disposed thereon; and right foot 234 can have a cooperating fastener 286 disposed thereon. Fasteners 280 and 282 can releasably engage cooperating fasteners 284, 286, 288 and 290 during use. For example, in a primary use when convertible bag 210 is used as a bag, fastener 280 engages cooperating fastener 290 and fastener 282 engages cooperating fastener 288 in a primary assembled configuration. In a secondary use when convertible bag 210 is used as a backpack, fastener 280 engages fastener 284 and fastener 282 engages fastener 286 in a secondary assembled configuration. Alternatively, fastener 280 can engage fastener 286 and fastener 282 can engage fastener 284. Fasteners 280 and 282 are illustrated in FIG. 4 as male fasteners and fasteners 284, 286, 288, and 290 are illustrated as female fasteners but other types of cooperating fasteners could be used such as VELCRO, snaps, buttons, magnets, clips, etc.

[0041] As with the other embodiments, in a primary assembled configuration, convertible bag 210 can serve as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag that a user uses to collect confectionary items from providers of such treats. As with the other described embodiments of an article carrier, a provider can deliver a confectionary item through the frontal opening of the mouth of convertible bag 210 and the confectionary item travels down the passageway into the receptacle of trunk 214, which can later be emptied. Therefore, frontal opening is at least sized to receive a typical confectionary item distributed during trick-or-treating on Halloween as described above. After a provider delivers confectionary items through the frontal opening, the mouth can be closed to prevent the confectionary items from falling out of mouth. In a secondary assembled configuration, convertible bag can serve as a backpack and be used for purposes for which a backpack is normally used. In such an embodiment, mouth 238 can be closed so that the items in the backpack do not fall out from frontal opening 252.

[0042] As shown in FIG. 7 and similar to the embodiment of bag 10 described above, convertible bag 210 can also have clips 264a and 264b positioned on straps 268 and 274 that can allow the length of the straps to be adjusted. Such clips are well known in the art.

[0043] Further, similar to the embodiment of bag 10 described above, convertible bag 210 can have a slot that the user can open or close by manipulating a closure mechanism in communication with the slot, which is shown in FIG. 2 as zipper 66. This closeable slot allows the user to remove the contents of the bag. This is particularly useful when the bag is used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag since the closure mechanism allows the user to close the bag when the user is collecting Halloween treats and open the bag when the user is ready to empty the articles from the bag. The slot is shown in FIG. 2 as being positioned on the "stomach" of the trunk of the bag but can be positioned in another area of the body. Further, although the closure mechanism depicted in FIG. 2 is a zipper, other closure mechanisms may be used such as, for example, VELCRO, snaps, buttons, magnets, clips, etc.

[0044] In certain embodiments, particularly when the article carrier is used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag, the body of the article carrier is in the shape of a monster. For example, the face of the body can be irregular or distorted compared to a typical human face. Such a distorted face can be seen in the crooked chin 165 and the irregular eyes 170a and 170b of the face depicted in FIG. 2. Eye 170a is a different size than eye 170b in the embodiment depicted in FIG. 2. The eyes 170 could also be crossed such that the monster has "cross-eyes." The head can also have horns 150, the mouth can have fangs 155 and/or the hands and feet can have claws 160. In certain embodiments, the mouth has a tongue 175 that sticks out of the mouth. Other features that are typically associated with a fanciful creature such as a monster can also be included.

[0045] As described above, the mouth of the article carrier in the embodiments of a bag, backpack and convertible bag is configured to open and close to allow confectionary items to be delivered through the frontal opening into the receptacle and to ensure that such items do not fall out of the frontal opening of the mouth of the article carrier. A mouth in an open configuration is shown in FIG. 2 and a mouth in a closed configuration is shown in FIG. 5. The mouth is configured such that it can releasably open and close without damaging, to some degree, the integrity of the article carrier such that the article carrier can no longer serve its intended purpose. Preferably, when the mouth is in an open configuration, the mouth stays in this configuration until a user closes the mouth. Similarly, preferably, when the mouth is in a closed configuration, the mouth stays in this configuration until the user opens the mouth. The mouth can be configured in different ways to allow it to open and close and thus to expose or obstruct the frontal opening.

