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STACKED MEASURING UTENSILS HAVING RELEASABLE SNAP FASTENING MEANS IN THE HANDLES

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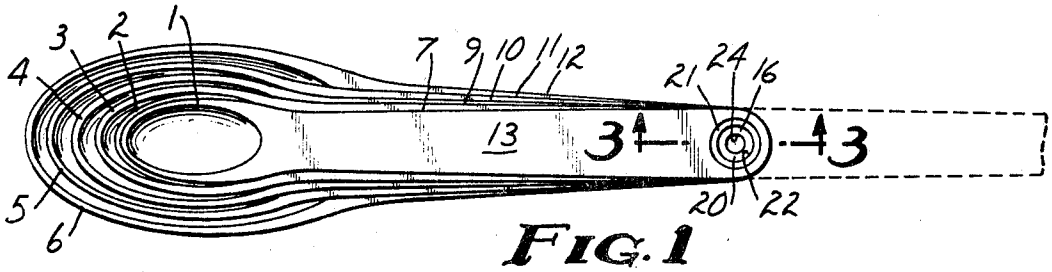

FIG. 1

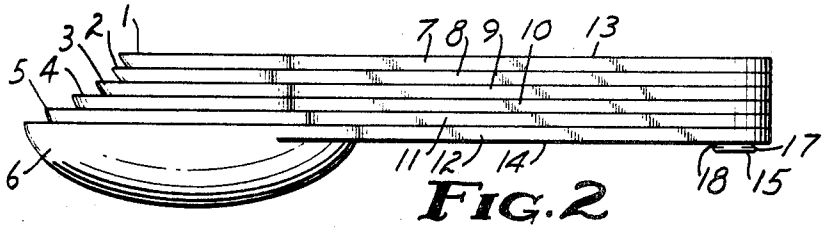

FIG. 2

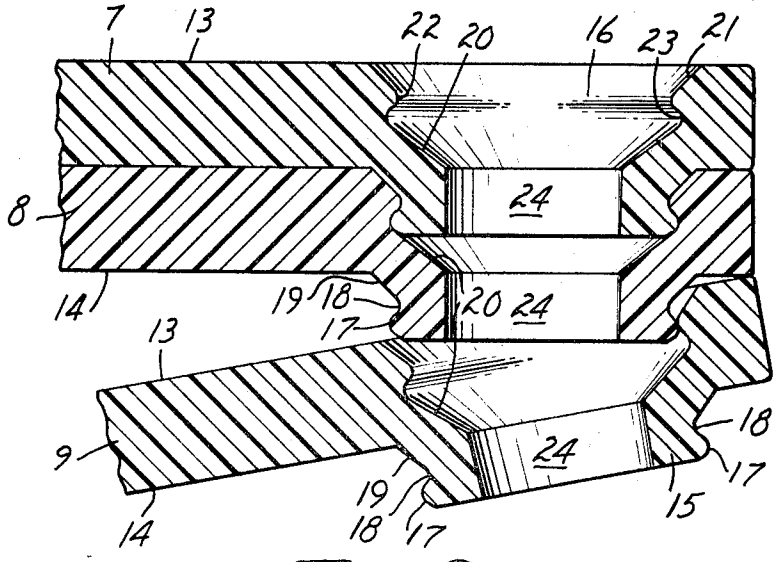

FIG. 3

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STACKED MEASURING UTENSILS HAVING RELEASABLE SNAP FASTENING MEANS IN THE HANDLES

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A measuring spoon formed to be releasably secured to other like spoons in stacked relationship and including a handle having an integrally formed stem projecting from one surface of the handle and a cavity in an opposite surface axially aligned with the stem for reception of the stem of an adjacent spoon handle.

Background of the invention

Heretofore, stacked or nested utensils, such as measuring spoons, have been produced having means for loosely, pivotally connecting together the handle portions thereof to permit the utensils to be partially separated for individual use. Further, snap fasteners for holding garment portions together are well known, these utilizing separate male and female elements secured to respective portions of a garment or textile fabrication to be joined together. Examples of stacked or nested spoons are found in United States Patents 1,249,017; 2,752,678; and 3,030,812. United States Patents 2,709,290 and 3,169,292 are illustrative of snap fasteners utilized to releasably hold separable article portions together.

Summary of the invention

The present invention adds to the broad concept of a snap fastener an arrangement wherein the male and female snap-type fastener elements are molded integrally into a single handle and in axial alignment, so that a plurality of spoons or like utensils thus formed may be closely nested or stacked, with the handles thereof in face-to-face engagement, and in such manner that the utensils may be not only rotated relative to each other about the common axis of the fastening means, but may be also removed from each other for convenience in use.

