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(54) **STORAGE CONTAINER FOR ELONGATE ARTICLES**

(76) Inventors: **Rod Nester**, Wooster, OH (US); **Thomas Hanna**, Wooster, OH (US); **Leighann Sturgin**, Shreve, OH (US); **Gina Rodi**, Wooster, OH (US); **Matt Doerfler**, Wooster, OH (US)

Correspondence Address:
MARSHALL, GERSTEIN & BORUN
6300 SEARS TOWER
233 SOUTH WACKER
CHICAGO, IL 60606-6357 (US)

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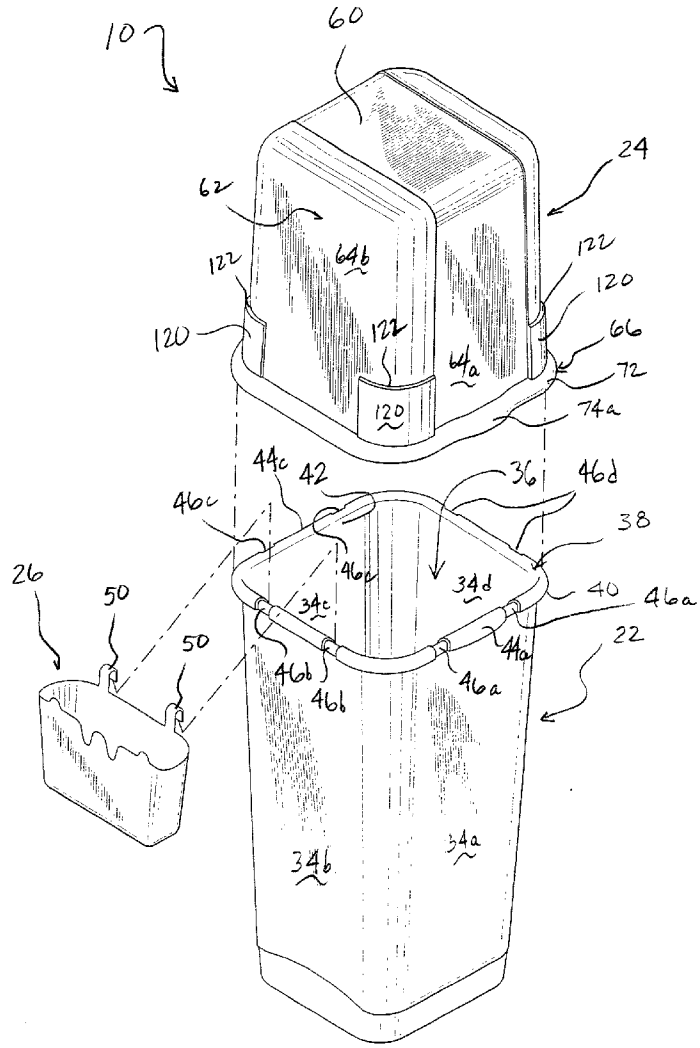
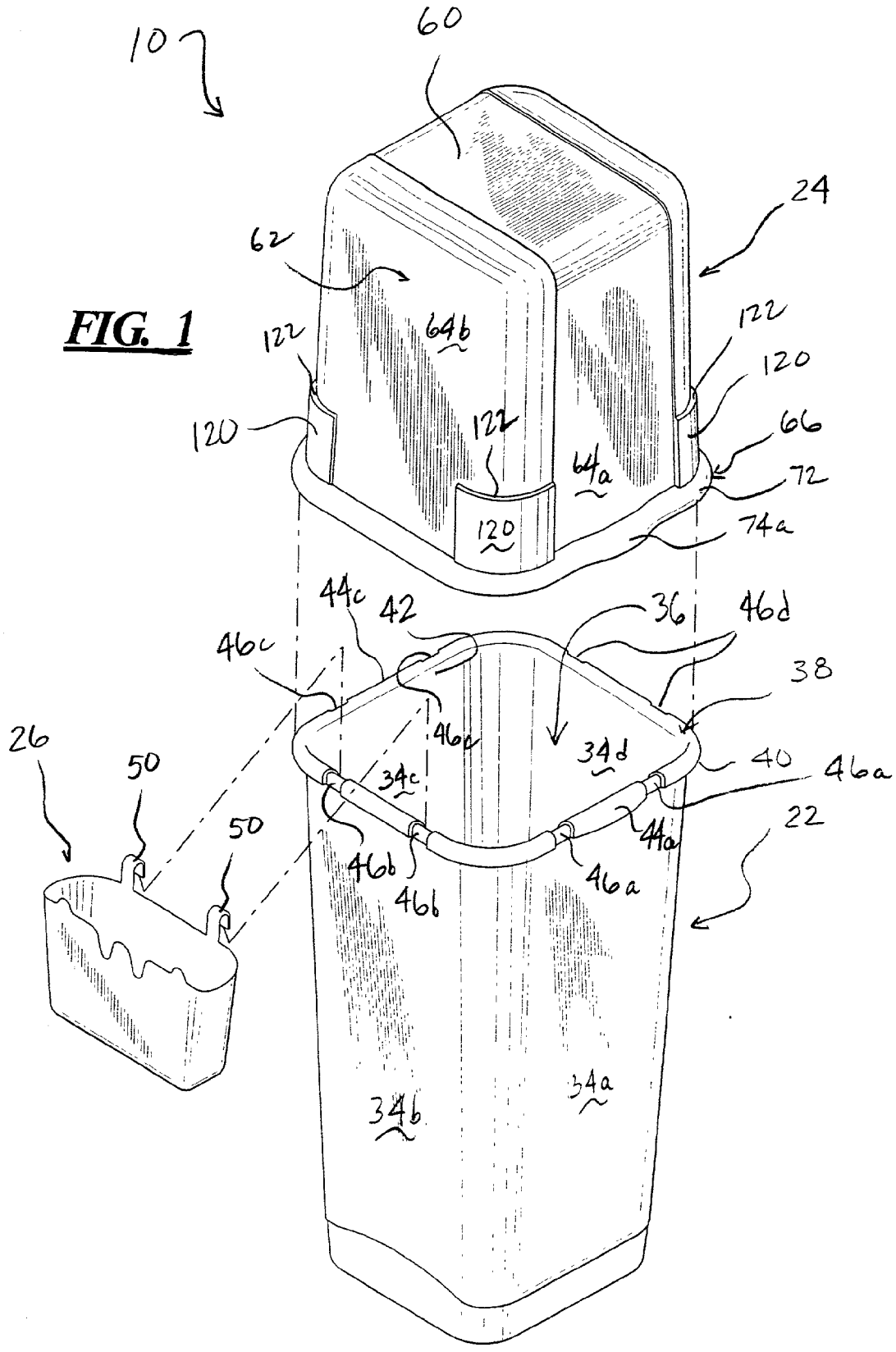
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A storage container has a container base with a bottom panel and an upstanding circumferentially contiguous base side wall. The side wall extends from and is connected to the bottom panel. The base side wall terminates at a top end that defines a base opening into a base interior. A container lid has a top panel and a lid rim. The lid can be installed on the base with the rim registered with the top end of the base side wall to form a storage enclosure defined within at least the base interior. A basket can be hung from the base top end either within the base interior or exterior to the base side wall when installed. The lid is configured to define at least a vertical portion of the storage enclosure. The lid can be configured having a depth sufficient to provide additional storage space when removed from the container and inverted.




