

- [54] CABINET FOR A WATER COOLER
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- [58] Field of Search 312/138 A, 236; 62/397, 62/389, 448; 165/77

[57] ABSTRACT

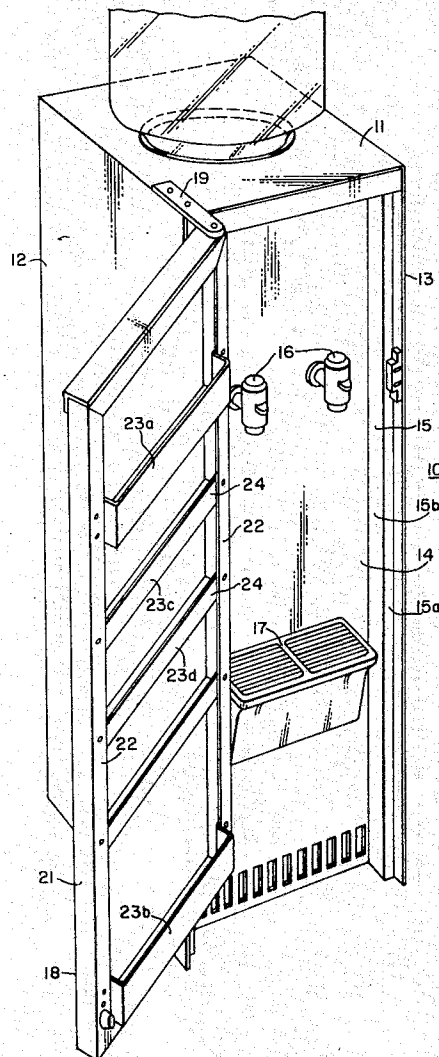
A water cooler is provided having a cabinet including a front vertical panel through which dispensing faucets extend and which support a drip trough spaced below the faucets and extending outwardly a sufficient distance to catch any water dripping from them. A front door is provided hingedly attached to the cabinet to move from an open position permitting access to the faucets to a closed position generally overlying the front panel. The inner face of the door supports horizontal storage shelves extending toward the panel to utilize the space therebetween for storage. The shelves in the space between the faucet and the drip trough extend rearwardly a distance short of interfering with water dripping from the faucets so that articles stored on these shelves will be kept in a position free of intercepting any of the occasional drips which may occur.

[56] References Cited

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10 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures



