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(54) **BOTTLE BANK**

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(76) Inventor: **Richard T. Gerke**, Tabernacle, NJ (US)

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Correspondence Address:

DONALD C. SIMPSON, P.C.

Attorney at Law

126 Borton Landing Road

Moorestown, NJ 08057-3055 (US)

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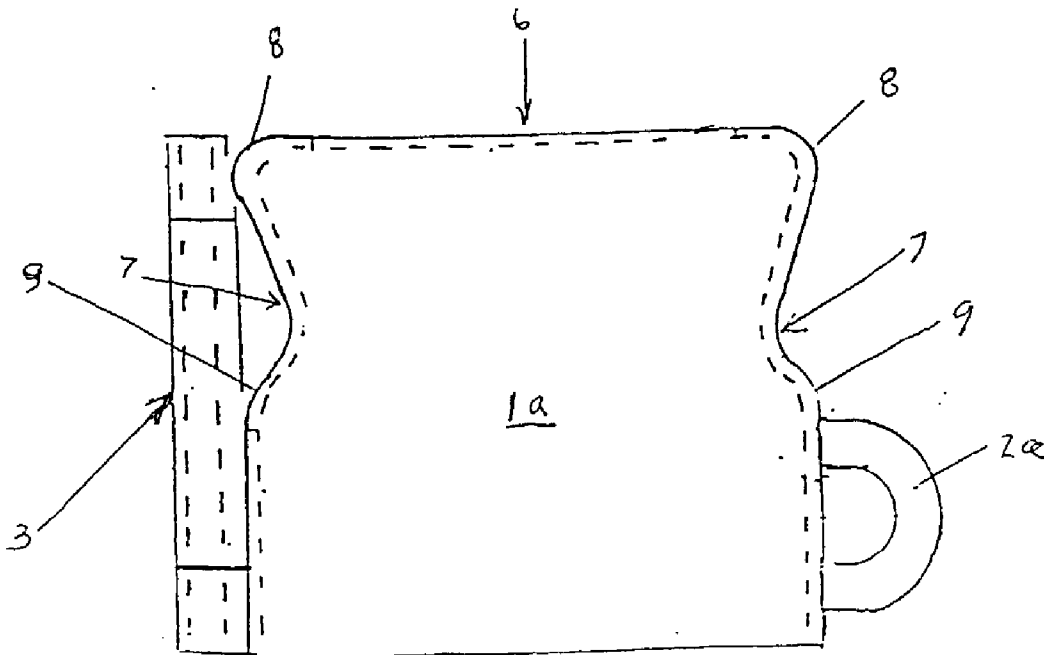
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

