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(54) **FREESTANDING, DECORATIVE, ROLLED PAPER STORAGE CONTAINER AND MOLD FOR MAKING THE SAME**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A freestanding, decorative, rolled paper storage container and mold for making, wherein the container comprises a hollow body comprising a peripheral wall, weighted base portion, open top end, and removable cover. An aperture, in the peripheral wall, allows at least a part of each paper roll stored within to be seen and easily grasped. The container, made in a variety of sizes and shapes, adapts to fit from two to more than five toilet paper rolls, more than one paper towel roll, or other bathroom accessories, such as folded paper or cloth towelettes. The container can be made from ceramic, plastic, metal, or wood and can match any new or existing decorating scheme. When made of ceramic, plastic, or metal the container is especially sanitary, because these materials are non-porous and inert and thus, remain clean longer, are easier to clean, and remain free of mold and mildew.

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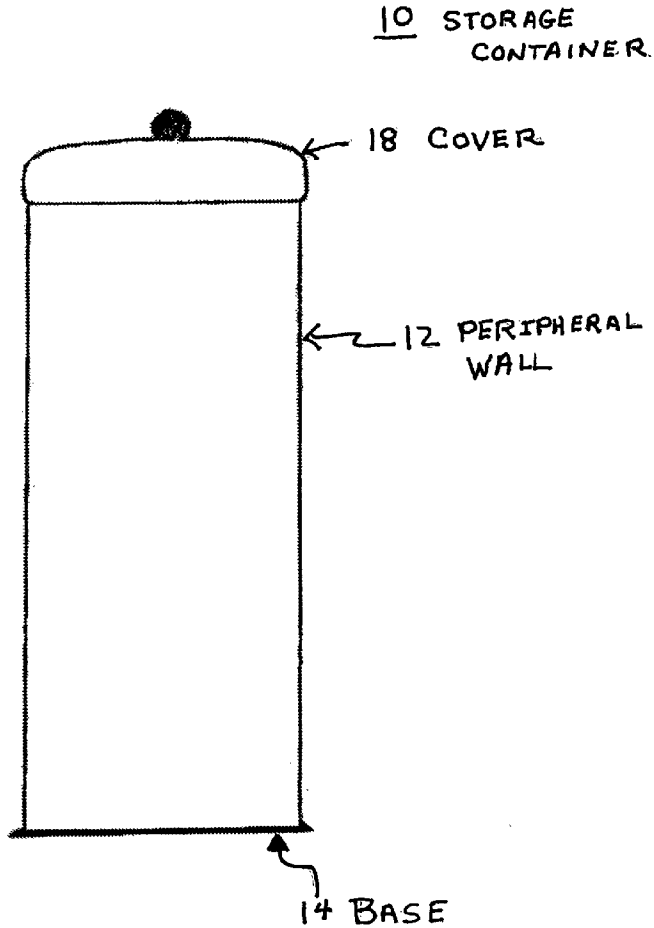
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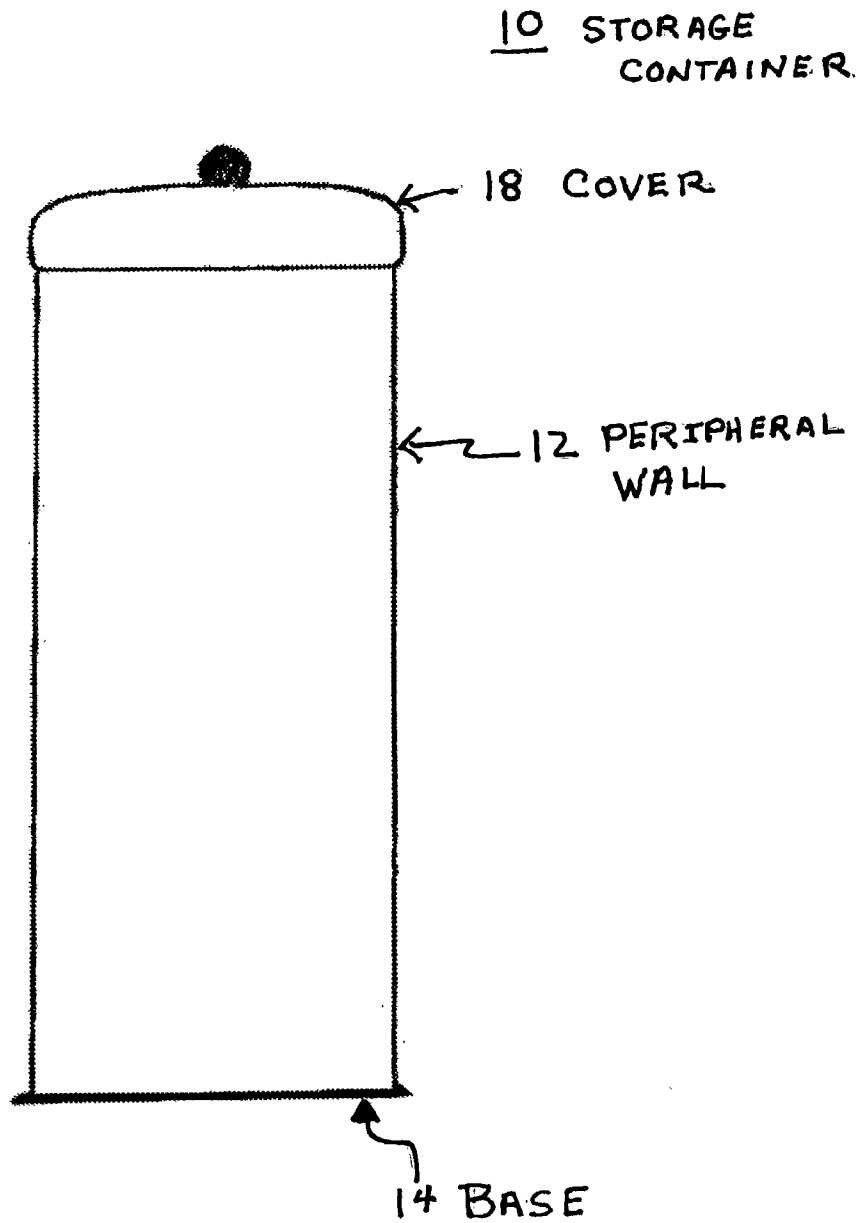
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**Front View**



