

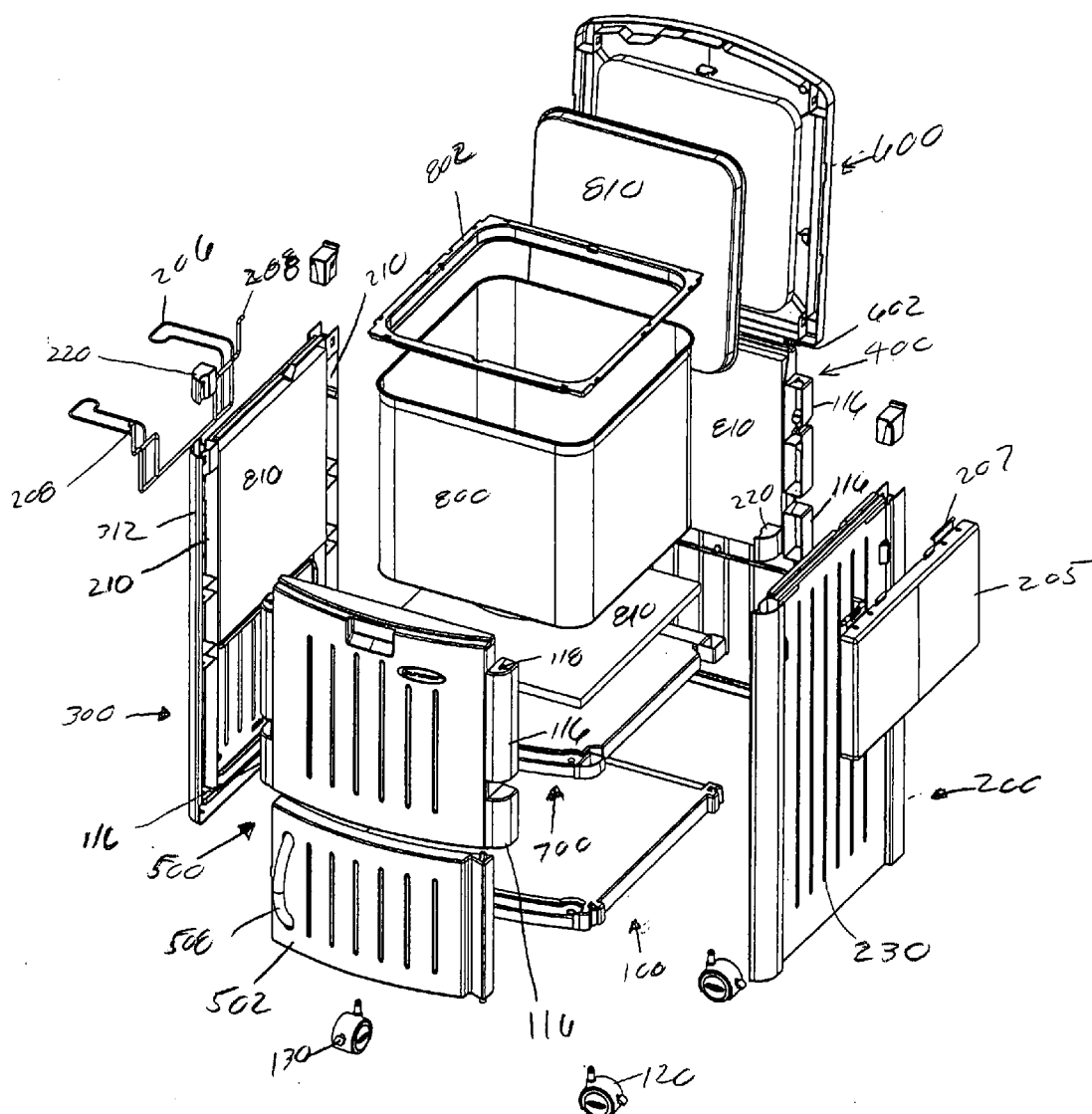


US 20070145051A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Uffner et al.**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0145051 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 28, 2007**(54) **MOBILE COOLER STATION**(52) **U.S. Cl. 220/4.28**(76) Inventors: **Michael Uffner**, Naperville, IL (US);
Torrence Anderson, Overland Park, KS (US)(57) **ABSTRACT**

Correspondence Address:
MCHALE & SLAVIN, P.A.
2855 PGA BLVD
PALM BEACH GARDENS, FL 33410 (US)

The present invention provides a plurality of injection molded plastic panels having integrated connectors which are capable of being packaged and shipped in a knock-down state and constructed to form an aesthetically pleasing mobile cooler assembly. The integrated connection of the side walls, front, back, cover and bottom panel components simplifies cooler assembly construction. The panels are formed of injection molded plastic to interlock with one another without the need for fasteners or connectors. The system incorporates a minimum number of components by integrally forming the connectors into the panels which are snapped together to complete the assembly.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/317,158**(22) Filed: **Dec. 22, 2005****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
B65D 6/00 (2006.01)

