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Vincent

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(54) **DEVICE AND METHOD FOR HANGING PHOTOGRAPHS OR CARDS**

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G09F 15/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **40/607.11**; 40/617; 211/45; 211/205; 248/469

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See application file for complete search history.

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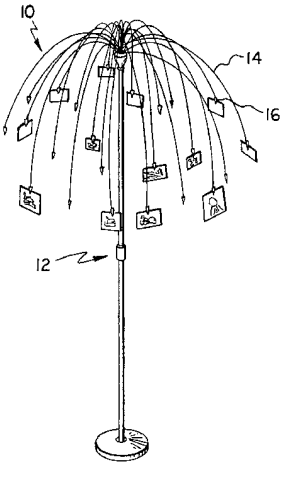
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention broadly comprises a device for displaying an object including a stand, at least one arcuate hanger element connected to the stand, and a fastener connected to the at least one arcuate hanger element. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is symmetrically arranged with respect to the stand. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element comprises a length and at least two hanger elements in the at least one hanger element have different respective lengths. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is flexible. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is wire. The at least one hanger element comprises a distal end and the fastener is connected to the distal end. In some aspects, the fastener is a clip.

14 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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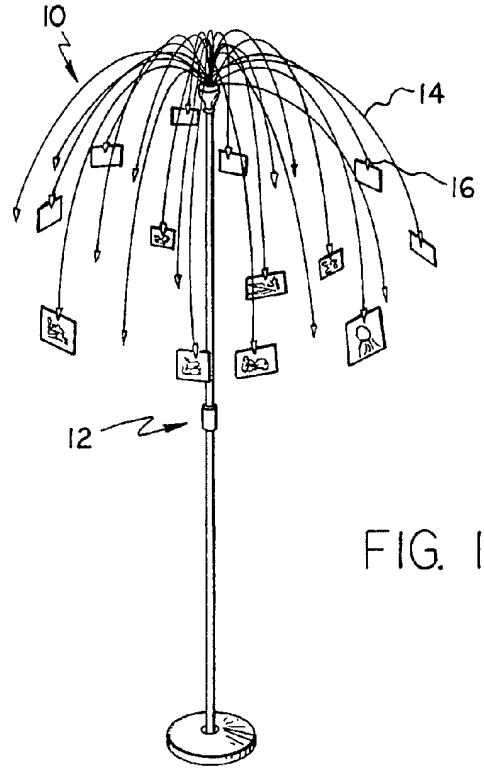


FIG. 1

FIG. 3

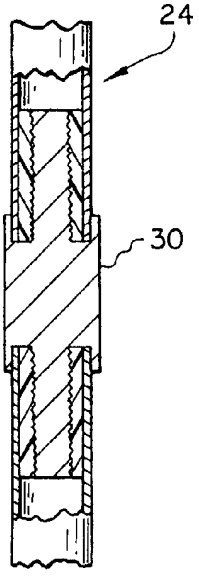
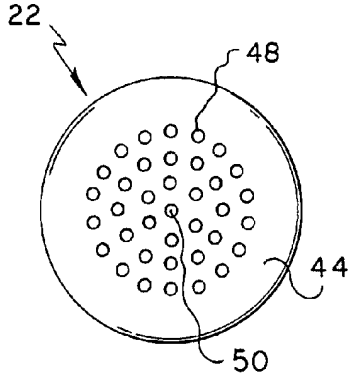


