Dec. 30, 1952 R. B. ROTTAU 2,623,656

PICNIC SERVER

Filed Feb. 23, 1950 2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

Fig. 1

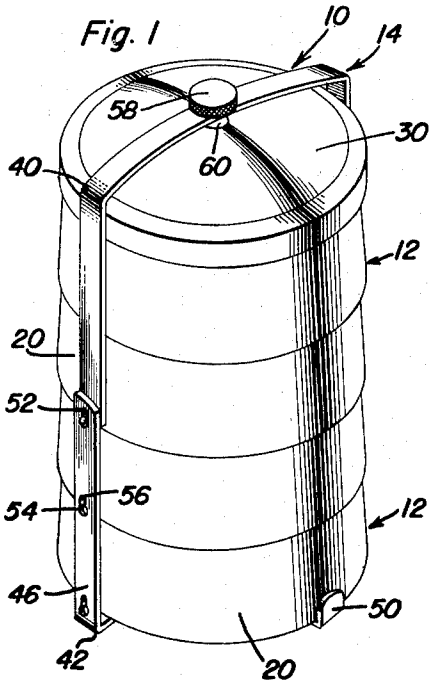


Fig. 2

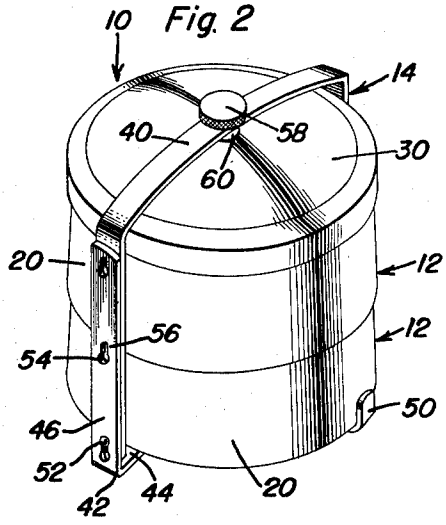
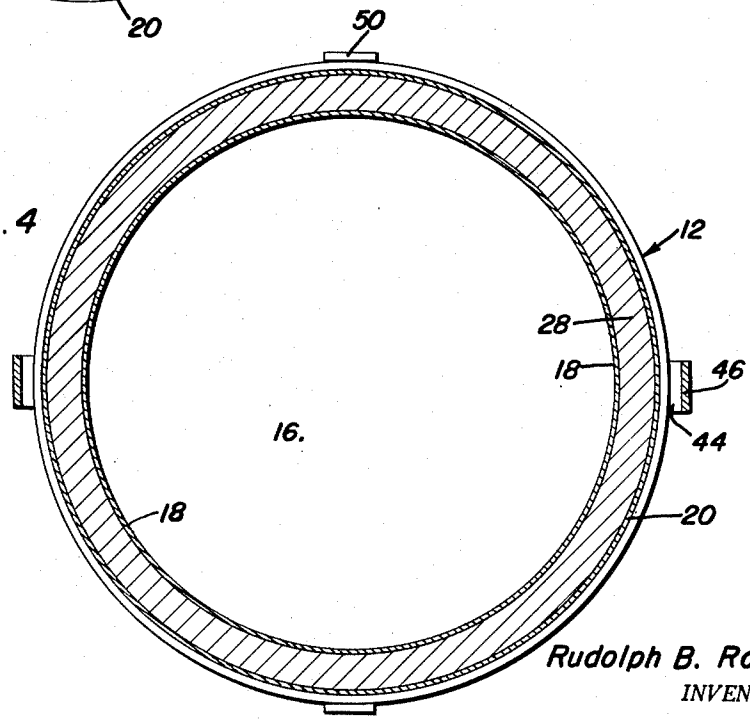