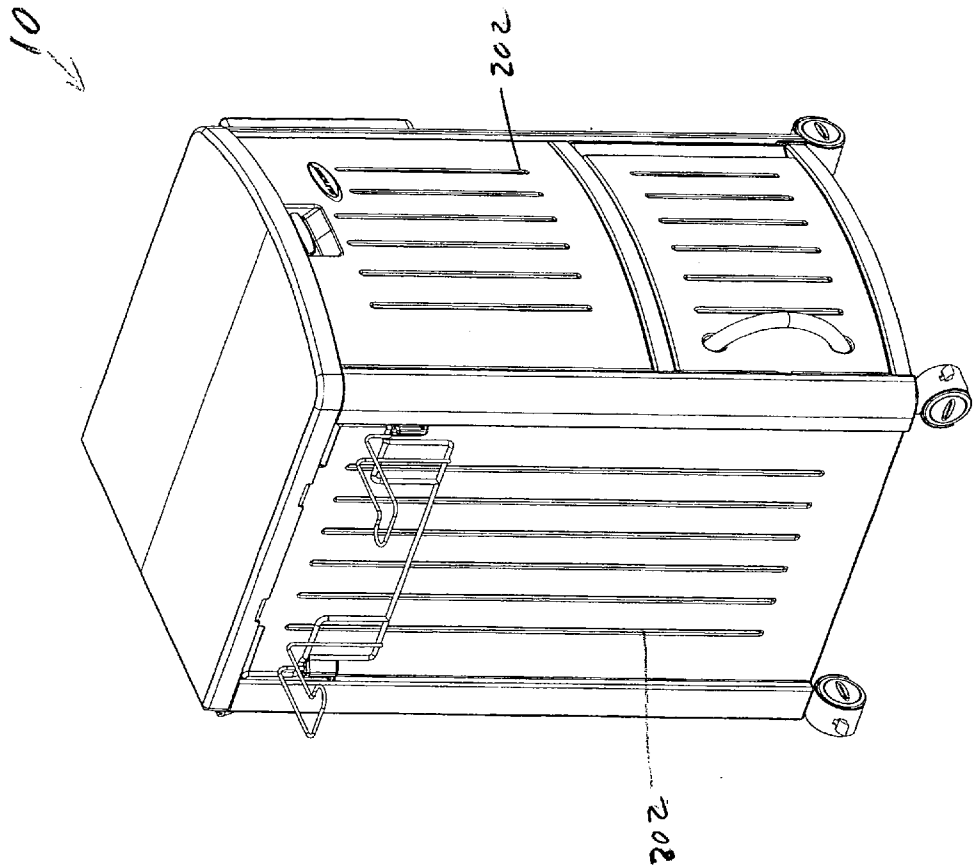
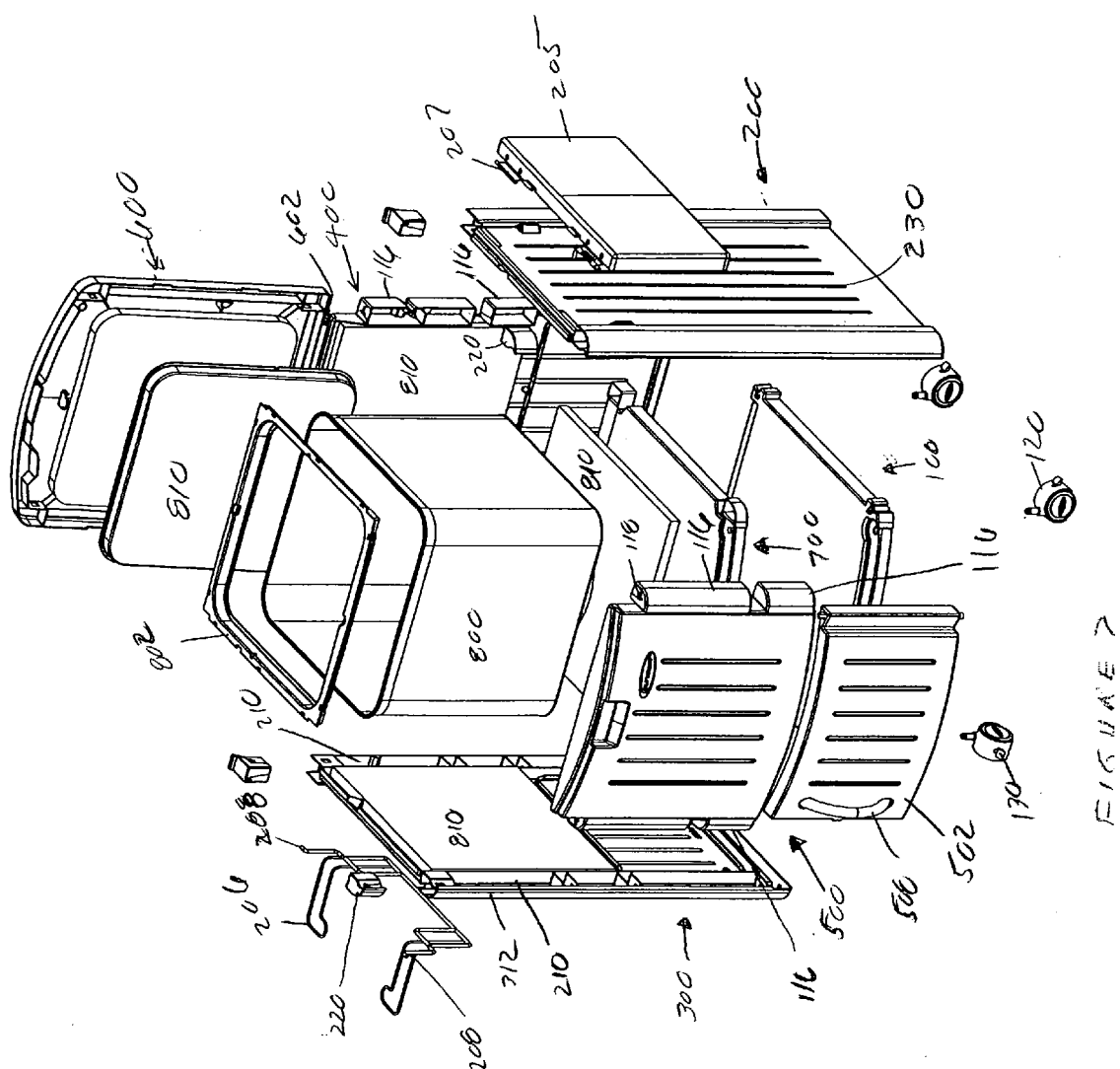


