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UTENSIL CLEANER

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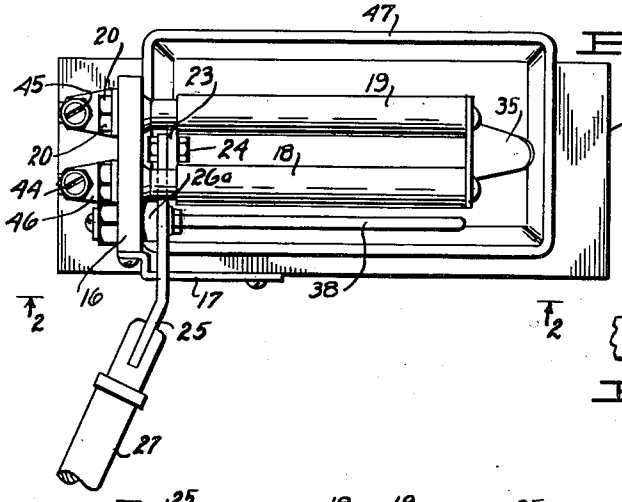


FIG. 1.

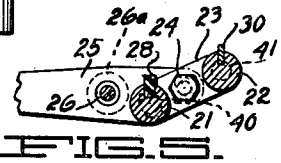


FIG. 5.

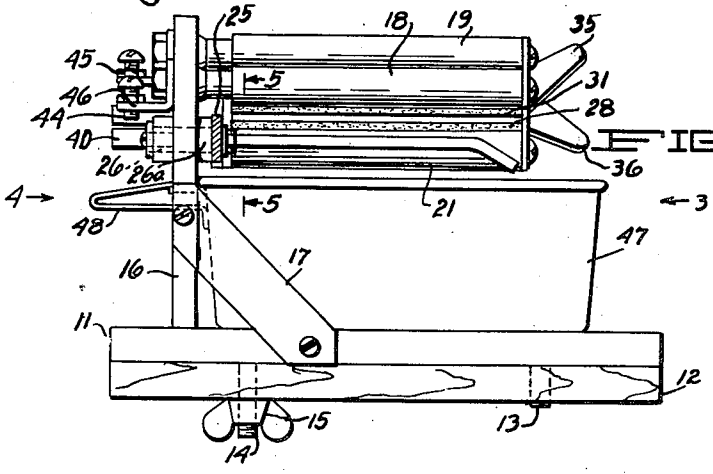


FIG. 2.

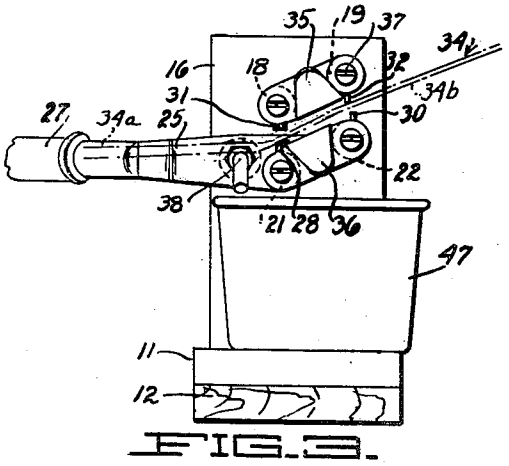
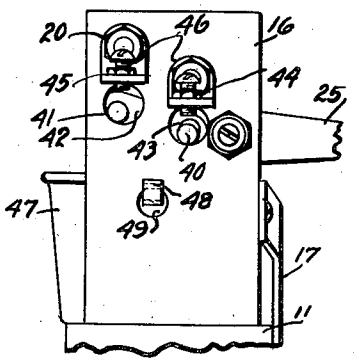


FIG. 3.

FIG. 4.



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UTENSIL CLEANER

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5 Claims. (Cl. 15—105)

This invention relates to utensil cleaners and has particular reference to cleaners for such utensils as spatulas, knives, and other similar articles used for cooking or food handling purposes, especially in restaurants, etc., where such utensils are in more or less continuous use, and require frequent cleaning. Generally this is done by rubbing the utensil with a rag or brush. This not only entails considerable time, but often such cleaning is difficult in cases where grease and food particles become firmly attached to the surface of the utensil.

