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C. M. RIPPS

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UTILITY SHELF

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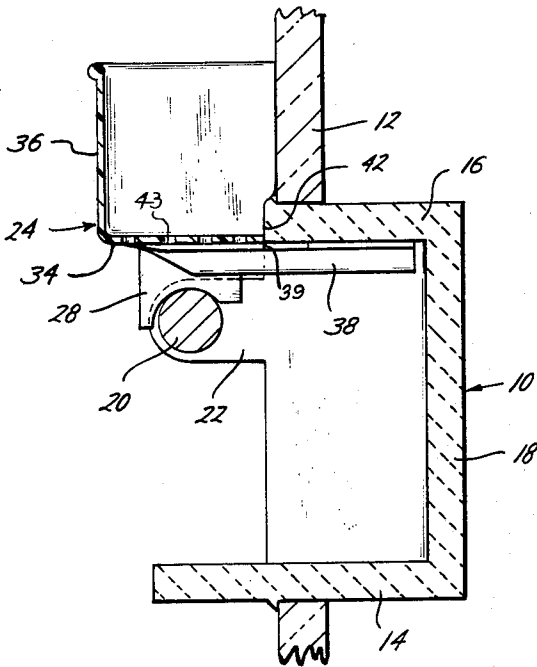


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

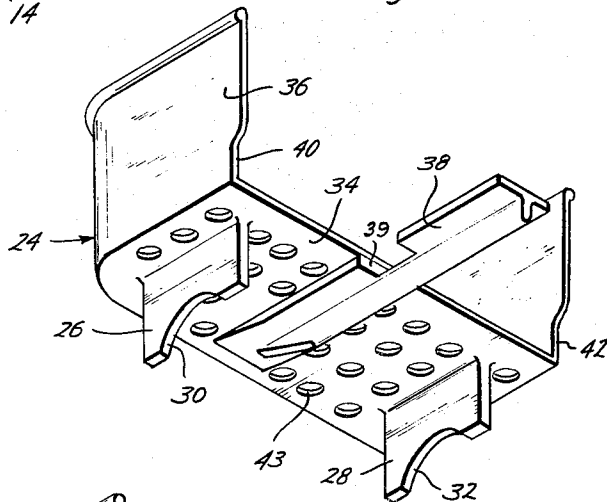
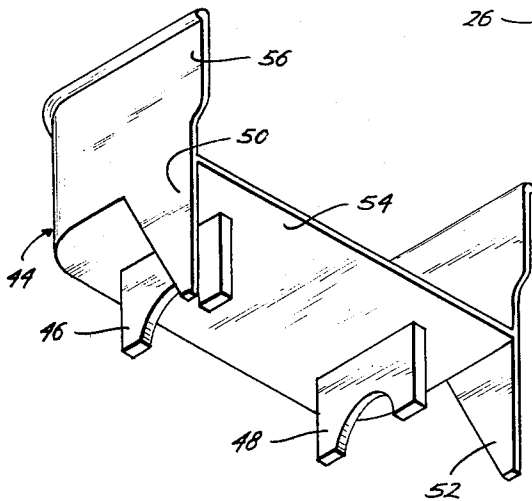


Fig. 3



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ATTORNEYS

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UTILITY SHELF

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The invention concerns a utility shelf, and particularly concerns a utility shelf adapted to hold various articles in convenient position when attached to a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities.

Many homes have soap dishes mounted on or recessed in a wall near bathing facilities, such as bathtubs, shower enclosures, lavatories, sinks, and the like. Particularly in the case of bathtub and shower installations, the soap dish usually comprises a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting the floor and ceiling but leaving an open side to permit entry of soap into the dish, and normally has a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side to provide a hand hold during bathing. The bar, however, is used infrequently for any purpose.

No provision is made normally for a shelf or other means for holding shampoo bottles, cleansers, glasses, razors, brushes, and the like. Consequently, these items are frequently stored on a ledge nearby or on the edges of the bathtub. Lack of convenient space for storing such articles leads to accidents, breakage of the articles, and general inconvenience.

The invention provides a utility shelf which may be removably attached to such a soap dish and which in various embodiments provides a place of convenient storage of one or more of the articles mentioned above. A utility shelf in accordance with the invention may be easily attached to a soap dish as well as easily removed from the soap dish. Furthermore, a utility shelf in accordance with the invention can be of simple and inexpensive construction.

Broadly, a utility shelf in accordance with the invention, which is suitable for removable attachment with a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities, may comprise a rack shaped to accept and support articles thereon, means attached to the rack or otherwise associated therewith for permitting the rack to rest on a bar extending substantially horizontally across a soap dish while limiting movement in relation to the bar other than rotary movement therearound, means extending from the rack for limiting rotary movement around the bar in a direction away from the soap dish by engagement with a stationary object near the soap dish, such as the soap dish itself, and means associated with the rack for limiting rotary movement around the bar in a direction toward the soap dish by engagement with a stationary object near the soap dish, such as the soap dish itself or a wall in which the soap dish is mounted.

