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R. S. CUTLER

2,781,651

TRAY

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FIG. 1.

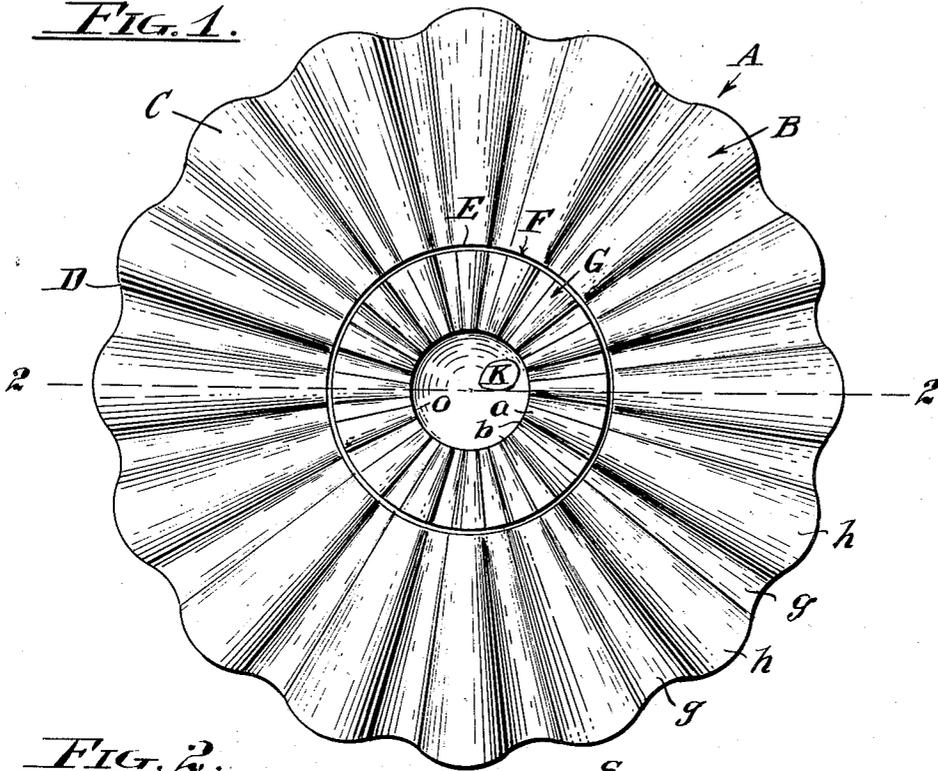


FIG. 2.

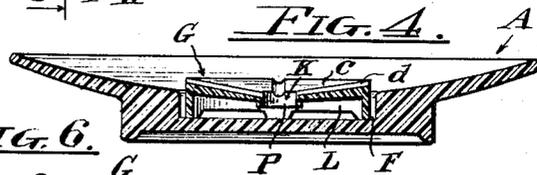
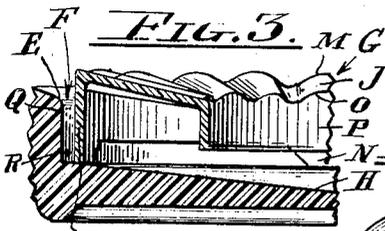
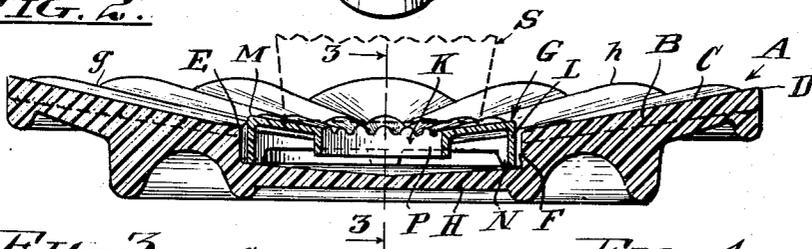
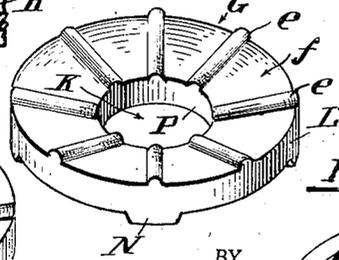
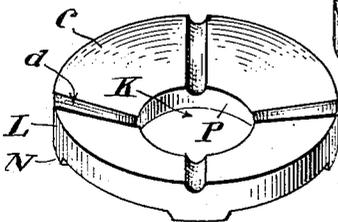


FIG. 5.



