United States Patent [19]

Chang

[11] **3,842,975**

[45] **Oct. 22, 1974**

[54] **COMBINATION FOOD CONTAINER AND EATING UTENSIL**

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[73] Assignee: **First Dynamics, Inc.,** New York, N.Y.

[22] Filed: **Sept. 21, 1972**

[21] Appl. No.: **290,975**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **206/72,** 206/223, 220/60 R, 229/43, 426/115

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 1/34,** B65d 43/04

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 206/4, 47 R, 56 AA, 72, 206/DIG. 24, DIG. 31, DIG. 32; 220/60 R; 229/1.5 C, 2.5, 5.5, 43; 426/115

[56] **References Cited**

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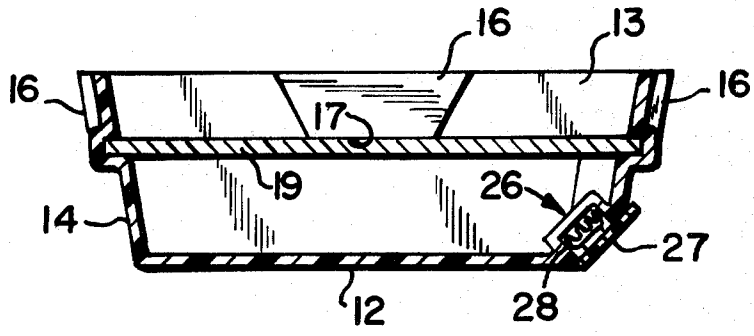
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Assistant Examiner—Steven E. Lipman
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Frank Ledermann

[57] **ABSTRACT**

The upper portion of the surrounding wall of the container has a plurality of spaced inwardly extending depressions whose lowermost edges all lie in a common plane parallel with the container bottom wall. Spaced a short distance below said plane, the surrounding wall has a continuous inwardly extending shelf whence a series of spaced grooves are provided between said shelf and said lowermost edges of the depressions. A snap-in cover is dimensioned to have its edges register frictionally in said grooves. At least one corner of the shelf is widened inward to form a triangular platform. The corresponding corner of the cover is cut away a distance less than the inwardly extending dimension of the platform so that the cut-away edge lies on the platform. Thus one's finger may engage said cut-away edge to lift it clear to expose the container contents. A utensil-receiving recess is provided in a container wall portion and is sealed with a tear strip. The corresponding corner of the cover may, instead of being cut away as stated, have a score line positioned close to and inward from the platform edge.