FIG. 6



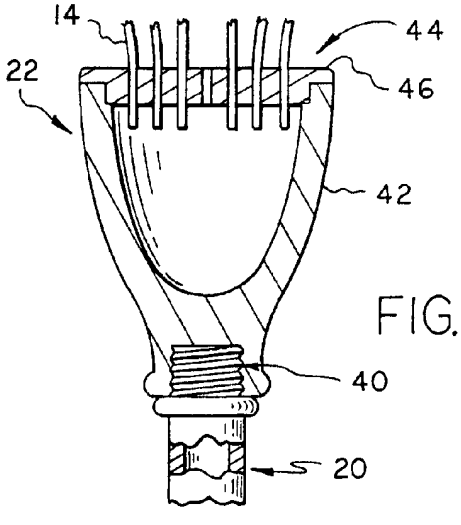


FIG. 5

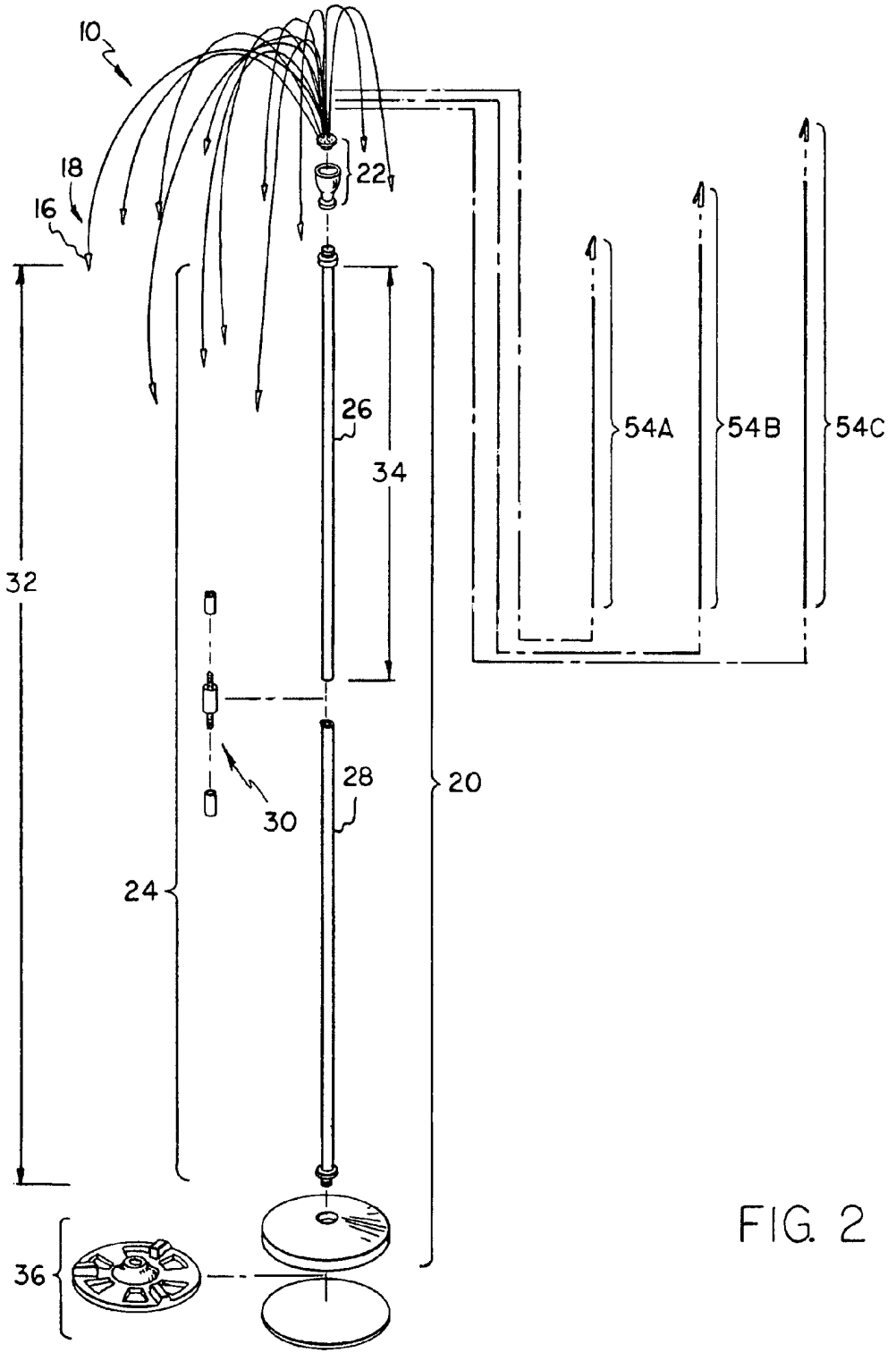
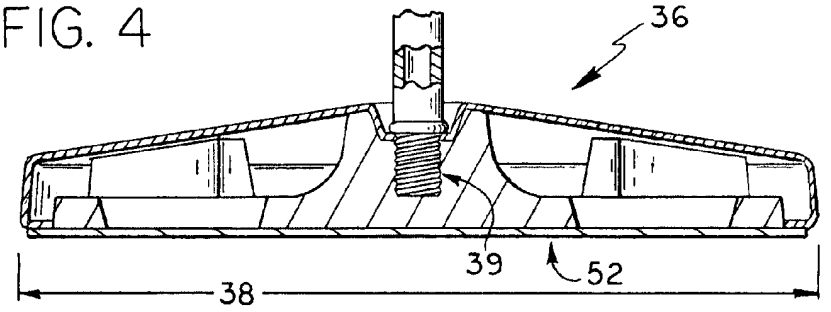


