Sept. 4, 1956 F. M. HEADLEY 2,761,155

TOY RAFT

Filed Nov. 18, 1954

FIG. 1

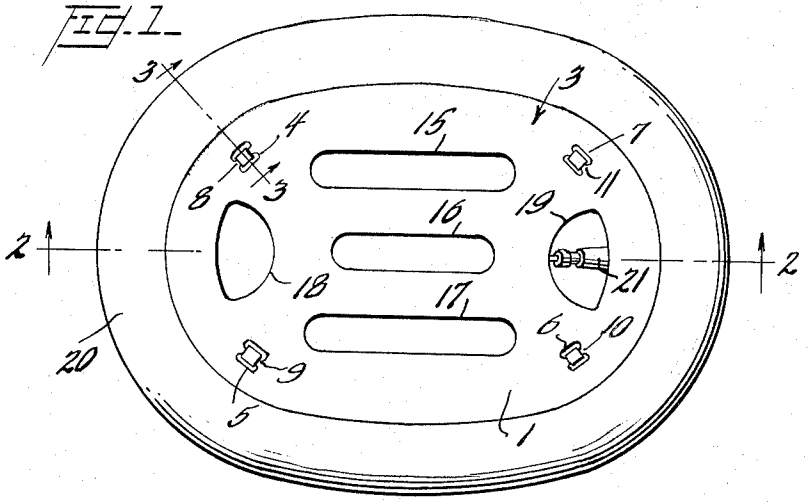


FIG. 2

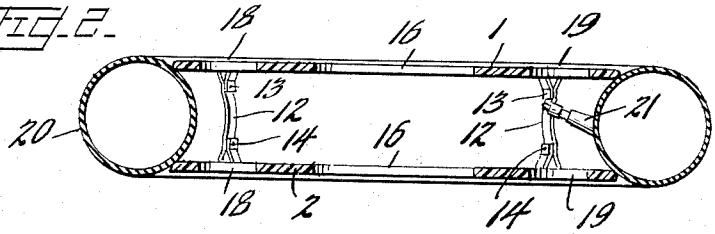


FIG. 3

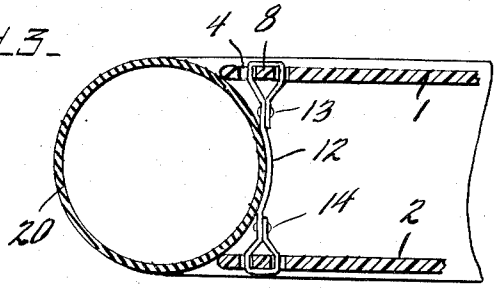
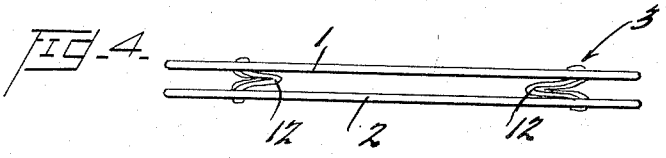


FIG. 4



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2,761,155

TOY RAFT

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2 Claims. (Cl. 9—21)

My invention relates to new and useful improvements in toy rafts. As is well known, children who live at the seashore, or on the river or lake, often use an inner tube as a raft, either sitting on the tub with their feet dangling within the confines of the tube, or, lying on the tube and paddling through the water.

Due to the fact that the weight is not evenly displaced about the tube when a child sits on the tube, the portion on which he is sitting is immersed in the water while the forward end of the tube is naturally inclined at quite an angle.

One of the objects of the present invention, therefore, is to provide a toy raft made up of two pieces held in spaced relationship to each other when separated, about which is to be encircled an inflated rubber tube so that a child may sit within the confines of the tube so the weight will be more evenly distributed than if he sat at one end of the tube.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a toy raft which, although it will be understood may be made in various sizes, comprises two like supporting sections connected by flexible straps, the length of the straps being slightly less than the internal diameter of the tube, so that the two sections, when the tube is inflated, will be below the upper surface and the lower surface of the tube respectively; so that if a child on the raft bumps into a bather or another child, there is no possibility of the central section striking, scratching or bruising the bather or any one whom the raft might hit.

Still another object of the invention is to provide supporting sections where there are identical portions, so that there is really no top or bottom to the raft.

With these and other objects in view, the invention consists in certain new and novel arrangements and combinations of parts, as will hereinafter be more fully described and pointed out in the claims.

