CAR-RACING THEMED BEVERAGE HOLDER

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ABSTRACT
The present invention is an insulated beverage holder having the shape of a gasoline refueling can of the type used in automobile races. The beverage holder is designed to hold standard 12-ounce sized, and other sizes, of beverage containers and beverages therein. Said beverage holder has an upper portion having a spout, an insulated lower portion, a means for attaching said top portion to said rigid container. A vent in the handle portion allows air to move into and out of the insulated bottom portion when the rigid container is inserted into or removed from said insulated bottom portion.
FIGURE 1

- **(B) Sipping tip**
- **(A) Sipping spout**
- **(G) Vent handle**
- **(D) Insulation media surrounding rigid can holder (E)**
- **(C) Lanyard loop**
- **Removeable top**
- **10**
- **14**
- **16**
- **18**
- **12**
- **15**
- **17**
Optional Spout Cap with Drinking Tip and/or Insect Screen

- (B) Sipping Tip
- (I) Optional corrugation

- (A) Sipping spout that threads onto rigid can holder
- (C) Lanyard loop
- (E) Rigid can holder for holding beverage can
- Attachment threads (or detent as required)
- (F) Gasket or seal
- (G) Vent handle
- Additional fluid volume capacity with can supported

- (D) Outside insulation media

FIGURE 2
CAR-RACING THEMED BEVERAGE HOLDER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The subject application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Ser. No. 60/595,922 filed on Aug. 17, 2005, which is incorporated herein in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to beverage-cans holders. More specifically it relates to a standard 12-ounce beverage can and to hand-held insulated containers and embodiments thereof.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] People who attend public outdoor events, such as car races, horse races, baseball games and the like, often spend many hours continuously outdoors, sometimes sitting in hot air or direct sunlight, and other times in cooler settings. But even in settings that are perfectly comfortable, spectators of hours-long public sporting events will need to ingest fluids, i.e., water, either as water or in the forms of such common beverages as soft drink, beer and fruit juices that are packaged in metal cans, the most common sort of which is the standard 12-ounce, metal beverage container.

[0004] It is the case that the attendees or "fans" of many sporting events feel themselves to be participants within a culture or subculture of aficionados, many of whom enjoy expressing their enthusiasm in public and easily visible ways. For example, attendees at baseball games often wear hats or shirts having emblazoned thereon slogans or symbols that express the wearer's feelings or allegiances to a particular team or other type of participant in the sport. Or they carry placards or such things as large foam hands that, by their colors or designs, proclaim the fans specific interest in a particular team.

[0005] In some sporting events, such as racing, the specific outcome, i.e., who the winner will be, is of less interest than is the specific sport itself, in which case the fans' enthusiasm is announced to others around him or her by means of the like emblazoned T-shirts, coffee mugs and the like.

[0006] In cold weather, it is desirable to have warm fluids to drink, such as coffee, especially if it can be kept warm for extented weather periods of time. In hot weather, the opposite is the case. In either heat or cold, or even in comfortable settings, people often want their soft drinks or beer or other fluids to be cold or hot, and maintained at desired temperatures for sustained periods of time. To that end, there exist various types of beverage holders that are thermally insulated.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] It is an object of the present invention to provide methods and/or apparatus as defined in one or more of the appended claims and, as such, having the capability of accomplishing one or more of the following subsidiary claims.

[0008] One object of the present invention is to provide a beverage holder that is appropriate to the sports setting associated with motorcar racing.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide a beverage holder that is thermally insulated;

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to provide a beverage holder capable of holding inside itself a standard 12-ounce, 16-ounce or 24-ounce metal cans that holds soft drinks or beer;

[0011] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a beverage holder that can be manufactured in multiple sizes; and

[0012] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a beverage holder having an external shape that is representative of automobile racing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0013] The structure, operation, and advantages of the present invention will become further apparent upon consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying figures. The figures are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. Certain elements in some of the figures may be omitted, or illustrated not-to-scale, for illustrative clarity. The cross-sectional views may be in the form of "slices", or "near-sighted" cross-sectional views, omitting certain background lines which would otherwise be visible in a "true" cross-sectional view, for illustrative clarity.

[0014] The structure, operation, and advantages of the present preferred embodiment of the invention will become further apparent upon consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying FIGURES, wherein;

[0015] FIG. 1 is an orthogonal side view of the external design of the present invention; and

[0016] FIG. 2 is an exploded cross-section view of one embodiment of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 is an exploded cross-section view of a second embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] The present invention is designed to be used to hold beverages, either bulk liquid, or beverages contained in standard beverage can sizes, including but not limited to 12-ounce, 16-ounce and 24-ounce metal beverage cans, and to insulate said beverage to keep it warm or cold as needed.

[0019] The specific design of the present beverage-holder invention is inspired by fuel cans currently being used in motorcar racing, in particular those sponsored by well-known commercial entities (such as NASCAR and NASCAR BUSCH Series). That is, the beverage holder according to the present invention is intended to simulate in its external design the appearance of a large metal refueling can of the sort used to convey gasoline rapidly into a racing car during a pit stop.

