CARD VIEWING DEVICE

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ABSTRACT

This invention is directed toward devices which all a person to view playing cards without having to actually pick up the cards themselves. There are two basic versions of the invention: a portable version which can be carried by the user, and an installed version which sits in a cavity cut out from a card playing table. Both versions have sides to prevent others from seeing the cards, a mirror to reflect the cards up onto the eyes of the user while the cards remain face down on the table, and a ramp, or means by which a user can pull cards from a table over the mirror. A number of accessory items can be added to the installed version, such as advertising gaskets between the rim of the device and the table, various LCD screens and control buttons displayed around the edges of the devices, and other such add-ons.
FIG. 4
CARD VIEWING DEVICE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

None.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

This invention was not federally sponsored.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the general field of devices which assist a person playing a game of cards, such as poker, with holding their cards, and more specifically, to a device by which persons with physical challenges holding cards desiring to play a game of cards effectively move and view their cards without having to pick the cards up with their hands. By way of providing a quick summary, the invention has three basic components: a mirror by which the user can view his/her cards while keeping the cards face down on the table, side panels to keep others from seeing his/her cards, and a clear “ramp” over which the cards can be pulled to position the cards for viewing in the mirror. There are two basic versions of the invention: a portable version which can be carried by the user, and an installed version which sits in a cavity cut out from a card playing table. Both versions have sides to prevent others from seeing the cards, a mirror to reflect the cards up onto the eyes of the user while the cards remain face down on the table, and a ramp, or means by which a user can pull cards from a table over the mirror. The mirror can be flat, or can be made convex or concave to enlarge or shrink the image of the cards, or can even be manufactured to an eyeglass prescription, such that a near-sighted or far-sighted person wearing glass can use the invention without needing his or her glasses. A number of accessory items can be added to the installed version, such as advertising gaskets between the rim of the device and the table, various LCD screens and control buttons displayed around the edges of the devices, and other such add-ons.

Playing cards appear to have originated around 1,000 years ago. Traditionally, card games are played by a “dealer” dealing out cards, face down, whereupon the players pick up their cards with their hands, and arrange the cards in one hand in a logical sequence. During each “round” of play, the players may take additional cards, depending on the particular card game being played, and/or remove cards from their hand.

People with some sort of physical challenge that prevents them from having full grasping abilities with their hands are at an obvious disadvantage playing cards, as some cannot hold their cards in their hands, and others do so only with great difficulty. Thus, a device which allows people who would like to play cards but cannot easily hold their cards in their hands is desirable.

The current invention provides just such a solution by providing a mirror, which reflects the cards, which are kept face down, in to the eyes of the user, a means to shield the cards from the prying eyes of other players, and a clear “ramp” upon which the cards can be moved to position them optimally for the user to see. The invention is intended for use both as a portable card-viewing device which can be carried by (and owned by) the user, and a “commercial version” more appropriate for casinos and other commercial establishments which offer card games, where the installed version which sits in a cavity cut out from a card playing table. Additional iterations of the invention allow for the mirror to be manufactured to a surface shape other than flat. A concave mirror would allow the user to see more cards spread out over a greater area; a convex mirror would enlarge the images of the cards directly above the mirror to provide the user with a better view of the cards in a game such as 21 where the player usually plays with a small number of cards. The mirror could also be made to conform to an eyeglass prescription such that a person who normally wears eyeglasses could play cards without the glasses. A number of accessory items can be added to the installed version, such as advertising gaskets between the rim of the device and the table, various LCD screens and control buttons displayed around the edges of the devices, and other such add-ons.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is a principal object of the invention to provide a means by which a person with less-than-average physical control over his/her hands and/or arms can participate in a game of cards.

It is another object of the invention to provide a device with a mirror, means to hide the cards, and a ramp upon which the cards can be manually moved, such that a user of the invention need only be able to manually move one or more cards by hand, and does not have to pick up the cards in his or her hands.

It is an additional object of the invention that a user be able to carry her or her own personal device.

