A single-piece napkin clip made of a flexible material, attached to the clothing of the wearer by hook (12). A napkin (24) is held in place over the clothing by spring (16) active jaws comprising base ridge (14) and moving ridge (15). Provision is made to slide a graphic piece into the front of the clip, held between top ridge (22) and bottom ridge (18). An optional notch (32) on the reverse of the clip facilitates adhesion to a garment button, in lieu of the use of the hook (12).
SINGLE-PIECE CLOTHING PROTECTIVE DEVICE

BACKGROUND

[0001] 1. Field of Invention

This invention relates to a single-piece clip device, specifically employed as a means to hold a napkin protective of the wearer’s clothing.

[0002] 2. Description of Prior Art

All too often a diner finds a portion of his or her meal on a valued garment. The napkin as usually employed protects the user’s lap only, providing but partial protection from such occurrences.

A napkin or bib supported high on the wearer’s person provides an improved measure of protection, and the implementation of such a napkin supporting device has been thoroughly investigated by prior art.

Simply stuffing a napkin over the collar of the wearer is an obvious means to accomplish this goal, but has drawbacks of discomfort and may not be practical in the case of a tight, loose fitting, or absent collar. Furthermore the appearance of a stuffed napkin is considered poor etiquette in many situations.

A successful napkin supporting device must readily accommodate a variety of napkins and securely affix such napkin to the wearer’s person. It should be convenient to use, comfortable to employ, and extremely low cost so as to be disposable.

Prior art addresses these needs to various degrees of success. A simple clamp affixed to collar hook has been suggested (Hardy U.S. Pat. No. 184,376; Pascoe U.S. Pat. No. 541,384; Peters U.S. Pat. No. 836,458; Ochsman U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,222). Alternate means include a neck-encircling member (Nelson U.S. Pat. No. 524,039; Humphrey U.S. Pat. No. 1,669,983; Lorden U.S. Pat. No. 5,191,681) and clamps that are supported from a frontal button (Short U.S. Pat. No. 1,864,281). A novel magnetic clamp with multiple pieces is the subject of Juda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,182,335).

While these devices all satisfy the requirement of napkin support they invariably are complex and relatively expensive to manufacture. Low cost single piece devices that address the problem of cost are found in the Short patent and others (Hart U.S. Pat. No. 2,247,372; Barnes U.S. Pat. No. 2,287,717).

These single piece devices, while extremely low cost and readily manufactured lack a easily used clip, and require the user to wind the napkin through some slot or notch.

Single piece spring clips such as taught by Duarte U.S. Pat. No. 3,305,904 have been suggested for use as a clothesline fastener; such devices are single piece spring clamps but are not optimized for the protection of clothing and would be awkward to wear.

An advantage to any of these designs would be the ability to display a simple card with text (such as a name card), image or logo and provide a means to support such. Although this capability is expressed by Basseches et al. and Ochsman, neither has an inherent holding mechanism and must rely on stamped messages or the application of a decal.

OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES

The device disclosed herein addresses the need for:

(a) A single-piece napkin clip, with advantages of low-cost manufacture and inherent reliability. An single-piece device allows for a minimized manufacturing cost of a spring clip.

(b) A convenient napkin-affixing mechanism requiring minimal manipulation by the user. A spring clip is a familiar device that adapts to napkins of various weights and thicknesses.

(c) A versatile clip adaptable to a variety of clothing styles. A curved portion of the disclosed device readily hooks over the wearer’s collar or necktie, and can adapt to the front of a lady’s gown.

(d) A napkin holding clamp that provides inherent means to to hold a printed card. Molded ridges on the front of the disclosed device allow for a standard sized business card or other image of this form factor to be firmly held.

SUMMARY

In accordance with the present invention a napkin clip comprises a single-piece plastic clamp with clothing attachment hook, and a means to affix printed material on a card without adhesive.

DRAWINGS

Drawing Figures

FIG. 1 shows the clip in perspective view.

