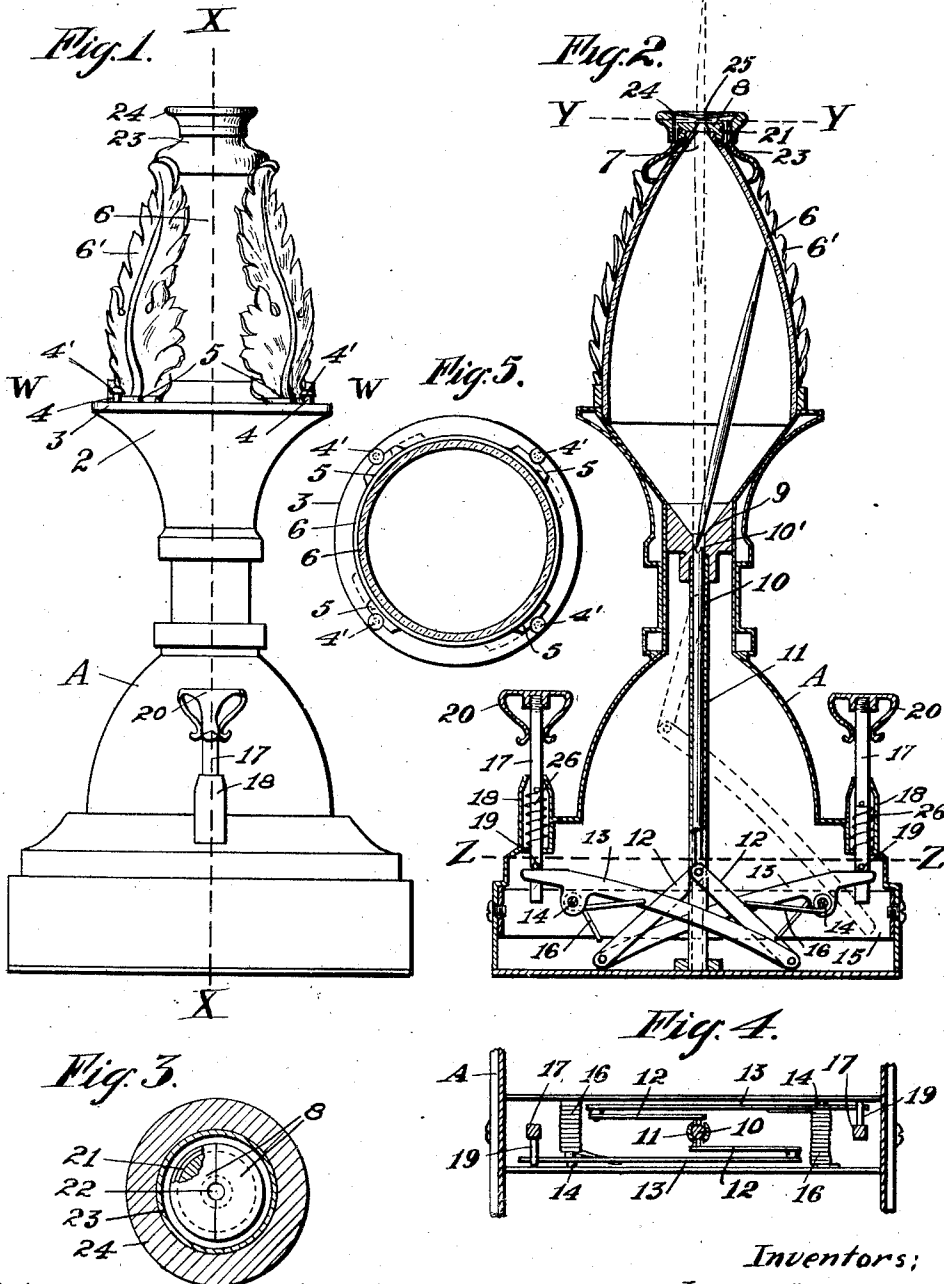


J. SOBRETTO & C. LOVATO.
TOOTHPICK HOLDER AND DISPENSER.
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Witnesses:
R. L. Perry
Thos. K. Merg.

