ASH TRAY FOR USE WITH DISPOSABLE ASH COLLECTION VESSEL

Inventor: Randy Paul Green, Austell, GA (US)

Correspondence Address:
COURSEY IP LAW, P.C.
POST OFFICE BOX 29509
ATLANTA, GA 30359

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ABSTRACT

An ash tray for use with disposable ash collection vessels that receive and collect cigarette and/or cigar ashes and butts. The vessels may be inserted and removed from the ash tray to provide for ash and butt collection and disposal. In an exemplary embodiment, the vessels comprise previously used beverage cups that might otherwise be disposed of in landfills or thrown on the ground as litter. The ash tray comprises a lid that securely engages a base thereof to substantially prevent the escape of smoke therefrom. The ash tray further comprises multiple tapered funnels with flanges that extend into the vessels to direct ashes and butts into the vessels and to significantly block the escape of smoke therefrom. The ash tray still further comprises multiple slots for receiving advertising panels that advertise the goods and/or services of vendors, making the ash tray particularly suitable for use in commercial establishments.
If you smoke, try a low-tar, low-nicotine cigarette today!
ASH TRAY FOR USE WITH DISPOSABLE ASH COLLECTION VESSEL

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates, generally, to the field of ash trays and, more specifically, to ash trays for use with disposable ash collection vessels.

BACKGROUND

[0002] For many years, smokers have utilized ash trays to collect the ashes from their cigarettes or cigars. Many of such ash trays comprise recesses into which ashes fall or are knocked off from cigarettes and/or cigars. The recesses also receive the butts of cigarettes and/or cigars once smokers have finished smoking. After becoming present in such recesses, the ashes and/or butts may continue to emit smoke into the environment around the ash tray. Because such smoke can be very problematic and detrimental to not only the smokers’ health, but also to non-smokers present in the area proximate the ash tray, there is a need for ash trays that attempt to curtail the emission of smoke from such ashes and/or butts.

[0003] In a somewhat seemingly unrelated problem, aluminum beverage cans have been used with great success by beverage manufacturers for many years to deliver their beverage products to consumers. However, once the beverage products are consumed from the beverage cans, consumers are faced with the dilemma of what to do with the empty beverage cans. Most of the time, the empty beverage cans are disposed of as garbage and find their way to landfills. Sometimes, the empty beverage cans are recycled so that their aluminum may be recovered and utilized to produce new beverage cans or other products. Still other times, the empty beverage cans are thrown on the sides of roads or in other areas creating a litter problem.

[0004] Therefore, there exists a need for an ash tray that substantially reduces the escape of smoke from butts and ashes to the surrounding environment, for a product that makes use of empty beverage cans, and that addresses the above-described, and other, problems, difficulties, and/or shortcomings.

SUMMARY

[0005] Broadly described, the present invention comprises an ash tray for use with one or more disposable ash collection vessels that receive and collect cigarette and/ash ashes and butts. The disposable ash collection vessels may be inserted and removed from the ash tray as necessary to provide for ash and butt collection and disposal. Generally, in an exemplary embodiment, the disposable ash collection vessels comprise previously used beverage cans that might otherwise be disposed of in landfill or thrown on the ground as litter. However, it should be understood that the scope of the present invention is not intended to be limited to an ash tray for use with beverage cans only. Instead, the ash tray of the present invention may also be used with other forms of disposable ash collection vessels.

[0006] According to the exemplary embodiment, the ash tray comprises a body having a base that includes a plurality of curbs therein defining receptacles for receiving a plurality of disposable ash collection vessels. Indicators are present proximate the curbs to assist a user of the ash tray in appropriately orienting the disposable ash collection vessels when inserted into the receptacles. The base also includes a plurality of slots at the sides thereof that are adapted to hold advertising panels that may be easily inserted into and removed from the slots. The advertising panels generally include advertisements for various goods and/or services of vendors.

