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Mendoza et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0252328 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 1, 2007**(54) **PORTABLE AMUSEMENT APPARATUS****Publication Classification**(76) Inventors: **Felix Mendoza**, San Juan, PR (US);
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ABSTRACT

A portable amusement apparatus is provided comprising a portable ice cooler including a support member acting as a lid and having an upper surface and a lower surface; a receiving portion located adjacent with respect to said upper surface for receiving game pieces and playing a game in a game playing portion; and an engaging portion located adjacent with respect to said lower surface to mate with an upper surface of the portable cooler. An adapting structure is also disclosed to easily adapt the support member to mate with a different sized portable cooler.

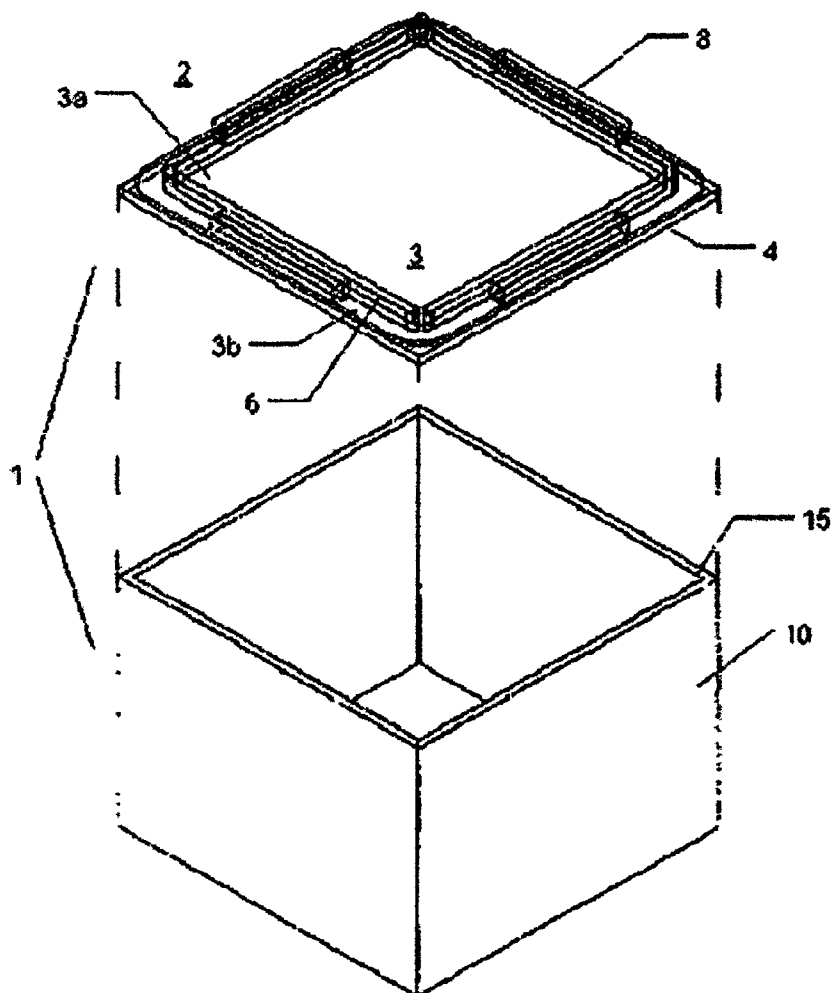
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FIG. 1

