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ORNAMENTAL TABLE WITH CENTRAL ILLUMINATED RECEPTACLE

Filed June 29, 1956

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

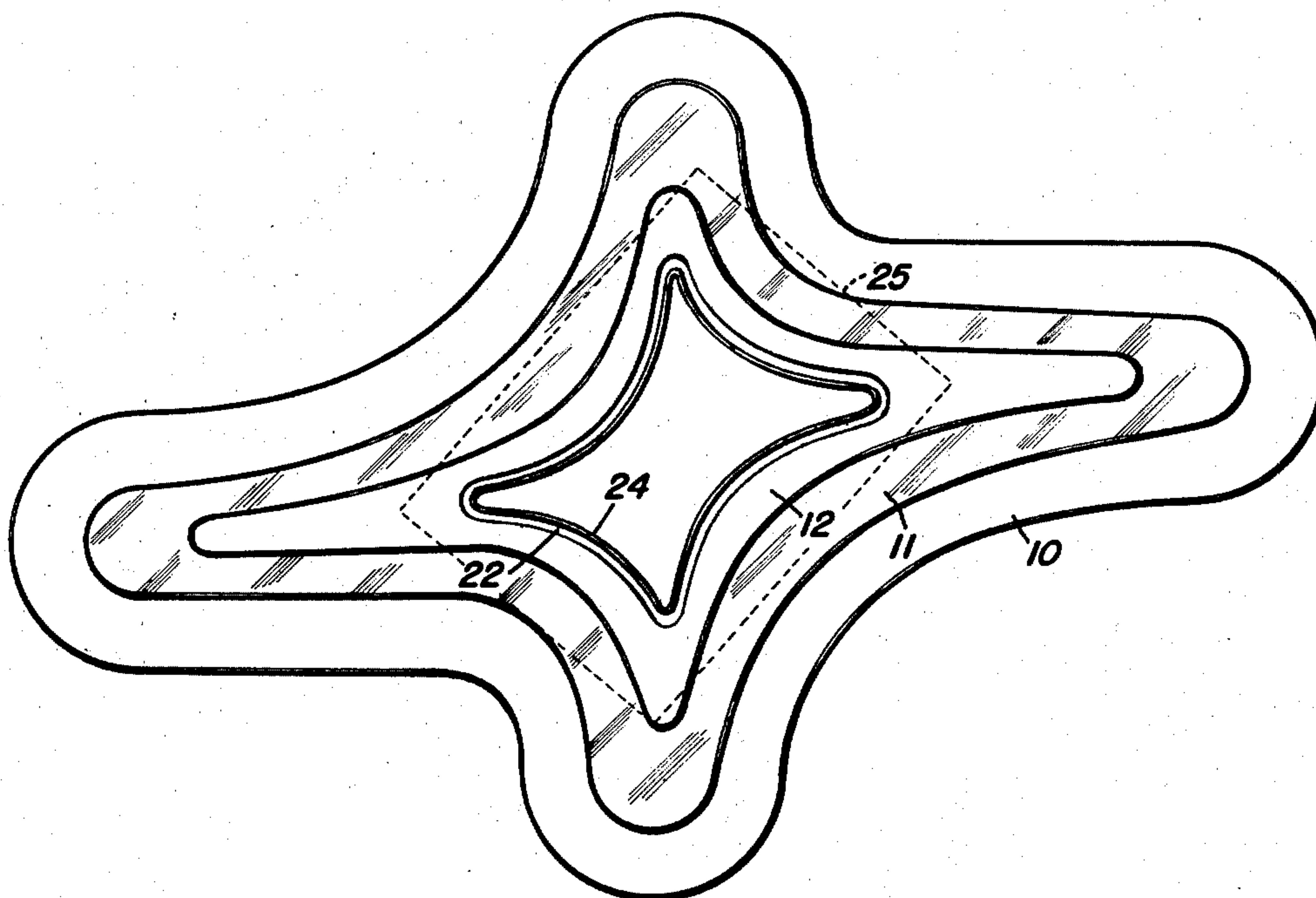


FIG. 1.