[0007] The ash tray of the exemplary embodiment further comprises a lid that securely engages and overlaps the base to significantly reduce the likelihood that smoke may escape from within the ash tray. The lid includes a plurality of sloping wall sections that define a recess for receiving ashes and for directing the received ashes toward a plurality of holes present in the lid at the bottom of the recess. The lid further includes a plurality of funnels having tapered walls that extend from the holes at the bottom of the recess and into respective disposable ash collection vessels present within the ash tray’s base. The tapered walls of the funnels are configured to fit snugly within the openings of the respective disposable ash collection vessels when the lid is engaged with the ash tray’s base, thereby substantially occluding the openings of the respective disposable ash collection vessels. The funnels also have flanges extending outward from the tapered walls such that the flanges reside against the tops of the respective disposable ash collection vessels when the lid is engaged with the ash tray’s base. The flanges are sized so as to cover and block any gap that might exist between the tapered walls of the funnels and the openings of the disposable ash collection vessels. By virtue of the tapered walls and flanges of the funnels substantially blocking the openings of the disposable ash collection vessels, the ash tray significantly reduces the amount of smoke that may escape from the disposable ash collection vessels into the internal cavity of the ash tray formed by the base and lid. Additionally, by substantially eliminating the escape of smoke from the disposable ash collection vessels, smoke is retained within the vessels to produce an oxygen-depleted environment that tends to eliminate further combustion of ashes and/or butts collected within the vessels.

[0008] Other advantages and benefits of the present invention will become apparent upon reading and understanding the present specification when taken in conjunction with the appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 displays a side elevational view of an ash tray, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment, for use with one or more disposable ash collection vessels and in which no advertising panels are present.

[0010] FIG. 2 displays a top plan view of the ash tray of FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 3 displays a top plan view of a base of the ash tray of FIG. 1.

[0012] FIG. 4 displays a top plan view of a lid of the ash tray of FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 5 displays a sectional view of the ash tray of FIG. 2 taken along lines 5-5.

[0014] FIG. 6 displays a side elevational view of an ash tray, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment, for use with one or more disposable ash collection vessels and with an advertising panel present.
FIG. 7 displays a side elevational view of the ash tray of FIG. 6 showing the advertising panel being inserted or removed therefrom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring now to the drawings in which like numerals represent like elements or steps throughout the several views, FIG. 1 displays a side elevational view of an ash tray 100 for use with one or more disposable ash collection vessels 102. The ash tray 100, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment, comprises a body 104 having a first portion 106 and a second portion 108 disposed substantially atop and movable relative to the first portion 106. The first and second portions 106, 108 may also be synchronously referred to herein, respectively, as a base 106 and a lid 108. As described further herein, the lid 108 generally receives ashes from a cigarette or cigar and directs them into a disposable ash collection vessel 102. Typically, the lid 108 resides atop the base 106, but is removable from the base 106 so as to enable a user to insert and remove advertising panels 154 (see FIGS. 6 and 7) from the base 106 and to allow a user to insert and remove one or more disposable ash collection vessels 102 relative to the base 106. The base 106 holds a disposable ash collection vessel 102 for the receipt of ashes from the cigarette or cigar directed thereto by the lid 108 and collects the ashes for subsequent disposal via the removal and disposal of the disposable ash collection vessel 102. According to the exemplary embodiment, the disposable ash collection vessel 102 comprise beverage cans from which the beverage has been substantially consumed or emptied. Generally, the disposable ash collection vessel 102 include soft drink beverage cans, beer cans, punch cans, or other similar cans or containers having a substantially upright cylindrical shape and an opening in an end thereof extending typically from a position near a central longitudinal axis of the vessel toward a lateral wall thereof. However, it should be noted that the scope of the present invention is intended to encompass forms of ash collection vessels 102 other than beverage cans and ash collection vessels 102 that may or may not be substantially empty and that might include a substantially non-flammable beverage or other substance therein.

The body 104 of the ash tray 100 is generally formed from a plastic or similar material that is substantially non-combustible and resistant to heat produced by a cigarette or cigar or by combustion of a cigarette or cigar butt therein. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment, the body 104, base 106, and lid 108 have a substantially rectangular shape when viewed in top plan view as in the top plan view of FIG. 2. More particularly, the body 104, base 106, and lid 108 have a substantially square shape in such exemplary embodiment when viewed in top plan view. The base 106, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, has a plurality of vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D that form sides 112A, 112B, 112C, 112D thereof. Vertical wall 110A is opposed to vertical wall 110C and vertical wall 110B is opposed to vertical wall 110D. The vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D are arranged such that: vertical wall 110A adjoins and forms respective corners 114B, 114A with vertical walls 110B, 110D; vertical wall 110B adjoins and forms respective corners 114D, 114C with vertical walls 110A, 110C; vertical wall 110C adjoins and forms respective corners 114C, 114D with vertical walls 110B, 110D; and, vertical wall 110D adjoins and forms respective corners 114A, 114B with vertical walls 110A, 110C. The base 106 also has a horizontal wall 116. Each vertical wall 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D adjoins the horizontal wall 116. Generally, the horizontal wall 116 is adapted to reside atop and rest upon the surface of a bar, a table, or other similar supporting structure found in a bar, restaurant, commercial establishment, residence, or other location in which the ash tray 100 is present.

The vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D each have respective inner surfaces 118A, 118B, 118C, 118D and respective outer surfaces 120A, 120B, 120C, 120D. Similarly, the horizontal wall 116 has an inner surface 122 and an outer surface 124. Generally, inner surfaces 118A, 118B, 118C, 118D, 122 and outer surfaces 120A, 120B, 120C, 120D, 124 comprise substantially planar surfaces. Together, the inner surfaces 118A, 118B, 118C, 118D of vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D and the inner surface 122 of horizontal wall 116 define a cavity 126 within base 106. Vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D also define an opening 128 substantially opposed to horizontal wall 116 that is in fluid communication with cavity 126. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment and during use, the cavity 126 receives one or more disposable ash collection vessels 102 therein. Opening 128 enables such disposable ash collection vessels 102 to be inserted into or removed from the cavity 126 when lid 108 has been removed from and is not positioned atop base 106.


In accordance with the exemplary embodiment and as seen in the top plan view of the base 106 displayed in FIG. 3, the base 106 still further includes a plurality of indicators
140A, 140B, 140C, 140D that provide an alignment aid for use in appropriately orienting respective disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D for receiving a respective funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D. As illustrated in FIG. 3, each disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D, respectively, has a longitudinal axis 142A, 142B, 142C, 142D and an opening 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D defined in an upper end 146A, 146B, 146C, 146D thereof that is offset relative to the longitudinal axis 142A, 142B, 142C, 142D. During insertion of a disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D into a respective receptacle 136A, 136B, 136C, 136D, the disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D may be rotated about its respective longitudinal axis 142A, 142B, 142C, 142D in the rotational directions indicated by arrows 148A, 148B, 148C, 148D in order for a respective funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D of lid 108 to extend through such openings 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D and into such disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 5, during placement of the lid 108 atop the base 106 and when lid 108 is in position atop base 106. The plurality of indicators 140A, 140B, 140C, 140D may be formed as arrows molded into or applied to the inner surface 122 of horizontal wall 116 at positions adjacent the plurality of curbs 130A, 130B, 130C, 130D adjacent for use in such orientation of disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D. However, it should be understood that in other exemplary embodiments, the indicators 140A, 140B, 140C, 140D may comprise symbols or indicia of other forms integrable with or applied to the inner surface 122 of horizontal wall 116, to curbs 130A, 130B, 130C, 130D, or to other structures of base 106.

[0021] Turning now to the sides 112A, 112B, 112C, 112D of the base 106, each of the vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D has a shoulder member 150A, 150B, 150C, 150D as displayed in FIGS. 1, 3 and 5. Each respective shoulder member 150A, 150B, 150C, 150D extends vertically proximate each corner 114 formed in part by its respective vertical wall 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D and horizontally substantially between such corners 114 proximate horizontal wall 116 such that each respective shoulder member 150A, 150B, 150C, 150D extends along three sides of respective vertical wall 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D. Each shoulder member 150A, 150B, 150C, 150D defines a respective slot 152A, 152B, 152C, 152D that also extends along three sides of its respective vertical wall 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D. The slots 152A, 152B, 152C, 152D are each adapted to receive a respective advertising panel 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D as illustrated in the side elevational views of FIGS. 6 and 7. Generally, each advertising panel 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D is formed of relatively stiff paper or cardboard of a thickness and size selected to fit within a slot 152, and includes advertising printed thereon that advertises one or more products or services. It should be understood, however, that each advertising panel 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D may be manufactured from other materials. Some of the advertising panels 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D may include advertising for the same product or service, or each advertising panel 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D may include advertising for a product or service that is different than that included on the other advertising panels 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D. Because advertisements on each advertising panel 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D may be sold or leased to vendors, the ash tray 100 is capable of generating on-going advertising revenue from such vendors.

