



US 20100059460A1

(19) **United States**  
(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Mulaw**

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2010/0059460 A1**  
(43) **Pub. Date: Mar. 11, 2010**

(54) **DISH RACK WITH REMOVABLE GRATE**

**Publication Classification**

(76) Inventor: **Azanaw Mulaw**, Fort Washington, MD (US)

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A47G 19/08** (2006.01)

Correspondence Address:  
**LOUIS VENTRE, JR**  
**2483 OAKTON HILLS DRIVE**  
**OAKTON, VA 22124-1530 (US)**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **211/41.3**

(21) Appl. No.: **12/558,534**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 13, 2009**

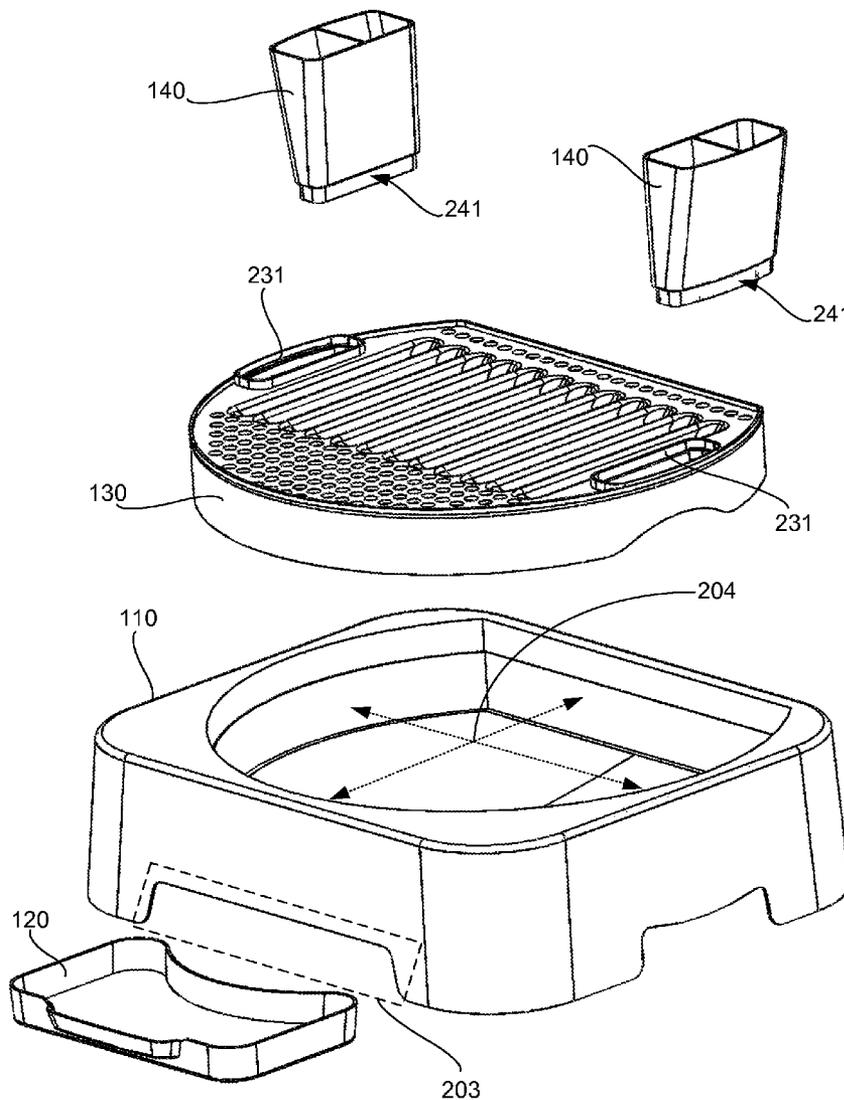
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A countertop dish rack has a compact unitary body holding a flat-panel grate, utensil holders, a funnel and a drainage tray. The unitary body is configured with a portion of approximately planar solid material, such as plastic. A recessed central portion holds the flat-panel grate and drainage funnel both located below the top surface of the unitary body. Hand hold recesses are located on the left side and right side of the unitary body. The funnel discharges water to a removable drainage tray. The utensil holders are removable and are supported within the flat-panel grate.

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 12/467,266, filed on May 16, 2009.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/095,944, filed on Sep. 10, 2008.



