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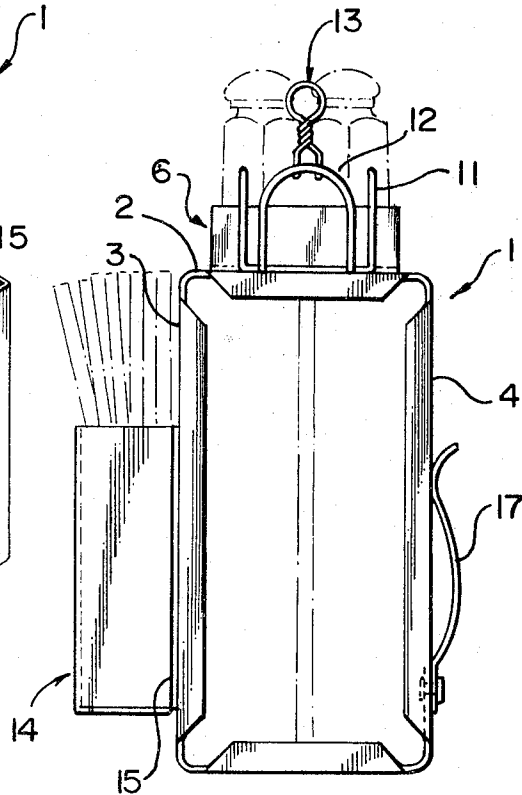
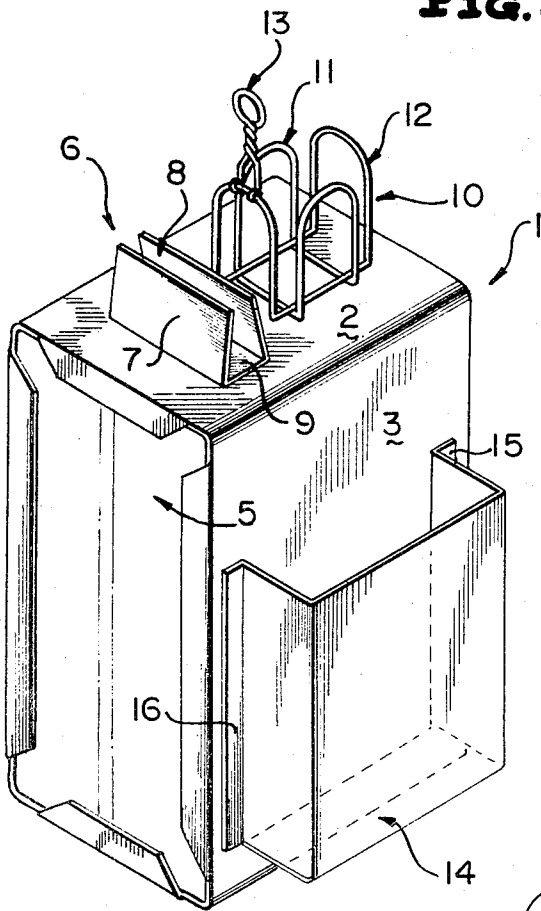
I. J. KOPPELMAN

3,442,393

NAPKIN AND CONDIMENT HOLDER

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**FIG. 1**



**FIG. 2**

INVENTOR  
IRVIN J. KOPPELMAN

BY *Harwitz & Rose*

ATTORNEYS

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3,442,393

**NAPKIN AND CONDIMENT HOLDER**  
 Irvin Jerome Koppelman, 504 W. College Ave.,  
 Salisbury, Md. 21801

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2 Claims

The present invention relates to holders for dispensing devices, and particularly to a unitary structure adapted to hold napkins and other dining table accessories.

In the operation of many commercial eating establishments, customer convenience requires that many table accessories, such as napkin dispensers, salt and pepper shakers, sugar dispensers, various condiment dispensers, drinking straws, menus, and the like, be kept on the tables or counters. Certain problems have developed as a result of the presence of such a large number of items on the tables. For example, the large amount of table space taken up by these accessories reduces the space available for dishes, thereby reducing the number of customers that can be comfortably accommodated for a given table or counter area. In addition, cleaning tables becomes quite time-consuming due to the many accessories which have to be shifted back and forth as various portions of the table or counter are cleaned. Further, repeated and hurried movement of so many relatively small objects increases the tendency towards droppage and breakage.

The present invention solves these and other associated problems by providing a unitary structure for holding a large number of table or counter accessories, retaining them within a minimal table area, and enabling to be moved as a unit.

It is an object of this invention to provide a unitary structure for holding a plurality of dining table accessories in order to minimize the table space required by these accessories.

It is another object of this invention to provide a holder for dining table accessories which allows them to be conveniently handled.

It is still a further object of this invention to make maximum use of the walls of a napkin dispenser for the purpose of securing holding and dispensing means thereto.

The above and still further objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description of one specific embodiment thereof, especially when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a view in perspective of a preferred embodiment of the invention; and

FIGURE 2 is a view in rear elevation of the structure of FIGURE 1.

Referring now to FIGURE 1 of the accompanying drawings, there is illustrated a frame 1, representing a napkin holder-dispenser. While a particular napkin holder-dispenser is depicted for illustration purposes, the invention is not to be construed as limited thereto, but rather to encompass any functionally equivalent device. Frame 1 is preferably made of relatively heavy gauge and durable metal to enable it to withstand rough handling over long periods of time. A top wall 2 and a bottom wall (not illustrated) join vertical front wall 3 and vertical rear wall 4 (FIGURE 2) so as to form a unitary structure. Side 5 of the frame and its opposing side (not illustrated) are preferably appropriately opened to permit insertion and withdrawal of folded paper napkins in a manner that is well known.

