PATENTS EXAMINATION BOARD

Subject: The Drafting of Patent Specifications - Paper ~~2~~ 1

Date: 6 July 2022

Time: 09h00 - 13h00 (although candidates requiring extra time are entitled to an additional two hours)

Examiners: L Cilliers
V Williams

Moderator: J D Whittaker

Question 1

Your client, Dame Washalot, hands you the following description and drawings of her new "Combo" dish dryer rack.

Dish dryer racks are commonly used for holding plates, bowls, cups, cutlery and kitchen utensils as they dry after washing. An example of such a dryer rack is shown in figure A (which, for the purposes of this exam, is to be considered by the candidates as being the only prior art). Typically, the dryer rack is placed on a drip tray which extends from an integrally formed sink as shown in figure B. The drip tray is sloped towards the sink so as to channel water received from the dryer rack into the sink. With space constraints in modern kitchens becoming more and more prevalent, and with a premium being placed on more usable flat counter space, kitchen designers have started using sinks as shown in figure C. This type of sink does not have the "old fashioned" integrally formed drip tray. As such, water dripping from dishes in a conventional dish rack used with this type of sink does not drain into the sink, and instead collects on the countertop adjacent the sink.

The Combo dish dryer rack which I have invented addresses this problem by providing a dish rack with its own drip tray for draining water directly into a sink. The Combo is illustrated below in a perspective view in figure 1 and in exploded perspective views in figures 2 and 3 of the drawings.

As can be seen, the Combo 10 includes a wire frame 12, a tray 14, a ramp 16 and a spout 18. The wire frame 12 acts as a rack portion, and can be made of a metal wire frame that includes a wire frame base 20 and four wire frame walls 22, 24, 26, 28.

Four legs 30, 32, 34, 36 are formed from the wire frame 12 and function to elevate the wire frame base 20 so that a trough 40 and the ramp 16 can be fitted below the wire frame base 20. The wire frame base 20 defines an opening 38 for receiving the trough 40 centrally of the frame 12 when the tray 14 is rested on top of the wire frame base 20. The tray 14 has a plurality of dividing ridges 42 on a plate 50 for holding plates (not shown) and similar items. A peripheral ridge 44 extends around the four sides of the tray 14, and channels 46 and 48 extend between the ridges 42 away from the peripheral ridge 44. The plate 50 is slanted or angled downwardly towards the trough 40 so that water collected on the plate 50 flows into the trough through the channels 46 and 48, and a plurality of dividing walls 52 extend downwardly in the trough 40, as shown, for guiding water onto the ramp 16.

The ramp 16 is attached to the bottom of the trough 40 so that all the water flowing through the trough 40 is collected on this ramp. The ramp 16 has a generally concave cross-section and is angled downwardly from a rear end 60 to a front end 62. One or more water outlets 64 are provided at the front end 62 of the ramp 16, and a pair of opposing rails 66 are provided at the bottom of the front end of the ramp.

The spout 18 is removably secured to the ramp 16, adjacent the outlets 64. This spout includes a concave body 68 surrounded by a generally U-shaped border 70, and extends from a V-shaped notch 74 at a rear end of the spout to a straight, discharge edge 72 at a front end of the spout. The concave body 68 is angled so that water from the outlets 64 flows towards the straight edge 72 for discharge into a kitchen sink (not shown). The border plate 70 is sized and configured for sliding engagement with the opposing rails 66 at the bottom of the ramp 16 so that the spout 18 may be located below the water outlets 64. To disengage the spout 18 from the ramp 16, a user merely grips the concave body 68 and pulls the spout 18 off the rails 66.