10
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24
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64b
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64a
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42
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46c
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34a

FIG. 1

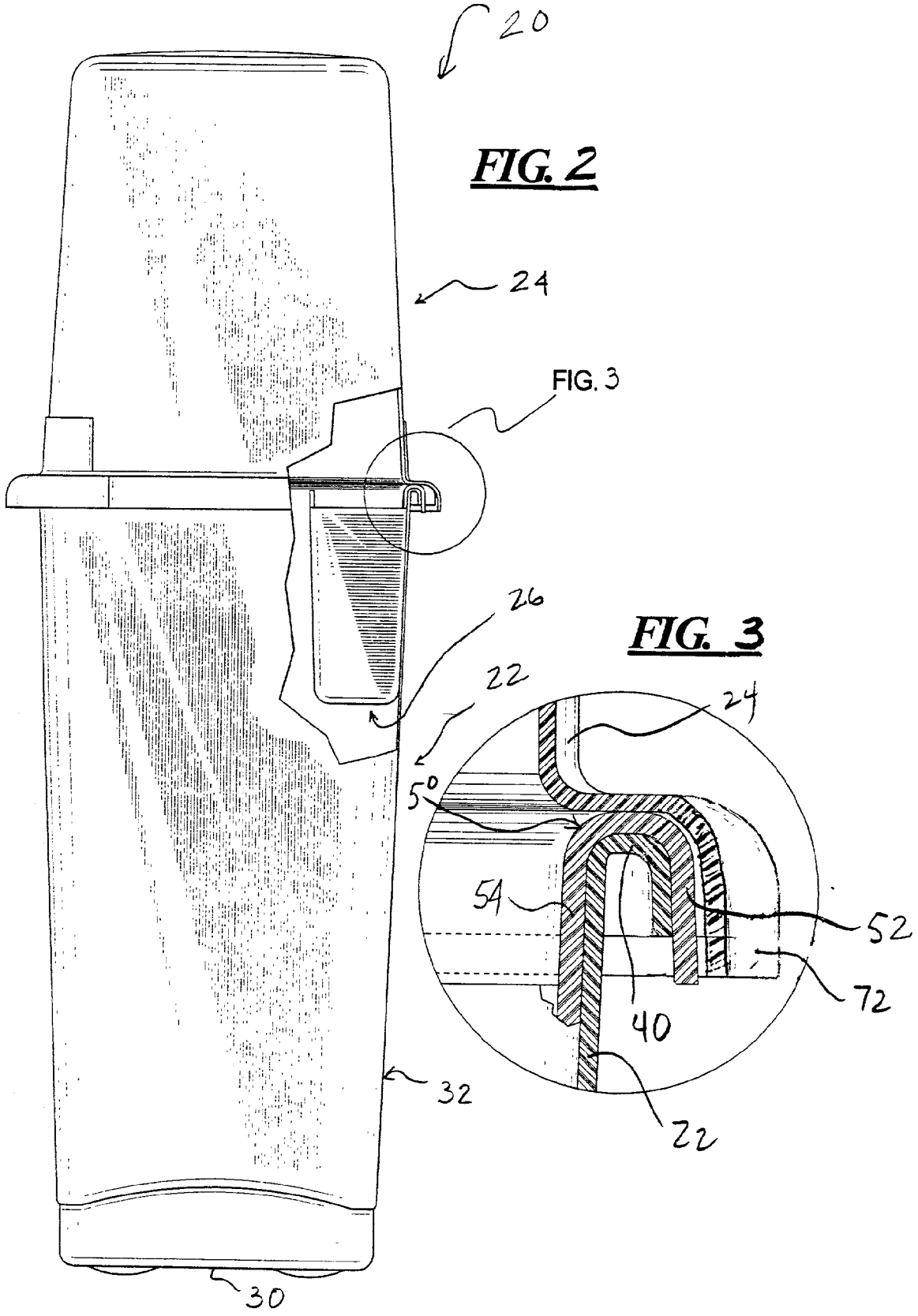


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

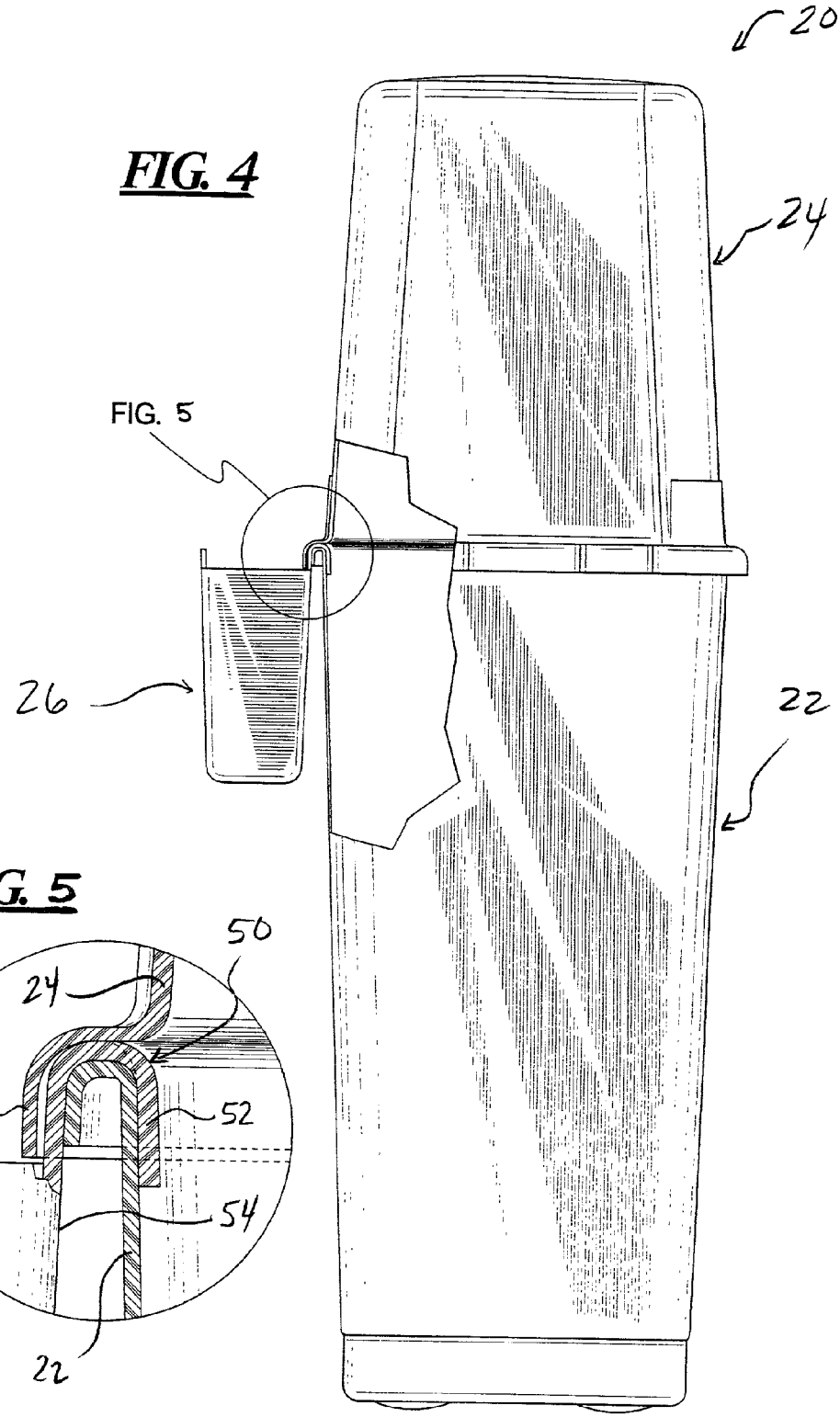


FIG. 5

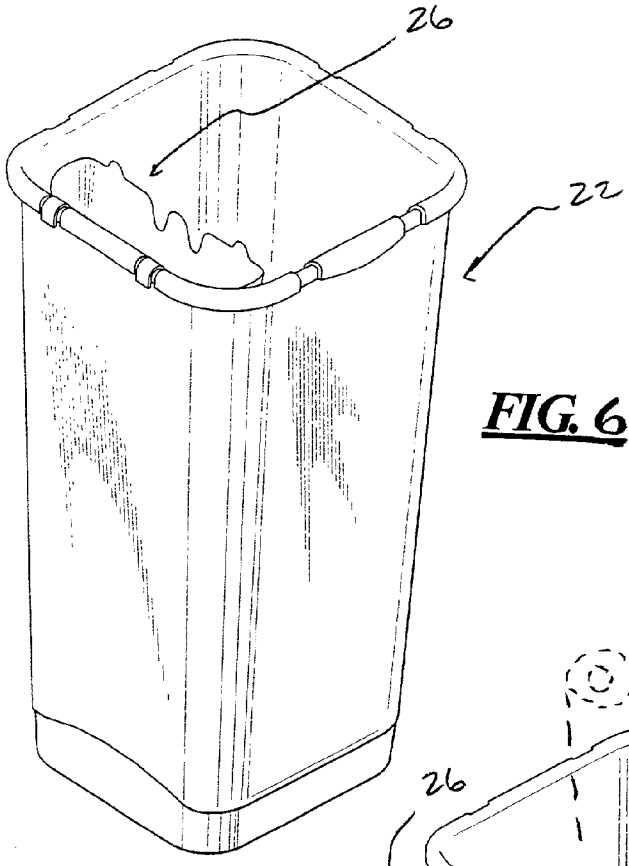


FIG. 6

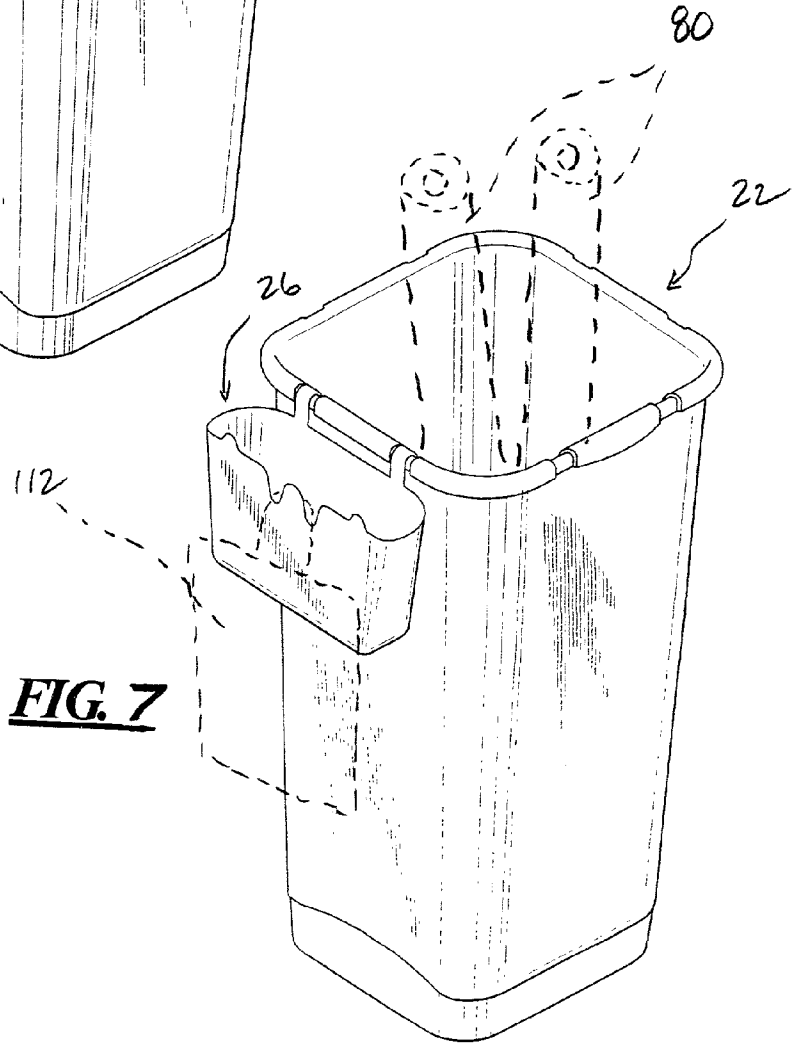
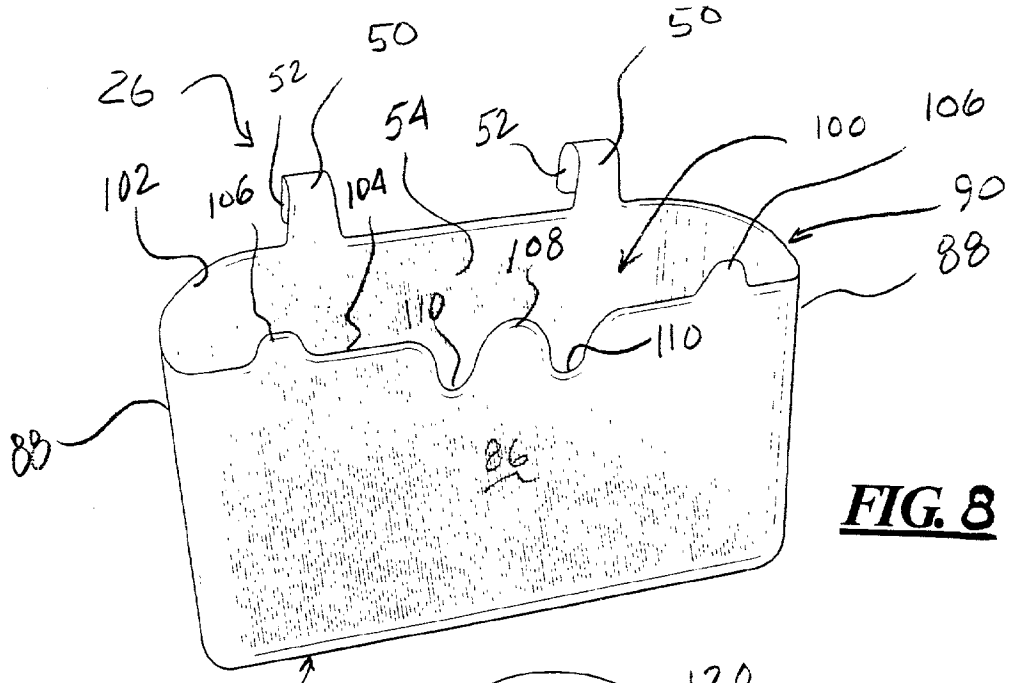