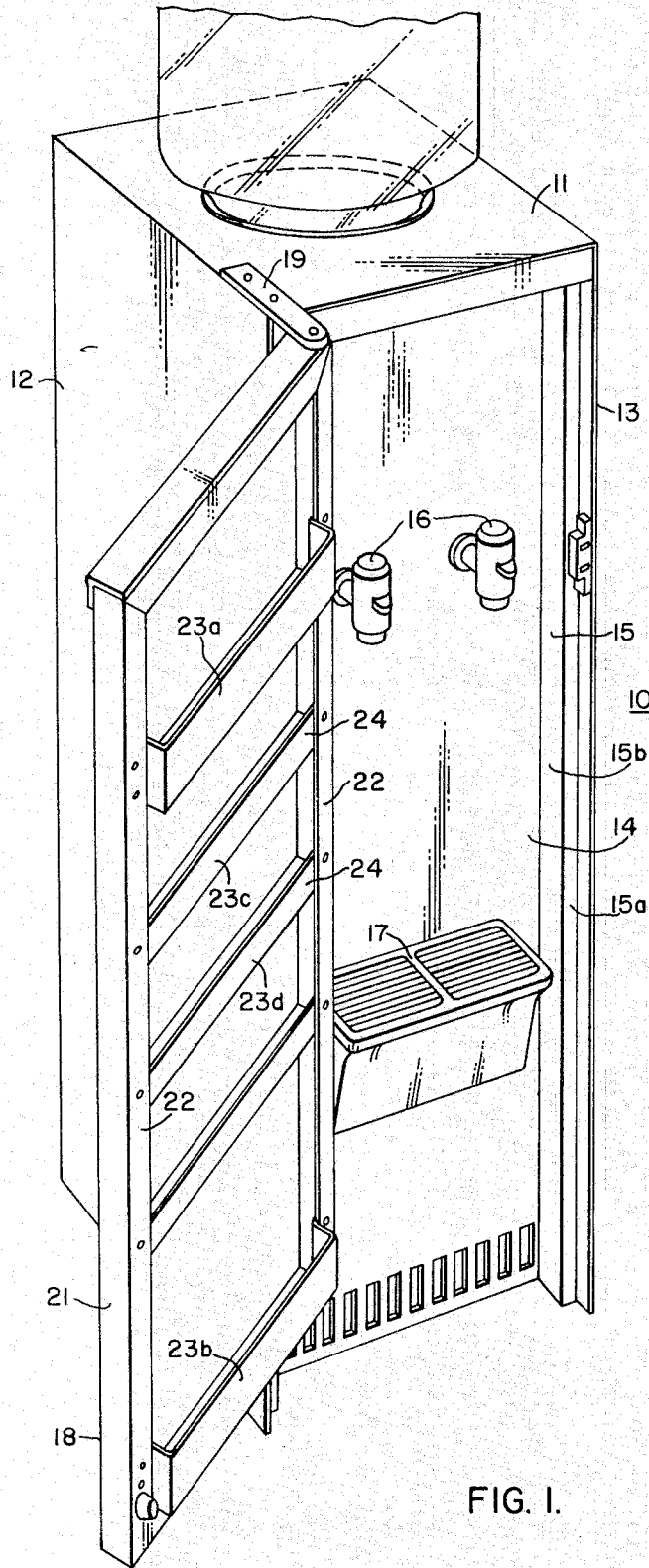


FIG. I.

