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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Kareesan**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2017/0143166 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 25, 2017**(54) **APPARATUS FOR HOLDING A UTENSIL**(52) **U.S. Cl.**(71) Applicant: **Nikila Kareesan**, Santa Rosa, CA (US)CPC ..... **A47K 1/09** (2013.01); **A47G 29/08**(72) Inventor: **Nikila Kareesan**, Santa Rosa, CA (US)(2013.01); **A47G 21/12** (2013.01); **A47G****21/14** (2013.01); **A47G 2400/022** (2013.01)(21) Appl. No.: **15/360,613**

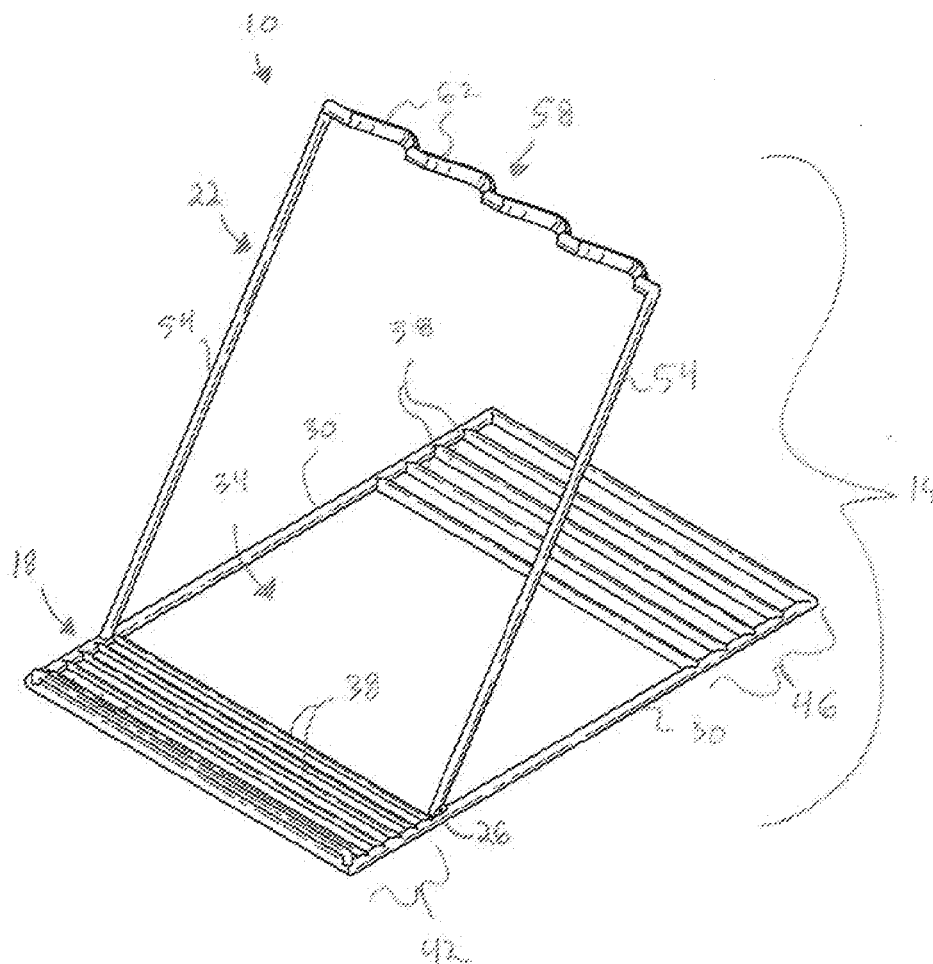
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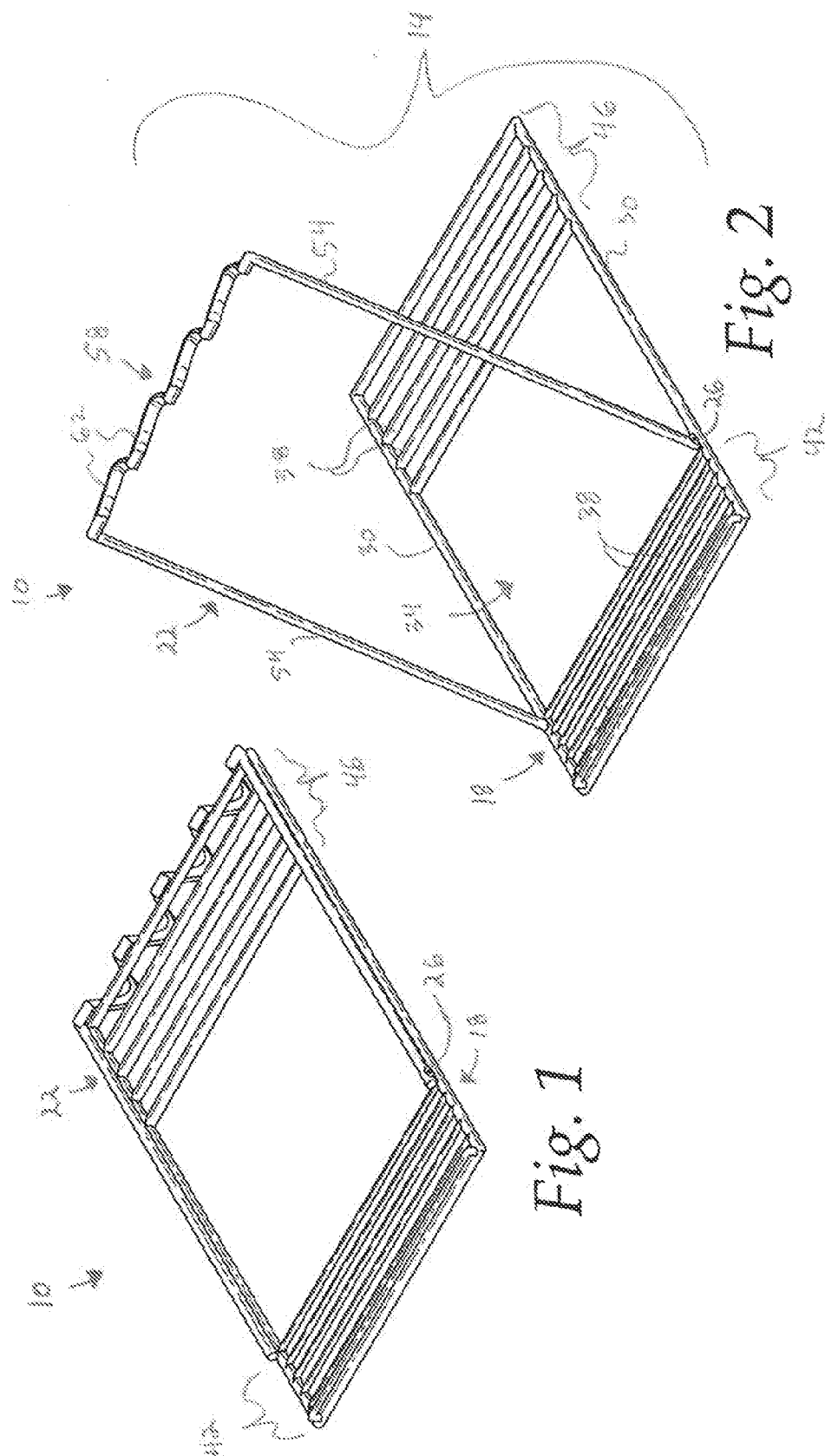
**ABSTRACT**(22) Filed: **Nov. 23, 2016****Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 62/259,777, filed on Nov. 25, 2015.

