

FILED  
2009 SE. -2 P 1:51  
RICHARD M. WEN  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIF.  
*(A)*  
*[Handwritten signature]*

1 Arthur S. Beeman (State Bar No. 237996)  
asbeeman@jonesday.com  
2 Brett A. Lovejoy (State Bar No. 212942)  
blovejoy@jonesday.com  
3 JONES DAY  
555 California Street, 26th Floor  
4 San Francisco, CA 94104  
Telephone: (415) 626-3939  
5 Facsimile: (415) 875-5700

6 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
ALEXX, INC.

**E-filing**

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
9 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
10 SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

**MEJ**

12 ALEXX, INC., a California corporation,  
13 Plaintiff,

**CV 10 3946**  
Civil Action No.:

**COMPLAINT FOR PATENT  
INFRINGEMENT**

14 v.

15 TRIPLE C DESIGNS, INC. and DOES 1-  
16 20, Inclusive

**JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

17 Defendants.

22 Plaintiff Alexx, Inc. (hereinafter "Alexx") hereby alleges as follows:

23 **NATURE OF ACTION**

24 1. This is an action for infringement of United States Patent No. 7,308,922 ("the '922  
25 Patent"), and United States Patent No. 7,537,032 ("the '032 Patent") (collectively, "the Alexx  
26 Patents"). True and correct copies of the Alexx Patents are attached as Exhibit A.  
27  
28

**SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT**

1  
2           2.       In April 2004, Sandra Stein, founder of Alexx, invented the FINDERS KEY  
3 PURSE key locator. The key locator is an innovative product for locating keys or other easily  
4 misplaced objects. The key locator allows a person to attach such easily misplaced objects to the  
5 key locator and hang the locator on a purse or similar article. From the outside of the purse or  
6 similar article, the key locator is visible and, on the inside of the purse or similar article, the  
7 attached objects are securely attached to the key locator and can therefore be easily retrieved.

8           3.       Alexx has enjoyed substantial commercial success with the key locator,  
9 distributing the product through more than 1000 sales representatives throughout the United  
10 States, including retail gift stores, chains, and catalogs such as Hallmark, Coach House Gifts, The  
11 Mole Hole, and Solutions. Through this network of vendors, Alexx has sold more than six  
12 million of the key locators.

13           4.       The innovativeness of Alexx’s key locator has received national recognition. In  
14 November 2006, the San Fernando Valley Business Journal highlighted the novelty of Alexx’s  
15 key locator. In February 2007, Sandra Stein was featured in an episode of the nationally  
16 syndicated Oprah Winfrey television series showcasing unique innovations. Alexx has  
17 subsequently been featured in Entrepreneur, NAWBO.org, MomInventors.com,  
18 MomtoMomchat.com, Bizymoms.com, Country Business, and PopularArticles.com. Moreover,  
19 Sandra Stein regularly appears on the QVC home shopping network selling Alexx’s patented key  
20 locator.

21           5.       Defendants have profited from Alexx’s innovation by selling key locators that  
22 infringe the Alexx Patents.

23           6.       On January 15, 2008, the undersigned counsel, on behalf of Alexx, sent a first  
24 cease and desist letter to Triple C Designs, Inc. demanding that the defendant stop selling key  
25 locators that infringe the ‘922 Patent.

26           7.       Triple C Designs, Inc. did not respond to the January 15, 2008 cease and desist  
27 letter and continued to sell key locators that infringe the ‘922 Patent.

1 8. On May 20, 2008, the undersigned counsel, on behalf of Alexx, sent a second  
2 cease and desist letter to Triple C Designs, Inc. again demanding that the defendant stop selling  
3 key locators that infringe the '922 Patent.

4 9. On July 2, 2008, counsel for Triple C Designs, Inc. replied to the first and second  
5 cease and desist letters and claimed that Triple C Designs, Inc. did not infringe the '922 Patent  
6 and that the patent was invalid in view of United States Patent Nos. 1,042,843 to Toce ("Toce"),  
7 1,364,709 to Butler ("Butler"), 1,418,979 to Seferlis ("Seferlis"), 1,490,871 to Wagner  
8 ("Wagner"), and 1,609,347 to Dee ("Dee").

9 10. Triple C Designs, Inc. continued to sell key locators that infringe the '922 Patent.

10 11. On December 22, 2008, Alexx filed an Information Disclosure Statement with the  
11 United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO"), in connection with the patent application  
12 that matured into the '032 Patent and that is a continuation of the '922 Patent, in order to make  
13 Toce, Butler, Seferlis, Wagner, and Dee of record before the USPTO.

14 12. On May 26, 2009, the United States Patent and Trademark Office duly issued the  
15 '032 Patent with Toce, Butler, Seferlis, Wagner, and Dee noted on the face of the patent.

16 13. On March 1, 2010, the undersigned counsel, on behalf of Alexx, sent a third cease  
17 and desist letter to counsel for Triple C Designs, Inc. demanding that the defendant stop selling  
18 key locators that infringe the '922 and '032 Patents.

19 14. On April 7, 2010, counsel for Triple C Designs, Inc. replied to the third cease and  
20 desist letter claiming that Triple C Designs, Inc. did not infringe the '922 and '032 Patents and  
21 that these patents were invalid in view of yet another reference that Triple C Designs, Inc. did not  
22 disclose in the initial July 2, 2008 letter.

23 15. Triple C Designs, Inc. has continued to sell key locators that infringe the '922 and  
24 '032 Patents.

### 25 **THE PARTIES**

26 16. Alexx is a California corporation, having its principal place of business at 6430  
27 Variel #101, Woodland Hills, California, 91367.





- 1 (c) Award Alexx damages resulting from defendants' infringement in accordance with  
2 35 U.S.C. § 284 for an amount that exceeds \$1,000,000.00;
- 3 (d) Treble the damages in accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 284;
- 4 (e) Find the case to be exceptional under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 285;
- 5 (f) Award Alexx reasonable attorneys' fees under 35 U.S.C. § 285;
- 6 (g) Award Alexx interest and costs; and
- 7 (h) Award Alexx such further relief to which the Court finds Alexx is entitled under  
8 law or equity.

