# United States Patent

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[72] Inventor **William D. Taylor**
**Wooster, Ohio**



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[73] Assignee **Rubbermaid Incorporated**
**Wooster, Ohio**


[54] **DINNERWARE RACK**
**4 Claims, 10 Drawing Figs.**


[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **108/30,** 108/64, 211/94.5
[51] **Int. Cl.** ..... **A47b 47/00**
[50] **Field of Search** ..... 108/25, 30, 26, 64, 50; 312/126, 222, 321, 348; 211/94, 94.5, 126



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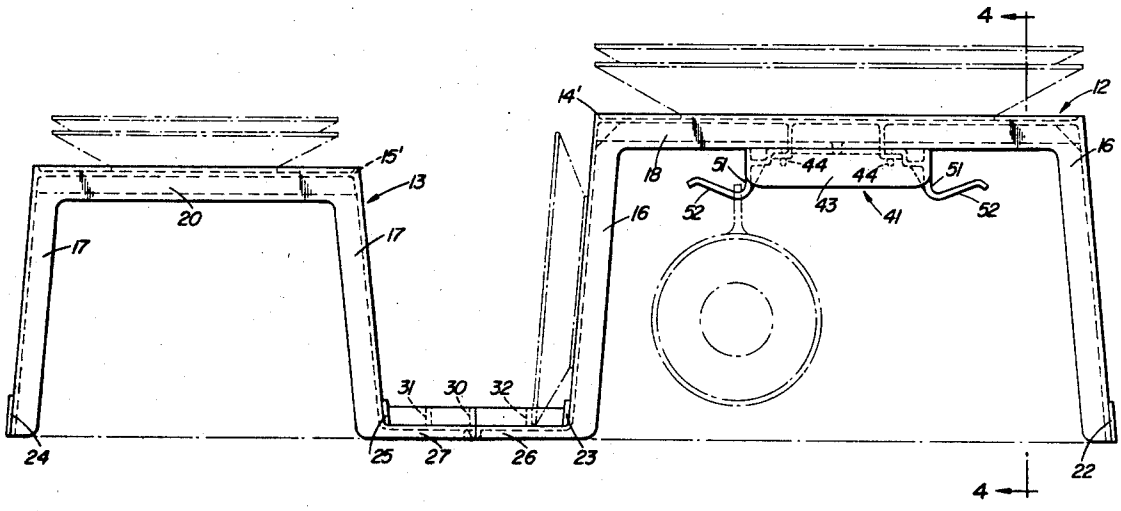
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*Primary Examiner*—Bobby R. Gay
*Assistant Examiner*—Peter A. Aschenbrenner
*Attorney*—Hamilton, Cook, Renner and Kenner



**ABSTRACT:** A dinnerware rack comprising a combination plate and cup stand having a top shelf and a pullout cup rack releasably slidably mounted under said shelf, and a smaller stand having a lower level top shelf, said stands having separably interconnected base racks for supporting dishes between the stands, said smaller stand when disconnected being nestable in said cup and plate stand.

