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(54) PAINT ROLLER SLEEVE STORAGE CONTAINER

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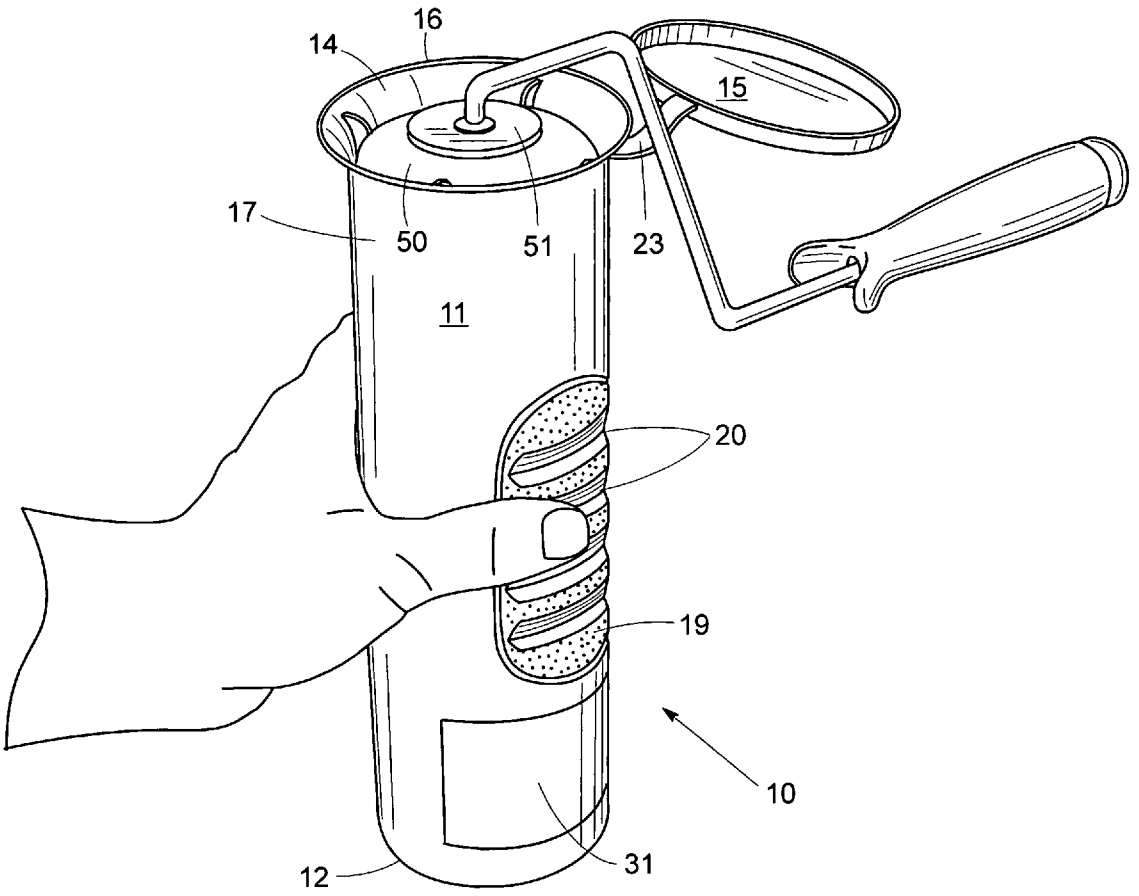
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A storage container for a paint roller sleeve which includes a flexible, resilient tubular housing and a cap which can be snap-fitted thereon for removably storing the sleeve therein. Sealed on one end, the housing defines a reservoir for holding excess paint. Distal from the sealed end, the housing terminates in a built-in funnel for ease of insertion of the sleeve. The sides of the tubular housing include at least one section that is easily collapsible inwardly and can be pressed against the stored sleeve when the user grasps the housing. This collapsible section in the sidewalls of the housing has teeth-like projections, which allow the user to engage and hold the sleeve in such a way that it can be pulled free from the roller without hand contact. When a painter is taking a break or through for the day, he can place the sleeve in the housing and close the cap. He can then come back and finish the work the following hour, day or year without any need to clean the sleeve. A sandblasted area on the exterior wall of the housing can be used to indicate the color and type of paint.