**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****A47K 1/09** (2006.01)**A47G 21/12** (2006.01)**A47G 21/14** (2006.01)**A47G 29/08** (2006.01)

In one embodiment an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil is disclosed having a frame. The frame defines a base member having a top surface and bottom surface. The bottom surface is configured to rest upon a support surface. The base member generally defines a plane. The frame further defines a holding member that is connected to the base member, and that is for holding a portion of an elongate utensil. The holding member has at least a deployed configuration wherein the holding member extends above the base member plane. In another embodiment, the holding member further has a stored configuration wherein the holding member substantially resides within the base member plane.





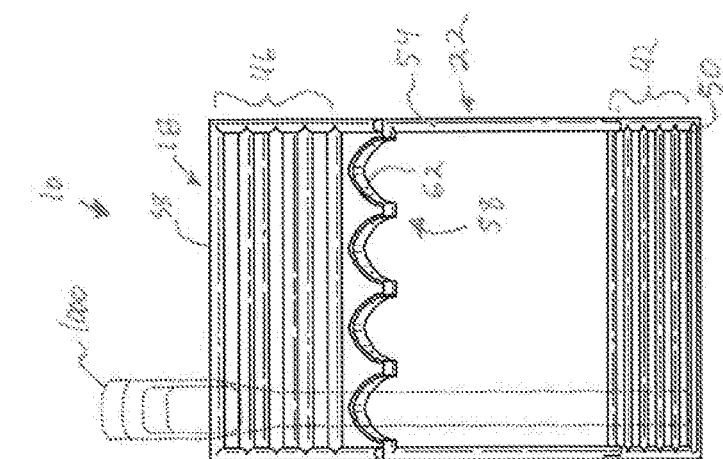


Fig. 5

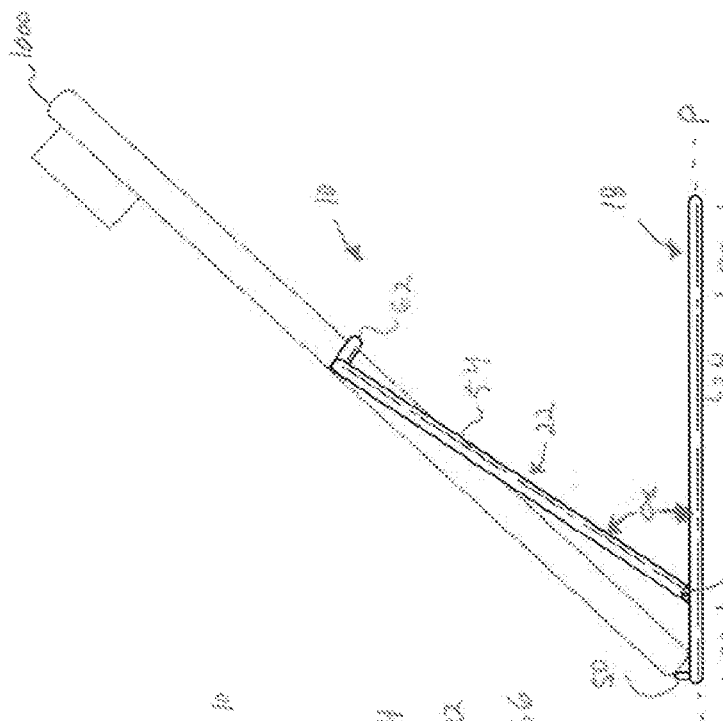


Fig. 4

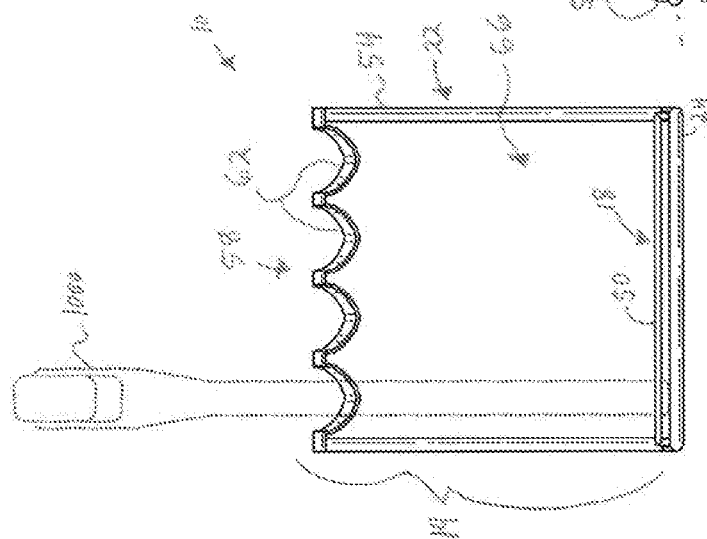


Fig. 3

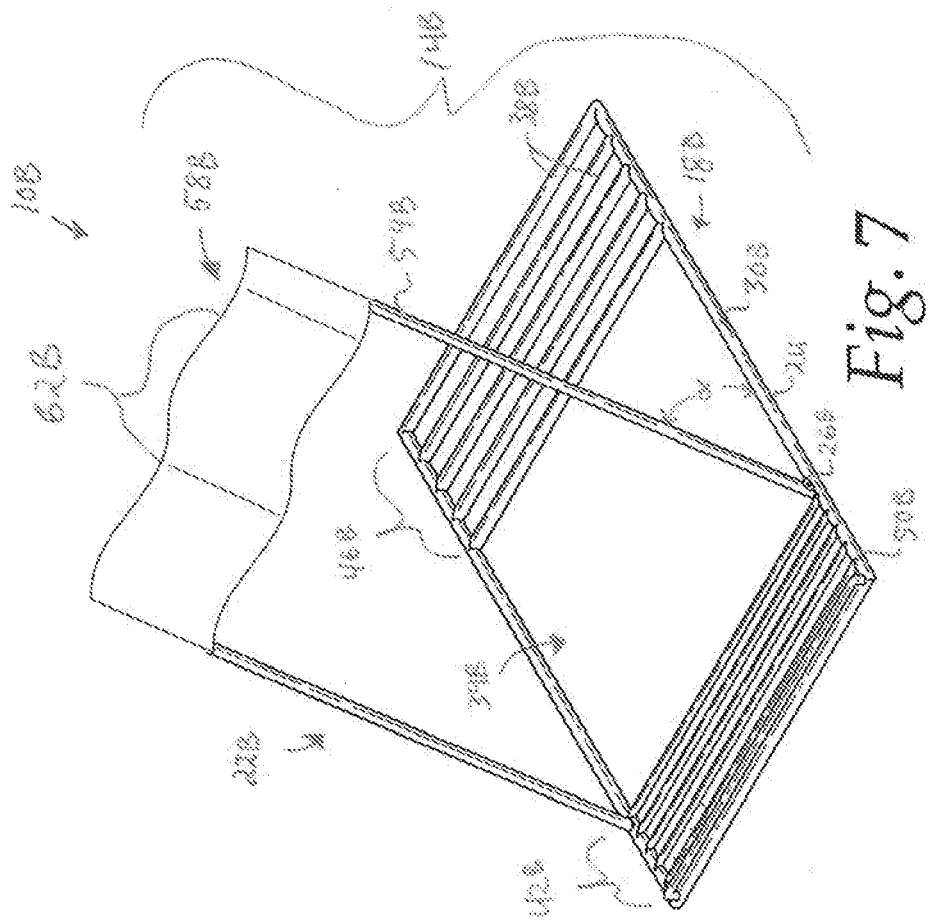


Fig. 7

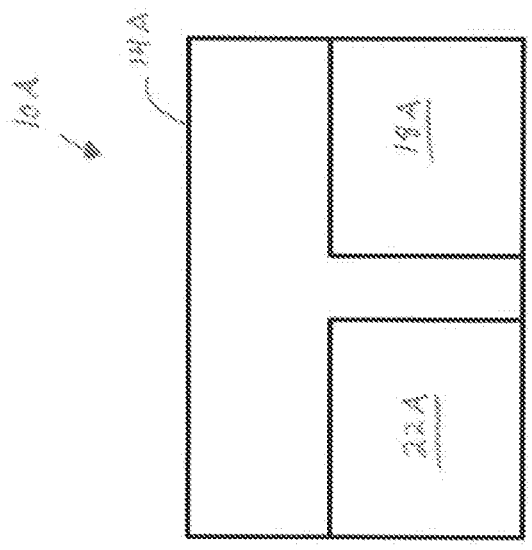


Fig. 6

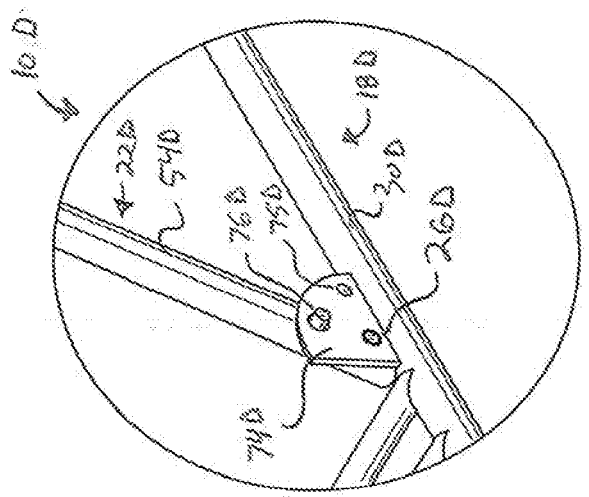


Fig. 8

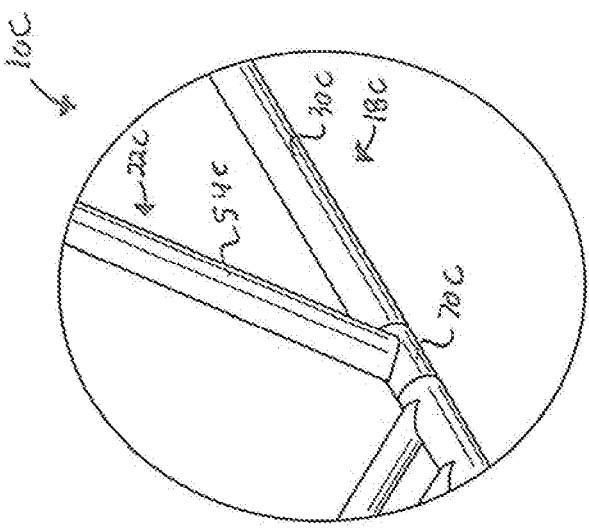


Fig. 9

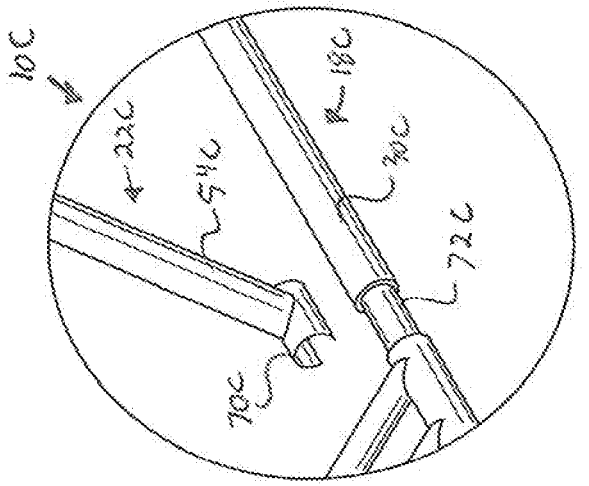


Fig. 10

## APPARATUS FOR HOLDING A UTENSIL

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

[0001] This application claims priority of U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 62/259,777, filed Nov. 25, 2015, which is incorporated here by reference in its entirety to provide continuity of disclosure, and applicant claims the benefit of that prior application.

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to an apparatus for holding one or more elongate utensils, and more particularly, an apparatus for hygienically holding one or more toothbrushes,