FIG. 7


50
50
26
52
54
52
100
106
102
106
104
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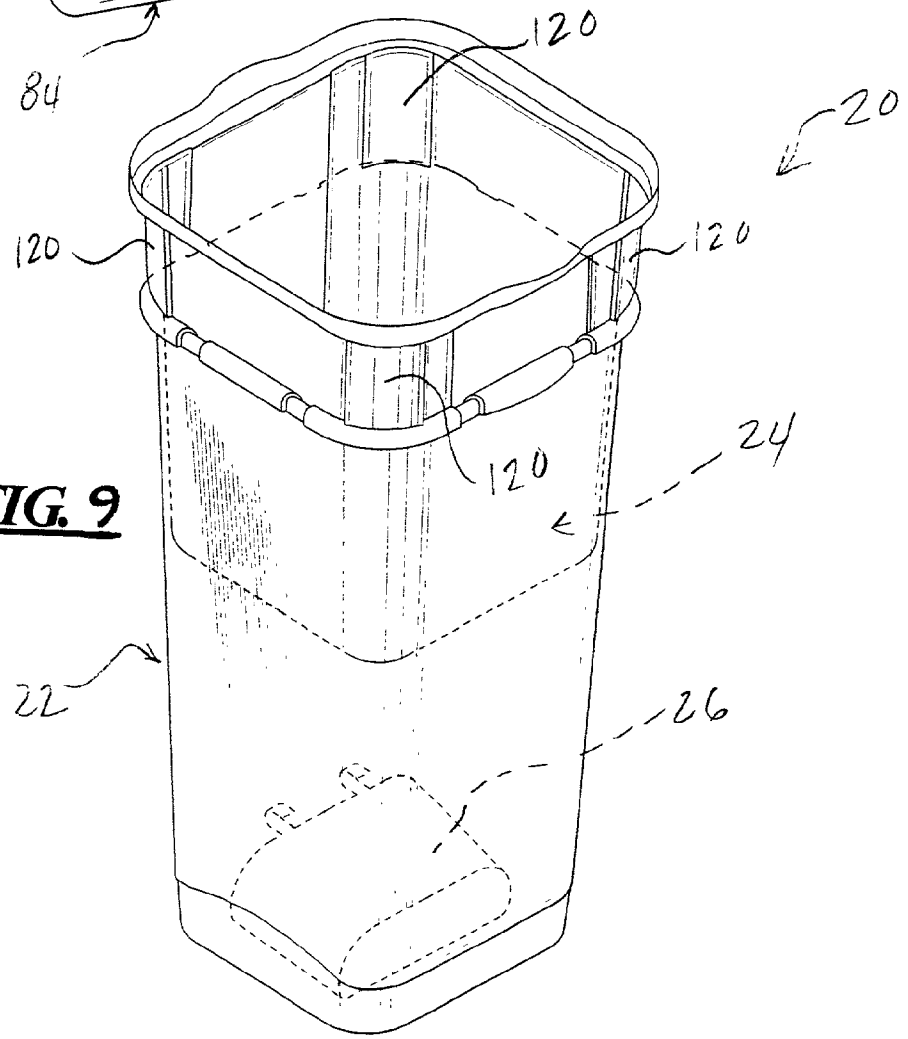
108
88
110
110
88
86
84

