United States Patent [19]

Wells et al.

[11] **3,807,597**

[45] **Apr. 30, 1974**

[54] **SELF-OPENING CONTAINER TOP**

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[73] Assignee: **SMW Atlanta, Inc.,** Atlanta, Ga.

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **220/48,** 222/81

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 17/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 220/48, 47; 222/80, 81, 222/83; 229/7

[56] **References Cited**

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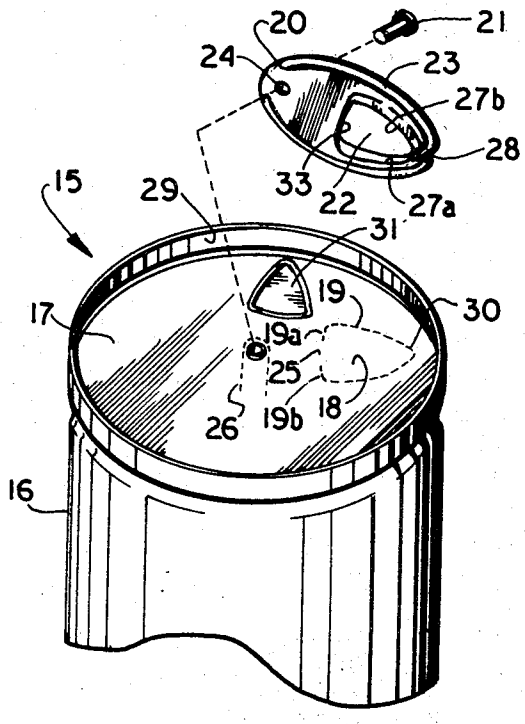
Primary Examiner—George T. Hall

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Jones, Thomas & Askew

[57] **ABSTRACT**

Container top which is useful as a closure for beverage containers and the like and which is openable without requiring a can opener or other additional implements, which does not require removal of a tear tab or a similar disposable article, which does not deposit a detached closure member within the container, and which is noninjurous to the user. The container top is provided with a scored section which can be deformed from the container top to lie inwardly of the container. An opening member attached to the container top includes a tab displacing portion for separating the tab along the scored line, and also includes a deforming portion for deforming the tab from the top. The opening member is movable from a non-use position into alignment with the scored tab, and may contain an aperture coincident with the opening presented by deformation of the tab, through which the contents of the container are accessible. In another disclosed embodiment of the present apparatus, the opening member provides a removable closure for an opened container.