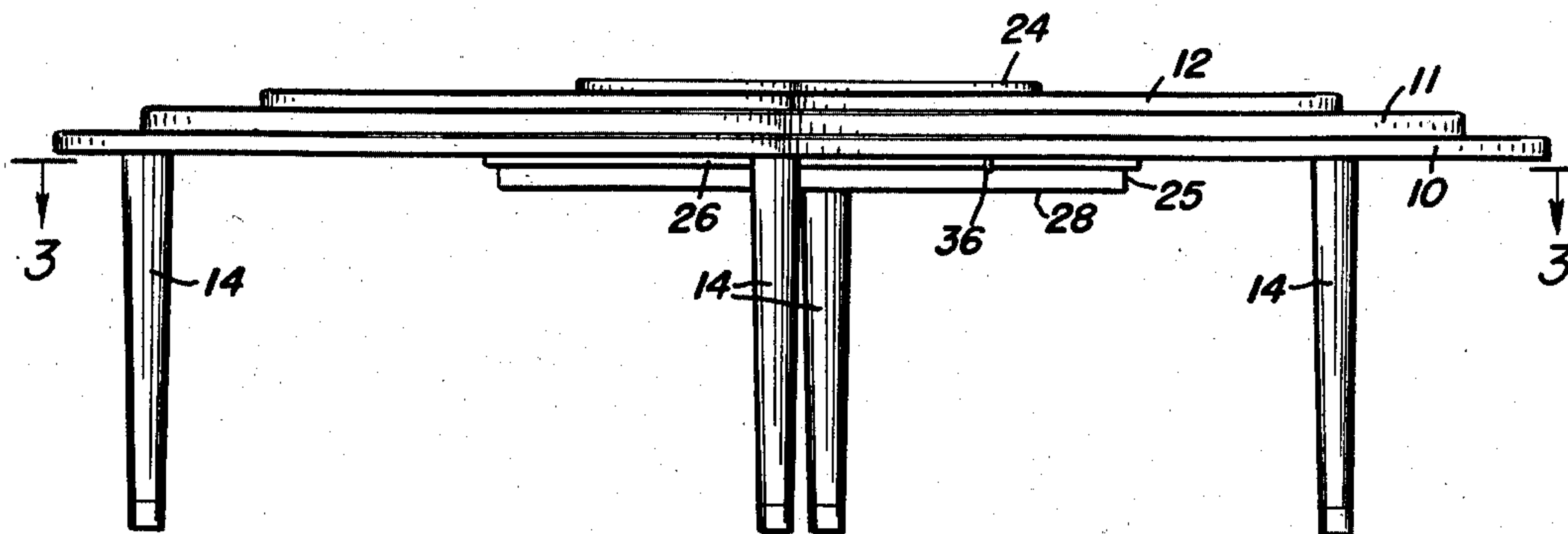


FIG. 2.