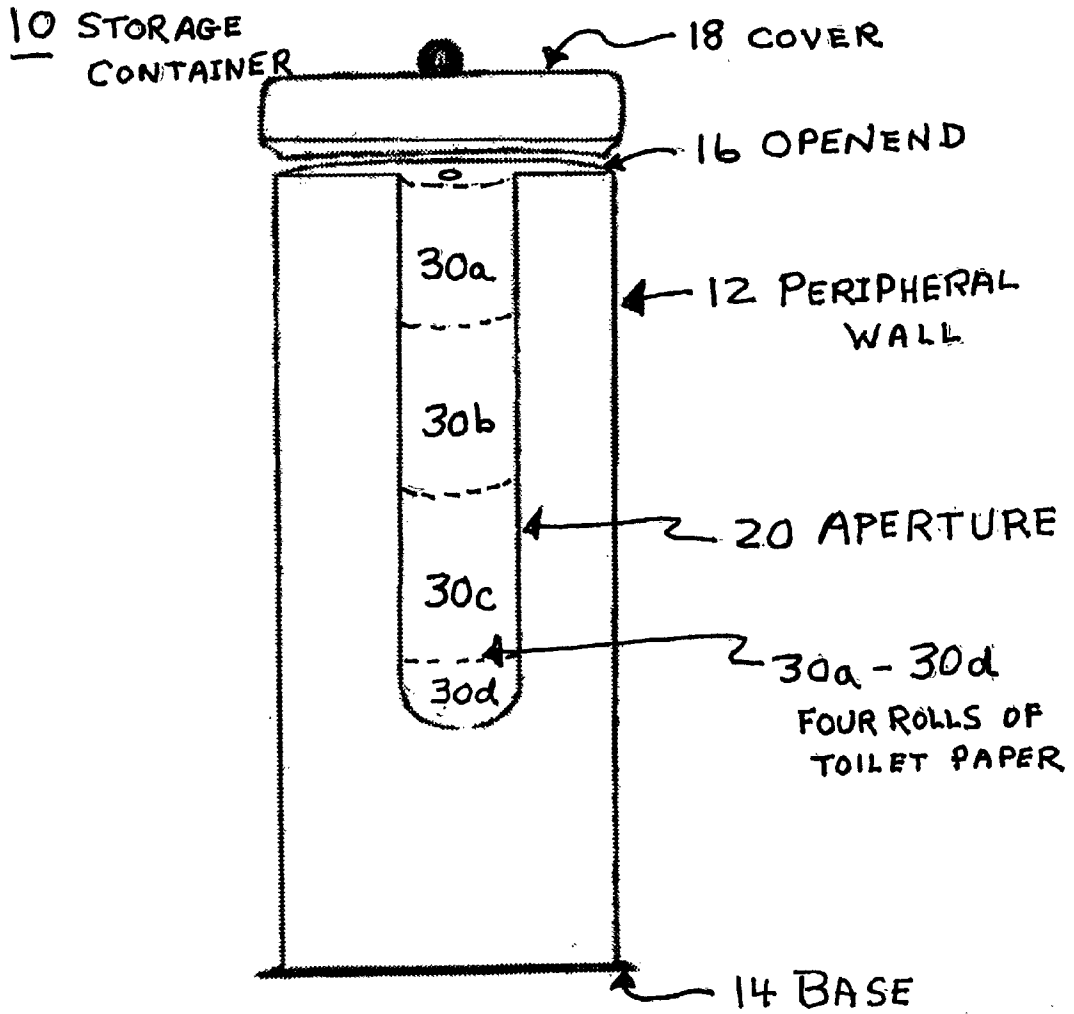
# Fig. 1

## Front View



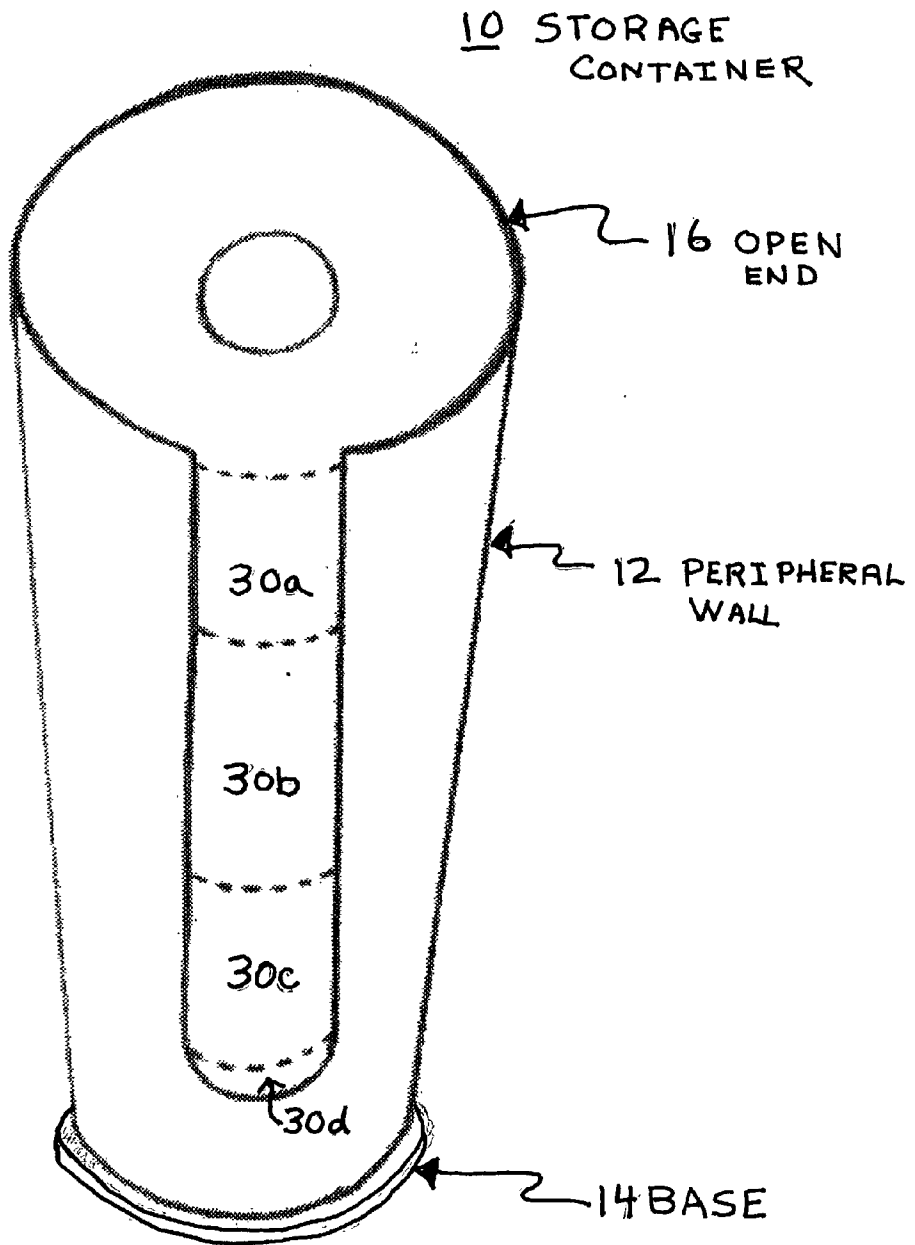