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A toothbrush holder or apparatus is employed to provide a location for storage of a toothbrush or other elongate utensils (toothpick holders, tongue scrappers, razors, personal care products, forks, spoons, knives, etc.). Such a toothbrush holder is especially of use to a user that is interested in storing a utensil that is wet, unclear with saliva, or otherwise coated in a non-fluent substance, that may make cause a mess (such as when the utensil contains an amount of toothpaste). In such a toothbrush holder, it is desirable to store the utensil until the water on the utensil has evaporated, or it is desirable to simply store the utensil in clean manner until it can be moved without causing a mess or leaving a residue.

[0004] A typical toothbrush holder has a body or frame within which the toothbrush can be removably stored. Typically, some portion of the toothbrush is received an aperture or slot so as to either hold or support the toothbrush in an upright manner, whereby any liquid, saliva, or water will drain from the brush or head of the toothbrush. Such a toothbrush holder may result in accumulation of water or undesirable substances within or around the frame. This may result in the accumulation of waste or bacteria within or around the frame, and/or on the toothbrush itself.

[0005] Some prior art toothbrush holders may further be bulky, relatively heavy and/or difficult clean or transport without creating a mess.

[0006] Toothbrush holders are disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,770,379; 5,480,027; 5,687,855; and 7,617,927; all of which are incorporated by reference in their entirety herein. Each of these patents discloses a toothbrush holder having a frame or body having a plurality of openings for receiving some portion of a toothbrush.