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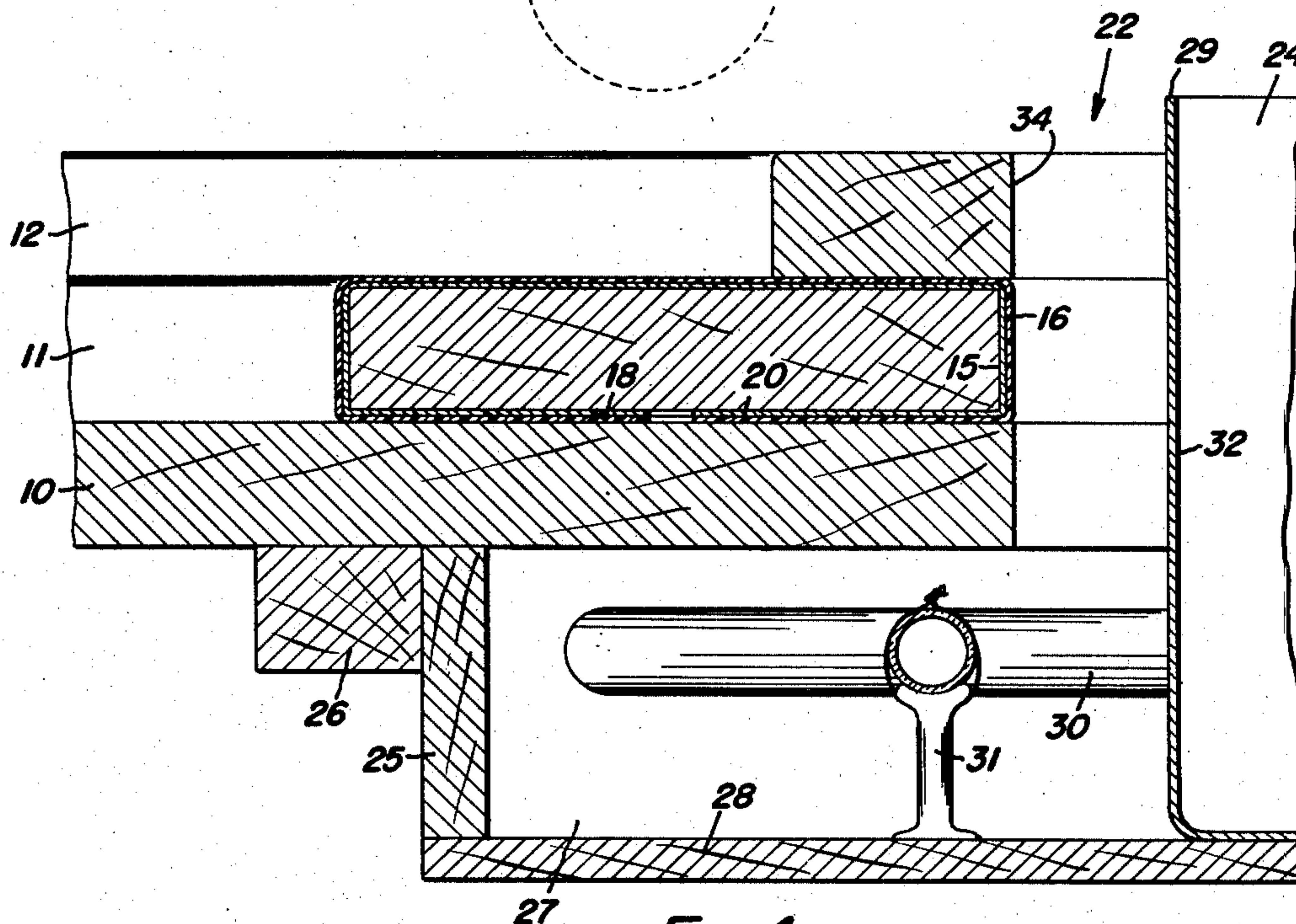
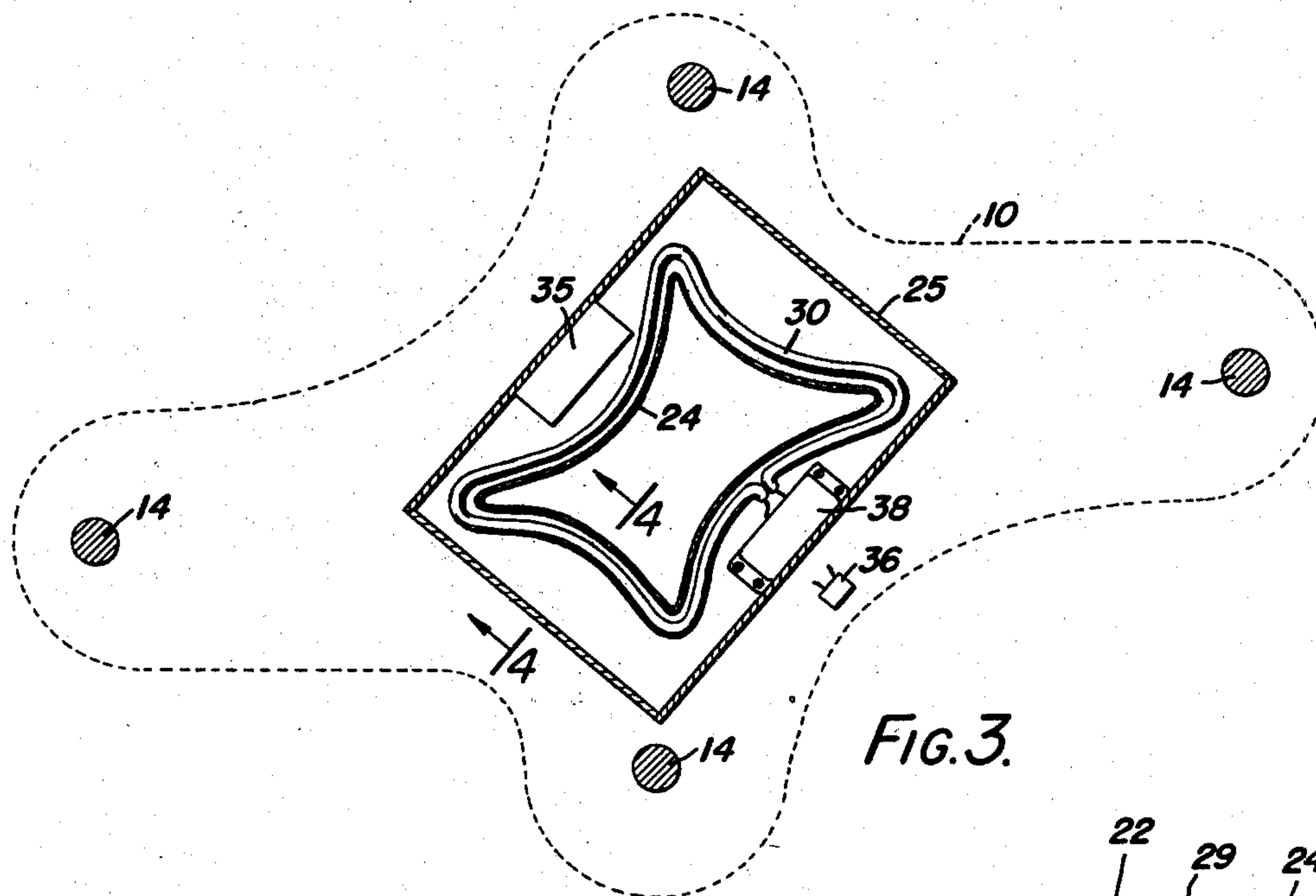