Preferably, the means for permitting the rack to rest on a bar across a soap dish comprises at least one leg depending from the rack and having an arcuate recess in the bottom surface thereof shaped to mate with and rest on the bar. Of course, the leg may also have means for tightly engaging the bar, thereby limiting all movement in relation to the bar, but in general this means is unnecessary. In fact, this means may even diminish convenience of use compared with a shelf without such means.

Another embodiment exemplifying a utility shelf in accordance with the invention comprises a rack shaped to accept and support articles such as shampoo bottles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to the rack and shaped to mate with and rest on a bar across the open

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side of the soap dish, and at least one tongue extending from the rack and shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and a wall in which a soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting away from the soap dish by pivoting or rotation around the bar; the rack also being shaped to fit against either or both of the soap dish and the wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent tilting towards the soap dish by pivoting or rotation around the bar.

10 In the drawing:

FIG. 1 is a sectional view of one embodiment of a utility shelf in accordance with the invention mounted on a conventional soap dish;

15 FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the embodiment of a utility shelf shown in section in FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a utility shelf in accordance with the invention.

20 With reference to FIG. 1, a soap dish 10 of conventional construction is mounted in a wall 12, such as a wall near a bathtub. The soap dish 10 comprises a floor 14, a ceiling 16, and a wall 18 in the nature of a partial cylinder, thus leaving an open side in the soap dish 10 to permit placement of soap on the floor 14. A bar 20 extends substantially horizontally across the open side of the soap dish 10 and may be mounted on the soap dish 10 in any suitable manner, such as by the projection 22 from the wall 18 of the soap dish 10 along with a similar projection (not shown) oppositely disposed on the wall 18. Of course, the soap dish may take other forms, which it frequently does for esthetic purposes, but conventionally it comprises a receptacle enclosed except for one side, with a bar across the open side.

25 An embodiment of a utility shelf in accordance with the invention is shown in section in FIG. 1 disposed on the soap dish 10, and in perspective in FIG. 2. The utility shelf there shown comprises a rack 24, a pair of legs 26 and 28 extending downwardly from the rack 24 and shaped to mate with and rest on the bar 20 of the soap dish 10. Preferably, the bottom edges of the legs 26 and 28 contain substantially arcuate recesses 30 and 32 with which to mate with the bar 20, although the legs may be otherwise shaped as long as horizontal sliding movement over the bar 20 is limited. Thus, in the embodiment shown, the utility shelf can exhibit pivotal or rotary movement around the bar 20 insofar as only the legs 26 and 28 and the bar 20 are concerned.

30 The rack 24 comprises a substantially flat rectangular bottom member 34 and a wall 36 extending around three sides of the bottom member 34. The wall 36 may be discontinuous or otherwise broken as long as it keeps articles placed on the bottom member 34 from falling off. In fact, the wall 36 may even be omitted, especially when the bottom member 34 is dish-shaped or otherwise shaped to retain articles placed thereon. Also, the wall 36 may extend completely around the periphery of the bottom member 34 although this construction is unnecessary since the wall 12 in which the soap dish 10 is mounted serves as a retaining wall of the rack 24.

35 A tongue 38 extends rearwardly from the rack 24 and is shaped to fit against the ceiling 16 of the soap dish 10 when the utility shelf 24 is mounted in place. The tongue 38 is an example of a means for limiting the utility shelf from pivoting around the bar 20 and tilting away from (facing away from) the soap dish 10.

40 The rack 24 is shaped to fit against the soap dish 10 or the wall 12, preferably both of them as shown, above the center of the bar 20 to provide thereby an example of a means for limiting rotation around the bar 20 and tilting towards (facing towards) the soap dish 10. Since the ceiling 16 of the soap dish 10 normally extends for a small distance beyond the wall 12 in which the soap

dish 10 is mounted, recesses 40 and 42 are provided in the wall 36 to permit the rack 24 to fit flush against both the soap dish 10 and the wall 12. Of course, if small spaces between the parts can be tolerated, which depends on of course the articles to be stored, a completely flush fitting of these parts is unnecessary. Holes 43 may be located in the rack 24, particularly the bottom member 34, to permit drainage of fluid from the rack 24.

The size of the various parts of the utility shelf, of course, should be constructed to permit easy mounting of the utility shelf on the soap dish 10 by slipping the shelf between the bar 20 and the ceiling 16 and then dropping the shelf in place, and easy removal therefrom by raising the shelf and then withdrawing it from between the bar 20 and ceiling 16. The sizes of various parts preferred to accomplish these steps will be apparent to persons skilled in the art. Slight variations in the structure shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 may also be made to facilitate easy attachment and removal, for example, the tongue 38 may contain a recess 39 on its upper side near the outer edge of the ceiling 16 to facilitate raising of the utility shelf from the bar 20 and, consequently, removal.