# Fig. 2

## Back View



**Fig. 3**

Back view  
without cover



**Fig. 4**

**Mold Front and Back**

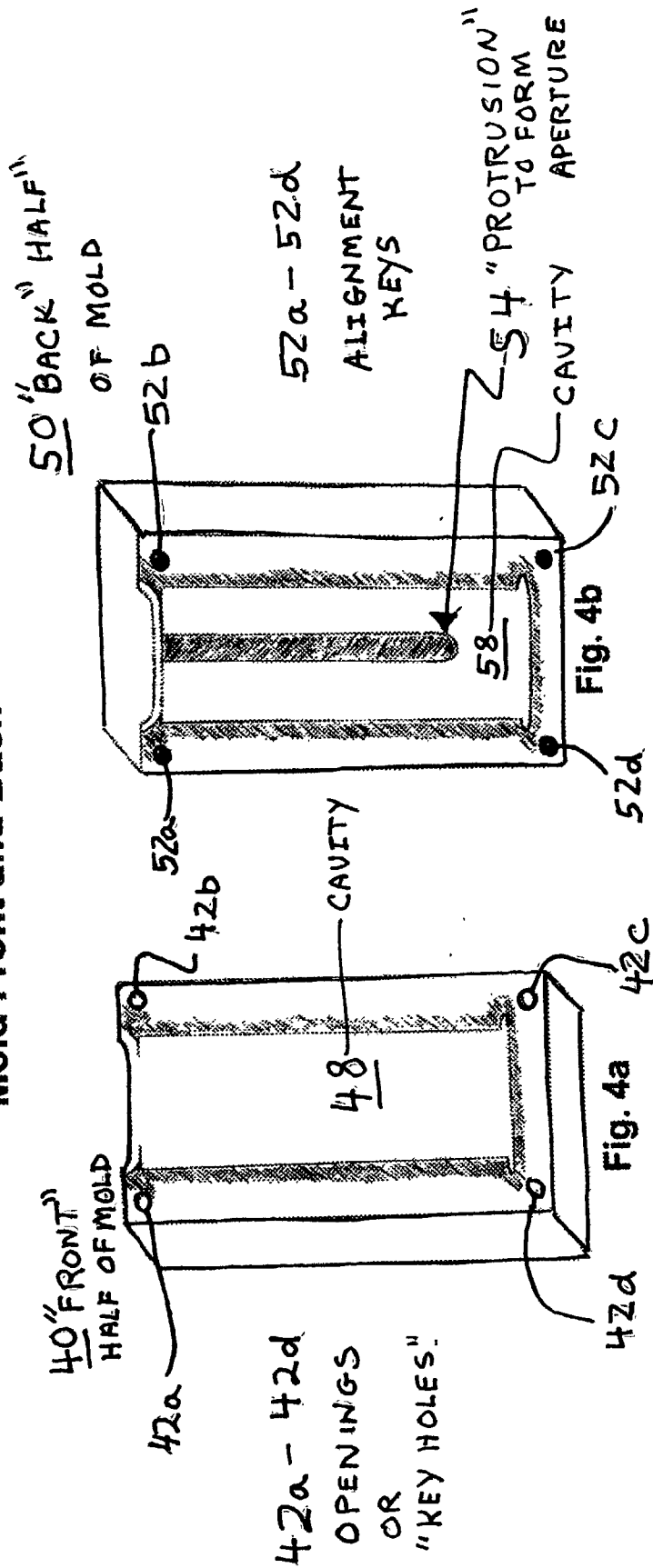
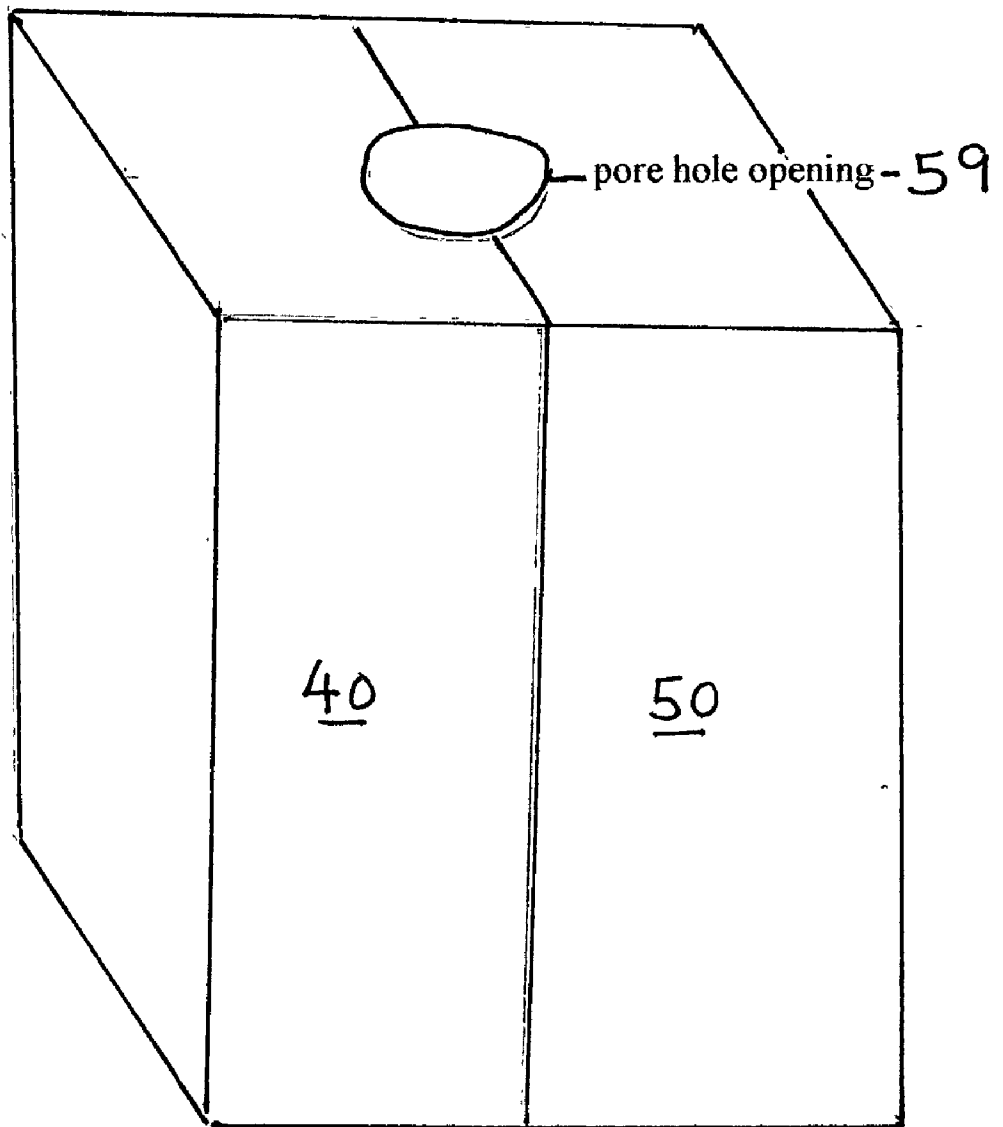


