United States Patent [19]

Alpher

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[54] **GAME SUPPORT TRAY**

[76] Inventor: **Elliott J. Alpher,** 2201 Virginia Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20037

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/136 A;** 46/32; 108/23; 108/25; 273/136 K

[51] **Int. Cl.²** **A63F 9/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/136 A, 136 Z, 148 R, 273/148 A, 136 K; 46/32; 108/23, 25, 144; 312/223

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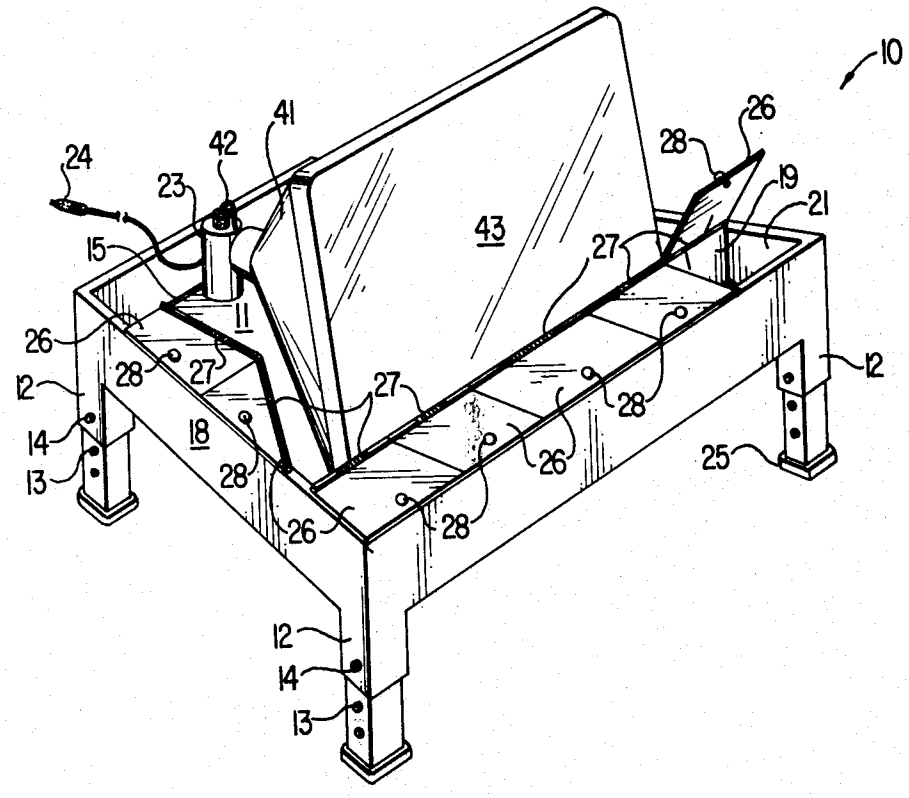
Primary Examiner—Anton O. Oechsle

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Frederick L. Bergert

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A game support tray adapted for supporting a game upon the lap of a passenger in an automobile is disclosed. The tray includes an electrical receptacle for use with games of an electrical nature, together with an adapter for connecting the receptacle to the electrical power source of an automobile cigarette lighter. Compartments are provided for storage of various game implements, and the tray legs are collapsible to allow the height of the tray to be adjusted.