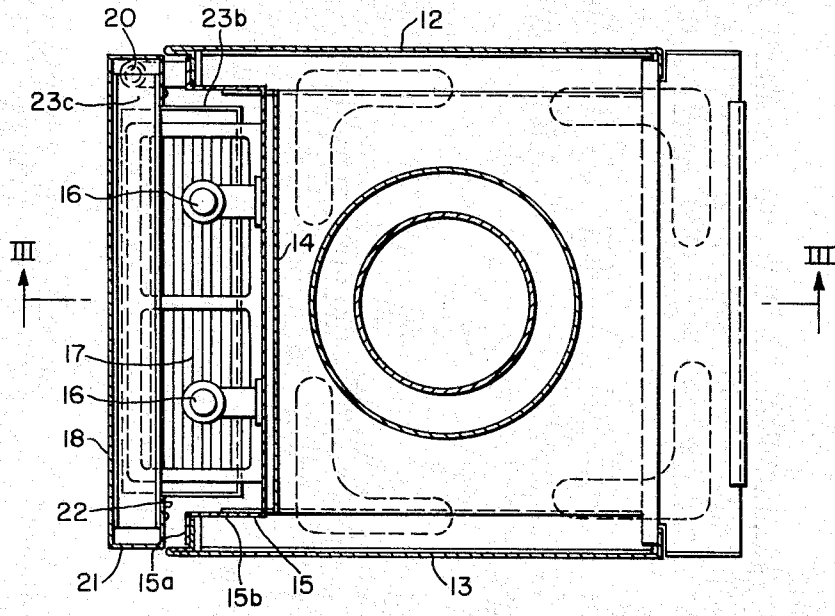
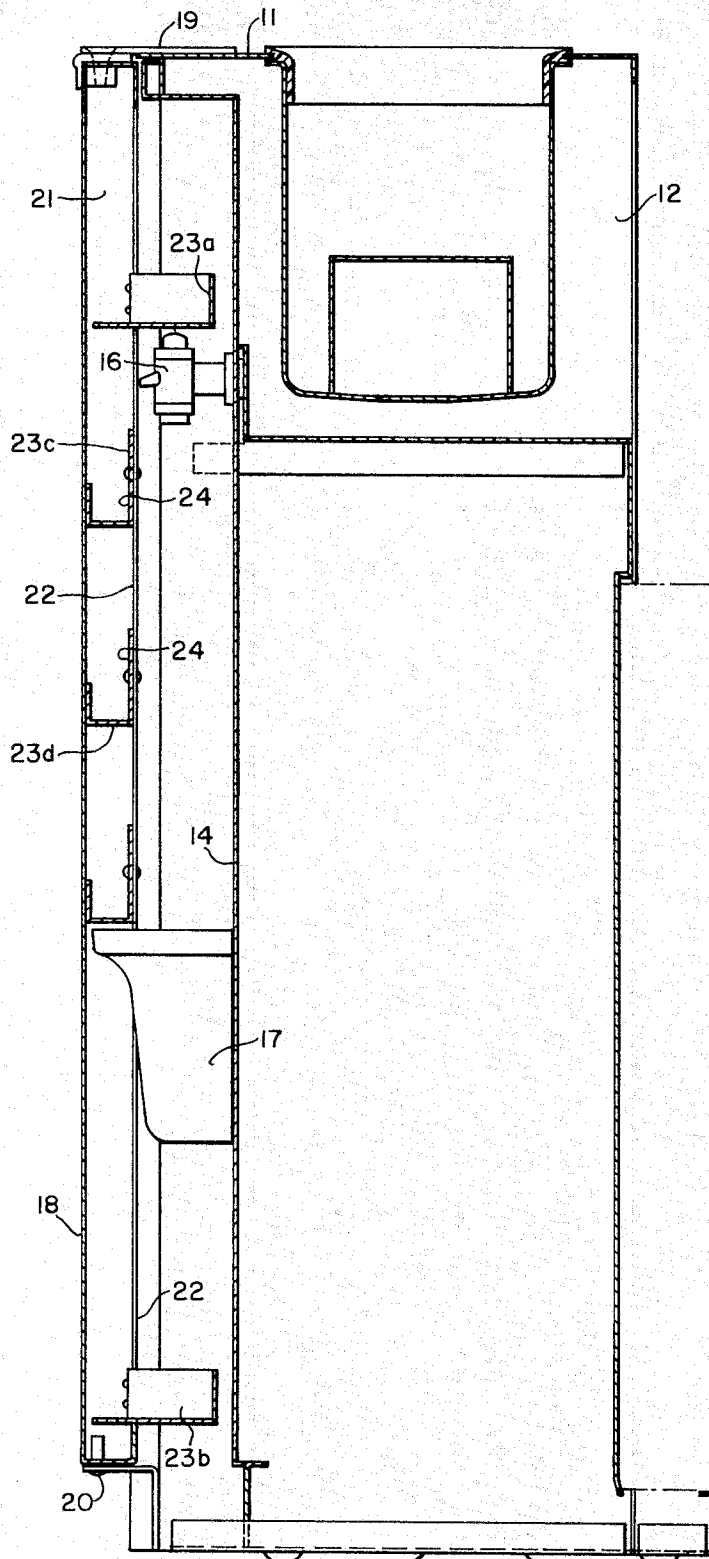


FIG. 2.



CABINET FOR A WATER COOLER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to dispensers such as bottled water coolers and more particularly to cabinet structure for such coolers providing storage space for various articles (i.e., powdered concentrate, cups, sugar, etc.) generally associated with such dispensers.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Water dispensers, especially the type associated with the present invention capable of dispensing both chilled and heated water, are useful in that they provide water at a proper temperature for a myriad of instant reconstituted beverages, such as coffee, tea, soup, bouillon, powdered citrus drinks, powdered hot chocolate, etc., which, for convenience, are generally stored adjacent the dispenser.

Previously, it has been common to provide a second cabinet which, exteriorly, was similar in size and shape to the cabinet housing the dispenser but interiorly provided storage shelves (including shelves on the inner door face) for such concentrates, along with cups, stirring sticks, sugar and whatever other accessories might be required. This arrangement occupied twice the floor space of the single dispenser cabinet in addition to a substantial cost for the additional cabinet.

