Dec. 24, 1963 J. E. FARRELL 3,115,251

PLATE AND CUP HOLDER

Filed May 16, 1961

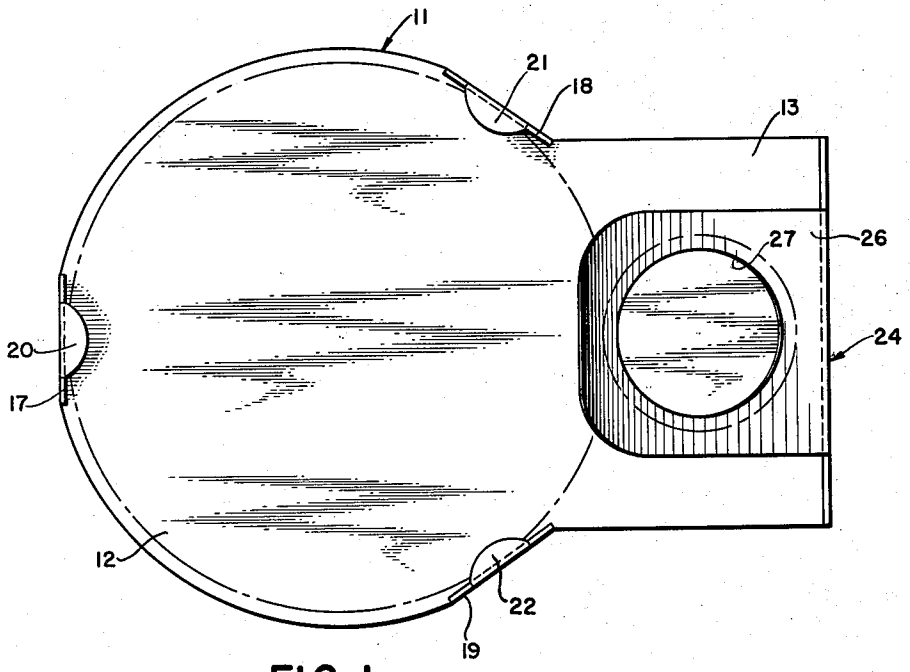

FIG. 1.

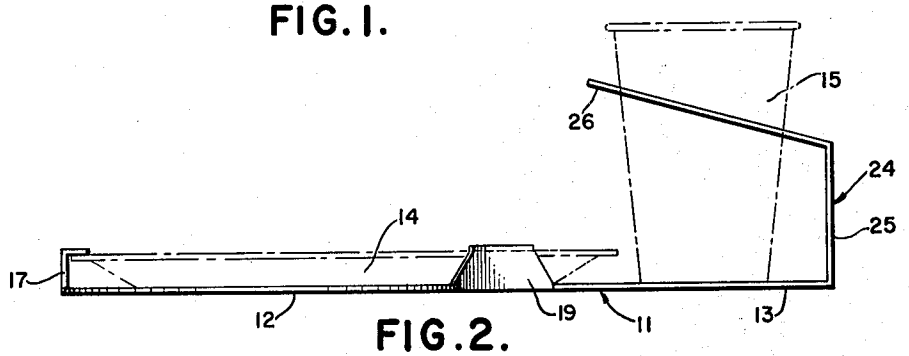

FIG. 2.

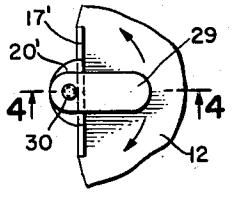

FIG. 3.

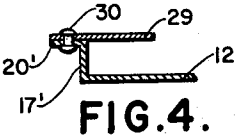

FIG. 4.

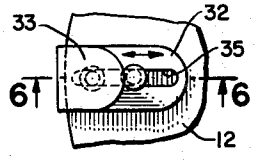

FIG. 5.

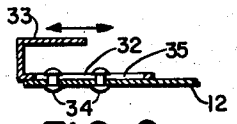

FIG. 6.

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PLATE AND CUP HOLDER

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This invention relates to holders for plates and cups and is particularly concerned with devices of this type which are adapted for use with lightweight, disposable cups and plates.

As is well known to those who attend picnics or who frequently eat and drink outdoors, empty paper cups and plates are so light that they are readily displaced even by a light breeze. Attempting to set a table outdoors is often very frustrating since to prevent its blowing away each cup and plate must be either held or weighted down. Holding is impractical and the objects used for such weighting interfere with serving the plates or pouring liquids into the cups.

It is the object of the present invention to provide a holder which will restrain a paper plate and a paper cup against upsetting or displacement yet leave them in condition for receiving, respectively, food and liquids.

Another object of the invention is to provide a holder of the character described which is light in weight and convenient to use.

A further object of the invention is to provide a holder of the character described which is inexpensive to produce and durable.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of the preferred embodiment of a plate and cup holder according to the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a front elevational view of the holder shown in FIGURE 1 with representations of a cup and plate shown in broken lines;

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary view showing a modification;

FIGURE 4 is a fragmentary sectional view taken on line 4—4 of FIGURE 3;

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary view showing another modification; and

FIGURE 6 is a fragmentary sectional view taken on line 6—6 of FIGURE 5.

As illustrated, the novel holder of the present invention comprises a base **11** having a generally round portion **12** for supporting a plate **14** and a generally rectangular portion **13** adapted to support a cup or glass **15**. Spaced around the periphery of the round portion **12** of the base **11** are a plurality of plate retainers. These retainers, which are preferably integral with the base **11**, comprise upwardly extending lugs **17**, **18**, **19** having at their upper ends inwardly projecting flanges or tabs **20**, **21**, **22**. As will be seen from the drawings these tabs are adapted to extend over the edge of a plate **14**.

