May 20, 1958 P. M. SEYMOUR 2,835,394

DISPLAY RACK

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FIG. 1

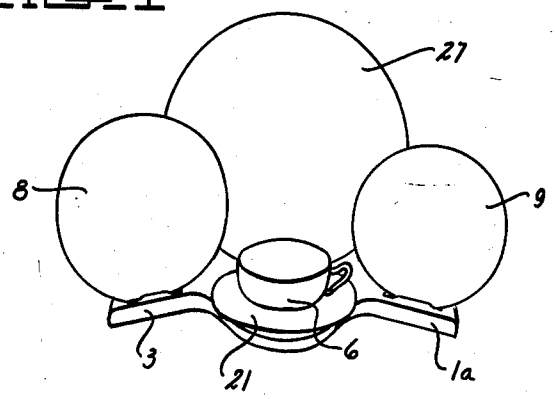
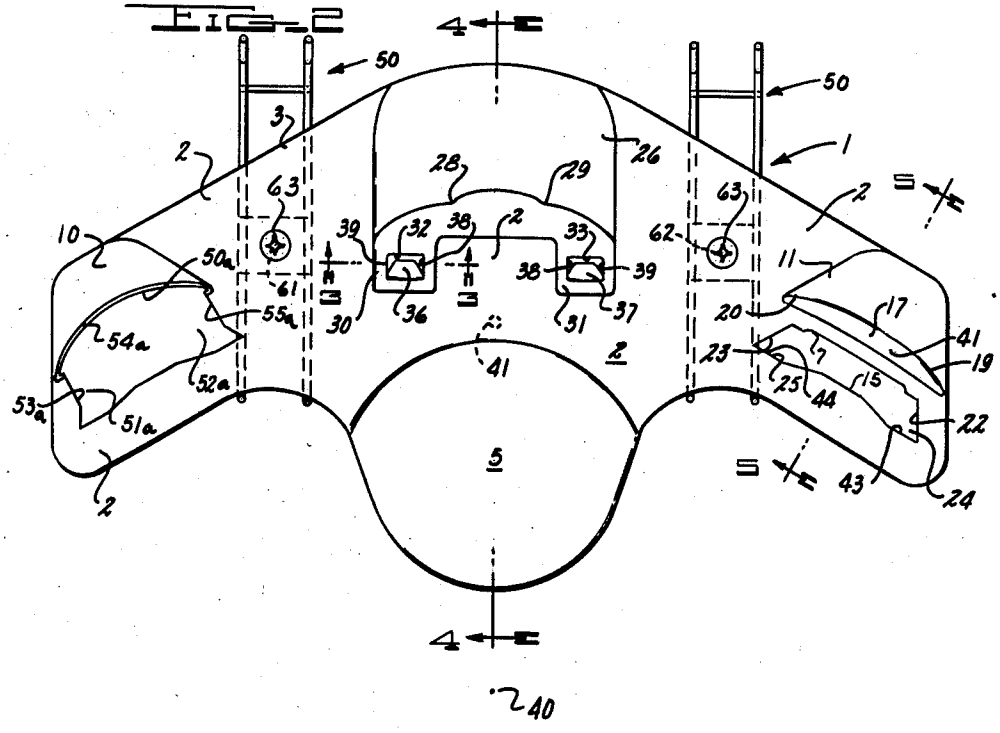