Inventors:
John Sobretto
Charles Lovato
By *G. H. Strong*
Att'y.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN SOBRETTO AND CHARLES LOVATO, OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

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Specification of Letters Patent.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, JOHN SOBRETTO and CHARLES LOVATO, both subjects of the King of Italy, residing in the city and county of San Francisco and State of California, have invented new and useful Improvements in Toothpick Holders and Dispensers, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to a toothpick holder and dispenser.

It is the object of this invention to provide a toothpick holder and dispenser which is so constructed and arranged that toothpicks may be delivered one at a time by the operation of a push button, and which obviates the handling of the toothpicks in the holder other than the one discharged therefrom.

Another object is to provide a mechanism, by means of which a single toothpick may be selected from a number of toothpicks and discharged from a container, which mechanism is simple in construction and efficient in operation.

A further object is to provide means for holding the toothpick in the discharge opening of the container, in such manner as to prevent the toothpick from falling back into the container, and which means also acts to prevent the toothpick from being reinserted into the container through the discharge opening thereof.

Other objects will appear hereinafter.

The invention consists of the parts and the construction and combination of parts as hereinafter more fully described and claimed, having reference to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a side elevation of the invention. Fig. 2 is a vertical section of same on the line X—X, Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is an enlarged horizontal section on the line Y—Y of Fig. 2, with parts broken away. Fig. 4 is a partial horizontal section on the line Z—Z of Fig. 2. Fig. 5 is a horizontal section on the line W—W, Fig. 1.

In the drawings, A represents a hollow base of any suitable description, which terminates at its upper end in a toothpick receptacle 2 which is in the form of an inverted cone, as particularly shown in Fig. 2. The receptacle 2 is formed with a horizontally extending, annular rim 3, on which a series of upwardly projecting studs 4 formed with heads 4' are mounted; the studs 4 being provided as a means for en-

gaging outwardly extending flanges 5 carried on the lower edge of a cap, as shown in Fig. 5. The cap is preferably formed of transparent material 6, such as glass or celluloid, removably incased in a suitable metallic frame 6', on which frame the flanges 5 are mounted; the inner wall of the transparent portion 6 of the cap being formed in the shape of a cone and having a perforation 7 in its upper end opening to a pair of jaw members 8, to which the toothpicks are delivered, as will be later described.

The lower end of the container 2 is provided with an opening 9, which is in vertical alinement with the perforation 7 in the upper end thereof, the side walls of which perforation extend some distance below the surface of the inclined bottom of the container 2 to form a pocket of such diameter as to allow the lower end of a single toothpick to enter therein and rest upon the upper end of a rod or plunger 10. The plunger 10 is mounted to reciprocate in a vertical direction in a tube or guide 11 attached to the bottom of the container 2 and extend perpendicularly within the base A; the upper end of the plunger 10 extending into the perforation 9 and terminating a short distance below the upper end thereof.

Attached to the lower end of the rod 10, on opposite sides thereof, is a pair of links 12 which are connected to the rod 10 by means of pins, which extend through vertically arranged slots formed in the tube 11, as shown in Fig. 4. The links 12 normally project downwardly at an incline and extend in opposite directions in relation to each other, and connect at their lower ends with the outer long ends of oppositely extending levers 13. The levers 13 are fulcrumed on rods 14 carried on a suitable frame 15 disposed on the interior of the hollow base A, and are designed to be rocked in a vertical direction.

The outer ends of the levers 13 are designed to be normally retained in their lowermost position by means of springs 16 wound on the rods 14 which engage the levers 13 and the frame 15, as shown in Fig. 2. The upper and short ends of the levers 13 are positioned adjacent the outer wall of the hollow base A and extend alongside of vertically disposed rods 17 which are reciprocally mounted in bearings 18 formed on the base A.

Mounted on the rods 17 are pins 19 which extend over the upper edges of the lever 13 and normally contact therewith in such manner that when the rods 17 are depressed, the levers 13 will be rocked in a vertical direction on their pivotal mounting on the rods 14. The upper ends of the rods 17 are fitted with push buttons 20 of any suitable description.

In filling the receptacle 2 the cap is turned sufficiently far to disengage the flanges 1 on the cap frame 6' from the heads 4' on the studs 4, as indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 5. The cap may now be removed and a quantity of toothpicks placed in the receptacle 2; the cap being placed over the upper ends of the toothpicks and attached to the rim 3 of the receptacle 2, as above described, thereby inclosing the toothpicks within the receptacle 2 and the transparent portion 6 of the cap, as shown in Fig. 2.