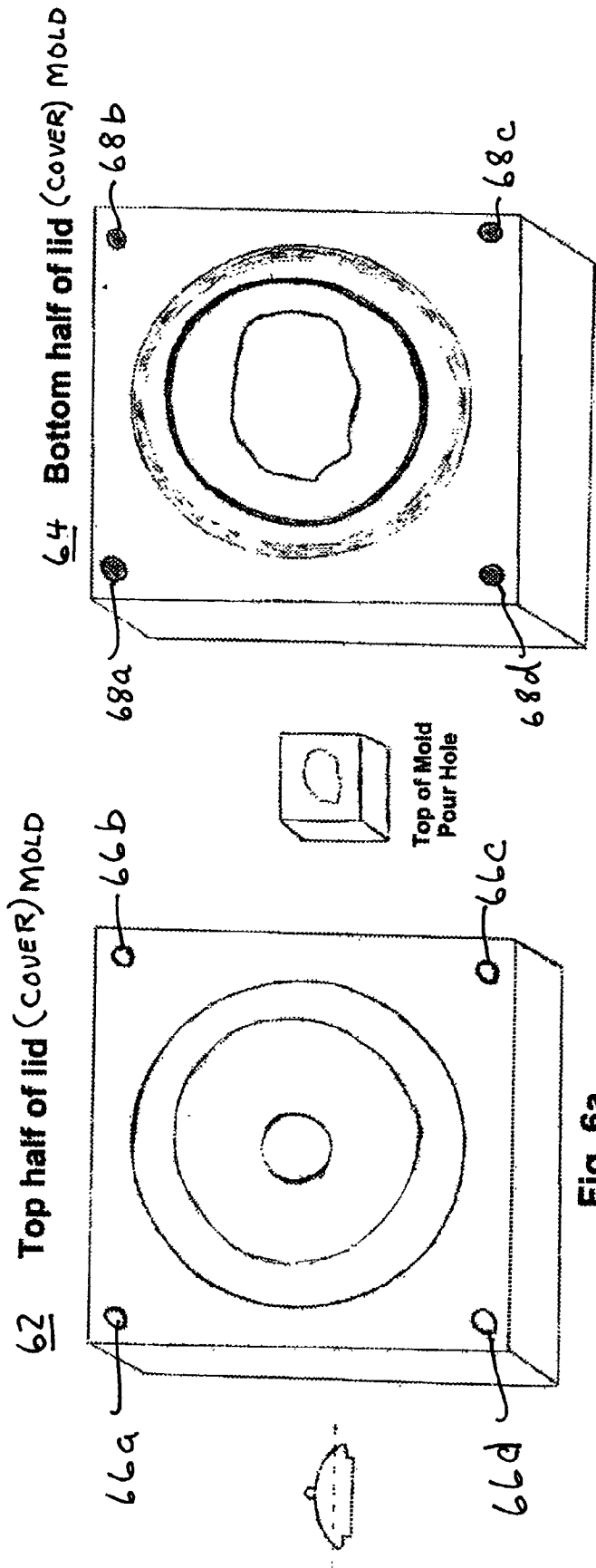
FIG. 5

Mold for shaping storage container  
with pour hole opening

55 MOLD



**Fig. 6** **Mold for Cover**



**Fig. 6a**

**Fig. 6b**

**FREESTANDING, DECORATIVE, ROLLED PAPER  
STORAGE CONTAINER AND MOLD FOR  
MAKING THE SAME**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not Applicable

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY  
SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

[0002] Not Applicable

**REFERENCE TO SEQUENCE LISTING, A  
TABLE OR A COMPUTER PROGRAM LISTING  
COMPACT DISK APPENDIX**

[0003] Not Applicable

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0004] The present invention relates generally to storage containers, and, more particularly, to storage containers for a plurality of items, such as rolled paper, and a mold for making said storage containers.

[0005] The background information from patents discussed below is presented to better illustrate the novelty of the present invention. This background information is not admitted prior art.

[0006] In addition to a master bathroom, even modestly sized homes today have what are referred to as "half-baths" that are usually small, with little or no storage space. Storage closets, in which the toilet paper and/or paper towels are kept for use in these half-baths, are usually located outside of the bathroom. Guest facilities, often located near the front entrance to the home, proximate to the entertaining areas, are also, generally, small rooms, and thus, have no place to store extra rolls of toilet paper. It is embarrassing for both the guest and the host when the guest is forced to "call out" for an additional roll of toilet paper. Even if one is alone, it is a considerable inconvenience when the "paper runs out" and there is no extra roll within reach.

[0007] In larger sized homes, often housing large families, the cabinet under the bathroom sink is often too small to serve as storage space for extra rolls of toilet paper and often there a call, to whomever is near, for an extra roll of paper.

[0008] The bathrooms in most hotels and motels are small and have no storage facilities. Public type facilities such as office buildings, educational institutions, and the like may, or may not, have larger bathrooms, but in many cases, there is no storage place for extra rolls of toilet paper. In these cases, toilet paper is often stored outside of the bathroom where it is not available for immediate use, when the need arises.

[0009] A similarly inconvenient, though not as embarrassing situation exists, when one runs out of towel, paper or cloth, that is for drying one's hands after using the bathroom. These problems have been addressed in several inventive ways.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 4,058,354 (Powaska) issued Nov. 15, 1997 describes a storage container for rolls of toilet tissue. This container, while certainly useful, is designed to be wall-mounted. In small bathrooms, wall space is usually at a premium, but even if there is some wall space, mounting

the container means putting holes into the wall. The container, as long it is positioned on the wall, will hide the damage made to the wall, but if one wants to change the mounting location, the original holes will present a blemish on the wall and additional nail or screw holes must be made. And, if one decides to cease using the container, unsightly holes remain in the wall. Moreover, the Powaska invention is meant to function not only as a storage unit in the bathroom, but as a package for sale and for shipment of the rolls therein. Thus, it is designed to be a disposable container. Disposal items have been identified as adding to already burdensome waste problems and costs. The fact that the container is used as packaging for shipping and sales means that only limited decorative features can be incorporated into this design.

[0011] Ramirez, U.S. Pat. No. 4,199,078 issued Apr. 22, 1980, sets forth a similar type of wall-mounted toilet tissue storage container with similar disadvantages. This unit eliminates the need for the creation of screw or nail holes in the wall. Instead, however, it requires the use of two squares of double-coated urethane foam tape to attach the unit to the wall. Once applied, this type of tape is difficult if not impossible to remove without causing some damage to the wall or the wall covering.

[0012] A dispenser for toilet paper rolls is taught in U.S. Pat. No. 6,422,503 (Hoo Kong) issued Jul. 23, 2002. The toilet paper dispenser taught by Hoo Kong is free standing and also serves to store several rolls of toilet paper. This invention, however, must be placed in arm's reach of the toilet in order to be useful. The fact is, however, the majority of homes, apartments, hotels, motels, offices, and other places where bathrooms are located, are built with toilet paper dispensers provided in the bathrooms. Thus, having an additional, and rather large, toilet paper dispenser in the same area is redundant and a poor use of limited space. Moreover, the combination container, as taught by Hoo Kong, has parts that move relative to one another (a spring, annular disk, and aperture shaft). These parts are apt to rust and malfunction due to the humid conditions found in bathrooms, and the additional parts add to the cost of manufacture.

[0013] U.S. Pat. No. 4,177,958 (Poole), issued Dec. 11, 1979, also discloses a freestanding toilet paper dispenser/storage unit, which suffers from the same limitations as the Hoo Kong unit. In addition, the unit requires the manual removal of a roll of toilet paper from the storage section in order to place the roll into the dispenser section. To accomplish this, the cap of the dispensing section must be removed in order to discard the paper core before lifting the platform (which supports the paper to be dispensed) to retrieve a spare roll of paper from the cylinder. A person with large hands would find it difficult to reach the bottom roll without having to tip the entire unit over. Furthermore, there is no way to know when the storage unit needs to be refilled without opening the entire unit.