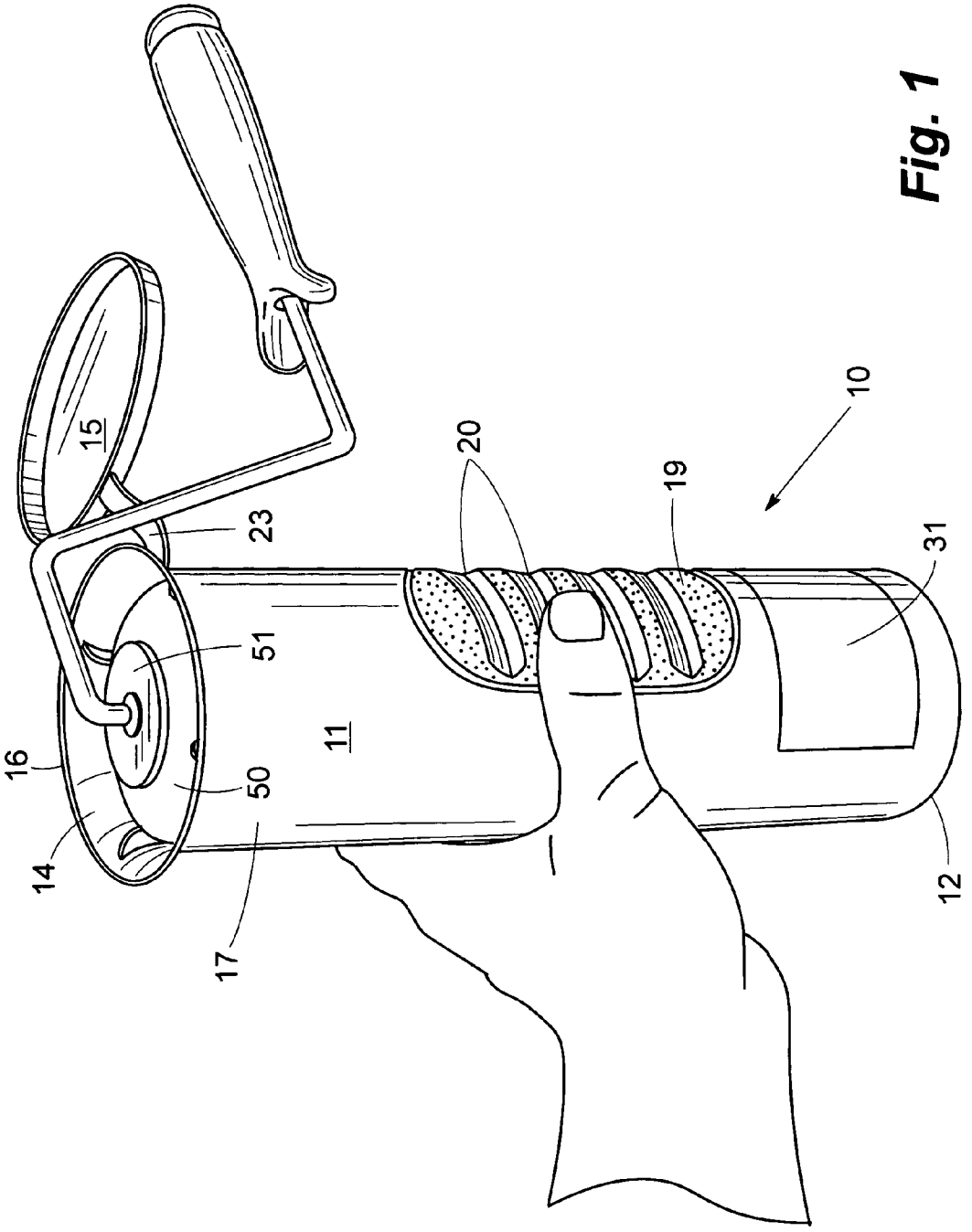


Fig. 1

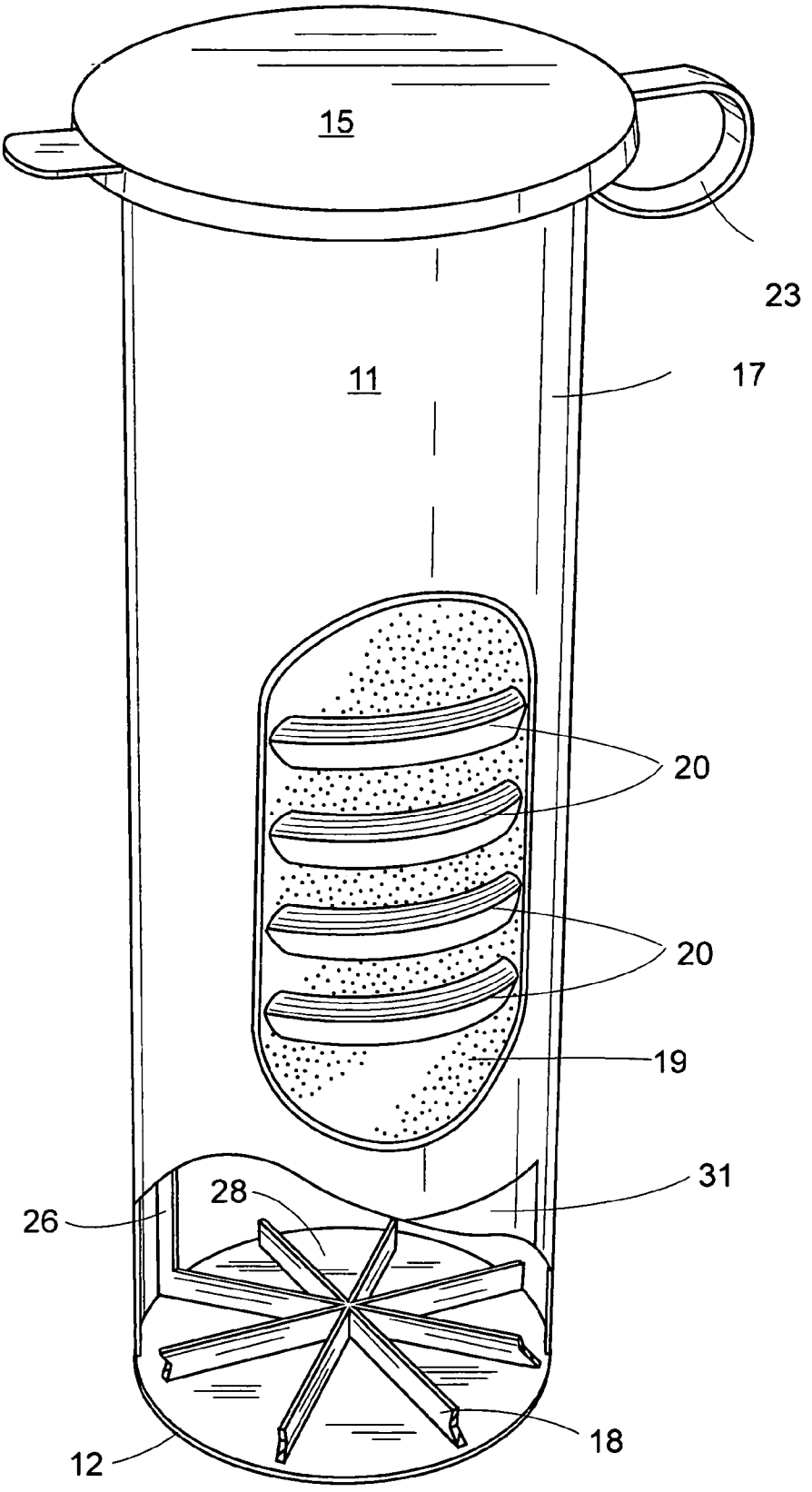


Fig. 2

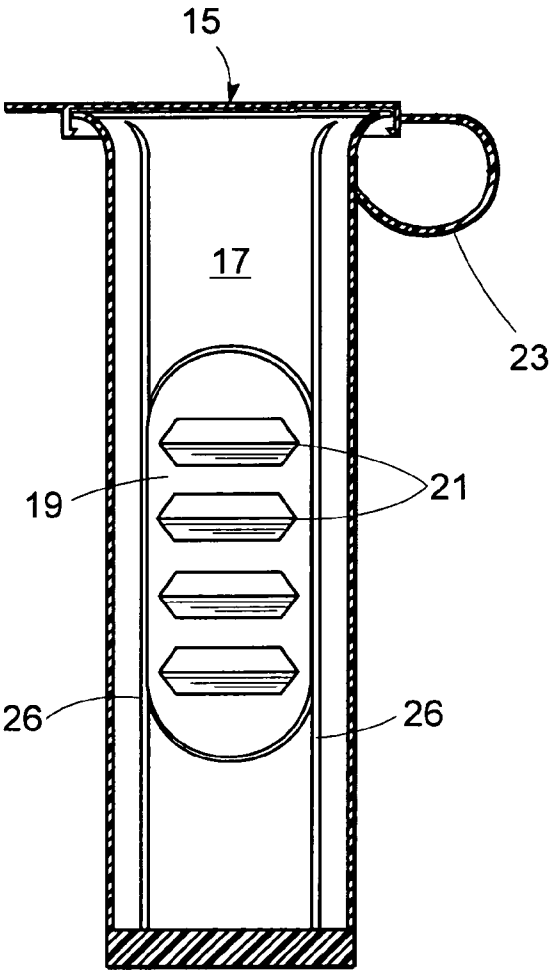


Fig. 3

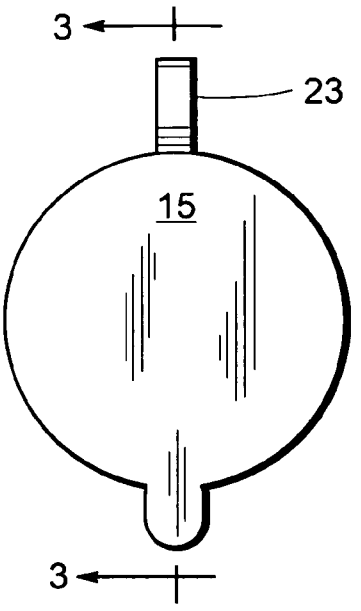


Fig. 4A

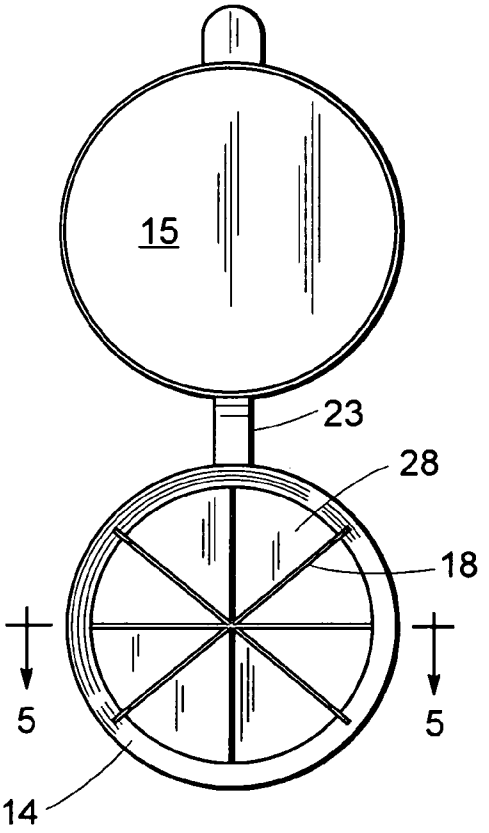


Fig. 4B

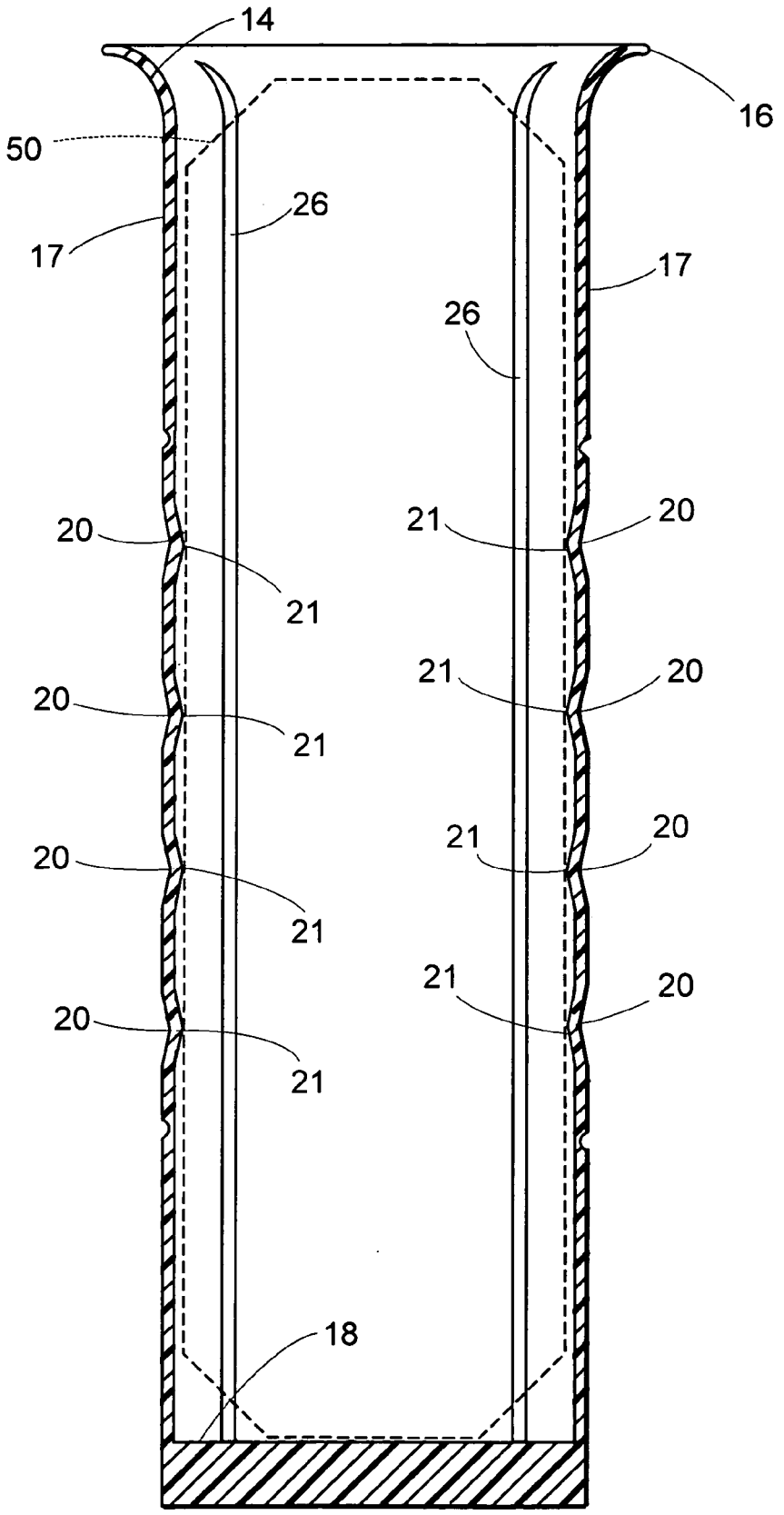


Fig. 5

PAINT ROLLER SLEEVE STORAGE CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] During a standard workday a painter may use one or more paint roller sleeves. Further, in many jobs more than one coat of paint is required. Moreover, if the job is not finished prior to a lunch break or at the end of the workday, the sleeve must be cleaned or discarded. There is a need for a device in which a freshly used, yet to be cleaned paint roller sleeve can be stored overnight, ready for reuse the next day.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The object of this invention is to provide a container for a just used paint roller sleeve in which it can be stored and kept in such a condition that be used again immediately, for the same color paint, without first being cleaned. An additional object of this invention is to provide means for removing a wet paint sleeve from the roller without the painter's hand, whether gloved or otherwise, coming into direct contact with the sleeve.

[0003] In accordance with the present invention, there is provided an improved storage container which comprises a generally cylindrical tubular structure having a thin wall made of a flexible, resilient plastic and at least one pleated wall section joined thereto. Formed of a hinged-type plastic, the pleated wall section can be pressed inwardly by hand. When the pleated wall section is so pressed, teeth-like projections on its inside surface are brought into contact with any paint roller sleeve housed temporarily within the storage container and can be used to grip the sleeve firmly.