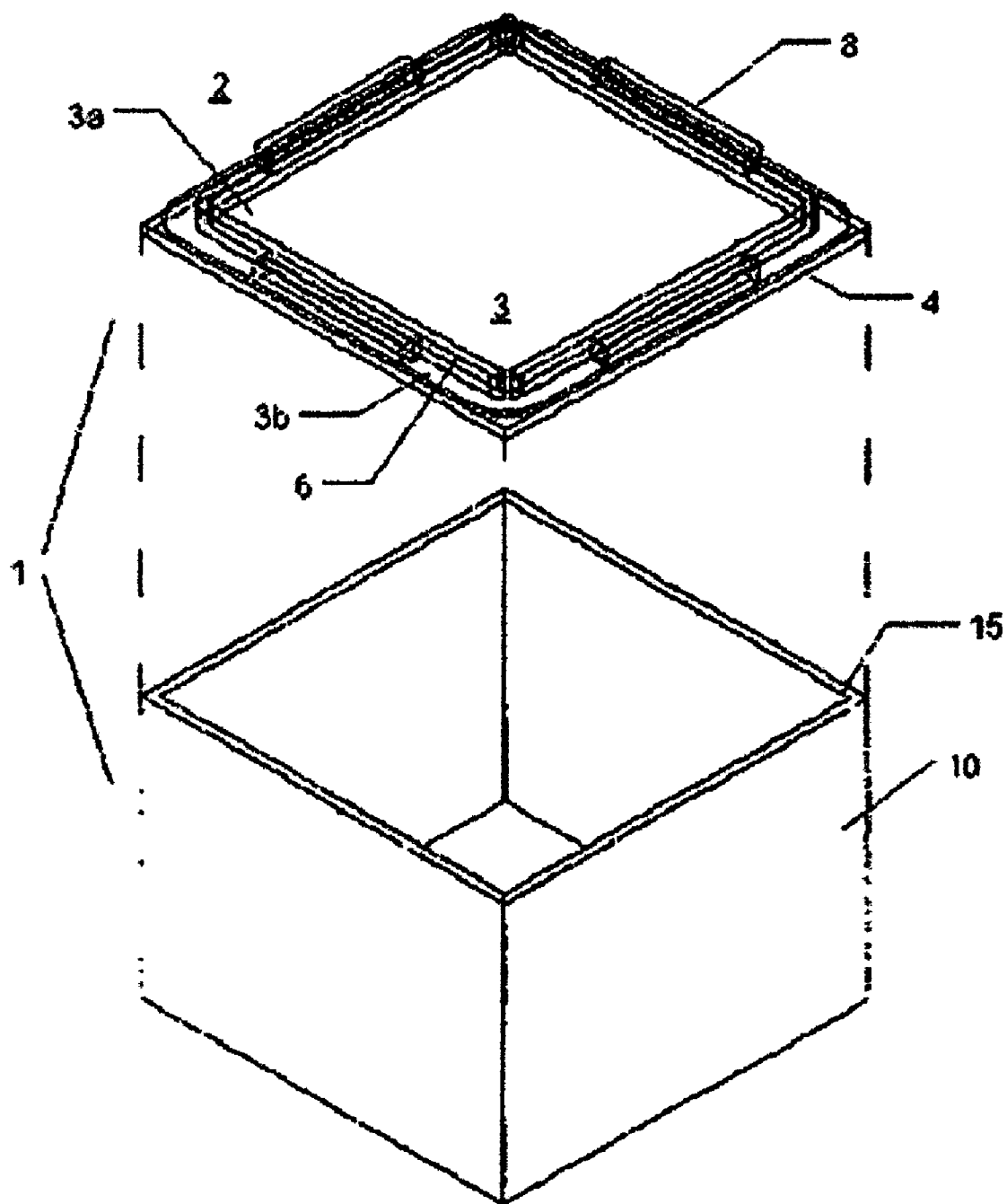


FIG. 2

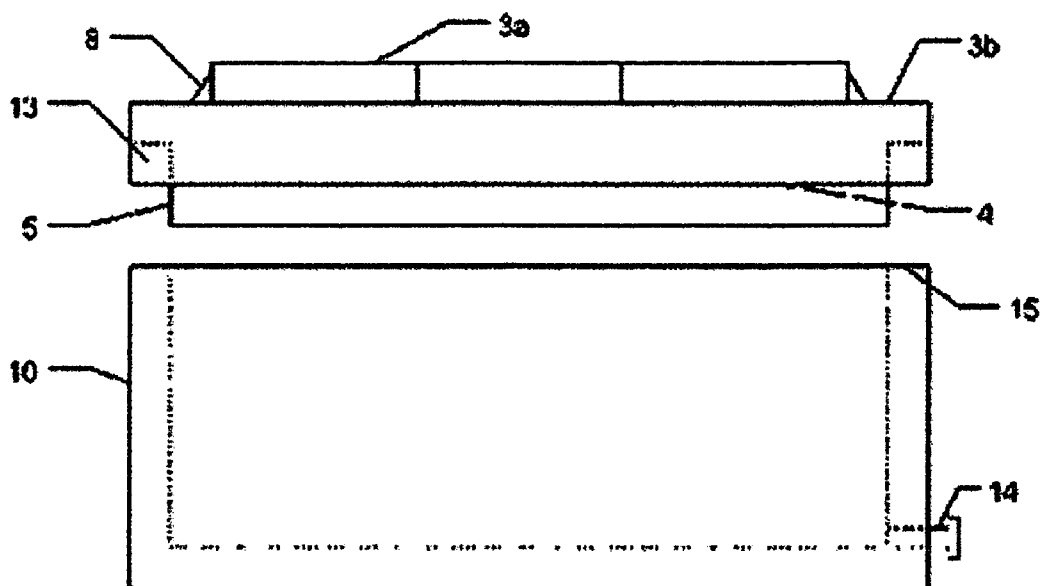


FIG. 3

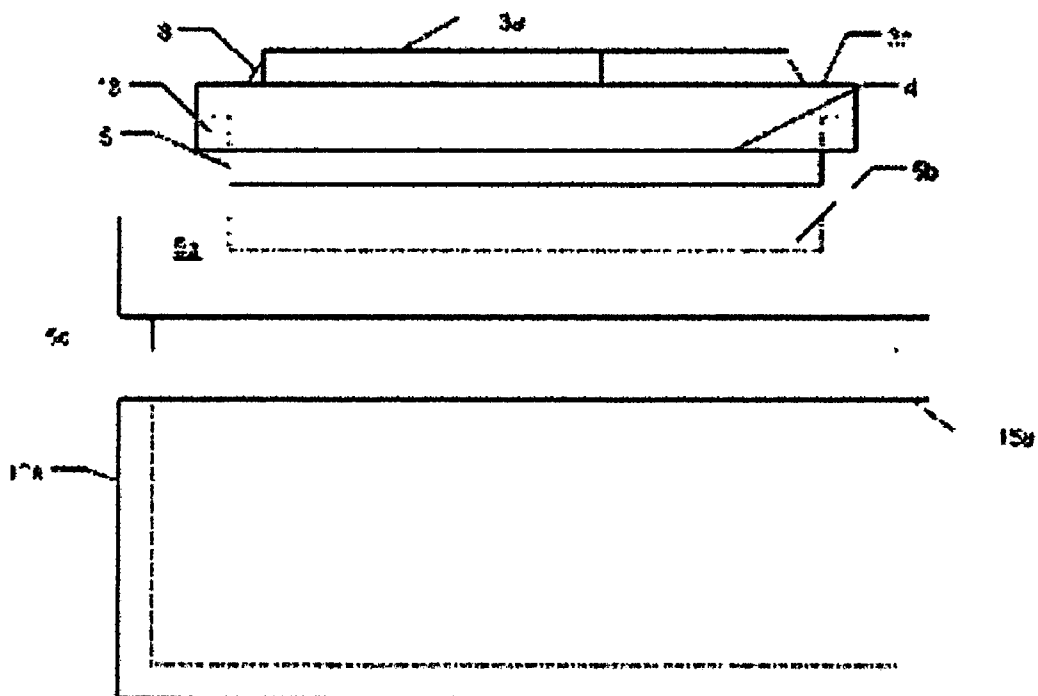


