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(54) **TABLEWARE DEVICE FOR EFFICIENT CONSUMPTION OF COOKIES AND MILK**

GESCHIRRVORRICHTUNG ZUM EFFIZIENTEN KONSUM VON KEKSEN UND MILCH

DISPOSITIF DE VAISSELLE POUR LA CONSOMMATION EFFICACE DE BISCUITS ET DE LAIT

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US-A1- 2012 325 831**

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## Description

### FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is directed to an article of tableware for personal consumption of food items soaked in fluid.

### BACKGROUND

[0002] This specification concerns a device for soaking multiples of a food item of specific size in a fluid for immediate human consumption. The qualifier, "of specific size", means the food item is normally consumed one at a time and is produced with consistency in its dimensions. To provide a familiar context for the reader, the terms "cookie" and "milk" are used throughout this specification as proxies for the food item of specific size and the fluid. Wherever "cookie" or "milk" appears, it should be understood to mean "food item of specific size" or "fluid", respectively. The specific size may differ from one embodiment to another and is referenced as the "intended cookie size".

[0003] The vessel traditionally used to eat cookies soaked in milk is the cup. Milk is held in the cup, and the cookie is introduced to the milk. One common method is for the user to hold the cookie while dipping it in the milk. Another method, which provides more thorough soaking of the cookie, is for the user to place the cookie in the milk and scoop it out with a spoon once it has absorbed the requisite amount of milk. Each thoroughly soaked cookie is then eaten, and the next cookie is placed into the cup. This method requires the user to wait for each cookie to be thoroughly soaked and removed from the cup before the next cookie is introduced. If the user introduces a second cookie while a first cookie is still soaking, then the user is faced with the challenge of removing the first cookie from beneath the second cookie. Inserting the second cookie beneath the first cookie is not practical, because buoyancy of the second cookie tends to lift the first cookie out of the milk. Orienting cookies vertically and placing them side by side in the cup causes uneven saturation. The time inefficiency inherent in eating cookies soaked with milk in a cup has not been effectively addressed in the prior art.

[0004] Another type of vessel that can be used to eat cookies and milk is a bowl. It allows cookies to be simultaneously soaked, but it has other disadvantages. A bowl requires a larger quantity of milk to achieve an adequate milk depth. While the cookies may be conveniently removed from the bowl, doing it in sequence requires tracking the location of each cookie in the bowl. As the milk depth becomes low, the user must lift one side of the bowl in an awkward and generally not very effective effort to give full milk exposure to the cookies.

[0005] Prior inventions relating to the immediate consumption of food items soaked in fluid can be divided into three categories: utensils which hold cookies as they are

dipped in milk, bowls with separation features, and bowls with consolidation features.

[0006] With respect to utensils that hold cookies as they are dipped in milk, their focus is on holding and controlling the cookies and are silent with respect to the features of the vessel that holds the milk.

[0007] Bowls with separation features are directed toward eating granular food items in fluid, "granular" meaning that it is normally scooped into the mouth in multiples. For example, US Patent Application 2011/0284119 discloses a cereal bowl which includes a main bowl portion and an ancillary portion or trough integral with the side of the bowl that is shaped to receive cereal or other food as a staging location before the food is maneuvered into the main bowl portion. UK Patent application 2 265 816 describes a similar cereal bowl containing a transverse wall to separate the cereal part and the milk part. US Patent 2 207 417 also discloses a cereal bowl comprising a bowl portion and a cereal receiving hopper portion from which cereals are moved to the bowl portion containing milk. Their stated objective is to keep the food item dry until the user is ready to mix it with the fluid, not to control the soaking process. They all have varying degrees of the disadvantages described above for bowls.