FIG. 8


120
20
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120
24
22
26

FIG. 9

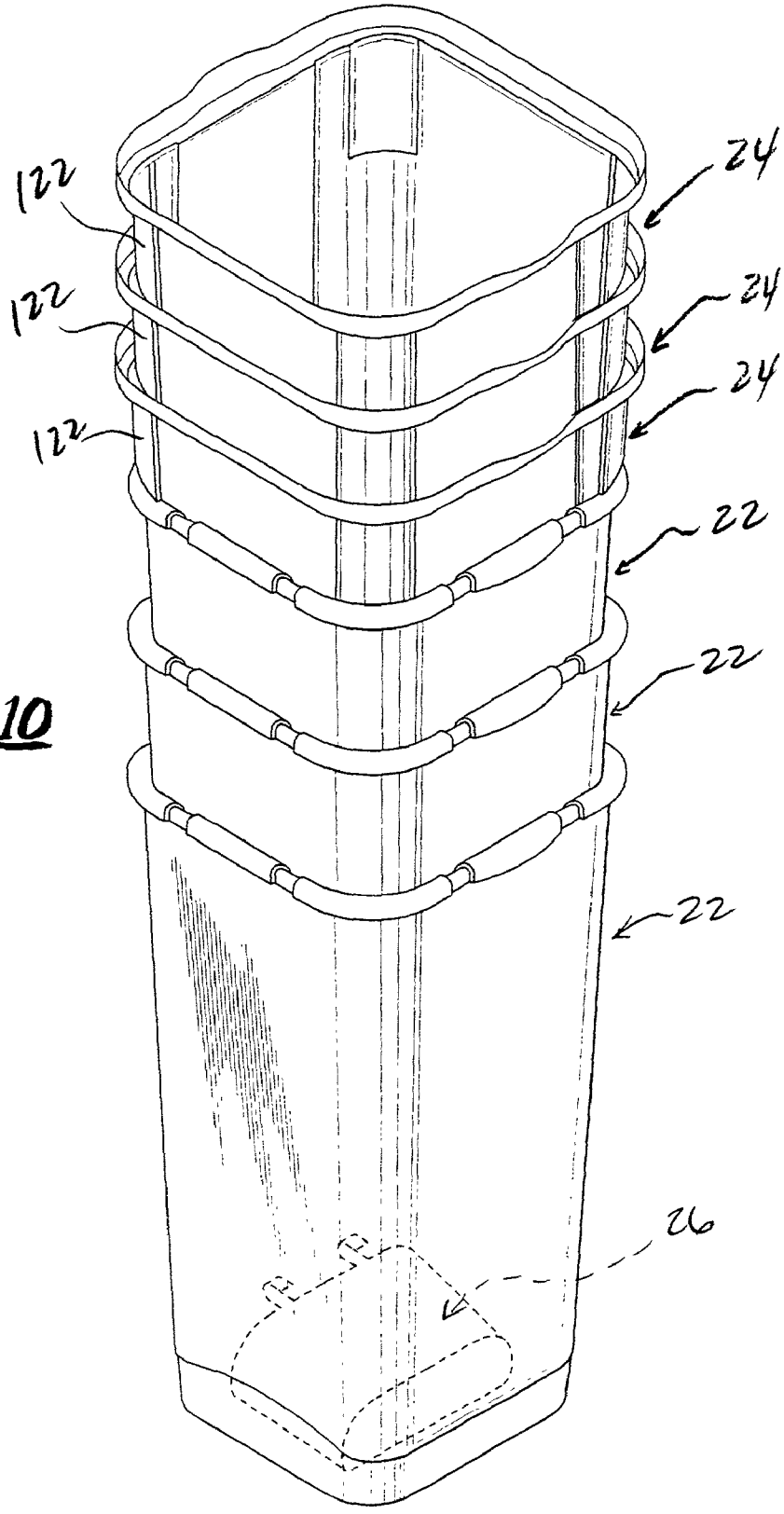

FIG. 10

STORAGE CONTAINER FOR ELONGATE ARTICLES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention is generally related to storage containers, and more particularly to a versatile storage container for storing elongate articles.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Gift wrapping paper typically comes in elongate rolls with long sheets or webs of paper wound around an elongate paperboard tube. In many instances, the paper sheets or webs are quite wide, thus resulting in rolls or paper that are quite long. These rolls can be difficult for a user to store when not being used. Wrapping gifts generally also requires the use of tape, scissors, bows, ribbons, note cards, and other accessories. Storing these accessories together, and near the wrapping paper rolls, can also often be problematic. Consumers often may use some of the accessories for purposes other than gift wrapping. The accessories thus become misplaced and/or separated from the other accessories, making them difficult to find when needed for gift wrapping.

[0003] Many consumers simply store a plurality of rolls of such paper and the accessories separately from one another with the paper rolls standing in a corner of a closet or resting in a stack on a closet shelf and with the accessories such as scissors and tape stored elsewhere. When it comes time to use the wrapping paper and the accessories, the consumer must gather the desired wrapping paper and must also locate and gather the necessary accessories. This can result in a frustrating and time consuming procedure.

[0004] Containers have been devised to store many different products and articles. Gift wrapping paper rolls and other types of rolled paper, as well as the associated accessories are no exception. Examples of such containers and devices are disclosed in, for example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,006,502; 6,123,197; and 4,186,833. Various disadvantages and problems are associated with these prior known containers and devices.

[0005] For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,006,502 discloses a wrapping station system and method that can also be utilized as a storage container for these articles. The container has two halves that can be folded open to form a gift wrapping surface. Each of the halves of the container has a plurality of receptacles, some for storing rolls of paper and some for receiving storage drawers to hold the various accessories. One disadvantage of the disclosed device is that it includes numerous different components requiring elaborate, labor intensive manufacturing and assembly sequences, and resulting in relatively expensive fabrication, assembly, and finished product.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 6,123,197 discloses an upright container with a hinged flip open lid. The container has a plurality of dividers that can be adjusted to change the spacing between sub-compartments within the container. One or more of the compartments includes vertically arranged storage regions to store items such as scissors, tape, and ribbons. The device is also disclosed as having clips that are spring-biased and separately attachable to the exterior of the container so that bags and other articles can be hung or otherwise suspended from the container. The container disclosed in the U.S. Pat. No. 6,123,197 also has a lid latching mechanism and requires hinges for the lid. A tray is also disclosed that rests in the top opening of the container for storing tape, ribbons, and other objects. One disadvantage of this disclosed container is that when using the top tray, space below the tray is blocked from easy access. The tray must be removed in order to access the vertically stacked storage regions within the container. A further disadvantage is that the vertically arranged storage regions within the container are difficult to access and required awkwardly bending over to retrieve accessories from these regions. Another disadvantage is that, again, the device is elaborately constructed with numerous components and requires laborious and relatively expensive manufacturing and assembly processes.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 4,186,833 discloses a smaller storage box for storing gift wrapping accessories and folded sheets of gift wrapping paper. The container has a hinged lid with one or more dowel rods extending transversely across and under the lid. The rods are provided in the lid for storing ribbon rolls and the like. A bottom portion of the container includes one or more compartments for storing folded paper and other objects such as tape and scissors. One disadvantage of this disclosed device is that it cannot accommodate storing elongate rolls of paper. Another disadvantage is that it again includes a plurality of components including hinges, handles, compartment dividers, ribbon dowels, and the like which require separate manufacture and assembly, thus increasing the labor expense to produce the container and the relative product cost.

[0008] Other types of storage container products are known as WRAP'n Craft™ boxes and available from RUBBERMAID®. One example is a horizontal container with an elongate, shallow base that lies flat on a surface. A lid fits over the base. Elongate articles such as wrapping paper are stored lying horizontally in the base. One or more accessory trays can be fitted in the base and suspended from edges of the base. Another example is a vertical container with an elongate, tall base and a removable hood. The hood has a top lid that is hinged and can be opened to access an accessory tray suspended in the top part of the hood.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] An exemplary storage container in accordance with the teachings of the present invention is described and explained in greater detail below with the aid of the drawing figures in which:

[0010] **FIG. 1** is an exploded perspective view of one example of a storage container constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

[0011] **FIG. 2** is a side view in fragmentary cross section of the storage container shown in **FIG. 1** and as assembled in one possible configuration.

[0012] **FIG. 3** is an enlarged view of a portion of the container shown in **FIG. 2**.

[0013] **FIG. 4** is a side view in fragmentary cross section of the storage container shown in **FIG. 1** and as assembled in another possible configuration.

[0014] **FIG. 5** is an enlarged view of a portion of the container shown in **FIG. 4**.

[0015] **FIG. 6** is an elevational perspective view of the basket and container base in the configuration shown in **FIG. 2**.

[0016] **FIG. 7** is an elevational perspective view of the basket and container base in the configuration shown in **FIG. 4**.

