Nov. 23, 1954 P. E. WELLS 2,695,114

COMPARTMENTED CONTAINER

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Fig. 1

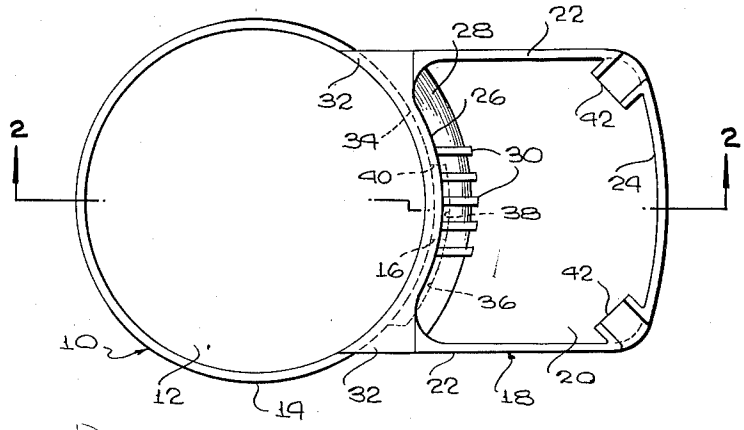


Fig. 2

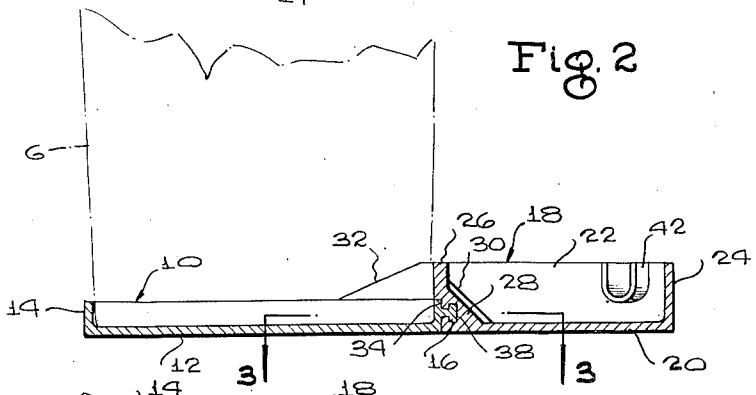
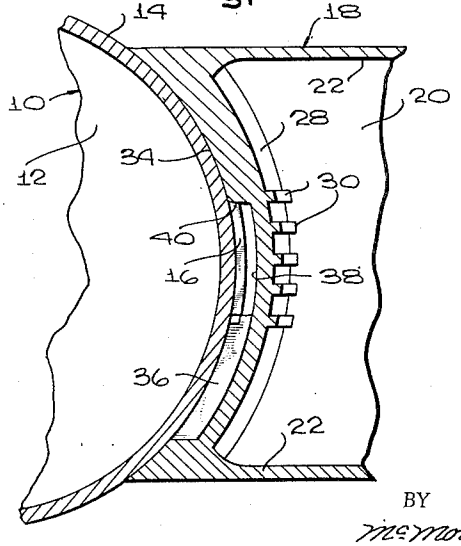


Fig. 3



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COMPARTMENTED CONTAINER

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1 Claim. (Cl. 220—23.4)

This invention relates to containers, and more particularly, has reference to a tray-like container including a plurality of separably connected, shallow receptacles which, when joined, cooperate to define individual compartments having a common dividing wall.

I have noted that there are many instances in which it would be desirable to provide a container having separate compartments each of which is adapted to receive a specific article, and constructed at the same time to permit separation of the several compartment forming portions thereof.

For example, in the serving of beverages, coasters are widely used, and quite commonly, ash trays are desired by the persons to whom said beverages are served. Additionally, it is believed that a useful article may well be provided, by combining a cigarette cannister with an ash tray in such a manner as to permit the cannister and ash tray to be normally connected as a single assembly, while at the same time permitting the ash tray to be detached from the cannister for emptying.

The main object of the present invention is to provide a compartmented container construction which will meet the desirable purposes set forth above, the device forming the present invention including a pair of receptacles proportioned to interfit with one another, and having a novelly arranged interlocking means that permits them to be separably and fixedly connected to produce the completed container.