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2,781,651

TRAY

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1 Claim. (Cl. 65-53)

This invention relates to a tray and particularly pertains to trays of the type employed as a support for individual drinking vessels, such as saucers, coasters and the like.

The primary object of the invention is to provide a tray of the above character embodying a receptacle supporting stand whereby a container, such as a cup, mug, drinking glass and the like may be carried on the tray in such fashion that the bottom thereof will be supported in an elevated position relative to such liquid as may be accidentally spilled onto the tray, the purpose of the invention being to prevent the accumulation of liquid on the bottom of the drinking vessel when seated on the tray and thereby obviate dripping of such accumulated liquid on lifting the vessel from the tray.

Various devices have heretofore been devised for accomplishing the above recited purpose but apparently because of involved or impractical constructions have met with little or no material commercial success and have not come into extensive use. The present invention contemplates the provision of a one-piece tray formed with a central recess or well into which liquid spilled on the tray is drained, and to equip the tray with a removable one-piece vessel supporting stand of improved construction which is adapted to be seated in said recess and to afford an elevated support for a vessel, and also effect drainage of liquid deposited thereon into the well.

A feature of the invention is the provision of a construction in the vessel supporting stand whereby it may be readily and economically pressed or molded into a unitary structure which may be easily cleansed by the usual dish washing operations, and may be handled apart from its tray.

Another object of the invention is to provide a construction in the vessel supporting stand which while affording a drain outlet in the top wall thereof will also serve as a finger-hold whereby the stand may be readily engaged by a finger in lifting it from its seated position. Drinking saucers are frequently employed by smokers as an ash tray while serving as a drinking cup support with the result that the cup may become fouled with ashes.

Another feature of the invention is to obviate this objection by elevating the cup above the floor of the saucer, and to furthermore contour the saucer so as to facilitate its use as an ash tray.

With the foregoing objects in view together with such other objects and advantages as may subsequently appear, the invention resides in the parts and in the combination, construction and arrangement of parts hereinafter described and claimed, and as illustrated by way of example in the accompanying drawing in which:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of the tray with the vessel supported in place thereon;

Fig. 2 is a view in section and elevation as seen on the line 2-2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged detail in section taken on the line 3-3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a view in cross section of a modified form of

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the invention showing it as applied to a conventional saucer;

Figs. 5 and 6 are perspective views of modified forms of the vessel supporting stand.

Referring to the drawings more specifically in which corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views A indicates generally a tray which may constitute a saucer or coaster and is characterized by having a marginal wall portion B formed with an inwardly and downwardly inclined top surface C leading from the margin D of the tray to the margin E of a central recess F in the tray whereby liquid deposited on the surface C will normally drain into the recess F and be confined in the latter as in a well.

In carrying out the invention a drinking vessel supporting stand G is provided which is adapted to be positioned in the recess F and loosely supported on the bottom wall H of the latter. The stand G embodies a top wall J having a central opening K and formed with a depending side wall L on its outer margin M which wall has marginal protrusions N constituting legs adapted to seat on the bottom wall H of the recess F. The top surface of the wall J inclines inwardly and downwardly from its outer margin M to the inner margin O thereof surrounding the opening K so that liquid deposited on the wall J will normally drain to and through the opening K.

The margin O is formed with a downturned flange P terminating in upwardly spaced relation to the plane of the lower ends of the projections N which flange surrounds the opening K and serves as a guard to minimize back-wash or surge of liquid upwardly through the opening K when the stand G is positioned in the recess F and liquid is contained in the latter.

The outer margin M of the wall J is contoured to substantially conform to the contour of the margin E of the recess F which is preferably circular and the outer perimeter of the wall L is dimensioned to parallel the side wall Q of the recess F in slightly spaced relation thereto so as to afford a clearance R between the walls L and Q and thereby permit ready positioning of the stand G in the recess F as well as its removal therefrom.

