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2,556,844

SERVING TRAY

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FIG. 1.

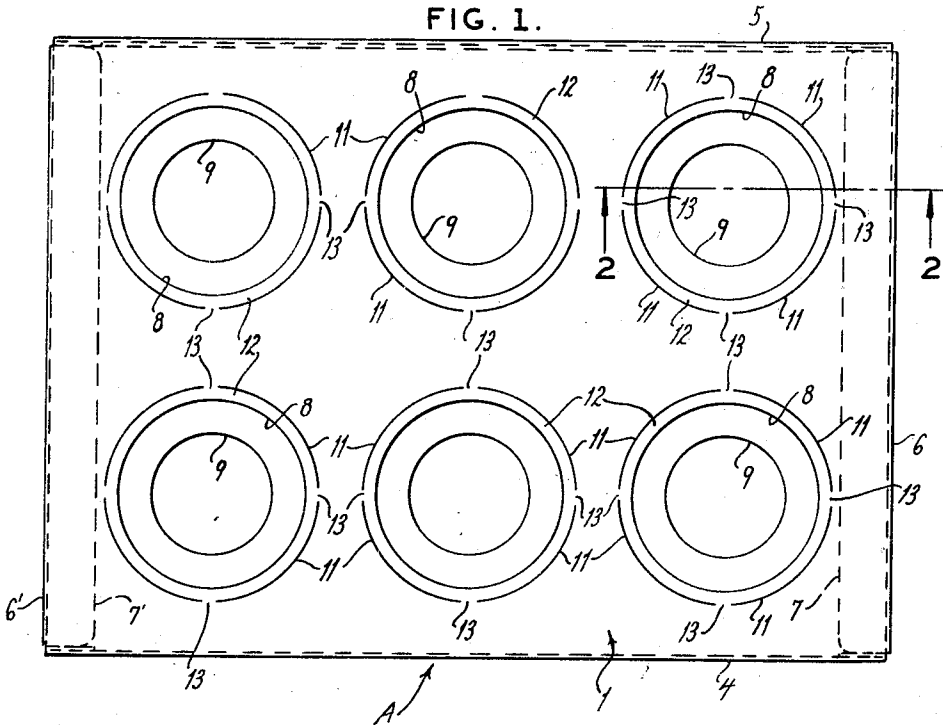


FIG. 2.

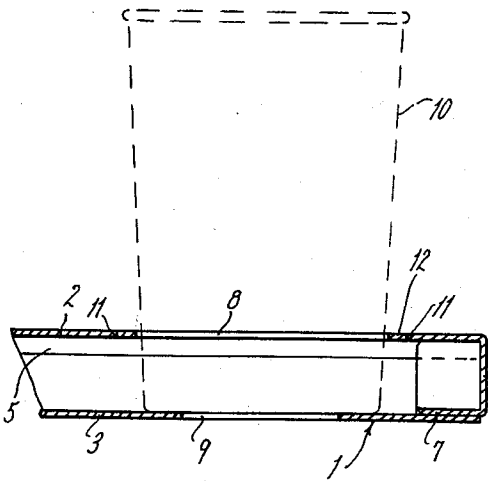
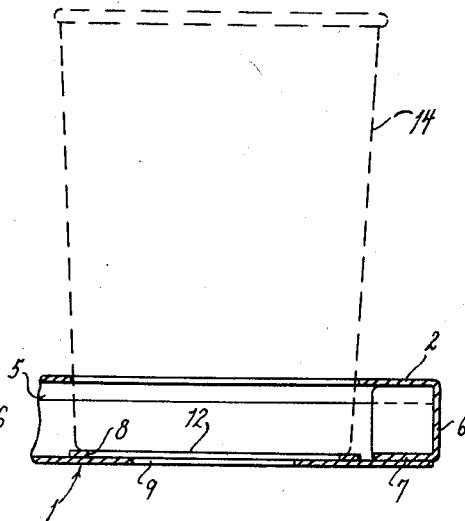


FIG. 3.



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SERVING TRAY

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This invention relates in general to trays and, more particularly, to certain new and useful improvements in disposable trays of the type utilized for serving soft drinks, ice cream, and related fountain preparations, as at roadside stands.

It is a primary object of the present invention to provide a serving tray having apertures for receiving cups and similar containers and detachable sections associated with each aperture for optional enlargement thereof whereby a cup of increased size may be accommodated therein.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a serving tray which is simple in construction, durable, light in weight, and which may be so economically manufactured that it may be discarded after use.

With the above and other objects in view, my invention resides in the novel features of form, construction, arrangement, and combination of parts presently described and pointed out in the claims.

In the accompanying drawing:

Figure 1 is a top plan view of a serving tray constructed in accordance with and embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 is a transverse sectional view taken along line 2—2 of Figure 1 showing a cup held by the tray; and

Figure 3 is a transverse sectional view taken along the same line as Figure 1 showing the annular section detached and with an enlarged cup held by the tray.