[0007] The Applicant has invented a novel structure for a toothbrush holder, wherein the holder includes advantageous features not heretofore taught or contemplated by the prior art.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is desirable to provide an apparatus for hygienic and convenient storage of an elongate utensil, such as a toothbrush. Such an apparatus will locate the utensil in manner that allows for clean and efficient drainage of the utensil when wet. The presently disclosed apparatus, and method of use thereof, satisfies one or more of these needs.

[0009] In one inventive form, an apparatus is provided for holding an elongate utensil. The apparatus has a frame that

defines a base member having a top surface and bottom surface. The bottom surface is configured to rest upon a support surface. The base member generally defines a plane. The frame further defines a holding member that is connected to the base member for holding a portion of an elongate utensils. The holding member has at least a deployed configuration wherein the holding member extends above the base member plane.

[0010] In another inventive form, an apparatus is provided for holding an elongate utensil. The apparatus has a frame that defines a base member having a top surface and bottom surface. The bottom surface is configured to rest upon a support surface. The base member generally defines a plane and has a pair of spaced apart side portions defining an internal aperture therebetween. The base member further has a front portion formed from a plurality of spaced apart ribs for permitting a fluent material to drain from the base member. The frame further defines a holding member connected to the base member proximal to the front portion for holding a portion of an elongate utensil. The holding member has two spaced apart arms connected by span having a plurality of concave regions. The holding member has at least a deployed configuration wherein the holding member extends above the base member plane.

