Nov. 14, 1972 R. BAJO 3,702,675

DECORATIVE PARTY DEVICE

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FIG. 1

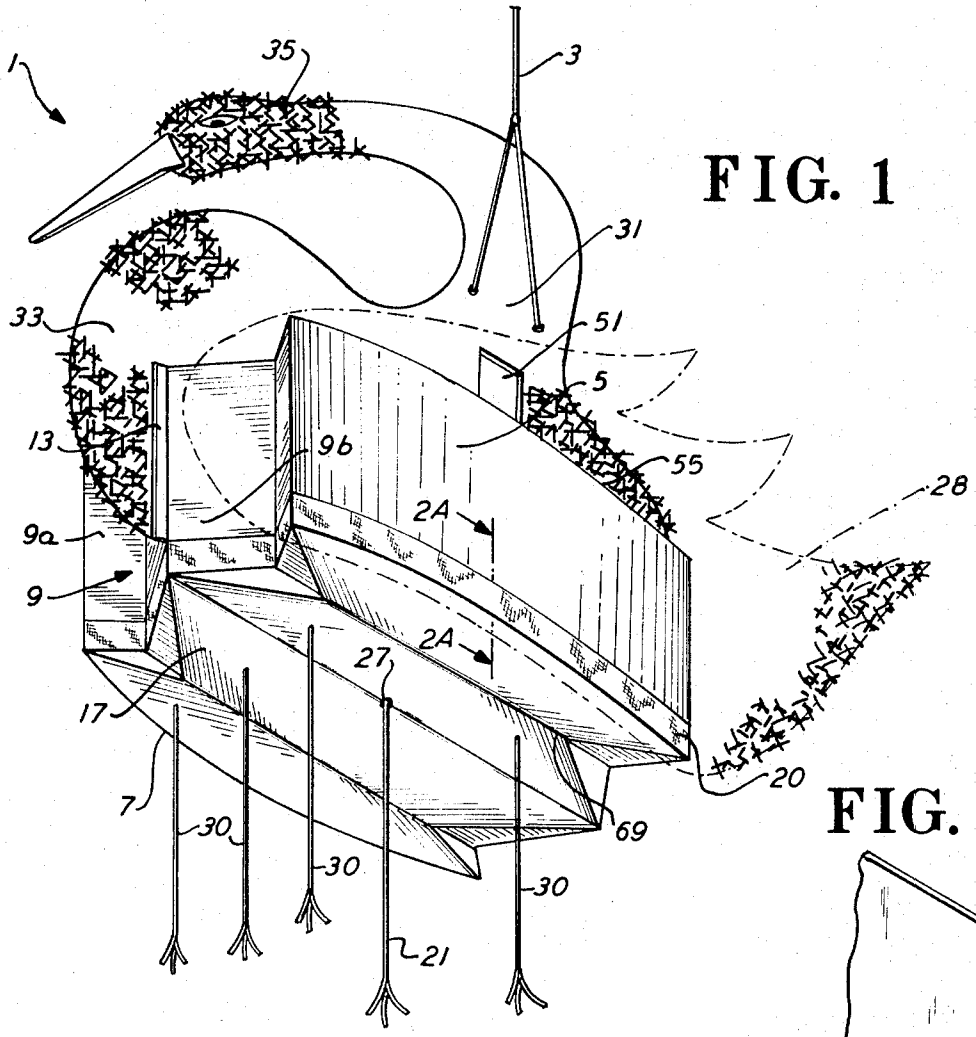


FIG. 2A

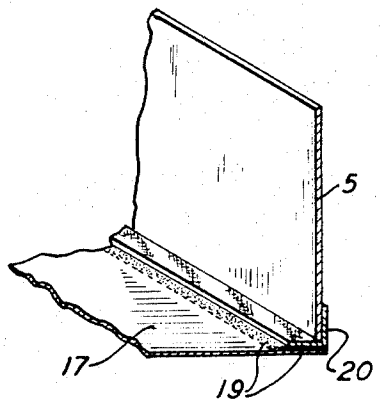