[0022] As illustrated in FIG. 7 with respect to vertical wall 110B, advertising panel 154B may be inserted or removed from slot 152B by removing lid 108 from base 106 and by moving the advertising panel 154B relative to vertical wall 110B in a direction indicated by arrows 156 appropriate for inserting or removing the advertising panel 154B or to or from slot 152B. After the insertion of advertising panel 154B into slot 152B and replacement of lid 108 atop base 106, the ash tray 100 appears as illustrated in FIG. 6. Each advertising panel 154B residing adjacent to and substantially hiding the outer surface 120B of vertical wall 110B. Other advertising panels 154A, 154C, 154D may be similarly inserted and removed from respective slots 152A, 152C, 152D of vertical walls 110A, 110C, 110D.

[0023] The lid 108 of the ash tray 100, as displayed in FIGS. 1, 2, 4 and 5, comprises a plurality of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D having inner surfaces 174A, 174B, 174C, 174D and outer surfaces 176A, 176B, 176C, 176D. Multi-section vertical wall 170A is opposed to multi-section vertical wall 170C and multi-section vertical wall 170B is opposed to multi-section vertical wall 170D. Multi-section walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D each have a respective first vertical section 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D and a respective second vertical section 180A, 180B, 180C, 180D that is offset and extends relative to its respective first vertical section 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D to form respective shoulders 182A, 182B, 182C, 182D. When the lid 108 is positioned atop 106 atop the base 106 of the ash tray 100, the vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D of the base 106 extend into respective shoulders 182A, 182B, 182C, 182D such that first vertical sections 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D are located atop and in contact with the tops of respective vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D and the outer surfaces 176A, 176B, 176C, 176D of the second vertical sections 180A, 180B, 180C, 180D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D are adjacent to and in contact with upper portions of the inner surfaces 118A, 118B, 118C, 118D of respective vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D of the base 106 forming a tight friction fit that resists movement and removal of the lid 108 from the base 106. Due at least in part to such fit and the overlapping of the second vertical sections 180A, 180B, 180C, 180D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D with respective vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D, the ash tray 100 substantially resists the escape of smoke that may be present within cavities 126, 195, thereby protecting persons near the ash tray 100 from second-hand smoke. Also, by substantially containing and retaining smoke within cavities 126, 195, such fit and overlapping produce an environment within cavities 126, 195 having a depleted oxygen concentration that is not conducive to combustion of any cigarette butts that may be present within a disposable ash collection vessel 102, thereby contributing to the extinguishing of any such cigarette butts and enhancing safety. Additionally, such fit and overlapping serve to retain any advertising panels 154A, 154B, 154C, 154D that may be present in respective slots 152B, 152C, 152D of vertical walls 110B, 110C, 110D.
Multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D are arranged such that: multi-section vertical wall 170A adjoins and forms respective corners 184A, 184B with multi-section vertical walls 170D, 170B; multi-section vertical wall 170B adjoins and forms respective corners 184B, 184C with multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170C; multi-section vertical wall 170C adjoins and forms respective corners 184A, 184D with multi-section vertical walls 170B, 170D; and, multi-section vertical wall 170D adjoins and forms respective corners 184A, 184D with multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170C. The first vertical sections 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D, respectively, form sides 186A, 186B, 186C, 186D of the lid 108. When the lid 108 is present atop the base 106 of the ash tray 100, the multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D of the lid 108 are oriented relative to the vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D of the base 106 with: the first vertical section 178A of multi-section vertical wall 170A being substantially coplanar with vertical wall 110A, corner 184A being substantially collinear with corner 114A, and side 186A being substantially coplanar with side 112A; the first vertical section 178B of multi-section vertical wall 170B being substantially coplanar with vertical wall 110B, corner 184B being substantially collinear with corner 114B, and side 186B being substantially coplanar with side 112B; the first vertical section 178C of multi-section vertical wall 170C being substantially coplanar with vertical wall 110C, corner 184C being substantially collinear with corner 114C, and side 186C being substantially coplanar with side 112C; and, the first vertical section 178D of multi-section vertical wall 170D being substantially coplanar with vertical wall 110D, corner 184D being substantially collinear with corner 114D, and side 186D being substantially coplanar with side 112D.