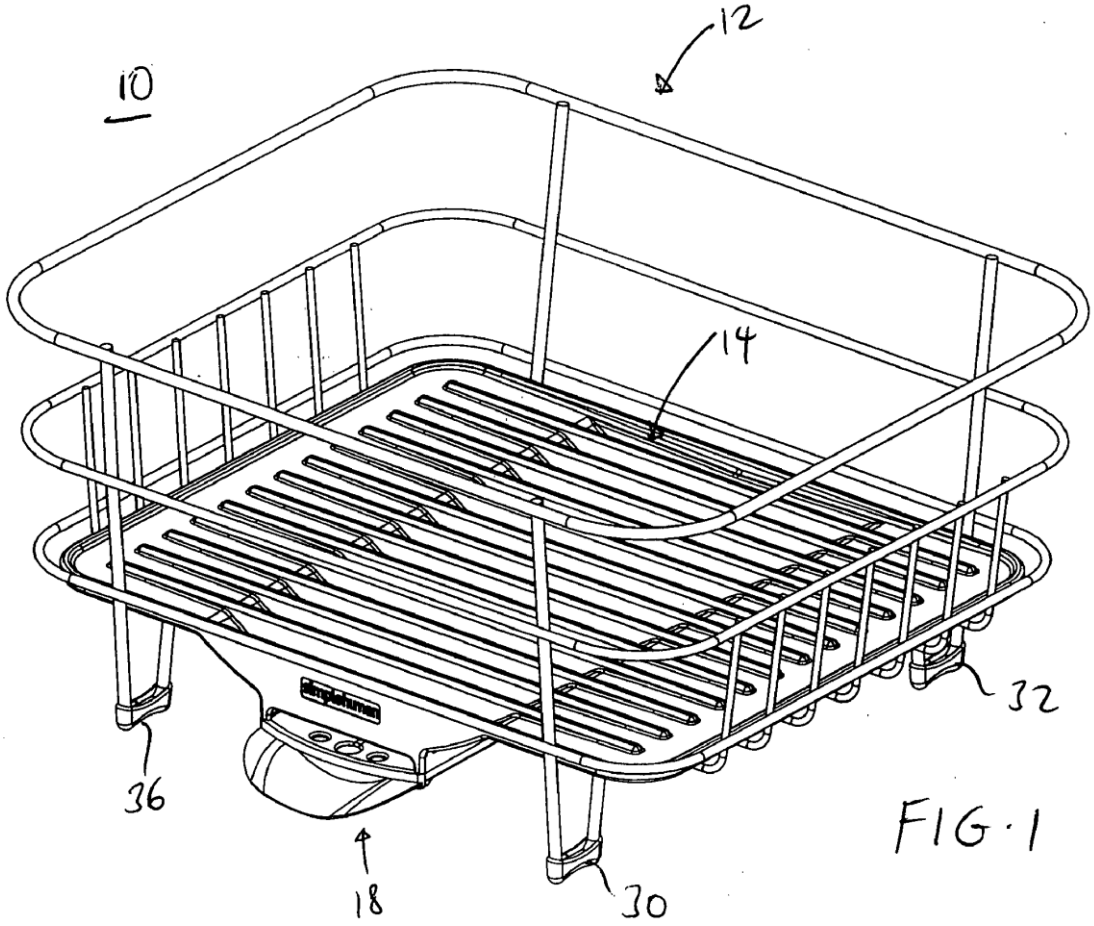
In use, the ramp 16 is secured to the bottom of the trough 40 and the spout 18 is secured to the front end 62 of the ramp 16 by sliding the spout into the rails 66. The tray 14, with the ramp 16 and the spout 18, is then placed inside the wire frame 12 so as to extend through the opening 38. The Combo 10 may then be placed adjacent a kitchen sink of the type shown in Figure C, with the edge 72 of the spout 18 directed towards and over the kitchen sink. When washed dishes and other items are placed onto the tray 14, water from these dishes and other items drips onto the plate 50, from where it flows through the trough 40 onto the ramp 16, and into the kitchen sink via the water outlets 64 and the spout 18, as indicated by the arrows in figure 3 of the drawings.

The candidate is required to identify the inventive feature(s) of the invention, and to draft up to three claims to protect the above invention.