[0017] **FIG. 8** is an enlarged perspective view of the basket of the storage container shown in **FIG. 1**.

[0018] **FIG. 9** is an elevational perspective view of the storage container shown in **FIG. 1** and in another possible configuration for storing the container.

[0019] **FIG. 10** is an elevational perspective view of three stacked storage containers and in the configuration shown in **FIG. 9**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0020] An exemplary storage container for storing elongate articles such as large or jumbo rolls of wrapping paper is disclosed and described herein. The disclosed storage container is constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention and solves or improves upon the above noted problems and disadvantages in prior known containers and devices. The storage container can vertically store a plurality of rolls of wrapping paper or other elongate articles within the container. The container can also protect the articles stored therein. The container can also house and store accessories associated with the stored articles.

[0021] If gift wrapping paper is stored, the accessories may typically include scissors, tape, ribbons, bows, note cards, and other accessories. The storage container is versatile in that the accessories can either be stored interior to the container, space permitting, or can be stored exterior to the container. When not in use, one or more of the storage containers can be reconfigured to nest and stack in a stored configuration, reducing the size of the container for storage. When in use, the storage container provides a safe and secure environment for stored articles. The storage container also include only three parts and requires virtually no assembly. It is also very easy to manufacture.

[0022] Turning now to the drawings, **FIG. 1** illustrates an exploded view of one example of a storage container **20** constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. The container **20** generally has a container base **22**, a container lid **24**, and an accessory basket **26**. The base **22**, the lid **24**, and the basket **26** are constructed so that the storage container is versatile and can be oriented and configured in a number of different ways, depending upon the intended use.

[0023] With reference to **FIGS. 1 and 2**, the base **22** generally has a bottom panel **30** and a circumferentially contiguous upstanding side wall **32** extending upward from a perimeter of the bottom panel. In the disclosed example, the side wall **32** has a generally rectangular cylinder configuration. In this example, the contiguous side wall **32** is formed by four side panel segments **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c*, and **34***d*. The four side panels **34***a*-**34***d* are interconnected to one another along adjacent edges to form the contiguous side wall **32**. The bottom panel **30** and side wall **32** generally define therein a vertically oriented base interior **36**.

[0024] In the disclosed example, the side wall **32** terminates at a top end **38** disposed opposite the bottom panel **30**. In this example, the top end **38** has a radially outwardly rolled lip **40** extending around the contiguous top end. The top end **38** also defines a base opening **42** providing access to the base interior **36**. Also in this example, the rolled lip **40** includes a pair of opposed outwardly bulged sections that define handles **44***a* and **44***c* that are disposed central to the side panels **34***a* and **34***c*, respectively. The handles **44***a* and **44***c* extend radially outward further than the adjacent parts of the lip **40** relative to the respective side panels **34***a* and **34***c* to a distance sufficient to provide for finger space underneath the lip. The handles **44** permit a user to easily grasp and carry the container base and the entire assembled container.

[0025] As best shown in **FIGS. 1, 6**, and **7**, the top end **38** of the base **22** also has a plurality of depressions **46** or recesses formed in the lip that accommodate attachment of the basket **26** as described in greater detail below. The depressions **46** can be provided on any one portion or multiple portions of the top end **38**, as desired. In this example, each of the side panels **34** adjacent the top end **38** has a pair of the depressions **46** formed therein. For example, the lip **40** at the top end **38** of the side panel **34***a* includes a pair of the depressions **46***a* so that the basket **26** can be attached. Each other side panel and lip portion in this example is similarly constructed.

[0026] As generally illustrated in **FIG. 1** and described in greater detail below, the disclosed basket **26** has a pair of upwardly and rearwardly extending hooks **50** that secure the basket to the base **22**. The pair of hooks **50** are spaced to register in the corresponding depressions **46** adjacent one side panel **24** when the basket is installed on the base **22**. As shown in **FIGS. 2, 4, 6**, and **7**, the basket **26** can be installed either interior to the base **22** or exterior to the base. Similarly, the basket **26** can be installed in either the interior or exterior orientation, both when the lid **24** is installed on the base **22** or when the lid is removed.

[0027] Turning again to **FIGS. 1 and 2**, the lid **24** generally has a top panel **60** and a circumferentially contiguous lid side wall **62** extending from and connected with a perimeter of the top panel. As with the base **22**, in this example, the contiguous side wall **62** defines a generally rectangular cylinder and has four interconnected lid side panels **64***a*, **64***b*, **64***c*, and **64***d* that coincide, when installed, with the base side panels **34***a*-**34***d*, respectively. The lid side wall **62** terminates at a bottom lid end **66** disposed opposite the top panel **60**. The lid end **66** in this example defines a lid opening **68** that opens into a lid space or interior **70**. The lid end **66** includes a radially outwardly flared rim that, when installed, extends downward toward the base **22**. The rim **72** is sized and configured to overlie and register with the base lip **40**. Thus, in this example, the rim **72** also includes a pair of oppositely disposed bulge portions **74** that register with the bulging handles **44***a* and **44***c* in the lip **40**.

[0028] Referring specifically to FIGS. **2-5**, details of the rim **72**, lip **40**, depressions **46**, basket hooks **50**, and their several installed arrangement are now described. When the storage container **20** is configured for storing elongate articles within the container, the lid opening **68** and the base opening **42** are positioned adjacent and facing one another. The combined base interior **36** and lid interior **70** form an

enclosure for storing articles within the container. In the installed configuration, the rim **72** overlays and closely follows the contour of the rolled lip **40**. The rim **72** registers over the lip **40** to removably secure the lid in place. As shown in **FIG. 3**, the bulge portions **74** of the rim **72** overlie the respective handle portions **44** of the lip **40**. When the disclosed lid and base are assembled, the lid height defines a significant portion of the enclosure size and the total enclosure length can be sized to accommodate quite lengthy articles. When the lid **24** is removed from the base **22**, its height permits a significant portion of elongate articles to be exposed and, therefore, easily accessible.

[**0029**] **FIGS. 3 and 5** also illustrate cross sections through one hook **50** of the basket **26** and one depression **46** when the basket and the lid **24** are both installed. In **FIG. 3**, the basket is installed in the interior of the base **22** and in **FIG. 5**, the basket is installed exterior to the base. As can be seen in **FIG. 3**, the hook **50** is contoured to extend upward from the basket **26** and then rearward from the basket before extending downward. The hook defines a space or gap between the depending portion **52** of the hook **50** and a rear wall **54** of the basket. The space for each hook **50** and the hook size and contour are configures so that each hook can nest within a selected **46** of the lip **40** on the base **22**. In this arrangement, the basket **26** is positioned inside the base **22** and, thus, each hook depending portion **52** extends over the lip **40** within the depression **46** and into the base interior **36**.