It is a further object of the invention that a commercially applicable device is available which a casino or other business with a large number of card playing tables is able to purchase and install into its tables.

An additional object of the invention is to provide a mirror which is concave, convex, or manufactured to an eyeglass prescription to provide a product which can be manufactured and sold in versions with several different mirror configurations, thereby providing more comfortable viewing surface for a wider variety of users.

It is also an object of this invention that additional accessories, such as advertising gaskets, LCD screens, text crawlers, buttons and dials by which a person can order drinks or make reservations, etc., can be added to the invention.

It is a final object of this invention that the cost of the main two versions of the invention be minor relative to the enjoyment a disabled or partially disabled person could have playing cards, and be substantially less than the revenue generated by a commercial card playing operation such as a casino that could cater to disabled card players by installing the device in some or all of their card playing tables.

It should be understood while the preferred embodiments of the invention are described in some detail herein, the present disclosure is made by way of example only and that variations and changes thereto are possible without departing from the subject matter coming within the scope of the following claims, and a reasonable equivalency thereof, which claims I regard as my invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the portable iteration of the invention.

Fig. 2 is a side view of the portable view of the invention as placed on a card table.
FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the portable iteration of the invention showing how the reflection of the cards is created by the angled ramp and mirror.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of one of the fixed versions of the invention: the round plug.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another of the fixed versions of the invention: the square plug.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the portable iteration of the invention. As discussed previously, there are two basic versions of the invention: a portable one that a card player can carry along with him or her, and a fixed version in which a plug is inserted into a hole created in a card table such that the invention rests in a removable fixed state. For the portable version, generally indicated by reference number 1, there are three basic parts. A clear ramp 3, which serves as a platform over which the cards can be pulled, a mirror 2 which reflects the bottom of the cards into the eyes of the user of the invention, and one or more sides 4, which hold the mirror 2 and ramp 3 at a predetermined angle at which viewing of the cards through the reflection in the mirror is optimized. Additional iterations of the invention allow for the mirror to be manufactured to a surface shape other than flat. A concave mirror would allow the user to see more cards spread out over a greater area and convex mirror would enlarge the images of the cards directly above the mirror to provide the user with a better view of the cards in a game such as 21 where the player usually plays with a small number of cards. The mirror could also be bent to conform to an eyeglass prescription such that a person who normally wears eyeglasses could play cards without the glasses.