9 **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

10 Plaintiff hereby demands a jury trial on all issues so triable.

11 Dated: September 2, 2010

12 ARTHUR S. BEEMAN  
13 BRETT A. LOVEJOY  
14 JONES DAY

15 By: 

16 Brett A. Lovejoy

17 Attorneys for Plaintiff Alexx, Inc.  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

## **EXHIBIT A**

**(U.S. Patent No. 7,308,922 and  
U.S. Patent No. 7,537,032)**



US007308922B2

(12) **United States Patent**  
**Stein**

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 7,308,922 B2**  
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Dec. 18, 2007**

(54) **KEY LOCATOR**

(75) Inventor: **Sandra Stein**, West Hills, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Alexx, Inc.**, West Hills, CA (US)

(\*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 205 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/919,494**

(22) Filed: **Aug. 17, 2004**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2006/0037681 A1 Feb. 23, 2006

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A45C 11/32** (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **150/106; 24/3.8; 70/456; 70/459**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** ..... **150/106; 24/3.6; 70/456, 459; D3/207.211; 63/1.1, 63/1.2, 12, 43**

See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

1,106,388 A *	8/1914	Juergens	63/14.8
1,165,882 A *	12/1915	Killion	70/459
2,117,989 A *	5/1938	Ryan	150/106
2,218,932 A *	10/1940	Collins	70/456 R
2,224,972 A *	12/1940	Long, Jr. et al.	24/3.6
2,250,328 A *	7/1941	Daniels	24/3.6
D178,482 S	8/1956	Bacon	
3,016,224 A *	1/1962	Hall	248/205.3
3,071,938 A *	1/1963	Davidson	63/13
3,670,524 A *	6/1972	Korwin	63/18
3,707,742 A *	1/1973	Justice et al.	24/377

3,934,317 A	1/1976	Langwell	
4,004,325 A	1/1977	Hubachek	
4,113,156 A	9/1978	Brito	
4,201,259 A	5/1980	Alsdorf	
4,221,118 A *	9/1980	Chicckine	63/13
4,226,105 A	10/1980	Wehrman	
4,282,733 A *	8/1981	Schmitt (Johnston)	70/456 R
D262,498 S	1/1982	Beilis	
4,319,384 A	3/1982	Horne	
4,407,148 A	10/1983	Rousseau	
4,430,778 A	2/1984	Sander	
4,516,418 A	5/1985	Cuttler	
4,523,443 A	6/1985	Momemers	

(Continued)

**FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS**

FR 2606258 A1 \* 5/1988

(Continued)

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

Mississippi Quarter from the United States Mint, issued 2002.\*

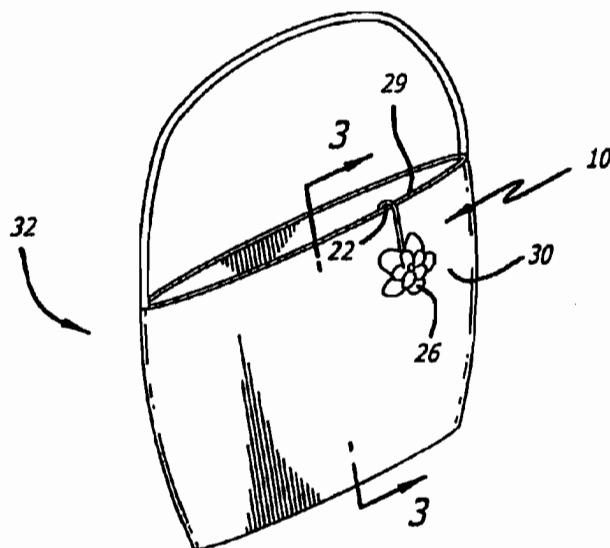
*Primary Examiner*—Suc A. Weaver

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Jones Day; Brett Lovejoy

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A key locator includes first and second members. The first member has opposed ends and an intermediate u-shaped region. One of the ends of the first member comprises a hook for engaging the second member which includes a clasp while the other end comprises an enlarged portion for fixing an ornament thereto. The arrangement is suitable for hanging at the open top of a bag-like device such as a purse, backpack or briefcase whereby the ornament is displayed at the same time that the keys are readily accessible without undue fishing efforts.

**19 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets**





## US 7,308,922 B2

Page 2

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS				FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS			
4,576,839	A *	3/1986	Parren ..... 428/13	D440,399	S	4/2001	DeRouen et al.
4,587,818	A	5/1986	Griffin	D441,184	S	5/2001	Ilaapala
D285,989	S	10/1986	MacDonald	6,318,610	B1	11/2001	Doherty
D288,984	S	3/1987	Scheurer et al.	6,334,239	B1	1/2002	Kraut
4,665,594	A	5/1987	Wagner	D468,091	S	1/2003	Tipton
D308,294	S	6/1990	Krassner	6,536,081	B2	3/2003	Allen et al.
D309,830	S	8/1990	Kraus	6,591,646	B1	7/2003	Huang
D311,451	S	10/1990	Chan	D478,719	S	8/2003	Mercuri
D312,172	S	11/1990	Ambrosio	6,606,769	B1	8/2003	Harris
4,976,124	A *	12/1990	Sanders ..... 70/458	D479,768	S	9/2003	Macevicz
5,048,310	A *	9/1991	Riley ..... 63/13	D484,306	S	12/2003	Lau
5,078,484	A *	1/1992	Vaughn ..... 351/51	6,772,614	B1 *	8/2004	Cheng ..... 70/456 R
5,173,999	A	12/1992	Welk et al.	6,843,086	B2	1/2005	Fitch
D341,940	S	12/1993	MacDonald	6,870,483	B1	3/2005	Davis
5,312,029	A	5/1994	Tuber	D503,850	S	4/2005	Staab
D352,821	S	11/1994	Stillwagon	D504,222	S	4/2005	Kieffer
5,359,870	A	11/1994	Reutlinger	6,928,943	B1	8/2005	Neubauer
D353,261	S	12/1994	Fort et al.	D510,185	S	10/2005	Chan
D357,350	S	4/1995	Stillwagon	7,021,852	B1	4/2006	Turner, III et al.
D366,359	S	1/1996	Riedl	2003/0200687	A1	10/2003	Wolfe
D371,325	S	7/1996	Fritsche	2003/0200779	A1	10/2003	Fitch
5,535,797	A *	7/1996	Martindale ..... 150/111	2004/0020813	A1 *	2/2004	Mocler et al. .... 206/425
5,551,269	A *	9/1996	Lewinstein et al. .... 70/459	2005/0208848	A1	9/2005	Grossman
D383,304	S	9/1997	Van Osch	2005/0257867	A1	11/2005	Vazin
D385,415	S	10/1997	Turbide	2006/0048343	A1	3/2006	Sinon
D392,797	S	3/1998	Kampe	2006/0090302	A1	5/2006	Colby
5,729,870	A	3/1998	Sharp				
5,768,915	A *	6/1998	Crumrine et al. .... 63/29.1				
D403,500	S	1/1999	Winter	GB	2180137	A *	3/1987
D403,501	S	1/1999	Winter	GB	2274236	A *	7/1994
D403,502	S	1/1999	Winter	GB	2275173	A *	8/1994
5,983,686	A *	11/1999	Lee ..... 70/456 R	JP	2003 174913	A *	6/2007

