CUP HOLDER FOR SHOPPING CARTS

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ABSTRACT

A cup holder for retaining a cup on a shopping cart has a ring and a bracket. The ring supports the cup, and is in turn supported by the bracket attached to the shopping cart. Further supports for holding the cup in the cup holder are provided as attachments to the ring or the bracket. The cup holder may be mounted on a wall of the shopping cart, a handle, or may be carried by the individual through the provision of a handle on the bracket or ring. The cup holder contributes to preventing spills and provides a safe and convenient way to transport beverages, especially hot beverages.
FIG. 15
CUP HOLDER FOR SHOPPING CARTS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/169,554, filed Oct. 21, 2002 entitled Design for a Cup Holder. This application is also based on and claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/416,506, filed Oct. 3, 2002 entitled Cup Holder for Shopping Carts and this application is also based on and claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/483,376, filed Jun. 27, 2003 entitled Cup Holder for Shopping Cart, a claim of priority being hereby made to both provisional applications.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates generally to beverage cup holders, and relates more particularly to beverage cup holders for shopping carts.

[0004] 2. Description of Related Art

[0005] It is often the case that individuals carry beverage containers with them as they complete various tasks throughout their daily regimen, while driving, at work or shopping. It is often difficult to insure that a beverage can be transported without spilling its contents while still being easily accessible to the individual. In addition, it is often the case that an individual will want to have two hands free, for example while driving, and avoid spilling the contents of a beverage container. As in the case of the present invention, a person shopping using a shopping cart may wish to have both hands free, while still being able to easily access the contents of a beverage container.

[0006] A solution to the above difficulties is to provide a cup holder that can be easily mounted on a relatively stationary mounting frame, such as an automobile frame or other non-movable fixtures within the automobile. With respect to shopping carts, no such cup holders are readily available for mounting on shopping carts. One difficulty in mounting cup holders to shopping carts is the fact that shopping cart models vary and the carts have irregular features that pose a problem for mounting cup holders. For example, a popular type of shopping cart is formed out of a grid of metal bars, which is unsuitable to support a cup holder adapted for use with an automobile. In another type of shopping cart, the cart structure is made of a grid of plastic elements all bound together to form a basket. The shopping cart so formed out of plastic has sidewalls that are thinned to provide enough support for items that may be placed in the shopping cart. Due to the thickness of the walls of the shopping cart, and because of the irregular support offered by the plastic grid, such shopping carts are unsuitable for use with cup holders adapted for automobile use.

[0007] Grocery retailers, at which shopping carts are commonly found in abundant numbers, are particularly sensitive to issues involving the transportation of beverages by shoppers. In particular, it is often the case that beverage spills can lead to slippery conditions on store floors, so that patrons of the store are exposed to hazardous conditions that can result in severe injury from slips and falls. However, store patrons regularly carry beverage containers that are susceptible to spilling and releasing the container contents without being fully aware of the potentially hazardous condition that spillage may cause thereby. Grocery store owners in particular are at high risk for liability related to slips and falls of patrons when unsafe conditions occur in the store for which the store owner is made responsible. It is possible for grocery store owners to reduce the risk to patrons by ensuring that spills are cleaned up rapidly and reduce the occurrence of spills in the first place. Accordingly, there is a tremendous need to secure and stabilize beverage holders in shopping carts when grocery store patrons transport beverage containers in the grocery store.

[0008] A particular cup holder for securing and stabilizing a beverage container is not available for all types of shopping cart models. For example, as mentioned above, the size and shape and construction materials used to manufacture shopping carts varies widely, such that no single cup holder device is usable with every shopping cart design. For example, a cup holder that fits on a wall of a shopping cart with a thick plastic wall will not be stable on a shopping cart with a very thin wall, such as with a wire frame shopping cart. Accordingly, it would be desirable to obtain a cup holder that performs well on a majority of available shopping cart designs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] According to the present invention, there is provided a cup holder for carrying a beverage container that can be easily and securely fixed to shopping carts of various design. According to one aspect of the invention, the cup holder may be disposable. According to another aspect of the present invention, the cup holder is provided with a clip that can be removably coupled to shopping carts having various designs. Advantageously, the cup holder may be provided with a handle element to permit the user to easily pick up and hold a beverage container in the cup holder. For example, a handle attached to the cup holder of the present invention provides an insulated grasping point for holding and moving beverage containers with the use of an individual’s hand, without the individual’s hand being subjected to high temperatures that may accompany a hot beverage container. According to one embodiment of the present invention, the cup holder is shaped in a loop that has a smaller dimension than that of a beverage container that has a tapered diameter along the container length, so that the beverage container is securely held by the loop of the cup holder. According to another embodiment, the cup holder has a bottom support portion upon which a beverage container may rest while supported by the cup holder.