FIG. 4

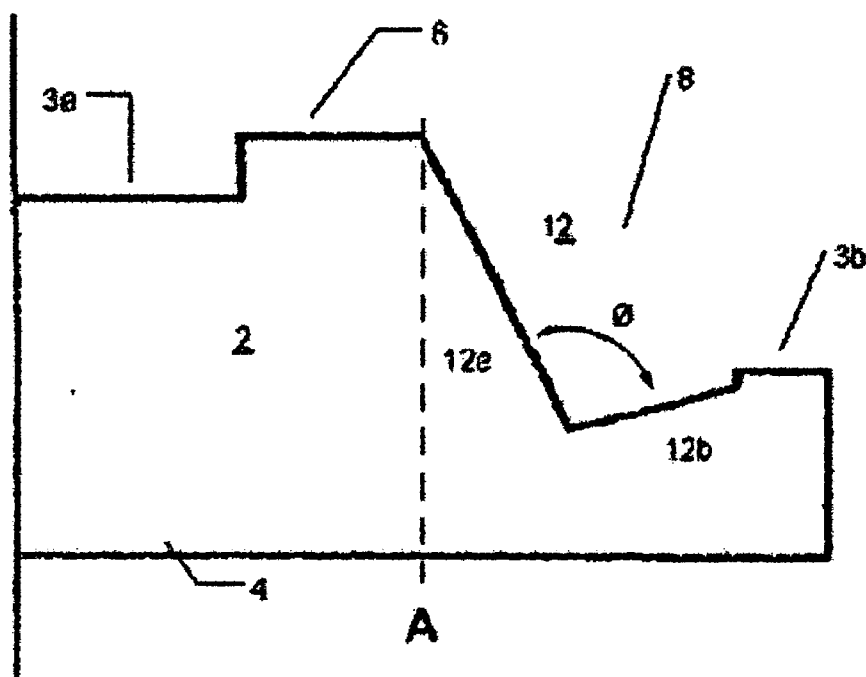


FIG. 5

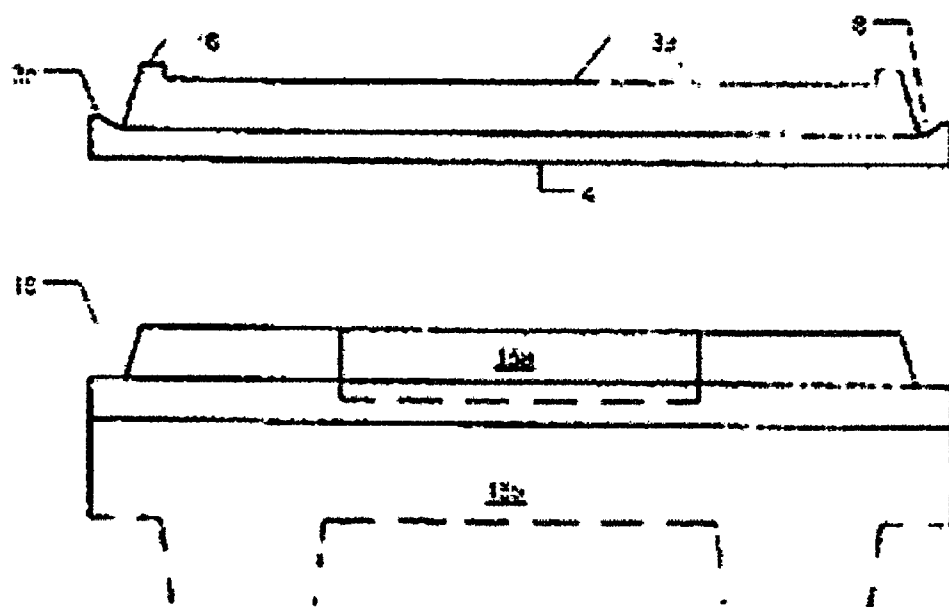


FIG. 6

