A drinking vessel that includes a beverage can with a depression in its bottom, a compressible and expandable bendable drinking straw, and a protective cover over the drinking straw. The drinking straw fits within the depression at least when the drinking straw is compressed and bent, and the drinking straw with the protective cover is disposed within the depression. Preferably, the beverage can is a standard beverage can unmodified to accommodate the drinking straw, and the covered drinking straw is attached to the beverage can using adhesive. Alternatively, the beverage can can be a standard beverage can modified to include a lip on its bottom to help hold the drinking straw in place.
BEVERAGE CAN WITH STRAW

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention
This invention relates to a beverage can with an expandable/compressible and bendable drinking straw disposed in its base.

[0002] 2. Description of the Related Art
Numerous attempts have been made to integrate a drinking straw into a beverage container. Examples include U.S. Pat. No. 6,443,324 (Buntain), entitled “Beverage container with self-contained straw,” with the following Abstract:

[0003] A tab top beverage can has a compressible drinking straw held between the can bottom and an upwardly extending detachable closed cavity formed in the can top. Detachment of the cavity by a pivoting tab top uncovers a straw access orifice through which the straw is projected by the force of a previously compressed corrugated spring section formed in the straw wall. A bulge located on the straw prevents passage of the straw from the can and facilitates extension of the straw. The tab is attached to the can top by outwardly projecting lips formed on upwardly projecting closed cavities defined in the can top. The cavities extend through openings in the tab and the lips extend beyond the opening perimeters to secure the tab to the cavities and top.

[0004] and U.S. Pat. No. 4,228,913 (Mack), entitled “Beverage can having a self contained straw,” with the following Abstract:

[0005] The invention relates to a tab top can having a self contained drinking straw. The straw includes a resilient bellows structure on its bottom which serves to bias the top end of the straw against the underside of the tab top. A straw guide secured on the interior of the can aligns the top end of the straw with the underside of the tab top. The bellows structure forces the top end of the straw through the drinking slot formed when the tab top is removed from the can.

[0006] Other examples of beverage containers that include straws exist, for example drinking bottles with integrated straws, juice boxes with straws taped to their outsides, and others.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] One issue with previous attempts to include straws with beverage cans is that the straws are at least partially disposed inside the cans. Thus, manufacture of these beverage cans can be more complex (and therefore expensive) than manufacture of standard beverage cans.

[0008] The invention addresses this issue with a drinking vessel that includes a beverage can with a depression in its bottom, a compressible and expandable bendable drinking straw, and a protective cover over the drinking straw. The drinking straw fits within the depression at least when the drinking straw is compressed and bent, and the drinking straw with the protective cover is disposed within the depression.

[0009] Preferably, the beverage can is a standard beverage can unmodified to accommodate the drinking straw. Thus, no retooling is required for manufacture of the beverage can. In this embodiment, the covered drinking straw preferably is attached to the beverage can using adhesive. Alternatively, the beverage can can be a standard beverage can modified to include a lip or to have an enlarged lip on its bottom to help hold the drinking straw in place.

[0010] This brief summary has been provided so that the nature of the invention may be understood quickly. A more complete understanding of the invention may be obtained by reference to the following description of the preferred embodiments thereof in connection with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIGS. 1 to 4 show various views of an embodiment of a drinking vessel according to the invention.

[0012] FIGS. 5 and 6 show one embodiment of a drinking straw that can be used with the invention.

[0013] FIG. 7 shows this drinking straw with a protective cover.

[0014] FIG. 8 shows another embodiment of a beverage can that can be used with the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0015] FIGS. 1 to 4 show various views of an embodiment of a drinking vessel according to the invention. This vessel includes beverage can 1 with depression 2 in its bottom. The vessel also includes compressible and expandable bendable drinking straw 3, which is shown in compressed form in FIGS. 2 and 5 and expanded form in FIGS. 3 and 6. In a preferred embodiment, the drinking straw compresses down to a length of 3.5 inches and expands to a length of 5.75 inches. Alternatively, a straw that compresses and expands to different lengths from these can be used.

[0016] A protective cover 4 preferably is placed over the drinking straw (not shown in FIGS. 1 to 6, but shown in FIG. 7). Any suitable cover such as a plastic or paper cover can be used.

[0017] The drinking straw with the protective cover is disposed within the depression in the bottom of the beverage can. According to the invention, the drinking straw fits within the depression at least when the drinking straw is compressed and bent as shown in FIG. 2. The drinking straw might also fit within the depression when expanded and bent as shown in FIG. 3.

[0018] In the embodiments shown in FIGS. 1 to 4, the beverage can is a standard beverage can unmodified to accommodate the drinking straw, and the covered drinking straw preferably is attached to the beverage can using adhesive. Thus, no retooling of the beverage can manufacturing process is necessary to implement these embodiments of the invention.

[0019] Alternatively, the beverage can can be a standard beverage can modified to include a lip or to have an enlarged lip on its bottom to help hold the drinking straw in place, for example as shown in FIG 8. This lip can keep the drinking straw in place, possibly without the use of adhesive, or can help to keep the drinking straw in place if adhesive is used.

[0020] In use, the drinking straw is removed from the depression in the beverage can’s bottom, the protective cover is removed from the drinking straw, the beverage can is opened, and the straw is inserted into the beverage can. This convenient arrangement makes use of a straw with a beverage can far more likely. When the straw is used, fluid from the beverage can flows through the straw into a person’s mouth and tends to make less contact with the person’s teeth, thereby dramatically decreasing the potential for tooth decay and the like.
[0022] Drinking vessels according to the invention can be used with vending machines. In contrast, beverage cans with straws attached to their outside walls (akin to the arrangement used with many juice boxes) can jam vending machines. Thus, the invention also facilitates use of straws in the vending machine context, extending the above dental benefits to these situations as well.

ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0023] The invention is in no way limited to the specifics of any particular embodiments and examples disclosed herein. For example, the terms “preferably,” “preferred embodiment,” “one embodiment,” “this embodiment,” “alternatively” and the like denote features that are preferable but not essential to include in embodiments of the invention. Many other variations are possible which remain within the content, scope and spirit of the invention, and these variations would become clear to those skilled in the art after perusal of this application.

What is claimed is:
1. A drinking vessel, comprising:
a beverage can with a depression in its bottom;
a compressible and expandable bendable drinking straw;
and
a protective cover over the drinking straw;
wherein the drinking straw fits within the depression at least when the drinking straw is compressed and bent; and
wherein the drinking straw with the protective cover is disposed within the depression.

2. A drinking vessel as in claim 1, wherein the beverage can consists of a standard beverage can unmodified to accommodate the drinking straw.

3. A drinking vessel as in claim 1, wherein the beverage can consists of a standard beverage can modified to include a lip on its bottom to help hold the drinking straw in place.

4. A drinking vessel as in claim 1, wherein the protective cover comprises a paper or plastic sheath.

5. A drinking vessel as in claim 1, further comprising adhesive that adheres the protective cover to the beverage can within the depression.

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