[0010] An attachment mechanism provided with the cup holder permits the cup holder to be rigidly fixed to the handle of a shopping cart. According to one embodiment, the cup holder is removably attachable to the shopping cart handle. Attachment to the shopping cart handle permits the shopping cart user to access a beverage container in the cup holder with ease. The cup holder attached to the handle also removes the beverage container from within easy reach of a child that may occupy a foldout seat in the shopping cart in the area near the handle. Moreover, even if the child can reach the cup holder, the rigid attachment to the handle prevents the child from causing a spill that could injure the child or produce an unsafe condition on the floor of the store.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is explained in further detail in the following description with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a top view of an embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a top view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a side perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 5;

FIG. 8 is a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 5;

FIG. 9 is a side perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 10 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 9;

FIG. 13 is a side view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 14 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 is a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 13;

FIG. 16 is a side perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 17 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 16;

FIG. 18 is a side perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 19 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 18;

FIG. 20 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 18;

FIG. 21 is a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 18;

FIG. 22 is a perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 23 is another side perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 22;

FIG. 24 is an exploded perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 22;

FIG. 25 is another exploded perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 22;

FIG. 26 is a perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 27 is another perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 26;

FIG. 28 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 26 detached from a cart handle;

FIG. 29 is a perspective view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 30 is another perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 29;

FIG. 31 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 29 assembled in a first position;

FIG. 32 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 29 in a second position;

FIG. 33 is a side view of another embodiment according to the present invention;

FIG. 34 is an exploded side view of the embodiment in FIG. 33;

FIG. 35 is an exploded perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 33;

FIG. 36 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 33.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides a simple and cost effective means for stabilizing beverage containers, particularly beverage containers with contents that are hot, in shopping carts and other types of transports for shoppers. Although the embodiments described are oriented materially for shopping carts, it should be apparent that the present invention is usable with any number of scenarios where beverage containers are retained in a particular position to avoid spillage. A particular feature of the present invention permits the cup holder to be discarded after being used, and therefore lends itself to a number of food service and other industries where the individual consuming the beverages is moving or does not have a stable frame of reference for retaining a beverage container, such as occurs on an airplane, for example.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, a first embodiment according to the present invention is shown generally as cup holder 20. Cup holder 20 is composed of a moldable plastic and can be manufactured in large quantities very rapidly. It should be apparent that cup holder 20 can be manufactured out of any number of materials that are low cost and capable of supporting a beverage container.

Cup holder 20 includes a clip 21 for attaching cup holder 20 to a shopping cart. Clip 21 is shaped to fit over the edge of a wall of a shopping cart and retain cup holder 20 in a given position. Clip 21 has a resilient arm 24 that can elastically deform a short distance away from a body 23 of cup holder 20. Resilient member 24 can apply spring force to the wall of the shopping cart on which it is placed to retain cup holder 20 in position. Clip 21 also includes a vertical
support member 25 for supporting cup holder 20 and a beverage container filled with a beverage. Once a full beverage container is placed in cup holder 20, a supporting force is carried by vertical support member 25 cooperating with a top edge of the wall of the shopping cart. Accordingly, vertical support member 25 and resilient member 24 cooperate to retain cup holder 20 in position when loaded with a full beverage container.

[0051] Support ribs 22 are preferably arranged near a bottom edge of cup holder 20 and span the width of cup holder 20 to provide vertical support for beverage containers. Support ribs 22 are thin and flexible and require less material than a solid cup bottom, for example, while still maintaining sufficient support for beverage containers.