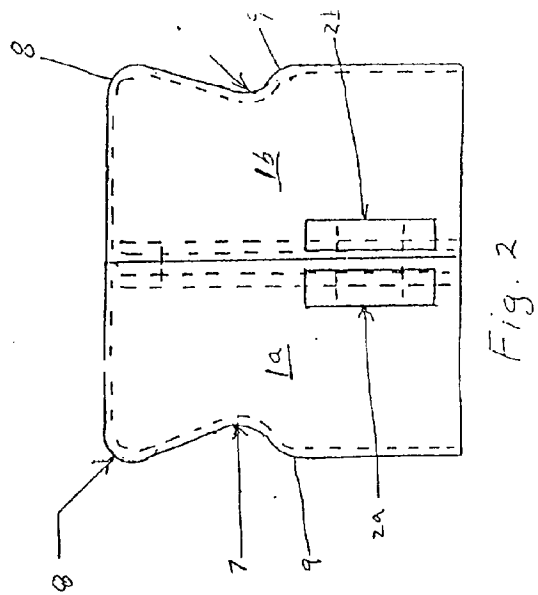
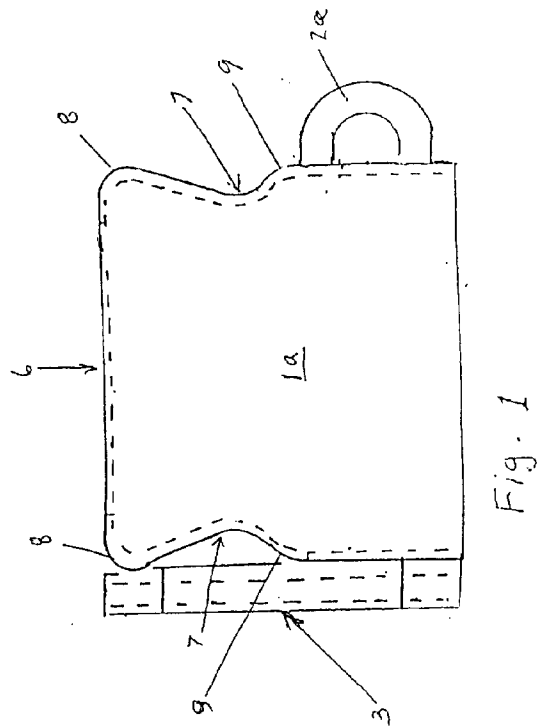
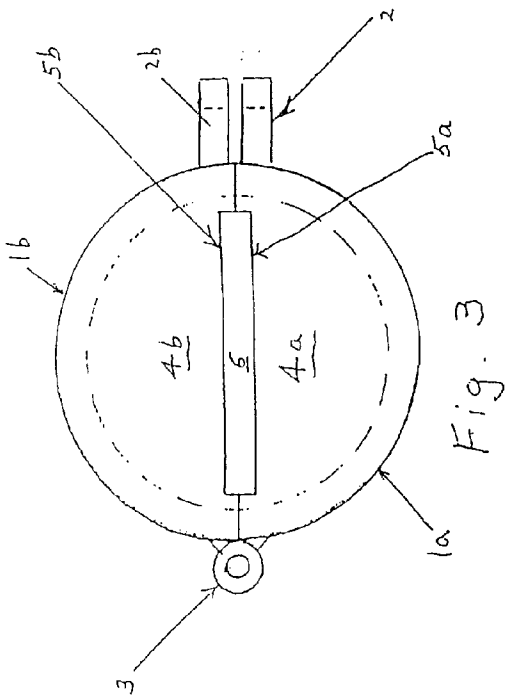
The problem of spontaneous removal of accumulated coins from a bottle kept as a coin bank. Is obviated by a lockable, slotted cap which, however, can be removed at the will of the owner when the owner deems that the savings objective has been achieved.