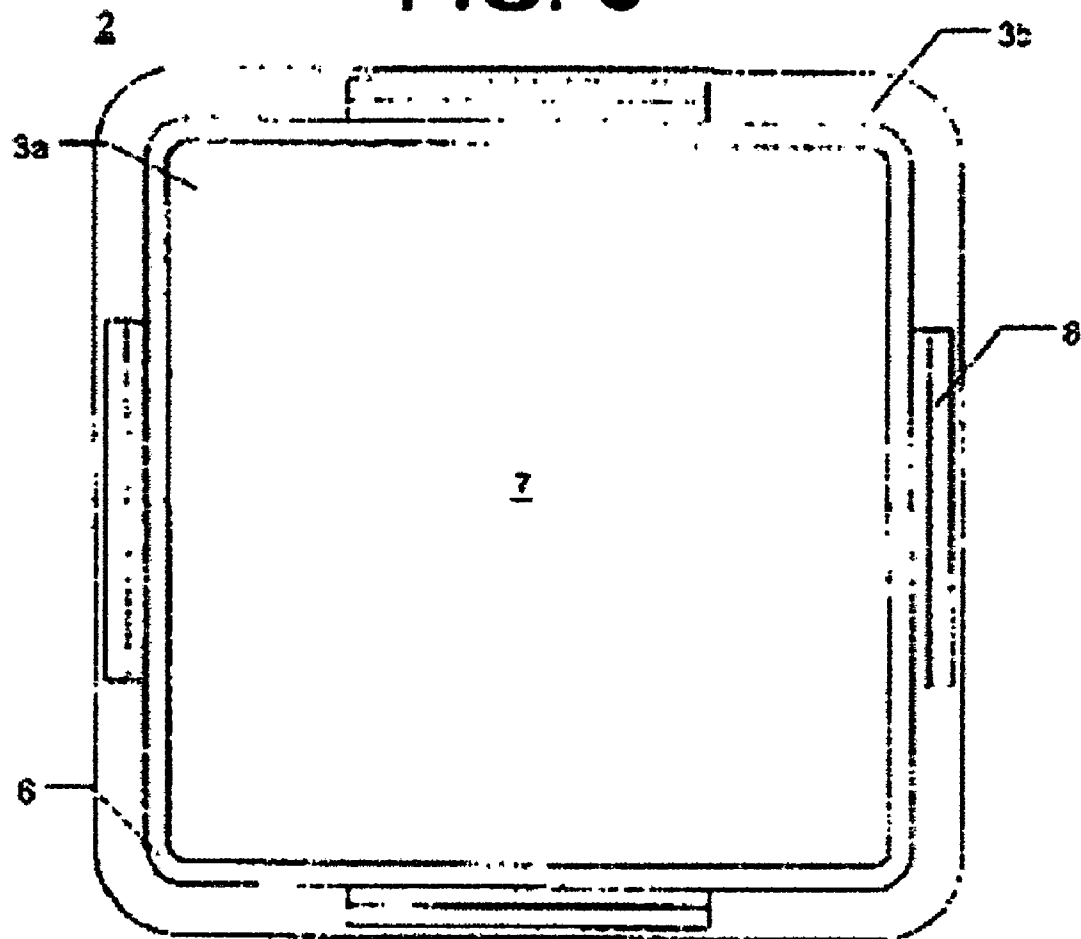
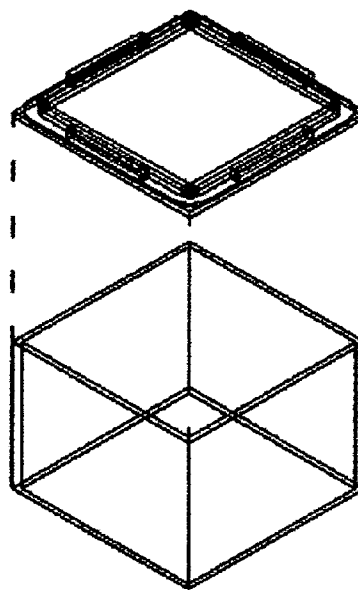
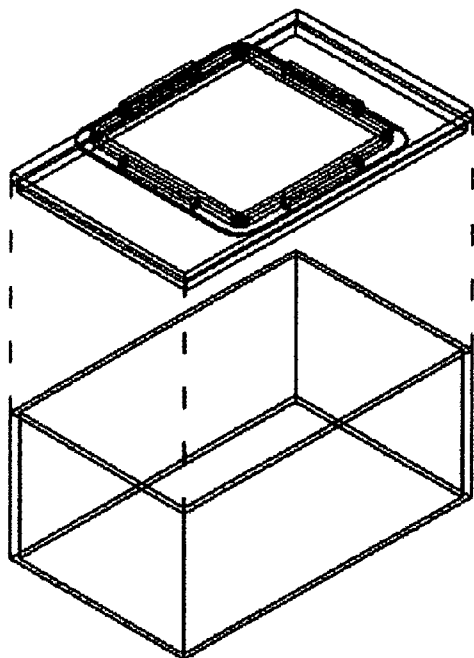