\* cited by examiner

FIG. 1A

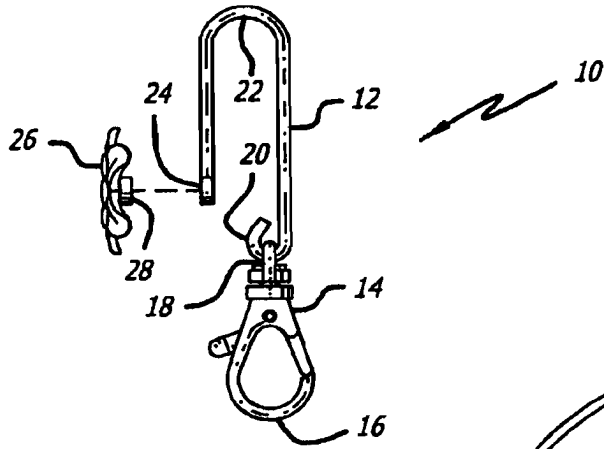


FIG. 1B

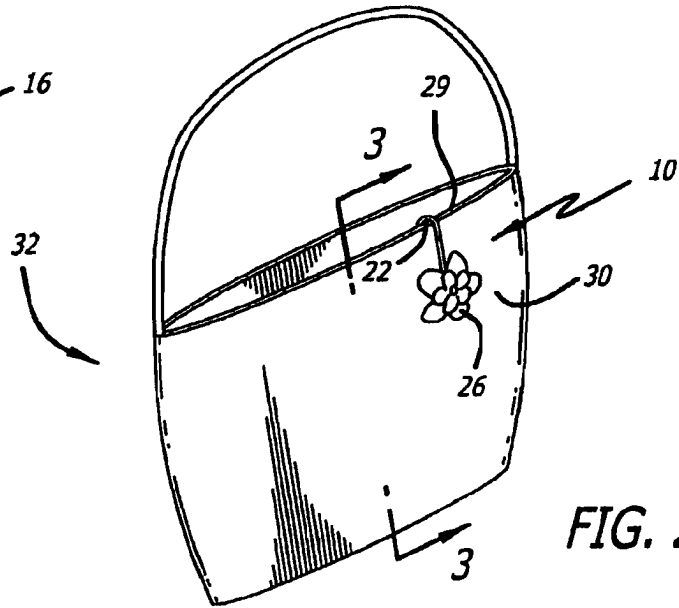
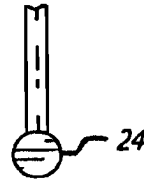