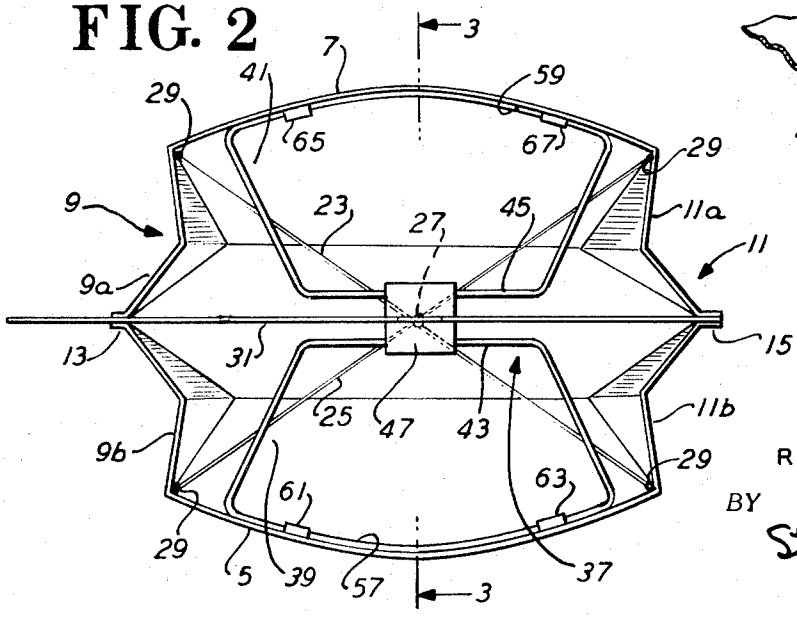


FIG. 2



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FIG. 3

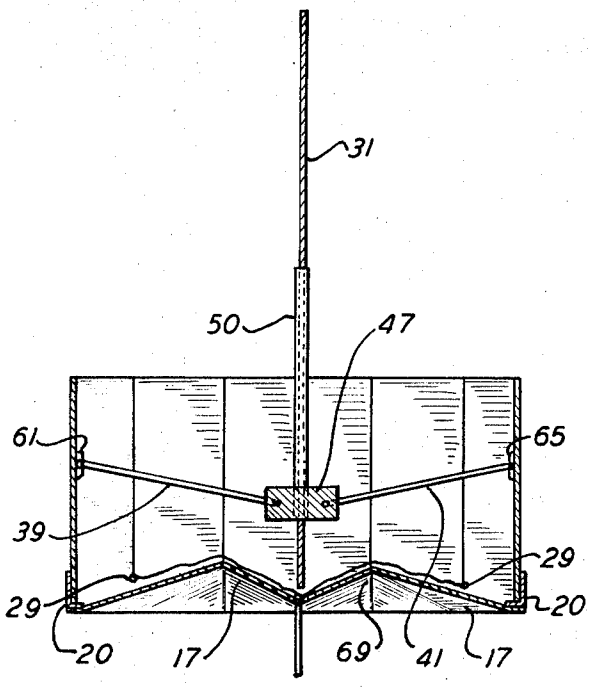
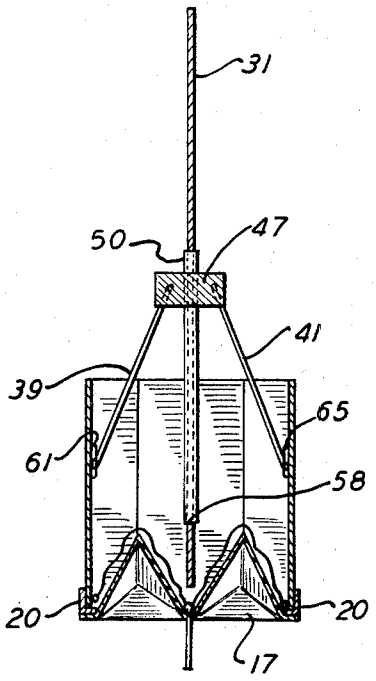