FIG. 4.

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ORNAMENTAL TABLE WITH CENTRAL ILLUMINATED RECEPTACLE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 240—4)

This invention relates to an ornamental table. More specifically, the invention relates to a multiple-tiered ornamental table having a receptacle therein adapted for use as a planter, goldfish bowl, or other use.

The attractive finish on tables now on the market is provided by a coating or coatings of a film-forming substance. Modern coatings frequently have a synthetic plastic base, but like all coatings, these are permanently applied to the table surface, and when worn, cracked, chipped, or otherwise disfigured, the entire finish must be renewed.

In addition, most attractive furniture pieces available at present follow function and tradition, and serve one purpose only, that being the support of objects placed thereon. However, it has long been recognized that the appearance of any table, however fine a piece of furniture it may be, may be enhanced by decorative objects placed thereon. Such decorative objects may include, for example, planters containing flowers or imitation flowers, goldfish bowls, and similar attractive objects. These have always been distinct objects separate and apart from the table structure.

A principal drawback of this conventional method for providing additional decorative features for a table has been the difficulty of providing suitable illumination for the decorative centerpiece on the table during the evening hours. Artificial lighting placed on the table but spaced from the decorative centerpiece usually draws attention away from the centerpiece and fails to enhance the combined appearance of the centerpiece and the table. General or area illumination also fails to emphasize the attractiveness of the centerpiece. Furthermore, lamps placed on the table or adjacent the centerpiece always detract from the appearance of the table because of the electrical cords which lead from the lamps across the table to a source of electricity.

An object of the present invention is to provide a decorative table having an attractive finish which may be simply and rapidly replaced at will, whether for the purpose of changing the appearance of the table, or for the purpose of repairing damage to the surface thereof.

A related object of the invention is to provide a decorative table having a surface finish which may be cleaned readily and simply.

Another object of the invention is to provide a decorative table having a receptacle therein as an integral part thereof, within which an attractive centerpiece may be placed.

A related object of the invention is to provide a centrally disposed receptacle in a decorative table, with means for illumination located in the table itself adapted to highlight the attractiveness of the centerpiece and emphasize its beauty.