4 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures



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FIG.1

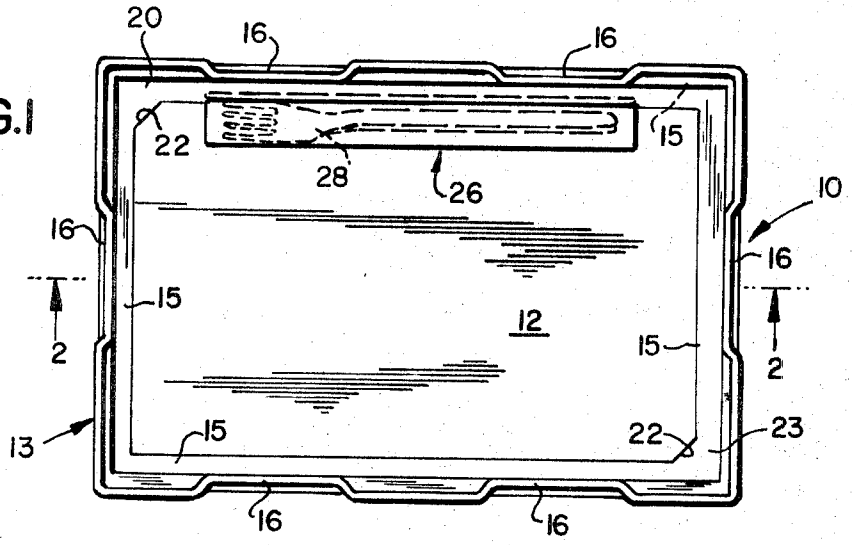


FIG.2

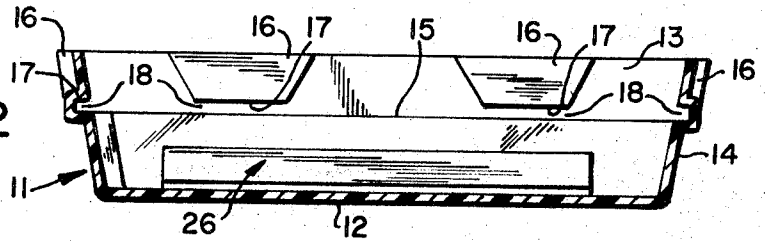


FIG.6

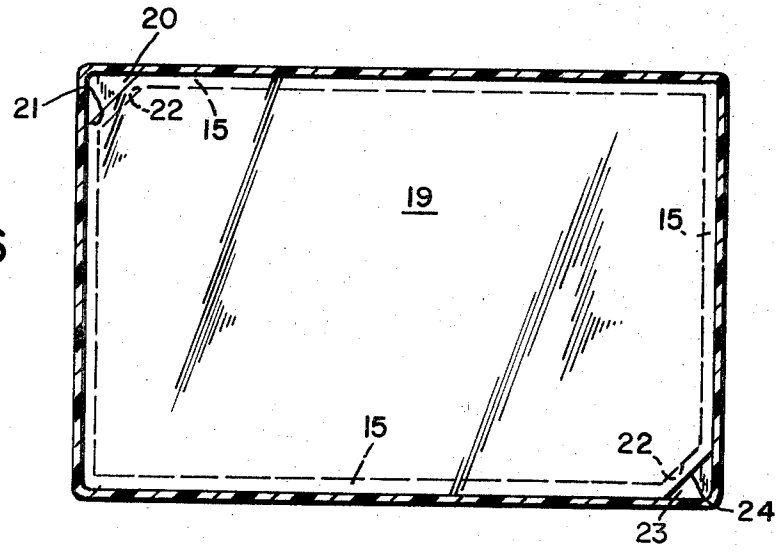
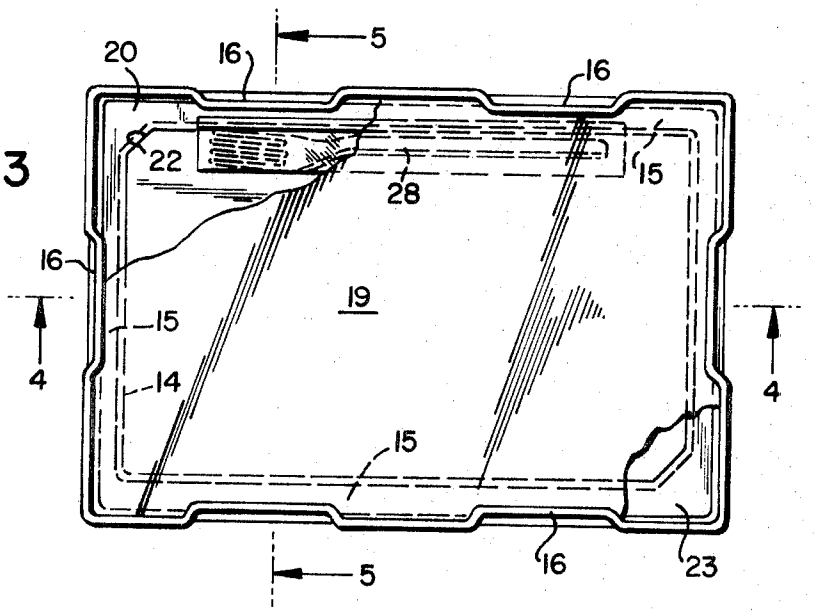


FIG.3



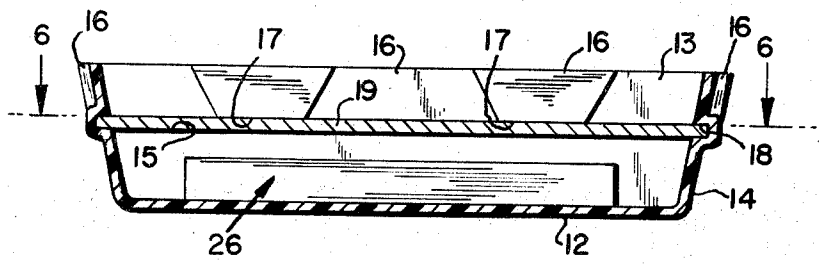


FIG.4

FIG.5

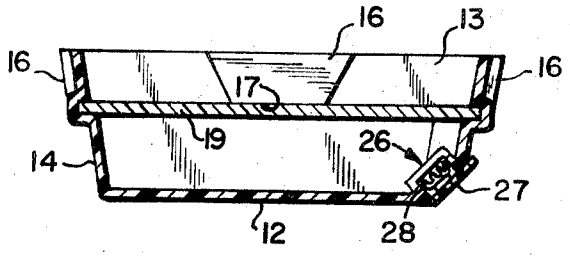
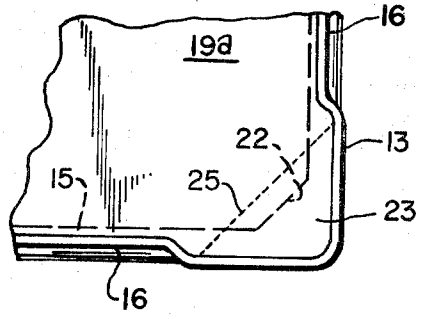


FIG.7



COMBINATION FOOD CONTAINER AND EATING UTENSIL

Referring briefly to the drawing, FIG. 1 is a top plan view of the container body with the cover omitted.

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken on the line 2—2 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the container with the cover in place and parts thereof cut away.