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1 of 2



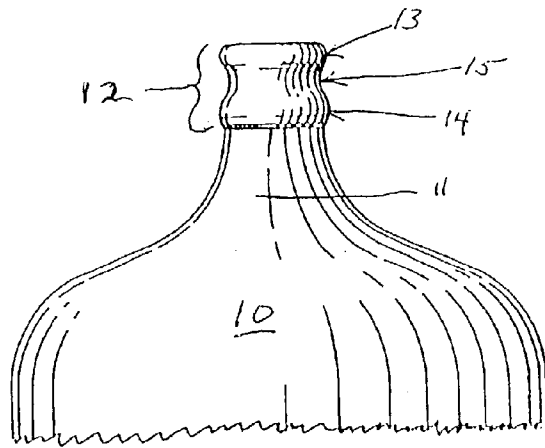


Fig. 4

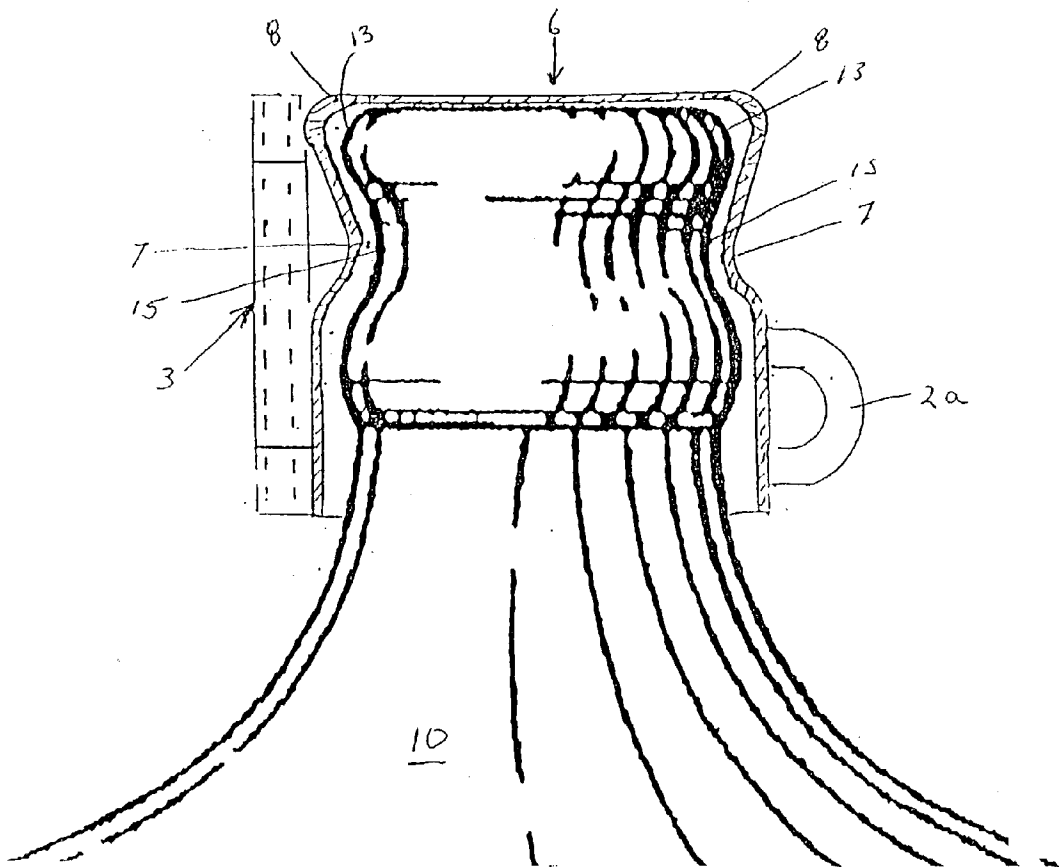


Fig. 5

BOTTLE BANK

[0001] This patent application is based on Provisional Patent Application No. 60/345,535 filed Jan. 7, 2002, by Richard T Gerke, the priority of which is hereby claimed.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to a bottle bank. It is a common practice for people to empty their pockets, purses, and the like of coins into a bottle or jar or other container where the coins can be accumulated over a period of time. One such container which has become particularly popular is the large bottle in which water is delivered to offices and residences. Typically, these bottles range in size from five gallons up to about twenty gallons, and can, therefore, hold a large quantity of coins having a substantial value. It is not uncommon for people to set aside the larger water bottles for coin collecting with the idea that, when it is full, the contents will be of sufficient value to be applied to some special objective such as a vacation or a cruise.

[0003] Because access to the bottle's contents is so easy, it is a common experience to find that the bottle contents become a source of spur of the moment funds rather than a long-term savings repository. Various members of the family, or even guests, may attack the contents for various immediate purposes and the concept of long-term savings is defeated.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention has been specifically designed to overcome the problem of spontaneous removal of accumulated coins from the bottle kept as a coin bank. For bottles that have an annular shoulder around the neck of the bottle and adjacent to the opening of the bottle, a lockable, slotted cap or cover is provided which, however, can be removed at the will of the owner when the owner deems that the savings objective has been achieved.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS.

[0005] FIG. 1 illustrates a front elevation view of the lockable, slotted bottle cover of the present invention.