FIG. 7



PORTABLE AMUSEMENT APPARATUS**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not Applicable

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH

[0002] Not Applicable

SEQUENCE LISTING OR PROGRAM

[0003] Not Applicable

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention relates to a portable amusement apparatus. Particularly, the present invention relates to a portable amusement apparatus having a container and a lid. More particularly, the present invention relates to a portable amusement apparatus having a lid including a game playing portion and a game piece receiving portion. Still more particularly, the present invention relates to a portable amusement apparatus having an engaging structure to selectively adapt the portable amusement apparatus to an existing container and/or lid.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Individuals traveling or experiencing outdoor activities may find it desirable or even necessary to take with them a portable cooler for their convenience while they're traveling or enjoying the activities. Portable coolers are well known in the art. Generally, the portable coolers receive a quantity of ice for cooling items placed in the coolers and a mating lid is provided to thermally insulate and seal the cooler. The lid might be hinged or simply mated with the cooler in a snap-on configuration. Additionally, the upper surface of the lid might contain holding areas for receiving articles such as: beverages as an added convenience for individuals.

[0006] In addition, individuals also like to entertain by playing different types of amusement games such as playing cards, tile games like dominoes and/or board games just to cite some examples. In the case of tile games like dominoes, individuals usually use a portable table to support the dominoes while they are playing the game. The portable table might be specially adapted to play dominoes and usually consist of a table with four legs, wherein the legs could alternatively be removable.

[0007] Therefore, in order to enjoy the outdoor activities individuals must carry both the portable cooler and the domino table causing an inconvenience in terms of cargo space availability and weight to be carried by individuals. There have been prior attempts in the art to solve the abovementioned problems. However, they all fail to solve the problems in an efficient and economical way. Thus, there is a need for a portable cooler that incorporates a game playing structure in a lightweight, economical and convenient way.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention solves the aforementioned problems by providing a lightweight portable cooler comprising an amusement apparatus conveniently incorporated into a lid.

[0009] To achieve the foregoing and other advantages, the present invention, briefly described, provides a portable amusement apparatus comprising a support member having an upper surface and a lower surface; a receiving portion located adjacent with respect to said upper surface; and an engaging portion located adjacent with respect to said lower surface.

[0010] Advantageously, in accordance with the present invention, the portable amusement apparatus has a defined inner and outer portion. A game playing portion and game piece receiving portions are also provided with respect to the inner portion to allow at least one individual to preferably play a tile game such as but not limited to dominoes.

[0011] In another aspect of the invention, the inner portion also includes an interchangeable removable surface. The surface might selectively comprise visual indicia selected from the group comprising at least one of a game board, a logo, a flag, a picture, an illustration, alphanumeric characters or a combination thereof. In addition, a storage area is provided for storing articles such as but not limited to: game pieces and personal belongings.

