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United States Patent [19]
Toews

[11] **Patent Number:** **Plant 10,810**
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[54] **PEACH TREE NAMED 'SIERRA GEM'**

[75] **Inventor:** **Ron Toews, Reedley, Calif.**

[73] **Assignee:** **The Burchell Nursery, Inc., Oakdale, Calif.**

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[51] **Int. Cl.⁶** **A01H 5/00**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./43.2**

[58] **Field of Search** **Plt./43.2, 42.1,**
Plt./43.1

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinctive variety of peach tree is described and which is a chance sport of a 'Fancy Lady' peach tree (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023), but which is distinguishable therefrom and, characterized principally as to novelty by producing fruit which are ripe for harvesting and shipment some seven days earlier than 'Fancy Lady' peach tree at the same geographical location.

1 Drawing Sheet

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BACKGROUND OF THE NEW VARIETY

The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of peach tree which will hereinafter be denominated vari-
etarily as 'Sierra Gem', and more particularly to a peach tree
which produces fruit which are ripe for commercial harvest-
ing and shipment between about June 12 to about June 16
under the environmental conditions prevailing in the San
Joaquin Valley of Central California. The present variety is
further distinguished as to novelty by producing a freestone
fruit which has a noteworthy flavor in comparison to the
commercial varieties which mature in the same season, and
which additionally has a higher degree of coloration and a
distinctive yellow-orange stripe which occurs along or in the
suture. The present variety of peach tree is mature for
harvesting and shipment approximately one week before its
parent, 'Fancy Lady', (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023).

Although there is a number of criteria which a commer-
cial variety of tree fruit must meet or exceed if it is to be
successful in the fresh market, without question, the ripening
date, flavor, coloration of the skin, texture, shipping quality
and size are among the most important factors. For example,
an attractive color as well as good to excellent flavor, if
particularly distinctive and different than currently existing
varieties attracts immediate attention in the marketplace.
These characteristics, among others, enhance the likelihood
that the variety will be a commercial success.

It should be understood that fresh market peaches are
characterized by two separate color types, that is, white-
fleshed peaches and yellow fleshed peaches. In the case of
white fleshed peaches, this variety is characterized by a
ground color which is lighter than the yellow-fleshed vari-
eties. In addition, the intensity of the blush color and
quantity of same is normally greater on the yellow-fleshed
varieties. Additionally, the yellow-fleshed peach varieties,
in contrast, are typically characterized by a yellow to orange
skin coloration with a red blush of various degrees.

**ORIGIN AND ASEXUAL REPRODUCTION OF
THE NEW VARIETY**

The present variety of peach tree was discovered by the
inventor within the cultivated area of his peach orchard
which is located approximately 1¾ miles south of Manning
Avenue on the east side of Lac Jac Road in Reedley, Calif.,
during the growing season of 1991. The present variety was
discovered growing as a chance sport in a planting of 'Fancy
Lady' peach trees (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023). The inventor,

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at that time, noted its unique characteristics and marked the
subject sport for subsequent observation. The inventor has
observed the sport for the last five years. Subsequent to
discovery, the inventor removed scion wood from the
marked sport and grafted it into Nemagard seedlings during
the 1991 and 1992 season. These test trees were located in
another peach planting owned by the inventor, and which is
located on the north side of Huntsman Avenue, and approxi-
mately ½ mile east of Lac Jac Road in Reedley, Calif.
Continued observation of the original sport and the asexu-
ally reproduced progeny has confirmed that the distinguish-
ing characteristics of the plant run true to the original sport
and are faithfully transmitted through such asexual propa-
gation.

SUMMARY OF THE NEW VARIETY

The 'Sierra Gem' peach tree is characterized as to novelty
by producing a freestone fruit which has an attractive orange
to reddish blush, and a noteworthy yellow skin coloration
with a distinctively attractive yellow-orange stripe in the
suture region. Further, the fruit produced by the 'Sierra
Gem' peach tree is ripe for commercial harvesting and
shipment approximately June 12 to June 16 under the
environmental conditions existing in the San Joaquin Valley
of Central California. The new and novel variety of peach
tree is perhaps most closely similar to its parent 'Fancy
Lady', (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023), but is distinguishable
therefrom and characterized principally as to novelty by
producing a high quality, fresh market, freestone, yellow
fleshed peach of medium size and which ripens during the
second week of June and which additionally possesses a
high degree of color with a distinctive yellow-orange stripe
in the suture region. In further contrast with the fruit of the
'Fancy Lady' peach tree, (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023), the
new variety produces fruit which are equal to or slightly
larger in size than that produced by 'Fancy Lady' peach tree
and has a considerably richer flavor than the fruit produced
by the 'Fancy Lady' peach tree.