FIGURE 1



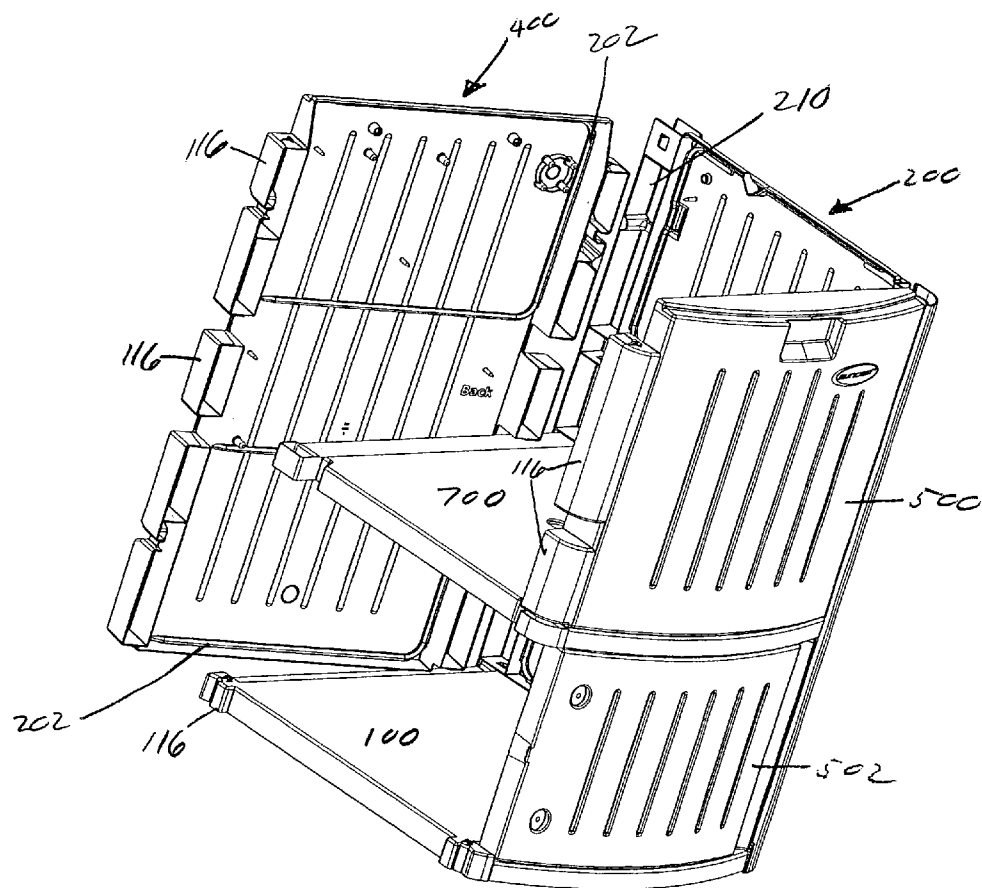


FIGURE 4

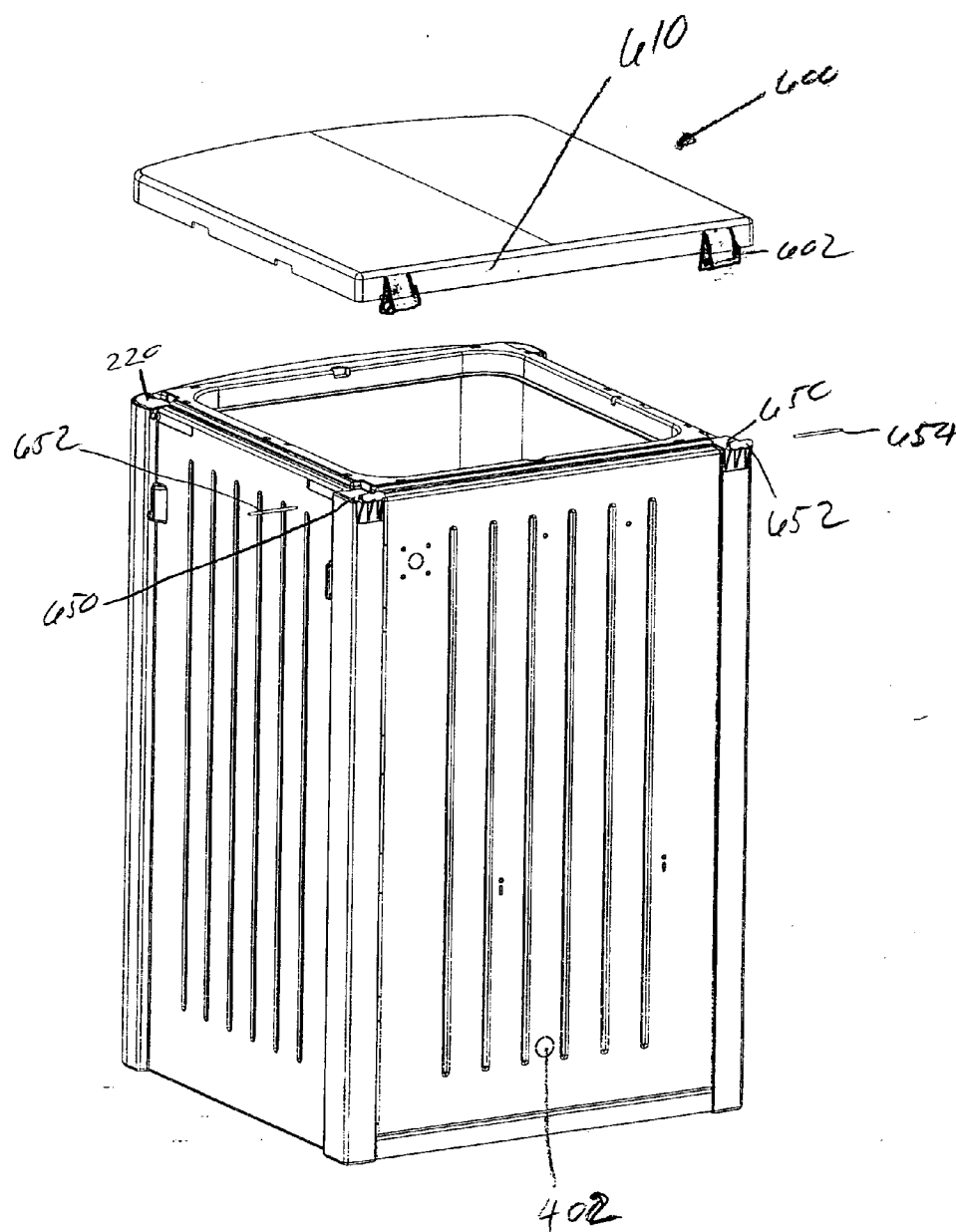
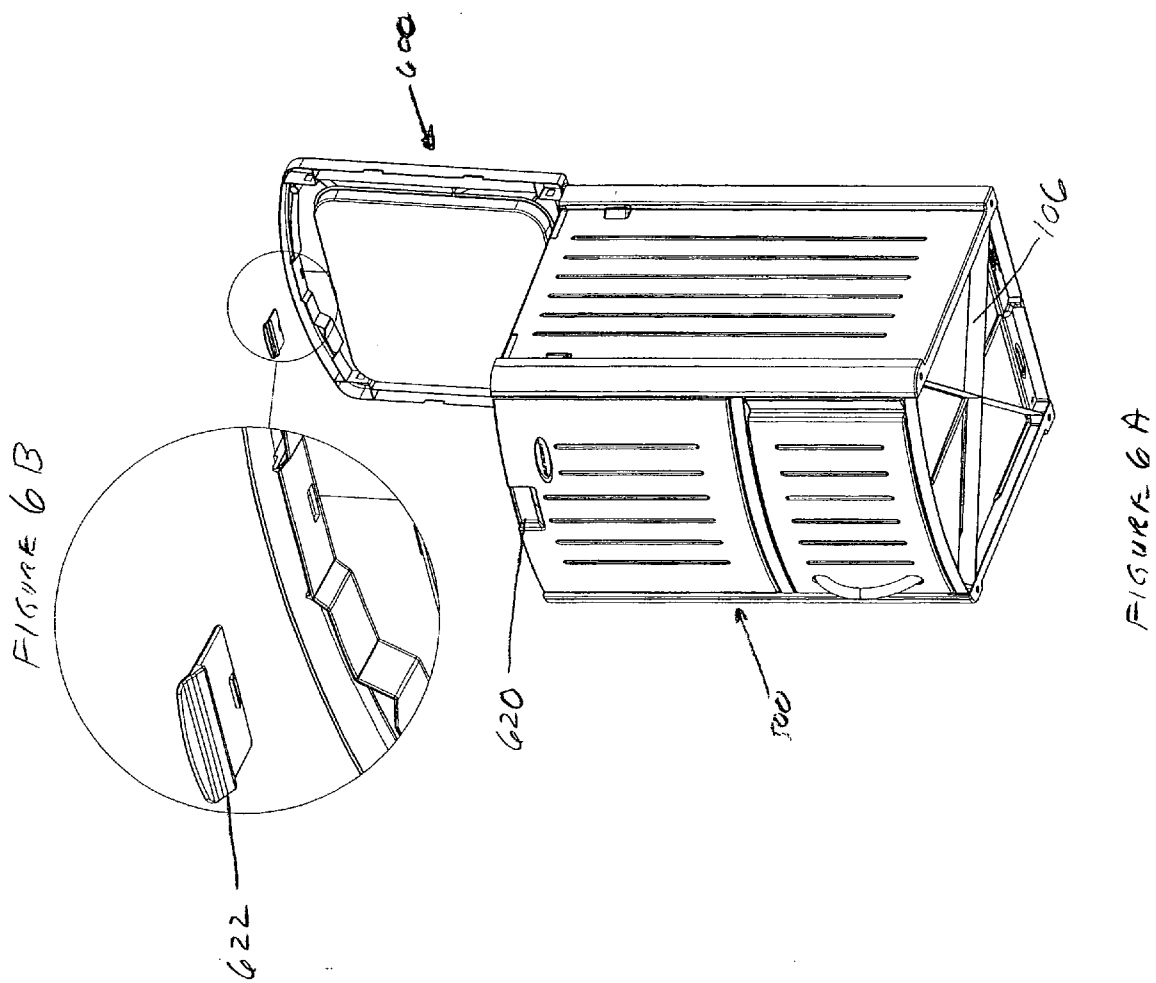


