



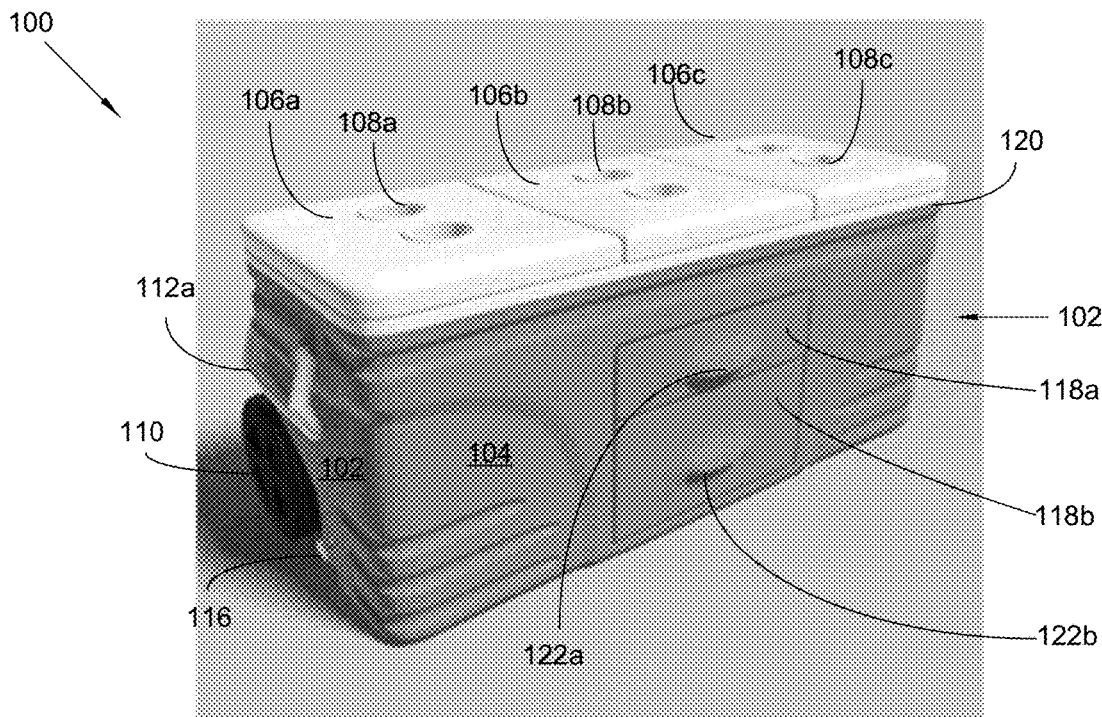
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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Valencia(10) **Pub. No.: US 2018/0149400 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 31, 2018**(54) **MULTIPLE STORAGE ASSEMBLY***F25D 25/025* (2013.01); *F25D 23/03/081*
(2013.01); *F25D 23/021* (2013.01)(71) Applicant: **Sergio Valencia**, Las Vegas, NV (US)(72) Inventor: **Sergio Valencia**, Las Vegas, NV (US)(21) Appl. No.: **15/364,617**(22) Filed: **Nov. 30, 2016****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.***F25D 3/08* (2006.01)*F25D 23/02* (2006.01)*F25D 23/04* (2006.01)*F25D 23/06* (2006.01)*F25D 25/02* (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**CPC *F25D 3/08* (2013.01); *F25D 23/026*
(2013.01); *F25D 23/04* (2013.01); *F25D*
2400/38 (2013.01); *F25D 23/069* (2013.01);

(57)

ABSTRACT

A multiple storage assembly provides an insulated housing comprising a plurality of segregated, independent compartments accessible by lids and drawers. The drawers provide a locking mechanism that helps inhibit accidental opening, and entry by children or animals. A housing stores food and beverages at cool temperatures. The housing includes an outer surface having a bottom wall, a first end wall, a second end wall, a first side wall, and a second side wall. The walls form a cavity. At least one barrier segregates the cavity into multiple lid compartments. Lids provide access to the lid compartments. Drawers having drawer compartments and a lower surface with a protruding lock slide in and out of housing on a rail. The protruding lock engages a depression in the rail to help restrain the drawers in the closed position. A mobile portion and a handle portion enable maneuvering and mobility of the housing.