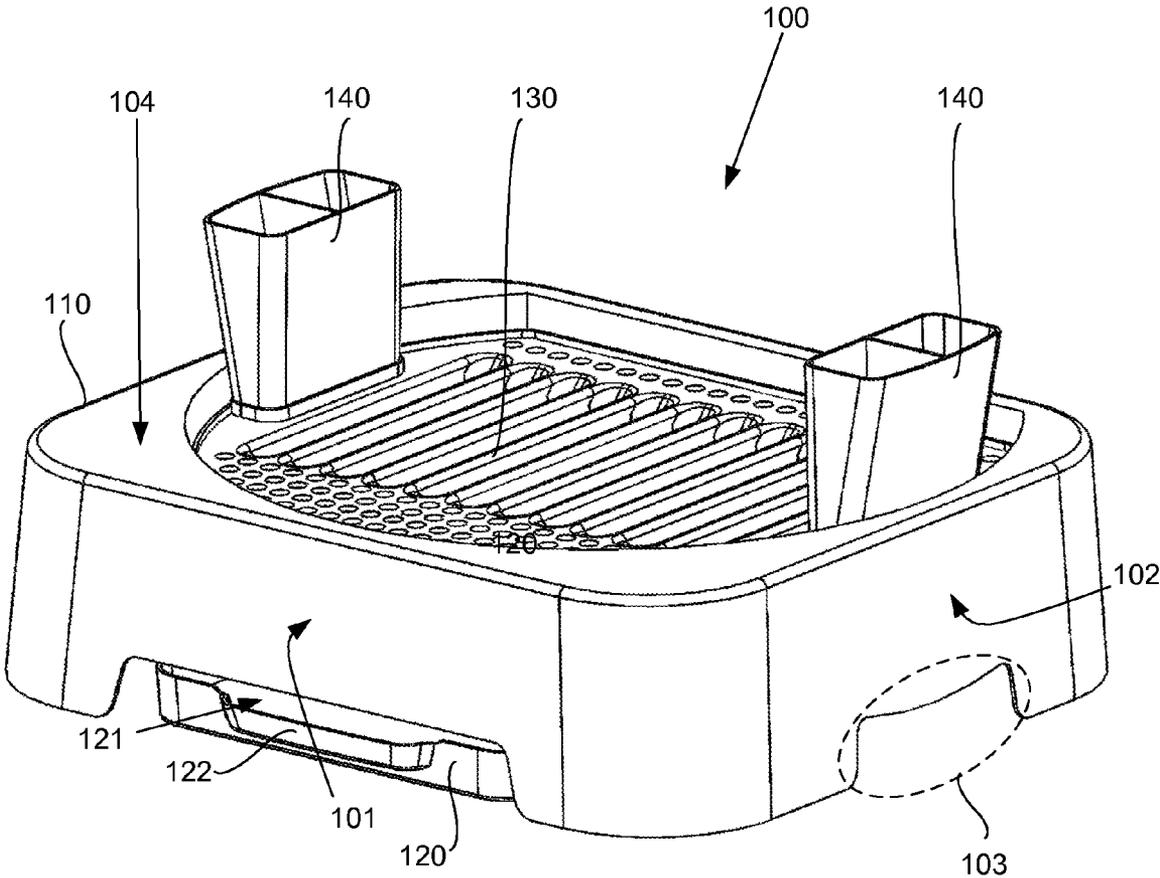


FIG.1

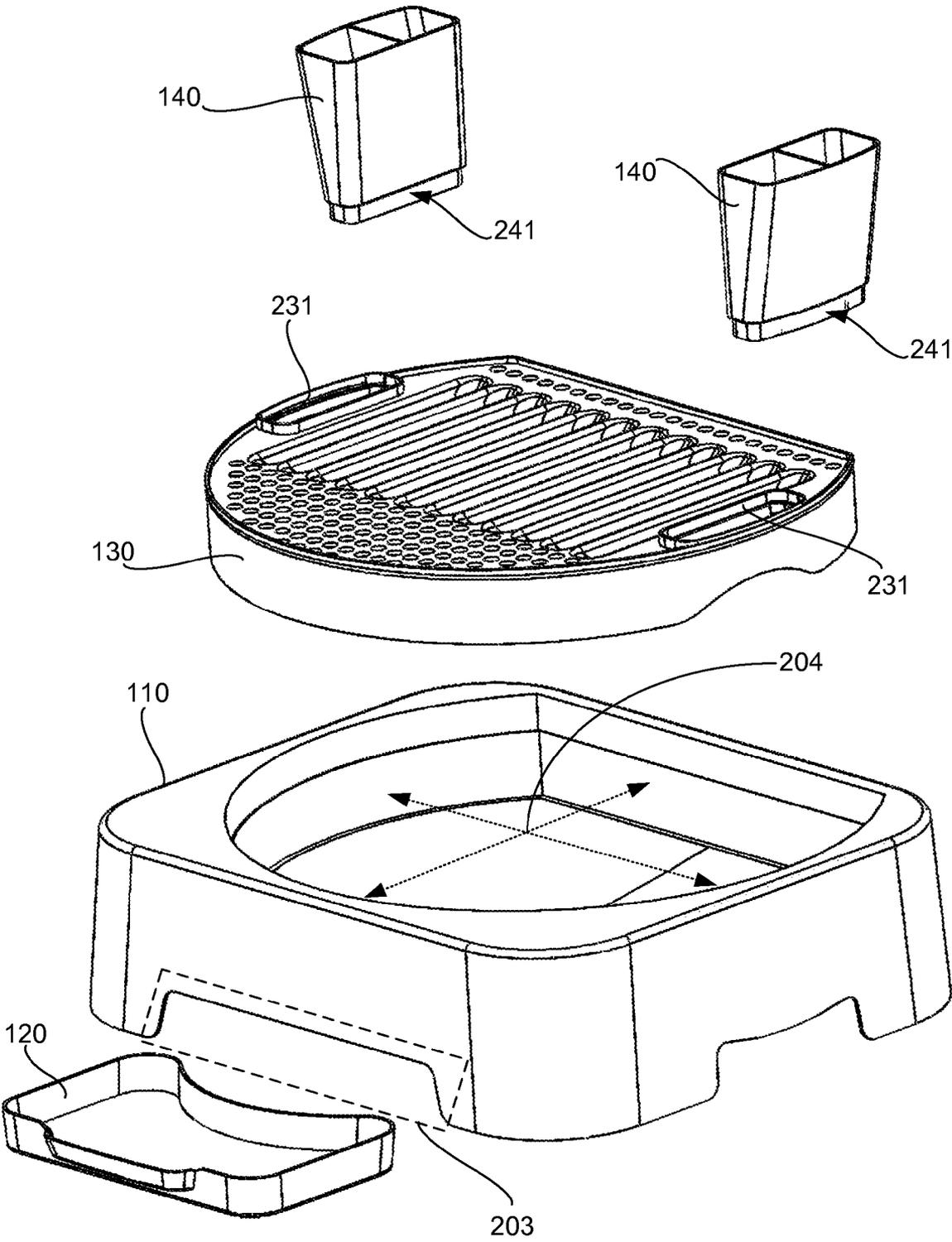


FIG.2

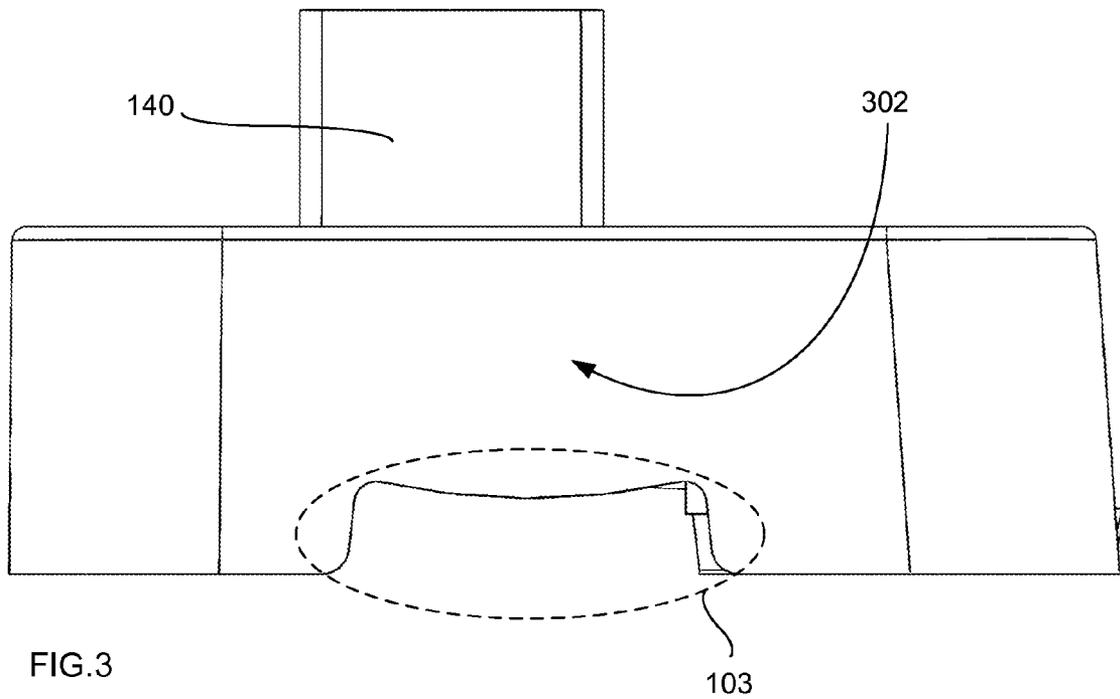


FIG. 3

