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A. A. MICELI
COMPARTMENTED PURSE INSERT

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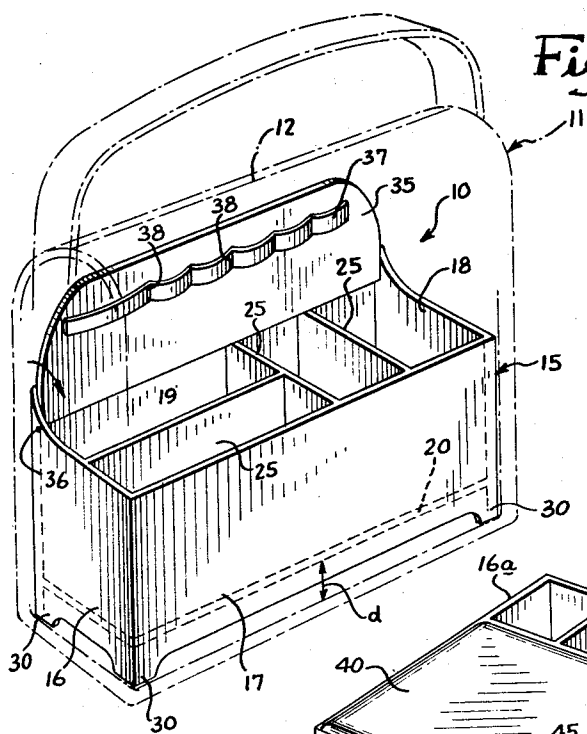


Fig. 1

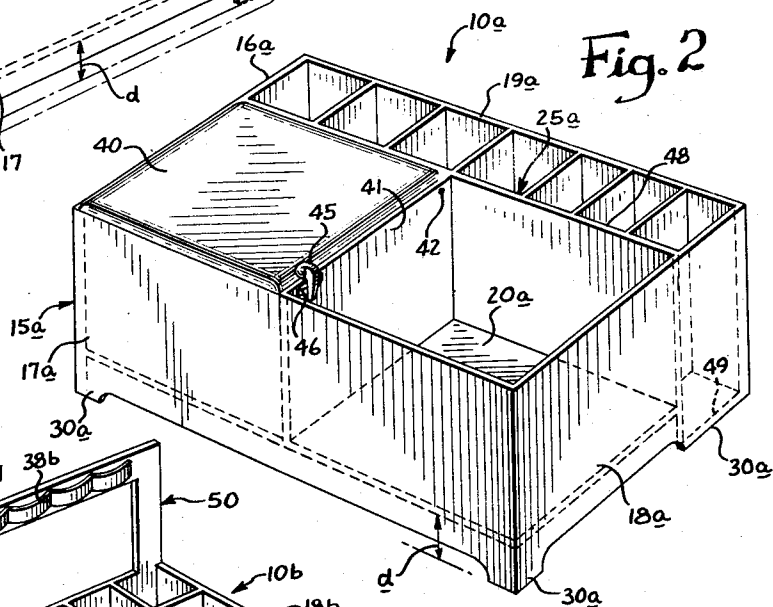


Fig. 2

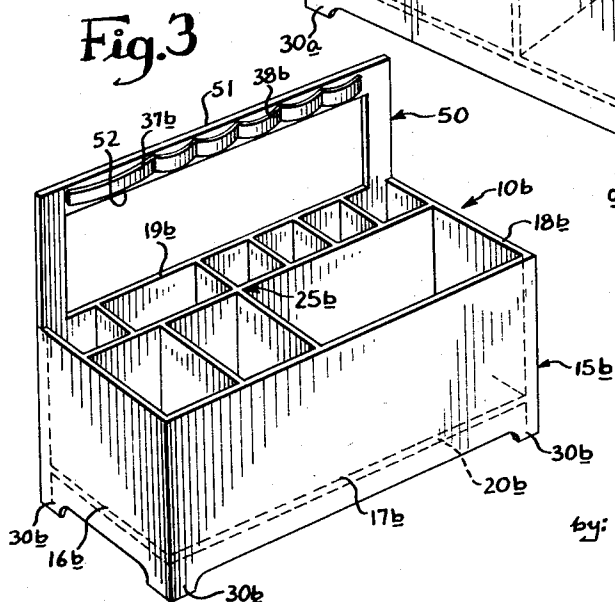


Fig. 3

INVENTOR
ANN A. MICELI

by: Carlson, Pitzner, Hubbard & Wolfe

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COMPARTMENTED PURSE INSERT

Ann A. Miceli, Chicago, Ill.