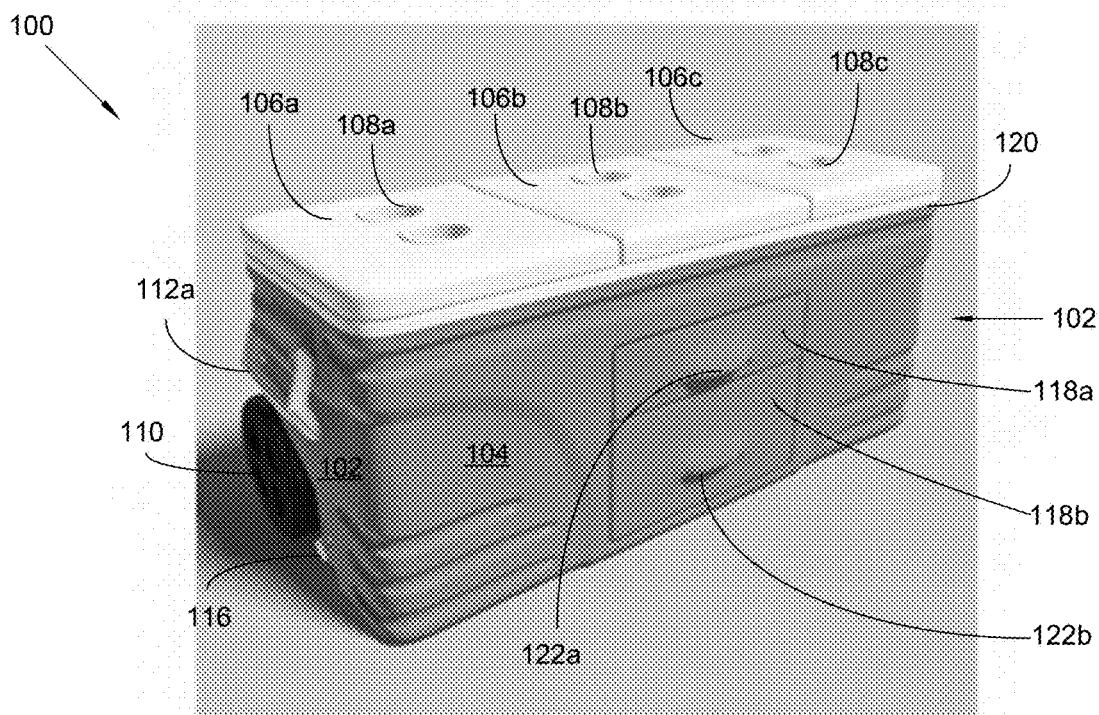


FIG. 1

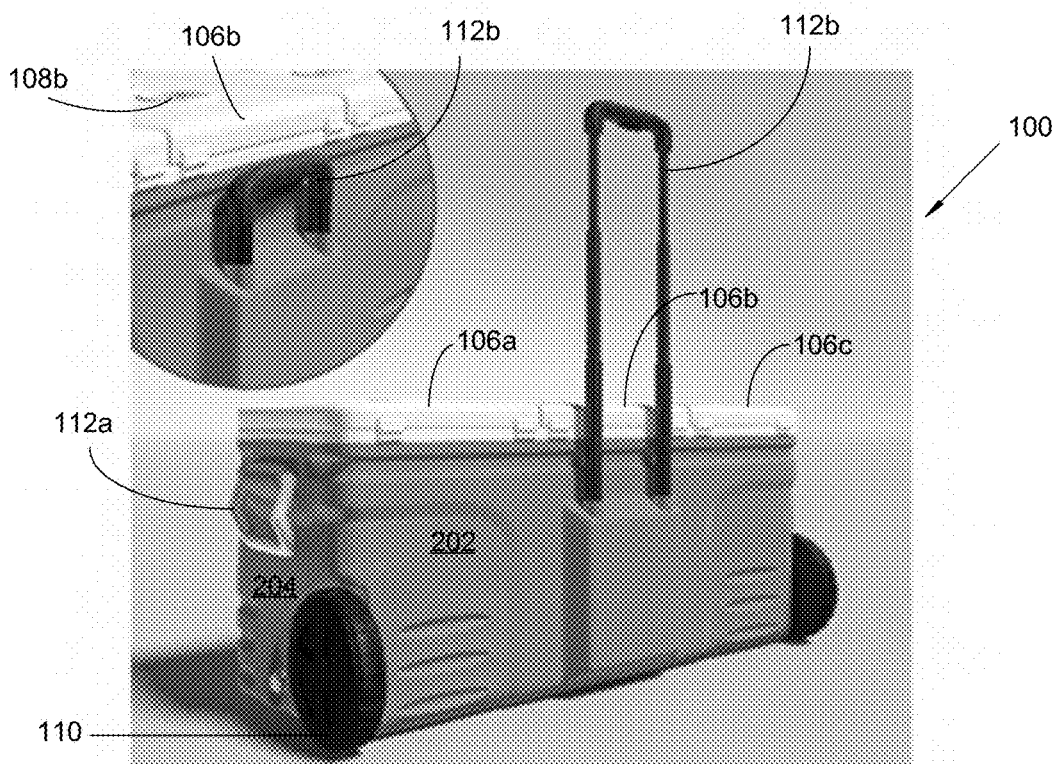


FIG. 2

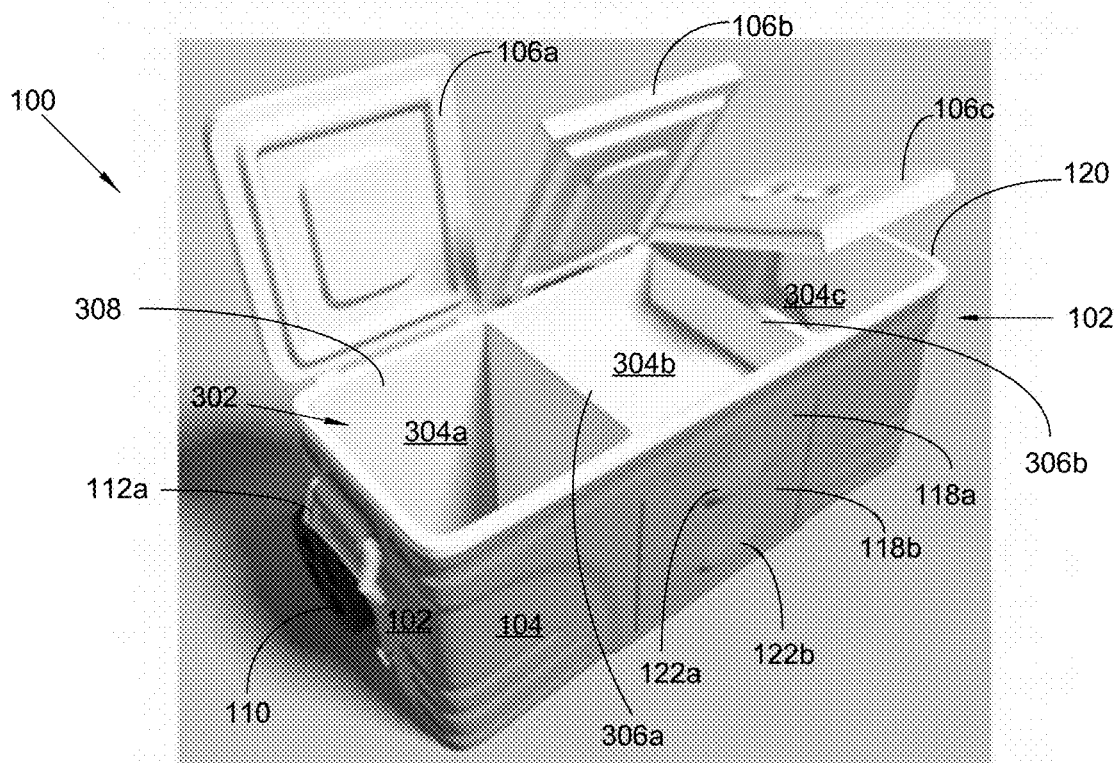


FIG. 3

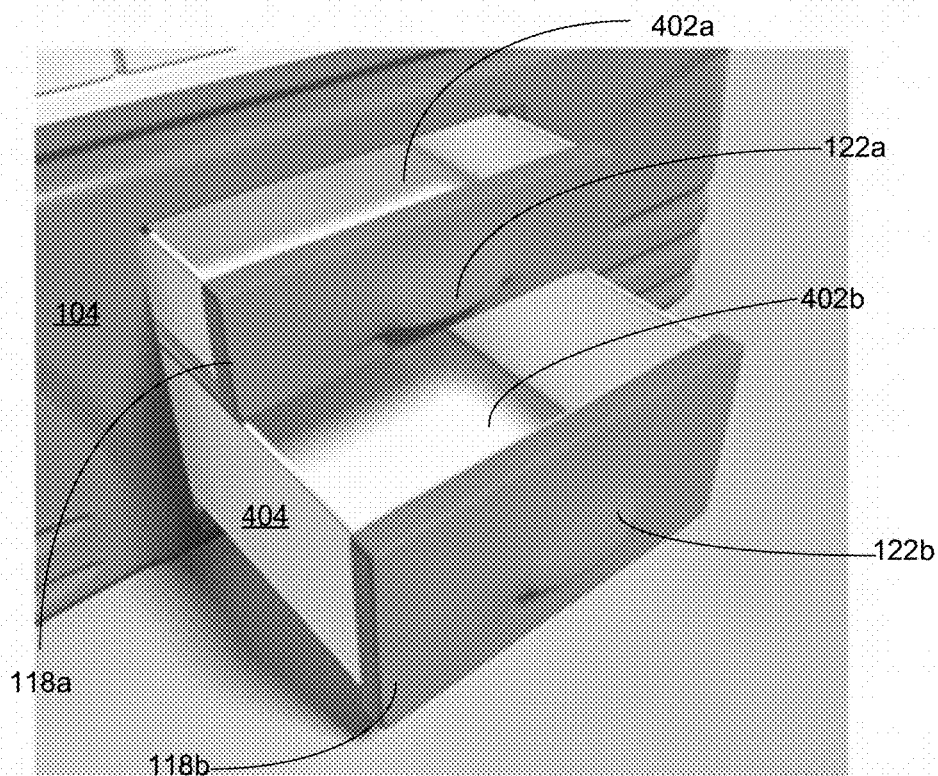


FIG. 4

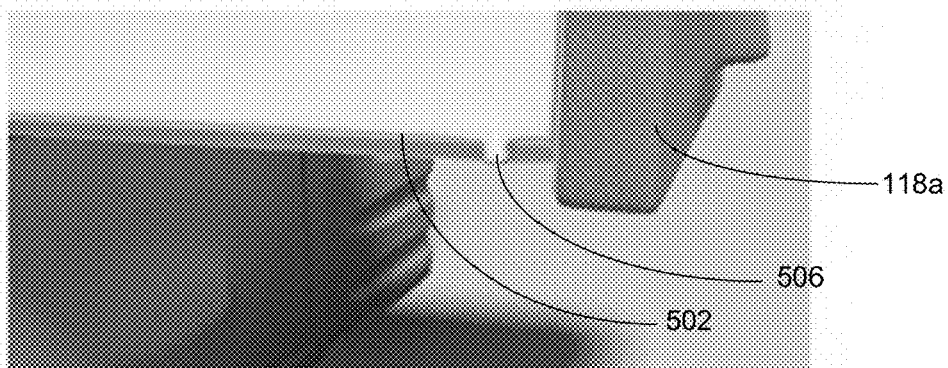


FIG. 5A

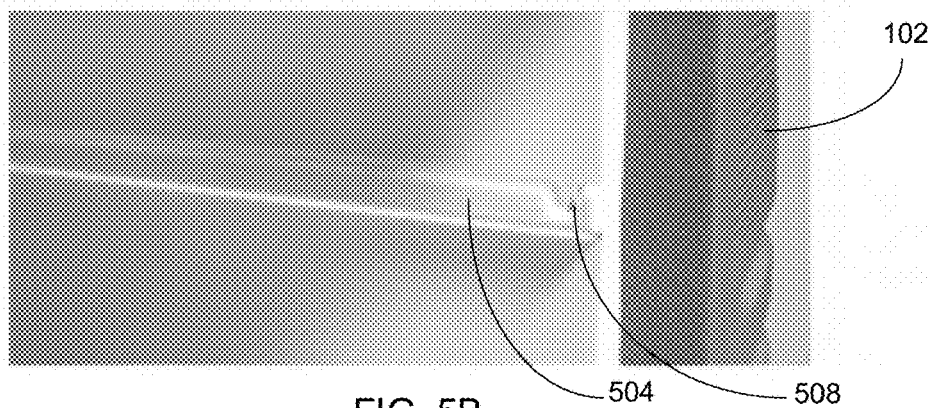


FIG. 5B

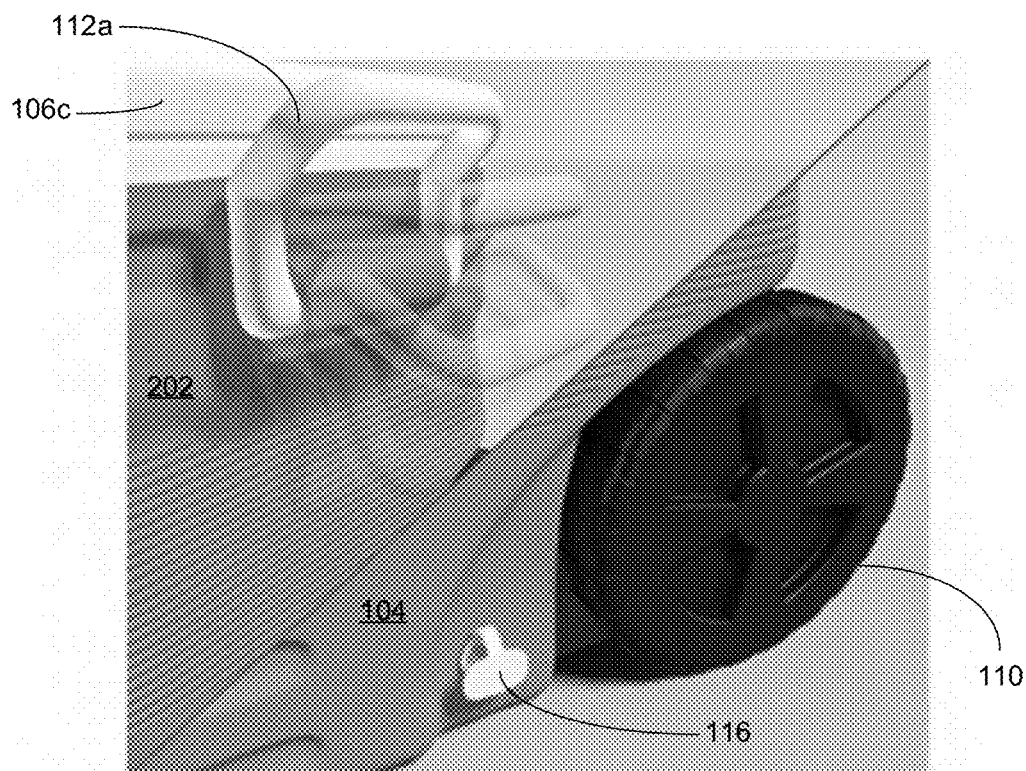


FIG. 6

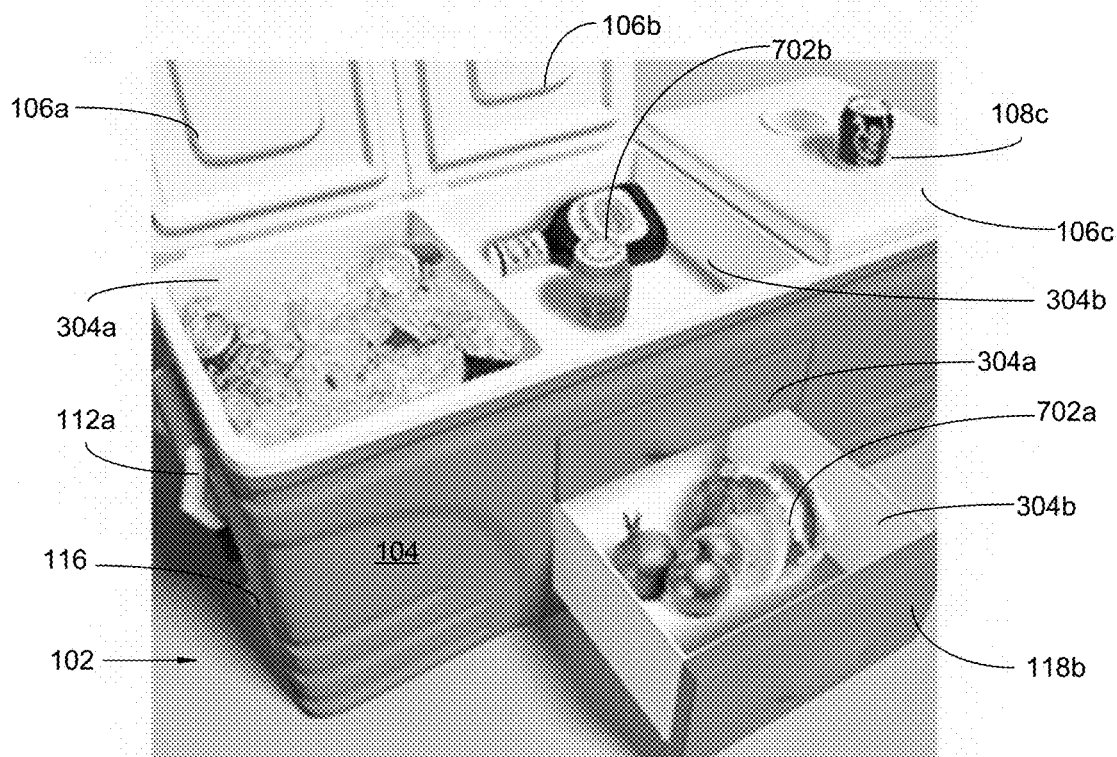


FIG. 7

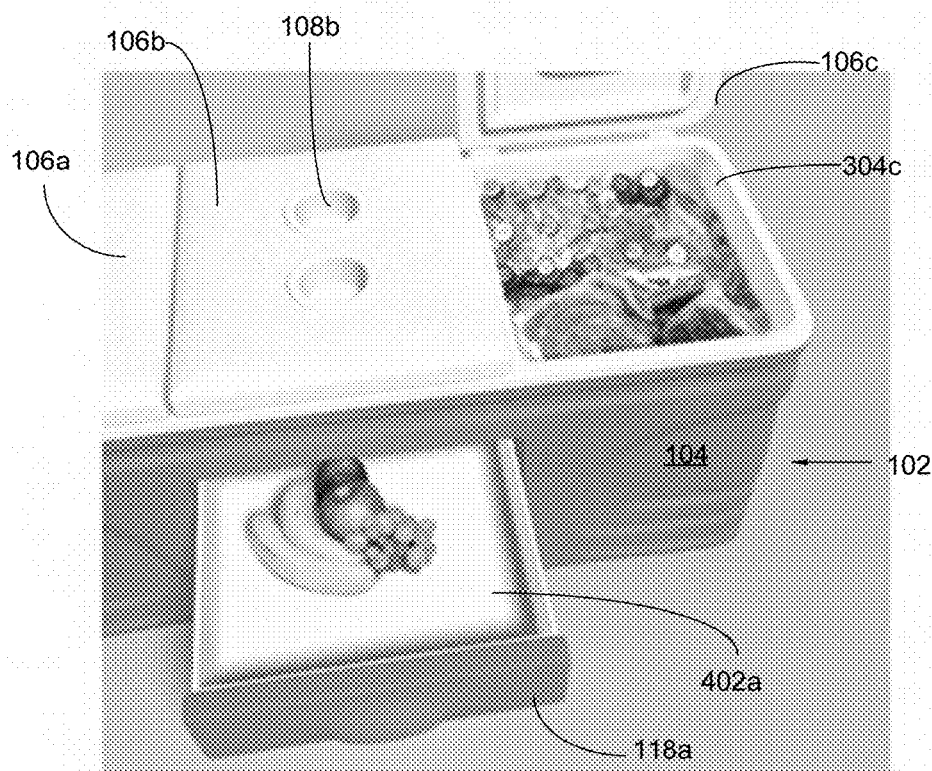


FIG. 8

MULTIPLE STORAGE ASSEMBLY**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not applicable.

RELATED CO-PENDING U.S. PATENT APPLICATIONS

[0002] Not applicable.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE OF SEQUENCE LISTING PROVIDED AS A TEXT FILE

[0003] Not applicable.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0004] Not applicable.

REFERENCE TO SEQUENCE LISTING, A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER LISTING APPENDIX

[0005] Not applicable.

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BACKGROUND OF THE RELEVANT PRIOR ART

[0007] One or more embodiments of the invention generally relate to a multiple storage assembly. More particularly, certain embodiments of the invention relates to a storage assembly that provides an insulated housing having separate independent storage compartments and lids allowing for compartmentalized transportation and storage of both wet items, dry items, fragile items, and weighted items, where at least a portion of the compartments may include a drawer having a lower surface that slides along a rail in the compartment, where the lower surface of the drawer has a protruding lock that mates with a depression in the rail to at least partially restrict the drawer from moving to an open position without elevating the drawer to disengage the locking projection with the depression.

[0008] The following background information may present examples of specific aspects of the prior art (e.g., without limitation, approaches, facts, or common wisdom) that, while expected to be helpful to further educate the reader as to additional aspects of the prior art, is not to be construed as limiting the present invention, or any embodiments thereof, to anything stated or implied therein or inferred thereupon.

[0009] The following is an example of a specific aspect in the prior art that, while expected to be helpful to further educate the reader as to additional aspects of the prior art, is not to be construed as limiting the present invention, or any

embodiments thereof, to anything stated or implied therein or inferred thereupon. By way of educational background, another aspect of the prior art generally useful to be aware of is that a cooler, or ice chest is an insulated box used to keep food or drink cool. Ice cubes are most commonly placed in it to help the things inside stay cool. Ice packs are sometimes used, as they either contain the melting water inside, or have a gel sealed inside that stays cold longer than plain ice.