Accordingly, a principal object of the present invention is to provide a cleaner which will rapidly and effectively clean utensils of the above type.

Another object is to provide a cleaner of the above type which will clean flat ware utensils of different thicknesses and widths.

Another object is to provide a cleaner of the above type which, itself, may be easily and readily cleaned.

A further object is to provide a cleaner of the above type which is simple and economical to manufacture.

The manner in which the above and other objects of the invention are accomplished will be readily understood on reference to the following specification when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a partial plan view of a utensil cleaner embodying a preferred form of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a sectional side view of the cleaner and is taken along the lines 2—2 of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is an end view taken in the direction of the arrow 3 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is an end view taken in the direction of the arrow 4 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is a transverse sectional view through the lower movable cleaner bars and is taken along the line 5—5 of Fig. 2.

Referring to the drawings, the cleaner embodies a base 11 which is removably mounted on a suitable bracket, shelf or the like 12, the latter being preferably secured to a wall or other solid support in a manner not shown. For this purpose, the base is provided with a dowel pin 13 fitted in a mating hole in the bracket and a threaded stud 14 also extending through a mating hole in the bracket. A thumb nut 15 holds the cleaner in place but enables the same to be readily removed for cleaning.

An upright wall 16 is suitably secured to the base 11 and is held rigid relative thereto by an angle brace 17.

A pair of spaced, parallel and horizontally extending cleaner bars 18 and 19 are suitably secured by nuts 20 to the outer side of the wall 16. Directly below the bars 18 and 19 is a second pair of similarly disposed but movable cleaner bars 21 and 22.

Referring to Fig. 5 in particular, the ends of the bars 21 and 22 adjacent to the wall 16 are integrally secured to opposite ends of a short cross head 23. The latter is pivoted, by means of a pivot pin 24 to the rearwardly extending end of an actuating lever 25. This lever has a stud 26 which extends through a bearing 26a formed

in the wall 16 to form a pivotal support for the lever. A handle, partially shown at 27, is secured to the forward end of the lever 25 to facilitate rocking of the lever to raise the bars 21 and 22.

As will be seen in Fig. 5, the bar 21 is provided with an upwardly opening slot along the length thereof, in which is suitably secured a wiper blade 28 of rubber, neoprene, or similar material which is capable of resisting heat, grease and oil. Likewise the bar 22 is provided with a similar slot along the length thereof, in which is suitably secured a scraper blade 30 of steel or similar hard material. Similarly, the bar 18 is provided with a downwardly opening slot (not shown) along the length thereof in which is secured a wiper blade 31 of rubber or the like, while the scraper bar 19 is provided with a slot in which is secured a blade 32 of metal or similar material.

It will be noted that the pairs of blades 18, 31 and 30, 32 are directly opposite each other. Thus, when a spatula, indicated by the dot-dash lines 34, or similar flat ware utensil, is placed between the pairs of blades, the handle 27 pressed downward to raise the lower blades, and the spatula then drawn forwardly, the blades will become effective to scrape and wipe both surfaces thereof. That is, as the spatula is drawn forwardly (to the left in Fig. 3), the surfaces thereof will first be scraped by the relatively hard scraping edges presented by blades 30 and 32. Then, the wiping edges presented by the rubber blades 28 and 31 will become effective to wipe off any remaining grease or food particles which may be left. Also, the rubber edges, because of their resiliency, embrace the edges of the spatula and thus clean such edges.

In order to guide a spatula or other article laterally between opposed ones of the bars, deflector plates 35 and 36 are provided. The former is attached to the ends of the bars 18 and 19 by screws 37 while the latter is similarly secured to the ends of the bars 21 and 22. The deflector plates have diverging guide surfaces which guide the spatula in place.

Also, a guide bar 38 is secured to the lever stud 26 and extends parallel to the various scraping and wiping bars. The position of the guide bar 38 is so arranged as to aid in guiding the spatula and to support the same in place in the event the spatula is left or stored in its position shown in Fig. 3. The right hand end of the bar 38 inclines downwardly so as not to interfere with guiding the utensil into position.