FIG. 2

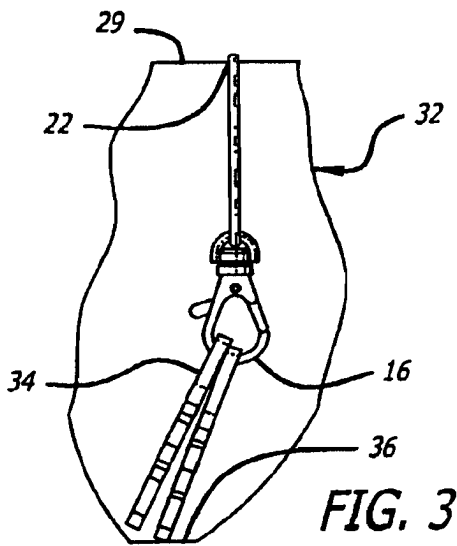


FIG. 3

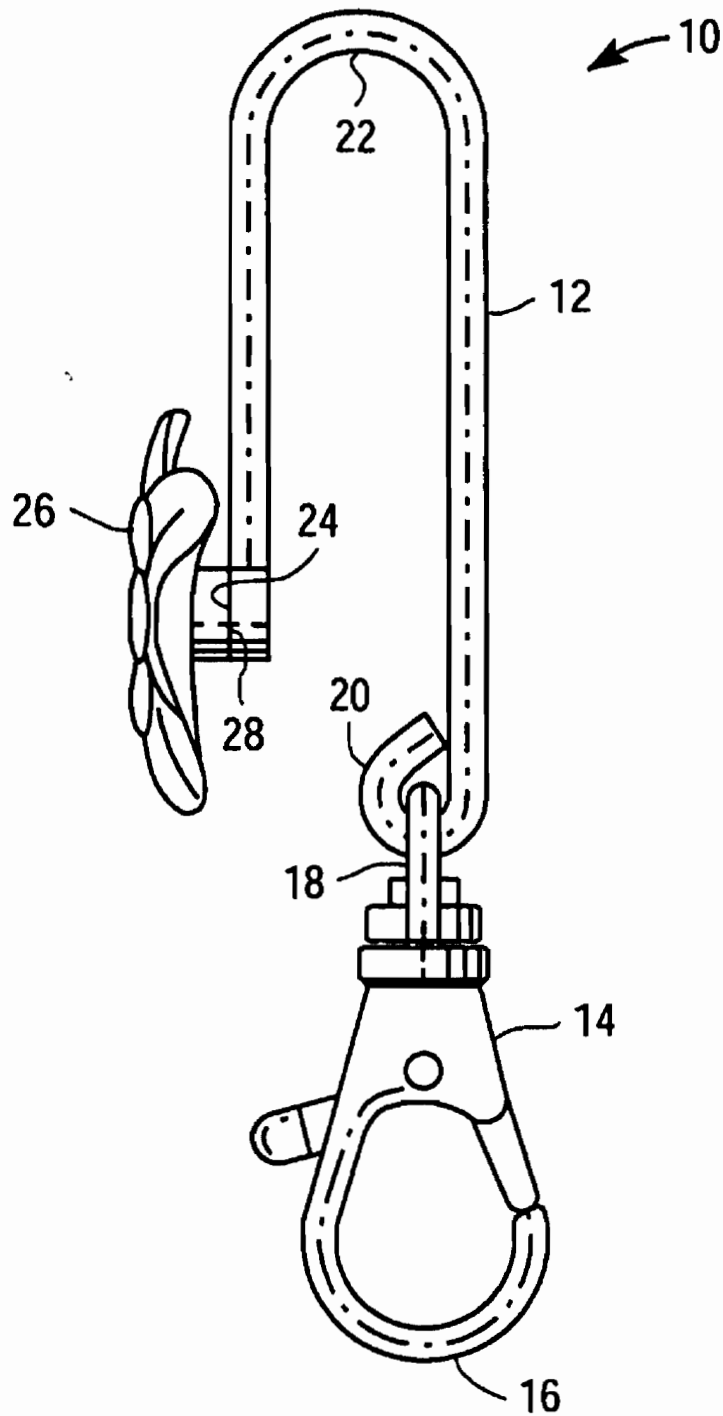


FIG. 1C

US 7,308,922 B2

# 1

## KEY LOCATOR

### BACKGROUND

#### 1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to key holders. More particularly, this invention pertains to a key holder that is especially adapted to facilitate the ready location of keys in a purse, backpack, briefcase or like bag.

#### 2. Brief Description of the Prior Art

A common and popular type of purse or like bag has a top that includes at least a region that is upwardly open in use. Often this type of bag is rather deep, permitting the owner-user to store a variety of items. Further, such depth is generally considered fashionable.

A known drawback of the above-described purse or like bag configuration resides in the difficulty of readily retrieving keys, or a group thereof gathered on a key chain, from its interior. This can lead to the frustration of the owner-user and to others. For example, the difficulty of locating car keys at the bottom of a purse can cause significant delay in vacating a parking space.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention addresses the preceding and other shortcomings of the prior art by providing a key locator. Such key locator includes a first member having opposed end portions.

The member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate the end portions. A second member includes a clasp for selectively retaining at least one key. The first and second members are engaged to one another.

The preceding and other features of the invention will become further apparent from the detailed description that follows. Such description is accompanied by a set of drawing figures. Numerals of the drawing figures correspond to numerals of the written description with like numerals referring to like features throughout both the written description and the drawing figures.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1(a) and 1(b) are a front elevation view of the key locator of the invention and a partial planar view of the ornament mounting pad thereof respectively, and FIG. 1(c) is a front elevation view of the key locator of the invention with the decorative element shown attached;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the key locator of the invention in use; and

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the key locator of the invention in use taken at line 3-3 of FIG. 2.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Turning now to the drawings, FIG. 1(a) is a front elevation view of the key locator 10 of the invention. The key locator 10 comprises interlocking first and second members 12 and 14 respectively. Each of the first and second members 12, 14 is preferably of steel or other metal although plastic or other rigid elastomeric material may be employed.

The second member 14 includes a clasp 16 that is preferably rotatably engaged to an inverted u-shaped element 18. The u-shaped element 18 is arranged to engage a hook 20 at one end of the first member 12 to provide flexible engagement of the members 12 and 14.

2

The first member 12 includes a u-shaped interior region 22. Its opposed end, as shown clearly in FIG. 1(b), comprises an enlarged region 24 that serves as an ornament mounting pad for affixation of a decorative ornament 26.

The ornament 26, comprising a flower-like shape as shown in the drawings but not limited thereto, is arranged to face away from the interior of the first member 12 with its back portion 28 preferably fixed to the enlarged region 24 of the member by solder or the like.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the key locator 10 of the invention in use. In FIG. 2, the key locator 10 is hung from the upper edge 29 of a side panel 30 of a bag-like purse 32 with the u-shaped region 22 overhanging the side panel 30 so that the face of the ornament 26 is exposed. This provides the user with an attractive adjunct to the purse 32 that serves the additional function of readily locating the key locator 10.

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the key locator of the invention in use taken at line 3-3 of FIG. 2. Keys 34, secured by the clasp 16 of the second member 14, are seen to lie near or at the bottom 36 of the bag-like purse 32, somewhat suspended from the upper edge 29 of the side panel 30. The u-shaped interior region 22 of the first member 12 of the key locator 10, as mentioned with reference to the preceding figure, is draped or hung over the upper edge 29 to create the suspension effect. The altitude of the bottom of the key locator 10 and keys 34 will depend upon the length of the key locator 10 relative to the depth of the side panel 30 of the bag-like purse 32. However, regardless of the precise altitude of the keys 34 within the purse 32, they may be readily located due to the visible presence of the ornament 26.

Thus, it can be seen that the present invention provides a key locator especially suitable for use with a purse, backpack, briefcase or other bag-like device. By employing the key locator of the invention in conjunction with such a device, one may find keys stored within without delay. Further, by providing a decorative ornament for indicating the location of the key locator, the appearance of the bag is enhanced.

While this invention has been described with reference to its presently preferred embodiment, it is not limited thereto. Rather the invention is limited only insofar as it is defined by the following set of patent claims and includes within its scope all equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A key locator comprising, in combination:

- a) a bent rod-shaped first member having a first end portion and a second end portion; and
- b) a second member including a closed-form clasp for selectively retaining at least one key; wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other; said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second end portion; said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an edge; said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are substantially permanently and flexibly engaged to one another via a single hook at said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member; and said closed-form clasp is rotatably fixed to a u-shaped element of said second member, wherein the u-shaped element is substantially permanently and flexibly engaged to said single hook at said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member.