The perforation 9 in the bottom of the receptacle 2 being of a trifle larger diameter than a toothpick, a single toothpick will extend a short distance therein and rest upon the upper end of the plunger 10 which is formed with a recess 10' to engage the lower end of the toothpick.

In the operation of the invention, either of the push buttons 20 is depressed to move the rod 17 in a downward direction; the pin 19 on the rod 17 bearing against the short end of the lever 13 to move it in a downward direction and thereby by move the long outer end of the lever in an upward direction. The outer end of the lever 13 in moving upward acts on the link 12 and the plunger 10 in such manner as to cause the latter to move upward in the tube 11 and carry the toothpick supported upon the upper end thereof in an upward direction.

The upper end of the toothpick follows the conical inner surface of the transparent portion 6 of the cap and passes through the perforation 7 in the upper end thereof and is forced between the jaws 8 into the position shown in dotted lines in Fig. 2 in which position it is supported when the push button 20 is released and the plunger 10 is restored to its normal lowermost position.

The jaws 8 may be constructed in any suitable manner, but are here shown as consisting of a pair of segmental or semicircular disks bound together with their straight edges adjoining each other, by means of a resilient band 21, which is wound in a groove formed in the periphery of the disks. A perforation 22 is formed in the center of the connected disks on the line of separation and diverges in a downward direction, as indicated in Fig. 2, to facilitate the upper end of a toothpick passing there- through from the under side and to form

a sharp edge on its upper rim. The disks are designed to be reciprocated in a lateral direction, being separated by the passage of a toothpick through the perforation 22 in opposition to the resilient band 21; the band 21 acting to bind the disks against the side of the toothpick to hold the latter against falling when the plunger 10 is withdrawn therefrom.

The jaw members or segmental disks 8 are supported in a casing 23 formed on the upper end of the frame portion 6' of the cap, which casing is fitted with a removable cover 24, perforated at 25, to allow of the passage of a toothpick therethrough.

When the push button 20 is released, the spring 16 acts to restore the lever 13 to its lowermost position, thereby retracting the plunger 10 and re-positioning the rod 17 and the push button 20 in readiness for another operation.

The toothpicks being supported endwise upon the sloping bottom of the receptacle 2, gravitate downward thereon, so that the moment the upper end of the plunger 10 passes below the upper end of the perforation 9, a single toothpick will drop into the perforation 9 and rest upon the upper end of the plunger 10 in readiness to be discharged through the discharge opening in the upper end of the cap, as before described, by the operation of either of the push buttons 20.

It is manifest any number of the levers 13, rods 17 and push buttons 20 may be linked to the plunger 10, as may be desired; it being advantageous to have a plurality of the levers 13, rods 17 and push buttons 20, so as to enable persons on opposite sides of the base A to operate the device without rotating it or otherwise disturbing its position.

By providing the mechanism here shown for operating the plunger 10, any one of the push buttons 20 may be depressed without affecting the others; the short end of the levers 13 moving downward away from the pins 19 on the rods 17 not operated. If desired, springs 26 may be wound on the rods 17 to hold the latter in their uppermost position.

The portion 6 of the cap is preferably formed of glass so that the toothpicks therein will be visible; this glass being removable from the frame 6' to admit of its being cleansed. This arrangement provides a hygienic container for the toothpicks, as they are protected from dust and indiscriminate handling.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is—

An improved toothpick holder and dispenser comprising a hollow base portion having a pocket in its upper end, the inner

face of said pocket being in the form of an inverted cone, and formed with a perforation at its lower end, a conical cap detachably mounted on the upper end of the base
5 over the pocket therein and having an aperture at its upper end, a pair of jaw members detachably mounted on said cap over the aperture therein, said jaw members comprising a pair of horizontal segmental disks
10 and a resilient band circumscribing the same, said disk having matching grooves forming a perforation through which the toothpick is projected, a vertically reciprocable plunger mounted in said base having

its upper end extending into the perforation in the bottom of the pocket, a reciprocable rod mounted in said base, and means for operating the rod to advance a toothpick between the jaw members. 15

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands in the presence of two subscribing witnesses. 20

JOHN SOBRETTO.
CHARLES LOVATO.

Witnesses:

JOHN H. HERRING,
CHAS. F. DUISENBERG.

Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."