[0010] Typically, a mobile cooler or portable ice chest is most commonly an enclosed insulated structure used to keep food and drink stuffs cool for periods of time away from a main refrigerated area. Typically ice cubes or some other frozen medium are placed inside the insulated structure to provide the cooling means. They are usually made from interior and exterior plastic shells with insulating foam in between and come in various sizes. Portable coolers are a useful piece of equipment for many outdoor activities.

[0011] Generally, coolers are used in various activities and events. One such activity is fishing, in which there is normally a cooler for food, a cooler for drinks, a cooler for bait, and perhaps a cooler for holding caught fish. The use of multiple coolers is often necessary to prevent cross contamination between food and other items. Other examples of cooler use may include an event where children and adults are sharing the same cooler containing beer and fruit punch.

[0012] In view of the foregoing, it is clear that these traditional techniques are not perfect and leave room for more optimal approaches.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings and in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements and in which:

[0014] FIG. 1 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly with an insulated housing having a plurality of lids and a plurality of drawers in a closed position, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0015] FIG. 2 illustrates a rear perspective view of a multiple storage assembly with a handle portion retracted and extended, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0016] FIG. 3 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly with an insulated housing having a plurality of lids in an open position, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0017] FIG. 4 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly with an insulated housing having a plurality of drawers in an open position, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0018] FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate close up views of a drawer lower surface comprising a locking projection, and a depression in the rail that mates with the locking projection to at least partially restrict displacement of the drawer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0019] FIG. 6 illustrates a close up view of a handle portion using a mobile portion as a fulcrum to move the insulated housing, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0020] FIG. 7 illustrates a top perspective view of a housing with a first arrangement of opened and closed lids

and drawers containing a plurality of items, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure; and

[0021] FIG. 8 illustrates a top perspective view of a housing with a second arrangement of opened and closed lids and drawers containing a plurality of items, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0022] Unless otherwise indicated illustrations in the figures are not necessarily drawn to scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SOME EMBODIMENTS

[0023] The present invention is best understood by reference to the detailed figures and description set forth herein.