[0008] Bowls with consolidation features are directed toward controlling small quantities of granular food items, such as peas or corn. They are not effective in overcoming the disadvantages of bowls with respect to soaking of cookies in milk.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] My device and its method of use have advantages which overcome the difficulties in the prior art. The user is able to soak multiple cookies simultaneously without losing track of the sequence that they were introduced to the milk. The user is able to conveniently remove the soaked cookies in sequence. The amount of milk used is similar to the amount that would be used in a cup for the same purpose, but the time it takes to consume a satisfying quantity of thoroughly soaked cookies is drastically reduced.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] Two drawing sheets, showing the following figures, are included with this application.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a basic embodiment. Fig. 2 is a longitudinal sectional view of the embodiment of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of an example not according to the invention.

Fig. 4 is a longitudinal sectional view of the example of Fig. 3.

**DESCRIPTION**

**[0011]** In this description and the claims, "accommodate" refers to a condition in which lateral movement of a single food item is restricted, and longitudinal movement is limited by the number of food items accommodated without the food items overlapping. This definition applies when the food items are oriented with their smallest dimension vertical. Accommodation may include allowance for variability of the food item size and clearance for insertion of a utensil, such as a spoon, around the food item.

**[0012]** One embodiment of my device, shown in Fig. 1 and Fig 2, is a vessel having a scooping end 10 and an entry end 20 and having a length to width ratio of at least two to one, with the width sized to accommodate the intended cookie size. The scooping end 10 has a level floor 14 which is essentially level over a longitudinal distance commensurate with the intended cookie size. The scooping end 10 is partially bounded by a wall 30 which at that end resembles a circumferential half of the wall of a coffee cup, shortened in height by about a third. Where that part of the wall 30 opens toward the level floor 14, the laterally opposed sides of the wall 30 continue longitudinally to the entry end 20 of the vessel. The upper edge of the wall 30 is its rim 32. The edge of the level floor 12 which is not bounded by the wall 30 merges with a sloped floor 24 which runs the remaining length of the vessel, bounded on its lateral sides by the wall 30. The sloped floor 24 is sloped, aligning with the level floor 14 toward the scooping end 10 and aligning with the rim 32 at the entry end 20. The level floor 14, the sloped floor 24 and the wall 30 are merged to form a vessel body 50 which is capable of holding a fluid. A support structure 26 is affixed to the underside of the vessel body 50 for support at the entry end 20.

**[0013]** The device may be constructed of any material suitable for tableware, including combinations of materials. Suitable materials include fired clay, glass, plastic, wood, metals, paper, and composites. One method of manufacturing in clay is as follows.

- Cut the floors from a slab as a single piece.
- Cut the wall from a slab.
- Score and slip the floor and wall pieces and join them to form the vessel body.
- Cut the support structure from a slab and join it to the vessel body by scoring and slipping.
- Reinforce all joins with coils.
- Dry, fire, glaze, and fire as is customary in the art of Ceramics.

**[0014]** Slip casting, ram pressing and pressure casting are other well understood methods that can be employed for manufacturing in clay. Manufacturing in other materials can be accomplished with methods that are well known in their respective arts.

**Operation:**

**[0015]** In this description and the claims, the "desired quantity" of milk or fluid refers to the amount of fluid that is expected to be consumed by a user during one consumption session. For a given intended cookie size, a person in the culinary arts would generally recognize a reasonable range for the desired quantity of fluid.

**[0016]** A user employs my device for the purpose of eating food items of specific size soaked in a fluid. The user sits at a table with the device placed upon the table in front of the user. Initially the device is filled with a desired quantity of milk. The user may insert the first cookie into the milk from either end, but it should be guided to the scooping end 10 while it is floating on the milk. If the cookie is not buoyant in the milk, then the sloped floor 24 will guide it toward the scooping end 10, and the user may help it along with a utensil. The user inserts the second cookie into the milk at the entry end 20. If the device is sufficiently long with respect to the size of the cookies, the user may optionally introduce the third cookie or more at the entry end 20 before extracting the first cookie. When the first cookie has soaked in the milk to the user's satisfaction, the user extracts it at the scooping end 10 with a spoon or other appropriate utensil and eats it. The user then guides the second cookie to the scooping end 10 and inserts the next cookie at the entry end 20. The process of extracting from the scooping end 10 and inserting at the entry end 20 is successively repeated, which provides a time efficient method to consume a fulfilling number of cookies. Once the milk is reduced to a level where it will no longer accommodate multiple cookies, the user may either soak the final few cookies one at a time at the scooping end 10 or simply drink the remainder of the milk.