21 Claims, 12 Drawing Figures



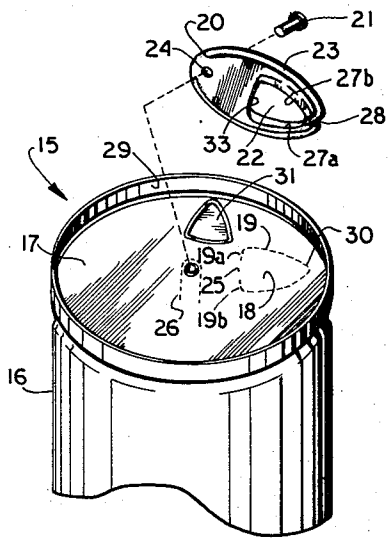


FIG 1

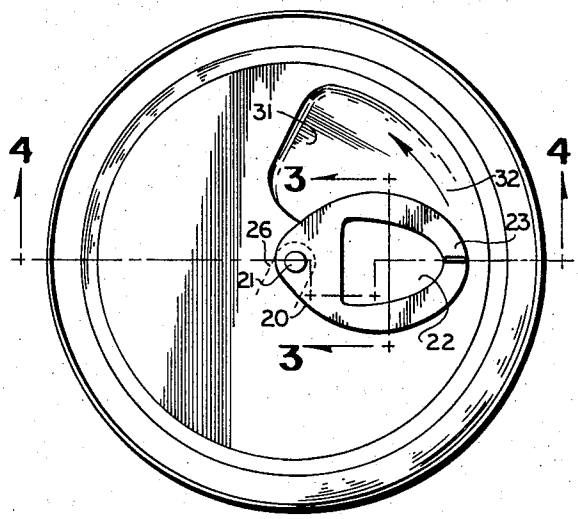


FIG 2

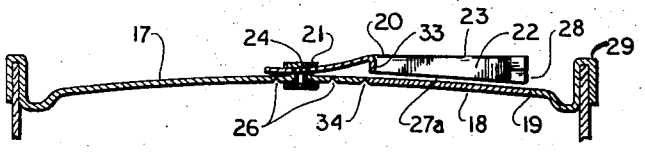


FIG 4

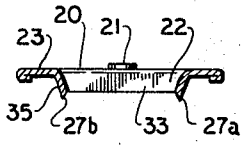


FIG 3

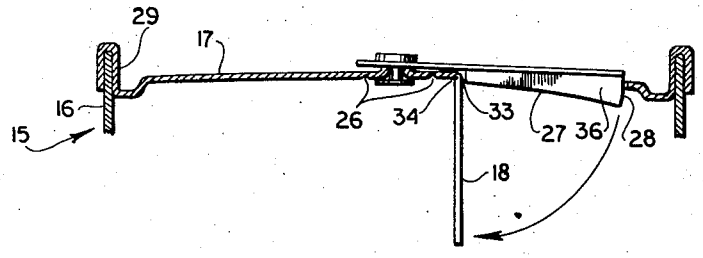


FIG 5

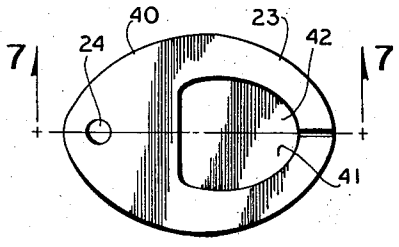


FIG 6

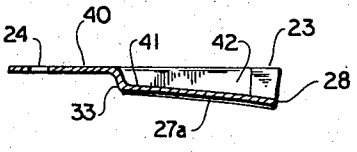


FIG 7

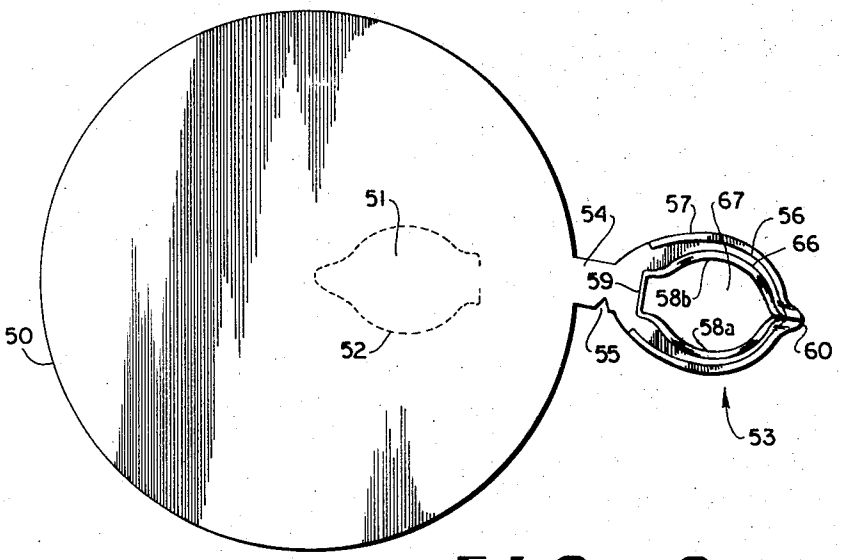


FIG 8

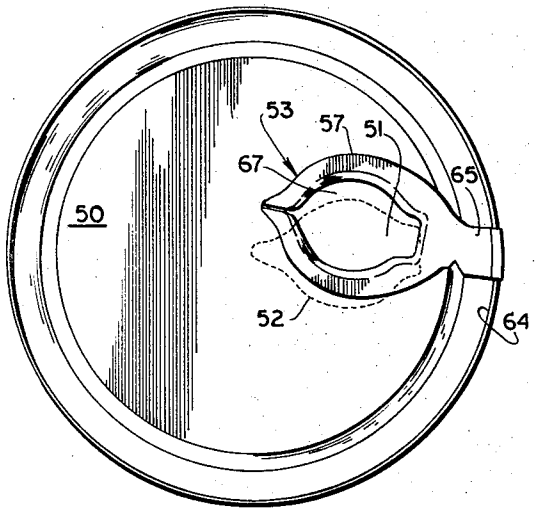


FIG 9

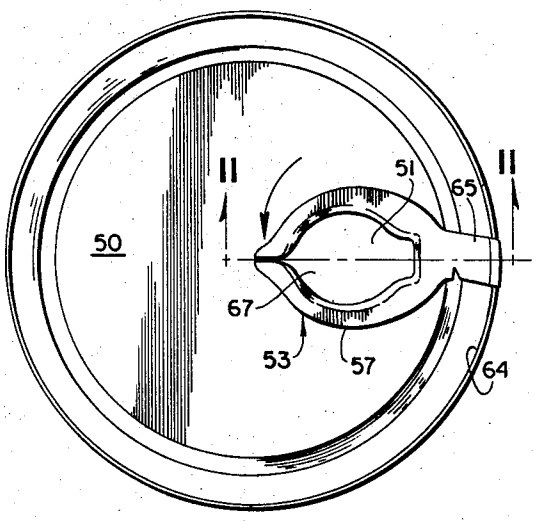


FIG 10

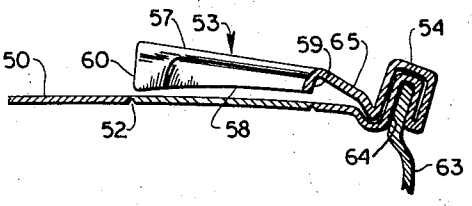


FIG 11

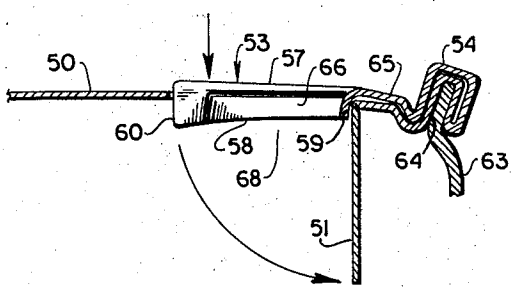


FIG 12

SELF-OPENING CONTAINER TOP

This invention relates in general to containers and in particular to an improved container top which is self-opening.

The conventional self-opening container of the type commonly known as the "pop-top" container and widely used for beverages and other purposes is notoriously well known to those skilled in the container and packaging arts. These containers typically include a container end having a tab portion provided according to one of several known expedients and defined by a suitable metal-weakening operation such as scoring. The tab portion is attached to a pull ring, and opening of the container is accomplished by pulling the ring for tearing removal of the tab along the score lines. The near-universal acceptance of this type of easy-open container is amply demonstrated by visiting any producer or retailer of popular beverages such as beer and soft drinks, and also by the ubiquitous appearance of letter caused by carelessly discarded tear tabs.

Modifications of the conventional pop-top container have been proposed in an attempt to eliminate a removed article, such as the tear tab and attached ring, while retaining the easy-open feature which is popular with consumers. One such proposal, for example, provides one or more separate plug portions mounted in holes formed in an end of the container. The mounting of the plugs enables finger pressure to be applied directly against the plug portions from the outside of the container end to physically dislodge the plugs into the container. These plugs then drop to the bottom of the container, and are thus not available as potentially littering material. However, this proposed solution includes a number of problems which