3 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



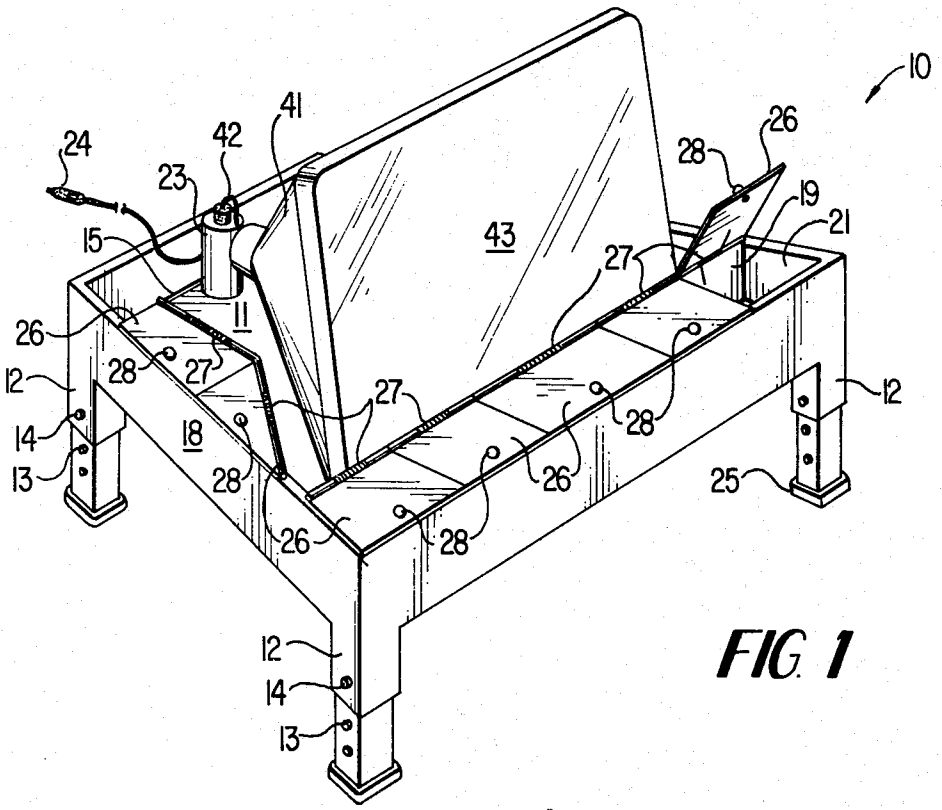

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FIG. 1

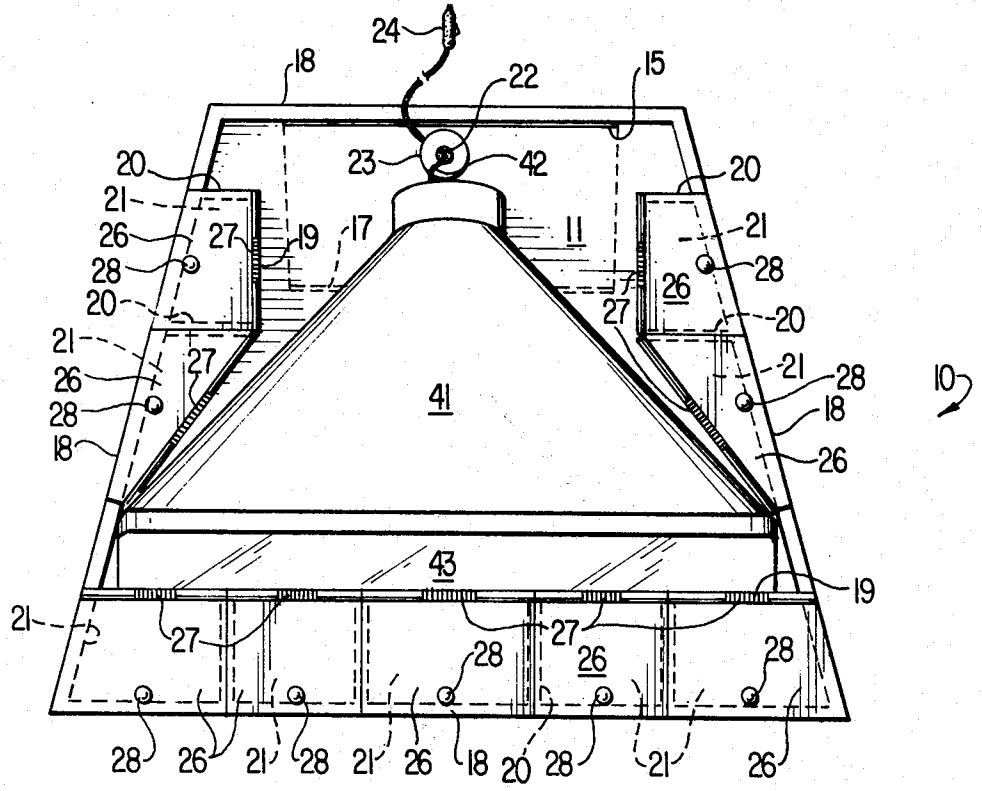

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FIG. 2

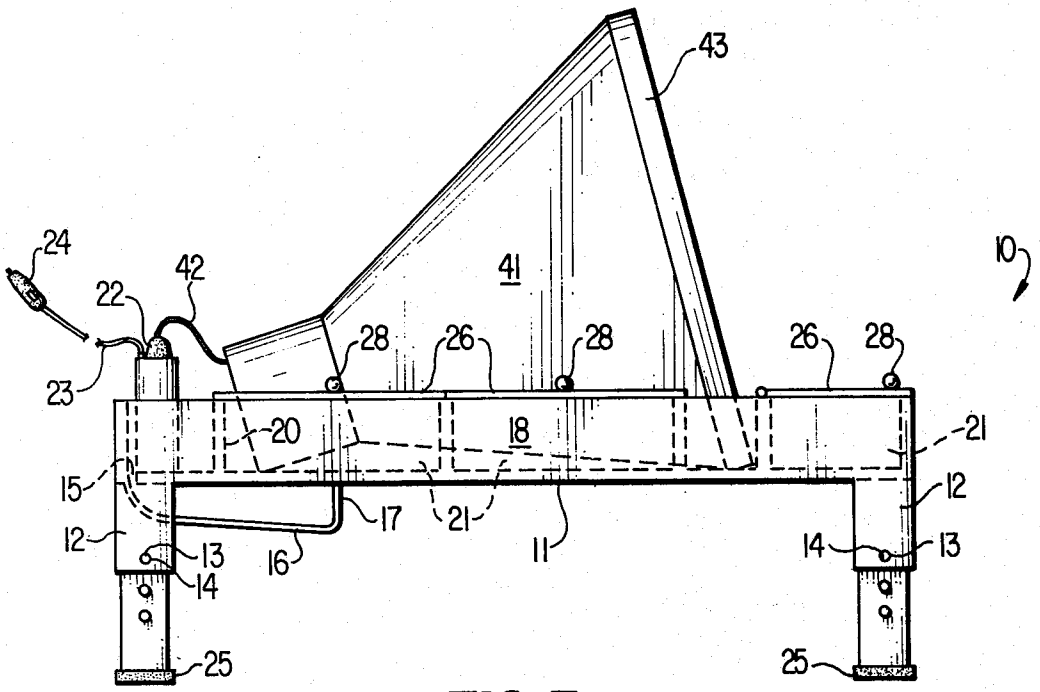

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FIG. 3

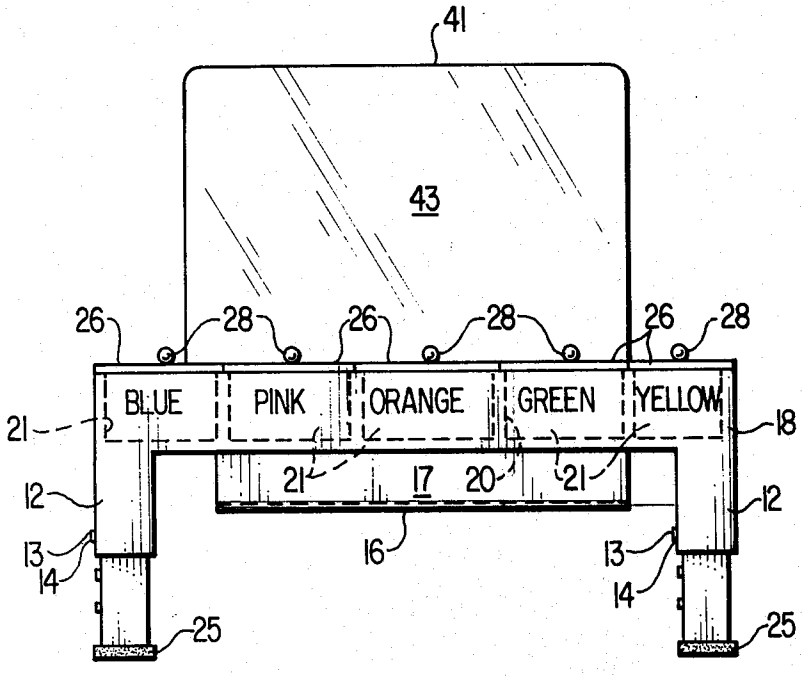

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FIG. 4

GAME SUPPORT TRAY

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is concerned with a game support tray. More particularly, the present invention is concerned with a game support tray which is well suited for use within an automobile or other relatively confined space, and which provides a sturdy structure for supporting a game upon the lap of a child or other person while riding in an automobile.

There are presently available a wide variety of games and other amusement and instructive devices which could advantageously be utilized to amuse children or other persons while riding in an automobile, autotrain, airplane, boat or the like, particularly where a long trip is involved. There has not, however, heretofore been available a suitable support tray which would make such forms of entertainment easily accessible to passengers of automobiles or other vehicles. Furthermore, in the case where the game or other device is of an electrical nature, there has not been available a convenient means for connecting the game to a source of electrical power.