Fig. 4



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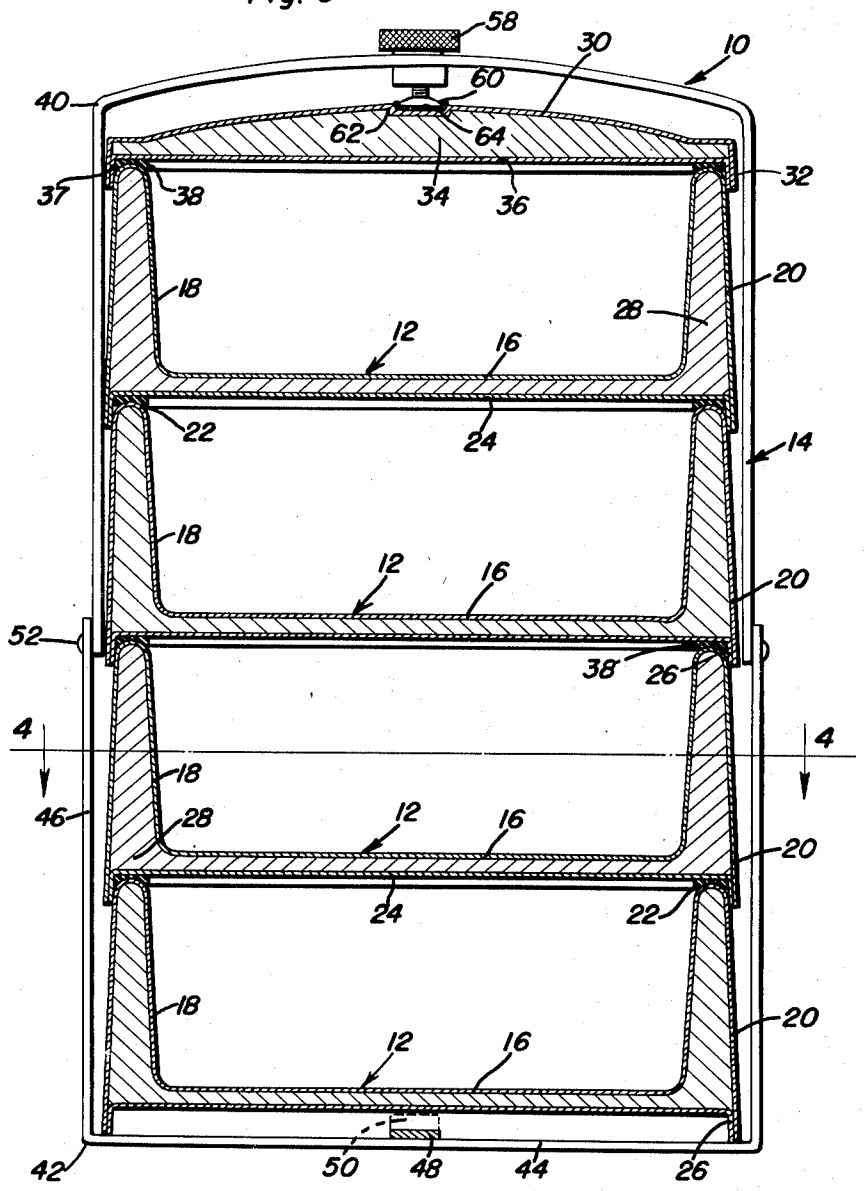
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Fig. 3



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PICNIC SERVER

Rudolph B. Rottau, Detroit, Mich.

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1 Claim. (Cl. 220—8)

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This invention comprises novel and useful improvements in food receptacles, and more particularly pertains to a device for storing comestibles during the transportation thereof.

An important object of this invention is to provide a device for storing comestibles while being transported in which a variable number of food containers can be firmly retained in superimposed relation so that the bottom of one container provides the cover for the container therebelow.

Another object of this invention is to provide a device in accordance with the foregoing object in which the containers will not be laterally displaced from each other during transportation thereof.

A further object of this invention is to provide a device, in accordance with the foregoing objects, in which the containers may also be used as serving dishes.

An important feature of this invention resides in the provision for containers having a downwardly depending supporting rim thereon, which rim overlies the sides of the container positioned below so as to prevent lateral displacement of the containers relative to each other.

Another feature of this invention resides in the provision for a pair of pivotally connected yokes which extend longitudinally of the axially aligned containers to retain the containers firmly together to prevent spilling of the contents therefrom.

A further feature of this invention resides in the provision for a pair of pivotally connected yokes, in accordance with the foregoing feature, in which the pivot point of the two yokes is adjustable relative to each other so that a variable number of containers may be retained between the yokes.

These, together with various ancillary objects and features, are attained by this device, a preferred embodiment of which has been illustrated, by way of example only, in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective elevational view of the picnic server;

Figure 2 is a perspective elevational view of the picnic server, some of the food containers having been removed and the yokes adjusted accordingly;

Figure 3 is a longitudinal sectional view of the picnic server taken substantially on the plane 4—4 of Figure 3; and

Figure 4 is a transverse sectional view of the picnic server taken substantially on the plane 4—4 of Figure 3.

Referring now more specifically to the accompanying drawings wherein like numerals designate similar parts throughout the various views, it can be seen that there is provided a picnic server indicated generally by the numeral 10 which consists of a plurality of food containers 12 which are retained in a superimposed arrangement by a carrying frame 14.