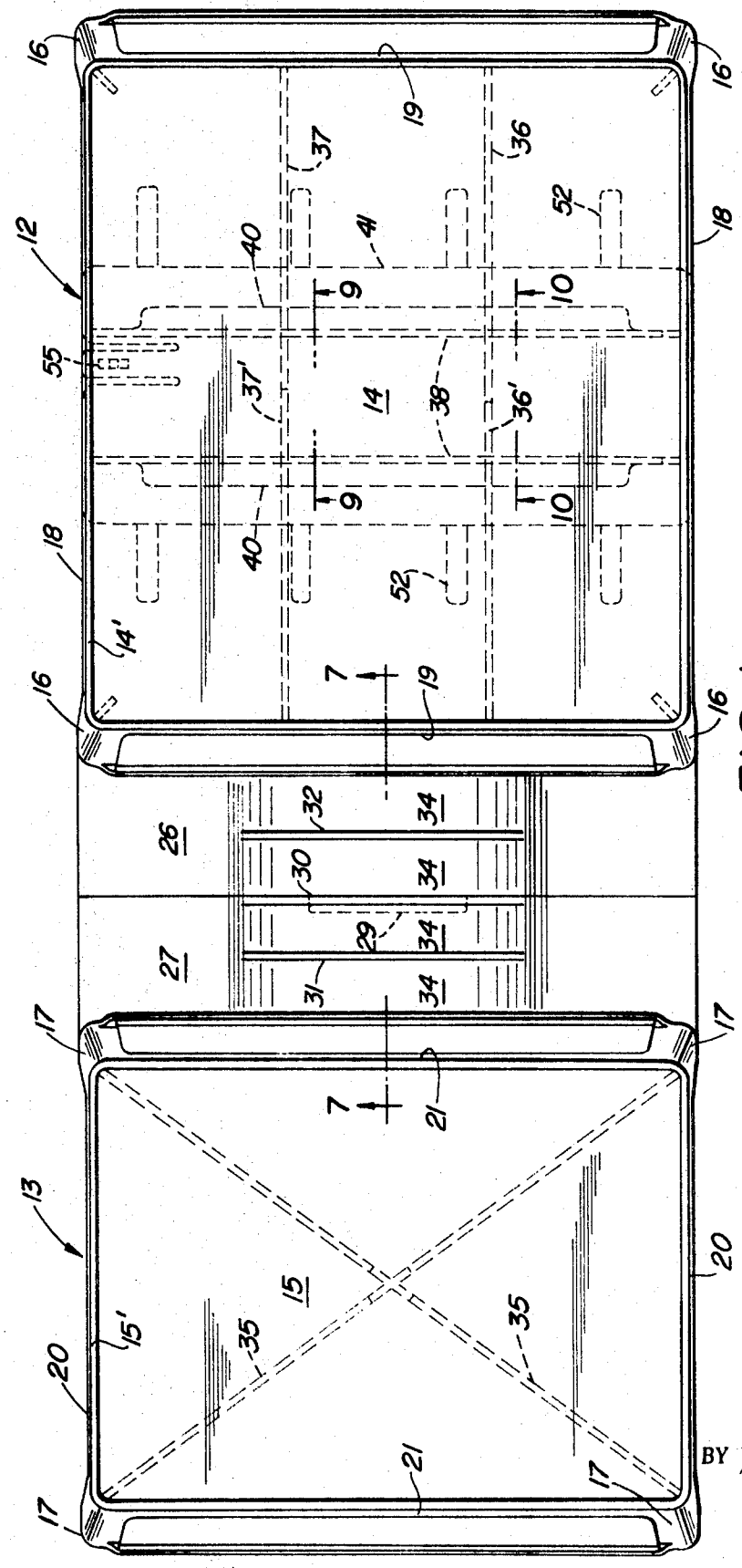


FIG. 1

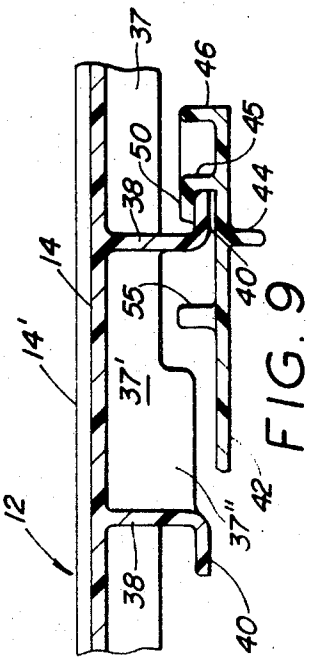


FIG. 9

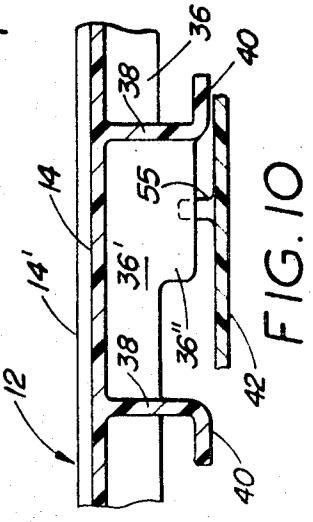


FIG. 10

INVENTOR.