FIGURE 5



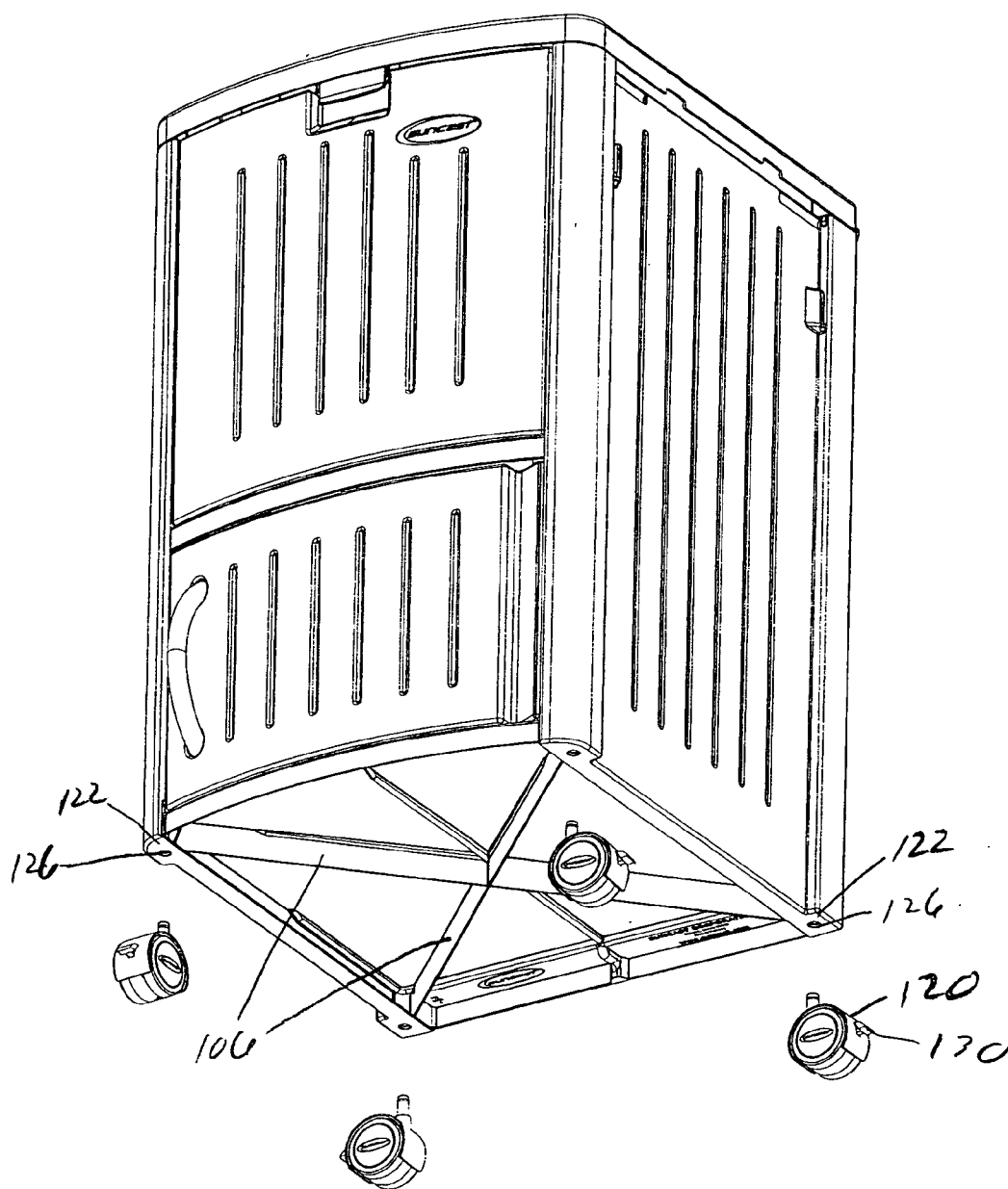


FIGURE 7

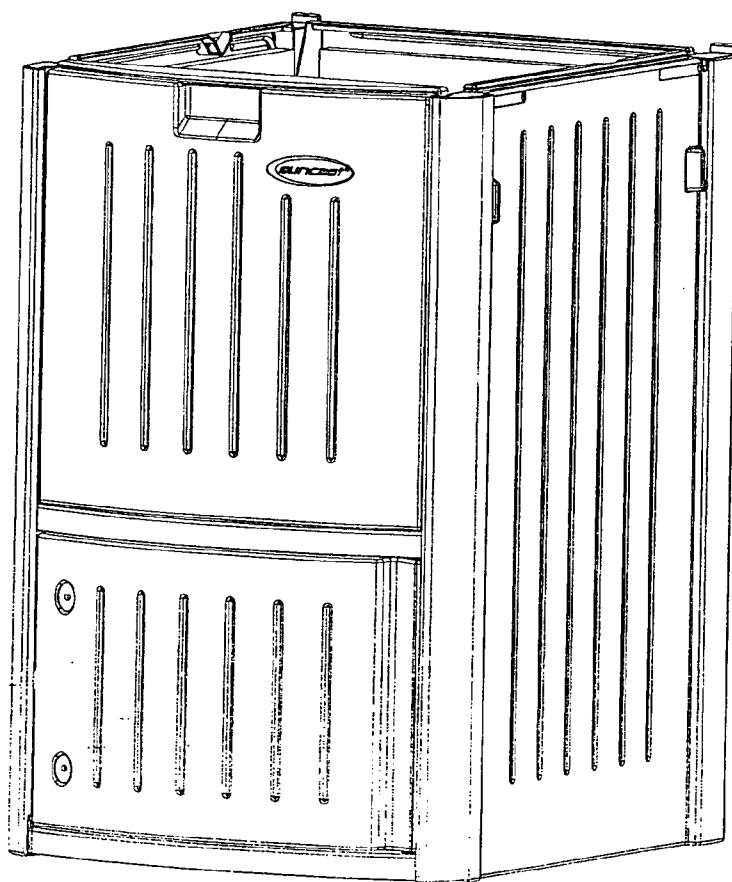
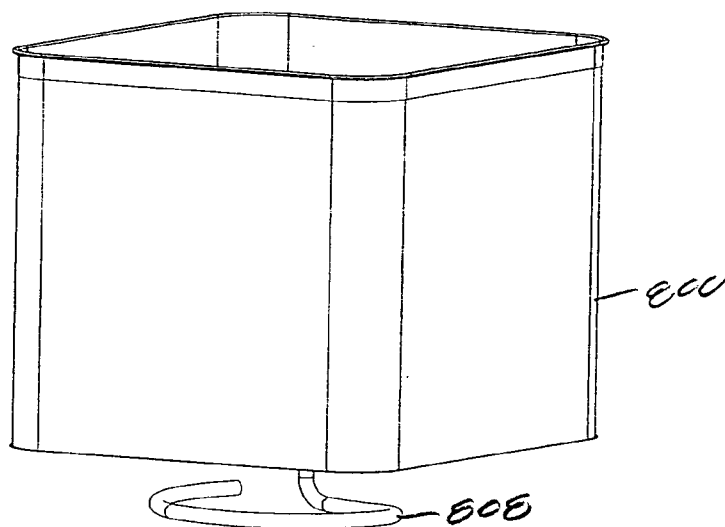