[0014] U.S. Pat. No. 5,763,984 (Day), issued Jun. 9, 1998, teaches a holder for a single roll of paper towel. Conceivably this holder could be used for toilet paper, but would hold only a single roll.

[0015] Design Pat. No. 376,284 (Keeley) issued Dec. 10, 1996 illustrates a container for storing multiple rolls of toilet paper. This container appears to have a base, but no cover so



that the rolls of toilet paper remaining in the container are exposed to the moisture and dust found in the immediate environment. The paper rolls appear to fit snugly in the container requiring that a person have small, flexible fingers to remove a roll of paper, or that the entire container be turned over to have one (or more) of the stored rolls fall out of the container.

[0016] For the foregoing reasons, it is readily understood that there is a unmet need for a free-standing, decorative, storage container to hold multiple rolls of toilet, or other rolled paper, in proximate reach of the facility, wherein the number of paper rolls remaining in the container can be readily ascertained so the container can be refilled in a timely manner saving from embarrassment the party who discovers too late that the dispensing supply is exhausted, and wherein a new roll can be readily and easily retrieved from the storage unit for immediate use.

[0017] One of the goals of today's interior decorators is to create harmony in our home spaces. Thus, the ease with which a storage container can be adapted to fit into any decorating scheme makes it especially useful. Equally welcome would be a rolled paper storage container that can easily be made in a variety of shapes and sizes to accommodate both small and large sized families and bathrooms of small and large dimensions.

#### SUMMARY

[0018] Therefore it is a main object of the invention to provide for a freestanding storage container to hold multiple rolls of toilet or other rolled paper.

[0019] A further main object is to provide for an adaptable, useful, attractive storage container for multiple rolls of toilet or other rolled paper that can be kept in the bathroom proximately in reach of the existing paper dispenser.

[0020] A yet further main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container having a cover to conceal the contents from view.

[0021] Another main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container having an aperture in the body of the container of sufficient length so that the number of paper rolls remaining in the storage unit can be easily ascertained.

[0022] Yet another main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container wherein a roll of paper can be readily and easily removed from the storage unit.

[0023] An additional main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that will eliminate embarrassing situations occurring when the paper dispenser is empty.

[0024] Yet, still another main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that can be inexpensively mass-produced from a variety of materials.

[0025] A yet still further main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that can be decorated to match any existing bathroom decorating scheme.

[0026] One more main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that can easily be made in a variety of shapes to better fit into particular spaces, such as corners.

[0027] Another additional main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that can be manufactured in a variety of sizes to hold from two to more than four rolls of toilet paper or to hold extra rolls of paper towel or to hold stacks of folded paper or cloth towelettes.

[0028] Another additional main object of this invention is to provide for a mold used to manufacture the storage container.

[0029] Yet another additional main object of this invention is to provide for a freestanding storage container that is sanitary, easy to clean, and remains free of mold and mildew.

[0030] In carrying out the above objects, and other objects, the present invention provides for a freestanding, decorative, rolled paper storage container comprising a hollow, elongate body portion defined by a peripheral wall, a weighted base portion at a bottom end thereof, and an open top end; a removable cover portion at the open top end of the body portion of the storage container; and with the peripheral wall having an aperture through which the number of toilet tissue rolls stored within can be seen and grasped; where the storage container is adapted for standing upright on a weighted base portion and holding a plurality of paper rolls stacked one on top of the other; and where the removable cover conceals the stored paper from a person's view.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0031] In order that these and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention, may be more fully comprehended, the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0032] **FIG. 1** is a front plan view of an embodiment of storage container with cover.

[0033] **FIG. 2** is a rear plan view of the storage container as shown in **FIG. 1** with cover and aperture.

[0034] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view of the storage container as shown in **FIG. 1** showing the top end and rear side of the container and four rolls of toilet paper revealed by the aperture.

[0035] **FIGS. 4a** and **4b** are perspective views showing the front and back halves, respectively, of one embodiment of a mold used for shaping a version of the storage container of the present invention.

[0036] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view illustrating two halves of a mold fitted together to receive the molding material.

[0037] **FIGS. 6a** and **6b** are perspective views showing the front and back halves, respectively, of one embodiment of a mold used for shaping the cover of the storage container of the present invention.

[0038] It should be understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale. In certain instances, details which are not necessary for an understanding of the present invention or which render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted. It should be understood, of course, that the invention is not limited to the particular embodiments illustrated herein, but encompasses many embodiments as are discussed throughout the specification.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0039] In the following detailed description and in the several figures of the drawings, like elements are identified with like reference numerals.

[0040] Definitions

[0041] “Front side” of the storage container (see FIG. 1) is defined as that side of the storage container that does not include the aperture 20.

[0042] “Rear side” of the storage container (see FIG. 2) is defined as the side of the container having an elongate aperture 20.

[0043] “Aperture” is defined as an opening through which at least a part of all of the contents, such as toilet paper rolls, paper towels, or folded towelettes in the container can be seen.

[0044] Description of Elements

[0045] One preferred embodiment will be described with reference to FIG. 1 showing a view of a “front side” (“front side” is defined above) of the freestanding toilet paper storage container 10. It can be seen that in this embodiment storage container 10 comprises a hollow, elongate, cylindrical body having peripheral wall 12 and base 14, and removable cover 18 where the cover may comprise a knob or some other type of handle. Removable cover 18 is shaped to fit snugly on the container body. There are many ways that the cover can be connected to the container, such as, mating, threading, and snap fit devices, which are all contemplated in various embodiments of this invention. The hollow, ceramic, cylindrical body, i.e., wall and base, is formed as a one piece molded unit using a version of the body mold (described below) of this invention. Base 14 is made to be heavier than the peripheral wall 12 to provide stability to the container. Cover 18 is formed as a one piece molded unit using a version of the mold (described below) of the cover mold of this invention.