Referring now to the drawings, showing a preferred embodiment,

Fig. 1 is a top plan view, showing the central supporting section with an inflated tube around the periphery of the section,

Fig. 2 is a section taken on line 2—2 of Fig. 1, showing the straps holding the supporting section together,

Fig. 3 is an enlarged section taken through line 3—3 of Fig. 1, and

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary side elevation, showing the supporting section collapsed.

Referring now to Fig. 1, there is shown an upper plate **1** which is identical with the lower plate **2**. As seen in Fig. 4, these two plates **1** and **2** make up what I term the central or supporting section **3**. These plates **1** and **2** preferably are molded from a relatively thick, rigid plastic, as they are light in weight and relatively inexpensive to manufacture; although it will be understood that I might use wood or non-corrosive metal plates.

Inasmuch as the two plates **1** and **2** are identical, a description of one is a description of both. Referring to Fig. 1, it will be noticed that the plate **1** is slightly oval

in shape and has the cut-out portions **4**, **5**, **6** and **7**, each cut-out portion leaving a resultant cross-bar **8**, **9**, **10** and **11**.

All the respective cross-bars are alike, and here again, a description of one is a description of all. As may be seen in Figs. 2 and 3, for instance, a strap **12** is passed over the cross-bar **4**; then its end riveted as at **13** while the lower end passes over the lower cross-bar directly beneath the first-mentioned cross-bar, and then riveted as at **14**. As heretofore mentioned, this arrangement is carried out with the four straps.

Now the length of the straps is such that the two plates **1** and **2** are separated a distance slightly less than the internal diameter of the tube, so that if the raft hits anything, only the periphery or circumference of the rubber tube will come in contact with the object or anything that is hit.

It will also be seen in plate **1** there are grooves **15**, **16** and **17**, so that the raft may easily be grasped by the user; and there are also two further cut-out portions **18** and **19**, so that the inflatable tube **20** with its valve **21** may be positioned when being inflated either beneath the cut-out portion **18** or **19**; or, in other words, near the opposite ends of the larger diameter of the said plates so that the valve is easily and readily accessible when the tube is to be inflated, or when the tube is to be deflated.

When the toy raft is to be packaged for sale, the tube, of course, will be deflated, if there is a tube included in the kit; and the supporting plates **1** and **2** will be superimposed, as shown in Fig. 4, thus occupying but little space in the box, or for storing during the winter.

It will be understood that this central supporting section, made up of the two parts strapped together, may be of different size, so that different size tubes may be used with them, and it will also be understood that they may be used with an old inner automobile tire tube, or with a new one.

The supporting section with its straps and plates is relatively light in weight and it is but a matter of a moment to inflate a tube around the section, and, as heretofore mentioned, the toy raft will support a child with less danger of his falling off than if he sits on the one end of a tube and lets his feet and legs dangle in the water, which is the common way of children just using an inner tube in the water.

Finally, it will be seen that the toy raft is relatively cheap to manufacture, and, in fact will be much cheaper than the rubber-impregnated fabrics in rafts that are now so much in use at the seashore.

It will be understood that many slight changes might be made without in any way departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. In a toy raft, the combination of an inflatable tube together with a central supporting section formed of two like plates, the plates adapted to lie flat against each other when not in use, the length and width of the same causing the tube to be rectangular in shape in top plan view when inflated; flexible straps holding the upper and lower plates in position, and the space between the said plates being slightly less than the cross-sectional diameter of the tube so that the central section is slightly below the upper and lower surface of the said tube to thereby present the tube to any object with which the raft might come in contact the top side and the bottom side of the raft being like and the center of buoyancy being a point midway between the top section and the bottom section of the raft.

2. In a toy raft, the combination of an inflatable tube together with a central supporting section formed of two like plates, the plates adapted to lie flat against each other

when not in use and being substantially rectangular in shape, flexible straps holding the two said plates in a certain vertical spaced relationship, the said straps located at the respective four corners of said rectangular plates, the said plates being provided with grooves to provide hand-holds, and also provided with like cut-out portions near their opposite ends, the said plates adapted to fit within said inflated tube and slightly below the upper and lower surfaces of said tube, the inflated tube having a valve projecting inwardly and extending beneath one of said cut-out portions at the end of the plates, and the top side and the bottom side of the raft being alike, the center of buoyancy being the same as that of the rubber tube if the plates were not inserted.

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