FIGURE 8

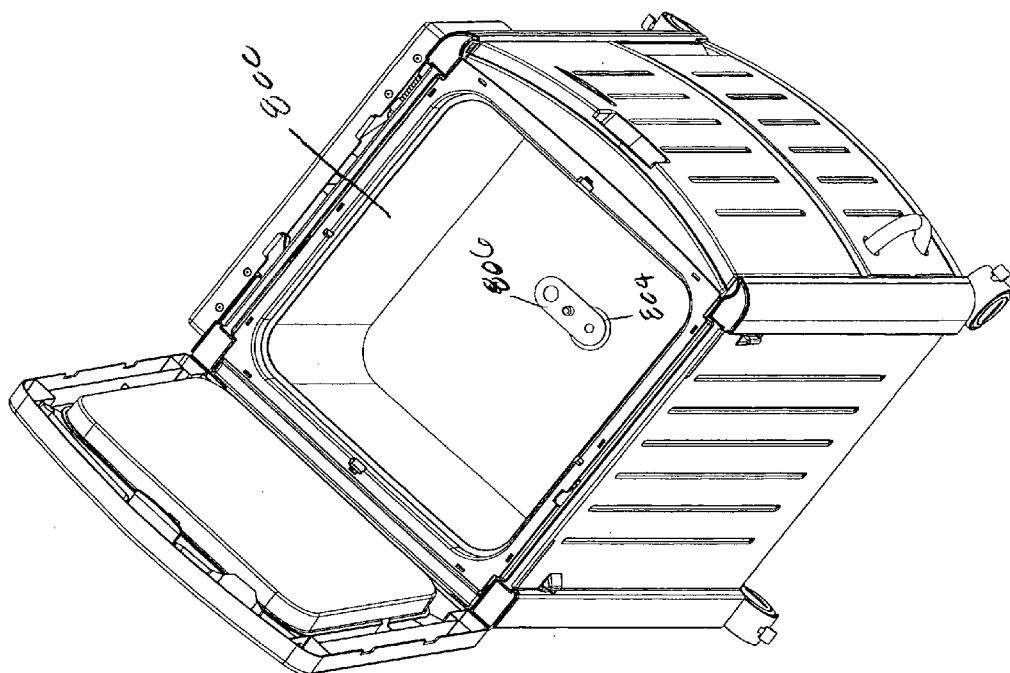


FIGURE 9

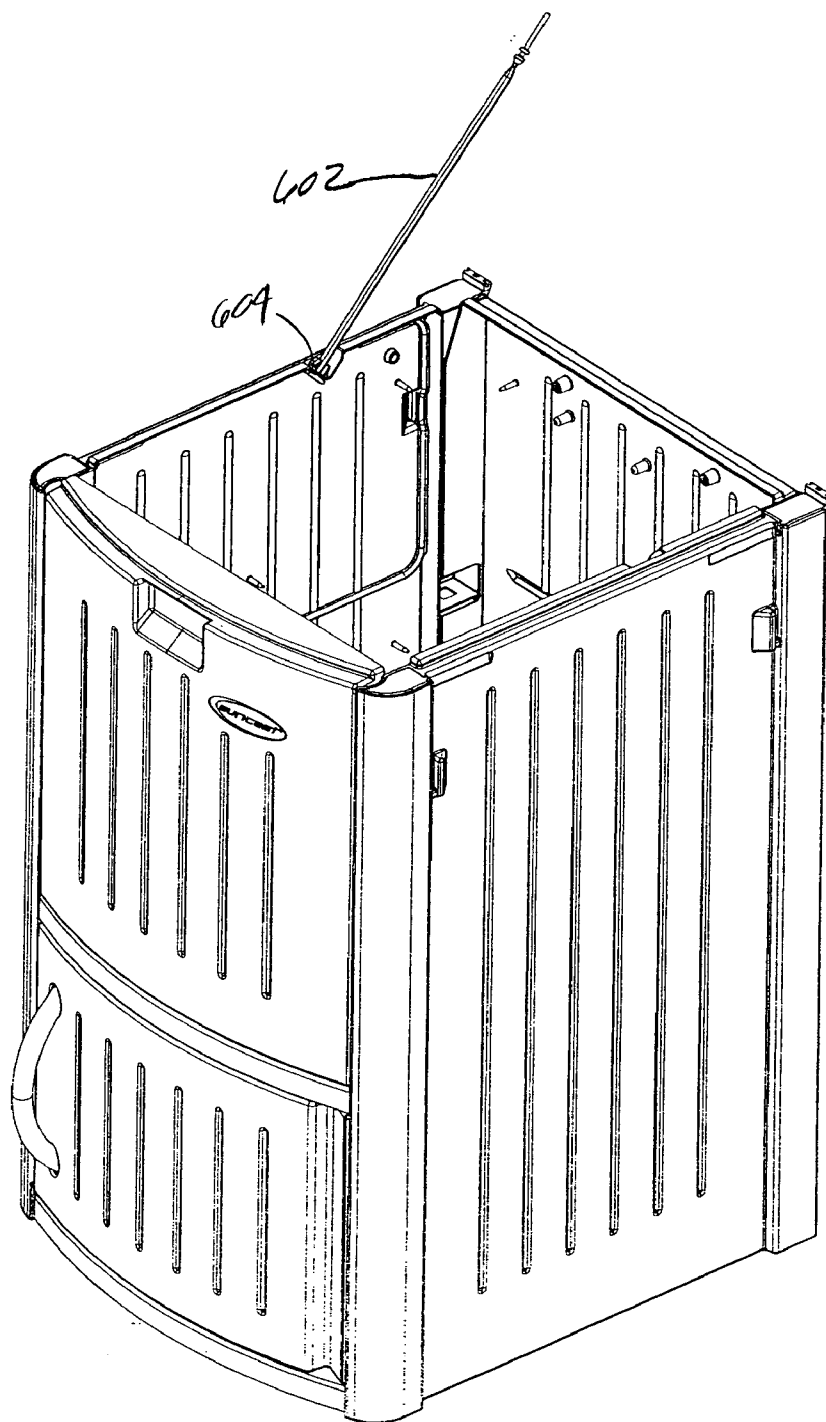
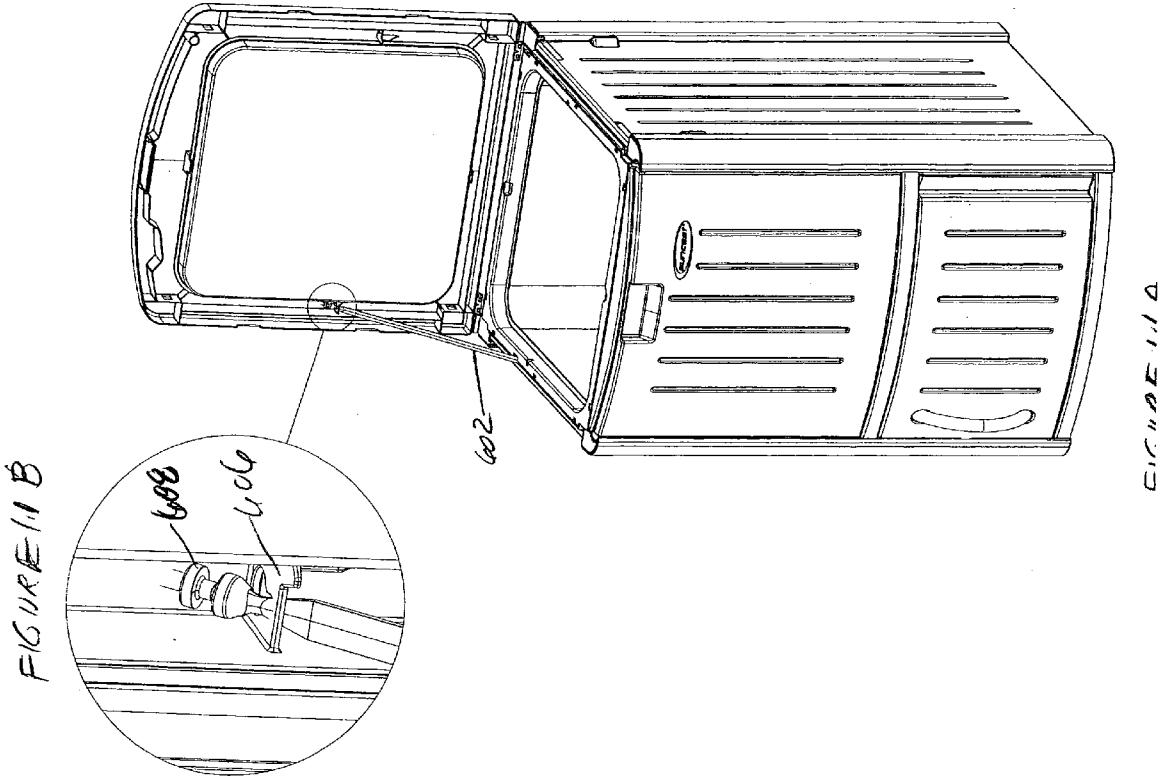


FIGURE 10



MOBILE COOLER STATION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates generally to a mobile cooler station. More specifically, the present invention relates to a cooler station assembly utilizing injection molded plastic structural panels having integrally formed connectors. The cooler station is capable of being packaged and shipped in a knock-down state and assembled into a secure and decorative cooler without additional fasteners.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Portable or mobile coolers are very convenient for outdoor picnics and cook outs. A common form of a portable cooler is the well known ice chest which comprises a molded, insulated container with a top hingedly connected thereto. These containers are available in various sizes and forms. However, they do not include a provision for the storage of glasses or other containers prior to their use in the service of cold beverages. Furthermore, certain foods require refrigeration or being kept at a cooler temperature prior to their preparation. Normally these foods are kept in separate, non-disposable, containers from which they are removed just prior to their preparation. The necessity of storing these containers after the foods are removed therefrom and prior to their being returned inside the house becomes problematic. This invention solves these problems by providing storage areas for these containers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[0003] An example of the well known portable ice chest is U.S. Pat. No. 4,976,448 which discloses a portable cooler onto which wheels are mounted for ease of mobility. This cooled has no provisions for the storage of glasses or other items.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 5,480,170 discloses a portable cooler which is provided with wheels for mobility and telescoping legs for stability once the cooler has been moved to the desired location. Hinged trays are mounted on the sides of the cooler to provide support for foods, beverages and food containers. However, there are no provisions for storage of the food containers after their use.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 5,876,047 discloses another portable including wheels for mobility. The cooler top is hinged to provide a support for food and beverages. Hinged trays are attached to the sides of the cooler for support of food and beverages. A storage compartment is provided adjacent the cooler. While this cooler provides a storage compartment it is inconvenient to use. As a result of its relative low height the user must constantly bend over to use it.