FIG. 2

FIG. 4



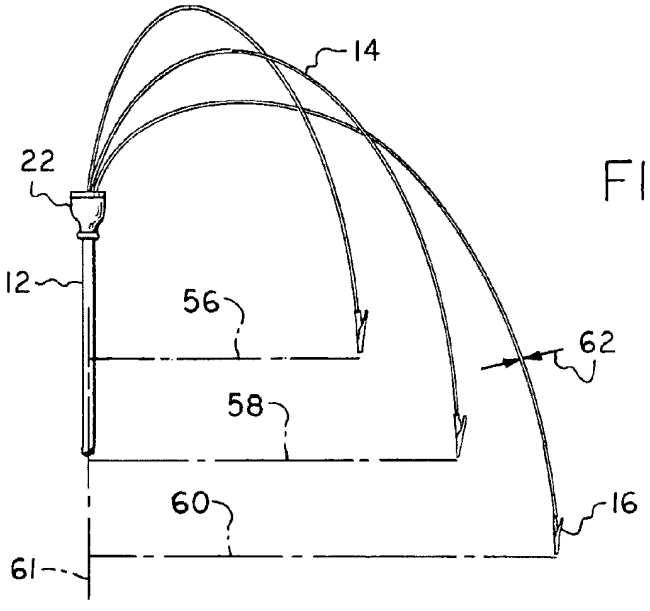
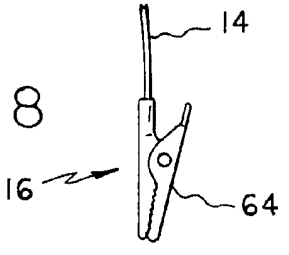