Figure A

Figure B

Figure C



FIG·1

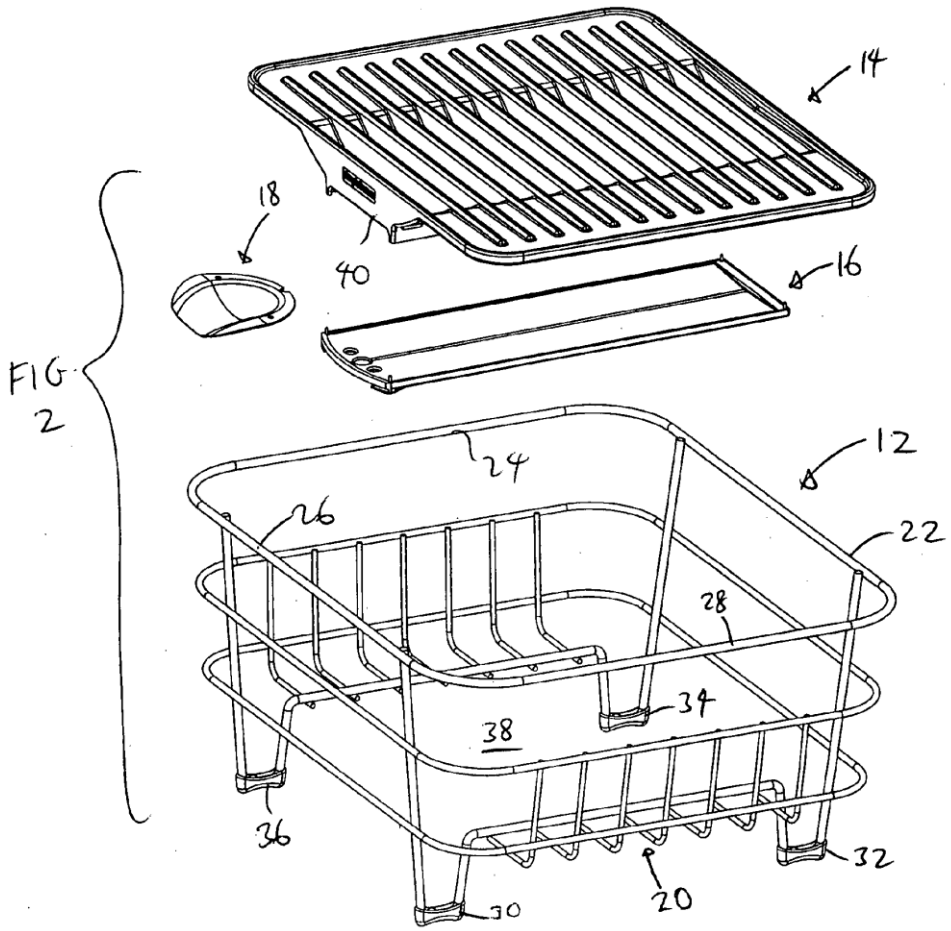
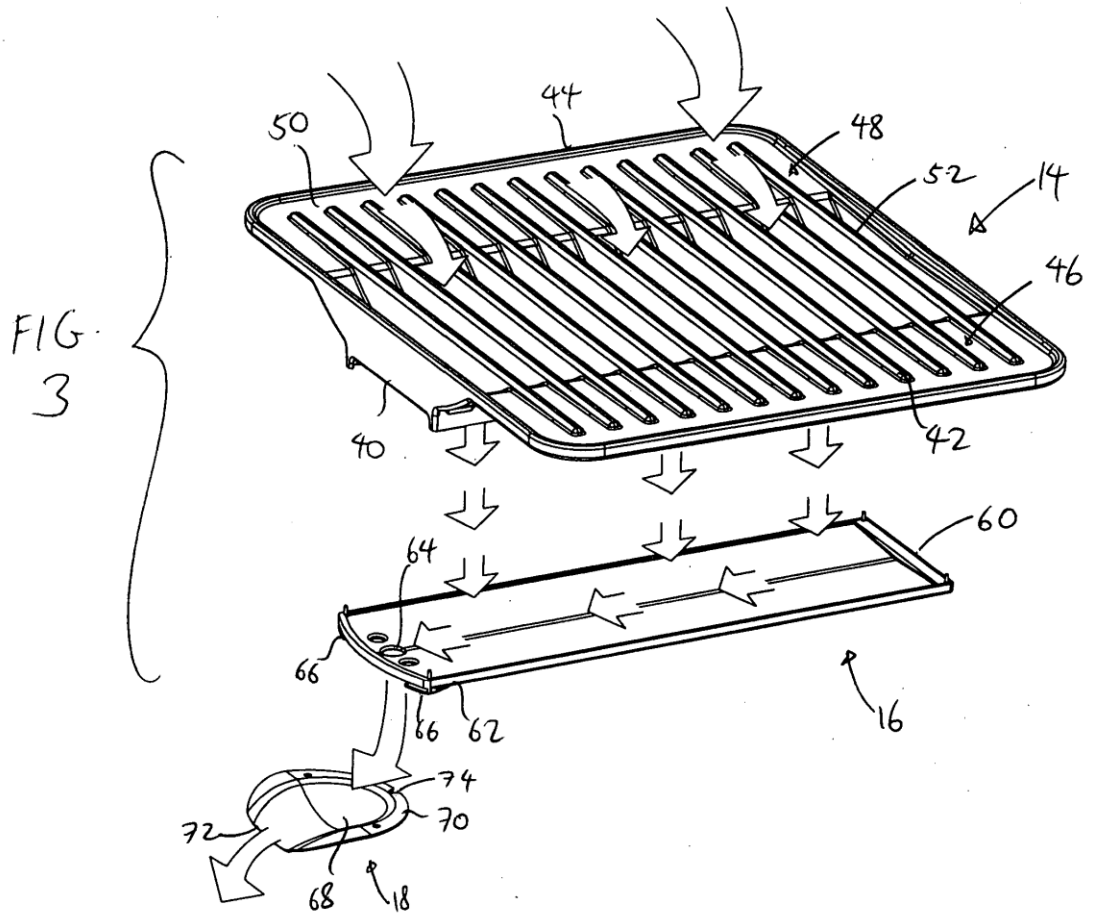