may be detrimental to its public acceptance. For one thing, the presence of one or more plugs in a beverage can is unsettling to a person drinking from the can, especially so when he hears the plug moving about in the container while he is drinking from it. Moreover, the hole or opening left in the container end by the aforementioned push-in opening procedure presents a potential injury hazard to the finger of a person opening the container and also to the tongue and/or lips of a person drinking from the container.

Still another objection to the aforementioned modified self-opening container is found in the relative expense of manufacture, as compared with the conventional pop-top container end.

Other examples of prior-art attempts to provide a self-opening container which omits the conventional detached tear tab/pull ring are found in such U. S. Pats. as Nos. 3,355,058; 3,442,416; and 3,160,309. None of the containers proposed by these cited patents is known to have achieved commercial acceptance, however, for such reasons as unacceptable cost of manufacture, difficulty of opening, and/or factors which are psychologically unappealing to the consumer of the beverages or other products in the containers.

Still another problem confronted by the container art and in particular by the increased popularity of relatively large cans, such as a No. 9 can, for various carbonated beverages, is the need for some closure device so that an opened can can be closed for storage to maintain the carbonation and freshness of the beverage for subsequent use.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved self-opening container.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a self-opening container in which container opening is accomplished without complete separation of any article from the container.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a self-opening container in which opening of the container does not dispose any loose unattached object within the container.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a self-opening container which minimizes or eliminates the potential hazard of personal injury during opening of the container.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a self-opening container which can be selectively closed and opened after initial container opening takes place.