[0006] Such prior art coolers, while working well, have not met all of the needs of the manufacturers, retailers or end users by providing a cooler station that can be easily manufactured, packaged and shipped to the consumer in a knock-down state. Nor have they met the needs of the end users who require structural integrity combined with a pleasing aesthetic appearance and ease of assembly without the need for tools and small fasteners for assembly.

[0007] High among these needs is a mobile cooler station having walls which resist panel separation, buckling, racking and weather infiltration. Structural integrity is a further

consideration. The cooler station formed by the panels must tie into the cover and bottom in such a way as to unify the entire enclosure. Also, from a safety standpoint, a cover should be present which can be easily opened and retained in the open position while the cooler is being accessed.

[0008] Finally, there are ergonomic needs that a mobile cooler station must satisfy in order to achieve acceptance by the end user. The cooler station assembly must be easily and quickly assembled using minimal or no hardware and requiring a minimal number of tools. Further, the cooler station assembly must not require excessive strength to assemble or include heavy component parts. The cooler station assembly must assemble together in a manner which will not detract from the internal storage volume.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention provides a plurality of injection molded plastic panels having integrated connectors which are capable of being packaged and shipped in a knock-down state and constructed to form an aesthetically pleasing mobile cooler station. The integrated connection of the side walls, cover and bottom panel components simplifies the cooler construction. The panels are formed from injection molded plastic to interlock with one another without the need for separate metal fasteners or connectors. The system incorporates a minimum number of components by integrally forming the connectors into the injection molded panels which are snapped together to complete the assembly. This construction eliminates the need for separate connectors or fasteners to assemble the cooler station assembly. Injection molding allows the panels to be formed with a single wall having integral cross-bracing, ribs and gussets for increased rigidity when compared to blow molded or rotationally molded assemblies. The same side wall and bottom panels components can be used to create a variety of different assemblies useful for cookouts or outdoor entertaining and the assembly of these requires minimal hardware and a minimum number of hand tools.

[0010] The base, support, front and back wall panels have integrally formed outwardly projecting bosses for interlocking engagement with the left and right side wall panels. The left and right side wall panels are constructed with integrally formed inwardly contoured sockets for interlocking cooperative engagement with the bosses on the edges of the base, support, front and back wall panels. The engagement between the bosses and the sockets serve to rigidly connect the components together into a weather resistant assembly. The system further includes a one-piece latching cover which is hingedly connected and latched in place after the front, back, support, side and bottom panels have been fully assembled.

[0011] The cover panel is hingedly connected to removable and replaceable hinge inserts thereby providing an opening for access to the interior of the cooler. The cover is provided with flexible supports on either or both sides thereof to maintain the cover in its open position.

[0012] The lower surface of the base panel includes integrally formed bosses constructed and arranged to cooperate with casters to allow for easy movement of a full or empty cooler. The lower portion of the back wall panel is provided with an opening through which a drain hose can pass for the removal of water from the cooler.

[0013] Accordingly, it is an objective of the instant invention to provide a mobile cooler station composed of panels with integral connectors.

[0014] It is a further objective of the instant invention to provide a mobile cooler assembly with panels formed by injection molding for increased structural integrity.

[0015] It is another objective of the instant invention to provide a mobile cooler assembly wherein the side walls, cover, support and bottom panels are integrally interlocked without the use of separate fasteners or connectors.

[0016] It is still another objective of the invention to provide a mobile cooler assembly constructed of modular panels having an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

[0017] It is still a further objective of the invention to provide a mobile cooler assembly that is capable of being packaged and shipped in a knock-down state and constructed into a secure assembly at a desired site.

[0018] Other objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with any accompanying drawings wherein are set forth, by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments of this invention. Any drawings contained herein constitute a part of this specification and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0019] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly of the instant invention.

[0020] FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the mobile cooler assembly shown in FIG. 1.

[0021] FIG. 3 is a partially exploded view of a side panel and the lower portion of the mobile cooler assembly.

[0022] FIG. 4 is a perspective of the outer portion of the cooler assembly in a partially state.

[0023] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the rear portion of the mobile cooler assembly with the cover removed.

[0024] FIG. 6A is a perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly with cover in its raised position.

[0025] FIG. 6B is a partial view of the cover showing the latch.

[0026] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the bottom of the mobile cooler assembly.

[0027] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly and the tub.

[0028] FIG. 9 is a top perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly.

[0029] FIG. 10 is a top perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly and a cover support.

[0030] FIG. 11A is a top perspective view of the mobile cooler assembly and the cover support including the cover.

[0031] FIG. 11B is a partial view of the cover illustrating the attachment of the support to the cover.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0032] While the present invention is susceptible of embodiment in various forms, there is shown in the drawings and will hereinafter be described a presently preferred embodiment with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered an exemplification of the invention and is not intended to limit the invention to the specific embodiments illustrated.

[0033] FIGS. 1 and 2 now referenced illustrate perspective and exploded views of the mobile cooler station, generally referenced as **10**, according to a preferred albeit non-limiting embodiment of the invention. The mobile cooler station assembly comprises a base panel **100**, a right side panel **200**, a left side panel **300**, a back panel **400**, a front panel **500**, a cover panel **600** and a support panel **700**. In the preferred embodiment the panels are formed of, but not limited to, a suitable plastic such as polystyrene, polypropylene, or polyethylene, through the process of injection molding. The result is that the panels forming the cooler station assembly **10** are formed as unitary single wall panels with integral connectors and cross bracing. Strengthening ribs **102** are formed within the inner surfaces of the side panels, front panel, and back panel to enhance rigidity of the panels as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. The base panel has a top surface **104**, bottom surface **106**, front edge **108**, back edge **110**, left edge **112**, and right edge **114** (FIG. 3). Integrally formed along the left and right base panel edges are a plurality of bosses **116** for attaching the base panel to the left and right panels. The bosses **116** extend outwardly from each edge to cooperate with sockets **210** extending inwardly along the bottom portions **206**, **306** of the right and left side panels respectively. The bosses and sockets are constructed and arranged so that the bosses **116** mateably engage the sockets **210**, securing the panels together in a perpendicular and inter-fitting engagement. Detent or spring lock fasteners **118** cooperate with apertures **208** to secure the bosses **116** to the sockets **210**. Those skilled in the art can appreciate that the spring lock fasteners **118** can be used throughout the cooler station **10** to mount or secure components to one another thereby facilitating assembly of the cooler station from an unassembled condition. The overlapping boss **116** and socket **210** arrangement increases the structural integrity of the cooler station **10** by preventing the panels **200**, **300**, **400**, and **500** from bowing or bending inwardly or outwardly, and thus, adversely affecting the appearance or operation of the cooler station. Also integrally formed on the bottom of the base panel are gussets **106** which add structural rigidity and strength to the base (FIGS. 6A and 7).

[0034] The right panel **200** is configured with a first edge **212** and a second edge **214**. Both edges **212** and **214** include integrally formed elongated sockets **210** extending inwardly in a linear fashion along each edge. The sockets **210** are generally constructed and arranged to cooperate with the bosses **116** provided along either edge of the back panel **400** and the front panel **500**.