FIG. 4



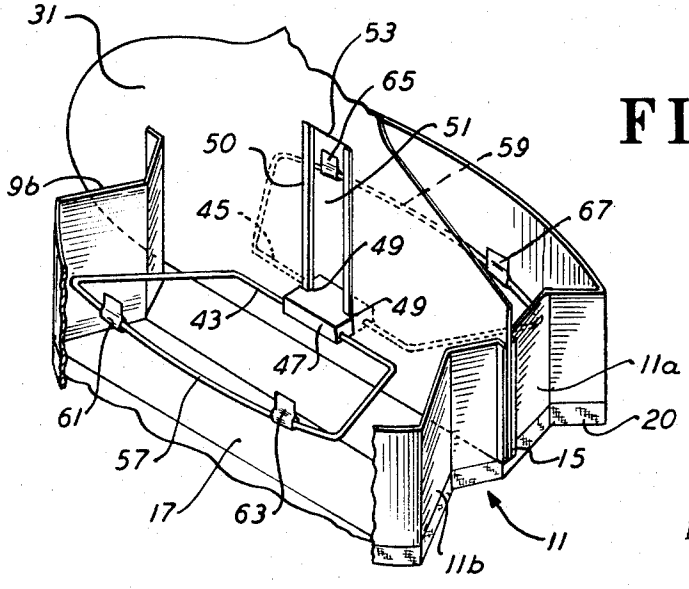


FIG. 5

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DECORATIVE PARTY DEVICE

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U.S. Cl. 229—7 R 12 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A collapsible and reusable pinata for use at parties and similar festive occasions. The pinata includes a pair of flexible lateral panels, front and rear accordion pleated panels extending between the lateral panels, and a frangible bottom piece which in cooperation with the panels defines a receptacle for the candy, toys, or the like held within the pinata. An expandible frame, as of wire or the like, is mounted within the enclosed space defined by panels and bottom element, and includes portions engaging the lateral panels. The said frame when expanded, displaces the pinata walls to their fully open position; similarly, collapsing of the frame draws the walls inwardly to collapse the pinata for storage. The pinata includes means for suspending the device from an overhead point, and means depending from the frangible bottom for tearing the piece to dispense the pinata contents. The bottom piece is secured to the adjoining walls by means which enable replacement thereof subsequent to tearing.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to amusement devices, and more specifically relates to party devices of the type commonly known as "pinatas."

The pinata is a device that for many years has found favor for use at parties and various other festive occasions where children are present. Although the device is known and widely enjoyed by all cultures, it is particularly popular among Spanish-derived cultures, where the pinata has commonly taken the form of a boat, animal, or similar fanciful figure such as a Santa Claus or so forth. Pinatas of this type are commonly filled with candy, coins, or other goodies, and suspended by wires from a ceiling. The children present then derive great pleaure from the attempts by their members to break the pinata with a bat or the like and thereby release the prized contents thereof.

In another known type of pinata, the device may be constructed of papier-mache or other frangible material, and may include a paper closure which is torn by a child's pulling a cord or similar element secured to the said closure.

It will be evident from the foregoing that pinata designs of the prior art have thus generally been conceived of as devices intended for but a single use. The devices are thus seen to be destroyed during the course of use, and following such employment they are normally discarded. Not only does such a mode of use tend to make the pinata a relatively high cost decoration—and thereby limit its attractiveness—but moreover the fact that the pinata is consumed in use necessitates constant repurchase of the items, or alternatively storage of a plurality of quite bulky units.

In accordance with the foregoing, it may be regarded as an object of the present invention, to provide a pinata which is capable of multiple and repeated uses.

It is a further object of the present invention, to provide a pinata construction, which is highly attractive and capable of assuming a variety of fanciful forms, and which is yet both reusable and capable of collapsing for storage purposes.