The lid 108 of the ash tray 100, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment and as depicted in FIGS. 1, 2, 4 and 5, further includes a multi-section upper wall 188 that defines a recess 190 for receiving ashes from a cigarette or cigar and for directing received ashes to a disposable ash collection vessel 102. The multi-section upper wall 188 includes a horizontal section 192 that forms the base of recess 190 and a plurality of sloping sections 194A, 194B, 194C, 194D that each extend between a respective first vertical section 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D of a multi-section vertical wall 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D and horizontal section 192. The plurality of sloping sections 194A, 194B, 194C, 194D are appropriately sloped so as to direct ashes in a generally downward direction toward horizontal section 192. Together, the multi-section upper wall 188 and the multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D define a cavity 195 within the lid 108. Each sloping section 194A, 194B, 194C, 194D and each respective vertical section 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D of each respective multi-section vertical wall 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D define a depression 196A, 196B, 196C, 196D. Generally, the depressions 196A, 196B, 196C, 196D are appropriately sized for receiving and holding a cigarette or cigar therein.


This embodiment additionally includes, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment, a plurality of funnels 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D that depend from the inner surface 200 of the horizontal section 192 of the multi-section upper wall 188. Each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D is generally associated in one-to-one correspondence with a respective quadrant 208A, 208B, 208C, 208D of recess 190. Each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D comprises a tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D having a first end 214A, 214B, 214C, 214D adjoined to the inner surface 200 of the horizontal section 192 of the multi-section upper wall 188 and a second end 216A, 216B, 216C, 216D distant therefrom. The tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D of each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D has a cross-sectional shape that corresponds to the shape of an opening 144 in a disposable ash collection vessel 102. Also, the tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D of each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D defines a bore 220A, 220B, 220C, 220D that extends between the first end 214A, 214B, 214C, 214D and the second end 216A, 216B, 216C, 216D thereof. The bores 220A, 220B, 220C, 220D of each tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D is in fluid communication with respective holes 202A, 202B, 202C, 202D and recess 190, and directs ashes and cigarette butts into a disposable ash collection vessel 102 when the ash tray 100 is used by a smoker. Additionally, each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D has a flange 222A, 222B, 222C, 222D extending outward from its tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D and shaped to correspond to the opening 144 of a disposable ash collection vessel 102, but sized to be slightly larger than such opening 144.
rests atop an upper end 146A, 146B, 146C, 146D of a respective ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D and adjacent to a respective opening 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D of such disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D, thereby further substantially preventing any smoke from escaping the disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D. It should be noted that by substantially filling and occluding the openings 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D of respective disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D and trapping smoke therein, the funnels 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D produce an oxygen-depleted environment within the disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D that is not conducive to further combustion of cigarette or cigar butts present therein. It should also be noted that if smoke does escape from a disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D into cavities 126, 195 of the base 106 and lid 108 during the ash tray’s use, the smoke is typically trapped within cavities 126, 195 by the overlapping arrangement of the base 106 and lid 108.

To configure the ash tray 100 for use by a smoker, the lid 108 is removed from the base 106 by pulling the lid 108 in a generally upward direction. Then, disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D are inserted into respective receptacles 136A, 136B, 136C, 136D and rotated about their respective longitudinal axis 142A, 142B, 142C, 142D so that their openings 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D are substantially aligned with a respective indicator 140A, 140B, 140C, 140D. Subsequently, the lid 108 is replaced atop the base 106 and pressed in a generally downward direction such that first vertical sections 178A, 178B, 178C, 178D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D are located atop and in contact with the tops of respective vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D and the outer surfaces 176A, 176B, 176C, 176D of the second vertical sections 180A, 180B, 180C, 180D of multi-section vertical walls 170A, 170B, 170C, 170D are adjacent to and in contact with upper portions of the inner surfaces 118A, 118B, 118C, 118D of respective vertical walls 110A, 110B, 110C, 110D of the base 106. As the lid 108 is replaced, the tapered wall 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D of each funnel 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D extends through the opening 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D of and progressively deeper into a respective disposable ash collection vessel 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D. As the taper C walls 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D extend progressively deeper, the tapered walls 212A, 212B, 212C, 212D interact with the upper ends 146A, 146B, 146C, 146D and openings 144A, 144B, 144C, 144D of the respective disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D to further appropriately rotate and align the disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D within respective receptacles 136A, 136B, 136C, 136D and relative to the funnels 210A, 210B, 210C, 210D.

