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(54) **CUP-SHAPED BALLOON HOLDER WITH STICK**

(52) **U.S. Cl. 446/222**

(75) **Inventors: John J. Gilbert, Maple Grove, MN (US); Scott W. Gardner, Wayzata, MN (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(73) **Assignee: Anagram International, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN (US)**

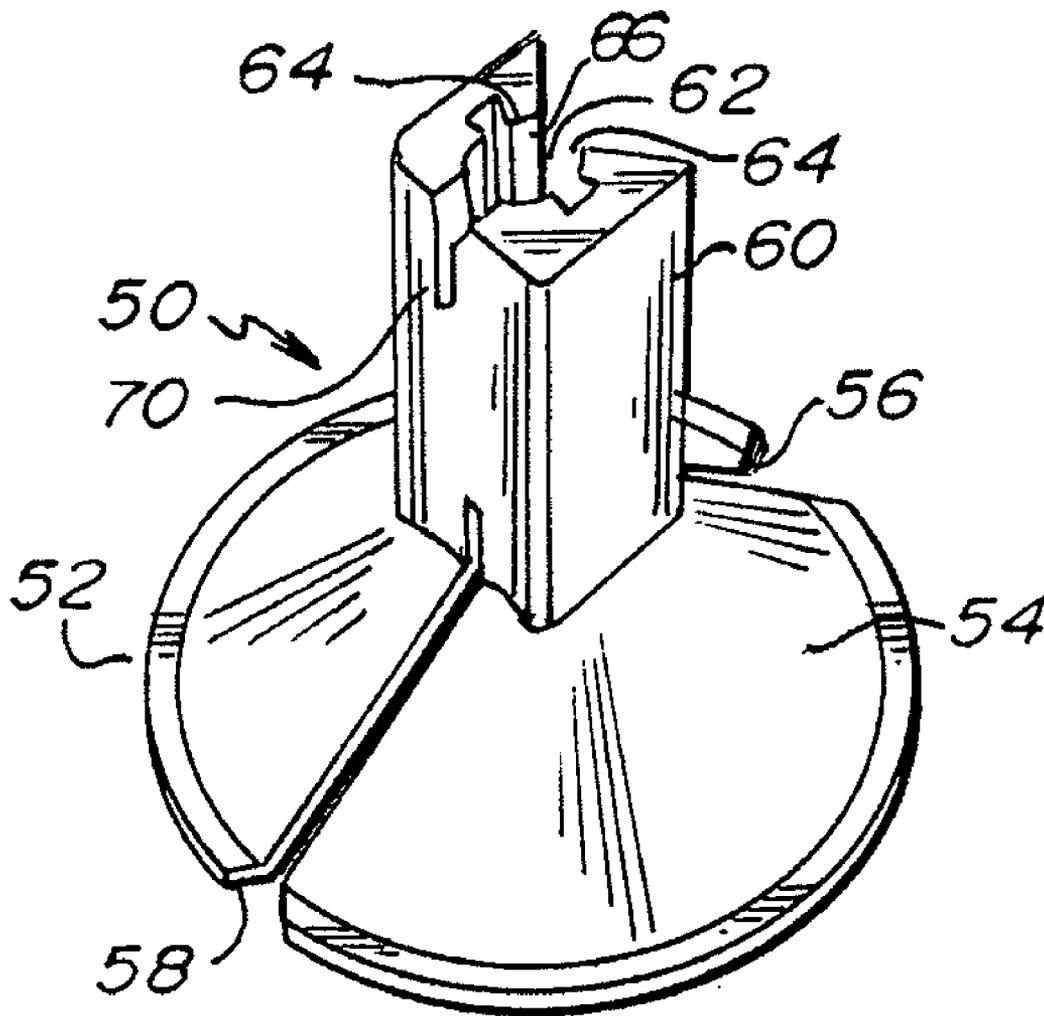
An improved balloon cup for mounting and supporting a balloon with the valve tail on a stick includes a frustoconical top for supporting and holding a balloon with a first depending slot therethrough for passing the balloon tail there-through. A stem depends from the top with an open inner channel circular in cross section extending the length of the stem. The channel is in open communication with the slot through an elongated channel opening for receiving the balloon tail therethrough. After the balloon tail is placed within the inner channel, the stick is transversely placed into the circular inner channel through the elongate channel opening and the stick and balloon tail are held in place by opposing bias flanges along the elongate channel opening.