It is an additional object of the present invention, to provide a pinata construction wherein the device, as desired, may be expanded for use or placed in a collapsed position for storage, and which incorporates simple but effective means for providing strength and rigidity in the expanded pinata.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

Now in accordance with the present invention, the foregoing objects, and others as will become apparent in the course of the ensuing specification, are achieved in a pinata construction including a pair of flexible lateral panels, front and rear accordian pleated panels extending between the lateral panels, and a frangible bottom piece which in cooperation with the panels defines a receptacle for the pinata contents. An expandible frame, comprised of wire or the like, is mounted within the pinata, with wing-like portions of the frame engaging the lateral panels. Expansion of the frame displaces the pinata walls to their fully open position; the frame in such position provides a relatively rigid skeleton, which in turn lends to the pinata structure strength and rigidity. Collapsing of the frame, on the other hand, draws the walls inwardly to collapse the pinata for storage. The pinata includes means, such as an anchored wire or a fine cord, for suspending the device from an overhead point, and also includes means depending from the frangible bottom for tearing that piece to release the pinata contents. The said piece is secured to the adjoining walls by means which enable replacement thereof subsequent to tearing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The invention is diagrammatically illustrated, by way of example, in the drawings appended hereto, in which:

FIG. 1 is an isometric view taken from a point below the suspended object, of a pinata in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 2A is a fragmentary cross-sectional view of the device of FIG. 1, taken along the line 2A—2A therein;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the pinata, taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2; the view illustrates the pinata in its fully expanded position;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view similar to FIG. 3, but illustrates the pinata in its collapsed condition; and

FIG. 5 is a partially broken-away view through the lateral wall of the pinata, and illustrates in detail the structure of the frame and the manner in which the frame is expanded.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In FIG. 1 an isometric view appears of a pinata **1** in accordance with the present invention. The view is taken from a point below the pinata, which is seen to be suspended by a support means **3** such as a wire, cord or the like, from a convenient overhead point such as a lighting fixture or so forth. As may be appreciated from simultaneous examination of the top plan view of FIG. 2, the pinata **1** generally includes a pair of flexible lateral wall panels **5** and **7** which join to front and rear accordian-pleated panels **9** and **11**, to thereby define the outer lateral perimeter of the pinata. Front and rear panels **9** and **11** need not be separately formed from the lateral panels. For example, flaps **9***a*, **9***b*, **11***a*, and **11***b* can be continuous with the adjoining portions of the lateral walls, the front and rear panels then being completed by joining the flaps as at seams **13** and **15**.

The panel elements thus far described may be formed of any flexible sheet material such as plastic or the like, with a flexible cardboard being particularly suitable for

the purpose. The basic containing volume of the pinata is completed by a frangible—that is, tearable—bottom piece **17** which is in accordance with the invention adjoined to the perimeter of the lateral panels and front and rear panels by means such as enables replacement of the piece **17** subsequent to tearing thereof. As best seen in the detail of FIG. 2A, such means may conveniently comprise a simple strip **19** of adhesive, e.g. f the pressure sensitive type, deposited as a band on the edge of piece **17**. Strip **19** secures piece **17** to a fabric reinforcing piece **20** which is bound as by gluing to the bottom perimeter of the pinata. Once the pinata **1** is used, the torn bottom piece **17** may be replaced by a new piece. If strip **19** is of the aforementioned pressure sensitive variety, such new piece may carry weakly adherent (shiny) paper strips over the adhesive strips **19**, such paper being removed just prior to use. It may be noted that during the replacement process the outer edges of the "old" piece **17** need not be completely removed—the new piece may be adhered to such torn edges as well as the fabric **20**. It may also be observed in this connection that the original piece **17** can actually be stitched to fabric piece **20**, with only the replacement pieces being adhered by strips such as at **19**.

The bottom piece **17** is typically formed of a relatively thin sheet of paper material, that is to say of a material which is rather easy to tear when children pull upon a string **21** which depends from pinata **1** and passes through piece **17**. Such tearing action may be best understood by reference to FIG. 2 wherein it is seen that string **21** actually adjoins at point **27** a pair of cross strings **23, 25** within the pinata, which cross strings are anchored at the edges **29** of the pinata. Moving of string **21** downwardly therefore displaces the cross strings downwardly to tear the piece **17** and thus release the candy or similar goods held within the pinata. In addition to strings **21**, further strings **30** may be present which are, unlike string **21**, directly attached to piece **17**. Thus a large group of children can simultaneously engage in releasing the pinata contents.