FIG. 2



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FIG. 3

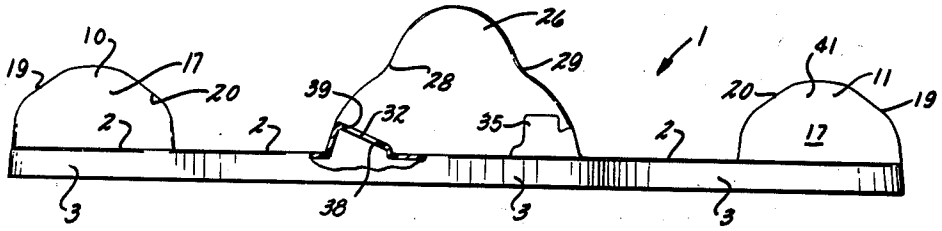


FIG. 4

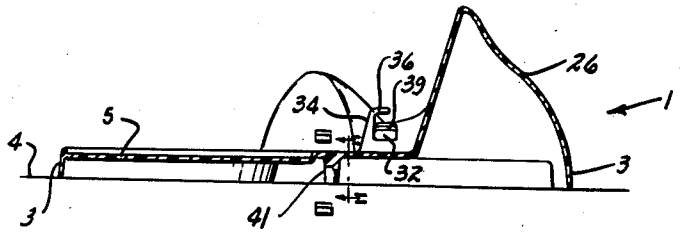


FIG. 5

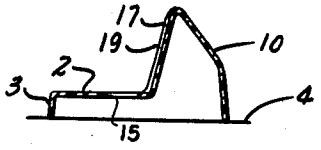


FIG. 7

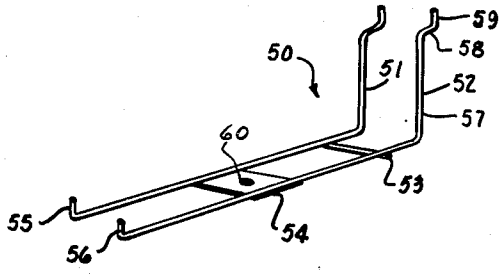
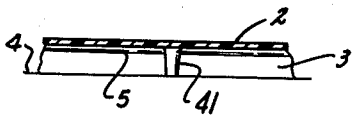


FIG. 6



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DISPLAY RACK

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5 Claims. (Cl. 211—41)

The invention relates to a display rack for dinnerware. It may be employed wherever it is desired to present an attractively arranged dinnerware display, either in the store or home.

The invention comprehends a construction whereby a plurality of dinnerware pieces can be arranged or grouped together in closely spaced upright positions. Preferably adjacent dinnerware pieces overlap each other so as to provide a compact and unified display. This unified display attracts the attention of the viewer to the display grouping as a whole as well as to individual ones of the displayed pieces. The unified character of the display has been found to be appreciably increased and enhanced by so designing the display rack that the displayed pieces are centered or arranged around an imaginary point forwardly of the display grouping. The result is an eye-catching and unified display which is much more attractive than other known dinnerware displays.

When the invention is utilized in stores or the like there are employed a number of the displays, the number being dependent on the number of different dinnerware patterns carried by the storekeeper and his available shelf or counter space. The compact and unified character of each display permits the effective display of a comparatively large number of dinnerware pieces per unit of shelf or counter area, and as a result the storekeeper is enabled to display a greater number of pieces and patterns than might otherwise be possible. In the alternative he is enabled to reduce the shelf or counter space devoted to dinnerware displays, thereby freeing shelf or counter space for other types of displays or reducing his total shelf and/or counter area requirements.

The invention is preferably embodied as a one piece unit which, without any external supporting means (such as the back wall of a cabinet or the like), supports the dinnerware pieces in their designated positions in the display grouping. The grouping is effected automatically by merely inserting the various dinnerware pieces in the rack, and no repositioning or adjusting of the individual pieces relative to one another is required in order to effect the desired grouping.

The preferred rack embodiment is of such construction as to securely grip and support the various dinnerware pieces, whatever their size or the character of their rim contours, i. e. plain, scalloped or other contour. As a result the rack may be interchangeably employed with different types, styles and sizes of dinnerware, and there is no need to provide a number of different racks in order to effectively display a plurality of different dinnerware lines. This rack interchangeability permits the rack manufacturer to standardize his manufacturing operation on one rack and also permits the storekeeper to obtain the greatest utility from the racks he purchases.

The preferred rack embodiment is of such design as to permit its being economically manufactured as a single unitary member and by a single easily effected molding operation. Preferably the rack is molded from one of

the more durable plastics although other materials and manufacturing processes could be employed.

When plastic is employed as the rack material it is desirable to provide each of the racks with a centrally positioned foot or pin member. This member prevents sagging of the central area of the rack when in use and also prevents telescoping, distortion and breakage of the racks during their packaging and shipment.

The invention has for one of its objects the provision of a display rack for dinnerware wherein the displayed dinnerware pieces are arranged in attractive and eye pleasing groupings.

Another object is to provide a display rack wherein the displayed pieces are arranged or grouped in a unified and compact manner, whereby to increase the number of display groupings per unit of shelf or counter area and reduce the required shelf or counter area requirements.

Another object is to provide a display rack which can be interchangeably employed to support dinnerware pieces of differing size and rim contour, thereby enabling the rack manufacturer to standardize his operations on one rack and permitting the rack user to obtain the greatest utility from the racks he purchases.

Another object is to provide a display rack of such design as to permit its being economically manufactured as a single unitary member and by a single, easily performed molding operation.

Another object is to provide a display rack construction wherein a plurality of the display racks can be packaged for shipment together without breaking or distorting.