The side wall L and protrusions N have a combined height such that when the stand G is seated in the recess F the outer margin M of the top wall J will extend on a plane spaced slightly above the plane of the margin E of the recess F which arrangement serves the double purpose of affording a finger hold and providing a barrier to prevent or at least minimize the downward flow of spilled liquid on the surface C from passing onto the top wall J of the stand G and to deflect such liquid directly into the recess F through the clearance space R.

When in service the stand G serves as a support for a drinking vessel S, the vessel being positioned with the bottom thereof seated on the top of the stand and spanning the opening K as indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 2.

As a means for facilitating flow into the opening K of liquid as may be deposited on the upper surface of the wall J as by splash or overflow of the vessel or as may occur in pouring liquid into the vessel carried on the stand, such surface is formed with radially extending vessel supporting members with drainage channels therebetween leading to the opening K.

In the construction shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 the vessel supporting members and channels designated *a* and *b* respectively, comprise tapered serpentine corrugations, in the construction shown in Figs. 4 and 5 the supporting members comprise areas *c* separated by channels *d*, and in the construction shown in Fig. 6 the supporting members comprise radial ribs *e* separated by areas *f*.

The surface C of the marginal portion B of the tray may be smooth as in an ordinary saucer as shown in Fig.

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4, but for ornamental as well as for utilitarian purposes may be fluted as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 wherein *g* and *h* indicate radially extending tapered ribs and channels extending from the outer margin *D* of the tray to the margin *E* of the recess *F*. This contouring of the tray renders it more suitable for use as a depository for cigarettes and ashes when utilizing the device as an ash tray.

The tray *A* and its associated stand *G* constructed as above recited may be formed of any suitable material but is especially subject to being made of urea-formaldehyde plastics and the like commonly employed in the production of tableware. However in some instances the tray *A* may be formed of one material such as porcelain while the stand *G* may be formed of another material. The stand *G* because of comprising a single piece may be stamped from sheet metal.

In operation the stand *G* is positioned in the recess *F* so that its top wall *J* will provide an elevated platform in the central portion of the tray whereby a drinking vessel *S* on being seated on such top wall will be supported clear of the tray *A* and out of contact with such liquid as ordinarily may be spilled onto the tray since any liquid deposited on the tray will drain into the recess *F* and will be confined therein beneath and out of contact with the vessel supported on the stand *G*. It follows that since the bottom of the vessel is sustained on the stand *G* out of contact with liquid it will be maintained dry and accordingly no drip of liquid from the vessel bottom will occur on lifting the vessel from the stand as when picking up the vessel preparatory to drinking therefrom.

When desired the stand *G* may be removed from the recess as by grasping its margins *M* and *O* between a finger and the thumb the opening *K* affording adequate space for positioning a finger or thumb against the inner margin *O* and the upstanding projection of the side wall *L* of the stand above the rim of the recess *F* permitting engagement with the margin *M* of the stand so that the stand may be readily lifted from the tray. However, removal of the stand may be readily effected by inverting the tray thereby causing the stand to fall free of the tray.

While a specific embodiment of the invention has been shown and described, the invention is not limited to the

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exact details of construction set forth, and the invention embraces such changes, modifications and equivalents of the parts and their formation and arrangement as come within the purview of the appended claim.

I claim:

A drinking vessel support comprising a tray formed with a bottom wall having an inwardly and downwardly inclined top surface and formed with a central recess having a dished bottom and bordered by an upstanding margin merging into said inclined surface, a drinking vessel supporting stand loosely positioned in said recess having a marginal wall loosely seating on the marginal portion of the bottom of said recess with its upper edge terminating above the upper margin of said recess adjacent thereto, said stand having a top wall merging with the upper edge of said marginal wall, said top wall being formed with a central drainage opening leading to said recess adapted to serve as a finger-hold and said top wall having its upper face inclined inwardly and downwardly to said opening and formed with radially extending vessel supporting members with drainage channels therebetween leading to said opening, and said top wall being formed with a downwardly projecting surge guard flange surrounding the opening therein terminating in spaced relation to said dished bottom.

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