Pinata **1** is typically of a bright attractive color or variety of colors, and is preferably textured. This may be effected by covering surfaces such as panels **5, 7, 9, 11**, and others with confetti or other textured or particulate material. Additional realism and attractiveness may be achieved by forming the lateral panels to suggest a bird wing or other fanciful form consistent with the theme of the design used in the pinata. Alternatively, and as is shown in FIG. 1, decoratively formed and textured (as with confetti) panels **28** (shown as dotted lines) may be secured to the purely functional walls **5** and **7** as by adhesion, lamination or so forth. Similar fancifully shaped panels may be secured to other exposed surfaces of the pinata as well.

In accordance with the invention an upright member **31**, typically in the form of a fancifully shaped panel such as the swan-like creature shown, extends between front and rear panels **9** and **11** at the median plane between the lateral wall panels **5** and **7**. As suggested, member **31** may be shaped to suggest any fanciful form, as for example an elephant or other animal attractive to children, or even airplanes, dirigibles or so forth. Also, of course, the member **31** need not necessarily be flat in nature, but may extend in three dimensions, that is to say may possess degrees of width. In the embodiment shown member **31** adjoins front and rear panels at the seams **13** and **15**, and it may be noted that in the swan-like creature depicted a breast portion **33** actually extends forward of the seam **13**. A portion of the textured covering **33** previously alluded to is apparent in the FIG. 1 showing.

In accordance with the invention, a frame generally designated at **37** is provided within the pinata, which cooperates with the various other elements of the device to enable collapse and expansion of the pinata. The frame **37**, as may be seen from FIG. 2, includes a pair of wing-shaped elements **39** and **41**, typically formed of wire or similarly shaped tubular means. As can be seen both in FIG. 2 and in the broken-away view of FIG. 5, wing elements **37** and **39** include inner arms **43, 45**, which pass through and are journalably supported in tubular passages in a slide member **47**. The latter, which is a block-shaped element, carries a pair of cuts **49** which enable member **47** to be mounted for vertical translation in a track **51** present in upright member **31**. Track **51** can be partially seen in FIG. 1, but is more clearly shown in the cut-away view of FIG. 5. The said track **51** is thus seen to comprise a rectangular cut-out in upright member **31**, and it will be noted from FIG. 1 that the upper edge **53** of this track is at a height above the upper edges (such as **55**) of the lateral panels **5, 7**, while the lower edge **57** of track **51** is close to the bottom edge of member **31**. The lateral edges of the cut-out are provided with plastic sleeves **50** which both facilitate vertical movement of block **47** and reinforce the edges of track **51**.

With the aid of the foregoing, the mechanism pursuant to which expansion and collapse of pinata **1** is achieved may now be set forth. In particular, as may best be seen in the cut-away view of FIG. 5, the outer arms **57** and **59** of the frame wing elements **37** and **39**, are secured adjacent the inside surfaces of the lateral wall panels **5** and **7** by loops **61, 63, 65**, and **67**, which are affixed to the said surfaces, whereby arms **57** and **59** are journalably held within the said loops. By now referring to the cross-sectional views of FIGS. 3 and 4, it will be seen (FIG. 3), that when slide member **47** is at the lower end of track **51**, the wing elements **39, 41** are almost fully extended, whereby the lateral wall panels **5** and **7** are fully extended and the pinata is ready for use. It will also be seen that in such fully extended condition, the slide member **47** is at the bottom of track **55** whereby frame **37** is held in a relatively rigid fashion, and in turn the pinata **1** forms a relatively rigid container for the contents which are deposited therein.