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4 Claims. (Cl. 150—34)

The present invention relates generally to handbags or purses of the type carried by women, and more particularly to a compartmented insert for such handbags and purses.

As is commonly appreciated, women tend to collect and carry a large variety and number of differently shaped and sized articles in their handbags. Despite the exercise of reasonable care, the various articles tend to become jumbled and disorganized, making it difficult to locate and grasp any particular item when it is wanted.

To avoid this situation, handbags have been marketed containing a number of pockets or compartments for receiving in an orderly manner the various articles to be carried. Handbags of this type have not found much favor, however, since whenever the owner wishes to carry a different handbag in the interest of fashion, it is necessary to individually remove the various articles from their appointed places and reposition them in the newly selected bag.

It has also been proposed to provide compartmented inserts that can be filled with the desired articles, and then placed bodily in whichever handbag is selected as appropriate to the owner's costume. However, previously known inserts of this type have had little success, for a number of reasons. Some of these prior inserts were difficult to transfer from bag to bag, others were relatively complex so as to be expensive and even more difficult to handle than an uncompartmented, cluttered purse, and still others were unable to effectively support the articles contained apart from the particular purse for which they were designed.

It is therefore the primary aim of this invention to overcome the problems and disadvantages referred to above and to provide a novel compartmented insert which may be interchangeably employed with any one of a variety of women's purses or handbags so as to facilitate efficient organization of the articles to be carried thereby, and which also may be effectively utilized apart from a purse or a handbag.

It is another object to provide an insert of the above type that is quite economical to manufacture and which may be utilized without requiring special adaptation of the purse or handbag with which it is employed.

It is a further important object to provide a purse or handbag insert that not only permits convenient organization of those articles for which ready accessibility is desired, but which also provides its user with a concealed or "secret" compartment in which currency or other obviously valuable or important items can be unobtrusively carried.

In one of its aspects, it is an object to provide a compartmented insert of the type characterized above having a hinged cover for either the entire insert or for selected compartments therein. With more particularity, it is an object to provide a cover as described above arranged so that it may be readily unlocked and swung wide to completely open the closed compartment or compartments,

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even though the insert is snugly fitted in the handbag or purse.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the attached detailed description and upon reference to the drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a compartmented insert constructed in accordance with the present invention and installed in a purse or handbag.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a modified form of a compartmented insert which also embodies the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of another modified form of compartmented insert embodying the present invention.

While the invention will be described in connection with certain preferred embodiments, it will be understood that I do not intend to limit the invention to those embodiments. On the contrary, I intend to cover all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the inventive claims.

Turning now to Fig. 1, there is shown a compartmented insert 10 embodying the invention installed in a purse or handbag 11, which appears outlined in phantom lines. The purse or handbag 11 is provided with a bottom wall and four side walls which define an article receiving and carrying space that is accessible through an opening 12 at the top of the purse or handbag. The insert 10 includes a boxlike frame 15 slidably fitted into the article-receiving space of the purse or handbag. In the preferred embodiment, the frame 15 is made up of four side panels 16, 17, 18 and 19 which are joined at their respective corners.

To support articles within the insert 10, a bottom plate 20 is positioned within the frame 15 and is secured to each of the side panels 16—19. So as to define a number of distinct compartments within the insert 10, a plurality of partitions 25 are secured both to the side walls 16—19 of the frame 15 and to the bottom panel 20. There, the partitions 25 not only subdivide the insert 10 into any desired pattern of compartments, but they also serve to strengthen and rigidify the insert so that it is self-supporting and able to contain and store articles apart from the purses or handbags with which it is used.

Pursuant to the invention, a plurality of leg portions 30 are formed integrally with the frame 15 and are extended downwardly beneath the bottom plate 20 for supporting the insert 10 on the bottom wall of a purse or handbag with the bottom plate 20 being spaced above the purse or handbag bottom wall so as to define therebetween an unobtrusive, concealed compartment. In the illustrated embodiments the leg portions 30 are simply and economically formed as extensions of the respective side panels 16—19, and they extend downwardly beneath the bottom panel 20 a distance d slightly greater than the thickness of a checkbook or the like. It can thus be seen that an unobtrusive concealed or "secret" compartment having the width and length of the bottom panel 20 and the height of the distance d has been provided. Papers and items of obvious value can be conveniently placed in this compartment by simply lifting the insert and placing the desired items on the bottom of the purse or handbag 11. In this way, when the purse is opened and the orderly array of articles contained therein is displayed, papers and articles of obvious value will not be exposed to the eye of a casual onlooker.