To replace disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D, the lid 108 is removed from the base 106 as described above. Then, the existing disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D are removed from receptacles 136A, 136B, 136C, 136D by moving them in a generally upward direction and disposed of. Next, new disposable ash collection vessels 102A, 102B, 102C, 102D are positioned within the receptacles 136A, 136B, 136C, 136D and the lid 108 is replaced atop the base 106 as described above. Then, the ash tray 100 is then ready for use by a smoker.

Whereas the present invention has been described in detail above with respect to an exemplary embodiment thereof, it should be understood that variations and modifications might be effected within the spirit and scope of the present invention, as described herein before and as defined in the appended claims.

1. An apparatus for receiving and collecting ashes from a cigarette or cigar, said apparatus comprising:
   a body defining a cavity therein for receiving a disposable ash collection vessel, said body further defining a passageway for enabling the passage of ashes from a cigarette or cigar therethrough and for directing said ashes into said disposable ash collection vessel; and
   a member disposed within said cavity for positioning said disposable ash collection vessel in a position relative to said passageway appropriate for said disposable ash collection vessel to receive said ashes from said passageway.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said member is adapted to receive said disposable ash collection vessel and to allow said disposable ash collection vessel to be subsequently removed therefrom.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said member is adapted to receive said disposable ash collection vessel and to enable replacement of said disposable ash collection vessel with a different disposable ash collection vessel.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said passageway is configured to extend into said disposable ash collection vessel.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said disposable ash collection vessel comprises a beverage can.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus further comprises an indicator for aiding in the appropriate orientation of said disposable ash collection vessel relative to said passageway for said disposable ash collection vessel to receive said ashes from said passageway.

7. An apparatus for receiving and collecting ashes from a cigarette or cigar, said apparatus comprising:
   a first portion defining a cavity for receiving therein at least a substantial portion of a previously opened beverage can having a substantially cylindrical shape, a void therein, and a top defining an opening therein enabling access to said void, said first portion comprising a curb protruding into said cavity and formed to cooperatively receive and hold said previously opened beverage can in a substantially vertically upright orientation with said top residing in a substantially horizontal plane; and
   a second portion movable relative to said first portion and having a wall defining a recess for receiving ashes from a cigarette or cigar and further defining a channel extending through said wall from said recess, said second portion having a tube depending from said wall in communication with said channel, said tube being adapted to extend through said opening in said top of said previously opened beverage can and into said previously opened beverage can;
   wherein said channel and said tube are configured to enable said ashes to pass through said channel and subsequently through said tube into said void of said previously opened beverage can.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said tube is adapted to extend into said void of said previously opened beverage can to a distance of between 0.25 inch and 1.0 inch as measured from an internal surface of said top.

9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein first portion further comprises an alignment aid proximate said curb for aiding in
the orientation of said opening of said previously opened beverage can for receipt of said tube.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said curb is configured to allow rotation of said previously opened beverage can while within said curb for alignment of said opening with said alignment aid.

11. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said first portion further comprises a wall, and wherein said wall of said second portion is configured to cooperatively mate with said wall of said first portion.

12. An apparatus for receiving and collecting ashes from a cigarette or cigar, said apparatus comprising:
   a base for receiving an ash collection vessel; and
   a lid adapted to cooperatively engage said base, said lid having a funnel depending therefrom for directing ashes into an ash collection vessel.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said funnel is adapted to extend into an opening of an ash collection vessel received by said base.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said funnel has a tapered wall configured to aid in orienting an ash collection vessel received by said base relative to said lid.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said funnel has a flange extending therefrom for engaging a top of an ash collection vessel received by said base.

16. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said lid and said base are further adapted to define a cavity in conjunction with said base when said lid is engaged to said base, said lid and said base being further adapted to substantially prevent the escape of smoke from within said cavity when said lid is engaged to said base.

17. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said funnel has a flange extending therefrom, and wherein said funnel and said flange cooperate to substantially occlude an opening in an ash collection vessel received by said base when said lid is engaged to said base.

18. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said base has a retaining member for receiving an advertising panel in an orientation visible external to said base.

19. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said base has an indicator to aid in orienting an ash collection vessel received by said base relative to said lid.

20. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the ash collection vessel comprises a disposable vessel having a void therein.

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