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken on the line 4—4 of FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken on the line 5—5 of FIG. 3.

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken on the line 6—6 of FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary top plan view of the container with a modified form of cover in place.

Referring in detail to the drawing, the numeral **10** designates the substantially rectangular container body whose surrounding wall **11** tapers somewhat toward its bottom wall **12.** The wall **11** consists of an upper or rim portion **13** and a lower portion **14;** these two portions are divided by an inwardly extending endless shelf **15,** which is so positioned that both wall portions **13** and **14** have substantially the same vertical dimensions. In other words, the shelf **15** lies in a plane substantially intermediate the planes of the container rim and the upper surface of the bottom wall **12.**

A plurality of spaced inwardly extending depressions **16** are provided in the upper wall portion **13,** with their straight-lined lowermost edges **17** all lying in a common plane spaced a short distance above and parallel with the shelf **15.** Thus the edges **17** provide, in combination with the shelf **15,** a series of spaced grooves **18,** one of which is shown in each of the shorter end walls and two of which are shown in the longer side walls.

A rectangular flexible snap-in cover **19** is so dimensioned that its edges are frictionally registrable in the grooves **18** and it is thus releasably locked in a position wherein it seals the container contents, not shown, resting on the bottom wall. Preferably both the container **10** and the cover **19** are formed of a suitable plastic material.

To facilitate removal of the cover to expose the contents, at least one corner of the shelf **15** widened to form a preferably triangular inward extension or platform **20.** So that one's finger tip may engage a corresponding corner portion of the cover to start removal of the cover, the cover corner is cut away along a line **21,** FIG. **6,** which is shown parallel with the platform **20** inner edge **22,** with the edge **21** positioned on the platform. Thus one's finger may touch the platform and the corresponding edge **21** of the cover and by pressure against that cover edge the removal of the cover may be begun, as is obvious.

For practical purposes it is preferable that a second corner platform **23** be provided in the shelf **15** diagonally opposite the platform **20** and that the corresponding corner of the cover be cut away along the line **24.**

FIG. 7 illustrates a modified construction of the cover **19***a*, wherein instead of having a cut-away edge such as the edges **21, 24,** FIG. **6,** which rest on the platforms **20, 23,** respectively, the corner of the cover is provided with a severance or score line **25** which is shown parallel with and spaced inward from the platform edge **22.** As the first step in removal of the cover, therefore, one's finger tip is pressed downward against the line **25** or close to it to sever the main body of the cover along the line **25** and thus begin its removal.

To add to the utility of the instant container, an inwardly extending elongated recess **26** is depressed into the lower wall portion **12** of the container, in which an eating utensil or implement for extracting the contents nests and is sealed by a tear strip **27.** As one example of such an implement, a fork **28** is shown contained within the recess.

By positioning the shelf **15** as mentioned, a substantially deep open top of the container is provided, that is, the part of the container surrounded by the upper wall portion **13.** This permits ready grasping of the filled container between one's thumb engaging one side of the wall portion **13** and one's other fingers grasping the other side thereof. Another obvious advantage of the deep open top taken together with the downwardly tapering surrounding wall is that a plurality of filled containers may readily be stacked in a vertical pile and thus be space-saving.

What is claimed is as follows:

1. A food container substantially rectangular in outline including a surrounding wall and a bottom wall, said surrounding wall tapering toward said bottom wall and having an endless inwardly extending shelf lying in a plane parallel with both the perimeter of said surrounding wall and said bottom wall and positioned substantially equidistantly between said perimeter and said bottom wall, the portion of the surrounding wall above said shelf having in the four sides thereof spaced inwardly extending depressions the lowermost edges of which lie in a common plane parallel with and spaced a short distance above said shelf whereby said lowermost edges and said shelf provide a series of spaced narrow grooves, a snap-in cover of flexible material having a thickness substantially equal to the distance between said shelf and said edges and dimensioned to have its four side edges register frictionally in said grooves, said shelf having one of the four corner portions thereof widened inward to form a platform on which a corresponding corner portion of said cover rests when the said cover edges register in said grooves as aforesaid, said portion of said surrounding wall above said cover providing a finger grip for grasping said container.

2. A food container according to claim **1,** said corresponding corner portion of said cover having the outer portion thereof cut away along a line positioned on said widened platform.

3. A food container according to claim **1,** said corresponding corner portion of said cover having a score line positioned close to but spaced inward from an inwardly extending edge of said widened platform.

4. A food container according to claim **1,** said inwardly extending depressions each covering an area extending between said lowermost edges and said perimeter.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,842,975 Dated October 22, 1974

Inventor(s) Henry M. Chang

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 2, line 50, after "container" insert -- and a sealed inwardly extending enlongated recess in a side wall portion of the container between said shelf and said bottom wall, said recess having an eating utensil registering therein --.

Signed and sealed this 31st day of December 1974.

(SEAL)
Attest:

McCOY M. GIBSON JR.
Attesting Officer

C. MARSHALL DANN
Commissioner of Patents

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