[0052] Cup holder 20 also includes solid sidewall 23 that spans the height and circumference of the cup portion of cup holder 20. Sidewall 23 thus provides rigid structural support for cup holder 20. Sidewall 23 is tapered from a larger diametric dimension to a smaller diametric dimension from top to bottom of cup holder 20. This partially conical shape permits cup holder 20 to be stackable for ease of storage and distribution. The partially conical shape of sidewall 23 also contributes to supporting beverage containers placed in cup holder 20. Sidewall 23 also provides the advantage that cup holder 20 may be grasped by an individual around sidewall 23 for transporting and consuming beverages in a retained beverage holder. In the instance where the beverage container holds a hot liquid, such as hot coffee, the individual is prevented from being scalded by the interposition of sidewall 23 between the individual’s hands and the hot beverage container. The partially conical shape of sidewall 23 also contributes to permitting the individual to maintain a good grasp of cup holder 20 to help prevent spillage of contained beverages.

[0053] Referring now to FIGS. 3 and 4, a top view and side view of a cup holder 20 of similar design to that of cup holder 20 of FIG. 1 is shown. In this embodiment, like components to those illustrated in FIG. 1 are marked with the same reference numerals. As shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, an alternative clip 26 is illustrated for use with cup holder 20. Clip 26 has a double resilient action with a central resilient member 28 and peripheral resilient members 29. Clip 26 includes two horizontal support members 27 that provide vertical support for cup holder 20. Peripheral resilient members 29 are formed to provide a spring resistance when moved away from sidewall 23 of cup 20. Accordingly, peripheral resilient members 29 provide a spring force in cooperation with cup holder 20 to retain cup holder 20 on the side of a shopping cart. Central resilient member 28 extends from a bottom portion of peripheral resilient members 29 and also provides a spring force when moved away from cup holder 20 and sidewall 23. Central resilient member 28 and peripheral resilient members 29 together form a reflex spring that provides additional resilient spring force along the length of central resilient member 28. Clip 26 according to the design of FIGS. 3 and 4 provides additional retaining force for retaining and stabilizing cup holder 20 on a shopping cart. Clip 26 is suitable for use with shopping carts having particular designs that prevent the simple use of a clip 21 illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. Clip 26 also has the advantage of using less material than clip 21.

[0054] Referring now to FIGS. 5-8, another embodiment of a cup holder according to the present invention is illustrated generally as cup holder 50. Cup holder 50 includes a ring 51 that is substantially circular in shape with walls 52. Accordingly, ring portion 51 is shaped substantially like a cylinder to accept beverage containers. Cup holder 50 also includes a handle 53 in the shape of a loop through which an individual can insert a finger to easily lift and support cup holder 50. In practice, handle 53 serves as an extension of the retained beverage container, as with a typical mug, so that the individual can drink the beverage out of the beverage container using handle 53 as a hand hold. Cup holder 50 also includes a clip portion 54 that includes two legs 55. Legs 55 are adapted to fit over and resiliently retain cup holder 50 to a shopping cart wall. An individual user can handle a beverage container by grasping cup holder 50 by handle 53, and place cup holder 50 and the retained beverage container onto a shopping cart wall with legs 55 retaining cup holder 50 and thus the beverage container. Because cup holder 50 is retained to the shopping cart wall with a spring force provided by the resiliency of legs 55, the individual user can easily remove cup holder 50 and a retained beverage container from the shopping cart wall, and freely replace cup holder 50 back on the shopping cart wall.

[0055] A support 56 is provided on clip 54 to form a lower portion of handle 53 and to join legs 55 together. When clip 54 is placed on the shopping cart wall, a top of the shopping cart wall abuts support 56 to support cup holder 50.