In addition to the foregoing, the exterior appearance of the
new variety and the parent 'Fancy Lady' vary substantially.
For example, the exterior appearance of the fruit produced
by the 'Fancy Lady' peach tree is characteristic of most
yellow-freestone peach varieties grown in California, that is,
it has a mostly orange skin coloration and occasionally,
some amount of reddish blush may appear on the skin of the
fruit which has been exposed to direct sunlight. In contrast,
the new variety of peach has increased amounts of red

coloration (blush). Still further, the new variety has, as earlier noted, a distinctive yellow- orange color in the suture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The accompanying drawing is a color photograph of a characteristic twig bearing typical leaves, several of which display both the dorsal and ventral coloration thereof, and mature fruit showing both their internal and external coloration sufficiently matured for harvesting and shipment. Additionally, one fruit is dissected in the axial plane to illustrate the stone characteristics thereof. All of the fruit are of the subject variety.

All color code designations are by reference to the Dictionary of Color, by Maerz and Paul, First Edition 1930. Common color names are also employed occasionally.

Tree:

Vigor.—Vigorous.

Chilling requirements.—Normal for peach trees grown under typical San Joaquin Valley climatic conditions.

Figure.—Upright, spreading and open in density with the eventual shape and form determined by pruning practices.

Productivity.—Productive.

Regularly of bearing.—Regular.

Trunk:

Size.—Large in diameter in relative comparison to other peach cultivars.

Surface texture.—Moderately smooth with some rough areas.

Color:

Old bark.—Page 132, Plate 55, A-3, Pigeon.

Less mature bark.—Scaffold branches which are somewhat smoother appear more brown colored — Plate 55, C-3.

Lenticels.—Numbers — numerous. Size — medium.

Branches:

Size.—Medium as compared to other varieties.

Surface texture.—Considered smooth.

Color.—One year or older wood — page 38, plate 8, E6, Rose Ebony. Immature branches — page 62, plate 20, J 3, Shadow Green.

Surface texture.—Immature growth — considered smooth.

Leaves:

Size.—Average length — approximately 147–166 mm (5.79 to 6.54 inches). Average width — approximately 37–47 mm (1.46 to 1.85 inches). Thickness — about average.

Form.—Shape — Lanceolate. Leaf tip — Acute to acuminate.

Color.—Upwardly disposed surface — Page 68, Plate 23, J8, Mt. Vernon Green. Downwardly disposed surface — Page 66, Plate 22, I3.

Leaf vein.—Midvein on lower leaf surface — Page 60, Plate 19, 5B, Nile Green.

Leaf margin.—Slightly undulating; and generally finely serrate or crenate.

Glands.—Reniform — small in size; generally 3–4 per leaf; an located on both sides of leaf; color — green. This color is not particularly distinctive, however.

Petiole.—Length — approximately 11–14 mm (0.43 to 0.55 inches). Width — approximately 1.5 mm (0.059 inch). Color — Page 64, Plate 21, 2L, Moss Green.

Stipules.—None are apparent.

Flowers:

Buds.—Shape — they assume the shape of a simple bud. Width — approximately 7–9 mm (0.28 to 0.35 inches). Length — approximately 10–12 mm (0.39 to 0.47 inches). Surface texture — slightly pubescent.

Date of first bloom.—Feb. 25, 1997, under environmental conditions prevailing in the San Joaquin Valley of central California.

Date of full bloom.—Mar. 6, 1997, under the environmental conditions prevailing in the San Joaquin Valley of central California.

Bloom size.—approximately 16–18 mm (0.63–0.71 inches) in diameter.

Petals.—Color — *peripheral edge* — Page 128, Plate 53, 9B. Color — *central portion* — Page 128, Plate 53, C5.

Stamens.—About 25–30 per bloom.

Fruit:

Maturity when described.—Ripe for commercial harvesting and shipping approximately Jun. 12–16, 1997, at Reedley, Calif. in the San Joaquin Valley of central California. The yellow-fleshed freestone fruit matures about seven days earlier than that of the 'Fancy Lady' peach tree (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,023) in the Reedley area, and is slightly larger in size.

Size.—Average diameter in the suture plane — approximately 65 mm (2.56 inches). Average diameter transverse to the suture plane — approximately 70 mm (2.76 inches). Average diameter transverse and at right angle to the suture plane — approximately 70 mm (2.76 inches).

Form.—Uniformity — fairly uniform. Symmetry — symmetrical and considered globose.

Ripening.—Even.

Suture.—Moderately pronounced but shallow.