[0012] In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, the portable amusement apparatus has an engaging portion to selectively engage with a portable cooler either directly or indirectly through an adapting portion. In another embodiment of the invention the engaging portion is selectively adapted to engage with a portable cooler's existing lid either directly or indirectly through an adapting portion. In still another aspect of the invention, the portable amusement apparatus comprises a container's lid.

[0013] Advantageously, in accordance with the present invention, the portable amusement apparatus is made of at least one of but not limited to: a non-cellular material, a thermal insulating material, and a magnetic material. In an embodiment of the invention, the portable amusement apparatus is at least partially hollow and/or at least partially translucent.

[0014] In still another aspect of the invention, the portable amusement apparatus further comprises at least one of: a handle, a beverage holding portion, a wheel, a side access portion, or a combination thereof.

[0015] Advantageously, in accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the portable amusement apparatus is selectively adapted to be reversible with respect to an upper surface of a portable cooler.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] The preferred embodiments of the invention will herein after be described in conjunction with the included drawings provided to illustrate and not to limit the invention, wherein like designations denote like elements, and in which:

[0017] FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 2 shows a side view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 3 shows a side view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 4 shows a cross-sectional view of a game piece receiving portion in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 5 shows a side view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0022] FIG. 6 shows a top view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0023] FIG. 7 shows an isometric view of a portable amusement apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] This specification and the accompanying figures disclose the preferred embodiment as example of the invention. The drawings illustrated in the figures are not to scale and are only intended to serve as illustrating examples of the invention. The invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiment illustrated. Numerous modifications, changes, variations, substitutions and equivalents will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0025] Referring now to FIG. 1, FIG. 2, FIG. 6 and FIG. 7 the portable amusement apparatus of the invention is shown generally at 1 in combination with a portable cooler 10. A support member 2 is shown comprising a lower surface 4, an upper surface 3 including an inner portion 3a and an outer portion 3b. Handles 13 are provided to ease removal of the support member 2 from the container 10. In the preferred embodiment said inner and outer portions are separated by a continuous rim 6 and said inner portion might be higher with respect to said outer portion. Alternatively, said inner portion and said outer portion could be at substantially the same horizontal plane comprising a single even surface. Specifically, FIG. 2 and FIG. 6 show the upper surface 3 of said support member 2, comprising a game playing portion 7 and at least one game piece receiving portion 8. In the preferred embodiment, the shape of said support member 2 comprises a square and thus, four game piece receiving portions (one on each side) are preferred to allow participation of up to four players. However, it should be understood that any shape, size and number of game piece receiving portions could be alternatively used without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Moreover, as will be explained later, in the preferred embodiment the game piece receiving portions are configured to receive and support tile game pieces such as dominoes. However, it is also envisioned by this invention to alternatively provide different types of game piece receiving portions selectively configured to receive and support other types of game pieces such as but not limited to: playing cards and/or tokens. As shown in FIG. 7 the portable amusement apparatus could be but is not limited to a rectangular or square shape.

[0026] In an embodiment of the invention, the game playing portion 7 comprises an interchangeable removable surface (not shown). The removable surface further comprises visual indicia selected from the group comprising at least one of: a game board, a logo, a flag, a picture, an illustration, alphanumeric characters or a combination

thereof. It should be understood that any other type of visual indicia could be additionally used. The removable surface could also be reversible so that different visual indicia are provided on each side of the removable surface and/or a plurality of removable surfaces could also be selectively interchanged. Moreover, the dimensions of said removable surface could correspond to the overall dimensions of said upper surface 3, or alternatively could be selectively configured to be smaller than said upper surface 3. Furthermore, said removable surface is removably secured to said upper portion 3 by any suitable non-permanent easily removable securing means such as but not limited to: non-permanent adhesive, snap fit, pressure fit, quick-release fit or fasteners. The removable surface could be additionally configured to be adapted as a removable lid to provide access to a storage area (not shown) inside said support member 2. However, it is also envisioned by this invention to alternatively or in combination provide access to said storage area with respect to said lower surface 4. A storage area could be provided by configuring said support member 2 to be at least partially hollow, thus allowing an inner section of said support member 2 to serve as a storage area.

[0027] In FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, there is shown an engaging portion 5 in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. An engaging portion 5 is located adjacent to said lower surface 4 and protruding outwardly with respect to said lower surface 4. In one preferred embodiment, the engaging portion 5 is selectively configured to mate snugly in a mating thermal insulating relationship with respect to an upper portion 15 of a container or portable cooler 10. In the embodiment shown on FIG. 2, said engaging portion 5 mates snugly in a mating thermal insulating relationship with respect to an internal wall of said upper portion 15 of container or portable cooler 10. However, it is also envisioned by this invention that said engaging portion 5 could mate snugly in a mating thermal insulating relationship with respect to an external wall of said upper portion 15 of container or portable cooler 10. In a preferred embodiment of the invention said engaging portion 5 is integrally formed with respect to said lower surface 4. However, it is also envisioned that said engaging portion could be removably secured with respect to said lower surface 4 and/or selectively configurable with respect to said lower surface 4 and/or at least one of: a container's lid and an upper portion of a container. A drain plug assembly 14 is provided to ensure proper water drainage before storing said portable cooler.