At the end of the base **11** opposite the round portion **12** a cup rack **24** is provided. This is formed by a generally rectangular flange the inner portion **25** of which extends upwardly from the base with a bend intermediate its ends so that the outer portion **26** thereof extends inwardly over the base portion **13** but also extends upwardly at an angle less than 45° with respect to the base. In this outer portion is provided a hole or orifice **27** adapted to receive a cup or glass.

In using the holder described above, a paper plate may be inserted and held therein for use by merely pushing it under the two tabs **21** and **22** of the retainers nearest the cup rack and deforming the side of the plate

adjacent tab **20** of the other retainer sufficiently to place the edge of the plate under the latter. The cup, of course, is merely placed in the orifice or hole **27** of the cup rack **24** and it will, if tall enough, rest on the base **11**. After use, both the cup and plate may be easily removed.

It will be evident that empty cups and plates resting in holders according to the present invention will not easily be blown away even when empty since they will be restrained by weight of the holders and that when full they are so restrained as to prevent overturning even when the holder is set on an uneven surface since their centers of gravity are inside the periphery of the base of the holder. It will further be observed that the holder permits both a plate and cup to be carried by one hand and also, since the plate supporting portion extends under the entire bottom of the plate, prevents sagging of the plate.

Preferably, plate and cup holders according to the present invention are formed of sheet metal, aluminum being favored since it is non-rusting. As shown in FIGURES 1 and 2, the holder is unitary and can be produced by merely cutting out a blank and bending the plate retainers and the cup rack as shown. Alternatively, the holders could be formed from rigid or semi-rigid sheet plastic material in the same way. However, if desired, they may also be made of molded plastic material, it being understood that in using some materials the plate retainers and cup rack cannot be formed integrally with the base but must be formed separately and even, perhaps, made from still another material.

Obviously, there is a considerable variation in the size of cups that can be used with a holder of a specific size. Also, of course, some variations in plate diameter with a specific holder is permitted since the tabs of the plate retainers extend inwardly over the edge of the plate a substantial distance. It should be understood that throughout this description and in the accompanying claims the term "plate" is used broadly to include plates, saucers, platters and other disc-like dishes and the term "cup" is intended to include any drinking utensil such as cups, tumblers, glasses, goblets and bottles. It will also be obvious that an even greater variation in side of plates and cups may be accommodated by varying the size of the holder as needed or desired.

Cups used with the present novel holder may be formed of paper, very thin plastic, or other inexpensive material, or may be of glass, metal, or the like and be intended for reuse. Similarly, either inexpensive disposable plates or permanent ones, such as those of glass or china may be used with the present holder. Where rigid plates are used a modified form of holder is preferred since some difficulty may be encountered in inserting a rigid plate in the form shown in FIGURES 1 and 2.

FIGURES 3 and 4 show one possible modification which facilitates the use of rigid plates. There the tab **20'** of the lug **17'** is bent outwardly rather than inwardly and a latch **29**, which may be formed of metal or other suitable material, is pivotally attached to the tab as by a rivet **30**. By swinging the latch **29** to one side a rigid plate may easily be inserted in the holder and retained therein by swinging the latch back into the position shown.

FIGURES 5 and 6 show another possible modification which not only permits the use of rigid plates, but also permits the use of plates substantially larger than the diameter of the round portion of the base. In these figures a sliding plate retainer, comprising a base **32** and an upwardly and inwardly bent hook portion **33**, which is preferably formed of a single bent piece of sheet metal, is provided instead of the lug **17** and tab **18** shown in FIGURES 1 and 2. The base **32** of the retainer is slidably secured as by rivets **34** passing through the radial

slot 35 in the base 32 to the portion 12 of the holder base 11 adjacent the edge thereof. By sliding the retainer out large diameter plates may be inserted in the holder with tabs 21 and 22 extending over the plate edge at two points and the hook portion 33 holding the plate edge at a third point.

As will be apparent from the foregoing description, plate and cup holders constructed in accordance with the present invention are very convenient to use and solve many problems associated with the use of lightweight, disposable plates and cups. They are light in weight and easily stored, particularly since the sloped upper portion of the cup rack permits nesting of several holders together.

While a number of modifications of the preferred form have been described above, it will be understood that many other variations and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit of the invention. Thus, for example, holders embodying the principles of the invention may be produced for use with square or other shaped plates and/or cups or bottles. Also a different number of plate retainers may be used as desired and any or all of such retainers may be adjustable. Further, if desired, the holder may be made larger to accommodate a plurality of plates and/or cups, suitable rearrangement of the locations of the plate retainers and the cup rack being made and additional retainers and/or racks being provided as necessary. In all such modifications the base of the holder should extend under a major portion of the plate bottom to provide adequate support.

I claim:

1. A plate and cup holder comprising a base including a plate-supporting portion and a cup-supporting portion

integral with and extending laterally from said plate-supporting portion, said plate supporting portion being substantially flat and of such size as to extend under a major portion of the bottom of a plate and having a plurality of plate-retaining members extending upwardly therefrom at spaced intervals around its periphery, and said cup-supporting portion having a cup rack which has substantially all of its area offset from said plate-supporting portion and comprises a member extending upwardly and inwardly from the edge of said portion, said member having an orifice therein adapted to receive a cup.

2. A plate and cup holder as set forth in claim 1 in which at least one of said plate retaining members is pivotally movable around a substantially vertical axis.

3. A plate and cup holder as set forth in claim 1 in which at least one of said plate retaining members is movable outwardly.

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