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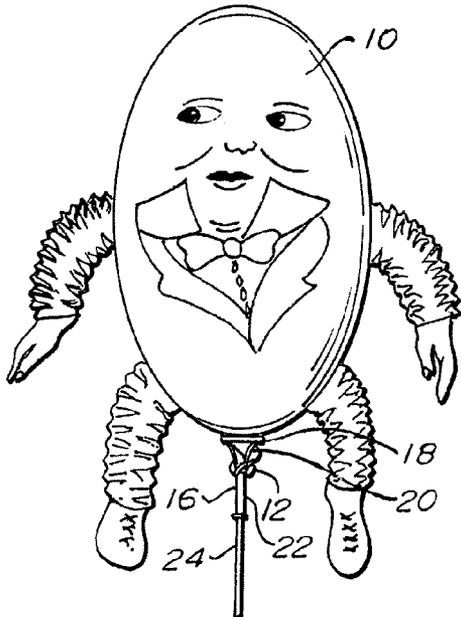


Fig. 1
(PRIOR ART)

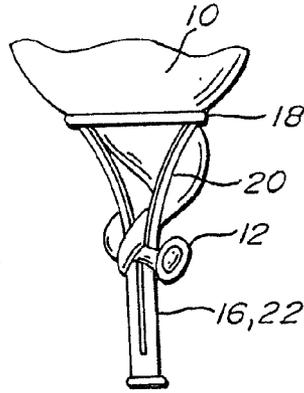


Fig. 2
(PRIOR ART)

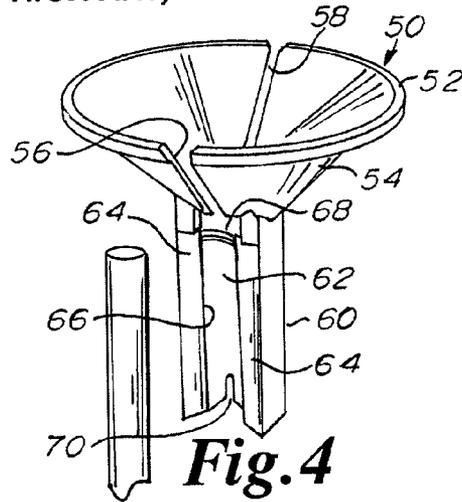


Fig. 4

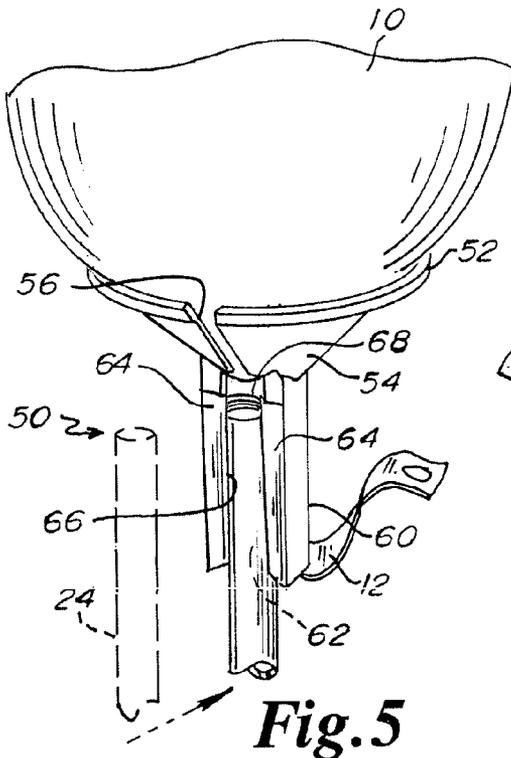


Fig. 5

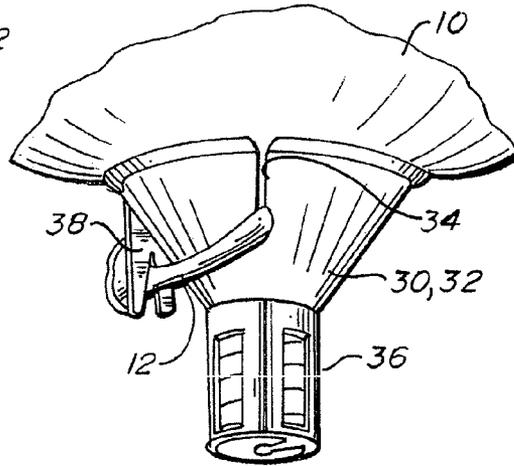


Fig. 3
(PRIOR ART)