[0056] Referring now to FIGS. 10-12, an embodiment similar to that of FIGS. 5-9 is shown as a cup holder 90. Cup holder 90 has a protrusion 97 and a hook 98 arranged near a top rim of a ring 91 to assist in retaining a beverage container. It is often the case that beverage containers are in the shape of a cup with a lip portion that has a greater diameter than the cup itself. Accordingly, when such a beverage container is placed in cup holder 90, the cup lip can cooperate with protrusion 97 and hook 98 to contribute to retaining the beverage container in cup holder 90. This arrangement permits cup holder 90 and the beverage container to be moved when cup holder 90 is grasped by a handle 93 and transported without the beverage container moving relative to cup holder 90. Accordingly, protrusion 97 and hook 98 contribute to the stability of the arrangement of cup holder 90 and the retained beverage holder.

[0057] In addition, ring 91 includes a flat portion 99 that serves to decrease the opening size defined by ring 91. When a typical beverage container is placed into cup holder 90 through ring 91, the round sides of the beverage container are compressed by flat portion 99 to contribute to retaining the beverage container in cup holder 90. With the configuration of protrusion 97, hook 98 and flat portion 99, a beverage container can be retained in cup holder 90 and moved about while grasping handle 93 to permit an individual to easily transport beverages in the beverage container, or consume the same, with less chance of spillage. Accordingly, as with other embodiments discussed above, cup holder 90 offers the individual an insulative grip for holding the beverage container through the use of handle 93 on cup holder 90. When cup holder 90 retains a beverage container holding a hot beverage, the individual need not grasp the hot beverage container and thus can avoid discomfort or receiving a potential scalding. Other features of cup holder 90 are similar to those described above for a cup holder 20 and are not repeated here.
Referring now to FIGS. 13-15, another embodiment of the cup holder according to the present invention is illustrated generally as a cup holder 130. Cup holder 130 has a clip 131 for retaining cup holder 130 on a shopping cart wall. Clip 131 is attached to a ring 132, which serves as a structural member for supporting cup holder 130 and a beverage container inserted into cup holder 130. Ring 132 is cylindrical in shape to match a shape of a beverage container and retain the container in cup holder 130 accordingly. Two vertical legs 133 extend from ring 132 to support an annular shaped ring 134. Ring 134 provides a vertical support for a beverage container inserted into cup holder 130. By being substantially annularly shaped, ring 134 provides even and distributed support for a beverage container retained in cup holder 130. Cup holder 130 provides an embodiment of the present invention that requires less material than other embodiments discussed above, while maintaining many of the features and advantages of the other embodiments. It should be apparent that clip 131 can be replaced with clip 26 according to the embodiment show in FIGS. 3 and 4, in addition to various other substitutions and combinations disclosed in other embodiments or equivalents. Cup holder 130 also has the added feature that it may be permanently affixed in a shopping cart, so that it need not be replaced with each use of a beverage container by an individual.

Referring now to FIGS. 16 and 17, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated generally as cup holder 160. Cup holder 160 is substantially similar to cup holder 130 with a reflex clip 161 added, similar to reflex clip 26 shown in FIGS. 3 and 4. All other features of cup holder 160 are substantially the same as those described above for cup holder 130 and clip 26, and will not be repeated here.

Referring now to FIGS. 18-21, a cup holder 180 is illustrated. Cup holder 180 has a clip 181 for retaining cup holder 180 on a shopping cart wall. Clip 181 is attached to a ring 182, which serves as a structural member for supporting cup holder 180 and a beverage container inserted into cup holder 180. Ring 182 is cylindrical in shape to match a shape of a beverage container and retain the container in cup holder 180 accordingly. Ring 182 includes a flat portion 189 that serves to decrease the cross-sectional area of ring 182. When a typical beverage container is placed into cup holder 180 through ring 182, the round sides of the beverage container are compressed by flat portion 189 to contribute to containing the beverage container in cup holder 180. Cup holder 180 includes two vertical legs 183 that extend from ring 182 to support an annular shaped ring 184. Ring 184 provides and distributed support for a beverage container retained in cup holder 180.