As illustrated in the embodiment depicted in FIGURE 1, top wall 2 supports a U-shaped channel bracket 6 which is made of a flexible metal or plastic material.

Base 9 of the bracket is secured to wall 2 by suitable means. Sides 7 and 8 of the bracket extend upwardly from the base in a slightly converging attitude. The function of bracket 6 is to hold salt and pepper shakers, or similar articles. Shakers which are no wider than base 9 yet wider than the distance between the uppermost ends of sides 7 and 8 will be held in place by the compressive force exerted by flexible sides 7 and 8.

Top wall 2 also supports packet container 10 which is comprised of two thin metal bars, 11 and 12, each in the shape of a flattened ellipse. The two most remote opposite ends of each bar are bent upwards at a 90° angle to form U-shaped objects, the bases of which are both co-planar and perpendicular with respect to each other. The vertical sides of each U-shaped object are parallel to one another and perpendicular to the sides of the other U-shaped object. The two bars, 11 and 12, are secured together at their bases, which are also secured to top wall 2 of the overall frame. In this manner, the two bars form a four-sided container, 10, with the four sides comprising the vertical sides of the U-shaped objects. A handle 13 of any convenient size and shape is secured to the centrally located side of container 10, enabling the entire frame to be lifted thereby.

While packet container 10 has been described and illustrated for a specific embodiment, it is within the scope of this invention that a container of any appropriate size or shape may be used as long as it is suitable for supporting sugar or condiment packets.

Secured to front wall 3 of frame 1 is a receptacle 14, suitable for drinking straws and the like. Receptacle 14 is a rectangular box-shaped structure of light-weight metal or plastic. It is open at the top and one of its four vertical sides comprises a portion of front wall 3 of frame 1. Shoulders 15 and 16 may be provided and extend from the two opposing sides of the receptacle that are adjacent to front wall 3, these shoulders being secured to the wall 3 by any appropriate means. Drinking straws may be inserted and removed through the open top of the receptacle, and are supported by the bottom and four sides. The shoulders 15 and 16 are provided where receptacle 14 is to be riveted to the frame. If a molded unit is provided or receptacle 14 is welded to the frame, the shoulders 15 and 16 are eliminated and the size of the receptacle may be increased to the edges of the frame. Also the bottom of the receptacle should be perforated to conform with the regulations of various health departments.

If desired, receptacle 14 may be divided into a number of compartments which may be utilized for holding a variety of articles such as swizzle sticks, silverware, and the like.

Means are provided in conjunction with rear wall 4 of frame 1 to support items such as menus, printed advertisements, and the like. The above is accomplished by securing resilient member 17 to rear wall 4 so as to provide a tensioned clamp between the member and the wall. One method of doing this is illustrated in U.S. Patent No. 2,094,051, issued to E. Zakos on Sept. 28, 1937.

Any similar arrangement is adequate for purposes of this invention, so long as the menus may be secured against rear wall 4 by member 17 and can thus be shifted along the table with frame 1.

Many advantages of the present invention become readily apparent from reading the above description. For example, with a large number of accessories supported by a single frame, movement of the accessories is greatly facilitated. In addition, the handle 13 attached to the frame enables the frame to be moved without having the accessories individually handled. This is advantageous

since many times the person moving the table accessories will have wet and greasy hands.

It should also be apparent that many modifications can be made to the disclosed device without departing from the spirit of the invention. Illustratively, particular locations of the accessories on the frame can be varied in accordance with individual needs. Moreover, a plurality of packet containers can be used instead of only the one illustrated, thereby enabling the device to hold individual packets of mustard, catsup, salt, pepper, or any condiment which is available in packets. Powdered coffee-creamers offer a still further possibility in this regard. These and other apparent modifications are deemed within the scope of this invention.

The construction described above is primarily related to a metallic unit. For the home market, cook-outs, picnics, etc. a plastic unit of tough high-impact resistant material may be provided. Such a unit could be a single molded piece or several pieces bonded to one another.

While I have described and illustrated one specific embodiment of my invention, it will be clear that variation of the details of construction which are specifically illustrated and described may be resorted to without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A unitary structure for holding and dispensing a plurality of dining table accessories comprising:
  - a rigid frame having unitary, vertical front and rear walls, top and bottom walls joining said vertical walls and at least one sidewall having an opening for receiving and dispensing napkins;
  - a holder comprising an elongated clip of resilient material having a base and two side members of generally U-shaped cross section with said side members extending from said base member and curved toward one another, the spacing between walls of said clip adjacent said base being at least as wide as a member to be held thereby;

said clip being secured to said top wall of said frame; a further holder comprising a pair of U-shaped wire members disposed generally perpendicular to one another and defining a generally rectangular structure with an open top for receiving small packets of goods, said further holder being secured to the top of said frame; and

at least one further member secured to and defining with a vertical wall of said frame a receptacle for paper and like products;

a generally flat plate of resilient material secured to a further wall of said frame adjacent one end of said plate and having the other end of said plate in contact with said further wall.

2. The combination according to claim 1 further comprising a handle secured to an upper end of that one of said U-shaped wire members adjacent the center of said top of said frame.

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35 CHANCELLOR E. HARRIS, *Primary Examiner.*

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211—50, 72, 74, 106; 312—280