WILLIAM D. TAYLOR
BY Hamilton, Cook, Rennard Kenney
ATTORNEYS

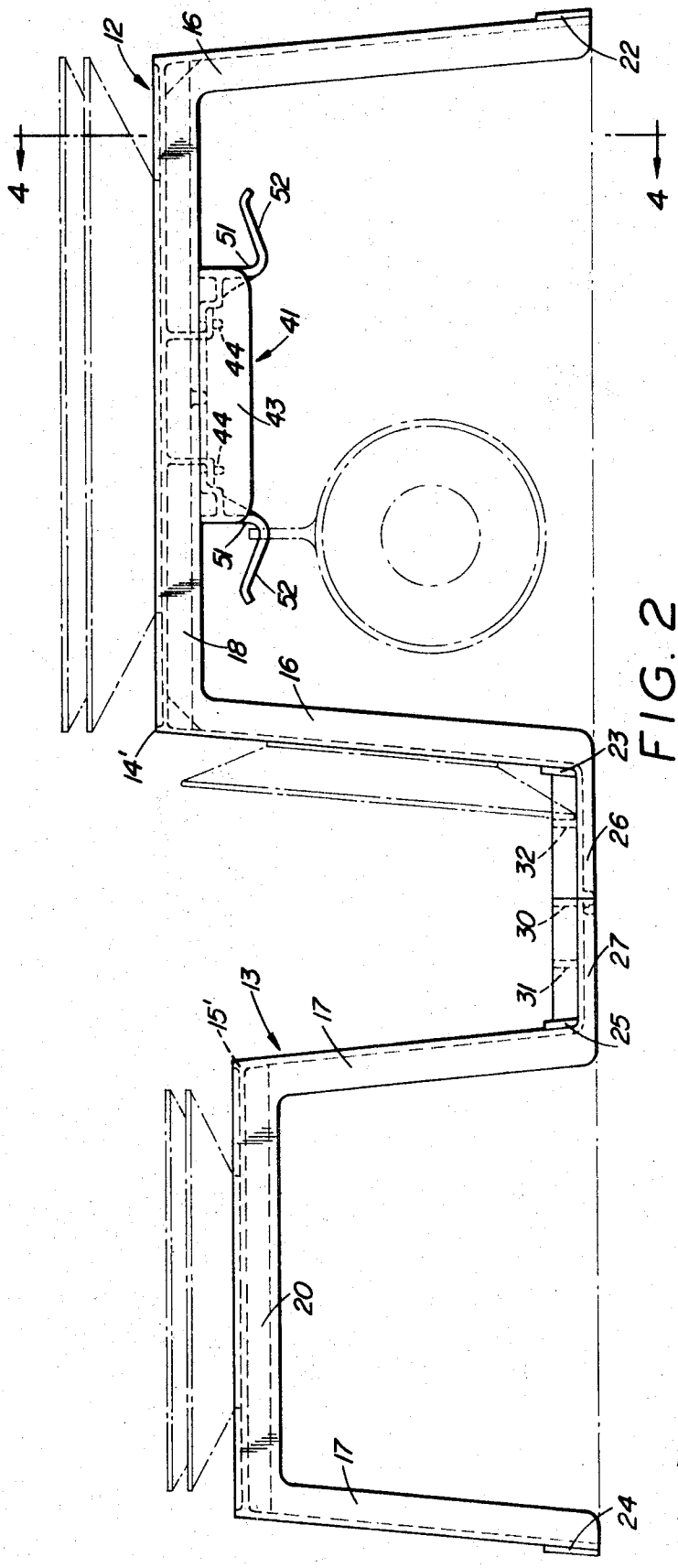



FIG. 2

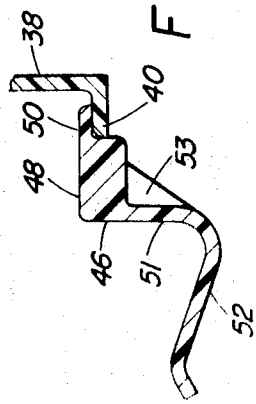



FIG. 6