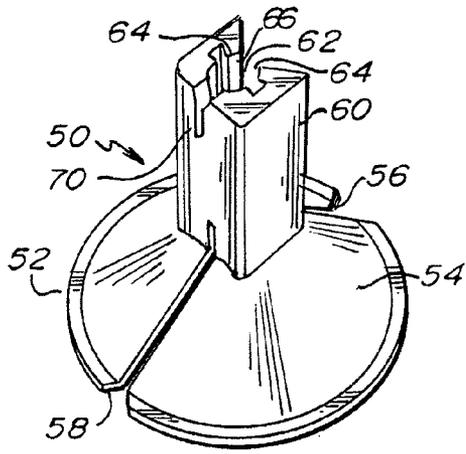


Fig. 6

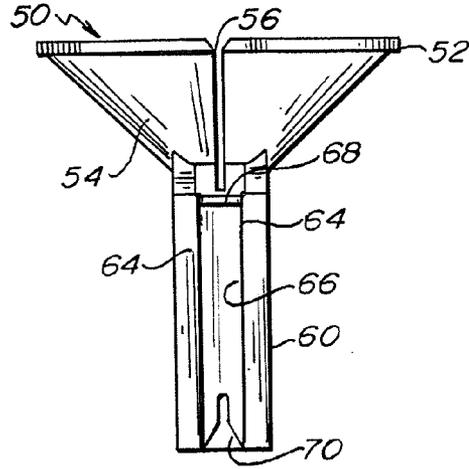


Fig. 7

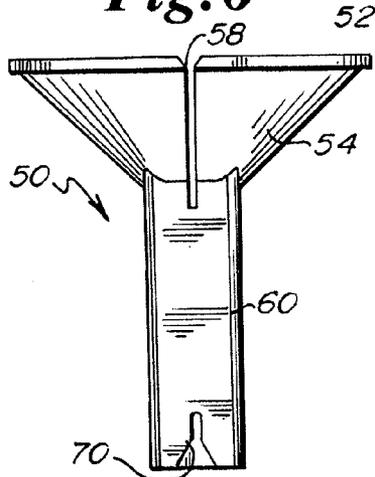


Fig. 8

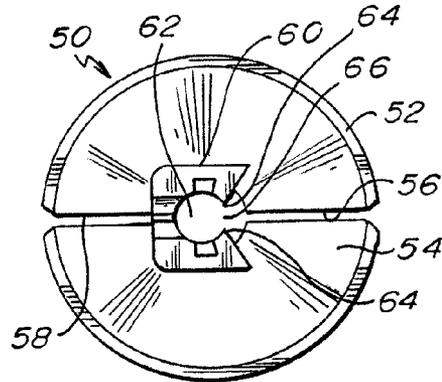


Fig. 9

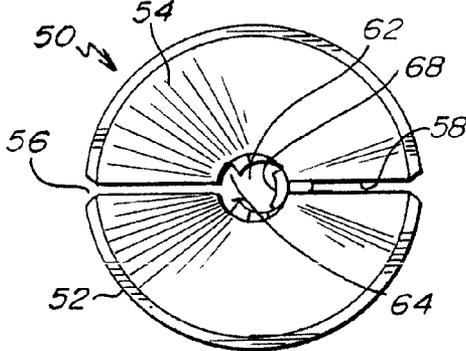


Fig. 10

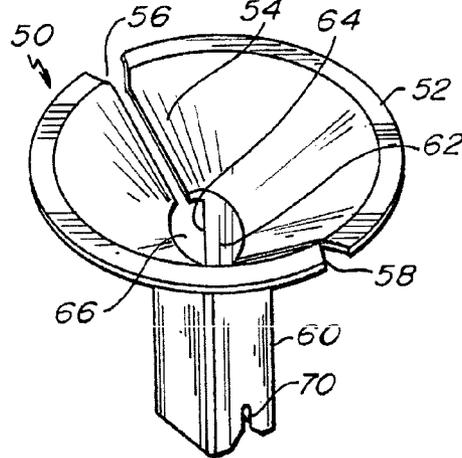


Fig. 11

CUP-SHAPED BALLOON HOLDER WITH STICK

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a cup-shaped balloon holder, and more particularly, to a cup-shaped balloon holder and stick combination which secures and holds a balloon in a simple, expedient and automatable fashion on a stick or straw.