Also, it has been both aesthetically and practically desirable to mount the faucets on a front panel which is recessed somewhat from the forwardly projecting periphery of the cabinet sidewalls and top. Thus, in addition to giving the illusion of a shadow box effect, the recess mounting provided protection for the faucets in that they were generally recessed within the plane defined by the outer edge of the cabinet and thus less likely to be knocked or snagged.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a door hingedly supported on the cabinet for covering the recessed front panel and faucets and having, on its inner face, storage space defined by horizontal shelves. To take advantage of the most usable storage space, a number of shelves project rearwardly into the space provided by the recess to generally adjacent the front panel; however, to protect the shelves or anything stored thereon from water dripping from the faucets, no shelf extends so as to intercept the normal drip path between the faucets and the drip trough.

DRAWING DESCRIPTIONS

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of the water cooler of the present invention with the door in an open position;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional plan view of the dispenser cabinet with the door closed and taken generally along the plane of the faucets; and

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional elevational view of the cabinet with the door closed taken generally along line III-III of FIG. 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

This invention is directed to a cabinet for a bottled water cooler of the type more particularly shown and described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,363,432 having a common assignee. Thus, although only the cabinet is disclosed in this present invention, it is to be understood that

such cabinet houses internal components such as therein described. With this in mind, reference is made to FIG. 1 which shows the water cooler 10 of the present invention having a cabinet which includes an outer wrapper comprising a top 11, for supporting an inverted bottle of water, and opposing sidewalls 12 and 13.

A generally planar front panel 14 coextensive with the inner surface of the top and opposing sidewalls closes the front face of the wrapper. The panel 14 has a peripheral, generally L-shaped, flange 15, the foot 15a of which overlies an inwardly projecting inner flange of the outer wrapper for properly seating the front panel. The leg 15b of the L-shape thus provides a rearwardly extending offset for recessing the front face of the panel further within the outer peripheral edge of the wrapper.

Two faucet means 16 (as the water cooler also includes the capability to provide heated water) project forwardly of the panel 14 in generally the upper half and provide a downwardly directed outlet. A drip trough 17 is removably supported on the panel 14 in generally the lower half and projects forwardly a distance sufficient to catch any drips from the faucets. The faucets 16 and drip trough 17 are vertically spaced a sufficient distance so that containers such as insulated bottles, coffee pots, and other generally taller containers can be placed under the faucets 16 without obstruction from the trough.

A door 18 is hingedly mounted on the wrapper as by a top hinge 19 and a bottom pin 20 (see FIG. 3). The door is generally contiguous with the periphery of the outer wrapper and in a closed position provides a planar unobtrusive front to the cabinet.

The door 18 is preferably formed of a sheet panel having a peripheral rearwardly facing flange 21 and terminating in a return flange 22 giving the sheet panel additional strength. As is seen in FIG. 1, the return flange 22 supports horizontal shelves 23 (as by screws) also formed of sheet metal having appropriate wall structure 24 to stongly accommodate and retain various of the items (cups, concentrates, etc.) associated with the cooler.

Referring now to FIGS. 2 and 3, it is seen that the uppermost and lowermost shelves 23a and 23b extend rearwardly (when the door is closed) a sufficient distance such that they reside within the recess or offset space provided by the offset of the front panel and thus utilize, to a great extent, the available space. However, it is emphasized that the shelf structure 23c and 23d supported by the door at an elevation between the faucets and the drip trough have a much shorter rearwardly extending length so that they terminate at a position prior to intercepting the plane defined by the faucet outlets and the drip trough. This is to permit an unimpeded drip path from the faucets to the trough.

It is evident that the intermediate shelves (i.e., those shelves between the faucets and the trough) could be contoured so as to extend rearwardly at selected portions, with the only criteria being that the actual normal drip path from each faucet to the trough is unimpeded by any intermediate shelf or door structure. However, for the usable shelf space gained by such a contour, and the discontinuous appearance it provides, the straight walled shelves, as disclosed, are preferable. Further, doors having the preferable shelf construction shown

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could then be used interchangeably on a dispenser having either one or two faucets.