In order to limit closing of the bars for different thicknesses of utensils, the lower bars 21 and 22 have reduced shank portions 40 and 41, respectively, which extend through enlarged openings 42 in the wall 16. The shank 41 also extends through an elongated opening 43 in the lever 25, permitting the bars 21 and 22 to rock slightly relative to the lever. The shanks 40 and 41 are adapted to limit against the ends of adjustable stop screws 44 and 45 threaded in brackets 46 which are mounted on the ends of bars 18 and 19 and held in place by nuts 20.

Since the stop screws 44 and 45 are located some distance laterally from one side of the lever 25, they are effective to cause the lower bars 21 and 22 to assume a parallel relation with respect to the upper bars 18 and 19 when the latter are raised, in spite of any forces to the contrary.

A pan 47 is provided to receive scraped or wiped food particles and the like removed by the blades. The pan rests on the base 11 and is removably held in place by a spring catch 48. The latter is substantially U-shaped, the longer leg of which is suitably secured to one end of the pan. The catch extends through a hole 49 in the wall 16 and the shorter leg thereof abuts against the

side of the wall to lock the pan in place. However, by depressing the shorter leg, it will become aligned with the hole **49** to enable removal of the pan to empty its contents.

An important feature of my invention is the provision for storing a spatula when not in use. When the spatula is placed in the device, as indicated at **34**, it rests on the bar **38**. In this position, the spatula tends to rock counter-clockwise because of the weight of its handle portion partially shown at **34***a*. Thus, the blade portion **34***b* of the spatula engages the upper scraping blade **32** and normally lies clear of wiping blade **31**. When the handle **27** is depressed, the various blades grip the spatula blade portion, rocking the spatula clockwise a slight amount about the blade **32** as a pivot. This permits the spatula to be drawn out to the left in Fig. 3 so that it is cleaned as it is removed from the device.

Having thus described the invention, what I desire to secure by United States Letters Patent is:

1. A cleaner for utensils of the character described comprising a pair of upper and lower elements of relatively hard material presenting opposed scraping edges, a second pair of upper and lower elements of relatively soft resilient material presenting opposed wiping edges, said edges being effective to clean the surfaces of a utensil drawn there-between, a cross head supporting said lower elements for movement toward and away from said upper elements, and a manually operable actuator pivotally connected to said cross head intermediate said lower elements for moving said lower elements.

2. A cleaner for utensils of the character described comprising a pair of upper and lower elements of relatively hard material presenting opposed scraping edges, a second pair of upper and lower elements of relatively soft resilient material presenting opposed wiping edges, said edges being effective to clean the surfaces of a utensil drawn therebetween, a cross head supporting said lower elements adjacent one end of each thereof for movement toward and away from said upper elements, a

manually operable actuator pivotally connected to said cross head intermediate said lower elements for moving said lower elements, and deflectors carried by said elements at the ends thereof opposite said cross head for guiding a utensil into position between said upper and lower elements.

3. A cleaner according to claim 1 comprising means for adjustably limiting the extent of movement of said lower elements toward the respective ones of said upper elements.

4. A cleaner for utensils of the character described comprising a pair of upper and lower elements of relatively hard material presenting opposed scraping edges, a second pair of upper and lower elements of relatively soft resilient material presenting opposed wiping edges, said edges being effective to clean the surfaces of a utensil drawn therebetween, a cross head supporting said lower elements adjacent one end of each thereof for movement toward and away from said upper elements, a manually operable actuator connected to said cross head for moving said movable elements, extensions on said movable elements projecting to the side of said cross head opposite said movable elements, and stops engageable by said extensions whereby to limit the extent of movement of said movable elements toward the respective ones of said pairs.

5. A cleaner according to claim 1 comprising an elongated guide element extending to one side of said first mentioned elements and having a guide surface substantially in line with said edges of said upper elements and spaced therefrom for guiding a utensil along said edges.

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