Many of the other objects and attendant advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent from the following description of working embodiments thereof, including the annexed drawings in which:

FIG. **1** shows an isometric exploded view of a container portion including an end member containing self-opening structure according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** shows a top plan view of the assembled container end shown in FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a section view of an opening member taken along line **3—3** of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** is a section view taken along line **4—4** of FIG. **2**, showing the self-opening structure in position to be opened;

FIG. **5** is a section view taken along line **4—4** of FIG. **3**, showing the container as opened;

FIG. **6** is a top plan view of a self-opening container top structure according to a second embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **7** is a section view taken along line **7—7** of FIG. **6**;

FIG. **8** is a top plan view of a blank for a container end according to a third embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **9** is a top plan view of the blank as shown in FIG. **8** and installed as an end on a container;

FIG. **10** is a top plan view of the container end of FIG. **9**, moved into container opening position;

FIG. **11** is a section view taken along line **11—11** of FIG. **10**, showing the container of the third embodiment in position for container opening; and

FIG. **12** is a section view taken along line **11—11** of FIG. **10**, showing the container of the third embodiment as opened.

Stated in general terms, the self-opening container of the present invention includes a container end with an opening tab preformed therein by a suitable operation such as scoring or severing of the metal or other material from which the container end is fabricated. An opening member is associated with the container end and includes a portion which can be pressed against the preformed opening tab to force the tab from the container end and inwardly of the container without necessitating complete removal therefrom. The opening member may be movably attached to the container end to be received in a storage well before the container is to be opened, and can be moved into opening position disposed over the opening tab. The opening member can be provided with a passage aligned with the open-

ing of the opened container, for drinking or pouring the contents of the container, or may be alternatively provided with a closure portion for closure of the opened container. In another disclosed embodiment of the invention, the opening member is formed as an integral part of the container end and is folded over the chime portion of the container during manufacture to be positioned in proximate location with the preformed opening tab.

More particularly and with reference taken to FIGS. 1 and 2, there is shown generally at 15 a container such as a conventional beverage can and having a cylindrical body 16 with an end member 17. An opening tab 18, shown in broken line in FIG. 1, is defined in the end member 17 by a suitable metal-weakening operation such as scoring 19 or the like. Although the scoring in the present embodiment is depicted as being provided on the inside of the end member, that is, the side of the end member facing the interior of the container, the scoring may optionally be provided on the outside of the end member or on both sides thereof in opposed alignment. The tab 18 of the present embodiment is defined along both sides thereof by the scoring 19, and is defined along the end or bend line by scored portions 19*a* and 19*b* which are separated by an unscored segment 25. The purpose of the unscored portion 25 will become apparent below.

An opening member 20, shown detached in the exploded view of FIG. 1, is movably attached to the end member 17 by a suitable attachment device such as a rivet 21 affixed to or through the end member 17, with the rivet 21 passing through a hole 24 in the opening member 20 of sufficient size to permit the opening member to be manually movable over the end member 17. The opening member 20 has a tab covering portion including an aperture 22 defined by a surrounding rim 23. The area of the end member 17 around the rivet 21 may include a pressure release member defined by the scoring 26 partially surrounding the location whereat the rivet is affixed to the end member.

Disposed on the underside of the opening member 20, to be in confronting relation with the end member 17 of the container, are severing or parting edges 27*a* and 27*b* defining substantially the same outline as the opening tab 18 defined by the scoring 19. These parting edges 27*a*, 27*b* preferably include a point 28 situated at the end of the opening member 20 which is remote from the location of attachment of the opening member to the container. It can be seen from FIG. 1 that the outline of the opening tab 18, for the presently-disclosed embodiment of the invention, extends toward the chime 29 of the container to form a tip 30, and this tip is the portion of the outlined opening tab 18 which is first contacted by the point 28 of the parting edges 27*a*, 27*b*, as will become more apparent below.