As a feature of the invention, the insert 10 is provided with a pivoted coverplate 35 for closing at least one of the insert compartments, and the coverplate is arranged so that it may be fully opened without interference from the surrounding side walls of the purse or handbag 11. This is accomplished by pivoting the coverplate on the frame 15 about an axis 36 which is parallel

to, but spaced from, the nearest side wall of the handbag 11. In this way, the coverplate 35 may be swung fully upright with respect to the frame 15 so that the underlying compartments will be completely open.

As an added feature, the coverplate 35 for the insert 10 is provided with an elastic band 37 secured at its opposite ends and at spaced intermediate portions 38 to the underside of the coverplate. The band 37 thus provides the user of the insert 10 with a plurality of adjacent elastic loops for receiving and resiliently supporting small articles.

Considering next the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig. 2, it will be observed that elements similar to those described above have been given the same identifying numerals with the distinguishing suffix *a* added. The insert 10a shown in Fig. 2 includes a frame 15a made up of side panels 16a—19a and provided with a bottom plate 20a and a set of partitions 25a defining a plurality of distinct compartments within the insert. The frame side panels 16a—19a are formed with leg portions 30a so as to space the bottom panel 20a a distance *d* above the surface on which the leg portions rest. It will be understood that when the insert 10a is included in a purse or handbag, a concealed compartment having the length and width of the bottom plate 20a and the height *d* will be provided.

In this embodiment, a coverplate 40 extends only from one edge of the frame 15 to an intermediate partition 41, which is one of the set of partitions 25a. In this way, the coverplate 40 only covers a single compartment. It will be noted, however, that the coverplate 40 is pivoted about a hinge 42 spaced from the closest parallel frame edge so that the cover may be fully raised and the compartment beneath fully opened without interference from the side walls of the purse or handbag with which the insert 10a is utilized.

In order to snap-lock the coverplate 40 in place while keeping the locking device readily accessible, a resilient catch 45 and lug 46 are secured, respectively, to the coverplate 40 and the partition 41 at a point spaced inwardly from the closest edge of the frame 15. In this way, when the frame 15 is snugly fitted within a purse or handbag, the catch 45 will be readily accessible to the user so that it may be easily disengaged from the lug 46 and the coverplate lifted.

As an additional feature of this embodiment, the bottom plate 20a which defines the underlying concealed compartment does not extend entirely across the frame 15a but rather abuts a longitudinal partition 48 which extends downwardly the full height of the frame 15a. Beyond this partition, an auxiliary bottom plate 49 is secured at the extreme bottom of the frame 15a so as to provide the overlying compartments in the insert 10a with the maximum depth available. Thus, the insert 10a, when installed in a purse or handbag, provides not only a concealed or "secret" compartment beneath the bottom plate 20a, but also provides a series of compartments beyond the transverse partition 48 which extends substantially down to the bottom of the purse or handbag so that maximum-depth compartments are available for lengthy or bulky articles.

Turning next to the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig. 3, it will be seen that elements corresponding to those described above in connection with Figs. 1 and 2 have been given the same identifying numerals with the distinguishing suffix *b* added. The insert 10b shown in Fig. 3 includes a frame 15b made up of side panels 16b—19b and is provided with a bottom panel 20b and a set of partitions 25b for defining individual compartments within the insert 10b. The side panels 16b—19b include leg portions 30b which are effective to raise the bottom panel 20b from the surface on which the insert is supported and thereby provide a concealed or "secret" compartment.

As a feature of this embodiment, a frame extension 50

is secured at one edge of the frame 15b and is provided with a rack strip 51 which extends the length of the frame and is spaced therefrom so as to define a handle for carrying and sliding the insert 10b into and out of the purses or handbags with which it is utilized. In the illustrated embodiment, the frame extension 50 is formed integrally with the side panel 19b, and a cut-out area 52 defines the rack strip 51. In addition, an elastic band 37b is extended along the rack strip 51 and is secured at spaced intermediate lines 38b to the rack strip so as to form a series of aligned elastic loops adapted to receive and resiliently secure small articles in place.

It will be apparent that each of the embodiments 10, 10a, 10b described above are economical to manufacture since they are essentially made up of flat members connected along straight lines. These inserts may be utilized in a variety of handbags or purses without special adaptation of the latter since they are simply slid into place and allowed to rest therein. Since the units are inherently rigid, they are effective to support the articles which they contain apart from the purses or handbags with which they are utilized. Thus, the user of the insert may simply withdraw it from her purse or handbag and place the insert, together with its contents, on her dressing table or in another convenient location where the contents will be readily available. When it is again desired to carry the items in a purse or handbag, the insert, together with its contents, is simply lifted into the selected purse or handbag so that the contents remain organized and oriented in their previous locations.