FIG. 2 shows an elevation side view of the clip in both the closed (FIG. 2a) and open (FIG. 2b) position.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the clip in a normal wearing configuration.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the clip with the wearer displaying a card in the ridges provided.

FIG. 5 is a rear elevation of the clip showing and optional notch provided for attachment to a shirt or blouse button, in lieu of application of the hook member.

REFERENCE NUMERALS IN DRAWINGS

10 base of clip
12 hook extension of the base
14 contacting portion of base
15 contacting portion of moving member
16 spring portion of clip
18 card holding bottom ridge
19 moving member of clip-open position
20 moving member of clip-closed position
22 card holding top ridge
24 napkin
26 collar of wearer
Detailed Description

Description—FIGS. 1, 2, 3 Preferred Embodiment

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1, a perspective view of the device in the normal, closed position. As is conventional in plastic injection molding, all component parts are derived from a body of plastic resin extracted by a machined die. It is advantageous in such a manufacturing process that the wall thickness of the various elements be substantially equal. The component parts of the single-piece part comprise a base 10 held against the person of the wearer by hook 12.

One or more ridges on the base 10, in this case a single ridge 14 provide a frictional surface for opposing moving element 20 and a protruding ridge 15 provided thereon.

Spring member 16 separates base and moving element, and provides a resilient action when the top of the lever arm 22 is compressed towards the base. This compression extends the opening between base ridge 14 and moving ridge 15 as is shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 2 illustrates the normally closed position of the clip, with tip 15 of moving member 20 resting against base 10 and base ridge 14. The dotted line portion of FIG. 2 shows the extended position 19 of moving member 20, sufficient to accommodate a napkin.

FIG. 3 shows in perspective the normal use of the invention, in this case shown holding a napkin 24 and protecting both shirt 27 and necktie 28.

In this configuration, hook 12 of the base element extends upon and over the wearer’s collar 26 and tie 28.

FIG. 4 shows how the invention might be used to hold some means of printed material, without the need of adhesives. Top ridge 22 and bottom ridge 18 comprise an aperture for a card 30 to be inserted from the side and slid horizontally to the shown position.

FIG. 5—Additional Embodiment

Optionally, the invention may be machined with a secondary operation Providing a notch 32 shown in FIG. 5. This notch allows attachment to a shirt button or other protrusion.

Advantages

From the above description, a number of advantages of the single-piece napkin clip become evident:

(a) The single piece construction ensures minimal manufacturing cost.

(b) A spring clip action is natural for the user, and obviates the need to control the device through an opening or notch. Furthermore, the napkin is easily released.

(c) The hook design accommodates almost all articles of clothing that might be considered.

(d) Ridges added to the invention for presentation of a printed card add minimal cost in the design of the body.

Operation—FIGS. 2, 3

As has been described, operation of this device requires that the wearer open the spring clip by applying pressure to the moving member as with a conventional clothespin. A napkin is inserted into the gap thus realized.

The secured napkin is fastened to the garment of the wearer, as is shown in FIG. 3, thus accomplishing the protective purpose. Removal of the device and napkin amounts to a reversal of this process.

Conclusion, Ramifications and Scope

Accordingly, the reader will see that the single-piece napkin clip can become an extremely low cost means to affix a napkin over the clothes of a diner. The single piece construction possesses inherent advantages of reliability and ease of manufacture. Added benefits of the molding process allow a card holder to be added without a complicated die structure. A notch may be provided on the obverse of the device so that a button may be used as the support anchor when a hook cannot be conveniently accommodated.

I claim:

1. An single-piece napkin clip comprising a monolithic structure, with inherent spring action.
2. A clip of claim 1 wherein the body of material is composed of deformable plastic resin.
3. A clip of claim 1 which provides single-piece grooves to accommodate a card of printed graphic matter.
4. A clip of claim 1 which may be additionally notched to provide means of attachment to a garment button.

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