US 7,308,922 B2

3

2. A key locator as defined in claim 1 further including an ornament directly and permanently fixed to said second end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member so that a first face of the ornament is exposed and so that the ornament is arranged to face away from an interior of said bent rod-shaped first member, wherein the ornament provides the function of readily locating the key locator on said edge and wherein the ornament provides the function of an attractive adjunct.

3. A key locator as defined in claim 2 wherein said second end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member comprises an enlarged portion for affixation of said ornament.

4. A key locator as defined in claim 3 wherein said ornament comprises a flower shape.

5. A key locator as defined in claim 3 wherein a back portion of said ornament is soldered onto said enlarged portion.

6. The key locator as defined in claim 1 wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are each made of a material selected from the group consisting of metal, steel, and plastic.

7. A key locator as defined in claim 1, wherein the edge is an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse.

8. A key locator as defined in claim 7, wherein the bag-like purse is a purse, a backpack, or a briefcase.

9. A key locator as defined in claim 1, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are configured so that when the bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the edge, the second member is necessarily retrieved.

10. A two-member apparatus comprising a bent rod-shaped first member and a second member, wherein

(i) said bent rod-shaped first member has a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other;

(ii) said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an edge;

(iii) said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are substantially permanently and flexibly engaged to one another via a single hook at said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member; and

(iv) an ornament is directly and permanently fixed to a said second portion so that a face of the ornament is exposed and wherein the ornament provides the function of readily locating the two-member apparatus on the edge and wherein the ornament provides the function of serving as an attractive adjunct; and

wherein said second member comprises a closed-form clasp that is rotatably fixed to a u-shaped element and wherein said u-shaped element engages said single hook at said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member, wherein the closed-form clasp is configured for selectively holding keys.

11. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein said ornament comprises a flower shape.

12. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein a back portion of said ornament is soldered onto said second end portion.

4

13. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are each made of a material selected from the group consisting of metal, steel, and plastic.

14. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein the edge is an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse.

15. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein the bag-like purse is a purse, a backpack, or a briefcase.

16. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are configured so that when the bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the edge, the second member is necessarily retrieved.

17. A method comprising:

(a) retaining at least one key in a closed-form clasp of a second member of a two-member apparatus, wherein

(i) a bent rod-shaped first member of said two-member apparatus has a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other,

(ii) said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse,

(iii) said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are substantially permanently and flexibly engaged to one another via a single hook at said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member, and

(iv) an ornament is fixed to said second end portion; and

(b) hanging the two-member apparatus from said upper edge of said side panel of said bag-like purse with the u-shaped region overhanging the side panel so that a face of the ornament is exposed, wherein said closed-form clasp is rotatably fixed to a u-shaped element and wherein said u-shaped element engages said single hook, and wherein the ornament provides the function of readily locating the two-member apparatus on the upper edge and wherein the ornament provides the function of an attractive adjunct.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the bag-like purse is a purse, a backpack, or a briefcase.

19. The method of claim 17, the method further comprising:

c) retrieving said bent rod-shaped first member of said two-member apparatus from said upper edge such that, when said bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the upper edge, the at least one key retained in the closed-form clasp of the second member is necessarily retrieved.

\* \* \* \* \*



US007537032B2

(12) **United States Patent**  
**Stein**

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 7,537,032 B2**  
(45) **Date of Patent:** **\*May 26, 2009**

- (54) **KEY LOCATOR**
- (75) Inventor: **Sandra Stein**, West Hills, CA (US)
- (73) Assignee: **Alexx, Inc.**, West Hills, CA (US)
- (\* ) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

1,609,347 A	12/1926	Dee
2,117,989 A	5/1938	Ryan
2,218,932 A	10/1940	Collins
2,224,972 A	12/1940	Long, Jr. et al.
2,250,328 A	7/1941	Daniels
D178,482 S	8/1956	Bacon

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(Continued)

**FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS**

- (21) Appl. No.: **11/977,891**
- (22) Filed: **Oct. 26, 2007**

FR 2606258 A1 5/1988

- (65) **Prior Publication Data**  
US 2008/0086847 A1 Apr. 17, 2008

(Continued)

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

- (63) **Related U.S. Application Data**  
Continuation of application No. 10/919,494, filed on Aug. 17, 2004, now Pat. No. 7,308,922.

U.S. Appl. No. 10/919,494, filed Aug. 17, 2004, Stein.

(Continued)

- (51) **Int. Cl.**  
*A45C 11/32* (2006.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **150/106; 150/104; 190/102; 24/3.6; 70/456 R; 70/459**
- (58) **Field of Classification Search** ..... **150/106, 150/104; 24/3.6; 70/456, 359, 456 R, 459; 63/1.1, 1.2, 12, 43; D3/207, 211; 190/102**  
See application file for complete search history.

*Primary Examiner*—Sue A Weaver  
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Jones Day; Brett Lovejoy

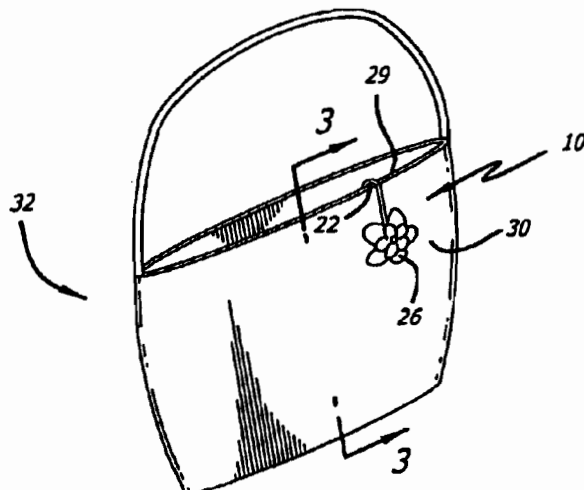
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A key locator includes first and second members. The first member has opposed ends and an intermediate u-shaped region. One of the ends of the first member comprises a hook for engaging the second member which includes a clasp while the other end comprises an enlarged portion for fixing an ornament thereto. The arrangement is suitable for hanging at the open top of a bag-like device such as a purse, backpack or briefcase whereby the ornament is displayed at the same time that the keys are readily accessible without undue fishing efforts.