With reference to FIG. 3, another embodiment in accordance with the invention is shown. The utility shelf comprises a rack 44, a pair of legs 46 and 48 extending downwardly from the rack 44 and shaped to engage a bar of a soap dish, and a pair of tongues 50 and 52 extending downwardly from the rear portion of the rack 44. The rack 44 comprises a substantially flat bottom member 54 and a wall 56 extending upwardly from the bottom member 54 near its periphery.

The embodiment shown in FIG. 3 functions in a manner similar to the embodiment shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 2. The back edges of the rack 44 prevent rotation when the shelf is placed on a bar by fitting against either the soap dish on which the shelf is placed or the wall in which the soap dish is mounted. Rotation and tilting away from the soap dish is prevented by the tongues 50 and 52 which are shaped to fit against either the wall or walls of the soap dish, the wall in which the soap dish is mounted, or other stationary area below the center of the bar on the soap dish.

Utility shelves in accordance with the invention may be constructed of any suitable material, such as polyethylene, polystyrene, rubber, ceramics, metals, combinations thereof, and the like, although materials known as plastics are preferred. Utility shelves in accordance with the invention may be made as integral units, for example, by molding, or may be made of individual parts and then bonded or otherwise attached together.

What is claimed is:

1. A utility shelf suitable for removable attachment with a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities; said soap dish normally comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; said shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, at least one leg attached to said rack and shaped to rest on a bar across a soap dish and maintain the shelf in position thereon, and at least one tongue extending from said rack and shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and a wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting away from the soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and a wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting toward the soap dish.

2. The shelf defined in claim 1 wherein said rack comprises a substantially flat bottom member and at least one wall extending upwardly therefrom near the periphery thereof.

3. The shelf defined in claim 1 wherein said leg has a substantially arcuate recess in the bottom edge thereof shaped to mate with and rest on said bar.

4. A utility shelf suitable for removable attachment

with a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities; said soap dish normally comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; said shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to said rack and shaped to mate with and rest on a bar across a soap dish, and a tongue extending rearwardly from said rack and shaped to fit against the ceiling of a soap dish to prevent thereby tilting away from the soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and a wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting towards the soap dish.

5. The shelf defined in claim 4 wherein said rack comprises a substantially flat bottom member and at least one wall extending upwardly therefrom near the periphery thereof.

6. The shelf defined in claim 4 wherein said legs have substantially arcuate recesses in the bottom edges thereof shaped to mate with and rest on said bar.

7. A utility shelf suitable for removable attachment with a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities; said soap dish normally comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; said shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to said rack and shaped to mate with and rest on a bar across a soap dish, and at least one tongue extending downwardly from said rack near the rear portion thereof and shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and the wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting away from the soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one of a soap dish and a wall in which the soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting towards the soap dish.

8. The shelf defined in claim 7 wherein said rack comprises a substantially flat bottom member and at least one wall extending upwardly therefrom near the periphery thereof.

9. The shelf defined in claim 7 wherein said legs have substantially arcuate recesses in the bottom edges thereof shaped to mate with and rest on said bar.

10. In combination, a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities, said soap dish comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; and a utility shelf removably attached to said soap dish, said utility shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to said rack and shaped to mate with and rest on said bar across said soap dish, and at least one tongue extending from said rack and shaped to fit against at least one of said soap dish and said wall in which said soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting away from said soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one of said soap dish and said wall in which said soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting towards said soap dish.

11. In combination, a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities, said soap dish comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and said ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; and a utility shelf removably attached thereto, said shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to said rack and shaped to mate with and rest on said bar across said soap dish, and a tongue extending rearwardly from said rack and shaped to fit against said ceiling of said soap dish to prevent thereby tilting away from said soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one

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of said soap dish and said wall in which said soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting towards said soap dish.

12. In combination, a soap dish normally mounted in a wall near bathing facilities, said soap dish comprising a floor, a ceiling, and at least one wall connecting said floor and ceiling but leaving an open side, and having a bar extending substantially horizontally across the open side; and a utility shelf removably attached thereto, said shelf comprising a rack shaped to accept and support articles placed thereon, a pair of legs attached to said rack and shaped to mate with and rest on said bar across said soap dish, and at least one tongue extending downwardly from said rack near the rear portion thereof and shaped to fit against at least one of said soap dish and said wall in which said soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting away from said soap dish; said rack being shaped to fit against at least one of said soap dish and said wall in which said soap dish is mounted to prevent thereby tilting toward said soap dish.

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