Description

In the accompanying drawings, which illustrate the invention, and in which like reference characters indicate like parts throughout the several views:

FIG. 1 is a view in top plan of a nested plurality of measuring spoons connected together in accordance with this invention;

FIG. 2 is a view in side elevation; and

FIG. 3 is an enlarged fragmentary section taken on the line 3—3 of FIG. 1, some parts being removed.

Referring with greater detail to the drawing, a plurality of utensils, such as measuring spoons **1–6** are shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 as being disposed in stacked or nested relationship, the spoons **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **6** being provided with elongated handles **7**, **8**, **9**, **10**, **11** and **12** respectively. The handles **7–12** have flat top and bottom surfaces **13** and **14** respectively that are disposed in face-to-face engagement when the spoons **1–6** are in their stacked or nested relationship. The spoons **1–6**, or at least the handles **7–12** thereof, are preferably made from flexible resilient material such as thermoplastic material.

For the purpose of releasably securing the several spoons **1–6** in stacked or nested relationship, the outer

end portion of each handle **7–12** is molded to provide an integrally formed male element in the nature of a stem **15** and a cavity **16** axially aligned with the stem **15**. As shown, each stem **15** projects outwardly from its respective bottom surface **14** on an axis normal to the bottom surface **14**, each stem **15** having an outer end head portion **17** in the shape of an annular bead, a reduced diameter neck portion **18**, axially inwardly of the head portion **17**, and a shank portion **19** which tapers from a relatively larger diameter adjacent the bottom handle surface portion **14** to the relatively smaller diameter neck portion **18**.

Each cavity **16** extends inwardly from its top handle surface **13** and is defined in part by a tapering or frusto-conical bottom portion **20**, a frusto-conical upper portion **21** extending laterally inwardly from the top surface **13**, adjacent portions of the bottom and upper portions **20** and **21** cooperating to define an annular bead-like collar **22** in downwardly spaced relation to the top surface **13**, and an annular recess **23** below the collar **22**. Further, an opening **24** extends axially through each stem **15** and communicates with its respective cavity **16**.

Preferably, the diameter of each stem head portion **17** is substantially equal to that of the recess portion **23**, the diameter of the collar portion **22** being substantially equal to that of the neck portion **18**. Thus, the diameter of each head portion **17** is greater than that of each collar portion **22**. By making each utensil from flexible resilient material, the head portions **17** and collar portions **22** are elastically deformable to permit insertion of each stem **15** into an adjacent cavity **16**, so that the head portions **17** will snap into place in their adjacent annular recesses **23**. When the spoons are in stacked or nested relationship, they may be angularly displaced from their stacked or nested relationship with each other, as shown by full and dotted lines in FIG. 1. Further, the elastic nature thereof permits each handle to be easily removed from adjacent handles for independent use, and the spoons may be quickly and easily snapped together for convenience in storage or shipment.

While I have shown and described a commercial embodiment of my utensil and securing means therefor, it will be understood that the same is capable of modification without departure from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A utensil formed to be removably secured to other like utensils in stacked relationship, said utensil including a handle of flexible resilient material and having top and bottom surfaces, a stem projecting outwardly from one of said surfaces on an axis normal to said one of the surfaces and including an outer end head portion and a neck portion axially inwardly of the head portion and of less diameter than the head portion, said handle having a cavity tapering from the other of said surfaces axially aligned with said stem, said cavity having a bottom portion axially inwardly of said other surface and an annular collar in axially outwardly spaced relation to said bottom portion for snug reception of the stem neck portion of an adjacent handle of one of said other utensils, said cavity axially inwardly of the collar portion defining an annular recess for snug reception of the head portion of the stem of said adjacent handle, said collar and head portions being elastically deformable to permit insertion of the stem head into the handle cavity of an adjacent utensil beyond the collar portion of the cavity and into the recessed portion thereof.

2. The utensil defined in claim **1** in which said stem tapers from a larger diameter portion of the other of said surfaces adjacent said one of the handles to a relatively smaller diameter portion at said neck portion, said

cavity having an axially inwardly tapering portion intermediate said other handle surface and the collar portion and corresponding generally to the tapered portion of said stem.

3. The utensil defined in claim 2, characterized by an axial opening extending through said stem to the bottom portion of said cavity.

4. The utensil defined in claim 1 in which said utensil comprises one of a plurality of separably nested measuring spoons.

5. The utensil defined in claim 1 in which said handle and stem are integrally formed from flexible resilient thermoplastic material.

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