Clip 181 is a shown as a reflex clip, similar to reflex clips described in previous embodiments, and will not be described here again in detail. Clip 181, however, includes a through hole 185 that is positioned to cooperate with a through hole 186 in leg 183. Accordingly, cup holder 180 can be permanently affixed to a shopping cart by placing clip 181 over a wall of the shopping cart and securing cup holder 180 to the cart by passing a securing device through holes 185 and 186 to thereby prevent removal of cup holder 180 from the shopping cart. Any type of adequate device can be used to retain cup holder 180 on the shopping cart by being passed through holes 185 and 186, such as a screw, peg, bolt and nut, plastic anchor, rivet or two piece rivet, for example. When cup holder 180 is attached to the shopping cart using an attaching device and holes 185, 186 cup holder 180 obtains further rigidity for supporting a beverage container to further help prevent spillage of the container contents. The attaching device passed through holes 185, 186 can also supply a compressive force to push clip 181 against the carriage wall in cooperation with legs 183 to provide further stability and rigidity for attaching cup holder 180 to the shopping cart. The advantages of this design are that cup holder 180 is less likely to be disturbed from its position and can more readily accept impacts without tipping or spilling contents of a beverage container retained in cup holder 180.

Referring now to FIGS. 22-25, another embodiment of a cup holder 220 is shown. Cup holder 220 includes a clip 221 for attaching cup holder 220 to a shopping cart. Clip 221 is shaped to fit over a handle 22 of a shopping cart and retain cup holder 220 in a given position. Clip 221 has a top member 224 that can fit snugly over a corner section of handle 223. Member 224 is attached to cup holder 220 and is shaped in an arc concentric with a basket 225. The shape of member 224 retains basket 225 in an upright position when attached to handle 223. A bottom member 226 cooperates with top member 224 to encircle handle 223 and provide a rigid support for cup holder 220. Top and bottom members 224, 226 are affixed together with a screw 227 that also securely fastens cup holder 220 to handle 223. Bottom member 226 includes a cylindrically shaped screw guide 222 on an inner curved portion of bottom member 226. Screw 227 is inserted into guide 222, and abuts against guide 222 to provide one end of a fixation mechanism for cup holder 220. Screw 227 projects into a screw receptacle 228 positioned in a cooperating location on top member 224. Screw receptacle 228 projects slightly into an interior of basket 225. An opening 229 in basket 25 provides a cutout section to receive guide 222 when top member 224 and bottom member 226 are secured together. Once screw 227 is screwed into screw receptacle 228, cup holder 220 is fastened to handle 223 through top and bottom members 224, 226. It should be apparent that any kind of securing device or mechanism can be used to couple cup holder 220 to handle 223, as long as basket 225 is maintained in an upright position on handle 23.

Once a full beverage container is placed in cup holder 220, a supporting force is carried by top and bottom members 224, 226 cooperating with handle 223 of the of the shopping cart. Accordingly, top and bottom members 224, 226 and handle 223 cooperate to retain cup holder 220 in position when loaded with a full beverage container.

Referring now to FIGS. 26-28, another embodiment of a cup holder according to the present invention is illustrated generally as cup holder 260. Cup holder 260 has clips 265, 266 for retaining cup holder 260 on a shopping cart wall. Clips 265, 266 are shaped to have a circular dimension cooperative with handle 223. Openings 267, 268 have a dimension smaller than a diameter of handle 223, so that once coupled to handle 223, cup holder 260 is retained in place with clips 265, 266. Two vertical legs 263, 264 extend from a ring 262 defining a top of cup holder 260 to clips 265, 266, respectively. Ring 262 provides a vertical support for a beverage container inserted into cup holder 260. Cup holder 260 provides an embodiment of the present invention that is removably attachable to handle 223, while maintaining many of the features and advantages of the
previously described embodiment. It should be apparent that clips 265, 266 can be used with members 224, 226 in addition to various other substitutions and combinations disclosed in other embodiments.