[0004] Means for keeping the paint roller sleeve from resting on the bottom surface of the container preferably includes a standoff. The height of the standoff determines the depth of the reservoir defined by the container for receiving excess paint, which drains from the sleeve during storage.

[0005] The upper portion of the tubular structure terminates upwardly in an opening for receiving the sleeve and preferably tapers outwardly, forming a funnel to facilitate insertion of the sleeve into the container and to capture any paint dripping from the sleeve which might otherwise drip outside the container during the insertion process.

[0006] Longitudinal ribs which extend inwardly from the inner walls of the tubular structure help to center the sleeve within the container and keep the sleeve, regardless of thickness of its nap, from rattling around in the container The ribs are rounded off at proximate with the opening in the tubular structure so as to help guide the sleeve into the container.

[0007] In a typical use, the just used sleeve while still on the roller is inserted into the storage container. Next the user grasps the sides of the container and presses the pleated wall section inwardly, in such a way that its teeth-like projections engage the roller with sufficient force to hold it while the roller is being slipped out of the sleeve. The container is then closed with a snap-on cap or the like, forming an airtight closure, which keeps the paint from drying on the sleeve, even after a long storage. To reuse the sleeve, the cap is removed; and the roller is inserted into the sleeve. The user is ready to proceed with the paint work.

[0008] The cap is preferably attached to the outer walls of the container by a strap which has sufficient length that when the cap is in the closed position, a loop is formed in the strap that can be used for hanging the storage container.

[0009] Further, there is provided a section on the outer walls of the container for identification of the paint residual on the sleeve stored therewithin.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a paint roller sleeve storage container according to the present invention, the storage container being shown holding a paint roller sleeve still mounted on its roller;

[0011] FIG. **2** is a perspective view, on an enlarged scale, of a fragmentary portion of the storage container according to FIG. **1**, the storage container being shown empty with its snap-on cap in the closed position; a breakaway section in the lower end of the storage container revealing a standoff disposed therein;

[0012] FIG. **3** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **3-3** of FIG. **4**;

[0013] FIGS. **4**A and **4**B are top plan views of the storage container according to FIG. **1** with its snap-on cap in the closed and open positions, respectively; and

[0014] FIG. **5** is an enlarged cross sectional view taken along lines **5-5** of FIG. **4**B showing the teeth-like projections of the opposing collapsible wall which when squeezed together, press the teeth-like projections against the sleeve, gripping it; the sleeve being shown in dashed lines and forming no part of the claimed invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0015] Referring to the drawings, a storage container **10** for a paint roller sleeve **50** includes a flexible, resilient, generally cylindrical housing **11** for removably storing the sleeve **50** therein. Sealed on its lower end **12**, the housing **11** defines an upper opening **13**, which is surrounded by a rim **16** atop sidewall **14**. Terminating with the rim **16**, the sidewall **14** tapers outwardly to form a funnel that aids in the insertion of the sleeve **50** while it is mounted on the paint roller **51** and keeps paint from dripping outside the container **10**.

[0016] In the preferred embodiment, a cap **15** snap-fits on the rim **16** to provide an airtight seal. Attached to the cap **15** and to the housing **11** is a strap **23**. When the container **10** is closed, the cap-retaining strap **23** is long enough to form a loop that can be used for hanging the container **10** on a pegboard or equivalent for display (FIGS. **2**and **3**).

[0017] As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the container **10** preferably includes a standoff **18** disposed within the housing **11** proximate with its lower end **12**. Formed in the shape of a star or similar structure, the standoff **18** keeps the sleeve **50** from resting on the bottom **12** of the container **10** and defines at least one pocket **28**. The pocket **28** fluidly communicates with a reservoir defined by the lower end **12** for capturing any excess paint which drains from the sleeve **50** during storage.

[0018] Near the mid-section of the housing **11**, at least one pleated wall section **19** made from a hinge-type plastic includes an array of ridges and grooves **20**. In the preferred embodiment, two pleated wall sections **19** are disposed on opposing sides of the housing **11** (FIGS. **1-3**). The ridges and grooves **20** move inwardly when the opposing wall sections **19** are gripped by the user and squeezed together firmly.