Referring now by reference characters to the drawing which illustrates a preferred embodiment of the present invention, A designates a serving tray formed from a single blank 1 of paperboard or other similar material which is suitably contoured for facile folding or bending into a rectangular box-like structure having parallel top and bottom walls 2, 3, respectively, and side walls 4, 5, the latter being formed with overlapping longitudinal edges of the blank 1 which may be adhesively secured together. Integral with the top wall 2 at its opposite ends are end-wall forming flaps 6, 6', having tongues 7, 7', respectively, for insertion between the side walls 4, 5, for maintaining the flaps 6, 6', in closure-wise position.

Provided in the top wall 2 is a plurality of spaced, circular apertures 8 which are each vertically aligned with an aperture 9 punched in the bottom wall 3, said apertures 9 being of reduced diameter. The apertures 8 are of suitable diameter for receiving, relatively snugly, a conventional cup 10 (shown in dotted lines in Figure 2) or other type container, of the character custom-

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arily utilized by soda fountains and roadside stands for serving soft drinks, ice cream, and related refreshments. It is to be noted that the base of the cup 10, being of greater diameter than the aperture 9 is supported by the bottom wall 3, with the central portion of the under face of the cup 10 disposed over the aperture 9, which thus provides a suitable vent or discharge port for any overflow, dripping, or leakage. As thus disposed in the tray A, the cup 10 is securely maintained with a minimum danger of inadvertent spilling of its contents during transportation of the tray A and can be readily removed for use.

Adjacent the margin of each aperture 8, the top wall 2 is provided with a plurality of arcuate slits or perforations 11 of equal radius and in concentricity with the associated aperture 8 to form an annular section or so-called "knock-out ring" 12 which is maintained in planar alignment with the top wall 2 by a plurality of spaced, relatively narrow connecting webs 13 disposed intermediate the slits 11. As shown in Figure 1 the webs 13 are spaced at 90° intervals about the annular sections 12. However, it is apparent that the arrangement and number of the webs 13 is dependent upon the size of the annular sections 12 which may have any selected depth for purposes appearing more fully hereinafter.

If in usage a generally enlarged type fountain serving cup or receptacle 14 (shown in dotted lines in Figure 3), having a diameter greater than that of the apertures 8, is to be used, the annular section 12 of the particular aperture 8 may be detached from the top wall 2 by the exertion of slight downward pressure thereon by the user which will cause the webs 13 to give way whereby the aperture 8 will be substantially increased for properly accommodating the enlarged cup 14. The sections 12 will normally, upon detachment, drop onto the upper face of the lower wall 3 into position for supporting the cup 14.

It will be seen that the provision of the readily detachable annular section 12 adapts the serving tray A for use with various sizes of cups and like vessels and thereby provides the tray A with increased versatility over currently used models. Obviously, the detachable sections 12 could be easily designed to accommodate any particular shape of the receptacle for which the serving tray A might be specially made, such as for rectangular-shaped cartons, and the like. The fabrication of trays A from cardboard and similar material is so relatively inexpensive that,

if desired, they may be discarded after limited usage.

It should be understood that changes and modifications in the form, construction, arrangement, and combination of the several parts of the serving tray may be made and substituted for those herein shown and described without departing from the nature and principle of my invention.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A disposable paper board serving tray comprising a top plate, a bottom plate, said top and bottom plate being in spaced parallel relation, said top plate having a plurality of first apertures for receiving cups and like vessels, said bottom plate being provided with a plurality of second apertures of reduced diameter relative to the first apertures and being respectively aligned therewith to provide a port for overflow material from the cups within the first apertures, and annular sections disposed within each of said first apertures in concentricity therewith whereby the effective cup-receiving opening of said first apertures is restricted to the opening of the associated annular section, the diameter of the opening of said annular sections being greater than that of said second apertures, said annular sections being integral with the plate by means of a plurality of spaced, narrow connecting webs, said annular sections and connecting webs being of the same thickness as the plate and in planar alignment therewith on both its upper and lower surfaces, said annular sections being circumferentially spaced in the margin of their associated first aperture intermediate the said connecting webs, said connecting webs being disposed at intervals, said paper board being of limited thickness so that optionally the connecting webs may be easily ruptured under slight pressure whereupon the said annular sections will be completely detached from the plate to permit effective full utilization of the opening of the first aperture for receiving receptacles of increased size so that upon said detachment of the annular sections they will drop through gravity onto the upper surface of the bottom plate into concentric relation with the associated second aperture for supporting on its upper sur-

face the base of the cup held within the first aperture to maintain same spacedly above the bottom plate.

2. A disposable paper board serving tray comprising a single foldable blank of material having top- and bottom-forming portions, side portions to hold the top- and bottom-forming portions spacedly apart when the folded blank is erected for use, and end flaps to be tucked inwardly within the other portions to hold the serving tray in erected position, said bottom-forming portion having a plurality of spaced apart openings therethrough, said top-forming portion being provided with a plurality of openings of relative greater diameter in respective alignment with the openings in the bottom-forming portion for receiving food and drink receptacles whereby lateral support is provided therefor, and said top-forming portion being formed with concentric slits around the openings thereof to provide knock-out rings whereby when a food or drink receptacle of greater diameter than the openings of the top-forming portion is fitted in the tray the related knock-out ring will be displaced to drop inwardly into and be contained within the erected serving tray with the knock-out ring and the receptacle being supported on the bottom forming portion of the tray around the relatively smaller opening therein.

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