I claim as my invention:

1. A multi-purpose compartmented insert for subdividing and organizing the carrying space of a woman's purse or handbag and convertible to service as a dresser or table-top tray, comprising, in combination, a rigid frame adapted to be slidably fitted within side walls of the purse or handbag and having side and end panels, a bottom plate secured within said frame and arranged generally parallel to the bottom wall of said purse or handbag, a plurality of rigid partitions secured within said frame between panels and above said bottom plate so as to rigidify said insert, said partitions being generally perpendicular with respect to said bottom plate and arranged in a pattern for subdividing said frame into a plurality of distinct compartments, means carried on the frame for supporting irregular articles in superior spatial relationship to said compartments, and a plurality of leg portions formed integrally with said frame and extending downwardly beneath the bottom plate for supporting said insert on said bottom wall of the purse or handbag with said bottom plate being spaced from said bottom wall so as to define therebetween an unobtrusive, concealed compartment.

2. A multi-purpose compartmented insert for subdividing and organizing the carrying space of a woman's purse or handbag and convertible to service as a dresser or table-top tray comprising, in combination, a rigid frame adapted to be slidably fitted within side walls of the purse or handbag, a bottom plate secured within said frame and arranged generally parallel to the bottom wall of said purse or handbag, a plurality of partitions secured to said frame and said bottom plate so as to rigidify the insert, said partitions being generally perpendicular with respect to said bottom plate and arranged in a pattern for subdividing said frame into a plurality of distinct compartments, a coverplate closing at least one of said compartments acting as a surface for supporting irregular objects in a superior spatial position and also sealing the articles in said one compartment away from sight, said coverplate being pivoted on said frame about an axis parallel to but spaced from the closest of said side walls of the purse or handbag so that the cover can be fully opened without interference from the surrounding side walls, and a plurality of leg portions formed integrally with said frame and extending downwardly beneath said bottom plate for

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supporting the insert on said bottom wall with the bottom plate being spaced from the bottom wall so as to define therebetween an unobtrusive concealed compartment.

3. A multi-purpose compartmented insert for subdividing and organizing the carrying space of a woman's purse or handbag and convertible to service as a dresser or table top tray, comprising, in combination, a rigid frame adapted to be slidably fitted within side walls of the purse or handbag, a bottom plate secured within the frame and arranged generally parallel to said bottom wall of said purse or handbag, a plurality of partitions secured to the said frame and said bottom plate so as to rigidify the insert, said partitions being generally perpendicular with respect to said bottom plate and arranged in a pattern for subdividing the frame into a plurality of distinct compartments, a coverplate for closing at least one of said compartments acting as a surface for supporting irregular objects in a superior spatial position and also sealing the articles in said one compartment from sight, said coverplate extending between one of said partitions and an edge of the frame and being pivoted on said one partition for movement about an axis spaced from and parallel to the nearest side wall of the purse or handbag, cooperative means for snap locking said coverplate down onto its underlying compartment, said means being secured to said coverplate at a point spaced from the nearest side wall of the purse or handbag so as to be readily accessible for release thereof, and a plurality of leg portions formed integrally with said frame and extending downwardly beneath said bottom plate for supporting the insert on said bottom wall with the bottom plate being spaced from the bottom wall so as to define therebetween an unobtrusive concealed compartment.

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4. A multi-purpose compartmented insert for subdividing and organizing the carrying space of a woman's purse or handbag and convertible to service as a dresser or table top tray, comprising, in combination, a rigid frame adapted to be slidably fitted within the side walls of the purse or handbag, a bottom plate secured within said frame and arranged generally parallel to the bottom wall of the said purse or handbag, a plurality of partitions secured to said frame and said bottom plate so as to rigidify the insert, said partitions being generally perpendicular with respect to said bottom wall and arranged in a pattern for subdividing said frame into a plurality of distinct compartments, a frame extension secured at one edge of said frame having an elastic band secured at spaced points along said frame extension for receiving and resiliently supporting articles along said strip in superior spatial relationship relative to the compartments, and a plurality of leg portions formed integrally with said frame and extending downwardly beneath said bottom plate for supporting the insert on said bottom wall with the bottom plate being spaced from the bottom wall so as to define therebetween an unobtrusive concealed compartment.

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