Ventral surface.—Generally slightly rounded at the base.

Stem cavity.—Obtuse. Length — approximately 25–35 mm (0.98 to 1.38 inches). Width — approximately 20–25 mm (0.79 to 0.98 inches). Depth — approximately 18–19 mm (0.71 to 0.75 inches).

Stem.—Length — approximately 8 mm (0.31 inches). Width — approximately 5 mm (0.20 inches).

Pistil point.—Form — considered shallow; slightly pointed.

Skin.—Down — moderate. Tendency to crack — not known. Blush coloration — Page 32, Plate 5, L8, Barberry Ground coloration — Page 32, Plate 5, L10, Chimney R+.

Flesh.—Color — Page 46, Plate 12, J5, Light Stone. Texture — medium. Flavor — excellent and considered subacid. Aroma — Pleasant and considered very good. Juice — very good. Surface texture of pit cavity — rough. Color of pit cavity — Page 46, Plate 12, J5. Color of pit well — Page 46, Plate 12, L6, Punjab. Fibers — Numerous; approximately 15–25 mm in length (0.89 to 0.98 inches).

Stone.—Attachment — freestone. Size — Length — approximately 25–31 mm (0.98 to 1.46 inches). Width — approximately 20–25 mm (0.79 to 0.98 inches). Thickness — approximately 17–19 mm (0.67 to 0.75 inches). Form — generally oval to oblong. Color — Page 50, Plate 14, 8B, Tanbark Algerian. Sides — equal in size and deeply pitted near the base. Ridges — several on each side, located

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near the apex and base. Base — shape is rounded. Size and position of grooves — deep and near the apex. Dorsal edge — thin, with deep grooves throughout. Ventral edge — thin, with a wing present throughout. Splitting tendency — not evident.

Use.—fresh market.

Eating quality.—Very good.

Keeping quality.—Good.

Shipping quality.—Good.

Although this new variety of peach tree possesses the above described characteristics as a result of the growing conditions prevailing near Reedley, Calif., in the San Joaquin Valley of central California, it is to be understood that variations of the usual magnitude and characteristics

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incidental to changes in growing conditions and cultural practices are to be expected.

Having thus described and illustrated my new variety of peach tree, which I claim as new and desire to be secured by Plant Letters Patent is:

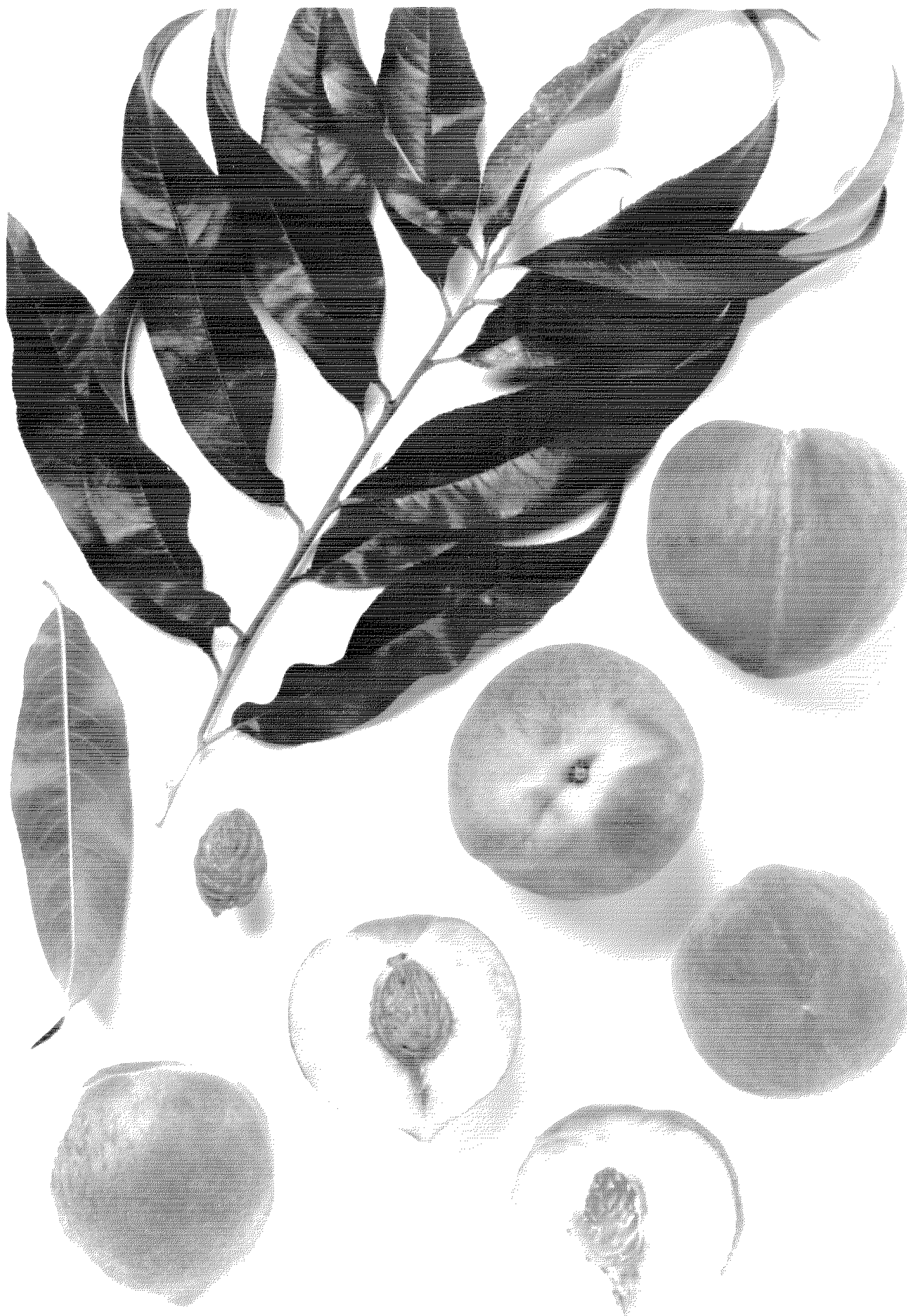
1. A new and distinctive variety of peach tree substantially as illustrated and described and which is characterized as to novelty by producing a yellow, freestone fruit which is mature for commercial harvesting and shipment approximately Jun. 12–16 under the environmental conditions prevailing in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, and which fruit further has a distinctive surface color and a pleasing flavor.