FIG. 7

FIG. 8



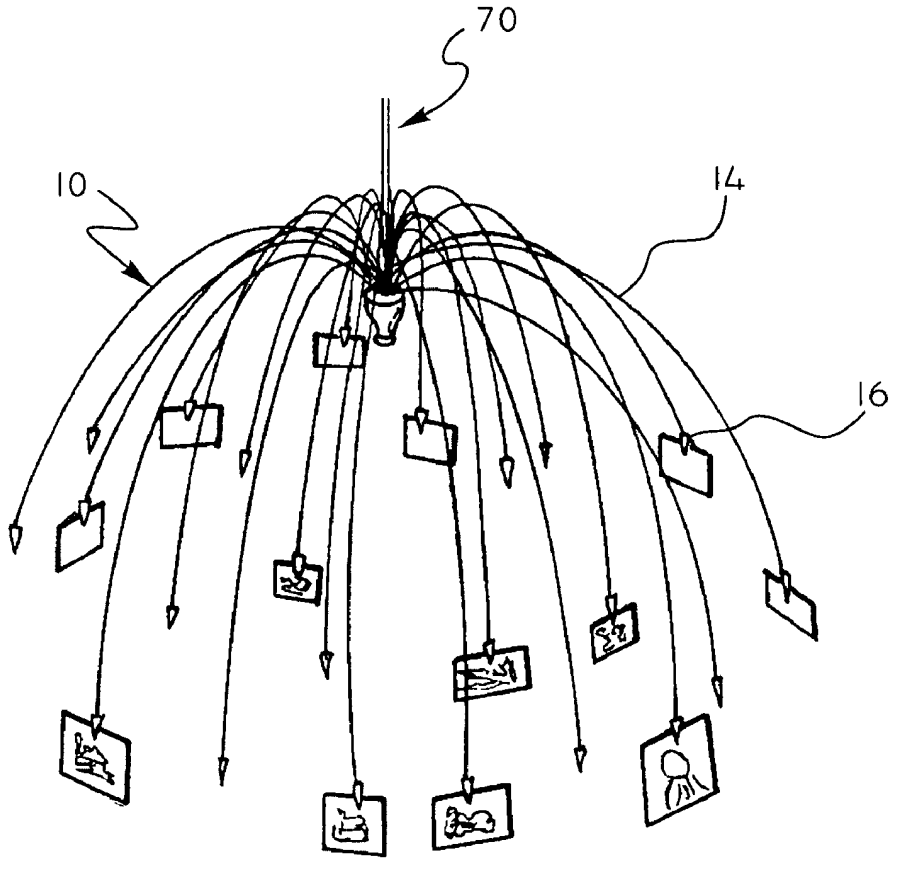


FIG. 9

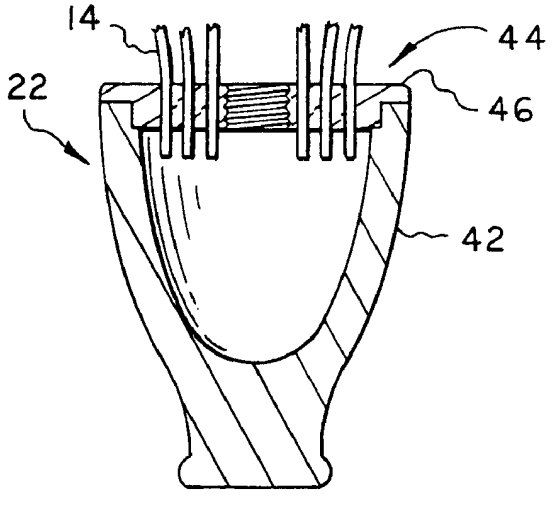


FIG. 10

DEVICE AND METHOD FOR HANGING PHOTOGRAPHS OR CARDS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates generally to devices for displaying objects such as photographs and cards. In particular, the invention relates to a stand with a plurality of arcuate hanger elements radiating from the stand with fasteners for grasping photographs and cards on the ends of the hanger elements.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is known to display photographs or cards from a stand. For example, U.S. Design Pat. No. D460,273 (Hennick) teaches a free-standing mobile/stand having a plurality of curved metal arcs from which photographs can be hung. Unfortunately, the stand and the arcs are integral, that is, each respective arc is a continuation of a vertical piece which is a continuation of a piece forming the base of Hennick's unit. This "unibody" construction limits the number of arc units than can be reasonably deployed (Hennick shows only six). This in turn limits the number of photographs that can be displayed. The "unibody" construction also results in a rather heavy and awkward device. Also, Hennick shows photographs hanging from the ends of the arcs. Unfortunately, this is a rather specialized arrangement. For example, it appears that special holders with special chain attaching means are needed. Thus, it appears to be difficult for a user to easily change the items being displayed.

U.S. Pat. No. 6,349,940 Nimry teaches a device for holding game cards. Unfortunately, Nimry's device is arranged to show cards only in one direction, is not meant for display purposes, and holds a rather small number of cards. In short, Nimry is not intended to or suitable for displaying photographs or other types of cards. U.S. Pat. No. 5,246,374 (Boodram) teaches a family tree display. This display is very specialized and requires special "branches" and special picture holders. Boodram is only intended to show genealogically related photographs and is not intended to or suitable for the general display of photographs and cards.

Thus, there is a long-felt need to provide a device for displaying photographs and cards that allows a user to display a large number of photographs and cards, to easily and quickly add or remove photographs and cards from the device, is well-adapted for general use, does not require specialized pieces to hang the photographs and cards, and engenders a graceful and aesthetically pleasing presentation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention broadly comprises a device for displaying an object including a stand, at least one arcuate hanger element connected to the stand, and a fastener connected to the at least one arcuate hanger element. The stand includes an upright member and a head. The at least one hanger element is connected to the head. In some aspects, the head is removably attached to the upright member.