[0024] Embodiments of the invention are discussed below with reference to the Figures. However, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the detailed description given herein with respect to these figures is for explanatory purposes as the invention extends beyond these limited embodiments. For example, it should be appreciated that those skilled in the art will, in light of the teachings of the present invention, recognize a multiplicity of alternate and suitable approaches, depending upon the needs of the particular application, to implement the functionality of any given detail described herein, beyond the particular implementation choices in the following embodiments described and shown. That is, there are modifications and variations of the invention that are too numerous to be listed but that all fit within the scope of the invention. Also, singular words should be read as plural and vice versa and masculine as feminine and vice versa, where appropriate, and alternative embodiments do not necessarily imply that the two are mutually exclusive.

[0025] It is to be further understood that the present invention is not limited to the particular methodology, compounds, materials, manufacturing techniques, uses, and applications, described herein, as these may vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is used for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention. It must be noted that as used herein and in the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” include the plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, a reference to “an element” is a reference to one or more elements and includes equivalents thereof known to those skilled in the art. Similarly, for another example, a reference to “a step” or “a means” is a reference to one or more steps or means and may include sub-steps and subservient means. All conjunctions used are to be understood in the most inclusive sense possible. Thus, the word “or” should be understood as having the definition of a logical “or” rather than that of a logical “exclusive or” unless the context clearly necessitates otherwise. Structures described herein are to be understood also to refer to functional equivalents of such structures. Language that may be construed to express approximation should be so understood unless the context clearly dictates otherwise.

[0026] All words of approximation as used in the present disclosure and claims should be construed to mean “approximate,” rather than “perfect,” and may accordingly be employed as a meaningful modifier to any other word, specified parameter, quantity, quality, or concept. Words of approximation, include, yet are not limited to terms such as “substantial,” “nearly,” “almost,” “about,” “generally,” “largely,” “essentially,” “closely approximate,” etc.

[0027] As will be established in some detail below, it is well settled law, as early as 1939, that words of approximation are not indefinite in the claims even when such limits are not defined or specified in the specification.

[0028] For example, see *Ex parte Mallory*, 52 USPQ 297, 297 (Pat. Off. Bd. App. 1941) where the court said “The examiner has held that most of the claims are inaccurate because apparently the laminar film will not be entirely eliminated. The claims specify that the film is “substantially” eliminated and for the intended purpose, it is believed that the slight portion of the film which may remain is negligible. We are of the view, therefore, that the claims may be regarded as sufficiently accurate.”

[0029] Note that claims need only “reasonably apprise those skilled in the art” as to their scope to satisfy the definiteness requirement. See *Energy Absorption Sys., Inc. v. Roadway Safety Servs., Inc.*, Civ. App. 96-1264, slip op. at 10 (Fed. Cir. Jul. 3, 1997) (unpublished) *Hybridtech v. Monoclonal Antibodies, Inc.*, 802 F.2d 1367, 1385, 231 USPQ 81, 94 (Fed. Cir. 1986), cert. denied, 480 U.S. 947 (1987). In addition, the use of modifiers in the claim, like “generally” and “substantial,” does not by itself render the claims indefinite. See *Seattle Box Co. v. Industrial Crating & Packing, Inc.*, 731 F.2d 818, 828-29, 221 USPQ 568, 575-76 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

[0030] Moreover, the ordinary and customary meaning of terms like “substantially” includes “reasonably close to: nearly, almost, about”, connoting a term of approximation. See *In re Frye*, Appeal No. 2009-006013, 94 USPQ2d 1072, 1077, 2010 WL 889747 (B.P.A.I. 2010) Depending on its usage, the word “substantially” can denote either language of approximation or language of magnitude. *Deering Precision Instruments, L.L.C. v. Vector Distribution Sys., Inc.*, 347 F.3d 1314, 1323 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (recognizing the “dual ordinary meaning of th[e] term [“substantially”] as connoting a term of approximation or a term of magnitude”). Here, when referring to the “substantially halfway” limitation, the Specification uses the word “approximately” as a substitute for the word “substantially” (Fact 4). (Fact 4). The ordinary meaning of “substantially halfway” is thus reasonably close to or nearly at the midpoint between the forwardmost point of the upper or outsole and the rearwardmost point of the upper or outsole.

[0031] Similarly, the term ‘substantially’ is well recognized in case law to have the dual ordinary meaning of connoting a term of approximation or a term of magnitude. See *Dana Corp. v. American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.*, Civ. App. 04-1116, 2004 U.S. App. LEXIS 18265, *13-14 (Fed. Cir. Aug. 27, 2004) (unpublished). The term “substantially” is commonly used by claim drafters to indicate approximation. See *Cordis Corp. v. Medtronic AVE Inc.*, 339 F.3d 1352, 1360 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (“The patents do not set out any numerical standard by which to determine whether the thickness of the wall surface is ‘substantially uniform.’ The term ‘substantially,’ as used in this context, denotes approximation. Thus, the walls must be of largely or approximately uniform thickness.”); see also *Deering Precision Instruments, LLC v. Vector Distribution Sys., Inc.*, 347 F.3d 1314, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 2003); *Epcon Gas Sys., Inc. v. Bauer Compressors, Inc.*, 279 F.3d 1022, 1031 (Fed. Cir. 2002). We find that the term “substantially” was used in just such a manner in the claims of the patents-in-suit: “substantially uniform wall thickness” denotes a wall thickness with approximate uniformity.

[0032] It should also be noted that such words of approximation as contemplated in the foregoing clearly limits the scope of claims such as saying ‘generally parallel’ such that the adverb ‘generally’ does not broaden the meaning of parallel. Accordingly, it is well settled that such words of approximation as contemplated in the foregoing (e.g., like the phrase ‘generally parallel’) envisions some amount of deviation from perfection (e.g., not exactly parallel), and that such words of approximation as contemplated in the foregoing are descriptive terms commonly used in patent claims to avoid a strict numerical boundary to the specified parameter. To the extent that the plain language of the claims relying on such words of approximation as contemplated in the foregoing are clear and uncontradicted by anything in the written description herein or the figures thereof, it is improper to rely upon the present written description, the figures, or the prosecution history to add limitations to any of the claim of the present invention with respect to such words of approximation as contemplated in the foregoing. That is, under such circumstances, relying on the written description and prosecution history to reject the ordinary and customary meanings of the words themselves is impermissible. See, for example, *Liquid Dynamics Corp. v. Vaughan Co.*, 355 F.3d 1361, 69 USPQ2d 1595, 1600-01 (Fed. Cir. 2004). The plain language of phrase 2 requires a “substantial helical flow.” The term “substantial” is a meaningful modifier implying “approximate,” rather than “perfect.” In *Cordis Corp. v. Medtronic AVE, Inc.*, 339 F.3d 1352, 1361 (Fed. Cir. 2003), the district court imposed a precise numeric constraint on the term “substantially uniform thickness.” We noted that the proper interpretation of this term was “of largely or approximately uniform thickness” unless something in the prosecution history imposed the “clear and unmistakable disclaimer” needed for narrowing beyond this simple-language interpretation. *Id.* In *Anchor Wall Systems v. Rockwood Retaining Walls, Inc.*, 340 F.3d 1298, 1311 (Fed. Cir. 2003)” *Id.* at 1311. Similarly, the plain language of claim 1 requires neither a perfectly helical flow nor a flow that returns precisely to the center after one rotation (a limitation that arises only as a logical consequence of requiring a perfectly helical flow).

[0033] The reader should appreciate that case law generally recognizes a dual ordinary meaning of such words of approximation, as contemplated in the foregoing, as connoting a term of approximation or a term of magnitude; e.g., see *Deering Precision Instruments, L.L.C. v. Vector Distrib. Sys., Inc.*, 347 F.3d 1314, 68 USPQ2d 1716, 1721 (Fed. Cir. 2003), cert. denied, 124 S. Ct. 1426 (2004) where the court was asked to construe the meaning of the term “substantially” in a patent claim. Also see *Epcon*, 279 F.3d at 1031 (“The phrase ‘substantially constant’ denotes language of approximation, while the phrase ‘substantially below’ signifies language of magnitude, i.e., not insubstantial.”). Also, see, e.g., *Epcon Gas Sys., Inc. v. Bauer Compressors, Inc.*, 279 F.3d 1022 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (construing the terms “substantially constant” and “substantially below”); *Zodiac Pool Care, Inc. v. Hoffinger Indus., Inc.*, 206 F.3d 1408 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (construing the term “substantially inward”); *York Prods., Inc. v. Cent. Tractor Farm & Family Ctr.*, 99 F.3d 1568 (Fed. Cir. 1996) (construing the term “substantially the entire height thereof”); *Tex. Instruments Inc. v. Cypress Semiconductor Corp.*, 90 F.3d 1558 (Fed. Cir. 1996) (construing the term “substantially in the common plane”). In conducting their analysis, the court instructed to begin with

the ordinary meaning of the claim terms to one of ordinary skill in the art. *Prima Tek*, 318 F.3d at 1148. Reference to dictionaries and our cases indicates that the term “substantially” has numerous ordinary meanings. As the district court stated, “substantially” can mean “significantly” or “considerably.” The term “substantially” can also mean “largely” or “essentially.” Webster’s New 20th Century Dictionary 1817 (1983).