FIG 2

FIG. 3



Question 2

A couple of months later, Dame Washalot brings you her latest dryer rack which she calls the "Suspender". She also hands you a detailed description and drawings of various embodiments of her latest invention, which appear below. Dame Washalot asks you to prepare a set of claims based on the description, and to take the patent application describing her Combo invention and the prior art described therein into account when drafting the claims.

Many kitchen utensils and implements are used in and around a kitchen sink. Flatware (including silverware), dishes, glassware, pots, and pans are often rinsed or washed in the sink and allowed to dry on a dish rack placed next to the sink. Food may be chopped next to a sink, and remnants from the chopping may end up in the sink. Also, foods such as fruits, vegetables, and pasta, may be rinsed or drained from a pot in the sink, and dirty dishes are often placed in the bottom of a sink to be rinsed or washed at a later time. Consequently, dirty or unsavory items and food remnants may be found at the bottom of the sink, and it is preferable to keep these away from kitchen utensils for use in and around the sink.

It is an object of my invention to provide an apparatus for suspending items, such as kitchen utensil for use in and around a sink, above the bottom of the sink.

Different versions of my invention are illustrated in the drawings below. FIG. 1 is a perspective view of my over-the-sink dryer rack (my Suspender); FIG. 1A is a cross-sectional view of a portion of my Suspender as illustrated in FIG.1; FIG. 1B is a perspective view of a portion of a second version of my Suspender; FIG. 1C is a perspective view of a portion of a third version of my Suspender; FIG. 2 is a top view of a fourth version of my Suspender located over a sink; FIG. 4A is a perspective view of a fifth version of my Suspender; and FIG. 5 is a top view of the fifth version of my Suspender located over a sink.

Referring to FIG. 1, an over-the-sink dryer rack 8 includes a utensil suspender part 10 and a hooking part 30. The suspender part 10 has a lower support surface 12 and at least one upper edge defining an upper rim 14. The hooking part 30 comprises a hook member 32 extending from the upper rim 14, preferably in a plane substantially parallel with the plane of the upper rim. The hook member 32 has an inner arcuate surface 34 defining a faucet contact surface for engaging the back of a sink faucet 52.

In the version shown in FIG. 1, the suspender part 10 comprises a shelf member having a top surface 16, and first and second ends 20a, 20b. The hooking part 30 extends outwardly from the first end 20a of the shelf member, and the support surface 12 is proximal the second end 20b. When the hook member 32 is disposed on the sink faucet

52, as shown in FIG. 1, the support surface 12 rests against a top edge 54 of a sink 50 and/or against a portion of a sink counter 55, and thereby supports the suspender part 10 above the bottom surface of the sink 50.

The rack 8 is a space-saver in that various kitchen implements may be disposed on, or used with, the suspender part 10. For example, in FIG. 1, three substantially semi-circular projections 22a, 22b, 22c, are seen to extend upwardly from the top surface 16 of the suspender part 10 to define a dish rack. Also shown on the top surface 16 of the suspender part 10 is a container 24 for holding cutlery, and a cutting board 26 for chopping food. The circular projections 22a, 22b, 22c, the container 24 and the cutting board 26 may be detachable from the suspender part 10 or they may be formed integrally with it. When detachable, a ridge 28 may extend around all or part of the periphery of the rack 8 for holding these components in place. For example, FIG. 1A shows how the ridge 28 may define a recess 28a for receiving a foot 29 of one of the detachable circular projections 22. The suspender part 10 also includes apertures 25 extending through it from the top surface 16 so that water from the sink faucet 52 may pass through the suspender part 10 into the sink below. The apertures 25 may also be used as attachments points. For example, a flatware container (not shown) may be attached to the suspender part 10 by engaging a hook on the container in one of the apertures 25.