- (56) **References Cited**  
**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

1,042,843 A	10/1912	Toce
1,106,388 A	8/1914	Juergens
1,165,882 A	12/1915	Killion
1,364,709 A	1/1921	Butler
1,418,979 A	6/1922	Seferlis
1,490,871 A	4/1924	Wagner

17 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



## US 7,537,032 B2

Page 2

## U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,016,224 A	1/1962	Hall	D396,552 S	8/1998	Browne
3,071,938 A	1/1963	Davidson	D398,775 S	9/1998	Fritsche
3,670,524 A	6/1972	Korwin	D403,500 S	1/1999	Winter
3,707,742 A	1/1973	Justice et al.	D403,501 S	1/1999	Winter
3,934,317 A	1/1976	Langwell	D403,502 S	1/1999	Winter
4,004,325 A	1/1977	Hubachek	5,983,686 A	11/1999	Lee
4,113,156 A	9/1978	Brito	D440,399 S	4/2001	DeRouen et al.
4,201,259 A	5/1980	Alsldorf	D441,184 S	5/2001	Haapala
4,221,118 A	9/1980	Chicckine	6,318,610 B1	11/2001	Doherty
4,226,105 A	10/1980	Wehrman	6,334,239 B1	1/2002	Kraut
4,282,733 A	8/1981	Schmitt (Johnston)	D468,091 S	1/2003	Tipton
D262,498 S	1/1982	Beilis	6,536,081 B2	3/2003	Allen et al.
4,319,384 A	3/1982	Horne	6,591,646 B1	7/2003	Huang
4,407,148 A	10/1983	Rousseau	D478,719 S	8/2003	Mercuri
4,430,778 A	2/1984	Sander	6,606,769 B1	8/2003	Harris
4,516,418 A	5/1985	Cuttler	D479,768 S	9/2003	Macevicz
4,523,443 A	6/1985	Momemers	D484,306 S	12/2003	Lau
4,576,839 A	3/1986	Parren	6,772,614 B1	8/2004	Cheng
4,587,818 A	5/1986	Griffin	6,843,086 B2	1/2005	Fitch
D285,989 S	10/1986	MacDonald	6,870,483 B1	3/2005	Davis
D288,984 S	3/1987	Scheurer et al.	D503,850 S	4/2005	Staab
4,665,594 A	5/1987	Wagner	D504,222 S	4/2005	Kieffer
D308,294 S	6/1990	Krassner	6,928,943 B1	8/2005	Neubauer
D309,830 S	8/1990	Kraus	D510,185 S	10/2005	Chan
D311,451 S	10/1990	Chan	7,021,852 B1	4/2006	Turner, III et al.
D312,172 S	11/1990	Ambrosio	7,308,922 B2 *	12/2007	Stein ..... 150/106
4,976,124 A	12/1990	Sanders	2003/0200687 A1	10/2003	Wolfe
5,048,310 A	9/1991	Riley	2003/0200779 A1	10/2003	Fitch
5,078,484 A	1/1992	Vaughn	2004/0020813 A1	2/2004	Moeller et al.
5,173,999 A	12/1992	Welk et al.	2005/0208848 A1	9/2005	Grossman
D341,940 S	12/1993	MacDonald	2005/0257867 A1	11/2005	Vazin
5,312,029 A	5/1994	Tuber	2006/0048343 A1	3/2006	Sinon
D352,821 S	11/1994	Stillwagon	2006/0090302 A1	5/2006	Colby
5,359,870 A	11/1994	Reutlinger	2006/0278311 A1 *	12/2006	Mittelstaedt ..... 150/105
D353,261 S	12/1994	Fort et al.			
D357,350 S	4/1995	Stillwagon			
D366,359 S	1/1996	Riedl			
D371,325 S	7/1996	Fritsche			
5,535,797 A	7/1996	Martindale			
5,551,269 A	9/1996	Lewinstein et al.			
D383,304 S	9/1997	Van Osch			
D385,415 S	10/1997	Turbide			
D392,201 S	3/1998	Chen			
D392,797 S	3/1998	Kampe			
5,729,870 A	3/1998	Sharp			
5,768,915 A	6/1998	Crumrine et al.			

## FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

GB	2180137 A	3/1987
GB	2274236 A	7/1994
GB	227 5173 A	8/1994
JP	2003 174913 A	6/2007

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Mississippi Quarter from The United States Mint, issued 2002.  
Office Action, dated Oct. 23, 2006, for U.S. Appl. No. 10/919,494.  
Office Action, dated Sep. 10, 2007, for U.S. Appl. No. 10/919,494.  
Office Aciton, dated Feb. 21, 2007, for U.S. Appl. No. 10/919,494.

\* cited by examiner

FIG. 1A

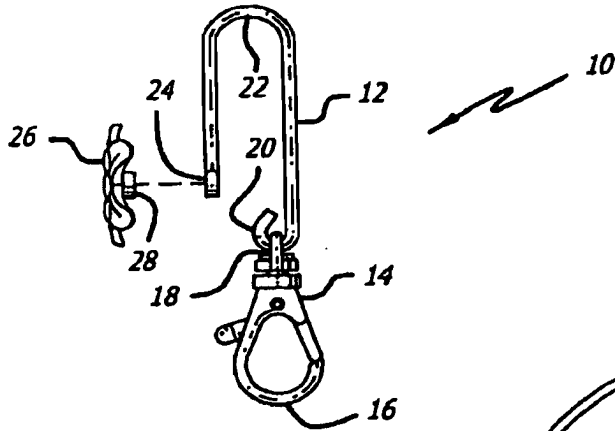
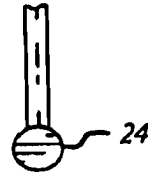