[0034] Words of approximation, as contemplated in the foregoing, may also be used in phrases establishing approximate ranges or limits, where the end points are inclusive and approximate, not perfect; e.g., see *AK Steel Corp. v. Sollac*, 344 F.3d 1234, 68 USPQ2d 1280, 1285 (Fed. Cir. 2003) where it where the court said [W]e conclude that the ordinary meaning of the phrase “up to about 10%” includes the “about 10%” endpoint. As pointed out by *AK Steel*, when an object of the preposition “up to” is nonnumeric, the most natural meaning is to exclude the object (e.g., painting the wall up to the door). On the other hand, as pointed out by *Sollac*, when the object is a numerical limit, the normal meaning is to include that upper numerical limit (e.g., counting up to ten, seating capacity for up to seven passengers). Because we have here a numerical limit—“about 10%”—the ordinary meaning is that that endpoint is included.

[0035] In the present specification and claims, a goal of employment of such words of approximation, as contemplated in the foregoing, is to avoid a strict numerical boundary to the modified specified parameter, as sanctioned by *Pall Corp. v. Micron Separations, Inc.*, 66 F.3d 1211, 1217, 36 USPQ2d 1225, 1229 (Fed. Cir. 1995) where it states “It is well established that when the term “substantially” serves reasonably to describe the subject matter so that its scope would be understood by persons in the field of the invention, and to distinguish the claimed subject matter from the prior art, it is not indefinite.” Likewise see *Verve LLC v. Crane Cams Inc.*, 311 F.3d 1116, 65 USPQ2d 1051, 1054 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Expressions such as “substantially” are used in patent documents when warranted by the nature of the invention, in order to accommodate the minor variations that may be appropriate to secure the invention. Such usage may well satisfy the charge to “particularly point out and distinctly claim” the invention, 35 U.S.C. § 112, and indeed may be necessary in order to provide the inventor with the benefit of his invention. In *Andrew Corp. v. Gabriel Elecs. Inc.*, 847 F.2d 819, 821-22, 6 USPQ2d 2010, 2013 (Fed. Cir. 1988) the court explained that usages such as “substantially equal” and “closely approximate” may serve to describe the invention with precision appropriate to the technology and without intruding on the prior art. The court again explained in *Ecolab Inc. v. Envirochem, Inc.*, 264 F.3d 1358, 1367, 60 USPQ2d 1173, 1179 (Fed. Cir. 2001) that “like the term ‘about,’ the term ‘substantially’ is a descriptive term commonly used in patent claims to ‘avoid a strict numerical boundary to the specified parameter, see *Ecolab Inc. v. Envirochem Inc.*, 264 F.3d 1358, 60 USPQ2d 1173, 1179 (Fed. Cir. 2001) where the court found that the use of the term “substantially” to modify the term “uniform” does not render this phrase so unclear such that there is no means by which to ascertain the claim scope.

[0036] Similarly, other courts have noted that like the term “about,” the term “substantially” is a descriptive term commonly used in patent claims to “avoid a strict numerical boundary to the specified parameter.” e.g., see *Pall Corp. v.*

Micron Seps., 66 F.3d 1211, 1217, 36 USPQ2d 1225, 1229 (Fed. Cir. 1995); see, e.g., *Andrew Corp. v. Gabriel Elecs. Inc.*, 847 F.2d 819, 821-22, 6 USPQ2d 2010, 2013 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (noting that terms such as “approach each other,” “close to,” “substantially equal,” and “closely approximate” are ubiquitously used in patent claims and that such usages, when serving reasonably to describe the claimed subject matter to those of skill in the field of the invention, and to distinguish the claimed subject matter from the prior art, have been accepted in patent examination and upheld by the courts). In this case, “substantially” avoids the strict 100% nonuniformity boundary.

[0037] Indeed, the foregoing sanctioning of such words of approximation, as contemplated in the foregoing, has been established as early as 1939, see *Ex parte Mallory*, 52 USPQ 297, 297 (Pat. Off. Bd. App. 1941) where, for example, the court said “the claims specify that the film is “substantially” eliminated and for the intended purpose, it is believed that the slight portion of the film which may remain is negligible. We are of the view, therefore, that the claims may be regarded as sufficiently accurate.” Similarly, *In re Hutchison*, 104 F.2d 829, 42 USPQ 90, 93 (C.C.P.A. 1939) the court said “It is realized that “substantial distance” is a relative and somewhat indefinite term, or phrase, but terms and phrases of this character are not uncommon in patents in cases where, according to the art involved, the meaning can be determined with reasonable clearness.”

[0038] Hence, for at least the forgoing reason, Applicants submit that it is improper for any examiner to hold as indefinite any claims of the present patent that employ any words of approximation.

[0039] Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meanings as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Preferred methods, techniques, devices, and materials are described, although any methods, techniques, devices, or materials similar or equivalent to those described herein may be used in the practice or testing of the present invention. Structures described herein are to be understood also to refer to functional equivalents of such structures. The present invention will be described in detail below with reference to embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0040] References to a “device,” an “apparatus,” a “system,” etc., in the preamble of a claim should be construed broadly to mean “any structure meeting the claim terms” exempt for any specific structure(s)/type(s) that has/(have) been explicitly disavowed or excluded or admitted/implied as prior art in the present specification or incapable of enabling an object/aspect/goal of the invention. Furthermore, where the present specification discloses an object, aspect, function, goal, result, or advantage of the invention that a specific prior art structure and/or method step is similarly capable of performing yet in a very different way, the present invention disclosure is intended to and shall also implicitly include and cover additional corresponding alternative embodiments that are otherwise identical to that explicitly disclosed except that they exclude such prior art structure(s)/step(s), and shall accordingly be deemed as providing sufficient disclosure to support a corresponding negative limitation in a claim claiming such alternative embodiment(s), which exclude such very different prior art structure(s)/step(s) way(s).

[0041] From reading the present disclosure, other variations and modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the art. Such variations and modifications may involve equivalent and other features which are already known in the art, and which may be used instead of or in addition to features already described herein.

[0042] Although Claims have been formulated in this Application to particular combinations of features, it should be understood that the scope of the disclosure of the present invention also includes any novel feature or any novel combination of features disclosed herein either explicitly or implicitly or any generalization thereof, whether or not it relates to the same invention as presently claimed in any Claim and whether or not it mitigates any or all of the same technical problems as does the present invention.

[0043] Features which are described in the context of separate embodiments may also be provided in combination in a single embodiment. Conversely, various features which are, for brevity, described in the context of a single embodiment, may also be provided separately or in any suitable subcombination. The Applicants hereby give notice that new Claims may be formulated to such features and/or combinations of such features during the prosecution of the present Application or of any further Application derived therefrom.

[0044] References to “one embodiment,” “an embodiment,” “example embodiment,” “various embodiments,” “some embodiments,” “embodiments of the invention,” etc., may indicate that the embodiment(s) of the invention so described may include a particular feature, structure, or characteristic, but not every possible embodiment of the invention necessarily includes the particular feature, structure, or characteristic. Further, repeated use of the phrase “in one embodiment,” or “in an exemplary embodiment,” “an embodiment,” do not necessarily refer to the same embodiment, although they may. Moreover, any use of phrases like “embodiments” in connection with “the invention” are never meant to characterize that all embodiments of the invention must include the particular feature, structure, or characteristic, and should instead be understood to mean “at least some embodiments of the invention” includes the stated particular feature, structure, or characteristic.

[0045] References to “user”, or any similar term, as used herein, may mean a human or non-human user thereof. Moreover, “user”, or any similar term, as used herein, unless expressly stipulated otherwise, is contemplated to mean users at any stage of the usage process, to include, without limitation, direct user(s), intermediate user(s), indirect user(s), and end user(s). The meaning of “user”, or any similar term, as used herein, should not be otherwise inferred or induced by any pattern(s) of description, embodiments, examples, or referenced prior-art that may (or may not) be provided in the present patent.

[0046] References to “end user”, or any similar term, as used herein, is generally intended to mean late stage user(s) as opposed to early stage user(s). Hence, it is contemplated that there may be a multiplicity of different types of “end user” near the end stage of the usage process. Where applicable, especially with respect to distribution channels of embodiments of the invention comprising consumed retail products/services thereof (as opposed to sellers/vendors or Original Equipment Manufacturers), examples of an “end user” may include, without limitation, a “consumer”, “buyer”, “customer”, “purchaser”, “shopper”, “enjoyer”, “viewer”, or individual person or non-human thing benefit-

ing in any way, directly or indirectly, from use of, or interaction, with some aspect of the present invention.

[0047] In some situations, some embodiments of the present invention may provide beneficial usage to more than one stage or type of usage in the foregoing usage process. In such cases where multiple embodiments targeting various stages of the usage process are described, references to “end user”, or any similar term, as used therein, are generally intended to not include the user that is the furthest removed, in the foregoing usage process, from the final user therein of an embodiment of the present invention.

[0048] Where applicable, especially with respect to retail distribution channels of embodiments of the invention, intermediate user(s) may include, without limitation, any individual person or non-human thing benefiting in any way, directly or indirectly, from use of, or interaction with, some aspect of the present invention with respect to selling, vending, Original Equipment Manufacturing, marketing, merchandising, distributing, service providing, and the like thereof.