By the present invention, there is provided a game support tray which is so constructed as to provide a convenient support structure for holding upon the lap of an individual passenger a game or other similar form of entertainment. The tray is especially designed for use in confined spaces and to allow convenient access to the various game implements, separating them and providing safe storage in the event of a sudden stop or sharp turn of the vehicle. Suitable equipment is also provided for connecting games of an electrical nature, such as those carrying an electric light bulb within their interior, to a source of electrical power.

The game support tray of the present invention includes a base member, preferably in the shape of a trapezoid, with a collapsible leg at each corner to allow adjustment of the height of the tray. An electrical receptacle is mounted on the base and provided with means for electrically connecting the receptacle to the electrical power source of an automobile cigarette lighter. Additional features of the present game support tray include a series of walled compartments having spring closure means at the top, the compartments being available for storage of pegs or other implements employed with the particular game being played. Also provided is a slot within the tray for storage of various materials in sheet form which may be used with a particular game.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THHE DRAWINGS

The features of the game support tray of the present invention will be more fully understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the game support tray of the present invention, shown with a game mounted for use upon the tray;

FIG. 2 is a plan view of the game support tray shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the game support tray shown in FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a front elevational view of the game support tray shown in FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the embodiment of the game support tray of the present invention as shown in FIGS. 1 through 4, apparatus 10 is provided, including a base 11 having a planar surface in the form of a trapezoid as viewed from above, with collapsible legs 12 located at the four corners of the base 11. Shown in position upon the base 11 is an electrical game 41 having electric cord 42 and a screen 43 through which passes light from an interiorly located light bulb (not shown). The base 11 and legs 12 may be formed of wood, plastic, metal or other suitable material. The legs 12 are attached to the lower surface of the base 11 by brackets or other suitable means. The collapsible feature of the legs 12 may be provided in any known manner, such as by means of a series of biased buttons 13 secured along the length of the lower portion of the legs, which buttons 13 mate with a corresponding hole 14 in the upper portion of each leg 12. A foot member 25, of rubber or other suitable material, is mounted on the lower portion of each leg 12.

A slot 15 is located in the base 11, said slot 15 being adjacent to the rear edge of the base 11 and extending parallel thereto. The slot 15 is of a size sufficient to allow the storage and removal of sheet materials which may be employed in playing a particular game. A curved plate 16, of metal, plastic or other suitable material, is attached to the outer edge of the slot 15 and extends beneath the base 11. The plate 16 is attached at its lower end to a vertical end piece 17 which, in turn, is attached to the under side of the base 11. The end piece 17 serves to close off the end of the area formed by the plate 16 for storage of the previously mentioned sheet materials.