[0002] The use of balloons for various functions and purposes has become extremely popular. Often, the balloon is secured to the end of a stick. In order to keep the balloon in a desired and secured location with respect to the stick, the balloon is typically received in a cup. Usually the valve tail of the balloon is manually threaded through an opening in the cup sidewall and then is wound into a knot to maintain the balloon securely in the seated arrangement in the cup and sealing the valve in the balloon tail. Thereafter, the cup is secured to a stick or straw slid into the bottom of the stem depending from the cup.

[0003] FIGS. 1 and 2 show a prior art character balloon 10 having a valve tail 12. The balloon holder 16 has an upper ring 18 supported by outwardly flaring vertical supports 20. The holder 16 has a depending stem 22 for securing the balloon holder 16 onto a mounting stick or straw 24. It can be appreciated that the balloon valve tail is wound about the vertical supports forming a knot to secure the character balloon 10 to the balloon holder 16 and to prevent leakage of air from the valve tail 12.

[0004] FIG. 3 is another prior art balloon holder mounting and holding a character balloon 10 having a valve tail 12. Balloon holder 30 includes a cup 32 with a depending slot 34 through the length of the cup and a depending stem 36 for receiving a stick 24. Attached to the outside of the cup 32 is a tail-catch notch or angled slot 38 which receives the valve tail 12 of the character balloon to lock the balloon 10 in the balloon holder 30 securely and to prevent leakage of gas or air from the valve tail 12.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] An improved balloon can for mounting and supporting a balloon with the valve tail on a stick includes a frustoconical top for supporting and holding a balloon with a first depending slot therethrough for passing the balloon tail therethrough. A stem depends from the top with an open inner channel circular in cross section extending the length of the stem. The channel is in open communication with the slot through an elongated channel opening for receiving the balloon tail therethrough. After the balloon tail is placed within the inner channel, the stick is transversely placed into the circular inner channel through the elongate channel opening and the stick and balloon tail are held in place by opposing bias flanges along the elongate channel opening.

[0006] A principal object and advantage of the present invention is that it permits a balloon with a balloon tail valve to be placed within the improved balloon cup holder after which a balloon stick is transversely mounts within the inner channel and held thereat in a biased fashion all of which can be done in an automated way.

[0007] Another object and advantage of the present invention is that it permits the retailer of balloons a quick and easy

way of mounting the balloon within the improved balloon holder cup with a simple snapping of the stick into place ready for the consumer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIGS. 1 and 2 are prior art front elevational views of a character balloon mounted in a known balloon holder.

[0009] FIG. 3 is a front elevational view of another prior art balloon holder.

[0010] FIG. 4 is a front perspective view of the cup-shaped balloon holder of the present invention including the mounting stick.

[0011] FIG. 5 is a front perspective view of the cup-shaped balloon holder of the present invention supporting a balloon with the mounting stick snapped into place.

[0012] FIG. 6 is a bottom perspective view of the invention.

[0013] FIG. 7 is a front elevational view of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 8 is a real elevational view of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 9 is a bottom plan view of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 10 is a top plan view of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 11 is a rear perspective view of the present invention.

DETAILED SPECIFICATION

[0018] Referring to FIGS. 4 through 11, the improved cup shaped balloon holder 50 of the present invention may be appreciated.

[0019] The cup-shaped balloon holder 50 includes a frustoconical top 52 having a sidewall 54. Through the sidewall 54 the length of top 52 is a depending slot 56. On the opposite side of sidewall 54 there may optionally be a second slot 58. The top 52 has a depending stem 60.

[0020] The stem 60 has an open inner channel 62 which is circular in cross section as to receive in fitted fashion a cylindrical stick or straw 24. Flexible biased opposing flanges, fingers, retainers or projections 64 bound an elongate channel opening 66 through which the mounting stick 24 may transversely pass therethrough and be held in place by flanges 64. Within the open inner channel 62 near its top is a stick rim or stop 68 to prevent the stick 24 from being moved upwardly into the balloon 10 which otherwise may puncture the balloon 10. At the bottom of stem 66 opposite the elongate channel opening 66 is a balloon tail notch 70 which may receive the ending portion of the balloon valve tail 12.