**Variations:**

**[0017]** An example not according to the invention which incorporates a few of many possible optional features is shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. This example includes the features described above for Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, which are identified by the same reference numerals. Their descriptions remain the same, except as noted here. The wall 30 is drafted at a slight angle, which can facilitate manufacture by slip casting or ram pressing and can provide clearance for a spoon to be inserted under a cookie. Two protrusions 34 are built into the wall 30 to provide additional clearance for a spoon and a place for the user to rest the spoon when not in use. The sloped floor 24 does not rise all the way to the rim 32. Instead, a ridge 22 is formed into the entry end 20 to enable mating of the devices when one is stacked upon another. The ridge 22 contacts the support structure 26 of the stacked device to prevent sliding. The draft of the wall 30 allows mating of the two devices at the entry end 10, thereby completing a means for stacking.

**[0018]** Other embodiments may incorporate any one

or more of the following optional variations.

- The wall 30 may have contours other than straight along the sides of the sloped floor 24.
- The vessel body 50 may follow paths other than linear. In such cases, references herein to the scooping end 10 and entry end 20 refer to the lower and upper levels of the sloped floor 24, respectively, and references to length or the longitudinal direction refer to the central path of the sloped floor 24.
- The vertical cross section of the wall 30 may have a non-linear profile to enhance spoon angle, milk containment, cookie positioning, ease of drinking or other minor conveniences.
- The level floor 14 may extend a longitudinal distance less than the intended cookie size, still providing a particular location for convenient extraction of the cookie, even to the extent that the longitudinal distance is zero.
- The support structure 26 may take any of an infinite number of forms, including some which may be interpreted as multiple structures.
- Handles may be attached to or molded into the device.
- The sloped floor 24 may have a concave lateral cross section to channel crumbs and to give the milk a curved edge at the entry end.
- The rim 30 may be raised near the entry end 20 to reduce spillage caused by shoaling of the milk.

## Claims

1. An article of tableware being a vessel for soaking in fluid and consuming a plurality of a food item being a cookie, said article having a support structure (26) affixed to the underside at an entry end (20), said article further comprising:

a level floor (14) at a scooping end (10) which extends from said scooping end (10) and which is semicircular at said scooping end (10);  
 a wall (30) which is half-circumferential at said scooping end (10) and bounds said level floor (14), which continues longitudinally along parallel paths on laterally opposed sides to said entry end (20), and which defines a rim (32) at its upper edge; and  
 a sloped floor (24) which merges with the edge of said level floor (14) which is not bounded by the wall (30) opposite said scooping end (10), which sloped floor (24) runs the remaining longitudinal length of the vessel to said entry end (20), which is bounded on its lateral sides by the laterally opposed sides of said wall (30), and which is sloped from said level floor (14) to align with said rim (32) at said entry end (20), wherein the sloped floor (24) is sloped, aligning

with the level floor (14) toward the scooping end (10) and aligning with the rim (32) at the entry end, and wherein the level floor (14), the sloped floor (24) and the wall (30) are merged to form a vessel body (50) which is capable of holding a fluid, and the length to width ratio of said article of tableware is at least two to one.

2. The article of claim 1, further comprising means for stacking said article, one upon another.

3. A method of soaking in fluid and consuming a plurality of a food item using an article of tableware according to claim 1 or 2, comprising:

pouring a desired quantity of fluid into a vessel having a width that accommodates said food item, a length that accommodates two or more said food items, a floor which is essentially level at one end, the scooping end (10) and slopes from near that end to meet the other end, the entry end (20), at or near the top of the vessel, the vessel defining a volume to contain the desired quantity of fluid and two of said food items; placing into said fluid one of said food item; placing into said fluid from said entry end (20) another of said food item; placing into said fluid from said entry end (20), as fluid quantity allows, additional said food items, guiding in sequence with a utensil, as necessary, each soaking food item to said scooping end (10); and removing with said utensil from said scooping end (10) each food item and eating it, wherein the food item is a cookie.

