

[54] **DISPOSABLE DISH MEANS**

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[56] **References Cited**

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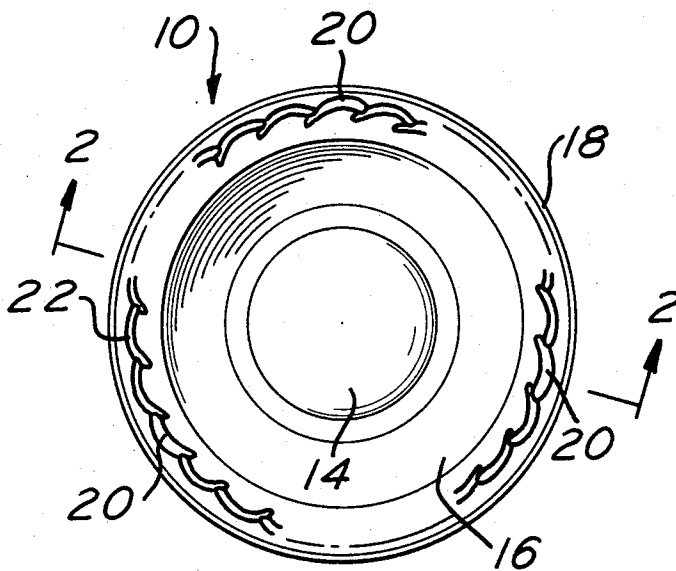
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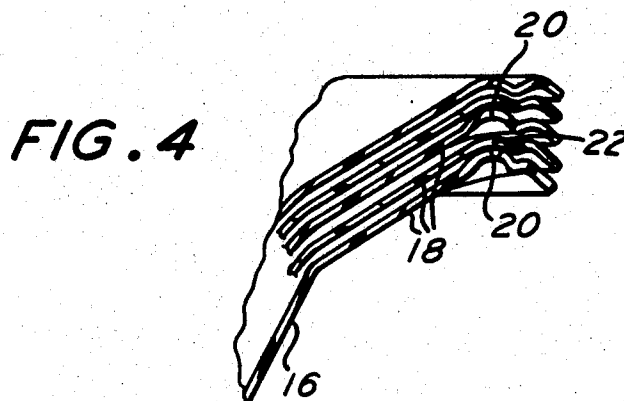
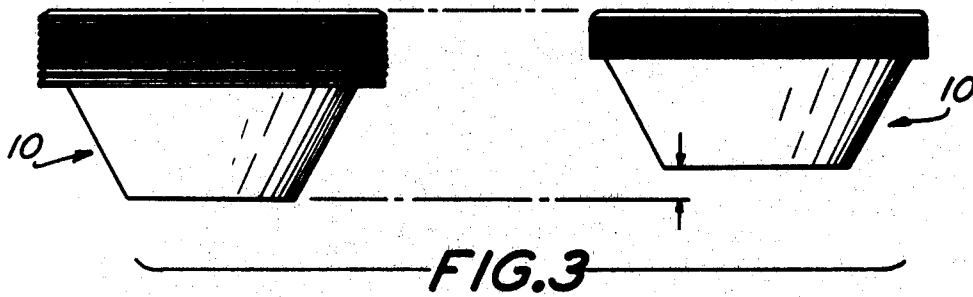
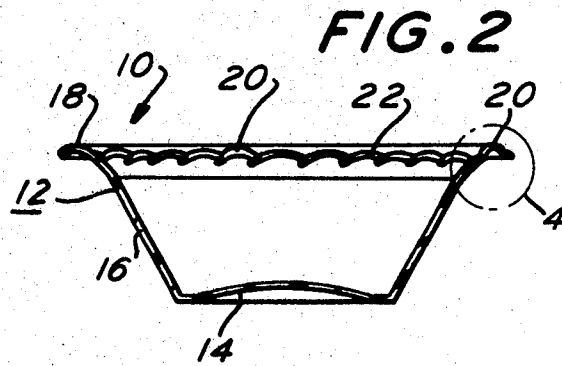
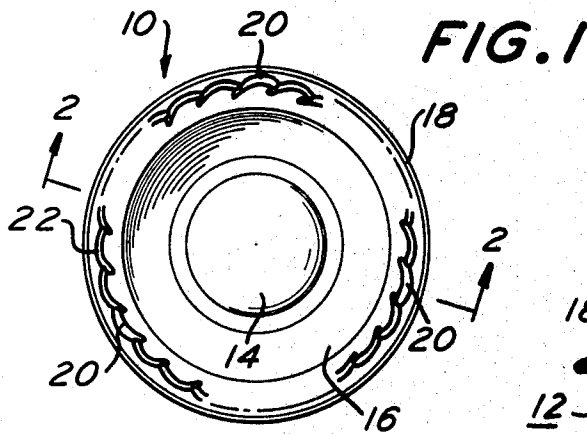
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A disposable dish, such as a plate, saucer or bowl, having a rim around the edge of a central portion. The rim has a plurality of spaced upstanding ribs thereon. The dishes are adapted to be stacked together in a pile with the upper surface of the ribs engaging the bottom surface of the rim of the next uppermost dish so as to space the dishes apart and allow for ease of individually removing the dishes from the stack even if the stack of dishes are compressed together.