INVENTOR.
WILLIAM D. TAYLOR
BY Hamilton, Cook, Rennes & Kennen
ATTORNEYS

FIG. 3

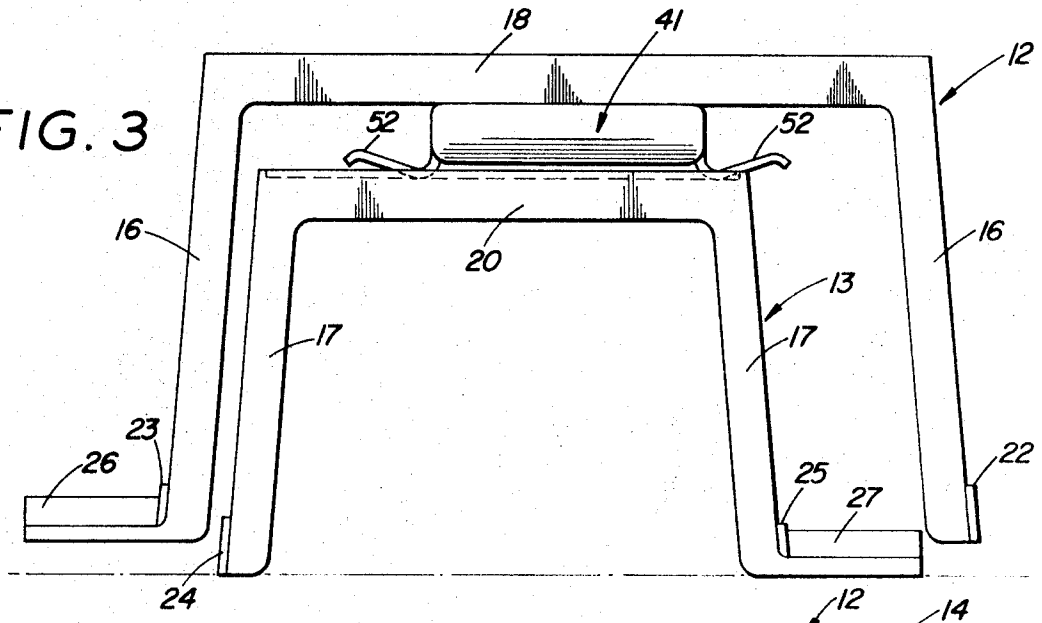
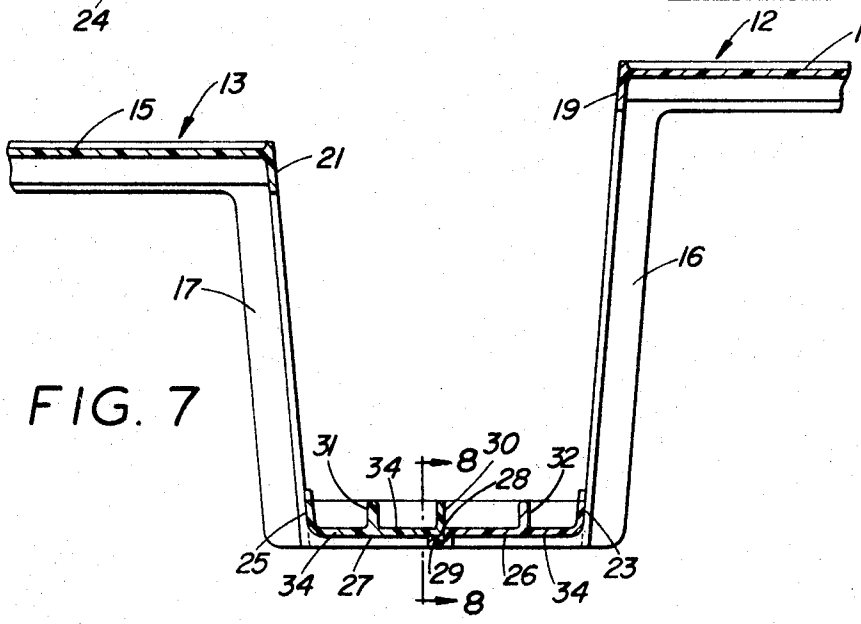