[**0030**] Similarly, **FIG. 5** illustrates that the basket is hanging exterior to the base. Thus, each hook **50** is again received in the selected depression **46** and the depending portion **52** extends over the lip **40** and into the interior **36** of the container base **22**. Again, the contour of the depression **46** in the lip **40** and the hook **50** preferably compliment one another. The rim **72** of the lid **24** closely follows the contour of the lip **40** and, as can be seen in **FIGS. 3 and 5**, in the region of the depressions **46** and hook **50**, the rim **72** follows the contour of and nests with the hook **50**.

[**0031**] As shown in **FIG. 6** and **7**, with the lid **24** removed from the base **22**, contents such as elongate articles stored within the base are easily accessible. A user need not bend over to access elongate articles and also need not bend over very far to reach accessories stored in the basket. For example, one or more rolls of wrapping paper **80** (shown here only in phantom) extend far upward from the top end **38** of the base **22** when the lid **24** is removed. Contents within the basket **26** are easily accessible, regardless of whether the basket is installed interior to or exterior of the base. As shown in **FIG. 4**, if the basket **26** is stored exterior to the base **22**, accessories in the basket are accessible without removing the lid **24**. In this arrangement, a user can access, for example, scissors and tape within the basket for any reason without disturbing the articles stored in the storage container enclosure.

[**0032**] When working with wrapping paper and with the accessories stored in the basket **26**, the basket can be installed as shown in **FIG. 7** exterior to the base providing easy access for the user, even when working on a floor surface adjacent the base **22**. Alternatively, the basket can simply be removed from the base and rested on a surface near the user as desired. As shown in **FIG. 2**, the basket can be positioned inside the base **22** and the lid can be installed. In this arrangement, the entire contents of the storage container **20** can be stored.

[**0033**] **FIG. 8** illustrates a perspective view of one example of the basket **26** in greater detail and constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. As described above, the disclosed basket **26** has a pair of the hooks **50** extending upward and rearward of the back panel **54**. The basket **26** also has a bottom panel **84**, a front panel **86**, and a pair of curved side panels **88** that interconnect the front and back panels. In this example, the front panel **86**, side panels **88**, and back panel **54** form a contiguous circumferential side wall **90** that is connected to and extends upward from a perimeter of the bottom panel **84**. The basket **26** defines a basket space or interior **100** that is accessible through a top opening **102** for inserting and removing accessories.

[**0034**] The basket **26** includes another feature in this example, as is described with reference to **FIGS. 7 and 8**. A top edge **104** of the front panel **86** in this example has a serpentine contour defining a plurality of upwardly extending and integrally formed hangers or prongs **106** and **108**. The prongs **106**, in this example, are outwardly disposed nearer the side panels **88**. The prong **108** is disposed centrally relative to the top edge **104** and is centered between a pair of recessed regions **110**, rendering the center prong larger than the outward prongs **106**. The protrusions **106** and **108** in this example are provided for hanging additional articles from the basket **26**. It is known that paper bags often come with handles. The handles of these type of bags can be placed over selected ones of the protrusions **106** and **108** to hang the bags from the basket. Such a bag **112** is shown in **FIG. 7** only in phantom.

[**0035**] As will be evident to those having ordinary skill in the art, the basket shape and configuration can vary considerably and yet fall within the scope of the present invention. For example, the size and shape of the various basket panels can be altered from the disclosed example. Similarly, the shape, size, and quantity of the hooks and prongs can be altered from that shown. Alternatively, the basket may have no prongs. The material and process used to form the basket can also vary. In one example, the basket can be molded from a plastic or thermoplastic material by a suitable process such as vacuum forming, rotation molding, injection molding, blow molding, or the like. Other processes can include cutting and fastening parts, stamping, weaving, or the like. The basket can alternatively be fabricated from many other different materials as desired and as suited for a particular use, such as, for example, wicker, coated paperboard, corrugated paperboard, cardboard, wood, metal, or the like. Also, the surfaces can be solid and relatively smooth as illustrated. However, the surfaces can also include decorative or structural ribbing and other contours, perforations, ventilation regions, or the like.

[**0036**] The basket, though shown having hooks that hook onto a lip of the base, can alternatively be removably attached in other ways to the container. For example, surface mounted hook and loop fasteners can be used and adhered to the basket and base. Also, pegs and holes or keys and ways can also be used if desired.

[**0037**] **FIGS. 9 and 10** illustrate additional versatility provided by the storage container **20** described herein. As shown in **FIG. 9**, the storage container **20** can be configured in an alternative manner for storing the container when not in use. In this configuration, the lid **24** is inverted and

telescopically received in the base opening **42**. The side panels **34***a*-**34***d* of the base **22** can be tapered slightly outward, moving upward form the bottom panel **30** so that the base is wider at the top end **38** than at the bottom panel. The lid **24** can be similarly tapered so that it is wider at the lid opening **68** and narrower near the top panel **60**. When so configured, the lid can be inverted and easily received within the base interior as shown in **FIG. 9**.

[**0038**] In the disclosed example, the lid includes four outwardly protruding corner regions **120** that extend radially outward further than the remaining panels **64***a*-**64***d* near the lid end **66**. The regions **120** as formed define an exposed stop surface **122** on a top side of each region facing toward the top panel **60**. These regions **120** extend outward to a sufficient degree so that, when the lid is inverted, the stop surfaces **122** rest on the top end **38** of the base **22**. The lid **24** is thus prevented from nesting too deep into the base interior **36**. These regions **120** and surfaces **122** therefore suspend the lid **24** in the inverted configuration and yet prevent the lid from fully seating within the base **22** and from becoming lodged therein by static friction. In this arrangement, the lid **24** can be easily removed when needed. Also as shown in **FIG. 9**, the basket **26** can be sized so that it can be laid flat within the container interior **36** and resting on the bottom panel **30**.

[**0039**] **FIG. 10** illustrates a plurality of the container bases **22** nested within one another. A plurality of lids **24**, also nested within one another, are shown inverted and received in the upper most base **22** of the stack. The tapered shape of the bases **22** and the lids **24** permit nesting and stacking of multiple bases **22** and lids **24**. The lower most lid **24** of the inverted lid stack and the upper most base **22** of the base stack nest with one another as shown in **FIG. 9**. The remaining lids **24** and bases **22** nest with the adjacent lids and bases, respectively. Although not shown in **FIG. 10**, the bases **22** can also include outwardly extending regions along some portion of the panels **34**, similar to the regions **120** of the lids **24**, so that the bases nest only to a given depth.

[**0040**] In the example of **FIG. 10, a** basket **26** for each of the containers can be stored within the respective container base **22** resting on the corresponding bottom panel **30**, as in the example of **FIG. 9**. In the alternative, a plurality of the baskets **26** can be stored in the upper most base **22** beneath the nested lid stack. Alternatively or additionally, a plurality of the baskets **26** can be stored in the upper most inverted lid **24**.