In some aspects, the upright member further comprises a base with a bottom surface, the head further comprises a top surface substantially co-planar with the bottom surface, and the at least one hanger element is connected to the top surface. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is symmetrically arranged with respect to the stand. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element comprises a length and at least two hanger elements in the at least one hanger element have different respective lengths.

In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is flexible. In some aspects, the at least one hanger element is wire. The at least one hanger element comprises a distal end and the fastener is connected to the distal end. In some aspects, the fastener is a clip.

It is a general object of the present invention to provide a device for displaying photographs and cards that allows a user to display a large number of photographs and cards and to easily and quickly add or remove photographs or cards.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a device for displaying photographs and cards that is well-adapted for general use and does not require specialized pieces to hang the photographs and cards.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a device for displaying photographs and cards that engenders a graceful and aesthetically pleasing presentation.

These and other objects and advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciable from the following description of preferred embodiments of the invention and from the accompanying drawings and claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a prospective view of a present invention device for displaying an object;

FIG. **2** is an exploded view of the device in FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a detail of the post in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** is a detail of the base in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **5** is a side view of the head shown in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **6** is a top view of the head shown in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **7** is a detail of the hanging elements shown in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **8** is a detail of the fastener shown in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **9** is a prospective view of an embodiment of a present invention device for displaying an object; and,

FIG. **10** is a side view of the head shown in FIG. **9**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

At the outset, it should be appreciated that like drawing numbers on different drawing views identify identical, or functionally similar, structural elements of the invention. While the present invention is described with respect to what is presently considered to be the preferred aspects, it is to be understood that the invention as claimed is not limited to the disclosed aspects.

Furthermore, it is understood that this invention is not limited to the particular methodology, materials and modifications described and as such may, of course, vary. It is also understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular aspects only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention, which is limited only by the appended claims.

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood to one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although any methods, devices or materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the invention, the preferred methods, devices, and materials are now described.

FIG. **1** is a prospective view of present invention device **10** for displaying an object.

FIG. **2** is an exploded view of device **10** in FIG. **1**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1** and **2**. Device **10** includes stand **12** and at least one hanger element **14**. Device **10** is not limited to any particular number of elements **14**. Elements **14** have an arcuate or curved shape. Fasteners **16**

are connected to the distal ends **18** of elements **14**. Stand **12** includes upright member **20** and head **22**. Elements **14** are connected to head **22**. Member **20** and head **22** can be made of any material or combination of materials known in the art. In some aspects member **20** and/or head **22** are spun or stamped metal. Any finish known in the art can be applied to member **20** and head **22**.

FIG. **3** is a detail of post **24**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1-3**. Member **20** includes post **24**. Post **24** can be solid or hollow. In some aspects, post **24** is modular. For example, FIG. **3** shows parts **26** and **28** joined by connector **30**. It should be understood that post **24** is not limited to any particular number or configuration of component parts and connectors. It also should be understood that any means known in the art can be used for connector **30**. Length **32** of post **24** can be varied. For example, if device **10** is to rest on a floor, length **32** can be longer, and if device **10** is to rest on a table, desk, etc., length **32** can be made shorter. For those aspects in which post **24** has multiple parts, the lengths of those parts, for example, length **34** of part **26**, can be varied.

FIG. **4** is a detail of base **36**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1-4**. Base **36** is generally arranged to rest upon a horizontal surface such as a floor or table top and to provide a stable base for device **10**. Diameter **38** can be varied and the weight and/or weight distribution of base **36** can be varied. In some aspects, post **24** is removably connected to base **36**. Any method known in the art, for example, threaded connection **39**, can be used to join post **24** and base **36**. In some aspects (not shown), post **24** is fixedly attached to base **36**.

FIG. **5** is a side view of head **22**.