The end member 17 has a recess 31 formed therein by a stamping operation or by any other suitable process, with the dimensions of the recess being adequate to receive at least the parting edges 27*a*, 27*b* of the opening member 20. The opening member 20 can be rotated around the rivet 21 to assume a position wherein the rim 23 and the aperture 22 of the opening member substantially overlie the recess 31, with the parting edges 27*a*, 27*b* disposed in the recess. The recess 31 may take the shape of a depression formed in the end member 17, as shown in FIG. 1, or the recess alternatively may include a sloped region 32 as shown in FIG. 2 to provide a ramp for moving the opening member 20 from the recess to a position overlying the opening tab 18.

In considering the operation of the embodiment described thus far, it will be assumed that a container 15 filled with a substance such as a beverage has been provided with a self-opening container top as described herein, with the opening member 20 as installed on the end member 17 initially positioned in or over the recess 31. In this way, any unexpected force or pressure applied to the opening member 20 during the shipping or other handling of the container cannot cause inadvertent opening of the opening tab 18. When a person desires to open this container, assuming that the end member 17 includes the pressure release member defined by the scoring 26, he first raises or lifts the opening member 20 away from its position as normally received in the recess 31, so that the bending force applied through the rivet 21 to the end member 17 causes at least part of the scoring 26 to break or tear. This breaking or tearing of the pressure release member permits the pressure stored in the container to be released and facilitates the subsequent opening of the container.

After the container pressure has been released, the opening member 20 is moved to a position as shown in FIG. 2, where the aperture 22 substantially overlies the opening tab 18 and the parting edges 27*a*, 27*b* are substantially aligned with the scoring 19. Since the scoring 19 in the disclosed embodiment is positioned beneath the end member 17, it will be appreciated that suitable alignment indicia may be printed or otherwise disposed on the end member 17 to assist in the foregoing alignment procedure. Alternatively, it will be understood that no such indicia is needed if scoring is applied to the outside of the end member 17 as discussed previously. With the opening member 20 thus aligned, the opening member is pressed downwardly to place the point 28 into contact with the tip region 30 of the opening tab 18, causing the point 28 to penetrate the scoring 19 at the tip region. This initial penetration of the end member 17, in the case of a container which lacks a pressure release member as defined by the scoring 26 in the disclosed embodiment, causes release of the built-up pressure in the container. The member 20 is then pressed downwardly further to cause the parting edges 27*a*, 27*b* to sever or part the opening tab 18 along the scoring 19 thereof.

The opening member 20 includes a tab displacing surface 33 disposed along a length of the underside of the rim 23 in lieu of the parting edge 27*a* or 27*b* extending around the remainder of the rim underside. It can be seen from FIGS. 4 and 5 that the parting edge 27*a* (as well as edge 27*b*, not shown in that Figure) extends from the point 28 in a somewhat arcuate configuration toward the container attachment end of the opening member, so that the parting edges as applied to the opening tab 18 present points of parting or shearing force travelling from the tip region 30 of the opening tab around both sides of the tab along the scoring 19 toward the bending line 34 of the opening tab. The bending line 34, which is the scored portions 19*a*, 19*b* and by the unscored segment 25, is positioned to be beneath and slightly offset toward the rivet 21, relative to the tab displacing surface 33 on the underside of the opening member 20. As the severing or parting of the opening tab 18 along the scoring 19 is completed, con-

tinuing downward pressure applied to the opening member **20** forces the tab displacing surface **33** against the tab **18** to bend the tab along the bending line **34** away from the plane of the end member **17**, as seen in FIG. **5**. Opening of the container **15** is completed when the opening tab **18** is bent or otherwise displaced a substantial distance downwardly into the container, so that the beverage or other contents of the container can readily be poured or consumed from the container opening **36** provided by the parting and downward displacement of the opening tab **18**. The opening member **20** preferably remains in position over the opening **36**, since the aperture **22** is suitable for drinking or pouring purposes and since the surrounding rim **23** protects the lips and tongue of the drinker from possible contact with the edge remaining along the scoring **19**. The opening member **20** is retained in position over the opening **36** left by the tab **18** through frictional engagement between the downwardly depending side **35** of the parting edge **27** and the adjacent side of the opening **36**. The unscored segment **25** retains the tab **18** attached to the end member **17**, although the scored portions **19***a*, **19***b* may break away during bending of the tab.