[0049] References to “person”, “individual”, “human”, “a party”, “animal”, “creature”, or any similar term, as used herein, even if the context or particular embodiment implies living user, maker, or participant, it should be understood that such characterizations are sole by way of example, and not limitation, in that it is contemplated that any such usage, making, or participation by a living entity in connection with making, using, and/or participating, in any way, with embodiments of the present invention may be substituted by such similar performed by a suitably configured non-living entity, to include, without limitation, automated machines, robots, humanoids, computational systems, information processing systems, artificially intelligent systems, and the like. It is further contemplated that those skilled in the art will readily recognize the practical situations where such living makers, users, and/or participants with embodiments of the present invention may be in whole, or in part, replaced with such non-living makers, users, and/or participants with embodiments of the present invention. Likewise, when those skilled in the art identify such practical situations where such living makers, users, and/or participants with embodiments of the present invention may be in whole, or in part, replaced with such non-living makers, it will be readily apparent in light of the teachings of the present invention how to adapt the described embodiments to be suitable for such non-living makers, users, and/or participants with embodiments of the present invention. Thus, the invention is thus to also cover all such modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of such adaptations and modifications, at least in part, for such non-living entities.

[0050] Headings provided herein are for convenience and are not to be taken as limiting the disclosure in any way.

[0051] The enumerated listing of items does not imply that any or all of the items are mutually exclusive, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0052] It is understood that the use of specific component, device and/or parameter names are for example only and not meant to imply any limitations on the invention. The invention may thus be implemented with different nomenclature/terminology utilized to describe the mechanisms/units/structures/components/devices/parameters herein, without

limitation. Each term utilized herein is to be given its broadest interpretation given the context in which that term is utilized.

Terminology

[0053] The following paragraphs provide definitions and/or context for terms found in this disclosure (including the appended claims):

[0054] “Comprising.” This term is open-ended. As used in the appended claims, this term does not foreclose additional structure or steps. Consider a claim that recites: “A memory controller comprising a system cache” Such a claim does not foreclose the memory controller from including additional components (e.g., a memory channel unit, a switch).

[0055] “Configured To.” Various units, circuits, or other components may be described or claimed as “configured to” perform a task or tasks. In such contexts, “configured to” or “operable for” is used to connote structure by indicating that the mechanisms/units/circuits/components include structure (e.g., circuitry and/or mechanisms) that performs the task or tasks during operation. As such, the mechanisms/unit/circuit/component can be said to be configured to (or be operable) for perform(ing) the task even when the specified mechanisms/unit/circuit/component is not currently operational (e.g., is not on). The mechanisms/units/circuits/components used with the “configured to” or “operable for” language include hardware—for example, mechanisms, structures, electronics, circuits, memory storing program instructions executable to implement the operation, etc. Reciting that a mechanism/unit/circuit/component is “configured to” or “operable for” perform(ing) one or more tasks is expressly intended not to invoke 35 U.S.C. .sectn.112, sixth paragraph, for that mechanism/unit/circuit/component. “Configured to” may also include adapting a manufacturing process to fabricate devices or components that are adapted to implement or perform one or more tasks.

[0056] “Based On.” As used herein, this term is used to describe one or more factors that affect a determination. This term does not foreclose additional factors that may affect a determination. That is, a determination may be solely based on those factors or based, at least in part, on those factors. Consider the phrase “determine A based on B.” While B may be a factor that affects the determination of A, such a phrase does not foreclose the determination of A from also being based on C. In other instances, A may be determined based solely on B.

[0057] The terms “a”, “an” and “the” mean “one or more”, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0058] Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers expressing conditions, concentrations, dimensions, and so forth used in the specification and claims are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term “about.” Accordingly, unless indicated to the contrary, the numerical parameters set forth in the following specification and attached claims are approximations that may vary depending at least upon a specific analytical technique.

[0059] The term “comprising,” which is synonymous with “including,” “containing,” or “characterized by” is inclusive or open-ended and does not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method steps. “Comprising” is a term of art used in claim language which means that the named claim

elements are essential, but other claim elements may be added and still form a construct within the scope of the claim.

[0060] As used herein, the phrase “consisting of” excludes any element, step, or ingredient not specified in the claim. When the phrase “consists of” (or variations thereof) appears in a clause of the body of a claim, rather than immediately following the preamble, it limits only the element set forth in that clause; other elements are not excluded from the claim as a whole. As used herein, the phrase “consisting essentially of” and “consisting of” limits the scope of a claim to the specified elements or method steps, plus those that do not materially affect the basis and novel characteristic(s) of the claimed subject matter (see *Norian Corp. v Stryker Corp.*, 363 F.3d 1321, 1331-32, 70 USPQ2d 1508, Fed. Cir. 2004). Moreover, for any claim of the present invention which claims an embodiment “consisting essentially of” or “consisting of” a certain set of elements of any herein described embodiment it shall be understood as obvious by those skilled in the art that the present invention also covers all possible varying scope variants of any described embodiment(s) that are each exclusively (i.e., “consisting essentially of”) functional subsets or functional combination thereof such that each of these plurality of exclusive varying scope variants each consists essentially of any functional subset(s) and/or functional combination(s) of any set of elements of any described embodiment(s) to the exclusion of any others not set forth therein. That is, it is contemplated that it will be obvious to those skilled how to create a multiplicity of alternate embodiments of the present invention that simply consisting essentially of a certain functional combination of elements of any described embodiment(s) to the exclusion of any others not set forth therein, and the invention thus covers all such exclusive embodiments as if they were each described herein.

[0061] With respect to the terms “comprising,” “consisting of,” and “consisting essentially of” where one of these three terms is used herein, the presently disclosed and claimed subject matter may include the use of either of the other two terms. Thus in some embodiments not otherwise explicitly recited, any instance of “comprising” may be replaced by “consisting of” or, alternatively, by “consisting essentially of”, and thus, for the purposes of claim support and construction for “consisting of” format claims, such replacements operate to create yet other alternative embodiments “consisting essentially of” only the elements recited in the original “comprising” embodiment to the exclusion of all other elements.

[0062] Devices or system modules that are in at least general communication with each other need not be in continuous communication with each other, unless expressly specified otherwise. In addition, devices or system modules that are in at least general communication with each other may communicate directly or indirectly through one or more intermediaries.

[0063] A description of an embodiment with several components in communication with each other does not imply that all such components are required. On the contrary a variety of optional components are described to illustrate the wide variety of possible embodiments of the present invention.

[0064] As is well known to those skilled in the art many careful considerations and compromises typically must be

made when designing for the optimal manufacture of a commercial implementation any system, and in particular, the embodiments of the present invention. A commercial implementation in accordance with the spirit and teachings of the present invention may be configured according to the needs of the particular application, whereby any aspect(s), feature(s), function(s), result(s), component(s), approach(es), or step(s) of the teachings related to any described embodiment of the present invention may be suitably omitted, included, adapted, mixed and matched, or improved and/or optimized by those skilled in the art, using their average skills and known techniques, to achieve the desired implementation that addresses the needs of the particular application.

[0065] In the following description and claims, the terms “coupled” and “connected,” along with their derivatives, may be used. It should be understood that these terms are not intended as synonyms for each other. Rather, in particular embodiments, “connected” may be used to indicate that two or more elements are in direct physical or electrical contact with each other. “Coupled” may mean that two or more elements are in direct physical or electrical contact. However, “coupled” may also mean that two or more elements are not in direct contact with each other, but yet still cooperate or interact with each other.

[0066] The present invention will now be described in detail with reference to embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0067] There are various types of insulated containers that may be provided by preferred embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, a multiple storage assembly provides an insulated housing comprising a plurality of segregated, independent compartments accessible by lids and drawers. The drawers provide a unique locking mechanism that helps to inhibit accidental opening of the drawer, and also inhibits entry by children or animals. A mobile portion and a handle portion work together to enable facilitated mobility of the insulated housing. In one exemplary embodiment, the assembly comprises a rectangular ice chest, base storage compartments on each lateral end of that ice chest, retractable drawers in the center of that ice chest, and a separate storage compartment directly above the top-most retractable drawer.

[0068] FIG. 1 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly 100. In one aspect, the multiple storage assembly may provide a housing 102 used for storing food and beverages at a cool temperature. Those skilled in the art will recognize that a cooler, or ice chest, is an insulated box used to keep food or drink cool. Ice cubes are most commonly placed in it to help the things inside stay cool. When camping, picnicking, boating, or going to the beach, food and beverages may be kept cool and last longer when secured in the cooler. Further, wet items, dry items, fragile items, and weighted items may be maintained in separate compartments to enhance quality thereof.

[0069] In some embodiments, the housing may include an outer surface formed by a bottom wall, a first end wall 102, a second end wall, a first side wall 104, and a second side wall. The walls may form a cavity that is segregated into multiple compartments by barriers. The walls may include an upper edge 120 that forms an opening into the cavity. In some embodiments, the housing may have a generally rectangular shape. Though in other embodiments, the housing may be shaped in other dimensions, including, without

limitation, cubicle, circular, and pyramidal. In one embodiment, the housing may be dimensioned approximately thirty-eight and one-half inches in length by fourteen and one-half inches in width by sixteen and one-half inches in height ($38\frac{1}{2}'' \times 14\frac{1}{2}'' \times 16\frac{1}{2}''$).

[0070] Suitable materials for the housing may include, without limitation, polyethylene (PE), aluminum, and aluminum alloy. The housing may be decorated in many colors and may feature various colors, patterns, images, icons and/or logos, which may or may not be of registered trademark and/or copyright status.

