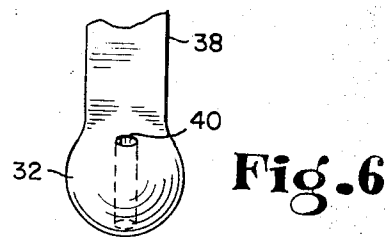
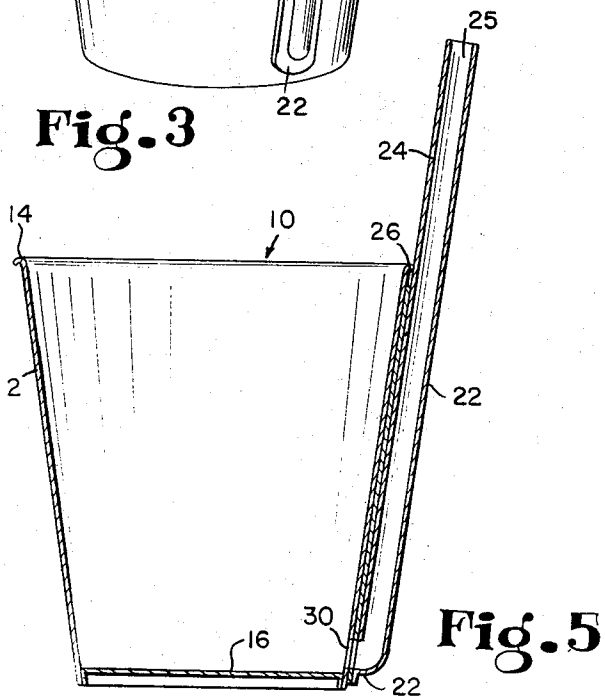
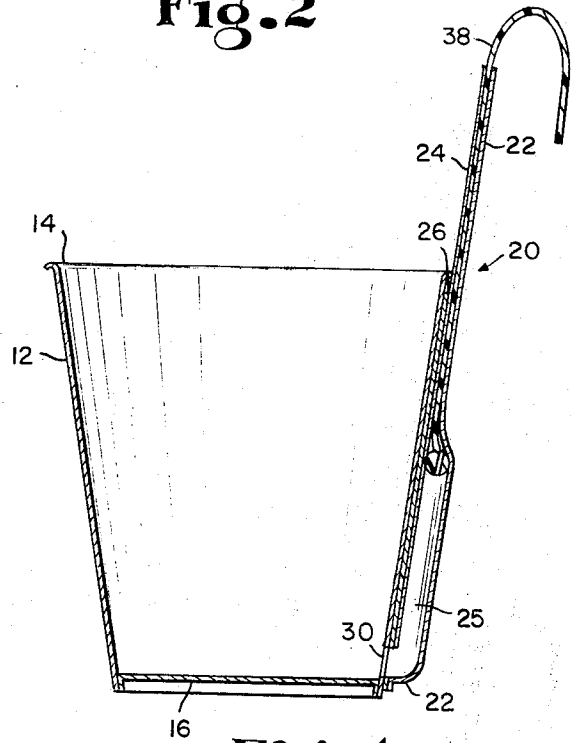
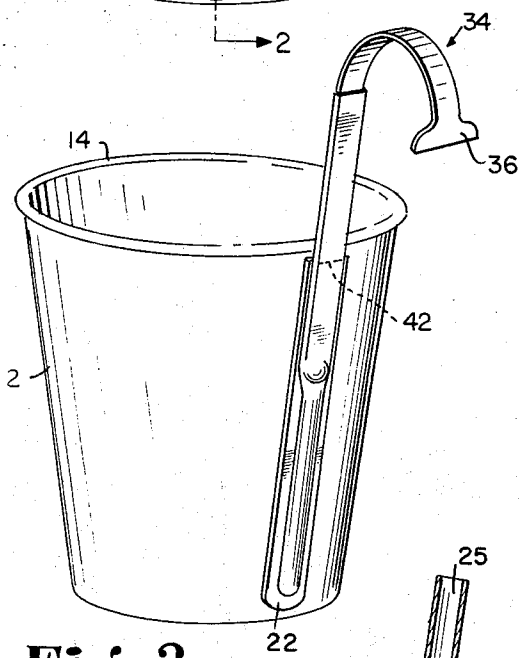
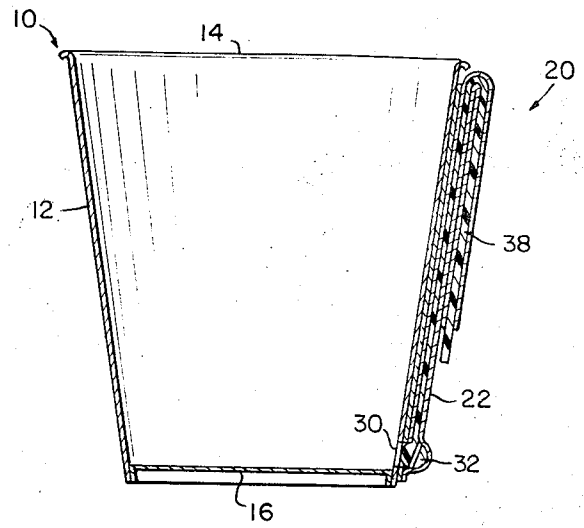
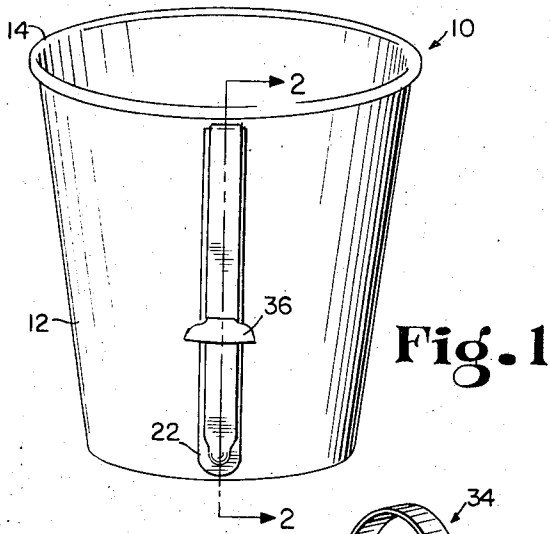