[0011] In another inventive form, a method is provided for using an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil. The method has the steps of: (i) acquiring the apparatus as discussed in the preceding paragraph; (ii) locating the base member of the apparatus on a support surface; (iii) locating the base member front portion over a basin; (iv) placing the apparatus in the deployed configuration; (v) locating a first portion of an elongate utensil against one of the concave regions; (vi) and locating a second portion of the elongate utensil against the base member front portion.

[0012] Other objects, features, and advantages of the invention will become apparent from a review of the entire specification, including, the appended claims and drawings.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective view, taken from above, of a first embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil, and FIG. 1 shows the apparatus in a stored configuration;

[0014] FIG. 2 is another perspective view taken from above, of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1, however FIG. 2 shows the apparatus in a deployed configuration;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 2;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a side elevation view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 2;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 2;

[0018] FIG. 6 is a schematic view of another embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil;

[0019] FIG. 7 is a perspective view, taken from above, of another embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil;

[0020] FIG. 8 is a partial perspective view, taken from above, of another embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil;

[0021] FIG. 9 is another partial perspective view, taken from above, of the apparatus shown in FIG. 8; and

[0022] FIG. 10 is a partial perspective view, taken from above, of another embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0023] FIGS. 1-5 show a first embodiment of an apparatus for holding an elongate utensil or toothbrush holder 10. The apparatus 10 has a frame 14 defining a base member 18 and a utensil holding member or holding member 22. As will be explained in detail hereinafter, the frame 14 is configured such that a lower surface 24 of the base member 18 rests upon a support surface, such as a countertop or sink, while the holding member 22 extends above the base member 18 to hold or otherwise support a portion of an elongate utensil (e.g., toothbrush 1000 in FIG. 3, a dental floss holder, etc.).

[0024] Referring now to FIG. 1, in the illustrated first embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10, the holding member 22 is rotatably connected to the base member 18 by a hinge 26. The hinge 26 permits convenient storage of the holding member 22 generally within a plane P (FIG. 4) defined by the base member 18 in what is referred to herein as a stored configuration (as in FIG. 1). When the holding member 22 is rotated above the plane P (as in FIG. 2), then the toothbrush holder 10 is in a deployed configuration. The hinge 26 develops sufficient friction to maintain the holding member 22 in the deployed configuration. It will be understood that other hinges may be used, such as those requiring a stand or prop in order to support the holding member 22 in the deployed configuration. Furthermore, no hinge 26 would be provided if the base member 18 is provided with a slot or other receptacle for rigidly receiving the holding member 22. The base member 18 and the holding member 22 could further be unitarily formed, without any type of hinge, whereby the holding member 22 is immobile and has only a deployed configuration and no stored configuration.

[0025] In the first illustrated embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10 shown in FIGS. 1-5, the base member 18 and the holding member 22 are formed from a generally rigid material, such as plastic or metal, sufficient to support one or more elongate utensils. Preferably, the material has anti-mildew or anti-microbial properties such as a polymer containing silver particles, a copper, alloy, etc.

[0026] With reference to FIG. 2, the base member 18 is formed from a pair of spaced apart side bars or side portions 30. The side portions 30 define an internal aperture 34 generally within the center of the base member 18, which is positioned to reside beneath the holding member 22 when it is in the deployed configuration. The side portions 30 are connected by a plurality of spaced apart interior portions or ribs 38. The ribs 38 are located at a front portion 42 and a rear portion 46 of the base member 18, and define a plurality of spaces or apertures therebetween. It can be seen in FIGS. 2 and 5 that the holding member 22 is connected with the support member 18 proximal to, or at, the front portion 42 of the base member 18. It can further be seen that the rear portion 46 is larger than the front portion 42, such that the center of mass of the base member 18 is located rearward (in the direction toward the rear portion 46) of the front portion 42. The location of the center of mass allows the toothbrush holder 10 to be located over a sink or basin in a manner with the front portion 42 cantilevered over the basin to enhance

drainage and decrease time to evaporation of any fluids on the base member 18, as will be discussed in detail hereinafter.