Still another related object of the invention is to provide an illuminated centerpiece for a decorative table in which the electrical connections for the source of illumination are arranged under the surface of the table so as not to distract or detract from the appearance of the table and centerpiece.

These and other objects of the invention are achieved by providing a table of decorative appearance having a centrally disposed receptacle supported therein, with il-

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luminating means seated in the recess adapted to highlight the marginal edge of the receptacle.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the table is provided with multiple tiers. The base for forming the first tier is of irregular but pleasing shape, and successive tiers are superposed on and supported by the base. Each successive tier is smaller in size than the immediately subjacent tier, and all tiers correspond generally in contour to the base. The tiers are provided with registering central recesses which together receive a plastic receptacle. The base includes a supporting structure for the receptacle, within which there is also disposed a continuous fluorescent tube. The receptacle is made of a plastic material characterized by high internal reflectivity, so that the light from the fluorescent tube is transmitted to the upper marginal edge of the receptacle by the internal reflectivity of the plastic, to highlight the receptacle. The illumination thus attracts attention to the centerpiece and emphasizes the attractive appearance of the entire piece of furniture as a unit. The electrical connections are completely disposed on the undersurface of the table and are arranged so as to be completely invisible in normal usage of the table.

Still referring to a preferred embodiment of the invention, the finish covering on one or more of the tiers, and preferably at least on the second tier in a three-tiered table, is provided by a combination covering structure. This covering structure includes a sheet of woven fabric having a desired pattern, and a superposed sheet of transparent thermoplastic material of substantially the same area as the woven fabric sheet. The two sheets are stretched smoothly across the surface of the tier and are secured along the edges thereof to the undersurface of the tier in a convenient manner.

The invention may be better understood by reference to the following detailed description of one embodiment of the invention, as illustrated in the drawings appended hereto.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a three-tiered decorative table having a centrally-located receptacle, made according to one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a side elevation thereof;

Fig. 3 is a section taken on line 3—3 of Fig. 2; and

Fig. 4 is a section on line 4—4 of Fig. 3 but on a considerably enlarged scale.

The table illustrated in the drawings has a base 10, preferably made of wood, and supported by four legs 14. Superposed on the base or first tier 10 are two additional tiers 11 and 12, respectively. The three tiers 10, 11 and 12 progressively decrease in size, but are generally of the same contour.

The second tier 11 is covered with a covering structure best shown in Fig. 4. The covering structure includes a sheet of patterned fabric 15 which is protected by an overlying sheet of clear thermoplastic 16. Both sheets are stretched smoothly over the surface of the tier 11, and are secured on the undersurface thereof in a convenient manner, as by tacking, stapling, etc. Ordinarily, the second tier 11 is secured to the base tier 10 by screw fasteners (not shown). In this case, spot adhesion may be relied upon to secure the covering structure in place temporarily, reliance being placed upon the compressive force between the two tiers for the permanent securing of the covering structure in position. As shown, the outer marginal edge 18 of the covering structure is interposed between the two tiers 10 and 11 respectively over a substantial distance. The inner marginal edge 20 of the covering structure is similarly interposed between these two tiers for a considerable distance. This provides an even bearing surface between the two tiers.

The woven fabric sheet 15 may contain any desired pattern. The color scheme is such as to harmonize with the finish on the base tier 10 and the upper tier 12.

The three tiers are provided with registering central recesses indicated in the drawings collectively by the single numeral 22. Received within the registering recesses 22 is a receptacle 24, which is supported in position by a structure dependent from the base tier 10. The supporting structure includes a downwardly depending wall 25, a supporting strip 26, and a bottom member 28. The downwardly depending wall 25 is spaced from the registering recesses 22 to provide space within which indirect lighting means are disposed.

Indirect lighting of the marginal edge 29 of the receptacle 24 is accomplished by a fluorescent tube 30 which is supported by fixtures 31 above the bottom member 28, within the illuminating recess 27.

Although it will be appreciated that common incandescent bulbs and other light sources may be employed as the illuminating means, in a preferred form of the invention, a fluorescent tube 30 is employed which has a contour substantially similar to the contour of the receptacle 24, so that the tube 30 is generally uniformly spaced from the side walls 32 of the receptacle. Thus, an even diffusion of light is obtained through the gap between the receptacle 24 and the adjacent inward marginal edge 34 of the top tier 12. Furthermore, when a fluorescent tube of the type described is employed, the illumination is evenly diffused around the entire periphery of the receptacle 24, providing an even, pleasing, attention-drawing illumination for the contents of the receptacle.