FIG. 1B



32

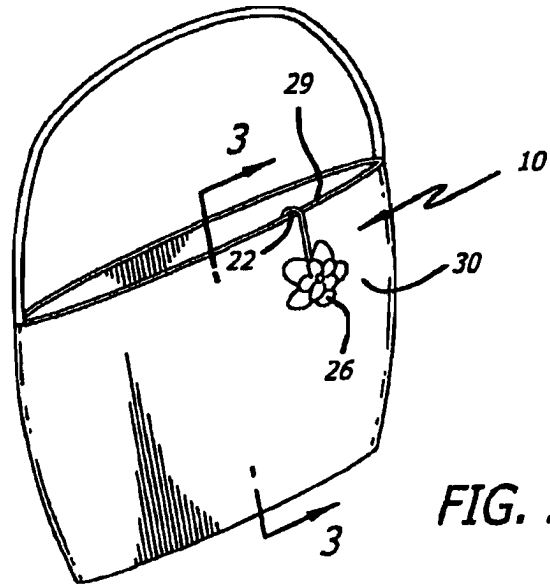


FIG. 2

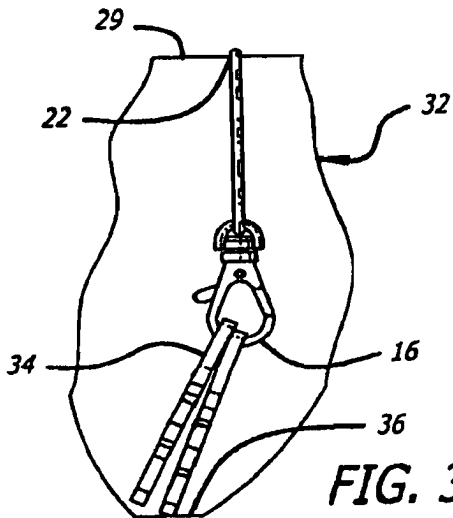


FIG. 3



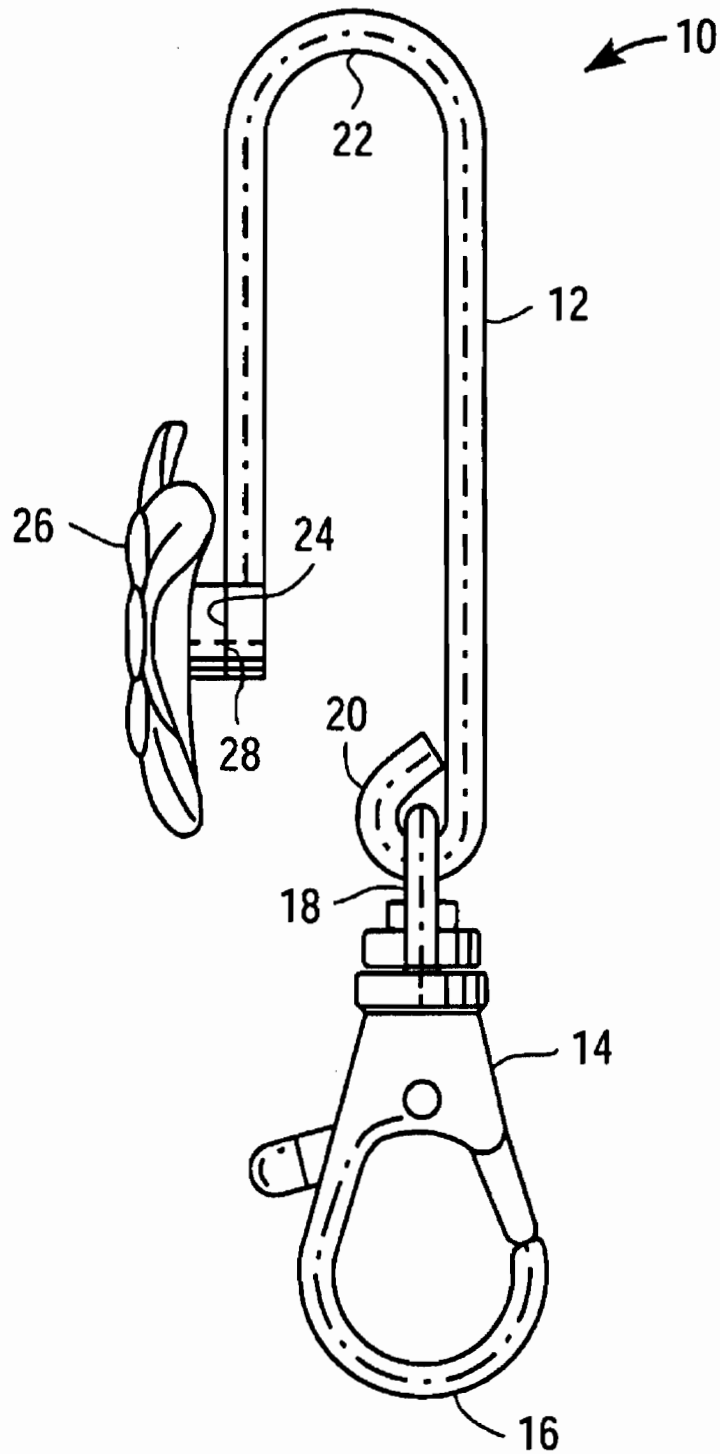


FIG. 1C

## US 7,537,032 B2

1

## KEY LOCATOR

## CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/919,494, filed on Aug. 17, 2004, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,308,922, the entire contents of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

## BACKGROUND

## 1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to key holders. More particularly, this invention pertains to a key holder that is especially adapted to facilitate the ready location of keys in a purse, backpack, briefcase or like bag.

## 2. Brief Description of the Prior Art

A common and popular type of purse or like bag has a top that includes at least a region that is upwardly open in use. Often this type of bag is rather deep, permitting the owner-user to store a variety of items. Further, such depth is generally considered 'fashionable'. A known drawback of the above-described purse or like bag configuration resides in the difficulty of readily retrieving keys, or a group thereof gathered on a key chain, from its interior. This can lead to the frustration of the owner-user and to others. For example, the difficulty of locating car keys at the bottom of a purse can cause significant delay in vacating a parking space.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention addresses the preceding and other shortcomings of the prior art by providing a key locator. Such key locator includes a first member having opposed end portions.

The member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate the end portions. A second member includes a clasp for selectively retaining at least one key. The first and second members are engaged to one another.

The preceding and other features of the invention will become further apparent from the detailed description that follows. Such description is accompanied by a set of drawing figures. Numerals of the drawing figures correspond to numerals of the written description with like numerals referring to like features throughout both the written description and the drawing figures.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1(a) and 1(b) are a front elevation view of the key locator of the invention and a partial planar view of the ornament mounting pad thereof respectively, and FIG. 1(c) is a front elevation view of the key locator of the invention with the decorative element shown attached;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the key locator of the invention in use; and

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the key locator of the invention in use taken at line 3-3 of FIG. 2.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Turning now to the drawings, FIG. 1(a) is a front elevation view of the key locator 10 of the invention. The key locator 10 comprises interlocking first and second members 12 and 14 respectively. Each of the first and second members 12, 14 is

2

preferably of steel or other metal although plastic or other rigid elastomeric material may be employed.