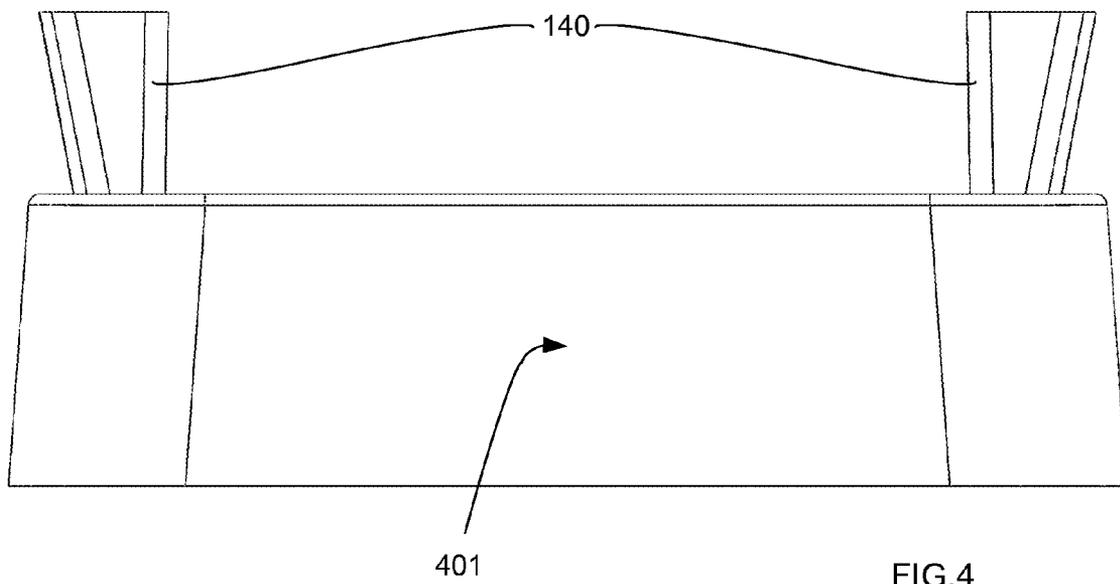


FIG. 4

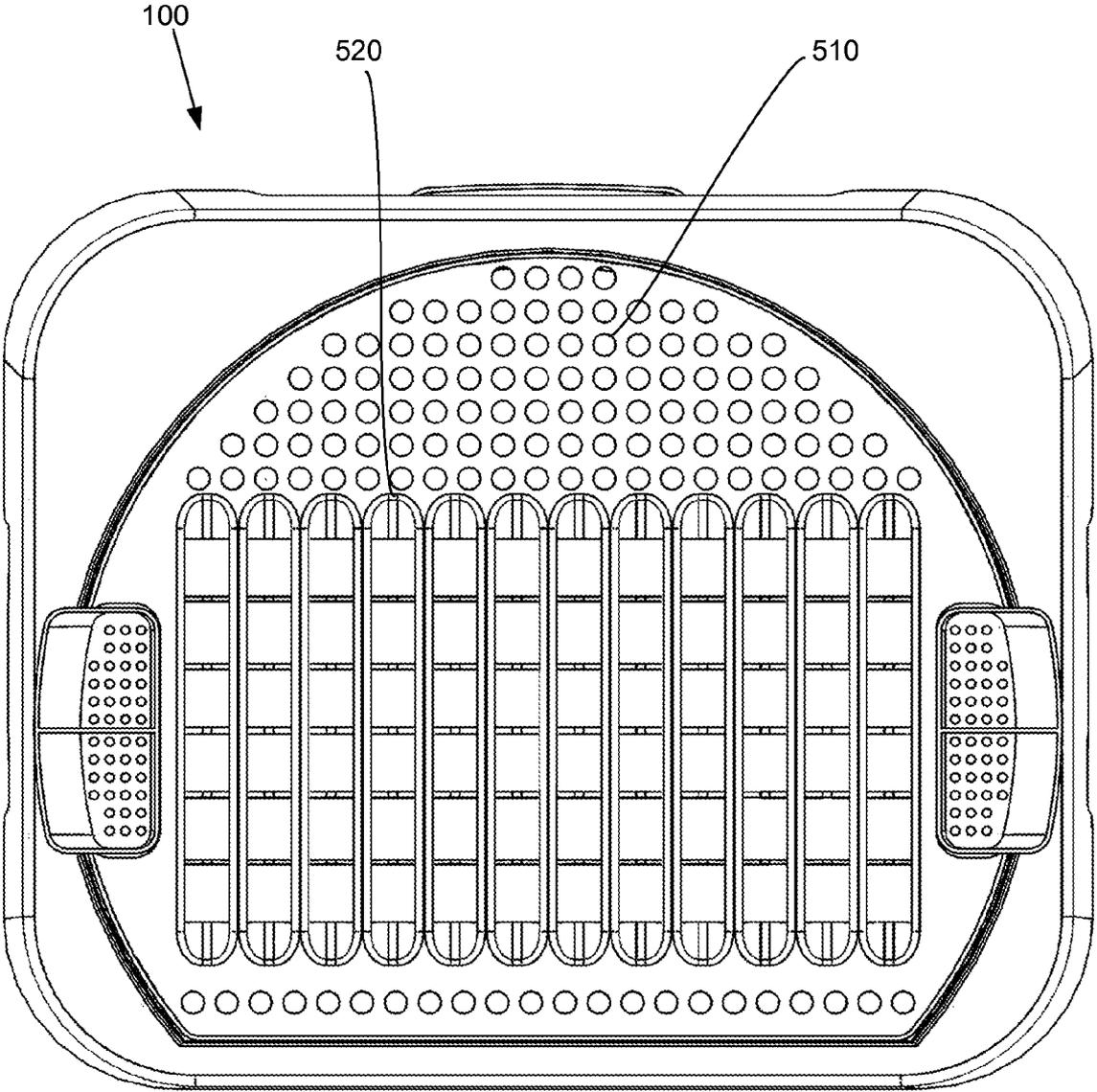


FIG.5

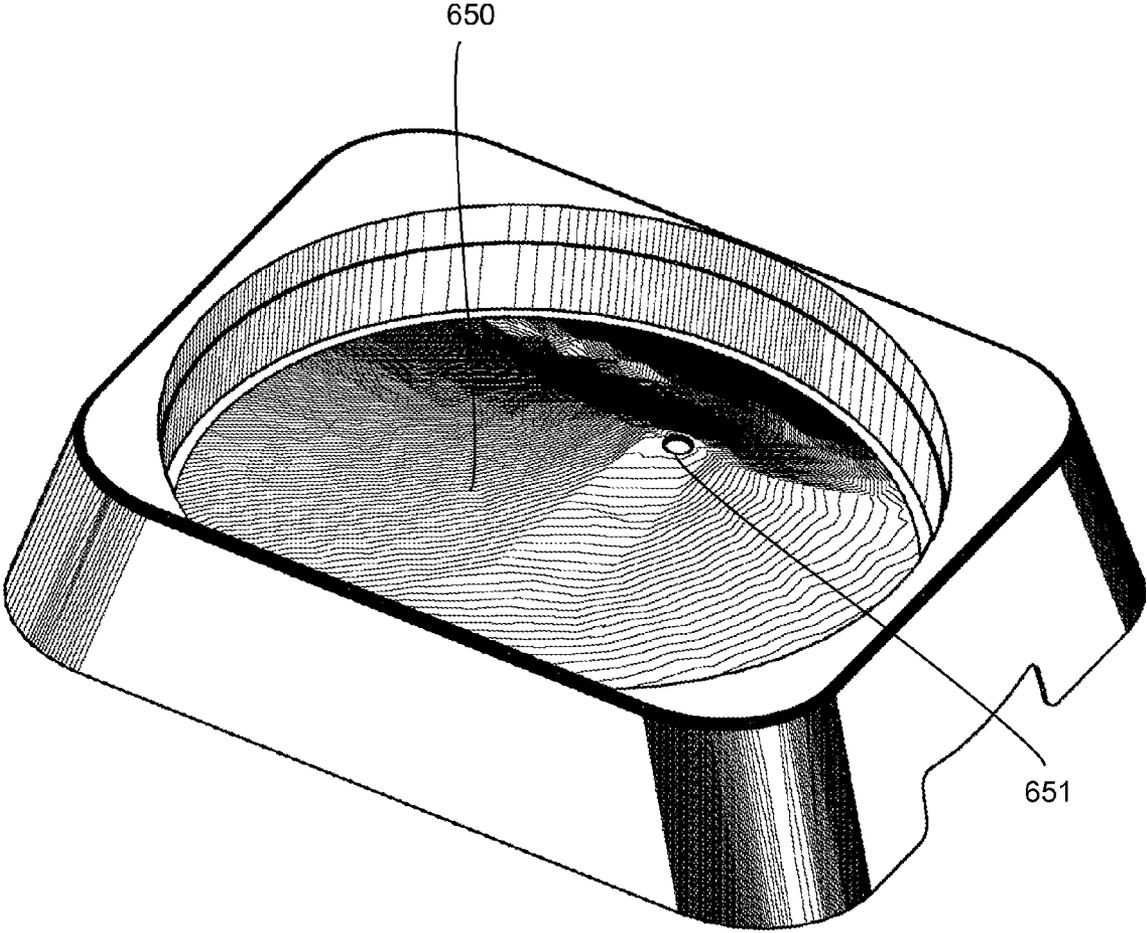


FIG.6

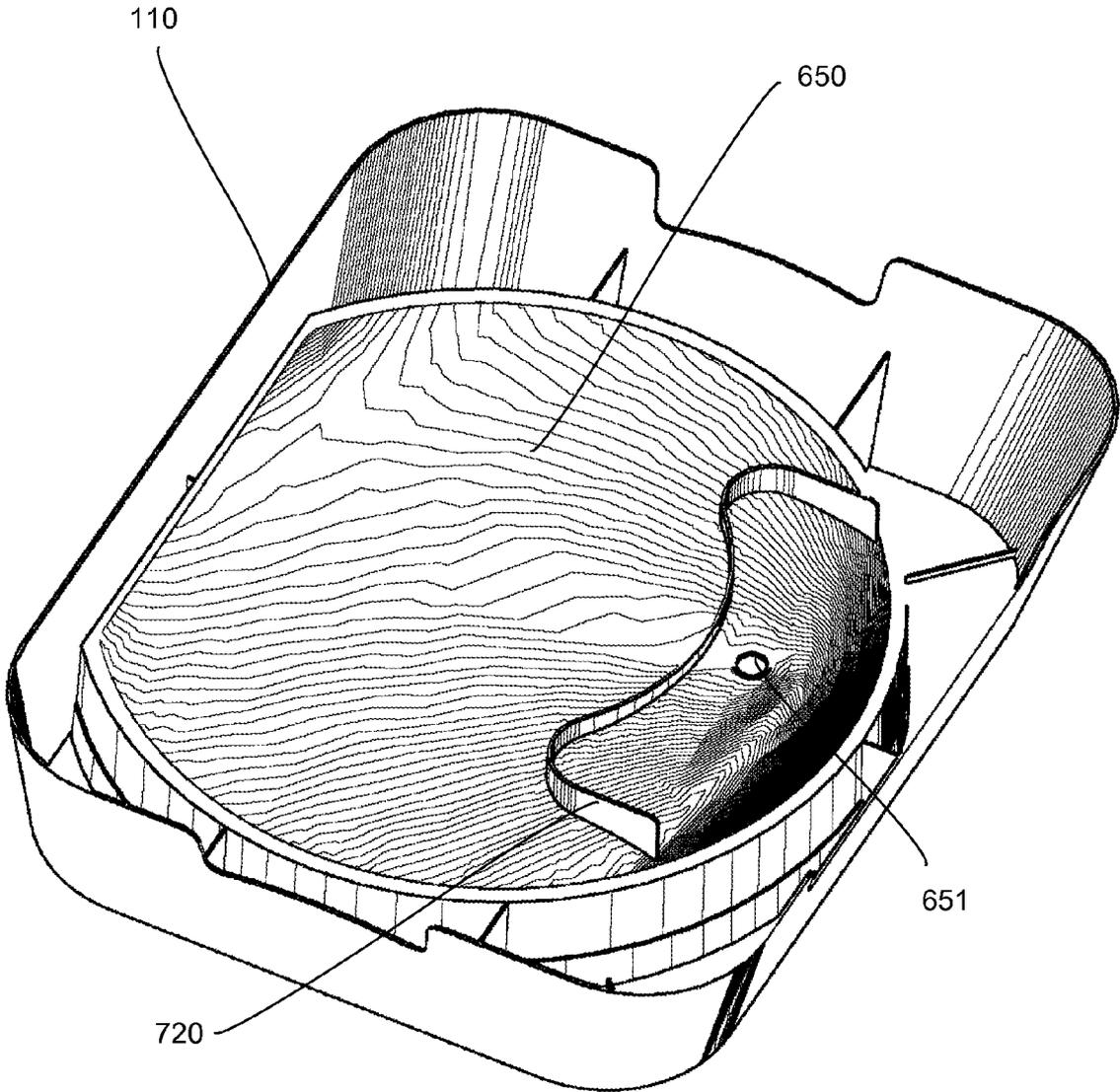