FIG. 7



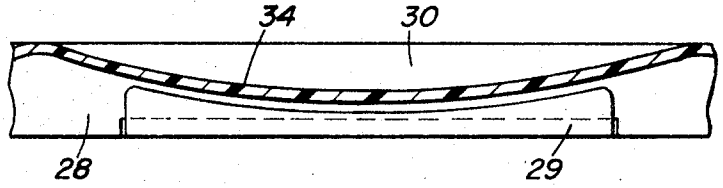




FIG. 8

INVENTOR.
WILLIAM D. TAYLOR
BY Hamilton, Cook,
Renner & Kenner
ATTORNEYS

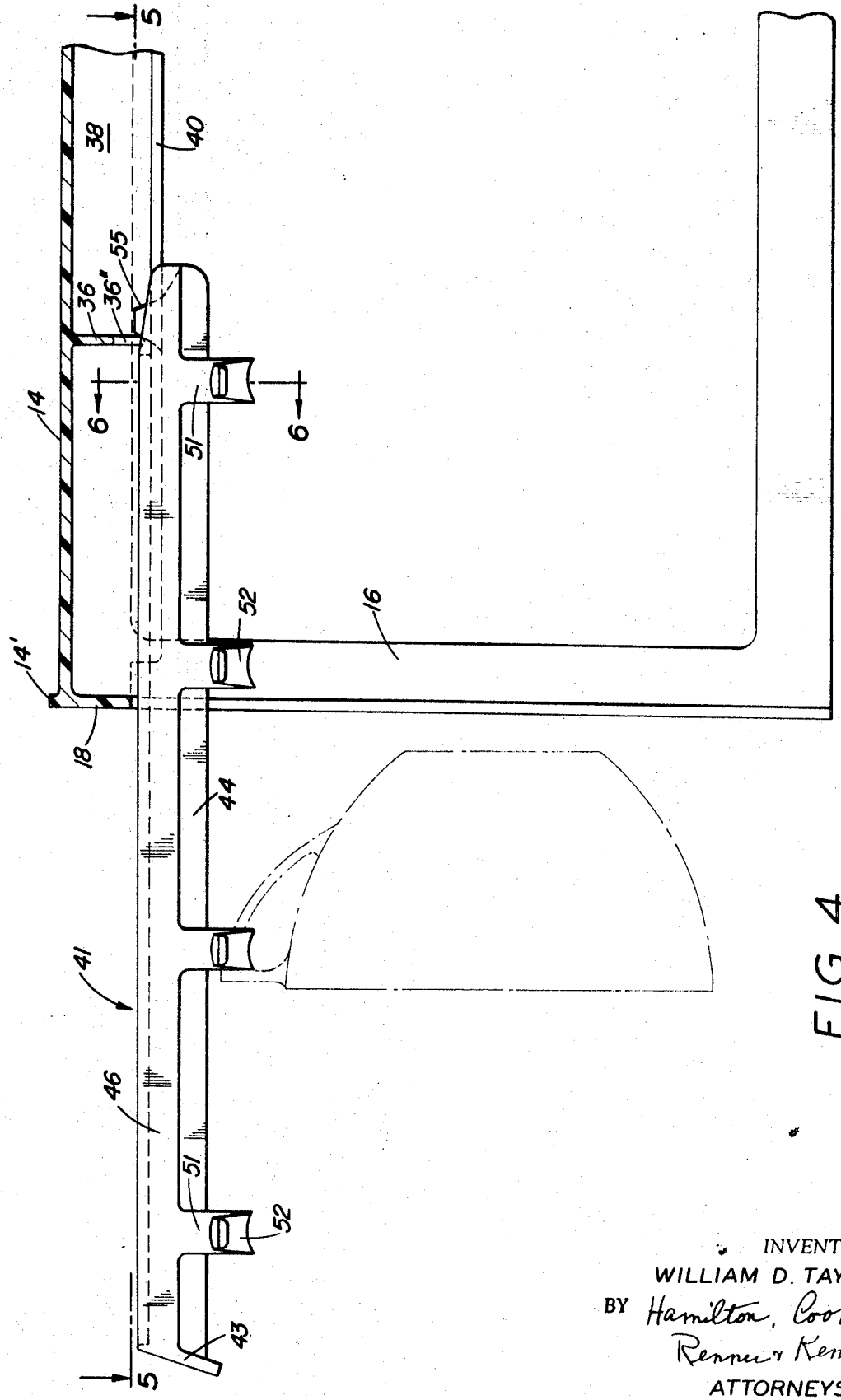



FIG. 4

INVENTOR.
WILLIAM D. TAYLOR
BY Hamilton, Cook,
Renner & Kenner
ATTORNEYS

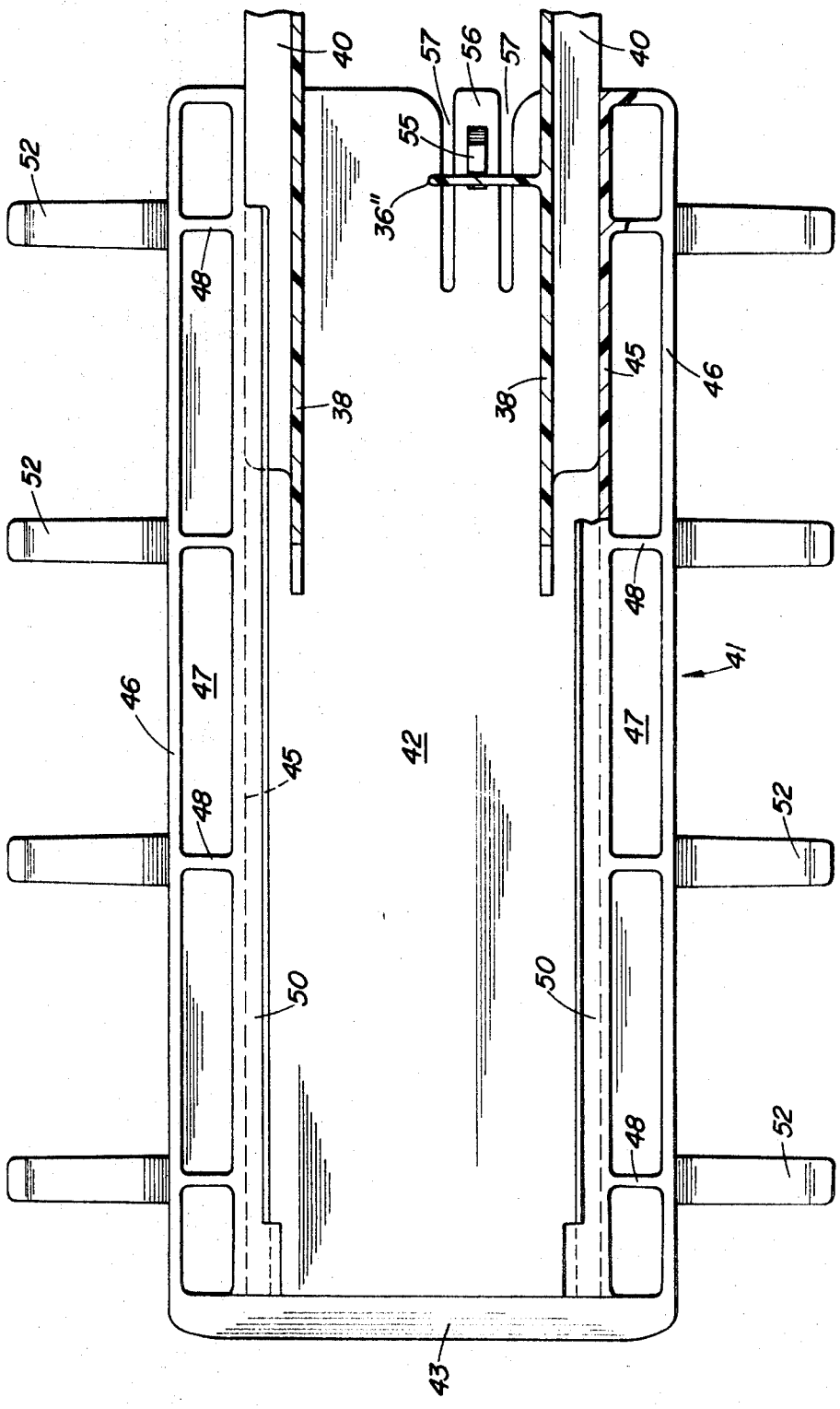



FIG. 5

INVENTOR.
WILLIAM D. TAYLOR
BY Hamilton, Cook, Rennes & Kramer
ATTORNEYS

# DINNERWARE RACK

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Various items of dinnerware, such as plates, cups and saucers and serving dishes are normally stacked and arranged more or less at random on a cupboard shelf. While plates and saucers of varying sizes can be stacked one upon another, the dishes of one size at the bottom or lower part of a stack are not accessible without removing those of another size stacked on top. Moreover, the various items of dinnerware are seldom arranged so as to utilize the available space in an efficient manner.