FIGS. 1B and 1C illustrated portions of two further versions of my Suspender. As can be seen, the hooking part 30 may be arranged so that the hook member on the hooking part 30 is generally aligned with the first end 20a of the shelf member (as shown in FIG. 1B), or the hooking part 30 may be arranged so that the hook member on the hooking part 30 is offset relative to the first end 20a of the shelf member (as shown in FIG. 1C).

A further version of my Suspender is illustrated in FIG. 2 of the drawings. In this version, the shelf member includes a hinge 60 so that the rack may be reduced in size for storage when not in use. The rack is movable relative to the sink 50 (for example in the direction of the arrow M) so as to provide access to different areas of the sink below the rack. In this way, items located in the sink 50 below the rack may be accessed without having to completely remove the rack from the sink.

FIGS. 4A and 5 illustrate yet a further version of my Suspender which includes a triangular-shaped suspender part 10. FIG. 4A shows semi-circular projections 22a, 22b, 22c extending upwardly from the top surface of the suspender part 10 to define a dish rack. The triangular-shaped suspender part 10 is designed to rest on sink edges proximal a corner 58 of the sink (see FIG. 5). In this version, the suspender part 10 has three end portions 20c, 20d, 20e, and the support surface 12 is disposed along the end portions 20d and 20e which converge towards the vertex 68 of the triangular-shaped suspender part 10.

The candidate is required to identify the inventive feature(s) of the invention, and to draft up to three claims to protect the above invention.