FIG.7

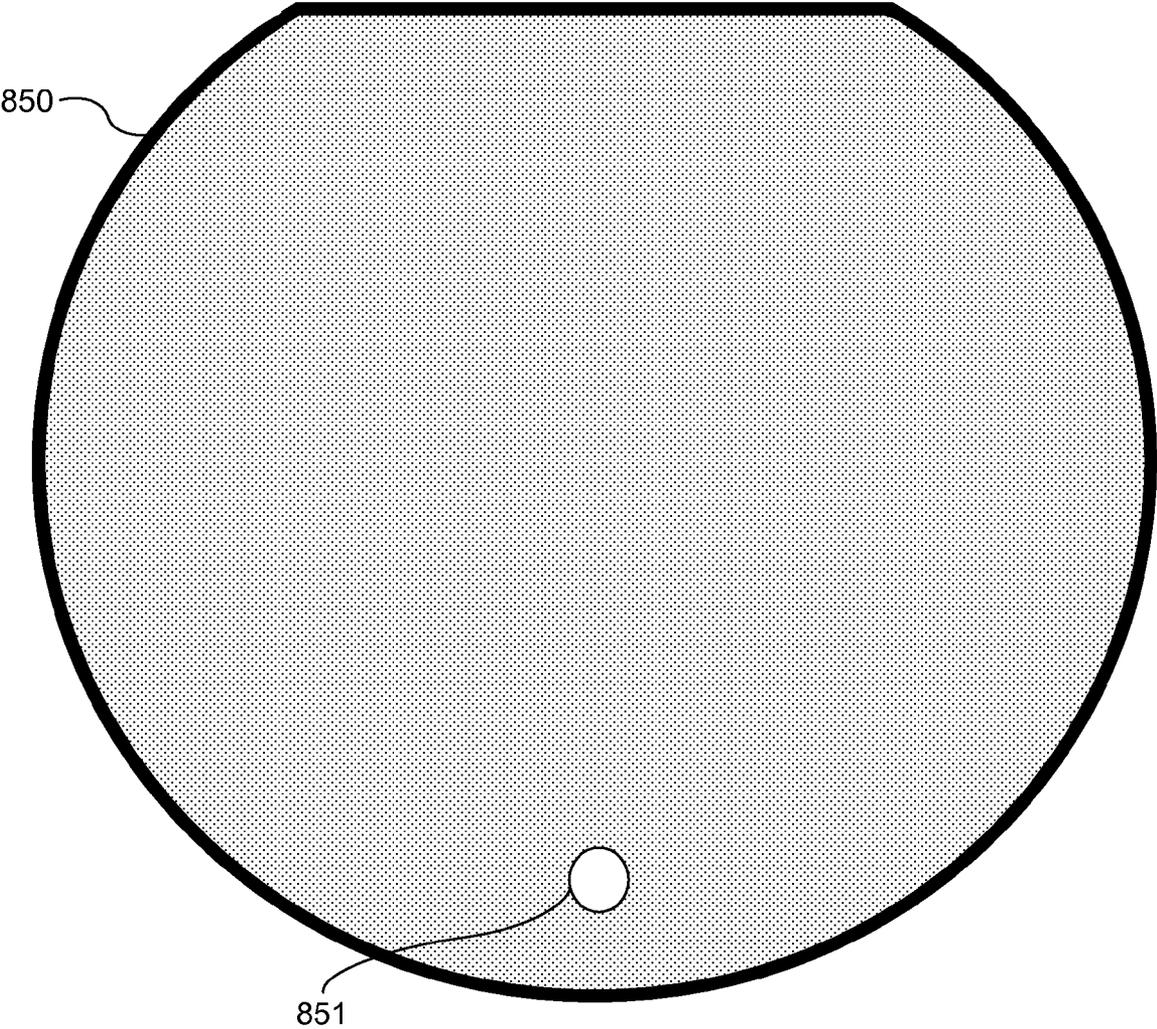


FIG. 8

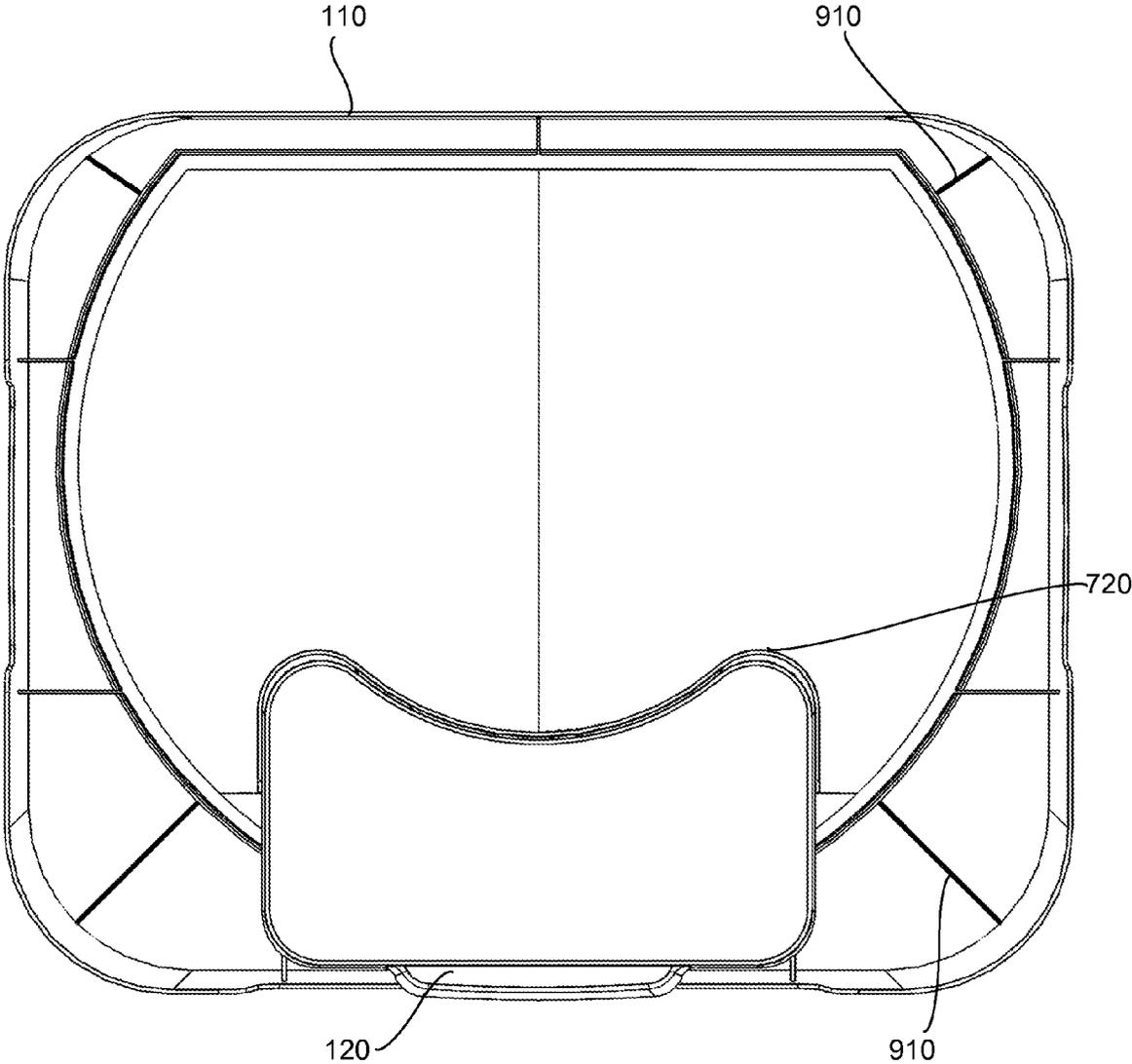


FIG.9

**DISH RACK WITH REMOVABLE GRATE**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/467,266, filed 16 MAY 2009, which in turn claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/095,944, filed 10 SEP. 2008. Both of these applications are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] In the field of support racks, a device to support a culinary plate during drying subsequent to washing.