[0046] FIG. 2 is a plan view showing a rear side (“rear side” is defined above) of toilet paper storage container 10 as shown in FIG. 1. Aperture 20 (“aperture” is defined above) is of sufficient length to ascertain how many rolls of rolled paper remain in storage container 10 and of sufficient width to allow for easy grasping and removal of the rolls of paper in the storage container. In the example illustrated, four rolls of toilet paper can be seen in the container 30a, 30b, 30c, and 30d.

[0047] FIG. 3 shows an angled perspective view of the back side of hollow, cylindrical body 12 having cover 18 removed so that the top of toilet paper roll 30a can be seen through top end 16. FIG. 3 emphasizes the fact that aperture 20 is of sufficient length so that at least a part of each of the rolls of paper stored in the storage container can be readily seen allowing one to know when the container needs refilling. Similarly, it is clear from FIG. 3 that aperture 20 is of sufficient width to allow each of the stored rolls of toilet paper to be easily grasped and thus, easily removed.

[0048] FIG. 4a illustrates one half of the mold 40 that is used to cast (i.e., result in forming) the front side of the version of the storage container illustrated in FIG. 1. Hereinafter, this part of the mold is referred to as the “front” half of the mold.

[0049] FIG. 4b illustrates the other half of the mold 50 that will be used to cast the back side of the embodiment of the storage container illustrated in FIG. 1. Hereinafter, this part of the mold is referred to as the “back” half of the mold.

[0050] Additionally, FIG. 4b illustrates “alignment keys” 50a, 50b, 50c, and 50d and FIG. 4a illustrates “holes” 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d. When the front half 40 of the mold is aligned with the back half 50 of the mold, an internal cavity is formed from the “mating” of cavity 48 in the front half of the mold and cavity 58 in the back half of the mold. By fitting alignment keys 50a, 50b, 50c, and 50d into their respective holes 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d, proper alignment of the mold halves is assured.

[0051] Raised portion 54, as illustrated in FIG. 4b, ensures the formation of aperture 20 as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3,

[0052] FIG. 5 illustrates the two mold halves 40 and 50, as shown in FIGS. 4a and 4b, respectively, fitted together to form shaping mold 55 to receive the slip (the clay/water mixture) through pore hole opening 59 to form ceramic toilet paper storage container 10.

[0053] FIGS. 6a and 6b illustrate the top half 62 and bottom half 64, respectively, of the mold used for shaping the cover 18 of the storage container 10 of the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 1-3. As in the mold halves for shaping the storage container body, these mold halves 62 and 64, each have alignment holes FIG. 6a, 66a-66d and alignment keys FIG. 6b, 68a-68d.

[0054] Description of How to Make

[0055] In a preferred embodiment, as exemplified in FIGS. 1-3, the storage container is made from clay and fired to become a ceramic piece. Generally, before the final firing the piece is coated with a glaze that fires to a hard, protective coating at the same time the unfired clay piece is fired. The glaze can be of any color and texture. The glaze is usually chosen to compliment a general, or specific, decorating scheme. If desired, the unfired piece can be used in ceramic studios as starting pieces for ceramic decorating classes.

[0056] The storage container, as envisioned by this invention, can be mass-produced at low cost, using the technique commonly referred to in the industry as slip casting. Those skilled in the art, however, will realize that many other methods of production using clay as a starting material are available. Two such methods are hand building and using the wheel. These alternative methods would likely be used when smaller quantities of the storage containers are desired, such as in the making of custom designed pieces.

[0057] Although many clay shaping techniques are well-known to those of ordinary skill in the art, the slip casting method is preferred because it is the least expensive and, thus, is the most used when making large quantities of copies of the same design.

[0058] The slip method uses a fluid clay/water mix of low viscosity. The clay is usually a mixture of various well-known materials that impart specific properties to the unfired and fired product. The specific formula used to prepare the clay mixture may vary within wide limits. It is within the skill and knowledge of the present art to select the proper composition in accordance with the desired characteristics.

[0059] FIGS. 4a and 4b illustrate the two cavities 48 and 58, respectively, that make up the storage container shaping cavity when the front half 40 and the back half 50 of the mold are "mated" using the alignment keys and key holes, as described above, to form shaping mold as illustrated in FIG. 5. It should be noted that aperture 20 is formed by the protrusion of raised portion 54 in cavity 58 in back half 50. The clay/water mixture is poured into the pore hole opening 59.

[0060] When using clay/water slips, the mold is typically made of a porous medium, typically plaster, which adsorbs much of the water from the wet slip. The slip remains in the mold until sufficiently dry to allow the firm, but still damp, clay body to be handled. At this time, the mold pieces are removed and the storage container is placed on a drying shelf until the container is sufficiently air-dried. At this stage, the product is called greenware (unfired clay) and is typically trimmed and smoothed to be readied for any decoration that is to be applied. In addition, at this time, if desired, the piece can also be design-carved in some decorative or functional manner. When ready, the piece is put into a kiln (oven) for a first, relatively low temperature, firing. The manufacturing process is complete when the cooled, partially fired body, is glazed and put into the kiln, again, for a final, higher temperature, firing. Glazing products and methods of glazing are also well known in the art and do not require any further discussion here.

[0061] Although cover 18 is shaped in its own mold, the body and the cover are fired at the same time to ensure that both experience the same firing conditions. Different firing conditions can result in different amounts of shrinkage as the firing drives the final bit of water from the clay body resulting in crystallization of the clay body and its glaze.

[0062] It is readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that the storage container can be made using other materials. For instance, the container can be molded out of any plastic, or plastic-like, material. It can be shaped out of metal and can be made out of wood.

[0063] In the preferred embodiment, discussed above, it is contemplated that the storage container is made from clay, which results in an opaque body. In other embodiments, it is contemplated that the peripheral wall and/or the cover can be made of a transparent or translucent material.