Other objects of this invention will appear in the following description and appended claims, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part of this specification wherein like reference characters designate corresponding parts in the several views.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of one embodiment of the invention, taken from a slightly elevated position, and showing certain dinnerware pieces in position thereon.

Fig. 2 is a plan view of a second embodiment with the dinnerware pieces removed.

Fig. 3 is a front elevational view with a portion of the illustrated structure cut away to show a section along line 3—3 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken on line 4—4 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is a sectional view taken on line 5—5 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 6 is a sectional view taken on line 6—6 in Fig. 4 and Fig. 7 is a top perspective view of a bracket which may be employed in the Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 embodiments of the invention.

Before explaining the present invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and arrangement of parts illustrated in the accompanying drawings, since the invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced or carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology or terminology employed herein is for the purpose of description and not of limitation.

Referring to Fig. 2 of the drawings there is shown a display rack 1 formed as a single unitary member from a durable plastice and by a conventional molding process well known in the art. Rack 1 includes a generally flat horizontal base or plate portion 2 and an endless peripheral flange portion 3 for supporting plate portion 2 in spaced position above a counter or shelf subsurface 4. If desired flange portion 3 could be replaced by a series of leg members, although the use of an endless

flange portion is preferred because it serves to strengthen and otherwise prevent twisting or distortion of the rack.

The area of plate portion **2** designated by reference numeral **5** is recessed in order to provide a depression for receiving and retaining a cup **6** and saucer **21** (shown in Fig. 1). Recess **5** is preferably of larger area than that defined by the engaged area of saucer **21** so as to adapt rack **1** for use with varying size saucers. Since the saucer is positioned horizontally there is no force tending to displace it from its position on the rack and there is therefore no need to immovably secure it in place, as by making recess **5** closely conform to the engaged area of the saucer.

End areas of plate portion **2** are bulged upwardly to provide protuberances or projections **10** and **11**. Projection **11** is intended to engage the bottom face of a bread and butter plate **9**. Face **17** of projection **11** is slightly concave so that edges **19** and **20** thereof are spaced forwardly from the central area **41**. As a result the bottom face of plate **9** contacts edges **19** and **20** to the exclusion of the aforementioned central area **41**. Edges **19** and **20** in effect provide a spaced two-point support which reduces the tendency of plate **9** to tilt or wobble about the vertical axis of projection **11**.

The end area of plate portion **2** in front of projection **11** is provided with a C-shaped or crescent-shaped slot **7** for receiving the rim of plate **9**.

As shown in Fig. 1, plate **9** is of traditional design. When plates of such design are received in slot **7** their face portions engage slot-defining wall **15** and their edge portions engage the forwardly diverging walls **22** and **23**. The diverging character of walls **22** and **23** automatically directs the plate (whatever its size) into engagement with wall **15**.

Slot **7** is of such contour that plates of coupe design may be accommodated therein. Plates of this design are provided with upturned rims so as to in effect form hollow or slightly dished pieces. In order that the rack may accommodate plates of coupe design, slot **7** is formed with two forwardly extended wing areas or cut-away portions **24** and **25**. When plate **9** is of coupe design its rim engages the walls **43** and **44** which define wing areas **24** and **25**. If slot **7** were not provided with wing areas **24** and **25** the couple plate would be pitched forward beyond a desired eye-pleasing angle, and possibly onto its face (due to the upturned character of the coupe plate's rim).

Supporting surfaces **15**, **43** and **44** may be considered as on the concave side of slot **7** and supporting surfaces **22** and **23** may be considered as on the convex side of slot **7**. It will be noted from Fig. 2 that the edge formed at the rear of slot **7** extends immediately adjacent to hollow projections **11**. The ends of this edge merge into forwardly diverging edges formed by walls **22** and **23**. The forward ends of these diverging edges connect with the edges formed by walls **43** and **44**. Between the facing ends of walls **43** and **44** is a rearwardly projecting wall portion which defines the rearwardly convexed wall edge **15**.

In the second embodiment of the present invention as illustrated in Fig. 2, projection **10** on the opposite side of plate portion **2** is cut away at **50***a*, and the slot in front of projection **10** is enlarged at **51***a* and **52***a*. These cut-away portions accommodate a fruit bowl (not shown). In the first embodiment as illustrated in Fig. 1, projection **10** is identical with projection **11** so as to accommodate a salad plate **8**. It will be understood that rack **1**[a] shown in Fig. 1 is identical with rack **1** shown in Fig. 2 except that rack **1**[a] is not provided with cut-away portions **50***a*, **51***a* and **52***a*.