[0046] For example, the inside of the head can contain enough of a soft stuffing material that presses against the interior of the mouth so that the top portion of the mouth is in close proximity to the bottom portion of the mouth, effectively assuming a closed configuration. The stuffing should be soft enough that it can be displaced when force is exerted against it. The top and bottom portions of the mouth need not contact each other so long as the top and bottom portions are in close enough proximity such that a typical confectionary item does not fall out of the frontal opening of the mouth when the mouth is in a closed configuration. For example, in a preferred embodiment, in a closed configuration the angle between the top exterior surface and the bottom exterior surface is less than 2 degrees. In order to open the mouth, a user simply urges his or her hand through the frontal opening of the mouth, compressing the stuffing material and thus opening the mouth. When the user removes his or her hand from the mouth, the stuff material returns to its un-compressed state and the mouth assumes a closed configuration.

[0047] Other mechanisms can be used to allow the mouth to open and close. For example, in order to releasably open and close, the mouth can have cooperating fasteners disposed thereon that communicate with each other to close the mouth. For example, as shown in FIG. 3, mouth 38 has fasteners 11 and 13 associated with the interior of mouth 38. Specifically, fasteners 11 are associated with the top interior surface 42 of top portion 40 of mouth 38 and fasteners 13 are associated with the bottom interior surface 48 of bottom portion 46 of mouth 38. In particular, fasteners 11a, 11b, and 11c cooperate with fasteners 13a, 13b, and 13c, respectively such that when fasteners 11 are in communication with fasteners 13, the

mouth is in a closed configuration. Again, all opposing points on the top exterior surface 42 and bottom exterior surface 50 need not to contact each other in order for the mouth to assume a closed configuration. So long as the surfaces are in close enough proximity such that a typical confectionary item does not fall out of the frontal opening when the cooperating fasteners are engaged, the mouth is considered to be closed. Fasteners can be placed on other areas of the mouth so long as they function to close the mouth.

[0048] Referring to FIG. 8, in order to ensure the fasteners are not displaced from their intended position, the fasteners can be placed within an encasement that has individual compartments that house individual fasteners to limit the movement of the fasteners such that the fasteners can stay aligned with their respective cooperating fasteners. For example, the encasement can be defined by a layer of fabric 7 and the top interior surface 42 of mouth 38. Fabric 7 can be placed over the fasteners 11a-11e and fabric 7 can be stitched to the top interior surface 42 of mouth 38 in such a way to create individual compartments for fasteners 11 as shown in FIG. 8. Of course other materials can be used to form the encasement so long as the material serves the purpose of limiting any incidental movement of the fasteners that misalign the fasteners with their respective cooperating fasteners such that the fasteners no longer serve their intended purpose. Also, as mentioned above, the fasteners can be positioned on other parts of the mouth and as such, the fasteners can be encased in other parts of the mouth.

[0049] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, fasteners 11 and 13 are magnets but any suitable fasteners that allow the mouth to assume a closed configuration can be used. Also, both fasteners 11 and 13 need not be magnets. For example, at least one of the cooperating fasteners 11 or 13 can be a magnet and at least the other one of the cooperating fasteners 11 or 13 can be a metal piece that is attracted to a magnet. Non-limiting examples of other cooperating fasteners include any male/female fastener, magnets, snaps, VELCRO, buttons. A zipper could also be used as a closure mechanism to close the mouth. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, the cooperating fasteners are not in direct communication with each other. However, as will be understood by one skilled in the art, certain fasteners such as snaps, buttons, and VELCRO, for example, will require direct contact. In such embodiments, the fasteners would be disposed on the exterior of the mouth.

[0050] As described above, in certain embodiments, particularly when the article carrier is used as a Halloween trick-or-treat bag, the body of the article carrier is in the shape of a monster and can have structures associated with the mouth such as fangs and a tongue. For purposes of this disclosure, such structures are part of the mouth of the body of the article carrier. As such, in certain embodiments, the fangs can have fasteners disposed thereon. For example, at least one fang depending from the top exterior surface of the mouth and at least one fang projecting from the bottom exterior of the mouth can be fabricated at least in part of VELCRO and can bind to one another when brought in contact to close the mouth. Of course, more than one fang on each surface can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, a fastener can be disposed on the interior or exterior of the tongue and can communicate with a fastener disposed on the top interior or exterior surface of the top portion of the mouth or any other surface of the face (such as the nose for example) so long as the tongue can reach the cooperating fastener on this other surface.