[0020] Referring to FIG. 1 there is shown in orthogonal side view of the beverage holder 10 at the present invention, illustrating its fuel-filling-apparatus design of the main body 12, including a fuel pouring spout 14 which serves as a sipping tip for the beverage can contained therein (not shown), a handle 15, a removable top portion 16, and insulated bottom 17, and a loop 18 appropriate for attach-
ment to a lanyard (not shown) of a sort that can be worn around the neck or held in the hand or wrapped around a wrist. The handle 15 simulates the handle of an actual refueling can and also contains air vent therein (not shown) for allowing air to move into or out of the bottom portion 17 when a rigid holder 28 (shown in FIG. 2), holding a can 30 or fluids, is inserted into or removed from said bottom portion 17. Said handle 15 also provides for ease of holding of the invention during use.

Referring now to FIG. 2 there is shown in exploded cross-sectional view one embodiment of the present invention 20, comprising a top portion 22 having a spout 23, a bottom portion 24 with a vent handle portion 26 attached thereto or integral therewith, a rigid, removable beverage-can holder 28 with a beverage container 30 held therein. Also shown is a screw-type threaded portion 32 of the top portion 22, and the corresponding mating threads 34 on the beverage-can holder 28 can also be a snap fit in addition to thread fit. Support tabs 34 and 36 support the beverage container 30 within the rigid holder 28. A snap and/or detent (not shown) helps to seal the top of the can 30 to the top portion 22, and also pulls the container 30 snugly against the gasket 38 which provides a secure seal and holds the container snugly against the supporting tabs 34, 36. Sealing mechanism may also be in the form of molded lips, tabs or ridge, integral to the top portion 22, which provide direct sealing contact between top portion 22 and beverage container 30, as well as to the bottom portion 24.

Use of the invention consists of inserting a beverage container 30 into a removable holder 28, to which the top portion 22 is then screw attached or snapped, and inserting removable holder 28 with beverage container 30 therein, and said top portion attached thereto, into the insulated bottom portion or outer housing 24 having handle 26 attached thereto. The beverage container rests upon the support tabs 34, 36. The user then drinks the beverage container contents by way of the spout 23, which also serves to limit spillage in the event of an accident, and also allows straw insertion into the fluid contained therein, unless the spout is protected by an optional insect screen. Spout may also have a removable cap, seal or closeable drinking tip to close the opening and further prevent spillage 29.

The inventors intend, as suggested in FIG. 2 that, instead of inserting a 12-ounce or larger metal beverage container 30 into holder 28, that the holder itself could contain a beverage. That is, for example, holder 28 can be filled with a soft drink or beer and then attached to the top portion 22 and inserted into the insulated bottom portion 24.

One embodiment of the invention is intended to hold a standard 12-fluid-ounce beverage container, while other embodiments can be sized to hold as little as one fluid ounce (shot size) or as much as 1 to 8 quarts of liquid (beer pitcher size).

The inventors also envision an embodiment, as shown in FIG. 3 designed specifically to hold the standard 12-ounce container size can also be made to hold a 16-ounce or 24-ounce can. That is, tabs 3436 shown in FIG. 2 would not be present, and the overall dimensions would be smaller than is suggested by the embodiment portrayed in FIG. 2. Spout portion 23 can also be made of flexible material such as corrugated tube to allow the user to easily reposition spout portion 23.

Beverage holder 10 can be made from a variety of materials, but will most likely be made from injection or blow molded plastic or other materials such as paper, metal (steel, aluminum) etc. These primary construction materials can be used in combination with additional materials such as rubber, plastic, fabric, expanded foam, paper, glass or metal components as required by the design.

Although the invention has been shown and described with respect to a certain preferred embodiment or embodiments, certain equivalent alterations or modifications will occur to others skilled in the art upon the reading and understanding of this specification and the annexed drawings. In particular regard to the various functions performed by the above described components (assemblies, devices, circuits, etc.) the terms (including a reference to a “means”) used to describe such components are intended to correspond, unless otherwise indicated to any component which performs the specified function of the described component (i.e., that is functionally equivalent), even though not structurally equivalent to the disclosed structure which performs the function in the herein illustrated exemplary embodiments of the invention. In addition, while a particular feature of the invention may have been disclosed with respect to only one of several embodiments, such feature may be combined with one or more features of the other embodiments as may be desired and advantageous for any given or particular application.

What is claimed is:

1. An insulated beverage holder designed for use in holding beverage containers therein, said beverage holder comprising:

   A rigid container portion screw thread or snap attachable to a top portion having a spout;

   An insulated bottom portion into which said rigid container inserts;

   An overall shape similar to that of fuel cans used in the refueling of racing cars; and a handle portion having an air vent communicating between the outside air and the volume that is displaced when said rigid container is inserted into or removed from said insulated bottom portion.

2. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder accommodates metal beverage containers.

3. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder accommodates liquid beverages.

4. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder is insulated to allow beverages to be stored at either cold or warm temperatures for prolonged periods of time.

5. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder has provisions for attachment of a neck lanyard to the holder.

6. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may utilize an air vent in the handle to allow for venting of the liquid.

7. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may be constructed of various materials including but not limited to metal (aluminum, steel), plastic, glass, rubber, paper, expanded foam, fabric and components made of these materials as required by the design.

8. The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may exist in a variety of sizes from 1-ounce up to 8-quarts.
9) The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may utilize an elastomeric gasket or molded lips, ridges or tabs to seal the top of the beverage holder to the beverage container contained within.

10) The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may utilize an optional closure cap or sealable spout.

11) The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may incorporate an optional insect screen.

12) The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may or may not utilize support tabs to support the beverage container contained within, in order to accommodate beverage containers of various size.

13) The beverage holder of claim 1, wherein said beverage holder may utilize a flexible material for the drinking spout.

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