[0027] Referring now to FIGS. 3 and 4, the base member 18 is further provided with a utensil stop or abutment member 50 that extends from an upper surface of the base member 18. The abutment member 50 serves to retain lower end of an elongate utensil, e.g. a toothbrush 1000, to prevent the utensil from slipping from the toothbrush holder 10. The inventor has found that it is preferable to locate the abutment member 50 over the ribs 38 of the front portion 42 such that any residue or fluid that may be present on the utensil may drain through the support member 18 into a basin or other receptacle. While the abutment member 50 is shown as being formed unitarily with the base member 18, it will be appreciated that such an abutment member 50 may alternatively be formed on, or extend from, a lower portion of the holding member 22. Still in other applications, the abutment member 50 may be omitted altogether, whereby the lower end of an elongate utensil may be retained between the ribs 38.

[0028] Referring next to FIGS. 2, 3, and 5, the holding portion 22 of the toothbrush holder 10 has the form of a pair of spaced apart arms 54 connected at a distal end by a back or span 58. The span 58 is further formed with a plurality of concave regions or slots 62 for supporting an upper end of a utensil (e.g., brush 1000). The concave regions define a generally arcuate surface against which a portion of a utensil may rest.

[0029] The arms 54 define an internal window or aperture 66 that may allow fluids on a utensil to fall directly onto a supporting surface, preventing substantial accumulation of fluids or unwanted residue on the toothbrush holder 10.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 4, it can be seen that the arms 54 of the holding member 22 connect with the base member 18 proximal to the front portion 42, and furthermore the arms 54 connect with the base member 18 at an angle of alpha, when viewed from the side with respect to plane P. The inventor has found that it is preferable to store a utensil at an interior angle alpha of between about 50 degrees and about 70 degrees, and more preferably at an angle alpha of about 60 degrees. The inventor has found that the preferred range of angles for alpha promotes efficient drainage of fluid that may be present on the utensil through the front portion 42 of the base member 18. Furthermore, any fluid that may fall down from the utensil within the holding portion 22 will fall through the apertures 66 and 34, respectively to prevent undesirable accumulation of fluids on the toothbrush holder 10. The inventor has further found that the range of angles alpha between about 50 degrees and about 70 degrees, and more preferably at an angle alpha of about 60 degrees, enhances the ability of the toothbrush holder 10 to cantilever out over a basin or sink by moving the center of mass of the toothbrush holder 10 away from its front portion 42.

[0031] In the first illustrated embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10, the span 58 is formed unitarily with the arms 54 from a rigid material, such as a polymer or metal. However it will be understood that the span 58 may be formed separately from the arms 54 and attached thereto via any conventional or special means such as by a fastener, heat or vibratory welding, adhesives, or friction fit, etc.

[0032] Another embodiment of a toothbrush holder 10A can be seen in diagrammatic form in FIG. 6. FIG. 6 illustrates a most basic embodiment of the inventive tooth-

brush holder 10A disclosed herein. Embodiment 10A is the same in all respects as the prior embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10, with a frame 14A defining a base member 18A and a holding member 22A. The base member 18A has a bottom surface and defines a plane. The holding member 22A has a deployed configuration wherein the holding member 22A is located above the plane. FIG. 6 illustrates that the most basic concept of the present invention is not limited to any particular illustrated geometry.

[0033] Another embodiment of a toothbrush holder 10B can be seen in FIG. 7. Embodiment 10B is the same in all respects as the first illustrated embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10, with a frame 14B defining a base member 18B and a holding member 22B connected by a hinge 26B. The base member 18B has a pair of space apart side members 30B defining an internal aperture 34B and connected by a plurality of ribs 38B at a front portion 42B and a rear portion 46B. A stop 50B extends from the front portion 42B. The holding member 22B has a pair of arms 54B connected by a span 58B. The embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10B differs from that of the embodiment 10 in that the embodiment 10B has a span 58B formed from a material that is more flexible than the rigid arms 54B. Furthermore the span 58B has a plurality of recessed regions 62B in the form of folds or creases formed in the material of the span 58B. The different geometry of the span 58B allows for a greater variation of the types of utensils that can be held by the toothbrush holder 10B.

[0034] Another embodiment of a toothbrush holder 10C can be seen in FIGS. 8 and 9. Embodiment 10C is the same in all respects as the first illustrated embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10, with a frame a base member 18C and a holding member 22C. The base member 18C has a side portion 30C and the holding member 22C has an arm 54C. However, the holding member 22C is not connected to the base member 18C by any type of hinge. Instead, the lower portion of the arm 54C has a concave clip portion 70C for being fixedly connected to a recess 72C within the base member 18C. FIG. 9 shows the clip portion 70C in mating contact with the recess 72C to position the holding member 22C in a deployed configuration.