It is desirable that both the Fig. 1 rack and Fig. 2 rack be available to persons desiring to purchase racks. One economical method for providing these two different racks is to form the Fig. 1 rack in a mold and form the Fig. 2 rack by cutting or sawing through a Fig. 1 rack along the lines **53***a*, **54***a* and **55***a*. This method of forming the Fig. 2 rack is advantageous in that it eliminates the cost of separate molds or mold inserts. It is further advantageous in that it permits either the right or left dinnerware-supporting mechanisms to be cut away so as to accommodate a fruit bowl in either of two positions. If desired, however, the sawing or cutting away operation can be omitted in favor of separate molds or mold inserts.

The intermediate or central area of plate portion **2** is bulged upwardly to provide a protuberance or projection **26** (in both the Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 constructions). This projection is intended to engage the bottom face of dinnerware plate **27**. Contact between projection **26** and plate **27** is made at points above points **28** and **29** on the projection.

Extending forwardly from projection **26** are two raised portions **30** and **31**. These raised portions are provided with cut-outs at **32** and **33**, and extending upwardly in front of these cut-outs are arms **34** and **35** having hook-forming ends **36** and **37**. When plate **27** is in its illustrated position the edge of its rim rests on either of the edges **38** or **39** formed by cut-outs **32** and **33**. Larger size plates rest on edges **39** and smaller size plates rest on edges **38**. The exposed face of plate **27** contacts the hook-forming ends **36**, **37** whereby said plate is firmly but removably fixed in the seat defined by raised portions **30**, **31** and upwardly extending arms **34**, **35**. Whether plate **27** is small or large its rim portion will be spaced above the surface of plate portion **2** and there will be no tendency for said plate to be displaced from its seating engagement with edges **38**, **39** and hooked ends **36**, **37**.

The design of the rack (whereby cut-outs are provided at **32**, **33** and hook-forming elements are provided at **36**, **37**) is advantageous in that it permits the rack to be formed in an easily effected molding operation, followed by an easily effected separation of the molded rack from the mold. If openings **32**, **33** were omitted the rack could not be easily discharged from the mold due to the presence of hooks **36**, **37** and if hooks **36**, **37** were omitted retention of plate **27** would not be as secure as with the illustrated construction.

The plate-supporting element or mechanism defined by projection **26** and raised portions **30**, **31** may be considered as facing the imaginary point **40** (see Fig. 2) in that plate **27**, when in position on rack **1**, faces said imaginary point. Likewise the dinnerware-supporting elements or mechanisms defined by projections **10**, **11** and slots **7**, **7** may also be considered as facing said imaginary point in that pieces **8** and **9**, when in position on rack **1**, face said point. This rack construction (whereby pieces **8**, **27** and **9** are disposed circumferentially around imaginary point **40**) presents a unified and compact display which attracts the attention of the viewer to the display grouping as a whole as well as to individual ones of displayed dinnerware pieces.

There is preferably extended from the lower face of plate portion **2** a pin or leg member **41**. This leg member serves to reinforce and otherwise space the central portion of plate **2** from sub-surface **4**. In other words member **41** prevents plate **2** from sagging.

Preferably a plurality of the racks are packaged in stacked or telescoped relations, i. e. each of the racks has its projections **10**, **11** and **26** telescoped within the hollows defined by projections **10**, **11** and **26** on the immediately superjacent rack. Hooked ends **36** project through slots **32** formed in said immediately superjacent rack. As a result each of the racks other than the first rack adds only the width of flange **3** to the thickness of the package, and it is possible to confine a plurality of the racks in a minimum size package. The racks would, except for the presence of pin **41**, have a tendency to compress within one another so as to distort wall portions of certain of the racks. Pin **41** prevents this com-

pressing or distorting action and thereby prevents breakage and/or distortion of the racks during the packaging and shipment.

In use the rack may be positioned on a subsurface 4 (of a shelf or counter for example) or it may be positioned on the bracket 50 shown in Fig. 7. The purpose of bracket 50 is to support the rack on a vertical surface (not shown). Bracket 50 includes two rods 51 and 52 spacedly positioned by means of a rod 53 and plate 54. The forward ends of rods 51, 52 are turned upwardly to provide rod portions 55, 56 for retaining bracket 50 in its designed position relative to the dinnerware-supporting rack. The rearward ends of rods 51, 52 are turned upwardly, then rearwardly and finally upwardly again to provide three rod portions 57, 58 and 59. Bracket 50 is designed to be supported in two horizontally spaced openings on a vertical wall, as for example, a wall of the type known as a peg board. In this connection the term peg board is applied to a board or wall-forming element which is provided with a series of horizontally and vertically spaced openings. Bracket 50 is supported in any two adjacent horizontally aligned openings in the peg board by inserting rod portions 59 in the openings, and lowering the bracket to a position wherein rod portions 57 lie against the outer face of the board. Rod portions 59 will then engage the inner face of the board, and rod portions 58 will lie within the peg board openings.