4 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures





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DISPOSABLE DISH MEANS

The present invention relates to a disposable dish, and more particularly to a disposable dish which can be stacked together with similar dishes without the dishes becoming stuck together.

Disposable dishes generally comprise a thin sheet of a relatively rigid, semi-flexible material, such as a plastic or a rigid paper with or without coating or impregnation of plastic, having a central portion and a rim around the edge of the central portion. At least, a portion of the central portion is depressed below the rim. The amount that the central portion is depressed depends on the type of dish. For example, plates have only a slightly depressed central portion, saucers have slightly greater depressed central portions and bowls have even greater depressed central portions. The rims are either flat or slightly curved so as to be convex on their upper surface.

These dishes are generally packaged by stacking of a plurality of the dishes one on top of the other and placing the stack in a container. The container can be a box or merely a wrapping of a sheet of plastic or paper. The stack of the dishes are usually compressed tightly together so that the stack is of minimum thickness to provide a minimum size package. However, when stack of dishes are removed from the container the dishes are so stuck together that they are often difficult to separate into the individual dishes.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a novel disposable dish.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a disposable dish which can be stacked with other similar dishes but can be easily removed from the stack on an individual basis.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a disposable dish which can be stacked with other similar dishes and can be easily individually removed from the stack even after the stack of the dishes are compressed together.

These objects as achieved by a disposable dish having a central portion and a rim around the edge of the central portion. The rim has a plurality of special upstanding ribs. The ribs space the dishes slightly apart when the dishes are stacked together so as to permit ease of separating the dishes.

The foregoing and other objects of the invention will become more apparent as the following detailed description of the invention is read in conjunction with the drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a dish of the present invention,

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken along line 2 — 2 of FIG. 1,

FIG. 3 is a side plan view of two stacks of the dishes with one stack being compressed, and

FIG. 4 is an enlarged view of the portion of the rim of the dish within the circle 4 of FIG. 2 stacked with similar dishes.

Like reference numerals designate like parts throughout the several views.

Referring initially to FIGS. 1 and 2, the disposable dish of the present invention is generally designated as 10. The dish 10 is shown as being a bowl but could be a plate, saucer or the like. The dish 10 is made of a thin sheet of a flexible, flat rela-

tively rigid material, such as a plastic, heavy paper or paper coated or impregnated with a plastic. The dish 10 includes a central portion 12 having a bottom 14 and an upstanding wall 16 around the bottom 14. A rim 18 extends around and projects outwardly from the upper edge of the wall 16. The rim 18 is slightly curved so as to be convex on its upper surface. A plurality of circumferentially spaced, upstanding ribs 20 are provided on the rim 18. As shown, the rim 18 is constructed with a pattern 22 which is embossed in the rim. The ribs 20 are part of the pattern 22 but are larger than the other portion of the pattern so as to stand up higher from the rim. Although the dish 10 can be provided with any number of the ribs 20, it has been found that three ribs, as shown, are sufficient. Also, it is preferable that the ribs 20 be non-uniformly spaced apart around the rim 18.

When a plurality of the dishes 10 are stacked together, as shown in FIG. 3, the ribs 20 engage the undersurface of the rim of the next uppermost dish so as to slightly space the dishes apart as shown in FIG. 4. This prevents the dishes from sticking together and allows for ease of removing individual dishes from the stack. By having the ribs 20 non-uniformly spaced apart around the rim 18, the chances of having the ribs on one dish nest or fit into the ribs on the next dish is greatly minimized. For packaging, a stack of the dishes 10, such as shown on the left hand side of FIG. 3, can be compressed together to provide a stack of lesser thickness as shown in the right hand side of FIG. 3. However, when the compressive forces are removed, the ribs 18 will expand to space the dishes 10 apart and permit ease of individually separating the dishes from the stack.

Thus, there is provided by the present invention a disposable dish which can be stacked with similar dishes but are prevented from sticking together by ribs on the rim of the dishes. This permits the dishes to be easily individually separated from the stack even if the dishes of the stack have been compressed together. Also, the ribs can be hidden by making them a part of a design embossed in the rim.

What is claimed is:

1. A plurality of disposable dishes, each comprising a thin sheet of a relatively rigid semi-flexible material having a central portion, a rim extending around and projecting outwardly from the edge of the central portion including a design embossed around the rim, and a plurality of ribs within said design projecting from the surface of said rim beyond said design and being non-uniformly spread around the rim, said dishes when satacked have the ribs around the rim of one dish engaging the rim of the next adjacent dish to space apart the rims of adjacent dishes and permit ease in separating each of the dishes from the stack and allowing compression of said ribs to reduce such spacing of adjacent dishes for packaging said stacked dishes.

2. A dish in accordance with claim 1 in which the ribs project upwardly from the upper surface of the rim.

3. A dish in accordance with claim 1 in which the central portion includes a bottom and an upstanding wall around the bottom and the rim projects from the top edge of the wall.

4. A dish in accordance with claim 3 in which the rim is slightly curved with its top surface being convex.

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