[0065] Referring now to FIGS. 29-32, another embodiment according to the present invention is shown generally as cup holder 290. Cup holder 290 is designed to be mounted on cart handle 223 with a mounting structure 295. Mounting structure 295 includes several openings or slots 296 for receiving a mounting protrusion 297 provided on a cup holder bracket 298. Mounting structure 295 is composed of two separate components, an upper clamp 293 and a lower clamp 294. Brackets 293, 294 are shaped to fit around handle 223 and provide a secure mounting structure for clamping bracket 298 of cup holder 290 to handle 223. Mounting structure 295 provides several openings 296 placed at specified intervals along a collar 299 that receives cup holder bracket 298. The several holes 296 permit mounting structure 295 to be placed on a corner of handle 223 that has various configurations according to different models of shopping carts. That is, mounting structure 295 is adapted to securely hold or clamp 290 to handle 223 on a cart with a substantially horizontal handle configuration, as best illustrated in FIG. 31. By providing a number of openings 296 on collar 299, mounting structure 295 also permits cup holder 290 to be mounted to handle 223 when the cart configuration includes a slanted handle configuration, as best seen in FIG. 32, for example. Accordingly, mounting structure 295 can be rotated about an axis along handle 223, and still provide suitable openings 296 for mounting cup holder 290. Bracket 298 need only have one protrusion 297 that cooperates with a given opening 296 for a particular handle configuration. Cup holder 290 remains securely, even when mounted to handle 223 of varying configurations as illustrated in FIGS. 31, 32. Because brackets 293, 294 provide a substantial clamping force when secured together, bracket 298 is securely positioned on handle 223 to maintain cup holder 290 in an upright position.

[0066] Cup holder 290 is assembled to handle 223 by first positioning mounting structure 295 loosely around a corner of handle 223. An appropriate opening 296 is selected to receive protrusion 297 on bracket 298, and bracket 298 is inserted into collar 299. Once the proper relationship between mounting structure 295 and bracket 298 is established to maintain cup holder 290 in an upright position, upper and lower bracket members 293, 294 are secured together to affix bracket 298 to handle 223. Cup holder 290 is prevented from rotating about handle 223 by the cooperation of protrusion 297 with the selected opening 296, and is also maintained in position by the clamping force provided by clamping members 293, 294 secured together.

[0067] The remainder of portions of cup holder 290 are similar to those described in other embodiments above, and will not be repeated here.

[0068] Referring now to FIGS. 33-36, another embodiment of the present invention is shown generally as cup holder 330. Cup holder 330 is secured to a shopping cart handle 223 with a clamp structure 335. Clamp structure 335 is composed of a top clamp 336 and a bottom clamp 337 that are joined securely together to clamp around handle 223. Clamp 336 is attached to cup holder 330 and provides a stable support platform when coupled with clamp 337 securely to handle 223. Clamp 337 has an arcuate shape that is semicircular to fit snugly around a portion of handle 223. Clamp 337 also has through holes 338 to allow passage of a retaining element, such as a bolt 333.

[0069] Clamp 336 has an arcuate semicircular shape similar to that of clamp 337, to again snugly fit around handle 223. The snug fit provided by clamps 336, 337 in cooperation, provides a secure fastening mechanism for supporting and maintaining cup holder 330 in a desired position. Clamp 336 has through holes 339 that also permit passage of a securing device such as bolt 333. Nuts 340 cooperate with bolt 333 to secure clamps 336, 337 together to affix cup holder 330 in a desired position and location.

[0070] An inner arcuate surface of clamps 336, 337 can be formed of a substance with particular gripping or frictional characteristics to assist in providing a secure clamp to handle 223. Alternatively, a gripping material can be applied to the inner surface of clamps 336, 337 to provide extra retaining properties to clamp 335 when clamps 336 and 337 are securely coupled together. Cup holder 330 attached to handle 223 with clamp 335 has the advantage of being positioned in any particular location on handle 223 and in any particular orientation, without regard to the structure of the particular handle of the shopping cart. That is, cup holder 290, discussed above, relies upon particular handle configurations at particular angles to maintain cup holder 290 in an upright position. Cup holder 330 can be maintained in an upright position without reliance on a remainder of the structure of handle 223. Cup holder 330 also includes a surface area 331 that, in addition to providing extra support and rigidity for cup holder 330, provides a space to apply advertising or other indicia on cup holder 330. For example, instructions on the use of cup holder 330 or safety precautions when transporting hot beverages can be provided on surface area 331, in addition to advertising or sponsorship for a beverage producer, for example.