FIG. 2 is a side view of the portable view of the invention as placed on a card table. A person 7 using the invention places the invention on a card table 5, such that the “narrow end” of the portable version 1 faces away from the person 7, and the “wide end” of the portable version 1 faces toward the person. The sides 4 hold the ramp 3 and mirror 2 apart such that one or more cards 8 can be pulled by the person 7 up the ramp 3 so that the reflection 6 of the cards 8 can be seen by the person 7. Because the sides 4 are opaque, other card players cannot see the cards 8 of the person 7. Because the person 7 only has to pull the cards 8 up the ramp 3, the person 7 can still participate in a game of cards even if he or she is challenged with respect to his or her manual dexterity.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the portable iteration of the invention showing how the reflection of the cards is created by the angled ramp and mirror. The opaque sides 4 hold the mirror 2 and the ramp 3 at a predetermined angle, such that once the user of the invention pulls the cards 8 up the ramp 3, the reflection of the cards 8 shines off the mirror 2. Because of the angle between the mirror 2 and the ramp 3, there is no way that even if there is a crack of the ramp 3 visible underneath the cards 8, the reflection of the undersides of the cards 8 will not travel to other players.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of one of the fixed versions of the invention: the round plug. The round plug 20 is designed to be placed into a round hole drilled, cut, or manufactured into a card table. As opposed to the portable version illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, the fixed version is intended to be used by a casino or other commercial operation which features one or more tables dedicated to card playing. There are both round plugs and 4-sided plugs shown in the figures, but shapes other than circles, squares, and rectangles are contemplated to be of possible interest to potential users of the invention and are considered within the scope of this application. The round plug 20 has two basic components: a portion that sits above the level of the top of the card table and a portion that sits in the cavity. Above the card table, the round plug 20 has a lip 21, which serves to prevent the round plug 20 from falling down into the cavity. The lip 21 has additional possible features, including a larger, more extended lip 21 that can cover an LCD or other screen which can display news, advertising, or other images. The lip 21 can also contain buttons a card player can push to order drinks, purchase tickets to shows, or make reservations at the casino for rooms and other items. The lip 21 can also have one or more holes in it which allow for the rapid and efficient installation, replacement, and removal of the round plug 20. The round plug 20 has a side, which in the case of a round plug 20 is round, but elliptical and other shapes which are completely curving are contemplated, as well as semi-circles and other shapes which are partially curving and partially flat. On the side can be tabs, which can be used to secure the round plug 20 to the underside of the card table as well. The tabs can be initially aligned in a vertical position, and upon insertion into the cavity, the tabs can be bent into a horizontal position such that screws and other similar means of attachment can be used to attach the side to the bottom of the card table. The tabs can also be screw threads, such that a large bolt-like object can be screwed up against the bottom of the card table, thereby pulling down upon the lip 21 and securing the round plug 20 to the card table. Inside the round plug 20 and under the clear ramp 20 is a mirror, which reflects the undersides of cards pulled partially over the ramp into the eyes of the card player.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another of the fixed versions of the invention: the 4-sided plug. The 4-sided plug 40 shown here is a cut-away of a card table, which, in this figure, illustrates a rectangular cavity. The 4-sided plug 40 in this illustration is a rectangular plug with a lip 42, which allows the 4-sided plug 40 to rest upon the surface of the card table 5, a clear ramp 41, which allows a player to view the undersides of cards (not shown in this figure) to reflect off the mirror (not shown in this figure), which is located below the ramp 41 in the 4-sided plug 40. The lip 42 can contain the same features as discussed with respect to FIG. 4.

What I claim is:

1. A device for playing a game of cards: comprising a mirror, where the mirror has three or more sides and a reflective surface on at least one side, means to manually move one or more cards, where the one or more cards are in a face down position, over the mirror, such that a user of the invention can see a reflection of the one or more cards in the mirror, means to prevent others from viewing the reflection of the one or more cards in the mirror, and means to hold the mirror in a stationary position.

2. The device of claim 1, where, the device is intended to be a movable device, and where the mirror, the means to manually move one or more cards, the means to prevent others from viewing the reflection of the one or more cards in the mirror, and the means to hold the mirror in a stationary position are all designed to be placed above the surface of a table.

3. The device of claim 2, where the means to manually move one or more cards is a ramp, where the ramp is manufactured from a clear substance such as glass or clear plastic, one or more connecting members, where the one or more connection members are connected to both the mirror and the ramp, and where the ramp has a lower edge over which a user can pull cards, where the cards are face down, and position the cards such that a reflection of the cards can be seen in the mirror, such that a user of the invention can see his or her cards without picking them up.
4. The device of claim 2, where means to prevent others from viewing the reflection is where the one or more connecting members are opaque, such that other card players cannot see through the one or more connecting members.

5. The device of claim 2, where the means to hold the mirror in a stationary position is one or more connecting members, where the one or more connecting members are connected to both the mirror and the ramp.

6. The device of claim 2, where the means to manually move one or more cards is a ramp, where the ramp is manufactured from a clear substance such as glass or clear plastic, one or more connecting members, where the one or more connecting members are connected to both the mirror and the ramp, and where the ramp has a lower edge over which a user can pull cards, where the cards are face down, and position the cards such that a reflection of the cards can be seen in the mirror, such that a user of the invention can see his or her cards without picking them up, and, where means to prevent others from viewing the reflection is where the one or more connecting members are opaque, such that other card players cannot see through the one or more connecting members, and where the means to hold the mirror in a stationary position is one or more connecting members, where the one or more connecting members are connected to both the mirror and the ramp.