The second member 14 includes a clasp 16 that is preferably rotatably engaged to an inverted u-shaped element 18. The u-shaped element 18 is arranged to engage a hook 20 at one end of the first member 12 to provide flexible engagement of the members 12 and 14.

The first member 12 includes a u-shaped interior region 22. Its opposed end, as shown clearly in FIG. 1(b), comprises an enlarged region 24 that serves as an ornament mounting pad for affixation of a decorative ornament 26. The ornament 26, comprising a flower-like shape as shown in the drawings but not limited thereto, is arranged to face away from the interior of the first member 12 with its back portion 28 preferably fixed to the enlarged region 24 of the member by solder or the like.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the key locator 10 of the invention in use. In FIG. 2, the key locator 10 is hung from the upper edge 29 of a side panel 30 of a bag-like purse 32 with the u-shaped region 22 overhanging the side panel 30 so that the face of the ornament 26 is exposed. This provides the user with an attractive adjunct to the purse 32 that serves the additional function of readily locating the key locator 10.

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the key locator of the invention in use taken at line 3-3 of FIG. 2. Keys 34, secured by the clasp 16 of the second member 14, are seen to lie near or at the bottom 36 of the bag-like purse 32, somewhat suspended from the upper edge 29 of the side panel 30. The u-shaped interior region 22 of the first member 12 of the key locator 10, as mentioned with reference to the preceding figure, is draped or hung over the upper edge 29 to create the suspension effect. The altitude of the bottom of the key locator 10 and keys 34 will depend upon the length of the key locator 10 relative to the depth of the side panel 30 of the bag-like purse 32. However, regardless of the precise altitude of the keys 34 within the purse 32, they may be readily located due to the visible presence of the ornament 26.

Thus, it can be seen that the present invention provides a key locator especially suitable for use with a purse, backpack, briefcase or other bag-like device. By employing the key locator of the invention in conjunction with such a device, one may find keys stored within without delay. Further, by providing a decorative ornament for indicating the location of the key locator, the appearance of the bag is enhanced.

While this invention has been described with reference to its presently preferred embodiment, it is not limited thereto. Rather the invention is limited only insofar as it is defined by the following set of patent claims and includes within its scope all equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A key locator comprising, in combination:

- a) a bent rod-shaped first member having a first end portion and a second end portion; and
- b) a second member including a clasp for selectively retaining at least one key; wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other; said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second portion; said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an edge; said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member is configured for substantially permanently and flexibly engaging with the second member; and

US 7,537,032 B2

3

said clasp is rotatably fixed to a u-shaped element of said second member, wherein the u-shaped element is substantially permanently and flexibly engaged to said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member.

2. A key locator as defined in claim 1 further including an ornament directly and permanently fixed to said second end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member so that a first face of the ornament is exposed and so that the ornament is arranged to face away from an interior of said bent rod-shaped first member, wherein the ornament provides the function of readily locating the key locator on said edge and wherein the ornament provides the function of an attractive adjunct.

3. A key locator as defined in claim 2 wherein said second end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member comprises an enlarged portion for affixation of said ornament.

4. A key locator as defined in claim 3 wherein said ornament comprises a flower shape.

5. A key locator as defined in claim 3 wherein a back portion of said ornament is soldered onto said enlarged portion.

6. The key locator as defined in claim 1 wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are each made of a material selected from the group consisting of metal, steel, and plastic.

7. A key locator as defined in claim 1, wherein the edge is an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse.

8. A key locator as defined in claim 7, wherein the bag-like purse is a purse, a backpack, or a briefcase.

9. A key locator as defined in claim 1, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are configured so that when the bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the edge, the second member is necessarily retrieved.

10. A two-member apparatus comprising a bent rod-shaped first member and a second member, wherein

(i) said bent rod-shaped first member has a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other;

(ii) said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second end portion wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an edge;

(iii) said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member is configured for substantially permanently and flexibly engaging with said second member and

(iv) an ornament is directly and permanently fixed to said second end portion so that a face of the ornament is exposed and wherein the ornament provides the function of readily locating the two-member apparatus on the edge and wherein the ornament provides the function of serving as an attractive adjunct; and

wherein said second member comprises a clasp that is rotatably fixed to a u-shaped element and wherein said

4

u-shaped element engages said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member, wherein the clasp is configured for selectively holding keys.

11. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein said ornament comprises a flower shape.

12. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein a back portion of said ornament is soldered onto said second end portion.

13. The two-member apparatus of claim 10, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are each made of a material selected from the group consisting of metal, steel, and plastic.

14. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein the edge is an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse.

15. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein the bag-like purse is a purse, a backpack, or a briefcase.

16. A two-member apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein said bent rod-shaped first member and said second member are configured so that when the bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the edge, the second member is necessarily retrieved.

17. A method comprising:

a) retaining at least one key by a clasp of a second member of an apparatus that comprises at least said second member and a bent rod-shaped first member, wherein

(i) said bent rod-shaped first member of said apparatus has a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are opposed to each other,

(ii) said bent rod-shaped first member incorporates a u-shaped region intermediate said first end portion and said second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion are not urged against each other and are configured to allow said u-shaped region to hang from an upper edge of a side panel of a bag-like purse,

(iii) said first end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member is configured to substantially permanently and flexibly engage with said second member and

(iv) said second end portion of said bent rod-shaped first member comprises an enlarged solid portion for affixation of an ornament that localizes the apparatus on the upper edge and serves as an attractive adjunct; and

b) hanging the apparatus from said upper edge of said side panel of said bag-like purse with the u-shaped region overhanging the side panel so that said second end portion is exposed; and

c) retrieving said bent rod-shaped first member of said apparatus from said upper edge such that, when said bent rod-shaped first member is retrieved from the upper edge, the at least one key retained by the clasp of the second member is necessarily retrieved.

\* \* \* \* \*