Another important object is to provide a compartmented container of the character referred to so designed that the means for locking the portions of the container together will be wholly concealed, thereby to add to the attractive appearance of the device.

Yet another object of importance is to provide a container as stated in which the connection and separation of the component container portions can be effected with maximum speed and facility, by rotatable movement of one portion relative to the other.

A still further object of importance is to provide a compartmented container construction designed to permit manufacture thereof from any suitable material, such as metal, plastic, or the like, and further designed to permit its manufacture at relatively low cost.

Other objects will appear from the following description, the claims appended thereto, and from the annexed drawing, in which like reference characters designate like parts through the several views, and wherein:

Figure 1 is a top plan view of a container formed in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a longitudinal sectional view taken on line 2—2 of Figure 1; and

Figure 3 is an enlarged, fragmentary, sectional view taken on line 3—3 of Figure 2.

In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, I have illustrated a compartmented contianer which is designed to provide a combined coaster and ash tray. This illustration is provided, however, merely by way of example, to show one form which the container can take when produced commercially. It will be understood that the container could readily take other forms, which are not deemed necessary to illustrate herein, such as a combined coaster and cigarette cannister, a combined cigarette cannister and ash tray, etc.

In any event, the illustrated embodiment of the invention includes a coaster designated generally by the reference numeral **10**, and adapted to receive a beverage glass G illustrated fragmentarily and in dotted line in Figure 2.

The coaster **10** includes a circular, flat, bottom wall **12**, which is integral or otherwise rigid with a low, upstanding, annular side wall **14** that extends about the margin of the bottom wall.

An elongated tongue **16** is integrally or otherwise rigidly secured to the outer surface of the side wall **14**, and extends through a portion of the circumference of said side wall, the tongue projecting outwardly from the side wall as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

The tongue **16** is, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, of T-shaped cross sectional configuration, so as to provide a locking tongue adapted for engagement with an ash tray **18**.

As hereinbefore noted, the coaster and ash tray illustrated in the drawings are shown merely by way of example, and accordingly, the coaster will be hereinafter termed the first receptacle, the ash tray being termed the second receptacle.

The second receptacle includes a flat bottom wall **20** coplanar with the bottom wall **12** of the first receptacle, said bottom wall being approximately rectangular in respect to its outer configuration.

Extending upwardly from the opposite side edges of the bottom wall **20** are straight, parallel side walls **22**, said side walls being integral with the bottom wall and rising to a height greater than the height of the side wall **14** of the first receptacle (see Figure 2).

The side walls **22**, at one end, are integral with an outer end wall **24**, which in the present instance, but not necessarily, is formed with a slight longitudinal curvature.

An inner end wall **26** is also provided on the second receptacle **18**, and is arcuately indented from end to end thereof, on a radius equal to that of the side wall **14**. The inner side wall **26** extends upwardly from the bottom wall **20** of the second receptacle, a distance equal to the height of the parallel side walls **22**, and for the purpose of rigidfying the inner end wall, and also for the purpose of providing a space for the receptacle locking means, the base **28** of the wall **26** is thickened, and reinforced through the provision of a plurality of spaced ribs **30**.

At its opposite ends, the inner end wall **26** of the second receptacle **18** is reduced progressively in height, to merge into the top edge of the side wall **14** of the first receptacle, thereby to add to the attractiveness of the completed article.

Formed in the outer surface of the wall **26** is an angular recess **34** shaped cross sectionally to complement the cross sectional shape of the side wall **14** of the first receptacle, thus to permit a portion of the circumference of the side wall **14** to be recessed wholly within the wall **26**, in a manner best shown in Figure 2.

One surface of the recess **34** is disposed vertically, and formed in said surface is an elongated groove **36** one end portion of which is of rectangular cross section, said end portion communicating with a groove portion **38** of T-shaped cross section.

The groove **36** is more than twice as long as the locking tongue **16** of the first receptacle, and accordingly, when it is desired to connect the two receptacles to one another, the user extends the tongue **16** into the portion of the groove **36** that is of rectangular cross section. Then, it is merely necessary that the first receptacle be partially rotated, the outer surface of the side wall **14** sliding along the grooved surface of the recess **34**. This causes the locking tongue **16** to be slidably received within the end portion **38** of the groove **36**, thus to interlock the two receptacles, and join them in such a manner as to define a compartmented container.