[0051] In certain embodiments, the mouth of the article carrier can have a support structure in the interior of the mouth to assist in defining the mouth and assist in closing and opening the mouth. Referring to FIGS. 9 and 10, in certain embodiments, this support structure is a jaw device 300 that functions similar to a human jaw (i.e. is an opposable articulated structure). The jaw device can be fabricated from any suitable material such a metal or polymer, including a plastic. FIG. 9 depicts jaw device 300 in an open configuration and FIG. 10 depicts jaw device 300 in a closed configuration. Jaw device 300 has an upper jaw 305 and a lower jaw 310 with a left end portion 318a and a right end portion 318b, each end portion linked by a joint 312 that allows for opening and closing of the top and bottom mouth portions. Specifically, upper jaw 305 has a left end 314a and a right end 314b. Similarly, lower jaw 310 has a left end 316a and a right end 316b. The respective left ends 314a and 316a are articulating parts of left joint 312a and the respective right ends 314b and 316b are articulating parts of right joint 312b. The joint may be any linkage, such as, for example, a hinge, that allows for opening and closing of the top and bottom mouth portions (i.e. any suitable connection between the upper and lower jaw at their nodes which allows for some motion between the connected upper and lower jaw).

[0052] In certain embodiments, the joint comprises fasteners that rotatably couple the two ends of the jaws. Referring to FIG. 11, which is an exploded view of the left end portion 318a of the jaw device, in certain embodiments, the joint is a revolute (pin) joint, such as a cantilever or straddle mount pin joint. The pin joint includes a male fastener 320 and a female fastener 322 that receives male fastener 320. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 11, there is a torsion spring 324 between the left end 314a of the upper jaw and the left end 316a of the lower jaw which allows the mouth to maintain an open configuration when the spring is in a relaxed position. In the mouth's closed configuration, torsion spring 324 assumes a compressed configuration. Non-limiting examples of other joints include helical joints and any other joint known in the art that allows the top mouth portion to rotate or otherwise pivot relative to the lower mouth portion. Other joints can include rivets, pins, screws, bolts and accompanying parts such as washers and nuts including lock washers, spring washers and lock nuts. Additionally, one or more bearings, such as ball, roller, or needle bearings, may be used to facilitate rotation in the joint. Of course, it is understood that while FIG. 11 depicts only the left end portion 318a of jaw device 300, the right end portion 318b can have the same components.

[0053] Referring to FIG. 12, preferably the joints of the jaw device allow the jaw device to open at an angle B of between about 2 degrees to about 270 degrees.

[0054] In certain embodiments, in order for the jaw device to remain in a closed configuration, the mouth can have other cooperating releasable fasteners disposed thereon, such as a magnet disposed on the upper jaw and a magnet or metal piece associated with the lower jaw. Of course, other types of suitable fasteners are also possible. When a user desired to open the mouth, the user can pull on the upper part of the head and/or the lower part of the head and to close the mouth, the user can push the upper part of the head and/or the lower part of the head such that the cooperating fasteners engage each other. As such, at least one of the upper and lower jaw moves relative to the other of the upper and lower jaw and preferably both jaws move relative to each other.

[0055] In certain embodiments, the jaw device may be triggered to open automatically through use of a spring. In this embodiment, a user would trigger the release of a spring attached to the jaw such that when the spring is released it expands from a compressed position to push the jaw open as it elongates to its equilibrium position. The user can actuate the spring via a button or switch that actuates the spring.

[0056] FIG. 13 is a schematic cut away rear view of the top of the head of an article carrier showing the interior of the mouth's top portion according to embodiments of the present invention. This figure illustrates how jaw device 300 can be attached to interior 541 of the mouth. In this embodiment, a strip of fabric 326 is stitched to the interior surface 542 of the mouth creating a sleeve within which a part of the upper jaw 305 is positioned. This sleeve (the stitches of which is shown by reference character 328) serves a mechanism by which the jaw device is secured within the interior 541 of the mouth. The sleeve can also be located in other areas of the interior 541 of the mouth so long as the sleeve secures the jaw device within the mouth. It is understood that lower jaw 310 can be similarly contained within interior 541 of the mouth. Of course, other ways of securing the jaw device within the interior 541 of the mouth can also be employed. For example, the jaw device or portions thereof can be perforated and thread can be threaded through the perforations and through the exterior surface and interior surface of the mouth. Alternatively, staples could be stapled through the perforations. Threading or strips can also be looped around the jaw device or portions thereof and through the exterior and interior surface of the mouth securing the jaw device against the interior surface of the mouth. The jaw device or portions thereof could also be glued, taped or otherwise adhered to the interior surface of the mouth. Again, such securement mechanisms are only exemplary and other suitable means by which the jaw device is secured within the mouth such that it remain therein can be used.

[0057] The article carrier can be fabricated from any suitable natural or synthetic material such as cotton or polyester. Preferably, at least the trunk of the article carrier is fabricated from a plush material.