[0006] FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the lockable, slotted bottle cover of the present invention.

[0007] FIG. 3 is a top plane view of the lockable, slotted bottle cover of the present invention.

[0008] FIG. 4 is a front elevation of a bottle of the type with which the present invention may be used.

[0009] FIG. 5 is a schematic representation of the top and neck of the bottle with the bank lock shown in partial section as it would rest on the bottle.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0010] FIGS. 1 through 3 show a lockable, slotted, bottle cover adapted to be positioned on and about the neck and top of a bottle of the type shown in FIG. 4. The body of the cover comprises two halves 1a and 1b that are essentially mirror images of each other. Each half is provided with a hasp for a lock, 2-a and 2-b, positioned to mate for locking when the two body portions are closed about a bottle top. The sides of each body half opposite the side having the hasps are hingeably connected to each other by a piano hinge 3 as shown in FIGS. 1 and 3. The tops of each of the two

body halves are essentially covered, 4a and 4b, except that each is provided with generally centrally located rectangular cut-outs, 5a and 5b, such that when the two halves, 1-a and 1-b, are hingeably closed against each other, the two cut-outs "unite" to form a single opening, coin slot 6, to permit ordinary coins to pass freely through. When the two halves of the slotted bottle cover are closed, the bottom remains open.

[0011] It should be noted in FIGS. 1 and 2 that the bottle cover is provided with an annular indent 7 to form what, for convenience sake, may be referred to as "ears" 8 and shoulders 9. The indent 7 is of considerable importance in the locking of the slotted bottle cover. FIG. 4 shows the upper portion of a bottle on which the lockable, slotted bottle cover of the present invention can be used. In the particular embodiment shown in FIG. 4, the bottle typically comprises a body portion 10 having a neck portion 11, and a top neck portion 12 which comprises an annular ring 13 and a shoulder 14. As shown, the annular ring 13 and shoulder 14 together define the annular indent 15.

[0012] In FIG. 5, the bottle of FIG. 4 is shown with lockable, slotted bottle cover of FIG. 1 enclosed about it. Cover indent 7 is sized and positioned to key into bottle indent 15 but will, of course, release from that position when the two halves of the cover are separated by pivoting on the hinge. As shown in FIG. 5, the "ears" 8 of the cover encompass and effectively hold on to the annular ring 13 of the bottle when the cover is closed. As an alternative, however, annular indent 7 for the cover can be located lower down on the cover device to key into the area beneath the shoulder 14, rather than in bottle indent 15, and still grip the bottle. The choice is simply a matter of design and strength.

[0013] In typical use, when the bottle of FIG. 4 is empty and sufficiently cleaned and dried, the lockable, slotted bottle cover of FIGS. 1 through 3 is opened pivotably about hinge 3 and placed around the top of the bottle and closed so that hasps 2-a and 2-b are in locking alignment and indents 7 are in alignment with bottle indent 15 (or the area beneath the bottle shoulder 14), and the ordinary combination or key lock can be positioned through the hasps and locked to deny access to anyone not having a key or the combination. Coins may then be placed through slot 6, so they will then pass through the slot, through the neck or the bottle, and into the bottle itself where they can be retained and accumulated without easy access being available to individuals encountering the locked bottle, but providing ready access to the bottle as a bank. When the bottle is sufficiently filled to satisfy the owner, the bottle cover can be readily removed by use of the key or combination of the lock, and pivotably opening the cover and pouring out the contents without the need to destroy the bottle in order to access the contents.

What is claimed is:

1. For bottles that have an annular shoulder around the neck of the bottle and adjacent to the opening of the bottle, a lockable, slotted cap which can be removed at the will of the owner when the owner deems that savings objective has been achieved, said cap being segmented and hinged to enclose the annular shoulder of said bottle when closed, the interior configuration of said cap conforming generally to the exterior of the said annular bottle shoulder when closed and adapted to be locked in place to prevent operation of said hinged portion.

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