Certain prior dinnerware racks occupy too much shelf space, are expensive to make and often difficult to install, and do not efficiently accommodate the variety of sizes and shapes usually involved in a conventional set of dinnerware. Furthermore, the cups are commonly stacked upright, one inside another, and as such are subject to excessive breakage.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a novel dinnerware rack adapted to support and systematically segregate various items and sizes of dinnerware.

Another object is to provide two separable and nestable plate stands having interconnected base extensions forming a rack between the stands for holding dishes on edge.

A further object is to provide a pullout rack for hanging cups normally slidably mounted under the one stand and detachable for packing and shipping.

These and other objects are accomplished by forming two nestable rectangular stands preferably of molded plastic, each having top plate-supporting shelves supported by corner legs, said stands having lateral base extensions on adjacent sides normally interlocked to form a base rack between the stands in side-by-side position, and the larger stand having a pullout cup rack releasably and slidably mounted on the underside of its shelf.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a plan elevational view of the two stands in normal side-by-side connected position.

FIG. 2 is a side elevation thereof, indicating cups and dishes in phantom lines.

FIG. 3 is a side elevation showing the stands in nested position for packing and shipping.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged vertical section on line 4–4 of FIG. 2, showing the rack in pulled-out position.

FIG. 5 is a plan sectional view of the rack taken substantially on line 5–5 of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a partial sectional view on line 6–6 of FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a partial sectional view on line 7–7 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 8 is an enlarged partial sectional view on line 8–8 of FIG. 7.

FIGS. 9 and 10 are partial sectional views on lines 9–9 and 10–10 of FIG. 1.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring first to FIGS. 1—3, the improved rack comprises two stands, indicated generally at 12 and 13, which preferably have substantially rectangular top shelves 14 and 15, respectively. Four corner legs 16 depend from shelf 14 and diverge slightly from each other, and four corner legs 17 depend from shelf 15 and diverge slightly outwardly from each other. The legs 16 of the larger stand 12 are somewhat longer than legs 17 so that the smaller stand 13 can be nested under stand 12 for shipment, as shown in FIG. 3. Preferably, one dimension of the top shelf 15 is the same as the corresponding dimension of shelf 14, while the transverse dimension of shelf 15 is substantially less than the corresponding dimension of shelf 14, for nesting purposes.



The shelves 14 and 15 have continuous top rim flanges 14' and 15', respectively, extending upwardly a slight distance above the top surfaces of the shelves to retain plates or dishes supported thereon. Opposite front and rear flanges 18 and opposite side flanges 19 depend from the rim flange 14' and connect with the corner legs 16. Opposite front and rear flanges 20 and opposite side flanges 21 depend from the rim flange 15' and connect with the corner legs 17.

At one side of stand 12 an outer side flange 22 connects the bottom ends of the legs 16 on that side, and at the other side a similar flange 23 connects the bottom ends of the legs on that side. Similarly, at one side of stand 13 an outer flange 24 connects the bottom ends of the legs 17 on that side, and at the other side a similar flange 25 connects the bottom ends of the legs on that side.

A horizontal rack portion 26 extends outwardly from flange 23, and a horizontal rack portion 27 extends outwardly from flange 25 and is adapted to interlock at its outer end with the outer end of rack portion 26 to form an extended rack portion between the bottoms of the two stands. As best shown in FIGS. 7 and 8, the rack portion 27 has an outer depending rib 28 which is received in a channel 29 formed at the outer edge of rack portion 26. Rack portion 27 has a dish engaging flange 30 extending upwardly from rib 28 and another such flange 31 intermediate flanges 25 and 30. Rack portion 26 has a similar intermediate flange 32. As seen in FIG. 8, the bottoms of rack portions 26 and 27 between the flanges 30, 31 and 32 have downwardly curved portions 34 parallel to the flanges for receiving the curved edges of dishes standing edgewise on the rack portions, as indicated in phantom lines in FIG. 2. As seen in FIG. 3, the length of rack portion 27 is such as to fit within the legs 16 of the stand 12 when the stands are nested.

Preferably, stand 13 has vertically disposed reinforcing ribs 35 under the shelf 15 extending diagonally between diagonally opposite legs 17. Stand 12 preferably has transverse vertically disposed parallel reinforcing ribs 36 and 37 extending between opposite side flanges 19 on the underside of shelf 14. Vertically disposed parallel ribs 38 depend from said shelf 14 and extend between the front and rear flanges 18, said ribs 38 intersecting the transverse ribs 36 and 37. Between the ribs 18 are transverse extensions 36' and 37' of the ribs 36 and 37, and said extensions have portions 36'' and 37'' of greater depth, for a purpose to be described.