BACKGROUND ART

[0003] Wire rack dish racks for use on a countertop are widely known and these serve to present a wire frame structure that does not retain drip water. For example, a recent example is United States Patent Application 20090211994, which describes a wire rack and extendable drip tray.

[0004] Some inventions employ novel water channeling components. For example U.S. Pat. No. 7,325,695 discloses a dish rack with water drainage channel and spout under the wire mesh to direct drip water into a sink.

[0005] Other known dish racks employ a water collection drawer. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,179,134 teaches an expandable dish rack that contains a drawer-like water collection tray within and in the bottom of the dish rack.

[0006] Yet none of the prior art describes a compact, solid form dish rack with a flat-panel grate, easily removable utensil cups, easily cleaned in a dishwasher, and with hand holds to enable easy carriage of a filled dish rack to a new location.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0007] A countertop dish rack has a compact unitary body holding a flat-panel grate, utensil holders, a drainage funnel and a drainage tray. The unitary body is not a wire formed container, but rather has a top surface, a front face, a rear face, a right side and a left side each configured with a portion of approximately planar solid material, such as plastic. The unitary body is configured such that the top surface defines an approximate horizontal plane with a recessed central portion that holds the flat-panel grate and funnel. Hand hold recesses are located on the left side and right side of the unitary body to enable secure carrying of a loaded dish rack. A drawer opening on the front face of the unitary body enables insertion and removal of the drainage tray. The drainage funnel may be molded as part of the unitary body or may be an insertable, separate component within the recessed central portion of the unitary body. In both cases, the drainage funnel receives water draining from the flat-panel grate, located immediately above the funnel within the recessed central portion of the unitary body and below the top surface of the unitary body. The utensil holders are removable and are supported within the flat-panel grate.

Technical Problem

[0008] Wire frame countertop dish racks are large, complicated, unsightly, costly, difficult to clean, and difficult to move when filled with dishes.

Solution to Problem

[0009] A small, compact, closed body, inexpensive and easily movable dish rack with a removable flat-plate grate

solves the problems with existing dish racks. The components of the present invention, especially, the unique flat-plate grate, can be easily removed and cleaned in a dishwasher.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0010] This invention has advantages in that it takes up a minimum of countertop space; it collects the drip water in an inconspicuous drawer; it is relatively inexpensive when made with a sturdy dishwasher-safe plastic; it can be easily disassembled and the components cleaned in a dishwasher; and it is easily carried when full to a new location. The unique flat-plate grate that holds and drains dishes in an upright position can be easily removed and placed in a dish slot in a dishwasher. This makes it convenient to regularly clean it of any mold or contamination resulting from the presence of drip water from extended use.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0011] The drawings show preferred embodiments of a countertop dish rack comprising the invention and the reference numbers in the drawings are used consistently throughout. New reference numbers in FIG. 2 are given the 200 series numbers. Similarly, new reference numbers in each succeeding drawing are given a corresponding series number beginning with the figure number.

[0012] FIG. 1 is a top perspective view of an embodiment of the invention.

[0013] FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a left-side elevation of the invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a rear-side elevation of the invention.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a top view of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 6 is a top perspective view of the unitary body of an embodiment of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 7 is a bottom perspective view of the unitary body of an embodiment of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 8 is a top view of the removable drainage funnel in an embodiment of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 9 is a bottom view of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0021] In the following description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof and which illustrate several embodiments of the present invention. The drawings and the preferred embodiments of the invention are presented with the understanding that the present invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms and, therefore, other embodiments may be utilized and structural, and operational changes may be made, without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0022] A preferred embodiment of the invention is shown in perspective in FIG. 1 and in elevation views in FIGS. 3 and 4. It is a countertop dish rack (100) comprising a unitary body (110), a removable drainage tray (120), a flat-panel grate (130), and two or more removable utensil holders (140). An alternative preferred embodiment includes a removable drainage funnel (850), as shown in FIG. 8.

[0023] The preferred embodiment shown in FIG. 1 first comprises a unitary body (110). The unitary body (110) has a top surface (104), a front face (101), a rear face (401), a right side (102) and a left side (302), and a drainage funnel (650).

[0024] The top surface (104), the front face (101), the rear face (401), the right side (102) and the left side (302) each

comprise a portion of approximately planar solid material, preferably a sturdy, molded plastic.

[0025] The unitary body (110) is configured such that the top surface (104) defines an approximate horizontal plane. The top surface (104) of unitary body (110) defines a recessed central portion (204), as shown by the arrows in FIG. 2.

[0026] The unitary body (110) is further configured such that the left side (302) and the right side (102) each define a hand hold (103) between the front face (101) and the rear face (401) and situated below the top surface (104). The left side (302) and the right side (102) are preferably mirror images of each other.

[0027] The unitary body (110) is further configured such that the front face (101) defines an opening (203) for the removable drainage tray (120). The opening (203) is situated between the right side (102) and the left side (302), preferably centered and at the bottom of the unitary body (110).

[0028] The unitary body (110) also comprises a drainage funnel (650), shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. The drainage funnel (650) is preferably molded as a single piece with the unitary body (110). Alternatively, the invention may include a removable drainage funnel (850) as a separate component. Whether a removable drainage funnel (850) is a separate component as shown in FIG. 8, or the drainage funnel (650) is a molded integral part of the unitary body (110) as shown in FIG. 6, it is positioned within the recessed central portion (204) of the unitary body (110) at a position recessed below the top surface (104) of the unitary body (110) in a configuration that enables it to receive water draining into the recessed central portion (204) of the unitary body (110) through the flat-panel grate (130). The drainage funnel (650), as shown in FIG. 6, or the removable drainage funnel (850), as shown in FIG. 8, is configured to discharge water through a hole (651 and 851, respectively) positioned near the front face (101) so that water can flow into the removable drainage tray (120).