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Each of the containers 12 may conveniently be constructed with an inner dish portion including an inner bottom wall 16 and a preferably annular inner side wall 18 formed integral with said bottom wall. An annular outer wall 20 overlies the inner wall in laterally spaced relation thereto, the lower edge of the outer wall extending below the bottom 16 of the inner dish portion. It is intended that the outer wall 20 and the inner wall be formed integrally with each other, the upper edges of the walls being joined by the arcuate rim portion 22. As is readily apparent, the inner dish portion and outer wall may conveniently be extruded from a single sheet of material. An outer bottom wall 24 has an annular peripheral downwardly depending flange 26 which is secured as by welding or the like to the lower edge of the outer wall 20, the outer bottom wall 24 and the inner bottom wall 16 defining an insulating space therebetween. Any thermal insulation 28 may be interposed between the space defined between the inner dish portion and the outer wall 20 and bottom 24 of the containers 12. Alternatively, the containers may be molded of a suitable, preferably non-heat conducting material having the aforementioned configuration.

A cover consisting of an outer cover plate 30 having an arcuate contour and a peripheral, downwardly depending rim portion 32 formed integrally with the outer cover plate is provided for the upper container. It is also intended that the cover be thermally insulated as by insulation material 34 which is sealed from moisture and other deleterious matter by an inner cover plate 38 having a peripheral rim 37 which is welded or otherwise secured to the rim portion 32 of the outer cover plate.

For reasons which will later become apparent as the following description proceeds, an annular resilient ring 38 is detachably secured in any desired manner to the outer bottom walls 24 of the intermediate and upper containers 12, and to the inner cover plate 30, adjacent the outer edges thereof. Obviously, the lower container may be similarly provided with the resilient ring to permit interchangeability of the containers 12.

As is readily apparent from a consideration of

Figure 3, when the containers are mounted upon each other in superimposed relation, the arcuate portion 22 of the lower and intermediate containers engages the resilient ring 38 on the outer bottom wall 24 of the container above and provides a fluid seal therebetween, the resilient ring further serving to prevent rattling of the adjacent containers. Similarly, the resilient ring 38 of the cover engages the arcuate portion 22 of the upper container. The annular flange 26 of each of the containers 12 serves to laterally space the containers from a supporting surface, such as a table or the like, when the containers are being utilized as dishes, the flanges 26 of the containers and the rim 32 of the cover serving to prevent lateral displacement of the various parts relative to each other, when the containers and cover are superimposed on each other.

The carrying frame 14, provided for retaining the containers and cover firmly together, consists generally of upper and lower U-shaped yokes 40 and 42, respectively. As shown more clearly in Figure 3, the lower yoke 42 has a bottom member 44 which underlies the lower container, and upwardly extending side members 46. A transversely extending cross member 48 is secured to the bottom member 44, and has upwardly bent end portions 50 which overlie the lower edges of the outer side walls 20 to prevent lateral displacement of the containers relative to the lower yoke 42.

The upper yoke 40 is provided at its terminals with laterally extending headed pivot pins 52, which pins are receivable through longitudinally spaced bores 54 in the side members 46 of the lower yoke 42. The bores 54 are large enough to receive the heads of the pivot pins. In order to prevent the pivot pins from retracting from the bores, upwardly extending slots 56 are provided in the side members 46 and communicating with the bores 54, the slots being suitably dimensioned to receive the shank of the pivot pin 52 but being too narrow to permit the head thereof to slide through.

A thumb screw 58 is screw-threadedly received in the upper yoke 40 and has a bearing cup 60 rotatably mounted on its inner end. The outer cover plate 30 is suitably recessed as at 62 so as to receive the bearing cup 60 and its washer 64.

In operation, the containers 12 are positioned in superimposed relation within the lower yoke 42, and the upper yoke 40 pivotally connected thereto by the pivot pins 52 which are positioned in a pair of registering bores 54. Obviously, which pair of bores and slots are utilized depends on the number of stacked containers. The upper

yoke is then pivoted so that the thumb screw 58 lies axially of the containers. The thumb screw is then tightened against the outer cover plate 30 and the cover and containers thereby urged together. The upper portion of the upper yoke may serve as a handle for the picnic server, or, alternatively, a separate handle may be provided.

From the foregoing, it is thought that the operation and construction of the device will be readily understood, and further discussion is believed unnecessary. However, since numerous modifications will readily occur to those skilled in the art after a consideration of the foregoing specification and accompanying drawing, it is not intended to limit the invention to that shown and described, but all suitable modifications may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the appended claim.

Having described the invention, what is claimed as new is:

A picnic server comprising a plurality of stacked containers, a cover for the uppermost container having a central depression therein, and a carrier comprising a rectangular frame for the reception of the containers, said frame including substantially U-shaped upper and lower sections, the legs of one of said sections having keyhole slots spaced vertically therein a distance substantially corresponding to the height of each container, headed pins on the legs of the other section engageable selectively in the keyhole slots for pivotally, adjustably and detachably connecting the frame sections, a thumb screw-threadedly mounted in the bight portion of the upper frame section, and a bearing member on said screw engageable in the depression for clamping the cover and the stacked containers together in the frame and for centering said upper section over said cover.

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