The base 11 is provided with side walls 18 which extend upwardly from the four edges of the base 11. Inner walls 19 are also attached to the upper portion of the base 11 and, together with the side walls 18 and transverse walls 20, there are formed a series of walled compartments 21 for storage of pegs or other game implements. Each of the compartments 21 is provided with a cover 26 and a spring 27, with the cover 26 and spring 27 being connected in a conventional manner so that the cover 26 is biased in the closed position. A small knob 28 is provided on the upper surface of each cover 26 to allow the person using the apparatus to open and close each of the compartments 21. The compartments 21 may be lined with felt or other material to provide a suitable surface which is comfortable to the touch. Preferably such material will be somewhat resilient to prevent the game implements from bouncing around and creating noise, a situation which would be distracting to the driver and others occupying the automobile or other vehicle.

An electrical receptacle 22 is attached to the base 11, in combination with a step-up transformer 23, with the receptacle 22 being connected by suitable electrical wiring to an adapter 24 for connection to the cigarette lighter of an automobile. The adapter 24 for the cigarette lighter may be any of various suitable devices, such as that described in U.S. Pat. No. 2,630,517 to Hiscar.

One particular game which is well suited for use with the game support tray of the present invention is the game known as Lite-Brite, the trademark of Hasbro Industries. Other suitable games having electrical lightbulb means located within the interior of the game ap-

paratus include games such as those described in U.S. Pat. No. 2,575,269 to Hall and U.S. Pat. No. 3,778,063 to Strand.

When the support tray apparatus of the present invention is employed with a game such as Lite-Brite, each of the various peg storage compartments may be labeled with the name of a particular color, as shown in FIG. **4**, so that all pegs of a certain color may be stored in the same compartment.

In the use of the game support tray apparatus of the present invention, the game **41** such as Lite-Brite is positioned upon the base **11** and the electrical plug of the game is plugged into the receptacle **22**. Blank sheets may be stored in the slot **15** and removed therefrom for attachment to the outer surface of the game playing board, while the pegs are stored in the compartments **21** for use in arranging the desired pattern upon the screen of the Lite-Brite game apparatus. By means of the collapsible legs **12**, the tray may be positioned at a height which is comfortable and which provides easy access to the game implements. The trapezoidal shape of the tray provides a large tray area immediately adjacent the person playing the game, while presenting a streamlined configuration which is advantageous for use in an automobile or other confined space.

From the foregoing description, it is apparent that the game support tray of the present invention provides useful apparatus for supporting any of various electric or other games, to allow the game to be played comfortably by a person while riding in an automobile. It should be understood that the present game support tray is not restricted to use with electric games, as any game of relatively small size which is adapted to be supported upon a flat surface may be advantageously positioned upon the tray to provide support while the game is being played. Also, while the support tray of the present invention has been found to be particularly well suited for use in an automobile, it should be understood that the game support tray may be utilized in any environment in which it is desirable to provide a flat tray to support a game and to allow easy access to the various compartments of the game.

It is thought that the invention and many of its attendant advantages will be understood from the foregoing description, and it will be apparent that various changes may be made in the form, construction and arrangement of the parts without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention or sacrificing all of its material advantages, the forms hereinbefore described being merely preferred embodiments thereof.

It is claimed:

1. A game support tray comprising: a base member; a plurality of walled compartments having spring closure means at the top, the compartments being positioned around the outer portion of the upper surface of said base member; said base member being formed in the shape of a trapezoid having two parallel sides, one of which is longer than the other, and said walled compartments being positioned along said longer parallel side and the two sides adjacent said longer side, a plurality of collapsible leg members attached to the lower portion of said base member; an electrical receptacle mounted on said base member and adapted to receive the electrical plug of a game carried by said tray; and means for electrically connecting said receptacle to the electrical power source of an automobile cigarette lighter.

2. The game support tray of claim **1**, wherein said electrical receptacle is electrically connected to a step-up transformer mounted on said base member.

3. The game support tray of claim **1**, further including a slot in said base member, the mouth of said slot being located parallel to and adjacent the shorter of said two parallel sides, said slot having attached thereto a curved plate which extends beneath said base member, said slot and attached plate being sufficiently large to hold game materials in sheet form.

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