[0035] The left panel **300** is configured having a first edge **312** and a second edge **314**. Both edges **312** and **314** include integrally formed elongated sockets **210** extending inwardly in a linear fashion along each edge. The sockets **210** are generally constructed and arranged to cooperate with bosses **116** provided along either edge of the back panel **400** and the front panel **500**.

[0036] The outer surface of the panels **200**, **300**, **400**, and **500** are constructed generally smooth having a plurality of inwardly curved grooves **230** for added strength and aesthetic appearance. The inside of the panels **200**, **300**, **400**, **500** are constructed with a plurality of strengthening ribs **202** extending along and across the panels. The ribs **202** and inwardly curved grooves **230** increase the structural integrity of the cooler station **10** by preventing the panels **200**, **300**, **400**, and **500** from bowing or bending inwardly or outwardly, and thus, adversely affecting the appearance or operation of the cooler station **10**. The integrally formed ribs **202** and inwardly curved grooves **230** are facilitated by injection molding. Injection molding offers significant strength and stability advantages over blow-molding or rotational molding as utilized in the prior art. In this manner the cooler station of the instant invention is capable of handling a significant amount of weight as compared to prior art cooler stations.

[0037] The right and left side panels **200** and **300** are attached to the base panel **100** by inserting the bosses **116** into the sockets **210** until the spring lock fasteners **118** engage the apertures **208** in the sockets **210** of the right **200** and left **300** panels (FIG. 3). The front and back panels **400** and **500** are attached to the right **200** and left **300** panels by inserting the elongated bosses **116** into sockets **210** until the spring lock fasteners **118**, integrally formed into the bosses **116**, engage the apertures **208** in the sockets of the right and left panels **200** and **300**. It will be appreciated that the purposes of the elongated bosses **116** are to align the two panels in a perpendicular relationship and to facilitate their mechanical connection. The resulting mobile cooler station benefits from high structural integrity and reliable operation.

[0038] Referring to FIGS. 5, 6A and 6B, perspective views of the cooler station are shown illustrating the pivotal operation of the cover panel **600** and latch assembly. Also illustrated is the construction and arrangement of the separable and replaceable hinge assemblies. The hinge assemblies generally include a pair of hinge inserts **650** (FIG. 5), each having a hinge **652**. The hinges are constructed and arranged to cooperate with a plurality of hinge receivers **602** located on the back edge **610** of the cover **600** to allow pivotal movement of the cover panel **600** between an open position illustrated in FIG. 2 and a closed position illustrated in FIG. 1. The hinges are integrally formed onto the upper portion of the hinge inserts **650**. The hinge receivers **602** are sized to fit over and encompass their respective hinges **652**. A pin **654** passes through the hinge and hinge receiver to couple them together in a pivotal assembly.

[0039] The cover panel **600** is releasably secured in the closed position by pivoting the cover panel downward until the cover latch **622**, mounted on the cover panel, engages at least one indentation **620** formed in the front top portion of the front panel **500**. This results in a positive mechanical connection. To open the cover panel the latch **622** is pulled outwardly until it releases from indentation **620** and then the cover is pivoted upwardly.

[0040] Referring now to FIG. 3 the support panel **700** is attached to the right and left side panels **200** and **300** by inserting bosses **116**, integrally formed on the support panel, into the sockets **210**, integrally formed in the side panels, until the spring lock fasteners **118**, located on the bottom portion of the boss **116**, engage the apertures **208** in the sockets **210** of the side panels.

[0041] Referring now to FIG. 2 the front panel **500** is attached to the right and left side panels **200** and **300** by inserting bosses **116**, integrally formed on the front panel, into sockets **210**, integrally formed in the side panels, until the spring lock fasteners **118** engage the apertures **208** in the sockets **210** of the side panels. The back panel **400** is attached to the right and left side panels in a very similar manner. Bosses **116**, integrally formed on the back panel **400**, are inserted into sockets **210**, integrally formed in the side panels, until the spring tabs **118** engage apertures **208** in the sockets **210** of the side panels. At the top of the edge **212** of the right side panel and top of the edge **312** of the left side panel are inserts **220** which close off the channels formed in the edge portions of the side panels by the injection molding of the sockets **210**.

[0042] The perpendicular panels are brought into an overlapping relationship wherein the bosses **116** enter the corresponding sockets **210** in the right and left panels **200** and **300** respectively. The result is a mechanically secure connection between the panels. The overlapping edges between the panels as described above provides a secure connection therebetween and provides several advantages. Among these advantages are first, the design allows the panels to be connected without the need for separate connectors. Second, the design creates a positive lock which prevents separation of the panels. Third, the design maintains alignment of the panels in the same plane and prevents bowing or bending of either panel relative to one another.

[0043] Referring now to FIGS. 2 and 7, the casters **120** and caster bosses **122** are illustrated. The casters include a stem **124** which is constructed and arranged to cooperate with an aperture **126** integrally formed into the lower surface of the base panel **100**. To assemble the caster, the stem **124** is inserted into the aperture **126** of the boss **122** until a retainer ring snaps into a corresponding groove formed in the aperture resulting in a mechanically secure connection. A releasable lock **130** for the casters is also provided to prevent the mobile cooler station from unwanted moves on sloped and uneven surfaces.

[0044] Located below the front panel **500** is a door **502** providing access to a storage area. The storage area is located below the support panel **700**, above the base panel **100**, and between the right and left side panels **200** and **300**. The area may be used for the storage of items associated with the serving of cold beverages or other chilled items. The door **502** is hingedly mounted to the base panel and support panel by hinge pins **504** integrally formed in the door. The hinge pins fit into and cooperate with apertures **506** integrally formed in the support panel and the base panel to allow pivotal opening and closing of the door. A handle **508** may also be provided on the door to assist the opening and closing thereof.

[0045] Referring now to FIGS. 2, 8 and 9, a tub **800** is illustrated. The tub serves as a container to hold the chilled beverages and other items in addition to the ice or other cooling means. The tub is surrounded by insulation panels **810** mounted to the side panels, the back panel, the front panel, the support panel and the cover. A preferred method of mounting the panels utilizes pins **812**, integrally formed in the side, back, front, and support panels and cover. The insulation, which may be in the form of sheets, is pressed onto the pins **812** and held thereon by friction. A rim **802**

(FIG. 2) completely surrounds the top perimeter of the tub and spans the space between the tub and the adjacent panels. The rim is installed after the tub is inserted into the cooler station. This rim permits easy installation of the tub into the assembled cooler station while preventing any objects from entering the space between the tub and the adjacent panels. The tub is also provided with a drain **804** (FIG. 9) located in the bottom thereof. The drain is provided with a valve **806** to allow fluid which has accumulated in the tub to be drained away when it is convenient. A drain hose **808** is connected to the drain at one end thereof and the opposite end passes to the exterior of the cooler station through an opening **402** located in the lower portion of the back panel **400** (FIG. 5).

[0046] Referring now to FIGS. 10 and 11A, a support **602** extends between the cover and one or both side panels. In the case where the support extends between both side panels and the cover, two separate supports are employed. The support is mounted at one end thereof to a side panel utilizing an integrally formed mount **604**. The other end of the support is mounted to the cover utilizing an integrally formed mount **606** (FIG. 11B). This end of the support is formed with a connector **608** which allows the support to be easily connect to or removed from mount **606**. When the cover is open the support is fully extended and rigid thereby supporting the cover in its open position. When the cover is closed, the support folds over on itself to allow it to fit into a groove and not interfere with the closing of the cover.

[0047] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2 a shelf **205** is hingedly mounted to the right side panel **200** by a plurality of hinges **207**. The hinges are removably mounted to apertures formed in the side panel so as to be attachable and removable without the use of tools. The shelf is constructed and arranged to be in either a downwardly folded position adjacent the side panel or an upwardly extended position (not shown). In the downward position the shelf is not in use and folded out of the way. In the upward position the shelf is horizontally extended away from the side panel and capable of supporting objects placed thereon. One of the hinges **207** is preferable spring loaded so as to enable the shelf to be inserted onto and removed from the side panel.