## Patentansprüche

1. Ein Geschirrgegenstand in Gestalt eines Gefäßes zum Einweichen in Flüssigkeit und Konsumieren einer Mehrzahl von Nahrungsmitteln in Gestalt eines Kekses, wobei der Gegenstand eine Stützstruktur (26) besitzt, die auf einer Unterseite eines Eingangsendes (20) fixiert ist, wobei der Gegenstand des weiteren umfasst:

einen ebenen Boden (14) an einem Schöpfende (10), der sich von dem Schöpfende (10) erstreckt und an dem Schöpfende (10) halbkreisförmig ist;  
 eine Wand (30), die an dem Schöpfende (10) halbumbfänglich ist und den ebenen Boden (14) begrenzt, die entlang paralleler Wege auf gegenüberliegenden seitlichen Seiten in Längsrichtung zu dem Eintrittsende (20) weiterführt,

- und die an ihrer oberen Kante einen Rand (32) definiert; und  
 ein geneigter Boden (24), der sich mit der Kante des ebenen Bodens (14) vereinigt, welche nicht von der Wand (30) begrenzt wird, gegenüberliegend zum Schöpfende (10), wobei der geneigte Boden (24) die verbleibende Länge in Längsrichtung des Gefäßes zum Eintrittsende (20) verläuft, an seinen seitlichen Seiten durch die seitlichen gegenüberliegenden Seiten der Wand (30) begrenzt ist und ausgehend von dem ebenen Boden (14) so geneigt ist, dass er sich an den Rand (32) an dem Eintrittsende (20) anschließt,  
 wobei der geneigte Boden (24) geneigt ist, sich an den ebenen Boden (14) zum Schöpfende (10) hin anschließt und zum Rand (32) am Eintrittsende anschließt, und  
 wobei der ebene Boden (14), der geneigte Boden (24) und die Wand (30) ineinander übergehen, um einen Gefäßkörper (50) zu bilden, der in der Lage ist, Flüssigkeit zu halten, und wobei das Längen-zu-Breiten-Verhältnis des Geschirrgegenstands mindestens zwei zu eins ist.
2. Gegenstand nach Anspruch 1, des weiteren umfassend Mittel zum Stapeln des Gegenstands, einer auf den anderen.
3. Verfahren zum Einweichen in Flüssigkeit und Konsumieren einer Mehrzahl von Nahrungsmitteln, unter Verwendung eines Geschirrgegenstands gemäß einem der Ansprüche 1 oder 2, umfassend:
- Gießen einer gewünschten Menge an Flüssigkeit in ein Gefäß, welches eine Breite besitzt, die das Nahrungsmittel aufnimmt, eine Länge, die zwei oder mehr der Nahrungsmittel aufnimmt, einen Boden, der an einem Ende, dem Schöpfende, im wesentlichen eben ist und von nahe diesem Ende aus geneigt ist, um das andere Ende, das Eintrittsende, an oder nahe dem oberen Ende des Gefäßes zu treffen, wobei das Gefäß ein Volumen definiert, um die gewünschte Menge an Flüssigkeit zu beinhalten und zwei der Nahrungsmittel;  
 Platzieren eines der Nahrungsmittel in die Flüssigkeit;  
 Platzieren eines anderen der Nahrungsmittel in die Flüssigkeit von dem anderen Ende (20) aus;  
 Platzieren weiterer der Nahrungsmittel in die Flüssigkeit von dem Eintrittsende (20) aus, soweit es die Flüssigkeitsmenge erlaubt,  
 Führen eines jeden einweichenden Nahrungsmittels nacheinander zu dem Einweichende (10) mittels eines Utensils; und  
 Entfernen eines jeden Nahrungsmittels aus dem

Einweichende (10) mittels des Utensils und Essen desselben, wobei das Nahrungsmittel ein Keks ist.