[0071] Cup holder 330 is affixed to handle 223 by aligning clamps 336 and 337 around handle 223, and passing bolts 333 through openings 338, 339 and affixing nuts 340 to bolts 333. Bolts 333 and nuts 340 are screwed together to obtain a particular torque and clamping force around handle 223 to maintain cup holder 330 in an upright position, for example. It should be apparent that many other affixing devices can be used with cup holder 330, including a releasably affixable mechanism that can be adjustably clamped to handle 223. By providing an adjustable clamping mechanism, a user can place cup holder 330 where they wish on handle 223 for their convenience. In addition, more permanent fixtures can be used such as rivets or welding to permanently affix cup holder 330 to handle 223.

[0072] Although the present invention has been described in relation to particular embodiments thereof, many other variations and modifications and other uses will become apparent to those skilled in the art. It is preferred, therefore, that the present invention be limited not by the specific disclosure herein, but only by the appended claims.
What is claimed is:

1. A cup holder for holding a cup on a shopping cart, comprising:
   a ring having a size and shape suitable for receiving the cup;
   a support member attached to the ring and having a portion being substantially horizontal for providing vertical support for the cup;
   a bracket coupled to the cup holder located on at least one of the ring and the horizontal support member for supporting the cup holder on the shopping cart in a particular position; and
   the bracket being shaped to obtain a retaining force acting between the bracket and the shopping cart to contribute to maintaining the cup holder in the specified position.

2. The cup holder according to claim 1, wherein the bracket is in the shape of an elongated hook, an elongated portion of the bracket providing a resilient retaining force applied between the shopping cart and the cup holder to retain the cup holder in the specified position.

3. The cup holder according to claim 1, wherein the bracket further comprises a resilient member that provides a retaining force between the cup holder and the shopping cart when the cup holder is placed on the shopping cart.

4. The cup holder according to claim 1, wherein the horizontal support member has an annular shape.

5. The cup holder according to claim 1, further comprising an inner flattened portion of the ring, whereby a size of an opening formed by the ring is reduced.

6. The cup holder according to claim 1, further comprising a planar portion on an inner surface of the ring, and the planar surface contributes to retaining the cup in the cup holder.

7. The cup holder according to claim 1, further comprising:
   an attachment structure on the bracket for cooperating with the bracket to attach the cup holder to the shopping cart; and
   an attachment device cooperative with the attachment structure to secure the cup holder to the shopping cart.

8. The cup holder according to claim 7, wherein the attaching device and the attachment structure are releasably cooperative.

9. The cup holder according to claim 1, wherein the bracket is shaped to attach to a handle of the shopping cart.

10. The cup holder according to claim 9, wherein the bracket attaches to a portion of the handle that includes a bend.

11. The cup holder according to claim 9, wherein the bracket is permanently affixed to the handle.

12. The cup holder according to claim 9, wherein the bracket is releasably coupled to the handle.

13. The cup holder according to claim 9, further comprising a bracket clamping mechanism for clamping the bracket to the handle.

14. The cup holder according to claim 13, further comprising:
   a series of positioning elements in the clamping mechanism for receiving a cooperative positioning member located on the bracket, wherein the positioning member cooperates with at least one of the positioning elements to maintain the cup holder in a specified position when the clamping mechanism is clamped.

15. A cup holder for holding a cup on a shopping cart, comprising:
   a ring shaped to receive and support the cup;
   a bracket attached to the ring for supporting the cup holder on the shopping cart;
   a handle coupled to at least one of the ring and the bracket to permit an individual to grasp and convey the cup holder.

16. The cup holder according to claim 15, wherein the bracket further comprises two resilient extensions for mounting on either side of a wall of the shopping cart.

17. The cup holder according to claim 16, wherein the extensions are separated by a dimension suitable to permit the legs to apply a resilient force to the wall of the shopping cart to retain the cup holder on the shopping cart wall.

18. The cup holder according to claim 15, further comprising a planar surface coupled to the ring for contributing to retaining the cup in the cup holder.

19. The cup holder according to claim 15, further comprising a protrusion on an upper portion of the cup holder defining a recess for receiving a lip of the cup to thereby contribute to retaining the cup in the cup holder.

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