[0071] In some embodiments, the housing may have a thermally insulating interior wall. The thermally insulating interior wall may be received within the insulated housing cavity to help insulate against heat. Thus, the thermally insulating interior wall allows the container to operate as a cooler.

[0072] In one embodiment, the housing may be defined by a continuous sidewall that forms a plurality of wet compartments and a plurality of dry compartments that segregate the contents. The separate compartments may help eliminate possible cross-contamination as well as provide different thermal conditioning of the contents. The compartments are completely independent of each other having an interior divider wall extending completely through the body of the housing and continuing into a lid area, thereby sealing independent compartments. In some embodiments, each compartment may include a drainage aperture 116.

[0073] In some embodiments, the housing may include separate independent storage lids and drawers allowing for compartmentalized transportation and storage of both wet items and dry items. At least a portion of the compartments may include a plurality of drawers 118a, 118b that slide in and out of the cavity of the housing to enable access to the contents in the drawer. The plurality of drawers comprise a continuous drawer sidewall, a lower surface, and a plurality of drawer compartments. At least one drawer handle 122a, 122b on the drawer may provide a grip for pulling the drawer.

[0074] In some embodiments, a top drawer may be dimensioned approximately twelve inches in length by twelve inches in width by eight inches in height ($12'' \times 12'' \times 8''$). A lower drawer may be dimensioned approximately twelve inches in length by twelve inches in width by four inches in height ($12'' \times 12'' \times 4''$).

[0075] At least a portion of the compartments may include, a plurality of lids 106a, 106b, 106c that join with the upper edge of the housing. The lids may hingedly attach to one of the upper edges to enable hinged access to the individual compartments in the cavity of the insulated housing. The lid regulates access to the cavity of the housing. The lid may be pivotally attached to the top of the housing, so as to be pivotable between an open position and a closed position that encloses the body cavity of the housing. In one embodiment, the lid may also have insulative properties. In some embodiments, the lids may include a lid outer surface 114 and a lid inner surface. The upper surface of the lid comprises at least one depression 108a, 108b, 108c. The depression may be circular and sized to receive a can.

[0076] In some embodiments, the insulated housing may further include a mobile portion 110 that enables mobile transportation of the insulated housing. The mobile portion may include a pair of large wheels that rotate about an axis.

In one embodiment, the pair of large wheels measure approximately four inches in diameter by one and one-half inches in width ($4'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$).

[0077] The first and second ends of the insulated housing may include at least one handle portion 112a, 112b. The handle portion 112a may have a generally U-shape and be about 4" in width. The U-shaped handle facilitates manipulation and carrying of the container. The handle portion may include a handle positioned on each end wall.

[0078] FIG. 2 illustrates a rear perspective view of a housing with a handle portion retracted and extended. In one aspect, the handle portion 112b may be configured to telescopically extend and retract from one end wall. In this configuration, the handle retracts into a channel. In one embodiment, the telescopic handle is approximately 42" in fully-extended length. Upon extension, the mobile portion serves as a fulcrum for the housing to enable rolling of the insulated housing by pulling or pushing with the handle portion. In other embodiments, the U-shaped handle may extend from a second end wall 202, while the telescopic handle extends from a second side wall 204. Though the handle portion may position on any wall of the housing.

[0079] FIG. 3 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly with an insulated housing having a plurality of lids in an open position. In the open position, a cavity 302 in the housing is exposed. The cavity may be segregated by at least one barrier 306a, 306b that segregate the cavity into a plurality of lid compartments 304a, 304b, 304c. Each lid compartment may be accessed independently of each other. In some embodiments, each lid compartment may be sealed and may contain different items. This may inhibit transfer of smell or moisture between lid compartments.

[0080] In one embodiment, a center lid compartment is dimensioned at approximately twelve inches in length by twelve inches in depth by four inches in height ($12'' \times 12'' \times 4''$). A pair of side lid compartments may be dimensioned at approximately twelve inches in length by twelve inches in width by sixteen inches in height ($12'' \times 12'' \times 16''$). Each of the lid compartments is top-sealed by the hinged lid.

[0081] In some embodiments, the housing may have a thermally insulating interior wall 308. The thermally insulating interior wall may be received within the insulated housing cavity to help insulate against heat. In one embodiment, the thermally insulating interior wall is disposed generally coplanar with the first side wall, the second side wall, the first end wall, and the second end wall. Thus, the thermally insulating interior wall allows the container to operate as a cooler. In some embodiments, the wall may be fabricated from an insulative material, including, without limitation, foam, polystyrene, and a nonconductive, porous material. The wall may be between $\frac{1}{8}''$ to 2" thick. Though in other embodiments, the container may be a general container, and not have insulative properties. Suitable materials for the thermally insulating interior wall may include, without limitation, polyurethane (PU) foam, and in various densities.

[0082] FIG. 4 illustrates a front perspective view of an exemplary multiple storage assembly with an insulated housing having a plurality of drawers in an open position. In one aspect, the plurality of drawers comprise a continuous drawer sidewall 404, a lower surface, and a plurality of drawer compartments 402a, 402b. The drawers may be displaced to the open position to reveal the drawer compart-

ment. Similar to the lid compartment discussed above, each drawer compartment may be accessed independently of each other. In some embodiments, each drawer compartment may be sealed and may contain different items. This may inhibit transfer of smell or moisture between lid compartments.

[0083] In one embodiment, the lid compartments and the drawer compartments are utilized based on the types of items contained therein. For example, the lid compartments may include two wet compartments and the drawer compartments may include two dry compartments. In this arrangement, the cold radiating from the ice stored in the two wet compartments keeps the items in the dry compartments chilled but does not allow the dry items to be engaged by moisture. In any case, each lid and drawer compartment maintains substantially the same cool temperature set in the housing.

[0084] FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrates close up views of a drawer lower surface comprising a locking projection, and a depression in the rail that mates with the locking projection that serves to at least partially restrict displacement of the drawer to an open position. In one aspect, the plurality of drawers may include a unique means for at least partially restricting displacement to the open position; and thereby access to the contents therein. This may especially be useful for inhibiting children or animals from accessing the drawer compartment.

[0085] In some embodiments, the drawer may include a lower surface 502 that slides along a rail 504 in the drawer compartment to move between an open position and a closed position. The lower surface of the drawer comprises a locking projection 506 that mates with a depression 508 in the rail to at least partially restrict the drawer from moving to an open position. The drawer moves to the open position by elevating the drawer to disengage the locking projection from the depression, and then sliding the drawer along the rail to the open position. In this manner, the drawer is difficult to open for children and animals, and prevents the drawers from accidentally opening during transport. The drawer moves and locks into the closed position as the locking projection engages the depression.

[0086] FIG. 6 illustrates a close up view of a handle portion using a mobile portion as a fulcrum to move the insulated housing. In one aspect, the mobile portion and the handle portion work together to enable facilitated mobility of the insulated housing. The handle portion may have a generally U-shape and facilitate manipulation and carrying of the container. The handle portion may include a handle positioned on each end wall. The mobile portion may include a pair of large wheels that rotate about an axis. The handle portion may be configured to serve as a fulcrum for the housing to enable rolling of the insulated housing by pulling or pushing with the handle portion. In one alternative embodiment, the mobile portion may lock. In this arrangement, the housing may be tipped over to drain liquids through the drainage aperture.

[0087] FIG. 7 illustrates a top perspective view of a housing with a first arrangement of open lids and drawers containing a plurality of items 702a, 702b. In one aspect, the housing may provide multiple lid and drawer compartments that protectively store items and segregate the items, preventing small or soft, fragile items 702a, such as vegetables and bread, from becoming smashed by large or weighted items 702b, such as cans of beverages and food containers. This compartmentalization may also serve to prevent dry

items such as bread from becoming wet from melting ice, and also to prevent cross-contamination of food items.

[0088] In one exemplary use of the compartments, items in a first lid compartment stores items that require a cool, dry environment, as well as items that do not need to be mixed with other items. Items in a second lid compartment store ice and drinks, making this a child-friendly compartment. Items in the bottom, large drawer compartment receive items that require a cool, dry environment, as well as items that do not need to be mixed with other items.

[0089] FIG. 8 illustrates a top perspective view of a housing with a second arrangement of open lids and drawers. In one aspect, the segregation of compartments allows items to be segregated based on the age of the users, and then easily monitored to ensure compliance by underage people. For example, without limitation, alcohol can be stored in one wet compartment and soda in the other. Further, if a minor access the wrong compartment an adult can easily see they are in the wrong side of the cooler and take corrective action.

[0090] As FIG. 8 illustrates, an end lid compartment contains ice and bottled drinks, while a top drawer compartment contains fruit. Though in other arrangements, any combination of food, drinks, bait, dry goods, medicine, and garments may be stored in the various lid and drawer compartments, as needed.

[0091] The multiple storage assembly may be especially beneficial to users who attend picnics, because of the many consumable items commonly brought to the environments of such event. By segregating each type of item while still maintaining their needed temperatures, the items are enhanced. The assembly may also benefit users who engage in outdoor barbecuing, because of the many consumable items used in the environments of barbecuing. Construction workers, soldiers, and travelers may also benefit from the segregated compartments of the assembly.