## Revendications

- Un article de vaisselle qui est un récipient pour le trempage dans un fluide et pour la consommation d'une pluralité d'un produit alimentaire qui est un biscuit, ledit article ayant une structure de support (26) apposée sur le côté inférieur à une extrémité d'entrée (20), ledit article comprenant en outre :  
 un plancher de niveau (14) à une extrémité d'écopage (10), qui s'étend à partir de ladite extrémité d'écopage (10) et qui est semicirculaire selon ladite extrémité d'écopage (10) ;  
 une paroi (30) qui est demi circonferentielle selon ladite extrémité d'écopage (10) et qui relie ledit plancher de niveau (14), qui se poursuit longitudinalement le long de chemins parallèles sur des côtés latéralement opposés jusqu'à ladite extrémité d'entrée (20), et qui définit une bordure (32) à son bord supérieur ; et  
 un plancher incliné (24) qui rejoint le bord dudit plancher de niveau (14) qui ne se raccorde pas à la paroi (30) et qui est à l'opposé de ladite extrémité d'écopage (10), lequel plancher incliné (24) s'étend le long de la longueur longitudinale restante du récipient jusqu'à ladite extrémité d'entrée (20),  
 lequel plancher incliné se raccorde sur ses côtés latéraux aux côtés latéralement opposés de ladite paroi (30), et est en pente à partir dudit plancher de niveau (14) pour s'aligner avec ladite bordure (32) selon ladite extrémité d'entrée (20), dans lequel  
 le plancher incliné (24) est en pente, en s'alignant avec le plancher de niveau (14) en direction de l'extrémité d'écopage (10) et en s'alignant avec la bordure (32) à l'extrémité d'entrée, et  
 dans lequel le plancher de niveau (14), le plancher incliné (24) et la paroi (30) se raccordent pour former un corps de récipient (50) qui est capable de contenir un fluide, et  
 dans lequel le rapport entre la longueur et la largeur dudit article de vaisselle est d'au moins deux sur un.
- Article selon la revendication 1, comprenant en outre des moyens pour empiler ledit article, l'un sur un autre.
- Procédé pour le trempage dans un fluide et pour la consommation d'une pluralité d'un produit alimen-

taire en utilisant un article de vaisselle selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, comprenant :

verser une quantité désirée de fluide dans un  
 récipient ayant une largeur qui correspond audit 5  
 produit alimentaire, une longueur qui corres-  
 pond à deux au moins desdits produits alimen-  
 taires, un plancher qui est essentiellement de  
 niveau à une extrémité, l'extrémité d'écopage,  
 et en pente depuis le voisinage de cette extré- 10  
 mité pour rejoindre l'autre extrémité, l'extrémité  
 d'entrée, sur ou au voisinage du sommet du ré-  
 cipient, le récipient définissant un volume pour  
 contenir la quantité désirée de fluide et deux  
 desdits produits alimentaires ; 15  
 placer dans ledit fluide l'un desdits produits  
 alimentaires ;  
 placer dans ledit fluide depuis ladite extrémité  
 d'entrée (20) un autres desdits produits 20  
 alimentaires ;  
 placer dans ledit fluide depuis ladite extrémité  
 d'entrée (20), lorsque la quantité de fluide le per-  
 met, un produit alimentaire additionnel,  
 guider en séquence avec un ustensile, si néces- 25  
 saire, chaque produit alimentaire jusqu'à ladite  
 extrémité d'écopage (10) ; et enlever avec ledit  
 ustensile à partir de ladite extrémité d'écopage  
 (10) chaque produit alimentaire et le manger,  
 dans lequel le produit alimentaire est un biscuit.