[0035] Another embodiment of a toothbrush holder 10D can be seen in FIG. 10. Embodiment 10D is the same in all respects as the first illustrated embodiment of the toothbrush holder 10 with a frame a base member 18D and a holding member 22D. The base member 18D has a side portion 30D and the holding member 22D has an arm 54D. The holding member 22D is connected to the base member 18D by a hinge 26D. The base member 18D is provided with a locking member 740 having a plurality of apertures 750 for receiving a spring pin 760 on the lower portion of the arm 54D. FIG. 10 shows the spring pin 760 received within an aperture 750 such that the holding member 22D is maintained in a deployed configuration.

[0036] A typical method of use or mode of operation of the toothbrush holder 10 will now be discussed. The user of the toothbrush holder 10 will acquire the holder 10 and locate the base member 18 on a support surface such as a basin or sink. The user will then locate the base member 18 such that the front portion 42 will cantilever out over the basin. The user will place the holding member 22 in the deployed configuration if the optional hinge 26 is provided, by moving the arms 54 a degree alpha-away from the plane P defined by the base member 18. A detent or stop may be provided

between the holding member 22 and the base member 18 such that the holding member 22 cannot rotate past a predetermined angle alpha (such as 80 degrees). The user may then place a toothbrush 1000 or other utensil such that a first end of the utensil rests against a concave region 62 of the span 58, and a second end of the utensil rests against the abutment member 50 of the base member 18 to prevent the utensil from slipping from the toothbrush holder 10.

[0037] With the utensil held within the toothbrush holder 10, fluids or other materials may drain along the utensil and/or arms 54 to the front portion 42 of the base member 18 and into the basin. Substantially any fluids that drip directly onto the support surface will fall into the aperture 34, and will not accumulate on the frame 14. The frame 14 is constructed with a plurality of spaced apart components to speed the evaporation of fluids from the surfaces, and/or surrounding areas, of the frame 14. When the toothbrush holder 10 is no longer in use, it may be placed into the stored configuration for stowing away in a drawer, luggage or the like.

[0038] The typical method of using the toothbrush holder 10 is the same as the methods of using the toothbrush holder 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10D.

1. An apparatus for holding an elongate utensil, said apparatus comprising:

a frame defining

- i. a base member having a top surface and bottom surface, said bottom surface for resting upon a support surface, said base member generally defining a plane; and
- ii. a holding member connected to said base member for holding a portion of an elongate utensil, said holding member having at least a deployed configuration wherein said holding member extends above said base member plane.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said holding member further has a stored configuration wherein said holding member substantially resides within said base member plane.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said holding member is rotatably connected to said base member.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said holding member unitarily formed with said base member.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said holding member forms an interior angle with said base member between about 50 degrees and 70 degrees in said deployed configuration.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

an abutment member located on said base member for abutting a portion of a utensil when said holding member is in said deployed configuration.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said base member defines an internal aperture located beneath said support member when said holding member is in said deployed configuration.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said base member has a front portion and a distal, rear portion, said front portion defining at least one aperture for permitting a fluent material to drain from said base member.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said base member has a front portion and a distal rear portion, said holding member is connected to said base member at a location proximal to said front portion, and said base member has a center of mass located rearward of said location.

**10.** The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein said holding member has at least one concave region for receiving a portion of a utensil.

**11.** The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein said, holding member has the form of two spaced apart arms connected by span, said span having a plurality of concave regions.

**12.** The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein said arms are formed from a rigid material, and said span is formed from a flexible material relative to said arms.

**13.** The apparatus of claim **1** wherein said base member and said holding member are formed from an antimicrobial material.

**14.** An apparatus for holding an elongate utensil, said apparatus comprising:

a frame defining

- i. a base member having a top surface and bottom surface, said bottom surface for resting upon a support surface, said base member generally defining a plane, said base member having a pair of spaced apart side portions defining an internal aperture therebetween, said base member having a front por-

tion formed from a plurality of spaced apart ribs for permitting a fluent material to drain from said base member; and

- ii. a holding member connected to said base member proximal said front portion for holding a portion of an elongate utensil, said holding member having two spaced apart arms connected by span having a plurality of concave regions, said holding member having at least a deployed configuration wherein said holding member extends above said base member plane.

**15.** A method of using the apparatus of claim **14**, said method comprising the steps of:

- a. acquiring the apparatus of claim **14**;
- b. locating said base member of said apparatus on a support surface;
- c. locating said base member front portion over a basin;
- d. placing said apparatus in said deployed configuration;
- e. locating a first portion of a utensil against one of said concave regions; and
- f. locating a second portion of said utensil against said base member front portion.

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