FIG. 1

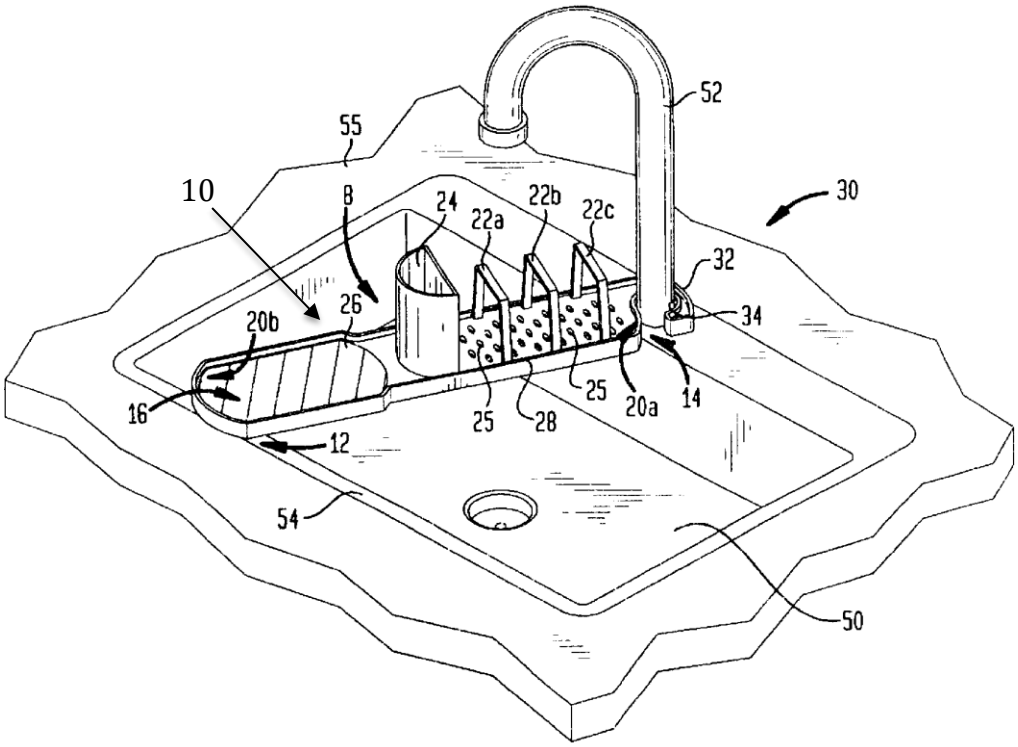


FIG. 1A

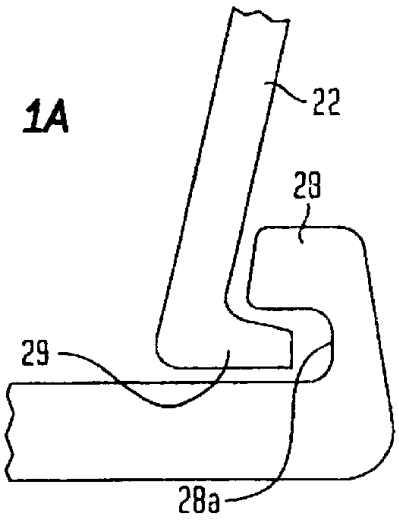


FIG. 1B

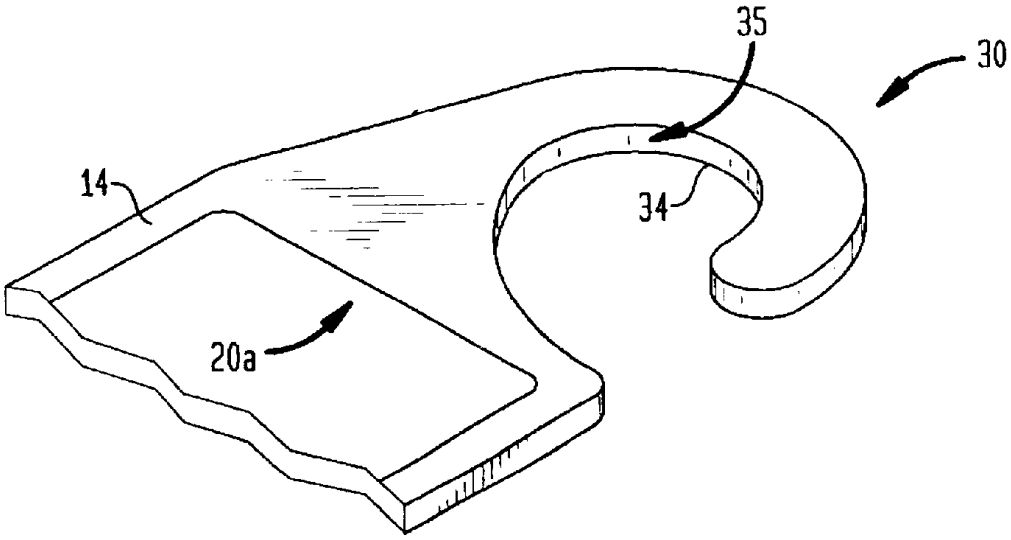