Although the self-opening container top as described thus far uses an opening tab **18** wherein the metal-severing operation is partially accomplished by the scoring **19** and is completed by force applied through the parting edges **27***a*, **27***b*, the opening tab **18** may alternatively be defined by completing the metal-severing operation along the line **19** and along the portions **19***a*, **19***b* during the manufacture of the container end member **17**. If such alternative construction is followed, the severed portion of the opening tab **18** in such case must be provided with an appropriate liquid and pressure seal by suitable techniques, such as a sealing tape or substance applied to the underside of the end member **17** to sealingly cover the severed line defining the tab **18**. The subsequent opening of the container by downwardly applied pressure to the properly positioned opening member **20** will cause the parting edges **27***a*, **27***b* to sever the tape or other sealing substance along the already-severed metal edge.

Although the use of a pressure release member as described above is effective in assisting the container opening procedure by releasing the gaseous pressure within the container before the initial penetration of the scoring **19** by the point of the opening tab, it will be understood that the pressure release member may be omitted from the end member **17**. The pressure within the container is then released upon initial penetration of the tab-defining scoring by the opening tab. Of course, substantial pressure will be encountered only in containers which are filled with carbonated beverages or the like, or are purposely pressurized. The scoring **26** which defines the pressure release member may be on either or both sides of the end member **17**.

As an alternative to the arrangement of the opening tab **18** located on the end member **17** at a position spaced apart from the recess **31**, the scoring **19** can be disposed on the end member within the recess **31** so that the opening tab **18** is defined to be on the bottom of the recess. This alternative arrangement may require some modification of the opening member **20** to relocate the parting edges **27***a*, **27***b* from the position surrounding the aperture **22** (seen in FIG. **1**) to a position surrounding the rim **23** of the opening member. When opening a container constructed according to the present alternative arrangement, the opening member is already disposed with the parting edges **27***a*, **27***b* substantially aligned with the scoring defining the opening tab; the opening member **20** is first raised to break the pressure release member (if provided), and is then pressed downwardly to accomplish initial penetration and severing or parting of the opening tab **18** along the scoring **19** thereof.

It will be apparent from the foregoing that the opening member **20** can be affixed on the end member in alignment with the opening tab **18** without disposing the opening tab within the recess **31**. Such an arrangement, however, may be somewhat more subject to accidental opening of containers, since the opening member **20** is not protected from the application of unwanted forces by being disposed within the recess **31**.

Considering next a second embodiment of the present invention as depicted in FIGS. **6** and **7**, there is shown an opening member **40** which is modified with respect to the previously-described opening member **20** by the absence of an aperture **22** extending through the portion of the opening member designed to overly and open the tab **18**. In place of the aperture **22**, the opening member **40** includes a closure **41** which is peripherially surrounded on the underside of the opening member by the parting edges **27***a*, **27***b*, including the point **28**, and by the tab displacing surface **33**. The container-opening operation of the embodiment depicted in FIGS. **6** and **7** is substantially the same as described previously herein; the severing or parting of an opening tab is caused by the point **28** and the parting edges, followed by downward bending of the tab **18** being caused by the tab displacing surface **33**. When the opening of the container is completed, the closure **41** is coincidentally received within the container opening **36**, and so the just-opened container is closed by the closure **41**. As seen in FIG. **7**, the closure **41** is disposed within a region **42** recessed below the upper surface or plane of the opening member **40**. The recessed region **42** serves the dual functions of providing additional surface features on the opening member **40** to enable this member to be readily grapsed for movement from its stored position in a recess **31** to the tab-overlying position, and of disposing the closure **41** within the opening **36** when the opening tab **18** is bent inwardly.

Once the container has been opened with the container top opening member according to FIGS. **6** and **7**, the closure **41** can be readily removed from the container opening **36** by lifting the rim **23** upwardly from the end member **17** and by moving the opening member out of alignment with container opening to another location, such as, for example, the recess **31**. The container opening **36** is now exposed for pouring or drinking from the container, and it will be understood that the opening member can be returned at will to a position permitting the closure **41** to be again inserted in the container opening for closure purposes.

A third embodiment of the self-opening container top invention is shown in FIGS. **8–12** and eliminates the need for the pivotal attachment provided in the two previously-described embodiments between the container top and the opening member. The container end member **50** is provided with an opening tab **51** defined by the underside score line **52** with the tab positioned

for opening by an opening member **53**, all such elements bearing substantial structural and operational resemblance to the corresponding elements previously described herein. However, the end member **50** and the opening member **53** are advantageously formed from a single blank of metal or another suitable material, as shown in FIG. **8**, with the score line **52** advantageously formed on either or both sides of the end member **50** by the stamping or blanking operation. The opening member **53** is formed integrally with the end member **50** by a connecting neck **54** having a notch **55** provided at one side thereof for a purpose to be described below. It will be understood that the rolled-under edge **56** surrounding a portion of the rim **57**, as well as the parting edges **58***a*, **58***b*, the tab displacing surface **59**, and the point **60** may be formed on the opening member **53** by metal working operations provided subsequently to the actual stamping or blanking of the integral end member-opening member, such structural elements being depicted in FIG. **8** for illustrative purposes.