[0048] A rack **206** is mounted on the opposite side panel from the shelf. The rack has two extensions **208** which engage apertures in the side panel to mount the rack thereto. These are the same apertures to which the hinges **207** are mounted. The rack may be attached and removed without the use of tools. The rack may be employed to hang things on such as towels or food service implements.

[0049] All patents and publications mentioned in this specification are indicative of the levels of those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains. All patents and publications are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

[0050] It is to be understood that while a certain form of the invention is illustrated, it is not to be limited to the specific form or arrangement herein described and shown. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes may be made without departing from the scope of the invention and the invention is not to be considered limited to what is shown and described in the specification and any drawings/figures included herein.

[0051] One skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the present invention is well adapted to carry out the objectives and obtain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as those inherent therein. The embodiments, methods, procedures and techniques described herein are presently representative of the preferred embodiments, are intended to be exemplary and are not intended as limitations on the scope. Changes therein and other uses will occur to those skilled in the art which are encompassed within the spirit of the invention and are defined by the scope of the appended claims. Although the invention has been described in connection with specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described modes for carrying out the invention which are obvious to those skilled in the art are intended to be within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A mobile cooler assembly comprising:

a left side panel for enclosing the left side of said cooler assembly;

a right side panel for enclosing the right side of said cooler assembly;

a base panel for enclosing the bottom of said cooler assembly;

a back panel for enclosing the back of said cooler assembly;

a front panel for enclosing the front of said cooler assembly; and

a cover hingedly secured to at least one of said left, right, or back panels;

said cover constructed and arranged to provide ingress into said mobile cooler assembly and facilitate removal of food and beverages from a cooler portion of said mobile cooler assembly when in an open position;

said cover constructed and arranged to cooperate with said left, right back and front panels to enclose the top of said mobile cooler assembly when in a closed position;

said base panel is adapted to receive means to provide mobility to said mobile cooler assembly;

whereby said base panel, said left side panel, said right side panel, said back panel, said front panel, and said cover are constructed and arranged for snap-together assembly without additional fasteners;

wherein said mobile cooler assembly can be shipped in a disassembled state and assembled on a desired site.

2. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 1 wherein said cover is hingedly secured to said back panel via a hinge assembly for pivotal movement between said closed and said open positions.

3. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 2 wherein said hinge assembly is constructed and arranged to snap-together without additional fasteners;

whereby a portion of said hinge assembly is constructed and arranged to cooperate with said back panel and a portion of said hinge assembly is constructed and arranged to cooperate with said cover.

4. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 1 wherein said cooler portion comprises:

a tub located in an upper portion of said mobile cooler assembly;

said tub extending substantially between said front and back panel and also substantially between said left and right side panels; and

the depth of said tub is substantially less than the height of said mobile cooler assembly;

said cooler assembly further comprising a support panel constructed and arranged to support said tub;

said support panel extending between said front and back panels and also between said left and right side panels; and

said support panel is spaced upwardly from said base panel.

5. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 4 wherein said cooler further includes insulation panels positioned on said front panel, said back panel, said left and right side panels, said support panel and said cover;

means are provided on said front panel, said back panel, said left and right side panels, said support panel and said cover to secure said insulation panels thereto;

said insulation panels are constructed and arranged to encompass the entire exterior surface of said tub to insulate the contents therein.

6. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 4 further including a rim which extends around the entire top perimeter of said tub;

said rim also extending horizontally to span the gap between said tub and said front, said back, said left, and said right side panels.

7. The mobile cooler of claim 6 wherein said cover is provided with a support on at least one side portion thereof, said support being constructed and arranged to fold when said cover is closed and be fully extended when said cover is open;

said support extending between said side portion of said cover and said rim;

whereby said cover panel is supported in said open position by said support and is permitted to completely close when said support is folded over.

8. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 4 wherein said tub is provided with a drain in a bottom portion thereof;

a drain hose is connected to said drain and extends to the exterior of said mobile cooler assembly.

9. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 1 wherein said base panel includes;

a top surface constructed and arranged to provide a rigid and generally flat surface;

a bottom surface constructed and arranged to provide rigidity and stability to said mobile cooler assembly;

a front closed edge and a rear closed edge;

a left edge and a right edge each having at least one integrally formed boss arranged in a linear fashion and extending outwardly from said left and said right edges,

said at least one boss constructed and arranged to cooperate with at least one inwardly extending socket integrally formed on a lower portion of said left and said right side panels for interlocking engagement therebetween.

10. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 9 wherein each of said bosses includes at least one spring lock integrally formed thereto, said at least one spring lock is constructed and arranged to cooperate with at least one aperture integrally formed into said sockets;

wherein said at least one spring lock engages at least one side wall of said at least one aperture for interlocking engagement therebetween.

11. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 9 wherein said bottom surface of said base panel includes at least four integrally formed caster bosses, wherein each of said caster is constructed and arranged to cooperate with a caster for securement thereof without additional fasteners, whereby said mobile cooler assembly is moveably supported upon said casters.

12. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 11 wherein at least one of said casters includes a manually engageable lock, wherein said lock is constructed and arranged to prevent rotation of said caster while said lock is in an engaged position and allow free rotation of said caster in a disengaged position.

13. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 9 wherein at least one of said left side panel and said right side panel includes;

a bottom portion including at least one integrally formed socket constructed and arranged to cooperate with said base panel in an overlapping and interlocking manner;

a top edge including an upwardly extending lip constructed and arranged to cooperate with said cover panel in an underlying manner;

a first edge having at least one integrally formed elongated socket for connection to said back panel in a perpendicular relationship;

a second-edge having at least one integrally formed elongated socket for connection to said front panel in a perpendicular relationship;

an inner surface; and

an outer surface.

14. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 13 wherein said at least one elongated socket formed on said first edge is constructed and arranged to interlockingly engage a corresponding at least one elongated boss formed on said rear panel resulting in a mechanically secure connection therebetween and wherein said at least one elongated socket formed on said second edge is constructed and arranged to interlockingly engage a corresponding at least one boss formed into said front panel resulting in a mechanically secure connection therebetween.

15. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 4 wherein said support panel includes;

a top surface constructed and arranged to provide a support for said tub;

a bottom surface constructed and arranged to provide a generally flat surface;

a front closed edge and a rear closed edge;

a left edge and a right edge each having at least one integrally formed boss arranged in a linear fashion and extending outwardly from said left and said right edges, said at least one boss constructed and arranged to cooperate with at least one integrally extending socket integrally formed in said left and said right side panels for interlocking engagement therebetween.

16. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 4 wherein said front panel includes a door;

said door extending between said left side panel and said right side panel;

said door extending upwardly between said base panel and said support panel;

said door hingedly secured to said base panel and said support panel to provide access to the interior of said mobile cooler assembly below said support panel.

17. The mobile cooler of claim 1 further including a latch positioned along a front portion of said cover and extending downwardly away from said cover;

said latch constructed and arranged to engage and cooperate with a portion of said front panel located adjacent a top portion thereof to hold said cover in a closed position.

18. The mobile cooler of claim 1 further including a shelf adapted to be hingedly mounted to an upper portion of said right side panel or said left side panel.

19. The mobile cooler of claim 18 further including a rack adapted to be mounted to an upper portion of said left side panel or said right side panel;

wherein said shelf and said rack are not simultaneously mounted on the same side panel.

20. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 8 wherein said drain is provided with a valve to permit or prevent fluid from draining from said tub to the exterior of said mobile cooler assembly through said drain hose.

21. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 1 wherein the means to provide mobility to said mobile cooler assembly comprises casters mounted to said base panel;

wherein said cooler assembly may be easily moved in any direction.

22. The mobile cooler assembly of claim 21 further including releasable locks on said casters.

* * * * *