Nov. 28, 1967 W. R. ROBINSON 3,354,515

ICE CREAM CONTAINER STABILIZING CLAMP

Filed July 26, 1965

FIG. 1

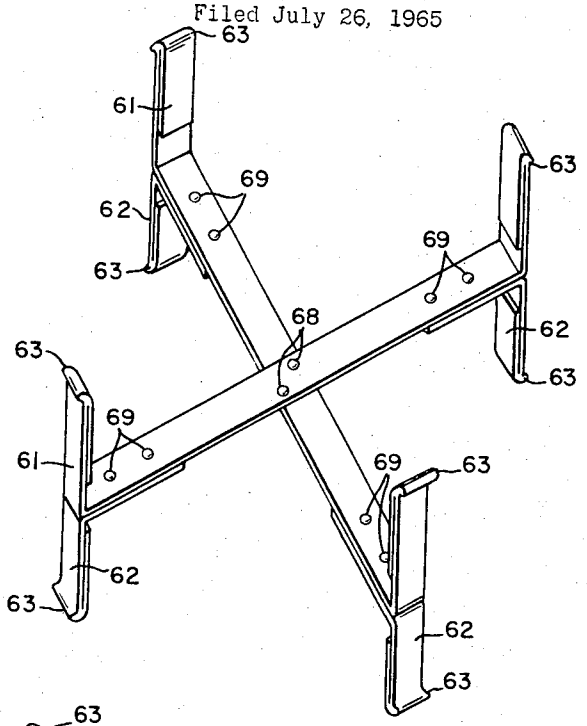


FIG. 2

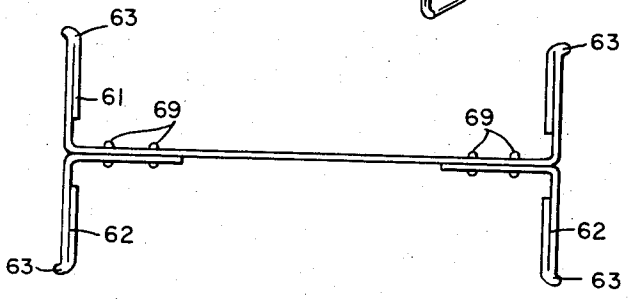
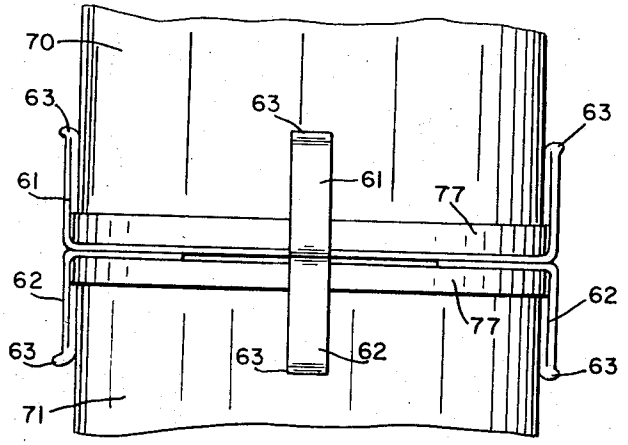


FIG. 3



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ICE CREAM CONTAINER STABILIZING CLAMP

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1 Claim. (Cl. 24—81)

The clamping device for clampingly holding two ice cream containers together in a vertically stacked condition to prevent relative movement of the upper container during a scooping operation having a pair of interconnected flat arm members provided with resiliently flexible fingers on their end portions which extend upwardly and downwardly so as to engage the peripheral edge of a strengthening rim on the containers.

This invention relates to a clamp constructed of two identical main sections each of which is composed of three smaller parts.

An object of the invention is stabilization of a pair of stacked ice cream containers in the interest of saving time and trouble. This is advantageous for the employee and keeps the customer happy so therefore keeping the employer satisfied.

Another object of the invention is to provide a clamp which is formed from aluminum with a width of three-quarter inch (¾") and a depth of one-eighth (⅛) of an inch and contains no moving parts as its operation depends only on its flexibility.

In the drawing:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the clamp showing two FIG. 2 main sections secured together.

FIG. 2 is a side view of a main section.

FIG. 3 is a sketch of the clamp in operation with the containers partially drawn. The drawing is one half (½) actual size.

In the sale of loose ice cream (for cones, sundaes, etc.) a cardboard container with a capacity of two and one half (2½) gallons and an empty weight of approximately nine (9) ounces is normally employed by the manufacturer to contain the ice cream. However, once the container becomes less than half full, it moves freely when one attempts to scoop ice cream from it. So freely in fact, that great and time consuming difficulty is encountered.

This stabilizing clamp fastens the top container **70** to the bottom one **71** (they are normally stacked in two's) thus adding the weight of the bottom one to stabilize the constantly lightening top container. A metal rim **77** which encircles the container (for form and strength) is the anchor for the clamp.

There are six (6) completely separate pieces to form the final clamp. Two of the larger ones, **61**, are identical and form the upper portion of FIG. 2 (of course, only one is shown in that figure). The four remaining parts **62** are also identical and can be seen in the lower half of FIG. 2. In the drawing and the first actual working model, one quarter (¼) inch, self tapping, aluminum screws **68** and **69** were used to hold the pieces together. However, rivets could serve the same purpose. The pieces have resiliently flexible fingers formed on the free ends thereof and reversely bent upon themselves to extend when assembled together inwardly toward an associated container so as to space the free end thereof a distance above the edge of the container sufficiently to enable the same to snappingly engage the peripheral edge of a metal strengthening rim **77** on the container edge. Each of the fingers acts as a clamping prong and may have a bent

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out prong **63** at the reverse bend to form a cam to facilitate clamping of a container and to form a thumb engageable projection for facilitating removal of the clamp. The clamp may have three clamping fingers or prongs for each container connected at 120° angles (not shown). The clamping device may be dimensioned so as to fit different sized ice cream containers.

The operation of the clamp is simple. You place one container upside down in the freezer. Take the clamp and set it so that the lower four prongs touch the metal rim; then press firmly to snap it in place. Take the top container and set its bottom rim over the upper four prongs and press it until it snaps in place. When the top container is empty, lift it (thus lifting the bottom one also) out of the freezer. Place your thumbs, on two adjoining prongs, press in and up on the rim with the fingers while pressing out with the thumbs. The empty container will then come loose. Place the fresh container in the freezer upside down. Take the full container with the clamp still attached, place it over the fresh container and snap into place. This method was found to be the best and only takes a few seconds more than it would take to change the ice cream without the clamp. The changing operation relies simply on the rim's flexibility and that of the clamp.

It must be remembered that though the container does not usually begin to move until it is about half empty, (unless the ice cream is a bit too hard; in which case the problem of movement will occur earlier) that makes it a nuisance at least fifty percent of the time. The few extra seconds taken in fastening and unfastening the clamp are well worthwhile.

I claim:

A clamping device for holding two ice cream containers together in a vertically stacked condition to normally prevent relative movement of the upper container when the stacked containers are received within an ice cream cabinet, said device comprising at least one pair of elongated substantially flat arm members interconnected at their mid points so as to lie in substantially a common plane, each of said arm members having a pair of opposed resiliently flexible fingers extending above and below the said plane and having a means thereon adapted to snappingly engage the peripheral edge of a strengthening rim on an adjacent container to normally maintain the said containers in the said stacked condition, said means comprising each of the end portions of the said fingers being reversibly bent inwardly toward an associated container and upon each other so as to space the free end thereof a distance above the said plane slightly greater than that of an associated edge of said rim.

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