Installation of the end member **50** on a container **63**, for example, is accomplished by folding the neck **54** over itself to place the opening member **53** more or less parallel with the end member **50.** As shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, the neck **54** is folded over the chime **64** of the container **63** when the end member **50** is attached to the container. The opening member **53** preferably is disposed as shown in FIG. **9** to be normally offset from alignment with the opening tab **51**, so that any untimely pressure or force applied to the opening member **53** will not press the parting edges **58***a*, **58***b* against the score line **52.**

When it is desired to open the container top shown in FIGS. **8–12**, the opening member **53** is moved from the offset position shown in FIG. **9** to a position as shown in FIG. **10**, to align the parting edges **58***a*, **58***b* of the opening member **53** with the score line **52** of the end member **50.** This movement of the opening member **53** is accomplished by bending the neck portion **65** which extends from the chime **64** toward the rim **57**; the notch **55** previously provided in the neck **54** facilitates the bending of the neck required in this repositioning of the opening member. The opening member **53** then is pressed downwardly to cause initial penetration of the end member **50** by the point **60**, separation of the opening tab **51** along the score line **52**, and then inward bending or displacement of the tab **51** in the manner related above with respect to the first-described embodiment of the present invention. As seen in FIG. **12**, the side **66** of the parting edge **58** extends inwardly of the container opening **68** and provides frictional retention of the opening member **53** therein. An aperture **67** disposed within the rim **57** permits the beverage in the now-opened container to be poured or consumed directly from the can.

It will be understood that the foregoing relates only to preferred embodiments of the present invention and that numerous alterations or modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. Openable container apparatus, comprising:

a container member mounted on a container and having an exterior surface;

a container opening portion at least partially defined on said container member by a region of predetermined structural weakness relative to the remainder of the container member;

opening means positioned on said container member in substantially flat alignment with said exterior surface and operative for selective movement toward said exterior surface of container member;

means positioned on said opening means in confronting relation with said exterior surface and in selective confronting alignment with said region and operative to sever said region in response to said selective movement of said opening means toward said exterior surface.

2. Apparatus as in claim **1**, further comprising:

means disposed on said opening means in confronting relation with said opening portion for contacting and displacing said severed container opening portion into the container in response to movement of said opening means toward said severed container opening portion.

3. Apparatus as in claim **2**, wherein:

said container opening portion is defined by a region of predetermined structural weakness of said container member and by a second region of substantially unchanged structural quality relative to said container member;

said means for severing selectively making severing engagement with said first region and not making severing emgagement with said second region.

4. Apparatus as in claim **3**, wherein:

said opening means includes an aperture which is at least partially surrounded by said means for severing and which is positioned by said selective movement to be in substantial alignment with the container opening provided by said displacement of said severed container opening portion into the container.

5. Apparatus as in claim **3**, wherein:

said opening means includes a closure member confronting said exterior surface and positioned by said selective movement to removably close the container opening provided by said displacement of said severed container opening portion into the container.

6. A self-opening member for a container, comprising:

a container member having an exterior surface;

said container member being at least partially severed along a predetermined path to define an openable tab portion on said container member;

a substantially flat tab opening member positioned on the container in substantially flat relation alongside said exterior surface of said container member;

severing means disposed on said tab opening member in confronting relation with said exterior surface of said container member and operative to sever said container member along said predetermined path when urged thereagainst; and

said tab opening member being positioned for selective movement toward said exterior surface of said container member to urge said severing means into severing contact with said predetermined path.

7. Apparatus as in claim **6**, wherein:

said tab opening member includes an aperture disposed in fixed relation with said severing means and substantially alignable with said openable tab portion.

8. Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein:
said tab opening member is selectively positionable on said surface member to a first position wherein said severing means is unaligned with said predetermined path and to a second position wherein said severing means is disposed in severing proximity to said predetermined path.