Together the ridges and grooves **20** form a series of teeth-like projections **21** which hold the sleeve **50** in place while the sleeve is being stripped off of the roller **51**. In use, a painter simply holds the handle of the roller **51** with one hand and while gripping the wall sections **19** so as to press them against the sleeve as it is being held within the container **10**, pulls the sleeve off of the roller. Thus the sleeve **50**, once inserted into the container **10**, can be removed from the roller **51** without soiling the painter's hands.

[0019] Means for centering the sleeve **50** in the housing **11** includes a plurality of longitudinal ribs **26**, which protrude inwardly from the inner surface of sidewall **17** (FIGS. **2** and **3**). The ribs **26** also facilitate the extraction of the sleeve **50** from the roller **51** when the pleated wall section **19** is pressed.

[0020] In the preferred embodiment, an identification patch **31** made by sandblasting a portion of the outer surface of the sidewall **17** is provided for the painter's convenience.

[0021] So that the open cap **15** can be held out of the way; the strap **23** defines a pair of notches (not shown); and a latch (not shown) is attached to the sidewall **17**. When a portion of the strap **23** defining the notches is snap-fitted into the latch, the cap **15** is held against surface **17**.

[0022] The container **10** measures, by way of example, about 9¾ inches in length and has inner diameters of about 2⅞ inches and 3 7/16 inches proximate with the closed end **12** and rim **16**, respectively. A suitable wall thickness for the sidewalls **14**, **17** ranges from approximately 0.007 inch to 0.062 inch; and the pleated wall section **19** preferably is about 2 inch wide and 4½ inches long. The cap-retaining strap **23** is preferably 2½ inches long so that a loop of about ½ inch is formed when the cap **15** is closed. The loop so formed can be used to hang the container **10** from a pegboard.

[0023] While the above describes the preferred embodiment of the invention, it is possible that other embodiments thereof may be made by those skilled in the art that fall within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A storage container for paint roller sleeve, comprising:

(a) a flexible, resilient tubular housing for removably storing the sleeve therewithin;

(b) the tubular housing including a centrally disposed chamber and a sealed end which defines a reservoir for holding excess paint;

distal from the sealed end, the housing terminating in an enlarged funnel-like opening for facilitating insertion of the sleeve into the chamber; and

(c) a sealing cap removably attachable to the housing proximate with the opening.

2. The storage container according to claim **1**, wherein the tubular housing further comprises a plastic hinge-type collapsible section which, when grasped, can be bent inwardly in such a way that portions of the section press against the stored sleeve so that the sleeve can be held and pulled off its roller.

3. The storage container according to claim **1**, which further comprises a strap, distal ends of the strap being affixed to the cap and to the housing, respectively.

4. The storage container according to claim **1**, which further comprises a strap, distal ends of the strap being affixed to the cap and to the housing, respectively; the strap defining a loop with which the storage container can be suspended.

5. The storage container according to claim **1**, wherein the tubular housing is further characterized as having a sidewall which includes a sandblasted portion for identification purposes.

6. A storage container for a paint roller sleeve, comprising:

(a) a flexible, resilient tubular housing for removably storing the sleeve therewithin;

(b) the tubular housing surrounding a centrally disposed chamber and having a sealed end which defines a reservoir for holding excess paint;

distal from the sealed end, the housing terminating in an enlarged funnel-like opening for facilitating insertion of the sleeve into the chamber; and

(c) the tubular housing further comprising plastic hinge-type collapsible section which when grasped firmly, bends inwardly in such a way that portions of the section press against the stored sleeve, so that the sleeve can be held and pulled off its roller,

(d) a sealing cap removably attachable to the housing proximate with the opening.

7. A storage container according to claim **6**, which further comprises means. Including for centering the sleeve within the tubular housing so that the sleeve regardless the thickness of its nap, is prevented from rattling around in the tubular housing.

8. The storage container according to claim **7**, wherein the longitudinal rib is further characterized as being rounded off proximate with his opening in the tubular housing, so that the sleeve can be easily guided into the tubular housing.

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