While the receptacle 24 may be constructed of a variety of materials, including ordinary glass, it is preferred that the receptacle be of a transparent plastic having high internal reflectivity, such as a polymer of methyl methacrylate. This plastic is readily available commercially under the registered trademarks, "Lucite," and "Plexiglas." Material of this type is familiar today, and it characteristically transmits the light from the tube 30 as a ribbon-like band along the upper marginal edge 29 of the receptacle 24.

The source of electricity for illumination of the tube may be a high voltage storage battery 35 positioned in the illuminating recesses 27, as shown in Fig. 3. The fluorescent tube circuit is controlled by switch 36 through a suitable ballast box 38. The ballast box 38 may be secured within the illuminating recess 27. The switch 36 is positioned on the lower surface of the base tier 10, adjacent the outer marginal periphery thereof, for ready access and operation.

There has thus been described, a novel decorative table in which three tiers are provided, each being attractively finished. The center tier is covered with fabric which is protected by a transparent, tough thermoplastic film. When the table is equipped with low legs and is employed as a cocktail table, refreshment containers, ash trays, and the like, may be supported on the second tier 11, so that any accidental damage to the surface thereof is minimized by the plastic film 16. Should severe damage occur, this film may be replaced, as may the fabric 15 in the case of exceptionally severe damage. Furthermore, a change in the color scheme of the table may be accomplished simply by changing the fabric. If desired, additional tiers, or all tiers, may also be protected by a similar covering structure.

The receptacle 24 may contain goldfish or an attractive planting, or some similar decoration which will enhance the appearance of the table. If the receptacle is made of a plastic material, which is transparent and is characterized by high internal reflectivity, when illumination is employed a concentrated "halo" of light is obtained around the upper marginal edge 29 of the receptacle 24 as described above. If a material is employed for the receptacle 24 which is not characterized by high

internal reflectivity, other lighting effects may be obtained. With translucent materials, particularly where the receptacle contains a translucent fluid such as water, beautiful lighting effects are available. When an opaque receptacle is employed, or when opaque material is contained in the receptacle, a diffuse halo of light outlines the receptacle and its contents against the surface of the upper tier 12, and provides still another lighting effect which also enhances the beauty of the combined centerpiece and table.

In describing a preferred embodiment of the invention above, reference has been made to the use of a battery as a source of electrical power for the illuminating means. It will be understood, however, that conventional alternating current may be employed simply by providing the necessary electrical cord for operation through the switch 36. Such a cord would depend from the undersurface of the table, and would not detract or distract from the decorative appearance of the table itself and the centerpiece. Furthermore, while specific reference has been made in the foregoing description to the use of irregular contours for each tier, as illustrated in the drawings, the invention also contemplates a table in which the contour of the base and successive smaller tiers is of substantially regular shape, such as the shape of a rectangle, square, diamond, or other desired shapes.

While the invention has been described in connection with a specific embodiment thereof, then, it will be understood that it is capable of further modification, and this application is intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention following, in general, the principles of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which the invention pertains and as may be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth, and as fall within the scope of the invention or the limits of the appended claims.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim is:

1. A table comprising a base having an aperture therein, a box-like structure secured beneath said base and having an opening at its top registering with said aperture but of larger area than said aperture whereby the portion of said base around said aperture overlies said box, a receptacle mounted in said aperture and opening and supported by said box-like structure, said receptacle conforming generally in shape to the shape of said aperture but being of smaller area than said aperture whereby the side walls of said receptacle are spaced from the bounding side walls of said aperture, and illuminating means mounted in said box-like structure around said receptacle beneath said overlying portion of said base to provide marginal illumination for said receptacle.

2. A table according to claim 1 in which said illuminating means is tubular and completely surrounds said receptacle.

3. A table according to claim 1 in which the receptacle is made of transparent material characterized by high internal reflectivity, whereby the upper marginal edge of said receptacle is highlighted by said illuminating means through internal reflectivity.

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