[0028] As used herein, the term engaging portion is generally used to define a structure that allows a support member to be removably attached or mated to another part or member. The term is used to encompass either a single-piece structure or a multi-part structure allowing a support member to be removably attached to another part or member. FIG. 3 shows an engaging portion 5 further comprising an adapting element 5a in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Adapting element 5a is configured to provide a mating thermal insulating relationship between said support member 2 and an opening defined by the upper portion 15a of a different sized container or portable cooler 10a. Adapting element 5a comprises an adapting receiving portion 5b located adjacent with respect to an upper surface of said adapting element 5a for removably receiving an engaging portion 5 of said support member 2; and an adapting engaging portion 5c located adjacent with respect

to a lower surface of said adapting element **5a** for mating snugly in a mating thermal insulating relationship with respect to an upper portion **15a** of a container **10a**. In the situation depicted in FIG. 3, the dimensions of said engaging portion **5** are smaller than the dimensions of said upper portion **15a**, so that an adapting element **5a** would have the net effect of increasing the dimensions of a support member's engaging portion with respect to an upper portion of a container. However, it is also possible that the dimensions of said engaging portion **5** are bigger than the dimensions of said upper portion **15a**, in which case adapting element **5a** would be configured to have the net effect of reducing the dimensions of a support member's engaging portion with respect to an upper portion of a container. It is also envisioned by this invention (not shown) that the adapting engaging portion **5c** could be configured to removably mate in a removably securing relationship with an existing lid of a container **10a**. This could be done by removably securing the adapting engaging portion **5c** with at least one surface (top or sides) of said container's lid or alternatively the adapting engaging portion **5c** could be configured to mate with an existing receiving portion of a container's lid such as but not limited to: a beverage holder recessed portion. Alternatively, any suitable non-permanent easily removable securing means such as but not limited to: non-permanent adhesive, snap fit, pressure fit, sliding fit, quick-release fit or fasteners could be used to provide a mating structure between said adapting engaging portion **5c** and said container's lid.

[0029] FIG. 5 shows the support member **2** of the portable amusement apparatus of the invention being adapted to mate with an existing container's lid in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, support member **2** is simply positioned above the upper surface **16a** of an existing container's lid in a removably mating relationship. The shape of said lower surface **4** is configured to at least partially match the shape of said upper surface **16a**. Alternatively, it is also envisioned that an engaging portion **5** (not shown) could be configured to mate with an existing receiving portion of a container's lid such as but not limited to: a beverage holder recessed portion. Moreover, any suitable non-permanent easily removable securing means such as but not limited to: non-permanent adhesive, snap fit, pressure fit, sliding fit, quick-release fit or fasteners could be used to provide a mating structure between said engaging portion **5** and said container's lid.

[0030] FIG. 4 shows a cross-sectional view of a game piece receiving portion **8** in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. Game piece receiving portion **8** comprises a recessed portion **12** comprising two walls **12a** and **12b** being separated by a predetermined angle θ . Angle θ is selected from angles that allow to maintain a domino tile removably secured with respect to walls **12a** and **12b** without affecting the visual field of a game player with respect to said domino tile. In the preferred embodiment, angle θ is 90° . Moreover, the angle between wall **12a** and axis A is preferably 20° . In the preferred embodiment of the invention the game piece receiving portions are configured to receive and support tile game pieces such as dominoes. However, it is also envisioned by this invention to alternatively provide different types of game piece receiving portions selectively configured to receive and support other types of game pieces such as but not limited to: playing cards and/or tokens.

[0031] The portable amusement apparatus of the invention is made of at least one of: a non-cellular material, a thermal insulating material or a combination thereof. Preferably, said portable amusement apparatus of the invention is made of at least one of: plastic, fiberglass or a combination thereof. However, any lightweight and durable material, preferably with adequate buoyant properties could be alternatively used. In an embodiment of the invention, the support member is at least partially hollow to provide a dual purpose feature. First, the hollow volume inside said support member could be used as a storage area as previously mentioned in the specification. Second, the hollow volume inside said support member in combination with the construction material provides a buoyant portable amusement apparatus. Additionally, said support member could be made at least partially of a translucent material to facilitate the view of the cooler's interior content without removing the support member from the portable cooler. In another embodiment of the invention, the support member alternatively comprises at least partially of a magnetic material selected from the group comprising at least one of but not limited to: iron, nickel, cobalt, Alnico, ceramics, or a combination thereof to allow the game pieces to be magnetically secured with respect to the game playing portion and/or the game piece receiving portion. In a more specific embodiment, the removable surface could comprise at least partially of a magnetic material.