FIG. **6** is a top view of head **22**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1-6**. In some aspects (not shown), head **22** is fixedly attached to member **20**, or is integral to member **20**. In some aspects, head **22** is removably connected to member **20**. Any method known in the art, for example, threaded connection **40** shown in FIG. **5**, can be used to removably join member **20** and head **22**. In some aspects, head **22** includes body **42** with top surface **44**. Elements **14** are connected to surface **44**. In some aspects, body **42** includes cap **46**. Cap **46** can be integral to body **42** (not shown) or can be a separate piece connected to cap **46**. Surface **44** includes openings **48**. Elements **14** are fastened to cap **46** using openings **48**. Any means known in the art can be used to fasten elements **14** using openings **48**. For example, the openings and respective elements can be complementarily threaded, the elements can be soldered to the cap, or the elements may have a friction fit with respect to the openings. In some aspects, elements **14** are arranged symmetrically with respect to stand **12**. For example, openings **48** are arranged symmetrically in cap **46**, for example, about center point **50**. In FIGS. **1** and **2**, openings **48** are configured in concentric circles about point **50**. However, it should be understood that other configurations of openings **48** are included in the spirit and scope of the claims. In some aspects, top surface **42** is substantially co-planar with bottom surface **52** of base **36**. This co-planar configuration and the configuration of openings **48** gives rise to a fountain-like shape for elements **14**.

FIG. **7** is a detail of elements **14** shown in FIG. **2**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1-7**. Each element **14** has a length **54**. In some aspects, elements **14** have one of three lengths **54**, lengths **54**A, **54**B, and **54**C as shown in FIG. **2**. However, it should be understood that the present invention is not limited to any particular combination of length **54** or lengths **54** and that any such combination is included in the spirit and scope of the claims. For example, elements **14** can have a same length **54**, can have one of two lengths **54**, or can have one of more than three lengths **54**. By varying lengths **54**, the disposition of the associated connectors **16** can be controlled and a desired effect created. For example, levels **56**, **58**, and **60** in FIG. **7**, measured with respect to axis **61**, are created by the lengths shown in FIGS. **2** and **7**.

In some aspects, hanger elements **14** are flexible and the arcuate shape of elements **14** is due to the bending of elements **14** by gravity. In some aspects (not shown), elements **14** are relatively rigid. In cross-section (not shown) elements **14** can have any shape known in the art. In general, a cross-section is circular, but it should be understood that other cross-sectional shapes are included in the spirit and scope of the claims. In some aspects, elements **14** are tubular (hollow). In some aspects, elements **14** are wire. In some aspects, elements **14** are made of a flexible metal or plastic rod. Diameter **62** of elements **14** can be selected in accordance with the properties of the material forming elements **14** and the desired shape of elements **14**. For example, decreasing diameter **62** generally increases the curvature of elements **14** for those aspects with flexible elements **14** and would vary the location of levels **56**, **58**, and **60**.

FIG. **8** is a detail of fastener **16** shown in FIG. **2**. The following should be viewed in light of FIGS. **1-8**. In some aspects, fastener **16** is a clip, for example, alligator clip **64**. However, it should be understood that other types of fasteners are included in the spirit and scope of the claims. In general, fastener **16** is selected for ease of use by a person using device **10**. In some aspects, fastener **16** is configured to grasp a photograph or a piece of paper, such as a postcard or a greeting card. However, it should be understood that fastener **16** can be used to grasp other objects and the suitability of such objects is generally with respect to a size, shape, or weight of such objects or a desired use of the device **10**. For example (not shown), device **10** can be used to hold multi-media art objects.

In some aspects, device **10** is configured for a chandelier application. That is, rather than being supported on stand **12**, head **22** is arranged to receive hanging member **70** from which head **22** is suspended or hung in space. In some aspects, point **50** is a hole or other means for connecting head **22** to hanging member **70**, for example a rod or flexible element such as a cord or chain. In these aspects, point **50** can be a threaded hole, a hook, an eyelet, or any other means known in the art. In some aspects (not shown), other or multiple points on head **22** are configured for receiving a hanging member.