Plate 54 of the bracket is provided with an opening 60 and the rack (1 or 1*a*) is provided with two openings 61 and 62. To secure the rack on the brackets screws 63 are extended through openings 61, 60 and 62, 60, and a nut 63 is threaded onto the lower end of each screw. Preferably the rack and brackets are assembled together prior to mounting of the bracket on the peg board, although the sequence of operations may be reversed if desired.

The illustrated rack is, as stated previously, formed as a single one piece molded element. It will be understood, however, that certain of the teachings of the invention could be incorporated in a rack constructed of a plurality of pieces and by other process than molding.

Having thus described my invention, I claim:

1. A dinnerware-supporting element comprising a base, a hollow projection extending upwardly therefrom to provide a dinnerware-supporting member, a plurality of arms extended upwardly from said base in front of said projection, and a plurality of cut-outs in said base between said projection and said arms, whereby when a plurality of the plate-supporting elements are positioned on one another one rack projection will telescope within another rack projection and the arms on one rack will project through the cut-outs on another rack.

2. The combination of a display rack and mounting brackets therefor comprising: a display rack having a base, a first dinnerware supporting means disposed centrally thereof, second and third dinnerware supporting means disposed on said base on either side of said first means and facing inwardly toward an imaginary point located forward of the said three means and a saucer supporting means disposed on said base in front of said first means; and two supporting brackets, each of said brackets comprising a horizontally extending portion for engaging the underside of the said rack, an upwardly extending portion for securing said bracket on a vertical wall, and means for extension through the rack base and horizontally extending portion of said brackets so as to secure the rack on the said brackets.

3. A dinnerware-supporting element comprising a horizontal base plate; walls extending downwardly from said plate to support it in spaced position above a subsurface; the rear portion of said base plate being bulged upwardly from the general plane of said plate to define a hollow dinnerware bottom-engaging projection; the front portion of said plate having a crescent shaped slot therein; said slot defining a first edge extending immediately adjacent the hollow projection, second and third edges diverging forwardly from the ends of the first edge, fourth and fifth edges extending toward one another from the forward ends of the second and third edges in general parallelism with the first edge, and a sixth rearwardly convexed edge interconnecting the facing ends of the fourth and fifth edges.

4. A display rack comprising: a substantially flat horizontal base plate; a downwardly depending peripheral flange extending integrally from the edge of said base plate to define a skirt portion for supporting the said base plate on a sub-surface; a rear central portion of said base plate bulged upwardly to define a first hollow dinnerware-bottom engaging projection; rear sections of end portions of said base plate bulged upwardly to define second and third hollow dinnerware bottom-engaging projections, the front external surfaces of the said first, second and third projections being circumferentially disposed around a central focal point located forward of the said rack; first, second and third dinnerware edge-engaging means integral with said base plate and disposed respectively in front of said first, second and third dinnerware bottom-engaging projections; said second and third dinnerware edge-engaging means being formed by slots in the base plate; and a central integral horizontal dinnerware supporting means provided in said base plate in front of said first dinnerware edge-engaging means; said hollow projections permitting a series of the racks to be stacked compactly on one another with the projections of one rack extending into the projections on the next superjacent rack.

5. A display rack comprising: a substantially flat horizontal base plate; a downwardly depending peripheral flange extending integrally from the edge of said base plate to define a skirt portion for supporting the said base plate on a sub-surface; a rear central portion of said base plate bulged upwardly to define a first hollow dinnerware-bottom engaging projection; rear sections of end portions of said base plate bulged upwardly to define second and third hollow dinnerware-bottom engaging projections, the front external surfaces of the said first, second and third projections being circumferentially disposed around a central focal point located forward of the said rack; first, second and third dinnerware-edge engaging means integral with said base plate and disposed respectively in front of said first, second and third dinnerware bottom-engaging projections; each of said second and third dinnerware edge-engaging means being formed by a C-shaped slot in the base plate facing away from the respective projection whereby to accommodate an edge on dinnerware; and a central integral horizontal dinnerware supporting means provided in said base plate in front of said first dinnerware edge-engaging means; said hollow projections permitting a series of the racks to be stacked compactly on one another with the projections of one rack extending into the projection on the next superjacent rack.

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