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U.S. Patent

Mar. 2, 1999

Plant 10,810



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : PP10,810

DATED : March 2, 1999

INVENTOR(S) : Ron Toews

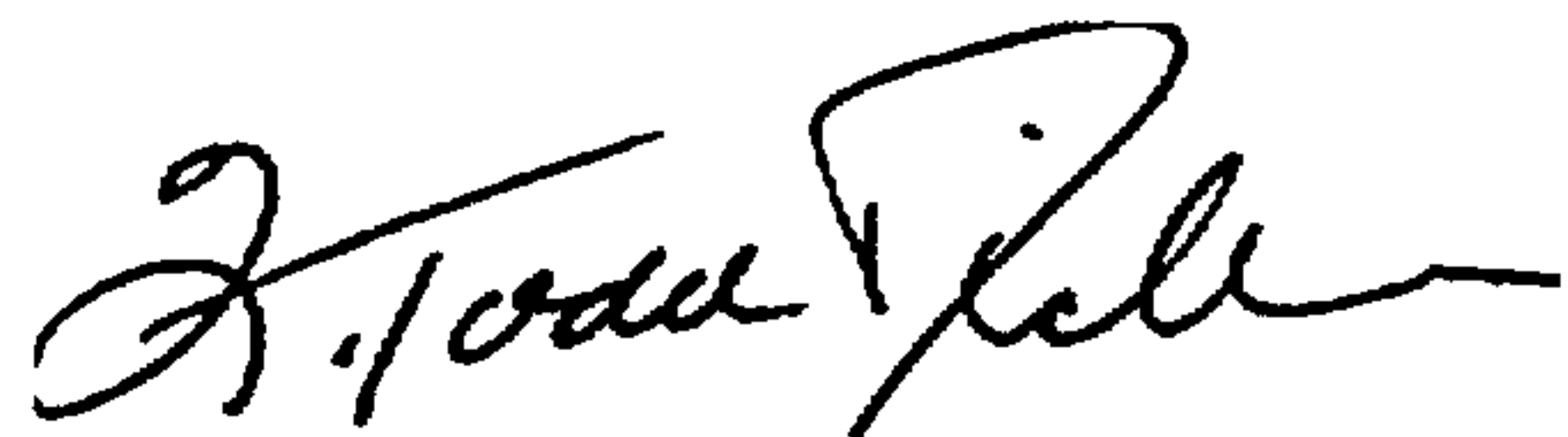
It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In column 3, line 64, delete the word "an" and insert the word --and--

In column 4, line 26, delete the word "sevn" and insert the word --seven--

In column 6, line 9, delete the word "novely" and insert the word --novelty--

Signed and Sealed this
Fourth Day of April, 2000



Q. TODD DICKINSON

Director of Patents and Trademarks

Attest:

Attesting Officer