The door is equipped with a rubber bumper on its rear face to properly position the door in the closed position, and held there by a magnetic latch. A handle member is provided on the exterior side of the door for ease of manipulation of the door.

What is claimed is:

1. Cabinet construction for a water cooler apparatus including a housing having a front panel and liquid dispensing faucet extending forwardly of said front panel, said front panel supporting a drip trough directly below said faucet for catching and retaining liquid dripping from said faucet, a door structure hingedly supported for movement between an open position permitting access to said faucet and a closed position generally covering said front panel and concealing said faucet, said door structure having an inner face with a plurality of shelves supported thereon and extending generally horizontally toward said front panel when said door is in a closed position, at least one of said plurality of shelves disposed so as to be at an intermediate height relative to said faucet and said drip trough, and of said shelves disposed at said intermediate height being of sufficiently limited depth in a front to rear direction so as not to interfere with the normal drip path from said faucet to said trough so that any drippage occurring when said door is closed does not contact any of said shelves.

2. Cabinet construction according to claim 1 wherein at least another of said plurality of shelves is disposed on said door at a height other than intermediate said faucet means and said drip trough, said at least another of said plurality of shelves having a sufficient depth in a front-to-rear direction so as to terminate substantially adjacent said front panel when said door is in a closed position and provide a relatively deep shelf with respect to any of said shelves disposed at said intermediate height.

3. Cabinet construction according to claim 2 wherein said front panel defines a planar portion generally recessed from the front peripheral edge of said housing and said door structure includes rearwardly turned peripheral shoulder terminating in a front-to-rear direction generally adjacent said peripheral edge when said door is closed, said at least one of said plurality of shelves having a front-to-rear depth substantially equal to said shoulder, and said another of said shelves having a front-to-rear depth extending substantially between said door and said recessed planar portion of said front panel.

4. Cabinet construction according to claim 3 wherein said at least another of said shelves includes a first shelf positioned at a height above said faucet and a second shelf positioned at a height below said drip trough.

5. In a bottle water cooler, the combination of: a cabinet construction and a side-swinging front door therefor, said door when closed forming a limited depth chamber enclosed along at least the top and side edges thereof between the facing portions of said door and cabinet,

said chamber including faucet means at an upper level and a drip trough at a relatively lower level, storage shelves carried on the inner face of said door, any one of said shelves located at a height intermediate said faucet means and said trough being of sufficiently limited depth in a front-to-rear direction as to not be interposed in the path of drippage between said faucet means and said trough when said door is closed.

6. Structure according to claim 5 wherein any other of said storage shelves located at a height other than intermediate said faucet means and said trough being of sufficient depth in a front-to-rear direction to terminate generally adjacent said facing portion of said cabinet.

7. Structure according to claim 6 wherein the facing portion of said cabinet is generally recessed from a front peripheral edge of said cabinet and said door includes a peripheral rearwardly extending shoulder terminating in a front-to-rear direction generally adjacent said peripheral edge when said door is closed, said depth of said any one of said shelves located at said intermediate height being substantially equal to said shoulder, and said depth of said other of said shelves extending to generally adjacent said recessed facing portion of said cabinet.

8. Structure according to claim 7 wherein said any other of said shelves includes a first shelf positioned at a height above said faucet means and a second shelf positioned at a height below said trough.

9. Structure according to claim 8 wherein said faucet means and said trough are mounted on said facing portion of said cabinet.

10. A bottle water dispenser comprising:

a cabinet including a top wall and a pair of opposite, generally vertically disposed side walls, said top and side walls having forwardly facing edges lying in a generally vertical plane, a front panel for said cabinet recessed rearwardly from said generally vertical plane,

faucet means for dispensing water, said faucet means projecting forwardly from said front panel, a drip trough on the front face of said front panel, and spaced downwardly from said faucet means; and,

a door for the front face of said cabinet, said door being hinged for side swinging movement and including storage means on its inner face thereof.

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