[0092] All the features disclosed in this specification, including any accompanying abstract and drawings, may be replaced by alternative features serving the same, equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is one example only of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

[0093] It is noted that according to USA law 35 USC § 112 (1), all claims must be supported by sufficient disclosure in the present patent specification, and any material known to those skilled in the art need not be explicitly disclosed. However, 35 USC § 112 (6) requires that structures corresponding to functional limitations interpreted under 35 USC § 112 (6) must be explicitly disclosed in the patent specification. Moreover, the USPTO's Examination policy of initially treating and searching prior art under the broadest interpretation of a "mean for" claim limitation implies that the broadest initial search on 112(6) functional limitation would have to be conducted to support a legally valid Examination on that USPTO policy for broadest interpretation of "mean for" claims. Accordingly, the USPTO will have discovered a multiplicity of prior art documents including disclosure of specific structures and elements which are suitable to act as corresponding structures to satisfy all functional limitations in the below claims that are interpreted under 35 USC § 112 (6) when such corresponding structures are not explicitly disclosed in the foregoing patent specification. Therefore, for any invention element(s)/structure(s) corresponding to functional claim limitation(s), in the

below claims interpreted under 35 USC § 112 (6), which is/are not explicitly disclosed in the foregoing patent specification, yet do exist in the patent and/or non-patent documents found during the course of USPTO searching, Applicant(s) incorporate all such functionally corresponding structures and related enabling material herein by reference for the purpose of providing explicit structures that implement the functional means claimed. Applicant(s) request(s) that fact finders during any claims construction proceedings and/or examination of patent allowability properly identify and incorporate only the portions of each of these documents discovered during the broadest interpretation search of 35 USC § 112 (6) limitation, which exist in at least one of the patent and/or non-patent documents found during the course of normal USPTO searching and or supplied to the USPTO during prosecution. Applicant(s) also incorporate by reference the bibliographic citation information to identify all such documents comprising functionally corresponding structures and related enabling material as listed in any PTO Form-892 or likewise any information disclosure statements (IDS) entered into the present patent application by the USPTO or Applicant(s) or any 3rd parties. Applicant(s) also reserve its right to later amend the present application to explicitly include citations to such documents and/or explicitly include the functionally corresponding structures which were incorporate by reference above.

[0094] Thus, for any invention element(s)/structure(s) corresponding to functional claim limitation(s), in the below claims, that are interpreted under 35 USC § 112 (6), which is/are not explicitly disclosed in the foregoing patent specification, Applicant(s) have explicitly prescribed which documents and material to include the otherwise missing disclosure, and have prescribed exactly which portions of such patent and/or non-patent documents should be incorporated by such reference for the purpose of satisfying the disclosure requirements of 35 USC § 112 (6). Applicant(s) note that all the identified documents above which are incorporated by reference to satisfy 35 USC § 112 (6) necessarily have a filing and/or publication date prior to that of the instant application, and thus are valid prior documents to incorporated by reference in the instant application.

[0095] Having fully described at least one embodiment of the present invention, other equivalent or alternative methods of implementing a multiple storage assembly that is insulated and provides multiple lid accessible compartments and drawer accessible compartments for storing different types of items according to the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Various aspects of the invention have been described above by way of illustration, and the specific embodiments disclosed are not intended to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed. The particular implementation of the multiple storage assembly that is insulated and provides multiple lid accessible compartments and drawer accessible compartments for storing different types of items may vary depending upon the particular context or application. By way of example, and not limitation, the multiple storage assembly that is insulated and provides multiple lid accessible compartments and drawer accessible compartments for storing different types of items described in the foregoing were principally directed to an ice chest that segregates items by providing a plurality of lids to access lid compartments and a plurality of drawers to access drawer compartments, and restricting opening of the drawers through a protruding lock in the drawer and a

depression in a rail of the compartment implementations; however, similar techniques may instead be applied to any type of container or box that would benefit from multiple, segregated compartments, which implementations of the present invention are contemplated as within the scope of the present invention. The invention is thus to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the following claims. It is to be further understood that not all of the disclosed embodiments in the foregoing specification will necessarily satisfy or achieve each of the objects, advantages, or improvements described in the foregoing specification.

[0096] Claim elements and steps herein may have been numbered and/or lettered solely as an aid in readability and understanding. Any such numbering and lettering in itself is not intended to and should not be taken to indicate the ordering of elements and/or steps in the claims.

[0097] The corresponding structures, materials, acts, and equivalents of all means or step plus function elements in the claims below are intended to include any structure, material, or act for performing the function in combination with other claimed elements as specifically claimed.

[0098] The corresponding structures, materials, acts, and equivalents of all means or step plus function elements in the claims below are intended to include any structure, material, or act for performing the function in combination with other claimed elements as specifically claimed. The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, but is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

[0099] The Abstract is provided to comply with 37 C.F.R. Section 1.72(b) requiring an abstract that will allow the reader to ascertain the nature and gist of the technical disclosure. That is, the Abstract is provided merely to introduce certain concepts and not to identify any key or essential features of the claimed subject matter. It is submitted with the understanding that it will not be used to limit or interpret the scope or meaning of the claims.

[0100] The following claims are hereby incorporated into the detailed description, with each claim standing on its own as a separate embodiment.

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:

- a housing comprising a bottom wall, a first side wall, a second side wall, a first end wall, and a second end wall, said walls defined by an upper edge, said walls being arranged to form a cavity;
- at least one barrier being disposed to traverse said cavity, forming a plurality of lid compartments, said plurality of lid compartments comprising a rail, said rail having a depression;
- a plurality of lids, said plurality of lids being pivotally attached to said upper edge of said walls, said plurality of lids being configured to pivot between an open position that enables access to said plurality of lid

compartments, and a closed position that encloses said plurality of lid compartments,
whereby each lid enables access to a corresponding lid compartment;

a plurality of drawers comprising a lower surface, a continuous drawer sidewall, and a drawer compartment, said plurality of drawers being configured to be displaced to an open position that enables access to said plurality of drawer compartments, and a closed position that encloses said plurality of drawer compartments, said lower surface being configured to be displaced along said rail;

a protruding lock being configured to extend from said lower surface of said plurality of drawers, said protruding lock being configured to engage said depression of said rail,

whereby engagement between said protruding lock and said depression helps restrict said plurality of drawers in said closed position,

whereby disengagement between said protruding lock and said depression requires a force.

2. The system of claim 1, in which said housing comprises a cooler.

3. The system of claim 2, in which said first end wall of said housing comprises a drainage aperture.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein said housing is dimensioned about 38½ inches in length by 14½ inches in width by 16½ inches in height.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein said housing is substantially rectangular.

6. The system of claim 5, further comprising a thermally insulating interior wall, said thermally insulating interior wall being received within said cavity of said housing.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein said thermally insulating interior wall is disposed generally coplanar with said first side wall, said second side wall, said first end wall, and said second end wall.

8. The system of claim 7, in which said thermally insulating interior wall comprises at least one of the following: foam, polystyrene, and a nonconductive, porous material.

9. The system of claim 8, in which said plurality of lids comprises three lids.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said plurality of lid compartments are dimensioned about 12 inches in length by 12 inches in depth by 4 inches in height, and about 12 inches in length by 12 inches in depth by 16 inches in height.

11. The system of claim 10, in which said plurality of lids comprises at least one lid handle.

12. The system of claim 11, further comprising a handle portion configured to enable manipulation of said housing.

13. The system of claim 12, in which said handle portion comprises a U-shaped handle and a telescopic handle.

14. The system of claim 13, further comprising a mobile portion configured to enable mobility of said housing.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein said plurality of drawers are configured to be slidably displaced along the rail.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein said plurality of drawers comprises two drawers.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein said dimensions of said plurality of drawers comprises about 12 inches in length by 12 inches in width by 8 inches in height.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein said plurality of lid compartments and said plurality of drawer compartments are configured to contain at least one item.

19. A system comprising:

means for cooling;

means for accessing pivotable storage means;

means for accessing slidable storage means;

means for segregating deposits in said pivotable storage means, or said slidable storage means, or both; and

means for restricting access to said slidable storage means.

20. A system consisting of:

a housing comprising a bottom wall, a first side wall, a second side wall, a first end wall, and a second end wall, said walls defined by an upper edge, said walls being arranged to form a cavity;

a handle portion configured to enable manipulation of said housing, said handle portion comprising a U-shaped handle and a telescopic handle;

a mobile portion configured to enable mobility of said housing, said mobile portion comprising a pair of wheels defined by a diameter of about 4 inches;

a thermally insulating interior wall, said thermally insulating interior wall being received within said cavity, said thermally insulating interior wall being disposed generally coplanar with said first side wall, said second side wall, said first end wall, and said second end wall; at least one barrier being disposed to traverse said cavity, forming a plurality of lid compartments, said plurality of lid compartments comprising a rail, said rail having a depression;

a plurality of lids, said plurality of lids being pivotally attached to said upper edge of said walls, said plurality of lids being configured to pivot between an open position that enables access to said plurality of lid compartments, and a closed position that encloses said plurality of lid compartments,

whereby each lid enables access to a corresponding lid compartment;

a plurality of drawers comprising a lower surface, a continuous drawer sidewall, and a drawer compartment, said plurality of drawers being configured to be displaced to an open position that enables access to said plurality of drawer compartments, and a closed position that encloses said plurality of drawer compartments, said lower surface being configured to be displaced along said rail;

a protruding lock being configured to extend from said lower surface of said plurality of drawers, said protruding lock being configured to engage said depression of said rail,

whereby engagement between said protruding lock and said depression helps restrict said plurality of drawers in said closed position,

whereby disengagement between said protruding lock and said depression requires a force.

* * * * *