The ribs 38 are provided at their bottom edges with outturned angular flanges 40 extending along the greater part of the lengths of the ribs 38 and terminating short of their ends. These flanges 40 form guides or tracks slidably supporting a cup rack 41 which has substantially the same length as the length from front to rear of the shelf 14.

The cup rack 41 has a central deck 42 with a transverse flange 43 at its front edge inclined to the deck and extending above and below the same so as to provide a finger hold for moving the rack back and forth. Parallel reinforcing ribs 44 depend from the deck and extend longitudinally from front to back thereof. Upwardly open channels extend from the front flange 43 rearwardly along the sides of the deck and have upwardly disposed inner and outer ribs 45 and 46 with a bottom web wall 47. At intervals the ribs 45 and 46 are connected by transverse ribs 48.

Longitudinal guide flanges 50 for sliding on the tracks 40 extend transversely inward from the inner longitudinal ribs 45 and their ends terminate short of the ends of the deck 42. As shown in FIGS. 5 and 9, the flanges 50 overlie the track flanges 40 under the top shelf of the stand when assembled.

At intervals along the sides of the cup rack 41 are hooks 51 depending from the outer ribs 46 and terminating in outwardly and upwardly curved portions 52 for hanging cups thereon, as shown in phantom in FIGS. 1 and 4. The hooks may be reinforced on their inner sides by triangular webs 53 (FIG. 6).

At the rear end of the deck 42, a stop lug 55 is provided projecting upwardly from a strip 56 of the deck formed by two parallel slots 57 extending forwardly from the rear edge (FIG. 5). The lug 55 is positioned so that it is aligned longitudinally,

or in a front to rear direction, with the depending portion 36'' of rib 36 and to one side of the depending portion 37'' of rib 37 depending from shelf 14 (FIGS. 9 and 10). Thus, when the cup rack 41 is pulled forwardly from the stand 12, the lug 55 will engage rib portion 36'' and limit the forward movement of the rack, as indicated in FIGS. 4 and 5.

The strip 56 is provided so that in assembling or disassembling the rack one can reach under and press down on the rear end of the strip to allow the lug to pass under the depending rib portion 36''. The depending rib portion 37'' is provided so that if it is desired to insert the cup rack from the opposite side, in other words, make the rear become the front, the stop lug will function in the same way to limit the extension of the cup rack in the reverse direction by engaging the rib portion 37'' after passing the rib portion 36''.

As shown in phantom in FIG. 2, larger plates are stacked upon the top shelf of stand 12 and smaller ones upon the top shelf of stand 13 for convenient accessibility. Other dishes standing on edge on the horizontal rack portions 26 and 27 are likewise conveniently accessible, as are smaller dishes which may be stacked under stand 13 and removed without lifting the larger dishes on top of the stand.

The improved dinnerware rack accordingly provides for supporting a variety of sizes and shapes of dishes in segregated positions so as to make the various items efficiently arranged and conveniently accessible without unstacking, and provides for storing cups in a conveniently accessible manner without danger of breakage. Also, the stands are nestable for shipment.

I claim:

1. A dinnerware rack comprising a plate and cup stand having a top shelf supported by corner legs, guide means on the underside of said shelf, a cup rack having laterally extending hooks for receiving cup handles, said cup rack being slidably mounted on said guide means for pullout movement between two of said legs, a base extension connecting two of said corner legs and extending laterally therefrom, a smaller stand having a top shelf supported by corner legs, and a base extension extending laterally from two of the legs of the smaller stand and separably interconnected with said base extension of the larger stand, said base extensions when interconnected forming a base rack for supporting dishes on edge between the stands.

2. A dinnerware rack as in claim 1, in which the smaller stand is nestable within said cup and plate stand when said base extensions are disconnected.

3. A dinnerware rack as in claim 1 in which the base extensions have spaced transverse upright ribs and downwardly curved bottom portions between the ribs for supporting the curved edges of dishes.

4. A dinnerware rack as claim 2 in which the base extensions have spaced transverse upright ribs and downwardly curved bottom portions between the ribs for supporting the curved edges of dishes.