Thus, it is seen that the objects of the invention are efficiently obtained, although changes and modifications to the invention should be readily apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art, without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as claimed. Although the invention is described by reference to a specific preferred embodiment, it is clear that variations can be made without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. A device for displaying an object, comprising:

a stand including a base and a single straight non-arcuate post, the single straight non-arcuate post extending substantially orthogonally from the base and including a first end connectable to the base and a second end, the second end of the post opposite the first end of the post;

a head with a first end, connectable to the second end of the single straight non-arcuate post, and a top side, opposite the first end of the head and facing away from the first end of the head;

a plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements, wherein each flexible arcuate hanger element in the plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements is a separate piece from the remaining flexible arcuate hanger elements in the plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements and wherein said each flexible arcuate hanger element includes a respective first end connected to the top side; and,

a respective fastener connected to a respective second end of said each flexible arcuate hanger element in the plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements.

2. The device recited in claim **1** wherein said head is removably attached to said single straight non-arcuate post.

3. The device recited in claim **1** wherein said base comprises a bottom surface, and said top side is substantially parallel to said bottom surface.

4. The device recited in claim **1** wherein the plurality of arcuate hanger elements is symmetrically arranged with respect to said stand.

5. The device recited in claim **1** wherein said each arcuate hanger element comprises a respective first hanger element with a respective first length and a respective second hanger element with a respective second length different than the respective first length.

6. The device recited in claim **1** wherein said each arcuate hanger element is wire.

7. The device recited in claim **1** wherein said respective fastener is a clip.

8. A method for displaying a plurality of objects, comprising:

connecting a first end of a single straight non-arcuate post to a base for a stand;

connecting a second end of the single straight non-arcuate post to a first end of a head, the second end of the post opposite the first end of the post, wherein the head includes a top side, opposite the first end of the head and facing away from the first end of the head;

connecting a respective first end for each flexible arcuate hanger element from a plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements to said top side, wherein said each flexible arcuate hanger element is a separate piece from the remaining flexible arcuate hanger elements in the plurality of flexible arcuate hanger elements; and,

connecting a respective fastener to a respective second end of said each flexible arcuate hanger element, the respective fastener arranged to grasp a respective object from the plurality of objects.

9. The method of claim **8** wherein said base comprises a bottom surface, and wherein said top side is substantially parallel to said bottom surface.

10. The method of claim **8** wherein said each arcuate hanger element comprises a respective first hanger element with a respective first length and a respective second hanger element with a respective second length different than the respective first length.

11. The method of claim **8** wherein said each arcuate hanger element is wire.

12. The method of claim **8** wherein said respective fastener is a clip.

13. A device for displaying an object, comprising:

a stand including a base and a single straight non-arcuate post, the single straight non-arcuate post extending substantially orthogonally from the base and including a first end connectable to the base;

a head connectable to a second end of the single straight non-arcuate post, the second end opposite the first end;

a plurality of arcuate hanger elements, wherein each arcuate hanger element in the plurality of arcuate hanger elements is a separate piece from the remaining arcuate hanger elements in the plurality of arcuate hanger elements and wherein said each arcuate hanger element includes a respective first end connected to the head; and,

a respective fastener connected to a respective second end of said each arcuate hanger element in the plurality of arcuate hanger elements, wherein said base comprises a bottom surface, said head further comprises a top side substantially parallel to said bottom surface, and said each arcuate hanger element is connected to said top side.

14. A method for displaying a plurality of objects, comprising:

connecting a first end of a single straight non-arcuate post to a base for a stand;

connecting a second end of the single straight non-arcuate post to a head, the second end opposite the first end;

connecting a respective first end for each arcuate hanger element from a plurality of arcuate hanger elements to said head, wherein said each arcuate hanger element is a separate piece from the remaining arcuate hanger elements in the plurality of arcuate hanger elements; and,

connecting a respective fastener to a respective second end of said each arcuate hanger element, the respective fastener arranged to grasp a respective object from the plurality of objects, wherein said base comprises a bottom surface, said head further comprises a top side substantially parallel to said bottom surface and wherein connecting a respective first end of said each hanger element to said head further comprises connecting said each arcuate hanger element to said top side.

* * * * *