What is claimed is:

1. An article carrier comprising a bag, the bag comprising: a body comprising:
 - a trunk defining a hollow receptacle;
 - a head comprising a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion, and a bottom portion, the mouth configured to open and close, the mouth positioned on the front of the face and defining a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body, the frontal opening at least sized to receive a confectionary item;
 - a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand; and
 - a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot; and
 - at least one strap that connects the left hand to the right hand to form a handle during use.
2. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein the mouth protrudes outwards away from the trunk of the body.
3. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein the mouth has an top exterior surface and a bottom exterior surface, the angle between the top exterior surface and the bottom exterior surface being between about 2 degrees and about 270 degrees.

4. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein the body of the bag has a slot that opens and closes by manipulating a closure mechanism in communication with the slot.

5. The article carrier of claim 4, wherein the closure mechanism is a zipper.

6. An article carrier comprising a backpack, the backpack comprising:

a body comprising:

a trunk defining a hollow receptacle;

a head comprising a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion and a bottom portion, the mouth configured to open and close, the mouth positioned on the front of the face and defining a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body;

a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand; and

a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot;

a left strap having a first end and a second end, the first end connected to the left hand and the second end connected to either of the left foot or the right foot during use; and;

a right strap having a first end and a second end, the first end connected to the right hand and the second end connected to the other one of the left foot or the right foot during use.

7. The article carrier of claim 6, wherein:

the first end of the left strap is fixedly connected to the left hand and the second end of the left strap is releasably connected to either of the left foot or the right foot during use; and

the first end of the right strap is fixedly connected to the right hand and the second end of the right strap is releasably connected to the other of the left foot or the right foot during use.

8. The article carrier of claim 6, wherein:

each of the left strap and the right strap has a fastener disposed thereon; and

each of the left foot and the right foot has a cooperating fastener disposed thereon.

9. The article carrier of claim 8, wherein each of the fasteners disposed on the left and right strap is a male fastener and each of the fasteners disposed on the left and right foot is a female fastener.

10. The article carrier of claim 8, wherein each of the left hand, the right hand, the left foot, the right foot, the first strap, and the second strap comprises a fastener.

11. The article carrier of claim 10, wherein the fastener of the left hand, right hand, left foot and right foot is a female fastener and wherein the fastener of the first strap and the second strap is a male fastener.

12. An article carrier comprising a convertible bag, the convertible bag comprising:

a body comprising:

a trunk defining a hollow receptacle;

a head comprising a face, the face comprising a mouth having an interior, an exterior, a top portion, and a bottom portion, the mouth configured to open and close, the mouth located on the front of the face and defining a frontal opening to a passageway, the passageway in communication with the hollow receptacle of the trunk of the body, the frontal opening at least sized to receive a confectionary item, wherein the face faces frontally during a primary use as a bag and faces rearwardly during a secondary use as a backpack;

a pair of arms comprising a left hand and a right hand, each of the left hand and right hand comprising a fastener; and

a pair of legs comprising a left foot and a right foot, each of the left foot and right foot comprising a fastener; and

a first strap comprising a fastener; and

a second strap comprising a fastener,

wherein, in a primary assembled configuration:

the first strap connects the left hand to the right hand and the second strap connects the right hand to the left hand,

further wherein, in a secondary assembled configuration:

the first strap connects the left hand to the either the left foot or the right foot and the second strap connects the right hand to the other one of the left foot or the right foot.

13. The article carrier of claim 12, wherein the fastener of the left hand, right hand, left foot and right foot is a female fastener and wherein the fastener of the first strap and the second strap is a male fastener.

14. The article carrier of claim 12, wherein the mouth of the face comprises at least one fastener to close the mouth.

15. The article carrier of claim 14, wherein the at least one fastener is a zipper, Velcro, a magnet or a button.

16. The article carrier of claim 12, wherein the top portion of the mouth has a top interior surface and a top exterior surface; and

the bottom portion of the mouth has a bottom interior surface and a bottom exterior surface, the top interior surface of the top portion comprising a row of magnets and the bottom interior surface of the bottom portion comprising a row of metal pieces that when attracted to the row of magnets substantially closes the mouth of the bag such that items in the bag do not exit the mouth of the bag.

17. The article carrier of claim 12, wherein at least the trunk of the body is fabricated from a soft, plush material.

18. The article carrier of claim 12 wherein the body is in the form of a monster.

19. The article carrier of claim 12, wherein the passageway does not extend above the shoulders of the user during use.

20. The article carrier of claim 12, further comprising a jaw device disposed within the interior of the mouth.

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