[**0041**] The disclosed storage container offers a simple, easy to manufacture construction that is versatile when in use and can be stored in an alternative configuration. Similarly, multiple storage containers can be stored as shown in **FIG. 10** both by a consumer and on display in a retail environment. When the container **20** is used, the enclosure defined within the installed lid **24** and base **22** is sufficiently large to accommodate multiple elongate articles and yet protect them from dust and damage. Additionally, the basket **26** can be mounted interior to the enclosure for storing accessories associated with the stored articles such as gift wrapping accessories. The basket **26** can also be stored installed on the base **22**, but exterior to the container, so that items held within the basket are accessible without removing the lid **24** from the base **22**. In this manner, accessories such as scissors and tape can be easily obtained for other uses and return to the basket **26** where they remain stored with the articles held in the enclosure of the storage container **20**.

[**0042**] The storage container base **22** and lid **24** described herein are particularly well suited for fabrication as plastic molded parts. However, the lid and base can also be alternatively fabricated from many other different materials as desired and as suited for a particular use, such as, for example, wicker, coated paperboard, corrugated paperboard, cardboard, wood, metal, or the like. Also, the surfaces can be solid and relatively smooth as illustrated. However, the surfaces can also include decorative or structural ribbing, corrugations, or other contours, perforations, ventilation regions, or the like. Similarly, any suitable fabrication process can be used, depending on the selected container materials. If plastic lids and bases are to be fabricated, injection molding, blow molding, vacuum forming, rotation molding, or other suitable processes can be performed. Other processes can include cutting and fastening parts, stamping, weaving, or the like. The disclosed storage container is not to be limited by any particular material or fabrication process.

[**0043**] The lid height as shown in comparison to the base height comprises some proportion of the height of the storage enclosure. In one preferred example, the lid provides about one-third the enclosure height and the base provides about two-thirds the total height. By having the lid comprise some significant proportion of the enclosure height, the elongate articles stored therein are easily grasped and readily accessible when the lid is removed. Also, when the lid is removed, inverted, and rested on a surface, the lid can provide a temporary storage container useful for keeping various articles organized and within reach.

[**0044**] In an alternative example, the lid need only provide a small proportion of the storage enclosure height. In such an example, the basket can still hang from the lip either interior or exterior relative to the base. Also, the slight lid depth will expose at least very top ends of elongate articles stored in the base when the lid is removed.

[**0045**] Although a certain exemplary storage container has been disclosed and described herein in accordance with the teachings of the present invention, the scope of coverage of this patent is not limited thereto. On the contrary, this patent covers all embodiments of the teachings of the invention fairly falling within the scope of the appended claims, either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A storage container comprising:

a container base having a bottom panel and an upstanding circumferentially contiguous base side wall extending from and connected to the bottom panel, the base side wall terminating at a top end that defines a base opening into a base interior;

a container lid having a top panel and a lid rim, wherein the lid can be installed on the base with the rim registered with the top end of the base side wall, wherein the lid defines at least a portion of a storage enclosure in conjunction with the base interior; and

a basket adapted to hang from the base top end either within the base interior or exterior to the base side wall when installed.

2. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the basket is further adapted to hang from the base top end both when the lid is removed from the base and when the lid is installed on the base.

3. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the basket further comprises:

a basket bottom; and

a circumferentially contiguous upstanding basket wall extending upward from and connected to the basket bottom, the basket wall terminating at a top end that defines a basket opening into a basket space.

4. A storage container according to claim 3, wherein the basket further comprises:

at least one hook extending upward from the basket top end and arching away from the basket opening, the hook adapted to hook over the top end of the base.

5. A storage container according to claim 4, wherein the top end of the base is a rolled lip extending radially outward from the base opening, and wherein the rolled lip has at least one depression into which the at least one basket hook nests when the basket is installed.

6. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the top end of the base includes a plurality of depressions formed therein each adapted to register with a portion of the basket when the basket is installed.

7. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the top end of the base is a rolled lip extending radially outward from the base opening.

8. A storage container according to claim 7, further comprising:

at least a pair of opposed radially outward bulging portions in the rolled lip, each bulging portion defining a handle for the storage container.

9. A storage container according to claim 6, wherein the lid rim has a radially outwardly flared portion adapted to register over the rolled lip when the lid is installed on the base.

10. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the lid further comprises:

a circumferentially contiguous lid side wall extending from and connected to the top panel, the lid side wall terminating at the lid rim such that the lid rim defines a lid opening into a lid interior, wherein the storage enclosure is defined by both the lid and base interiors when the lid is installed.

11. A storage container according to claim 10, wherein the lid interior forms about one-third of the storage enclosure and the base interior forms about two-thirds of the storage enclosure.

12. A storage container according to claim 10, wherein the lid is adapted to nest at least partly within the base interior through the base opening when the lid is in an inverted orientation.

13. A storage container according to claim 12, wherein the lid has a plurality of radially outwardly extending stop surfaces that bear against the top end of the base when the lid is in the inverted orientation.

14. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the lid is adapted to at least partly fit within the base interior when removed from the base.

15. A storage container according to claim 1, wherein the base interior defines substantially all of the storage enclosure.

16. A storage container according to claim 10, wherein the lid can be used as a separate storage container when removed from the base and inverted.

17. A storage container for storing elongate articles, the storage container comprising:

a container base having a top end defining a base top opening that opens into a vertically elongate base interior;

a container lid having a lid rim surrounding a lid opening that opens into a vertically elongate lid interior; and

a basket adapted to hang from the base top end either within the base interior or exterior to the base when installed,

wherein the lid can be installed on the base top end in an installed orientation such that the base and lid interiors together define an elongate storage enclosure or in an inverted orientation such that the lid at least partly nests into the base interior.

18. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the base has a bottom panel and an upstanding circumferentially contiguous base side wall extending from and connected to the bottom panel, the base side wall terminating at the base top end.

19. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the lid has a top panel and a circumferentially contiguous lid side wall extending from and connected to the top panel, the lid side wall terminating at the lid rim.

20. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the lid rim registers with the base top end when in the installed orientation.

21. A storage container according to claim 20, wherein the lid rim is a radially outwardly extending flare the registers over the lid top end.

22. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the basket has a pair of hooks that can be hooked over the base top end to support the basket on the base.

23. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein a plurality of the bases can be nested in series with one another to form a base stack, and wherein a plurality of the lids can be nested in series with one another to form a lid stack, and wherein the lid stack can be nested in the base stack in the inverted orientation.

24. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the base and the lid are each molded from a thermoplastic material.

25. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the basket can be selectively installed both within the interior of the base and exterior to the base without regard as to whether the lid is in the installed orientation, in the inverted orientation, or removed from the base.

26. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the lid forms about one-third of the storage enclosure and the base interior forms about two-thirds of the storage enclosure.

27. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the lid can be used as a separate storage container when removed from the base and inverted.

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