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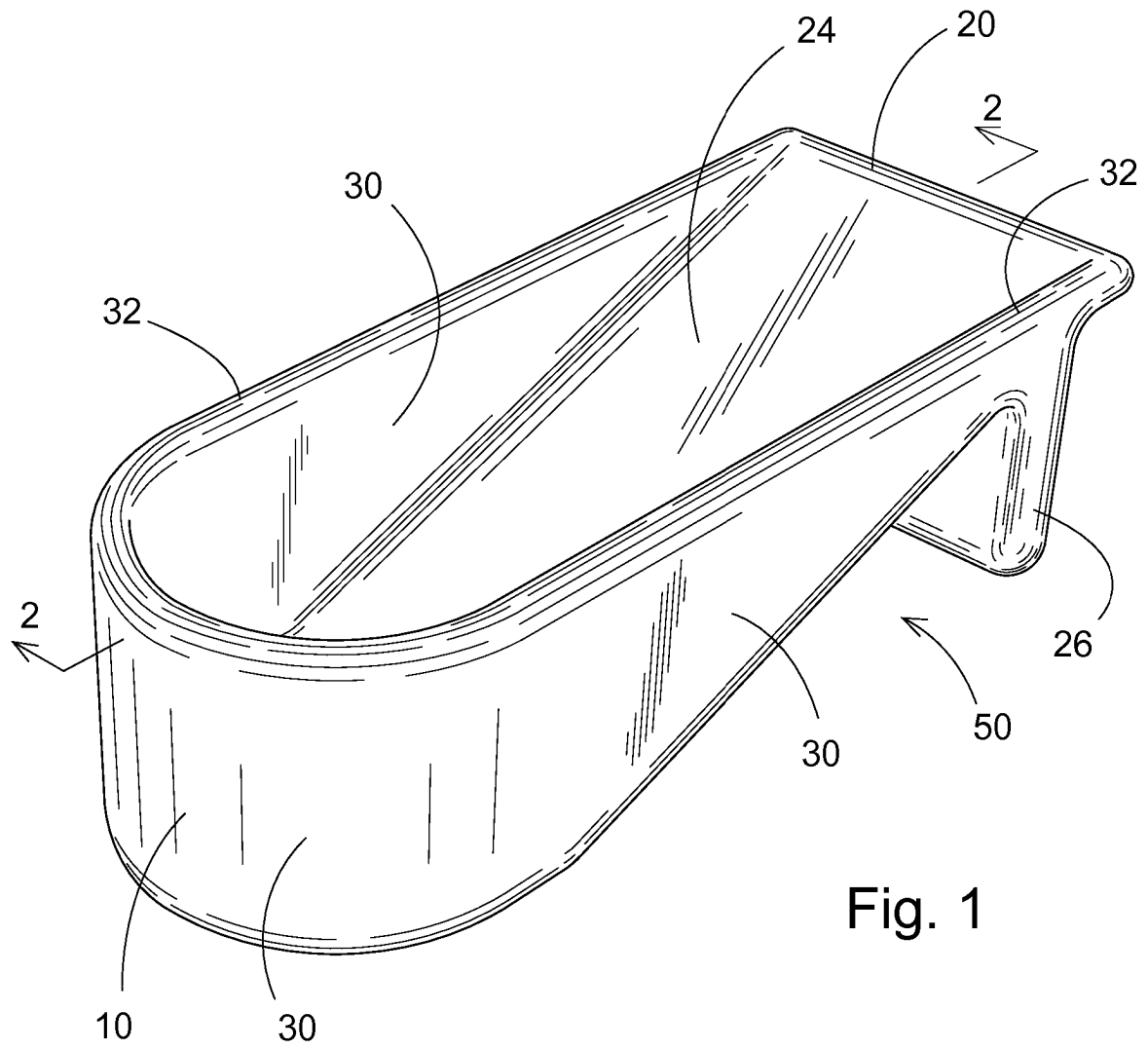