[0021] In operation, the cup-shaped balloon holder 50 receives the valve tail 12 of the balloon 12 through the sidewall slot 56 and then is passed through the elongate channel opening 66 into the open inner channel 62. As the balloon valve tail 12 is pulled downwardly within the stem 60, the balloon is drawn into the frustoconical top 52 to securely mount and support the balloon within the balloon holder 50. After which, the valve tail 12 is secured into cup 32 in balloon tail notch 70. Excessive balloon valve tail 12 may optionally be further passed up through the second slot 58 as to make the valve tail 12 inconspicuous.

[0022] The mounting stick 24 next is aligned in parallel with the elongate channel opening 66. The stick 24 is then snapped or pushed past a biased opposing flanges 64 as to be received within the open inner channel 62. Flanges 64 secure the mounting stick or straw 24 in place as to complete the

assembly of the balloon 10 to the cup-shaped mounting holder, 50. If excessive valve tail 12 exists, the tail 12 may be further passed from the balloon tail notch 70 into the second slot 58 into the frustoconical top 52 as to make any remaining portions of the valve tail 12 inconspicuous.

[0023] These assembly steps may be simply automated by machinery but also permit the retailer to assemble the character balloon 10 with the cup-shaped balloon holder 50 in a quick and simple fashion. The stick rim or stop 68 prevents the stick 24 from passing upwardly as to possibly puncture the balloon 10.

[0024] The present invention is to be understood by the appended claims. The above embodiment and Figures are for illustrative purposes only and are not to be deemed limiting to the scope of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An improved balloon cup for mounting and supporting a balloon with a valve tail on a stick, comprising:

- a) a frustoconical top for supporting and holding a balloon with a first depending slot therethrough for passing the balloon tail therethrough the slot; and
- b) a stem depending from the top with an open inner channel extending the length of the stem, the channel being in open communication with the slot for receiving the balloon tail therethrough afterwhich biasedly receiving the stick transversely therethrough to hold the balloon tail in the channel and to hold the balloon cup on the stick.

2. The improved balloon cup of claim 1, wherein the top has a solid side wall.

3. The improved balloon cup of claim 1, further comprising a second depending slot therethrough the top generally opposite the first depending slot.

4. The improved balloon cup of claim 1 wherein the open inner channel is circular in cross section to receive and capture the stick.

5. The improved balloon cup of claim 1, further comprising an elongate channel opening for receiving the balloon tail and the stick in a biased locking arrangement in the stem.

6. The improved balloon cup of claim 5, further comprising opposing biased flanges along the elongate channel opening to biasedly transversely receive and hold the stick.

7. The improved balloon cup of claim 5, further comprising a balloon tail notch in the stem opposite the elongate channel opening for locking the balloon tail in the stem after the stick is placed in the open inner channel.

8. The improved balloon cup of claim 1, further comprising a stick rim in an upper portion of the open inner channel to prohibit the stick from moving upwardly into the balloon.

9. An improved balloon cup for mounting and supporting a balloon with a valve tail on a stick, comprising:

- a) frustoconical top for supporting and holding a balloon with a first depending slot therethrough for passing the balloon tail therethrough the slot; and
- b) a stem depending from the top with an open inner channel circular in cross section extending the length of the stem, the channel being in open communication with the slot through an elongate channel opening for receiving the balloon tail therethrough afterwhich biasedly receiving the stick transversely therethrough to hold the balloon tail in the channel and to hold the balloon cup on the stick.

10. The improved balloon cup of claim 9, wherein the top has a solid side wall.

11. The improved balloon cup of claim 9, further comprising a second depending slot therethrough the top generally opposite the first depending slot.

12. The improved balloon cup of claim 9, further comprising opposing biased flanges along the elongate channel opening to biasedly transversely receive and hold the stick.

13. The improved balloon cup of claim 9, further comprising a balloon tail notch in the stem opposite the elongate channel opening for locking the balloon tail in the stem after the stick is placed in the open inner channel.

14. The improved balloon cup of claim 9, further comprising a stick rim in an upper portion of the open inner channel to prohibit the stick from moving upwardly into the balloon.

15. An improved balloon cup for mounting and supporting a balloon with a valve tail on a stick, comprising:

- a) a frustoconical top for supporting and holding a balloon with a first depending slot therethrough for passing the balloon tail therethrough the slot; and
- b) a stem depending from the top with an open inner channel circular in cross section extending the length of the stem, the channel being in open communication with the slot through an elongate channel opening with opposing biased flanges along the channel opening for receiving the balloon tail therethrough afterwhich biasedly receiving the stick transversely therethrough to hold the balloon tail in the channel and to hold the balloon cup on the stick.

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