When it is thereafter desired to collapse the pinata **1** for storage purposes, it is only necessary for the slide member **47** to be raised to the upper end of track **55**, that is to the position depicted in FIG. 4. Since the vertical position of the loops **61, 63, 65, 67**, which support the outer arms **57, 59** of the frame **37**, is well below the upper edge **53** of track **55**, slide member **47** is thereby displaced well above the vertical height of the said loops, and in consequence the horizontal projection of the then upwardly tilted wings **37, 39** is so foreshortened that lateral walls **5** and **7** are drawn sharply inward to the position depicted in FIG. 4. It may be noted that in the course of the expansion and collapse operations, folds **69** in bottom piece **17** assist in accommodating the collapse of the bottom element.

While the present invention has been particularly set forth in terms of specific embodiments thereof, it will be understood in view of the instant disclosure, that numerous variations are now enabled to those skilled in the art, which variations in propriety are yet within the province of the instant teaching. Accordingly the present invention is to be broadly construed, and limited only by the scope and the spirit of the claims now appended hereto.

I claim:

1. A collapsible and reusable pinata, comprising in combination:

(a) a pair of flexible lateral wall panels;

(b) front and rear accordian pleated panels extending between said lateral panels;

(c) an upright member extending between said front and rear panels at the median plane between said wall panels;

(d) track means formed in said upright member and extending from near the bottom of said member up-

wardly to a point in said member at a height above the upper edges of said wall panels;

(e) a slide member mounted for vertical displacement in said track;

(f) a pair of wing shaped wire frame elements extending between said slide member and a line on the inner surface of said wall panels at a vertical height corresponding to the lower portion of said track, whereby displacement of said slide member upwardly in said track draws said walls inwardly toward said upright member, and displacement downwardly from the top of said track expands said walls outwardly and upon said slide reaching the bottom of said track provides a relatively rigid support for said walls and said pinata;

(g) a frangible bottom covering extending about the perimeter formed by the lower edges of said lateral walls and front and rear panels, to thereby in cooperation with said walls and panels define a receptacle for the contents of said pinata;

(h) means for suspending said pinata from an overhead point; and

(i) means depending from said frangible bottom for tearing said bottom to release said contents.

2. A device according to claim 1, wherein said bottom covering is replaceably adjoined to said perimeter.

3. A device according to claim 2, wherein said bottom covering is so adjoined by an adhesive band present on the upper surface of said covering, said band adhering to a reinforcing piece at said perimeter.

4. A device according to claim 2, wherein said upright member is a fancifully shaped panel.

5. A device according to claim 4, wherein said lateral panels are fancifully shaped.

6. A device according to claim 4, wherein at least the said lateral panels are covered by fancifully shaped and textured panels secured thereto.

7. A device according to claim 4, wherein said track is formed as a vertically oriented rectangular cut-out in said panel, and said slide member comprises a block having a pair of cuts slideably engageable with the vertical edges of said rectangle.

8. A device according to claim 7, wherein said frame elements are supported at said slide member in journaled

fashion by passing through horizontally oriented tubular passages therethrough, and supported at said lateral panels in journaled fashion by loops present at the said inside surfaces of said panels.

9. A collapsible and reusable pinata, comprising in combination:

(a) a pair of flexible lateral wall panels;

(b) front and rear accordian pleated panels extending between said lateral panels;

(c) a frangible bottom covering extending about the perimeter formed by the lower edges of said lateral walls and front and rear panels, to thereby in cooperation with said walls and panels define a receptacle for the contents of said pinata;

(d) means for suspending said pinata from an overhead point;

(e) means depending from said frangible bottom for tearing said bottom to release said contents; and

(f) expandible frame means mounted within the said perimeter and engaging said lateral walls, for expanding the perimeter formed by said panels to the fully open position of said pinata and collapsing the said perimeter for storage of said pinata.

10. A device according to claim 9, wherein said bottom covering is secured to said perimeter by means enabling replacement thereof subsequent to tearing.

11. A device according to claim 9, further including an upright member extending between said front and rear panels at the median plane between said wall panels.

12. A device according to claim 11, wherein said member is a fancifully shaped panel.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

46—11; 229—8, 41 R, 51 S