[0032] The portable amusement apparatus in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the invention comprises a handle (not shown) and preferably a retractable handle adjacent to said portable cooler. Moreover, it comprises at least one beverage holding element that could be permanently or removably secured to the portable cooler. Furthermore, in another aspect of the invention, the portable amusement apparatus comprises at least one wheel connected for rotational movement with respect to said portable cooler. Additionally, an access portion could be provided on at least one side surface of the portable cooler to easily access the interior portion of said cooler without removing the support member from the upper surface of said cooler. The access portion is selected from the group comprising at least one of: a sliding door, a hinged door, a removable door, a zippered door, or a combination thereof. In another embodiment of the invention, the upper surface and the lower surface of said support member are selectively adapted to interchangeably mate in a reversibly mating relationship with respect to an upper surface of said portable cooler. Advantageously, the lower surface could be primarily used as a "virtual" upper surface and provide for example a plurality of beverage holding portions. When an individual desires to play a game, he/she simply reverses the support member, so that the upper surface now can be used as a "normal" upper surface along with the game playing and game piece receiving portions.

[0033] This specification and the accompanying figures disclose the preferred embodiment as example of the invention. The invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiment illustrated. Numerous modifications, changes, variations, substitutions and equivalents will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention from the accompanying claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable amusement apparatus comprising:
 - a support member having an upper surface and a lower surface;
 - a receiving portion located adjacent with respect to said upper surface; and an engaging portion located adjacent with respect to said lower surface.
2. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said upper surface comprises at least an inner portion and an outer portion.
3. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 2, wherein said inner portion is higher than said outer portion.
4. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 2, wherein said inner portion and said outer portion are separated by a continuous rim.
5. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said receiving portion comprises a game playing portion.
6. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 5, wherein said receiving portion further comprises a game piece receiving portion.
7. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 6, wherein said game piece receiving portion is selectively configured to maintain a game piece at a predetermined angle with respect to a visual field of a game player.
8. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 5, wherein said game playing portion comprises an interchangeable removable surface.
9. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 8, wherein said interchangeable removable surface comprises visual indicia.
10. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 9, wherein said visual indicia comprises at least one of: a game board, a logo, a flag, a picture, an illustration, alphanumeric characters or a combination thereof.
11. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said support member further comprises a storage portion.
12. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said engaging portion comprises a mating structure protruding outwardly with respect to said lower surface.
13. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 12, wherein said engaging portion is integrally formed with said lower surface.
14. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 12, wherein said engaging portion is removably secured with respect to said lower surface.
15. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said engaging portion is selectively configured to mate snugly in a mating thermal insulating relationship with respect to an upper portion of a container.
16. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said engaging portion is selectively configured to mate in a removably securing relationship with respect to at least one of: a container's lid and an upper portion of a container.
17. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 16, wherein said engaging portion further comprises an adapting

element removably securing said engaging portion with respect to at least one of: a container's lid and an upper portion of a container.

18. A container's lid comprising the portable amusement apparatus of claim 1.

19. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, comprising a portable cooler in combination with said support member.

20. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said portable amusement apparatus is made of at least one of: a non-cellular material, a thermal insulating material or a combination thereof.

21. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 20, wherein said non-cellular material is selected from the group comprising at least one of:

plastic and fiberglass.

22. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said support member is at least partially hollow.

23. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said support member is at least partially translucent.

24. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 1, wherein said support member comprises at least partially of a magnetic material.

25. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 19, further comprising at least one handle connected adjacent to said portable cooler.

26. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 25, wherein said at least one handle comprises a retractable handle.

27. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 19, further comprising at least one beverage holding element connected adjacent to said portable cooler.

28. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 19, further comprising at least one wheel connected for rotational movement with respect to said portable cooler.

29. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 19, wherein said portable cooler further comprises at least one access portion connected adjacent to at least one side of said portable cooler.

30. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 29, wherein said at least one side of said portable cooler further comprises at least one opening.

31. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 30, wherein said at least one access portion is selectively actuated in a thermal insulating covering/uncovering relationship with respect to said at least one opening.

32. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 31, wherein said at least one access portion is selected from the group comprising at least one of: a sliding door, a hinged door, a removable door, a zippered door, or a combination thereof.

33. The portable amusement apparatus of claim 19, wherein said upper surface and aid lower surface of said support member are selectively adapted to interchangeably mate in a reversibly mating relationship with respect to an upper surface of said portable cooler.

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