It may be noted that one end of the groove **36** defines a shoulder **40**, which will limit movement of the tongue **16** into a locking position.

It may be noted that the recessing of the wall **26** of the second receptacle permits the first receptacle to be guided during its rotatable movement, since the surfaces of the recess **34** will cooperate with the tongue and groove in retaining the receptacles in proper relation during their relative rotatable movement.

Additionally, it is believed to be of importance that the wall **26** is so formed as to completely overlie the wall **14** with which it is interlocked, the wall **14** being recessed within the surface of the wall **26**. As a result, when the two receptacles are lockingly engaged with one another, the compartmented container defined thereby appears to have individual compartments separated by a common, integral dividing wall. This adds to the attractiveness of the appearance, and conceals wholly the locking means, while at the same time providing a simulation of an integral, one-piece, compartmented container.

Despite the fact that the receptacles are joined in such a manner as to simulate a one-piece container of the compartmented type, it is nevertheless possible to readily separate the receptacles, so that one of said receptacles can be emptied without disturbing the other receptacle.

In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, the ash tray defined by the second receptacle **18** is provided with cigarette holders **42**, disposed at the outer corners of the second receptacle. The cigarette holders, as will be noted from Figure 2, are so formed as to have straight side walls merging into a semi-cylindrical bottom wall. Preferably, the distance between the side walls of the cigarette holders is less than the ordinary diameter of a cigarette, the purpose of this construction being to provide a means for snuffing out a cigarette by extinguishing the fire thereof. In other words, when the cigarette has burned up to the point of contact with the cigarette holder, the metal of which said holder is formed will conduct the heat faster than the tobacco can retain it, and will cause the cigarette to be snuffed out before it reaches the end of the holder.

The construction illustrated and described would, it is believed, have wide application, and it will be readily appreciated that a device formed as illustrated and described herein could be used advantageously not only in homes, but also in night clubs, at conventions, etc. In each instance, the ash tray can be readily detached from the coaster without disturbing the glass G disposed within the coaster, to permit the ash tray to be emptied and returned to its proper position. The entire operation can be carried out without removing the glass or even elevating the coaster from the position normally assumed thereby where it is supported upon a table surface or the like.

It is believed apparent that the invention is not necessarily confined to the specific use or uses thereof described above, since it may be utilized for any purpose to which it may be suited. Nor is the invention to be necessarily limited to the specific construction illustrated and described, since such construction is only intended to be illustrative of the principles of operation and the means

presently devised to carry out said principles, it being considered that the invention comprehends any minor change in construction that may be permitted within the scope of the appended claim. For example, one minor change that might be made could involve the formation of the tongue **16** to a different cross-sectional shape, while still retaining its locking action. Thus, instead of a T-shaped cross-section, said tongue might well be bulbous in cross-section, having a relatively narrow base merging into a progressively thickened outer edge portion. This change is believed sufficiently obvious as not to require special illustration therein.

What is claimed is:

A compartmented container comprising a relatively shallow receptacle having a circular bottom, a circular cylindrical side wall carried by the bottom and extending upwardly therefrom adjacent the periphery thereof, a tongue carried by the convex side of the circular cylindrical side wall and projecting outwardly therefrom intermediate the upper and lower edges thereof, a relatively deep receptacle having a bottom, a concavo-convex side wall carried by the bottom of the deep receptacle and extending upwardly therefrom adjacent the perimeter thereof, the concave side of said concavo-convex side wall having a concave recess therein for receiving a portion of the convex side of of the circular cylindrical side wall and causing the concave sides of the side walls to lie flush, and said recessed side wall having an elongated closed end horizontal undercut groove therein intermediate the upper and lower termini of the recess receiving the tongue in interlocking engagement therewith and retaining the receptacles in interfitting relation with the concavo-convex side wall lying flush with and extending above a portion of the circular cylindrical side wall to form a stop for items introduced into the shallow receptacle.

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