FIG. 1C

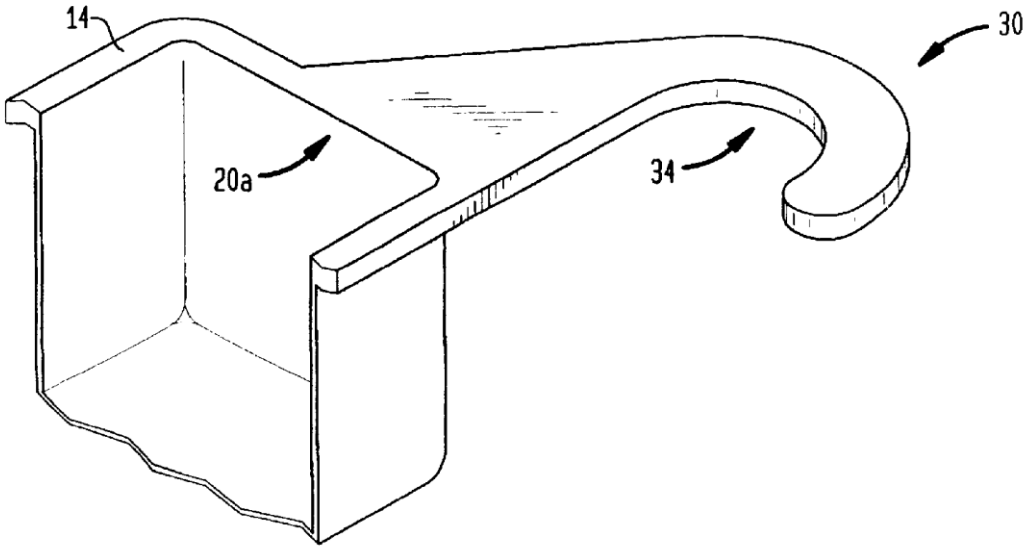


FIG. 2

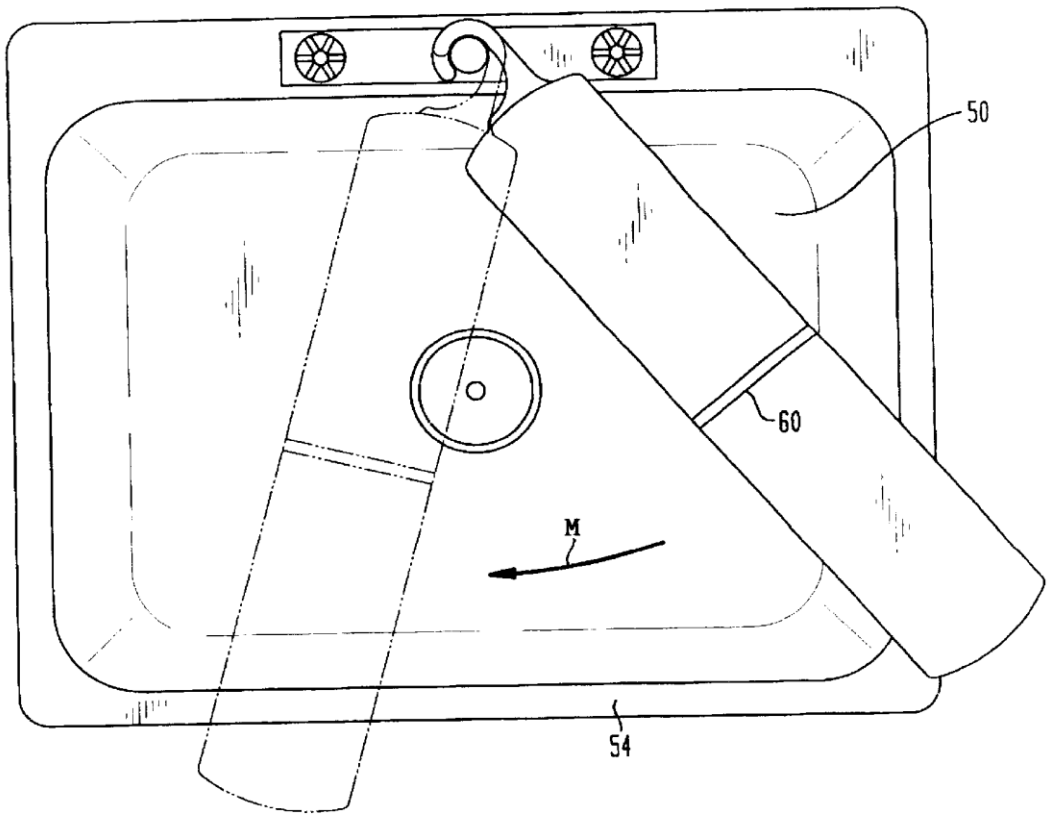


FIG. 4A

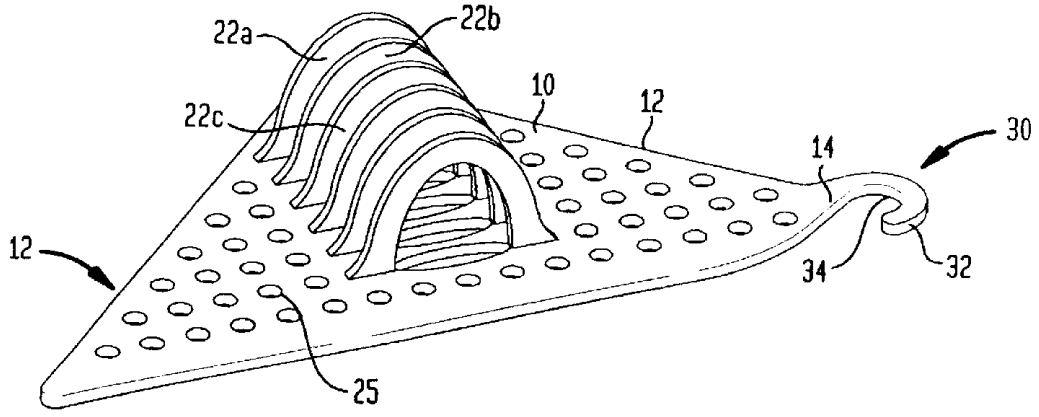


FIG. 5