- [58] **Field of Search** 220/90.2; 229/7 S;
215/1 A

D27,886 11/1897 Rogers..... 220/90.2 X

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A straw-forming structure is attached to a beverage container. The structure has outer and inner walls and is originally in a collapsed position. A tab having an enlarged lobe at its lower end is carried between the outer and inner walls and when lifted and pulled out forms a channel which is in communication with the container to serve as a built-in straw.



STRAW-FORMING STRUCTURE FOR A BEVERAGE CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a straw-forming structure, and more particularly to a straw-forming structure which is attached to a beverage container so as to be formed into an integral straw for use therewith.

Several proposals have previously been made for beverage containers with integral drinking straws. Such straws have frequently been placed inside the container with some means for pulling the straw at least partially out of the container for use, and have frequently been of a rigid, non-collapsible type.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The straw-forming structure of this invention is carried externally of the beverage container and in a collapsed, folded position. The structure has inner and outer walls with a tab carried therebetween, all of which are flexible and folded over along the external surface of the container. When it is desired to extend the straw for use, the tab is lifted and pulled upwardly. An enlarged lobe at the lower end of the tab is thus forced between the inner and outer walls opening a channel therebetween. Movement of the lobe also frees an opening in the lower portion of the container, thus providing a passage from the container to the channel between the inner and outer walls. When the tab with its lobe is completely removed, the straw is fully extended and ready for use.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawing in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a beverage container with an attached straw-forming structure in a collapsed position;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 shows the beverage container with the tab partially removed;

FIG. 4 is a view like FIG. 2 but with the tab partially removed;

FIG. 5 is a view like FIG. 4 but with the tab complete removed and the straw fully formed; and

FIG. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the lobe at the lower end of the tab.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A beverage container 10 has a body member 12 with a top portion or rim 14 and a bottom or base 16. As illustrated, body member 12 is generally frustoconical. A straw-forming structure 20 is attached to the body member 12, and is originally in a collapsed position. The structure 20 is preferably attached to the outer surface of body 12.

The structure 20 has an outer wall 22 and an inner wall 24 which when forced apart remain parted to form a channel 25 therebetween through which the contents of the container 10 may be withdrawn. A tab 34 is removably carried between the inner and outer walls.

The outer and inner walls and the tab are sufficiently flexible to permit the tab to be pulled out from between the walls so as to open a channel therebetween. An intermediate wall 26 may be provided between inner wall 24 and the surface of body member 12.

An opening 30 is provided in body member 12 adjacent to the base 16 to provide access between the container 10 and the channel 25 of the straw-structure 20. As illustrated, the outer wall 22 is attached to body 12 adjacent to the base 16 and below opening 30, and the intermediate wall 26 (or the inner wall 24 if no intermediate wall is used) is attached to body 12 slightly above base 16 and above opening 30. In the collapsed or closed position with tab 34 carried between the walls 15 (FIGS. 1 and 2), the opening 30 is closed by an enlarged, generally spherical lobe 32 which is an integral part of tab 34. Tab 34 has an external handle portion 36 and a stem 38 extending between the handle and the lobe 32.

In the collapsed or closed position, the structure 20, with the tab 34 carried therein, is folded over as indicated at 42. To form and extend the straw, the tab handle 36 is lifted to an upright position (FIGS. 3 and 4) and then pulled upwardly. As the handle is pulled, the enlarged lobe 32 is forced upwardly between the outer and inner walls 22 and 24, forming channel 25 therebetween as it moves. As the lobe 32 is pulled entirely out, the straw-structure is completed and the opening 30 to the container 10 is free of any obstruction (see FIG. 5). As best seen in FIG. 6, an opening 40 extends generally vertically through the lobe 32 in order to prevent liquid in the container 10 from spilling by following the lobe out of the straw. When tab 34 has been fully removed, the integral straw is fully extended and may be used to drink the beverage contained in container 10.

I claim:

1. A straw-forming apparatus for use with a beverage container having an opening adjacent its base, said apparatus comprising an outer wall and an inner wall fluidly tightly connected together along their longitudinal edges to form a flattened tube structure, said outer and inner walls being attached to the exterior of said beverage container with the interior of said flattened tube structure in communication with said opening, a tab having a stem and an enlarged lobe and carried between said outer and inner walls with said lobe closing said opening, said outer and inner walls and said tab being sufficiently flexible that said tab and lobe may be pulled out from between said walls to open a channel therebetween which is in communication with the beverage container through said opening.

2. The invention set forth in claim 1 wherein an intermediate wall is provided between the beverage container and said inner wall.

3. The invention set forth in claim 1 wherein said lobe has an opening therethrough.

4. The invention set forth in claim 1 wherein said outer wall is connected to the beverage container below said opening therein, and said inner wall is connected to the beverage container above said opening therein.

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