[0029] FIG. 7 is a bottom perspective view of the unitary body (110). This view shows the bottom of the drainage funnel (650), which is the same configuration when the countertop dish rack (100) includes a removable drainage funnel (850). A stop (720) is positioned to limit the depth of insertion of the removable drainage tray (120). The stop (720) is preferably contoured to match the shape of the removable drainage tray (120).

[0030] The preferred embodiment shown in FIG. 1 next comprises a removable drainage tray (120) configured to receive water from the drainage funnel (650). In an alternative embodiment, the removable drainage tray (120) is similarly configured to receive water from the removable drainage funnel (850). The removable drainage tray (120) includes a handle (122) that protrudes from front face (101) in a configuration that creates a line of sight (122) to a water level within the removable drainage tray (120) when the removable drainage tray (120) is fully inserted into the unitary body (110). This line of sight (122) permits a convenient and easy determination of when the removable drainage tray (120) needs to be emptied.

[0031] As shown in FIG. 2, the removable drainage tray (120) is preferably a molded plastic drawer with a built in handle that promotes ease of insertion into the unitary body (110) and ease of retraction when it is desired to empty the water in the removable drainage tray (120).

[0032] The removable drainage tray (120) is configured to fit under the hole (651 or 851) in the drainage funnel (650) or the removable drainage funnel (850), respectively. Prefer-

ably, the removable drainage tray (120) rests on a countertop. Upon carriage of the countertop dish rack (100) to a new location, the removable drainage tray (120) would be carried separately to the new location. This ensures that any water in the removable drainage tray (120) will not be inadvertently spilled. Alternatively, the removable drainage tray (120) may also be configured with lip extensions or supports on its left and right sides to engage side shelves within the opening (203) in the unitary body (110), which would enable retention of the removable drainage tray (120) in the unitary body (110) upon carriage of the countertop dish rack (100) to a new location.

[0033] The preferred embodiment shown in FIG. 1 next comprises a flat-panel grate (130) configured to rest on the drainage funnel (650) or the removable drainage funnel (850) below the top surface of the unitary body (110). As shown in FIG. 5, a preferred flat-panel grate (130) has a series of holes (510) on both sides of slots (520) contoured at each end to hold dishes, preferably aligned from the front face (101) to the rear face (401). The flat-panel grate (130) is configured with two ports (231) in the flat-panel grate (130). The ports (231) are configured to support the utensil holders (140). The flat-panel grate (130) is preferable less than about an inch and a quarter in thickness, that is from top to bottom, so that it can easily fit between the dish support prongs in many dishwashers. Larger thicknesses for the flat-panel grate (130) would also fit between dishwasher prongs for pots or pans, which are typically about 2.5 inches apart with a fold down capability to accommodate even larger pots or pans.

[0034] The preferred embodiment shown in FIG. 1 next comprises a two or more removable utensil holders (140) configured to be supported within the flat-panel grate (130). There are preferably two removable utensil holders (140). The removable utensil holders (140) are preferably configured with a recessed bottom segment (241) to fit into the ports (231) in the flat-panel grate (130).

[0035] FIG. 9 is a bottom view of the countertop dish rack (100) showing reinforcing ribs (910) spaced about the perimeter of the unitary body (110). These reinforcing ribs (910) add strength and stability to the countertop dish rack (100) when the unitary body (110) is made of plastic.

[0036] The above-described embodiments including the drawings are examples of the invention and merely provide illustrations of the invention. Other embodiments will be obvious to those skilled in the art. Thus, the scope of the invention is determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents rather than by the examples given.

What is claimed is:

1. A countertop dish rack comprising:
  - a unitary body comprising a top surface, a front face, a rear face, a right side, a left side, and a drainage funnel:
    - wherein the top surface, the front face, the rear face, the right side and the left side each comprise a portion of approximately planar solid material;
    - wherein the unitary body is configured such that the top surface defines an approximate horizontal plane with a recessed central portion;
    - wherein the unitary body is further configured such that the drainage funnel receives water draining into the recessed central portion of the unitary body;
    - wherein the unitary body is further configured such that the left side and the right side each define a hand hold between the front face and the rear face and situated below the top surface; and,

wherein the unitary body is further configured such that the front face defines an opening for a removable drainage tray, said opening situated between the right side and the left side;

a removable drainage tray configured to receive water from the drainage funnel;

a flat-panel grate configured to rest on the drainage funnel below the top surface of the unitary body; and,

a plurality of removable utensil holders configured to be supported within the flat-panel grate.

**2.** The countertop dish rack of claim **1** wherein the removable drainage tray is configured with a handle that protrudes from front face creating a line of sight to a water level within the removable drainage tray when the removable drainage tray is fully inserted into the unitary body.

**3.** A countertop dish rack comprising:

a unitary body comprising a top surface, a front face, a rear face, a right side and a left side:

wherein the top surface, the front face, the rear face, the right side and the left side each comprise a portion of approximately planar solid material;

wherein the unitary body is configured such that the top surface defines an approximate horizontal plane with a recessed central portion;

wherein the unitary body is further configured such that the left side and the right side each define a hand hold

between the front face and the rear face and situated below the top surface; and,

wherein the unitary body is further configured such that the front face defines an opening for a removable drainage tray, said opening situated between the right side and the left side;

a removable drainage funnel:

configured to fit within the central portion of the unitary body at a position recessed below the top surface of the unitary body; and,

configured to receive water draining into the recessed central portion of the unitary body;

a removable drainage tray configured to receive water from the removable drainage funnel;

a flat-panel grate configured to rest on the removable drainage funnel below the top surface of the unitary body; and,

a plurality of removable utensil holders configured to be supported within the flat-panel grate.

**4.** The countertop dish rack of claim **3** wherein the removable drainage tray is configured with a handle that protrudes from front face creating a line of sight to a water level within the removable drainage tray when the removable drainage tray is fully inserted into the unitary body.

\* \* \* \* \*