7. The device of claim 2, where the device is designed to be portable, and where the ramp has two sides with four 90 degree angles at the corners of the two sides, and a dealer end, that which lies furthest away from the user of the invention, and a user end, that which lies closest to the user of the invention, and where the mirror has two sides with four 90 degree angles at the corners of the two sides and a dealer end, that which lies furthest away from the user of the invention, and a user end, that which lies closest to the user of the invention, and the connecting members are two triangularly shaped members, with two substantially longer sides and one substantially shorter side to which both the ramp and the mirror are attached, with two opposing sides of the ramp are attached to the connecting members and two opposing sides of the mirror are attached to the connecting members, where the dealer end of the mirror and the dealer end of the ramp are in substantially closer physical proximity to each other at the section of the connection members where the substantially longer sides meet than at the section of the connection members where the substantially shorter side keeps the two substantially longer sides apart, thereby creating an incline, where, the user of the invention can pull cards up the incline on the ramp, and position the cards such that the reflection of the cards in the mirror is reflected into the eyes of the user, and where the connection members are opaque, and where the shield means is the opaque nature of the connection members, such that when a user of the invention pulls cards onto the ramp, the reflection of the cards cannot be seen by players sitting to the side of the user as the connection members block out any view of the cards.

8. The device of claim 2, where the connection members additionally comprise a laterally extending plate with one or more raised semi-circles of a diameter slightly larger than standard poker chips, such that a stack of poker chips can rest within the one or more raised semi-circles.

9. The device of claim 1, where the device is intended to be embedded into a card playing table, and where the means to manually move one or more cards is a flat, clear, piece of non-flexible material and the device additionally comprises one or more embeddable sides which are of a size, a shape, and a configuration to fit into a cavity, with one or more sides, which has been created in a table, and where the means to prevent others from viewing the reflection of the one or more cards in the mirror, is the one or more side of the cavity, which prevents the other players from seeing the reflection in the mirror, and means to hold the mirror in a stationary position is the one or more sides which are of a size, a shape, and a configuration to fit into a cavity.

10. The device of claim 9, where the one or more embeddable sides are in the shape of a circle, and the cavity is in the shape of a circle.

11. The device of claim 9, where the one or more embeddable sides are in the shape of a square, and the cavity is in the shape of a square.

12. The device of claim 9, where the one or more embeddable sides are in the shape of a rectangle, and the cavity is in the shape of a rectangle.

13. The device of claim 9, where the flat, clear, piece of non-flexible material additionally comprises a lip, which is an extension of the flat, clear, piece of non-flexible material which extends over the cavity, such that the device can rest of the lip.

14. The device of claim 13, where the lip additionally comprises one or more holes through which screws or other means of attachment can be placed to secure the device to the table.

15. The device of claim 13, where the device additionally comprises an advertising gasket, which is of a size and shape such that it fits under the lip and above the table, such that a user of the invention can view advertising material contained in the gasket.

16. The device of claim 13, where the device additionally comprises a viewable screen, such as an LCD screen, upon which advertising material can be viewed.

17. The device of claim 13, where the device additionally comprises one or more buttons located on the lip, where the one or more buttons are electronically connected to one or more services provided by the owner of the card tables, said one or more services comprising food and beverages where the user of the invention can order food and beverages, and reserve a table for future food and beverages by activating the one or more buttons.

18. The device of claim 13, where the device additionally comprises one or more buttons located on the lip, where the one or more buttons are electronically connected to one or more services provided by the owner of the card tables, said one or more services comprising entertainment, such as magic shows, rock concerts, singing performances, and shows, where the user of the invention can order food and beverages, and reserve a table for the entertainment by activating the one or more buttons.

19. The device of claim 13, where the lip additionally comprises one or more raised semi-circles of a diameter slightly larger than standard poker chips, such that a stack of poker chips can rest within the one or more raised semi-circles.

20. The device of claim 1, where the device additionally comprises an electronic port for charging a cell phone.

21. The device of claim 1, where the mirror is convex.

22. The device of claim 1, where the mirror is concave.

23. The device of claim 1, where the mirror is shaped to an eyeglass prescription.