Fig. 1

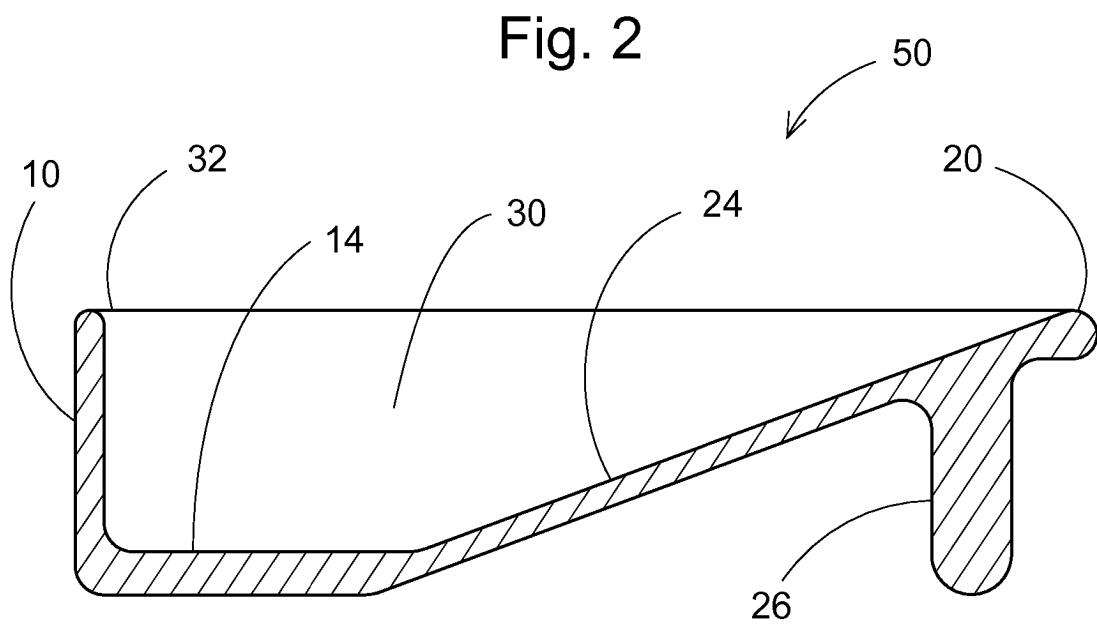


Fig. 2

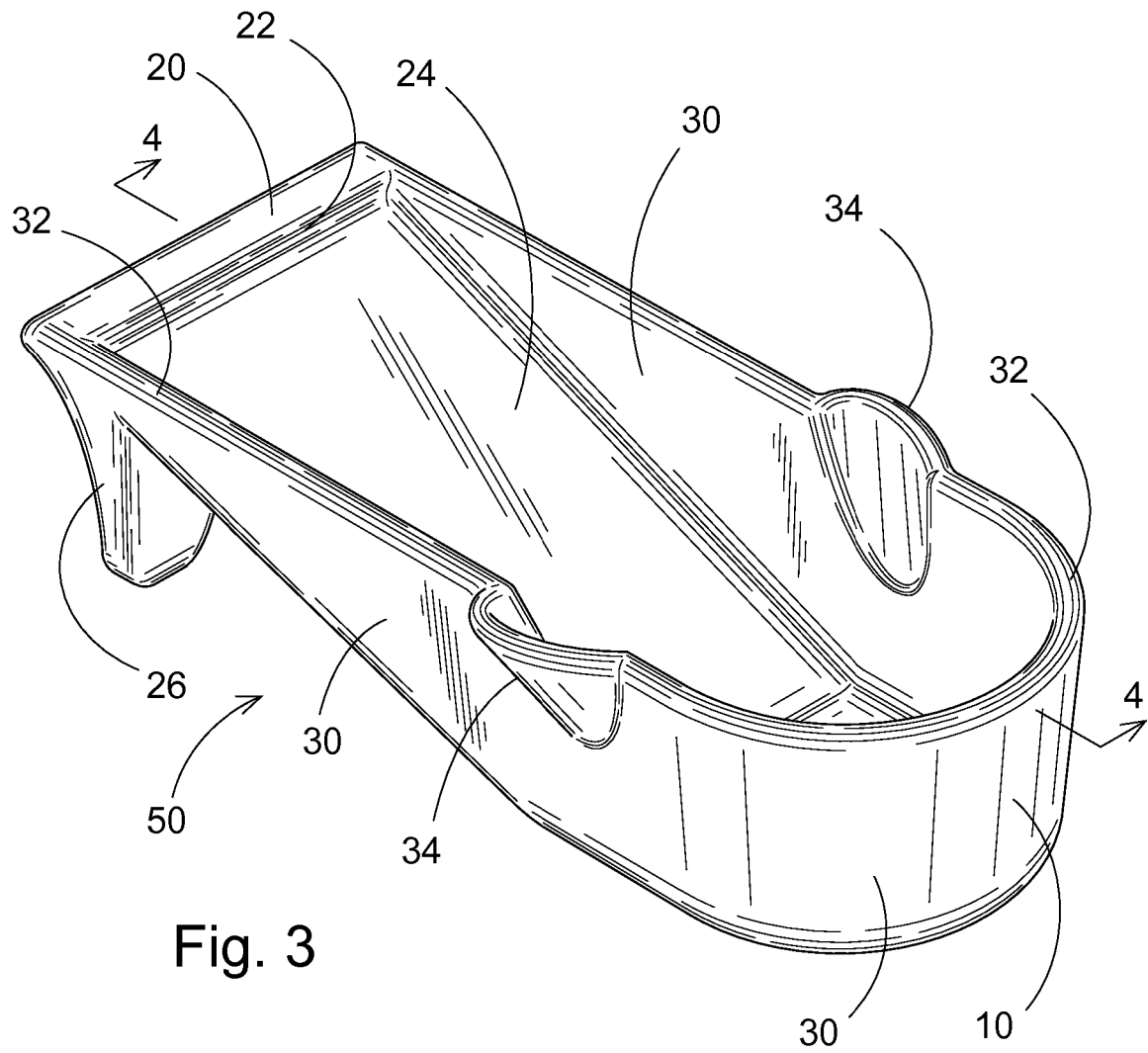


Fig. 3

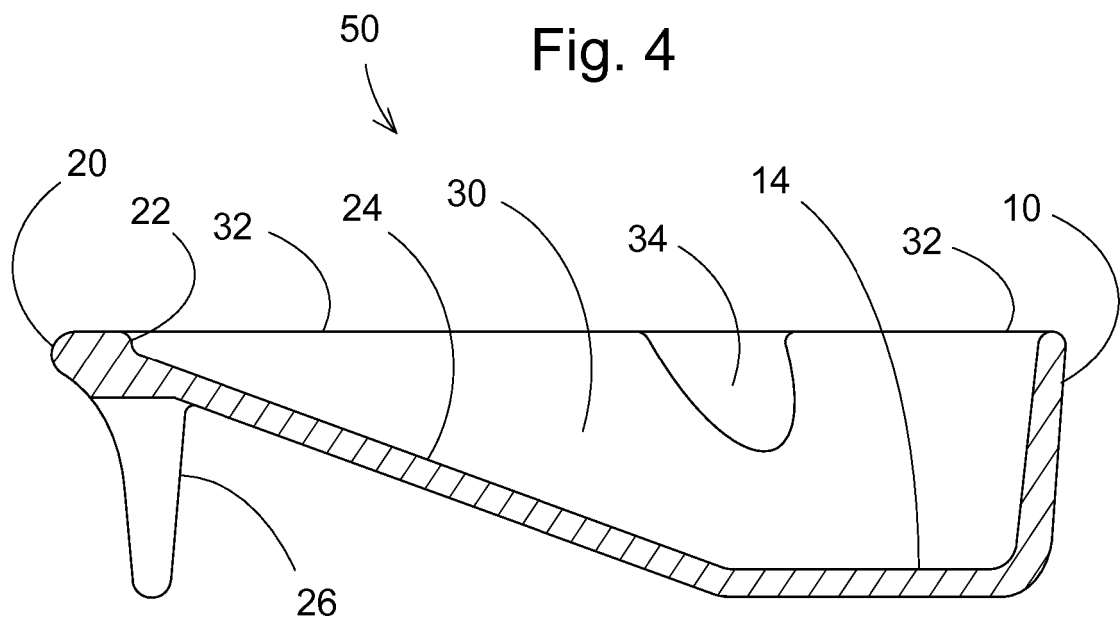


Fig. 4



**REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION**

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