[0064] As will also be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, the storage container can be shaped and sized as desired.

[0065] Description of How to Use

[0066] A preferred embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 1, is sized to accommodate four rolls of toilet paper, as it is usual to fine toilet paper sold in four roll packages. It would be obvious to one skilled in the art to size the body of the storage container so that more or less than four rolls could be accommodated. Although most brands of toilet paper are sold in the four roll packages, toilet paper rolls are also sold as individual units.

[0067] If a household consists of only one or two persons, then it would be reasonable for the household to purchase only two rolls per shopping trip, whereas for a large family, it would be reasonable to purchase five or more rolls per

shopping trip. Thus, the storage container could be made having varying heights to accommodate differing numbers of rolls of toilet paper.

[0068] For example, if the container was to be used to store toilet paper rolls for a family of one, it could be made shorter, to hold only the two extra rolls purchased. Conversely, for a large family, the container body could be made longer, to hold the five, or more, rolls of toilet tissue purchased.

[0069] If the storage container is used as a toilet paper storage container in a small bathroom, with little extra space to place the container, the container's shape could make it easier to fit the container into the design of the room. The container, for example, could be shaped so that the cross-section of the body of the container defined a triangle, to allow the container to fit tightly into a corner of the small room.

[0070] If used, for example to hold extra rolls of paper towels, instead of toilet tissue, the holder could be made of slightly larger dimensions to fit one or two extra paper towel rolls. If the use of folded paper hand towels, or folded cloth hand towels, was desired, the container could, but would not necessarily have to, be made of dimensions to fit the folded towels.

[0071] Several containers, with bodies of various heights and widths, but of the same decoration scheme, could be grouped to form an artful design element in the bathroom.

[0072] One of the most important aspects of the present invention, is the presence of the aperture (see aperture 20, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3). Providing for an aperture of sufficient length to assure that at least a part of each roll of paper in the paper roll storage container can be seen provides one with the advantage of being able to ascertain "at a glance" if the storage container needs to be refilled. This will prevent any embarrassing incidents when it is realized, perhaps too late, that the toilet paper dispenser is empty.

[0073] In a similar vein, providing for an aperture of sufficient width, allows a person, even one with relatively large hands, to easily remove the needed roll from the container, even if it is the last roll sitting on the bottom of the container.

[0074] When made of ceramic, metal, or a plastic, such as fiber glass, the freestanding storage container is especially sanitary, because these manufacturing materials are non-porous and inert and thus, remain clean longer, are easier to clean, and remain free of mold and mildew.

[0075] If desired, matching containers, without covers or apertures, could be provided to be used as vases that "fit" with the chosen decorating scheme. Used with or without its cover, a matching container could be used as a wastebasket. Thus, several containers, with bodies of various heights and widths, but of the same decoration scheme, could be grouped to form an artful design element in the bathroom. The uses for the container are limited only by the imagination of the user.

[0076] The foregoing description, for purposes of explanation, used specific and defined nomenclature to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the specific details are not required in order to practice the invention. Thus, the

foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the rolled paper storage container are presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Those skilled in the art will recognize that many changes may be made to the features, embodiments, and methods of making the embodiments of the invention described herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Furthermore, the present invention is not limited to the described methods, embodiments, features or combinations of features but include all the variation, methods, modifications, and combinations of features within the scope of the appended claims. The invention is limited only by the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A freestanding, decorative, rolled paper storage container comprising:

a hollow body portion defined by a peripheral wall and a base portion at a bottom end thereof and an open top end;

a removable cover portion sized and shaped to be mounted on said open top end of said hollow body portion of said storage container;

with said peripheral wall having an aperture through which at least a part of each of the paper rolls stored within can be seen and easily grasped;

wherein said storage container is adapted for standing upright on said base portion and receiving a plurality of paper rolls stacked one on top of the other, and wherein said removable cover portion conceals the stored paper from view.

2. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein a cross-section of the hollow, elongate body portion forms an ellipsoid.

3. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein a cross-section of the hollow, elongated body portion forms a polygon.

4. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage container is ceramic.

5. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage container is plastic.

6. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage container is metal.

7. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage container is wood

8. The storage container as recited in claim 1, wherein the base provides the weight needed to provide static stability to the container and to resist unintentional tipping of the container.

9. The storage container as recited in claim 8, wherein the base includes added weights to provide static stability to the container and to resist unintentional tipping of the container.

10. The storage container as recited in claim 8, wherein the base is made thick enough relative to the peripheral wall to provide static stability to the container and to resist unintentional tipping of the container.

11. A forming mold for forming a freestanding rolled paper storage container:

a. which storage container comprises:

a hollow elongate body portion defined by a peripheral wall, a base portion at a bottom end thereof, and an open top end;

wherein said storage container is adapted for standing upright on said base portion and receiving a plurality of paper rolls stacked one on top of the other,

with said peripheral wall having an aperture through which at least a part of each of the paper rolls stored within the container can be seen and easily grasped for removal from the container;

and wherein a removable cover portion conceals the stored paper from view; and

b. which mold comprises a mold body having a cavity with a forming surface of desired shape.

12. A mold for forming a removable cover portion sized and shaped to be mounted on a storage container:

a. wherein said storage container comprises:

a hollow, elongate body portion having a peripheral wall and a base portion at a bottom end thereof and an open top end;

wherein said storage container is adapted for standing upright on said base portion and receiving a plurality of paper rolls stacked one on top of the other;

with said peripheral wall having an aperture through which at least a part of each of the paper rolls stored within the container can be seen and easily grasped for removal from the container; and

wherein said removable cover portion conceals the stored paper from view.

b. which mold comprises a mold body having a cavity with a forming surface of desired shape.

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