9. A self-opening member for a container, comprising:
a container member;
said container member being at least partially severed along a predetermined path to define an openable tab portion on said surface member;
a tab opening member operatively disposed adjacent said container member;
means disposed on said tab opening member in confronting spaced apart relation with said container member and operative to sever said container member along said predetermined path when urged thereagainst;
said tab opening member being selectively movable to urge said severing means from said spaced apart relation into severing contact with said predetermined path;
said tab opening member including an aperture disposed in fixed relation with said severing means and substantially alignable with said openable tab portion;
said tab opening member being selectively positionable on said surface member to a first position wherein said severing means is unaligned with said predetermined path and to a second position wherein said severing means is disposed in severing proximity to said predetermined path;
means disposed on said container member at a location thereon spaced apart from said tab member to define a receptacle; and
said tab opening member being selectively positionable to said first position to be at least partially received in said receptacle means.

10. A self-opening member for a container, comprising:
a container member;
said container member being at least partially severed along a predetermined path to define an openable tab portion on said surface member;
a tab opening member operatively disposed adjacent said container member;
means disposed on said tab opening member in confronting spaced apart relation with said container member and operative to sever said container member along said predetermined path when urged thereagainst;
said tab opening member being selectively movable to urge said severing means from said spaced apart relation into severing contact with said predetermined path;
said tab opening member including an aperture disposed in fixed relation with said severing means and substantially alignable with said openable tab portion;
said tab opening member being selectively positionable on said surface member to a first position wherein said severing means is unaligned with said predetermined path and to a second position wherein said severing means is disposed in severing proximity to said predetermined path; and
said tab opening member being operatively disposed adjacent said container member by means of a connective member extending between said tab opening member and an edge region of said container member.

11. Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein said tab opening member is connected to said exterior surface of said container member in said substantially flat relation at a location spaced apart from said tab portion and is operative for displacement about said location and into contact with said exterior surface in response to force exerted on the tab opening member in a direction toward the exterior surface, said means to sever being urged into said severing contact with said predetermined path in response to said displacement of the tab opening member.

12. Apparatus as in claim 6, further comprising:
a displacement surface disposed on said tab opening member in confronting relation with said exterior surface and in position to contact and to displace said severed tab portion inwardly of the container when said tab opening member is moved from said spaced apart relation into said severing contact.

13. Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein:
said tab opening member includes an aperture which is substantially aligned with said openable tab portion and which is positioned on the opening remaining in said exterior surface when said tab portion is severed.

14. Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein:
said tab opening member includes container closure means confronting said exterior surface and selectively removably insertable in closure relation with the opening which is formed in said container member by opening of said openable tab portion.

15. Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein:
said openable tab portion is defined by a predetermined path at least partially severed from said container member and by a second region of substantially unchanged structural quality relative to said container member; and
displacing means disposed on said tab opening member in confronting relation with said exterior surface to contact said openable tab portion on the severed side of said second region when said tab opening member is moved into severing contact with said predetermined path.

16. Apparatus as in claim 3, wherein:
said opening means is attached to a certain location on said container member; and
said certain location is partially defined on said container member by a second region of predetermined structural weakness relative to the remainder of the container member and said opening means is operative to sever said second region in response to selective movement of said opening means away from said container member.

17. 17 Apparatus as in claim 6, wherein:
said tab opening member being attached to a certain location on said container member;
said certain location being partially defined by a second region of predetermined structural weakness which is breakable when subjected to force applied through said tab opening member; and
said certain location being retained in connection with the remainder of said container member not-

withstanding the occurrence of said breakage of said second region.

18. Apparatus as in claim **9** wherein:

said tab opening member is movably attached to said container member to be selectably positionable to said first and second positions.

19. Apparatus as in claim **10,** wherein:

said connective member is aligned to position said tab opening member in said first position; and

said connective member is yieldable to enable said tab opening member to be selectively moved to said second position.

20. Apparatus as in claim **19,** wherein:

said container member, said tab opening member, and said connective member are formed of a unitary piece of material.

21. Apparatus as in claim **1,** wherein said means for severing comprises point means operative to make initial severing penetration at a predetermined location of initial contact on said region in response to initial selective movement of said opening means, and further comprises edge means extending from said point means and operative for severing engagement of said region from said predetermined location progressively along the remainder of said region in response to further selective movement of said opening means.

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