



[54] PAINT CONTAINER LID MEMBER ADAPTABLE FOR USE WITH A PLURALITY OF PAINT MIXING SYSTEMS

[75] Inventor: Arie Boers, Plymouth, Minn.

[73] Assignee: X-Pert Paint Mixing Systems, Inc., Roseville, Minn.

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(List continued on next page.)

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[52] U.S. Cl. 366/247; 366/605

[58] Field of Search 366/197, 198, 366/242-251, 331, 605

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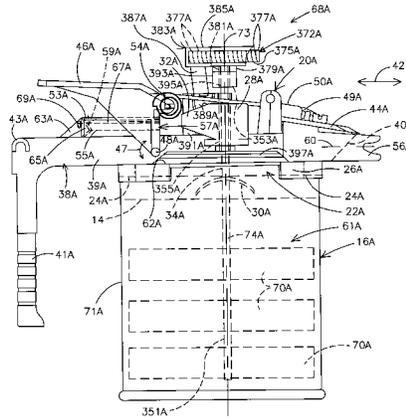
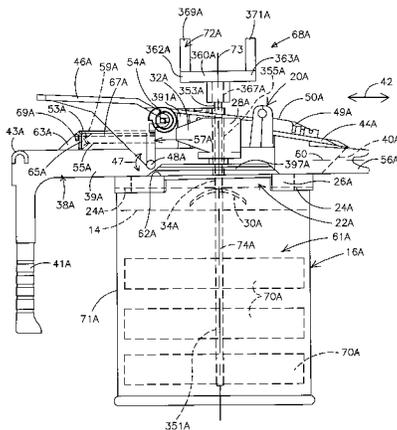
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Primary Examiner—Charles E. Cooley
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Dicke, Billig & Czaja, P.A.

[57] ABSTRACT

Disclosed is a lid member for an original container of a liquid paint component. The lid member is useable with a plurality of different pourable component mixing systems. The lid member includes a base portion that is adapted to releasably engage an open top of the paint component container. The base portion has a pour spout through which the paint component can be dispensed and a movable cover element. The cover element is movable between a closed state, and an opened state, wherein the pour spout is uncovered and the paint component can be dispensed from its original container. A stirring device for mixing the pourable component within the original container is rotatably mounted to the base portion. The stirring device includes a shaft member, at least one mixing paddle mounted to a first end of the shaft member, and a plurality of different paddle actuators. Each of the plurality of paddle actuators is singly mountable to a second end of the shaft member to adapt the lid member to a desired mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems.

18 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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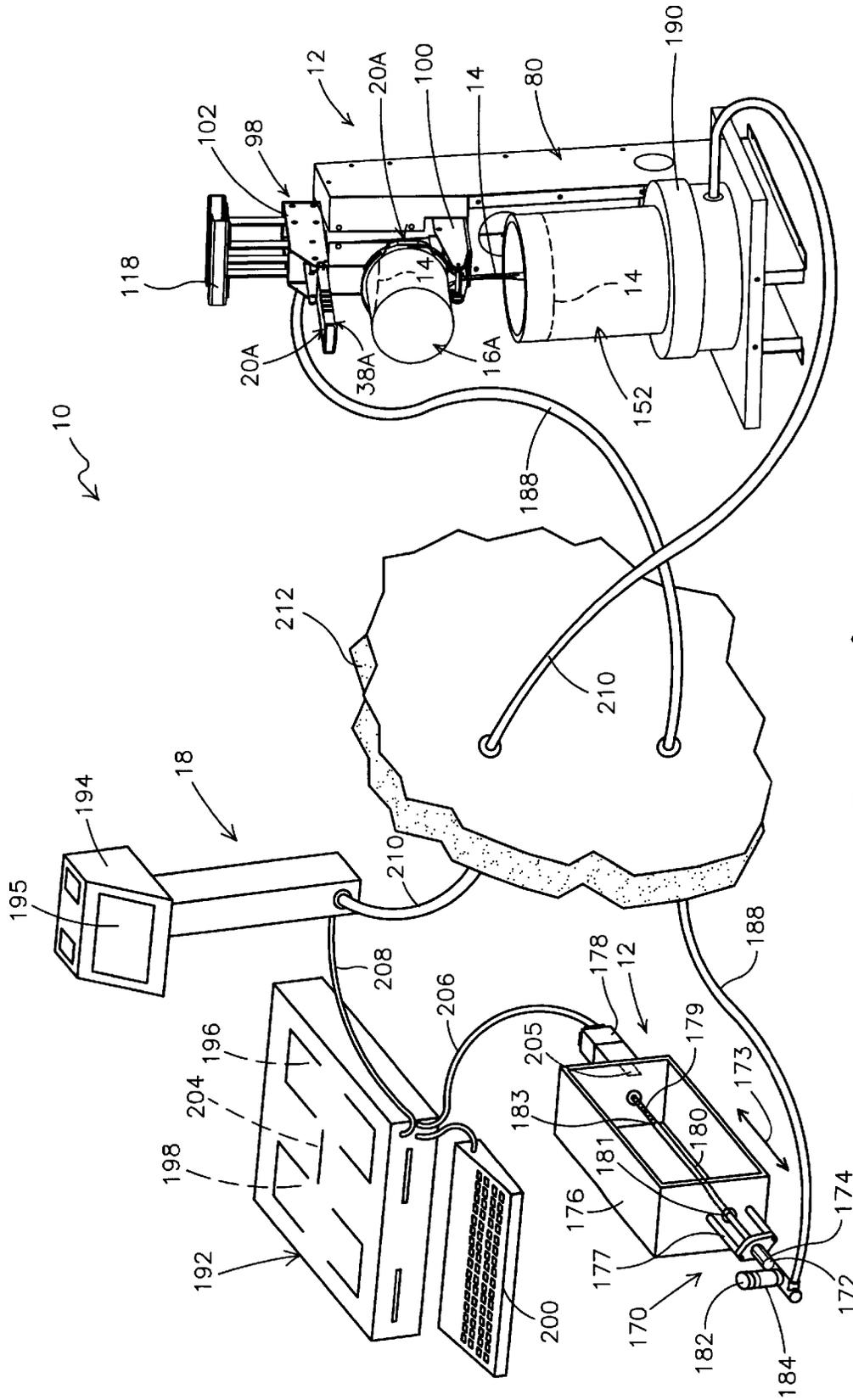


Fig. 1

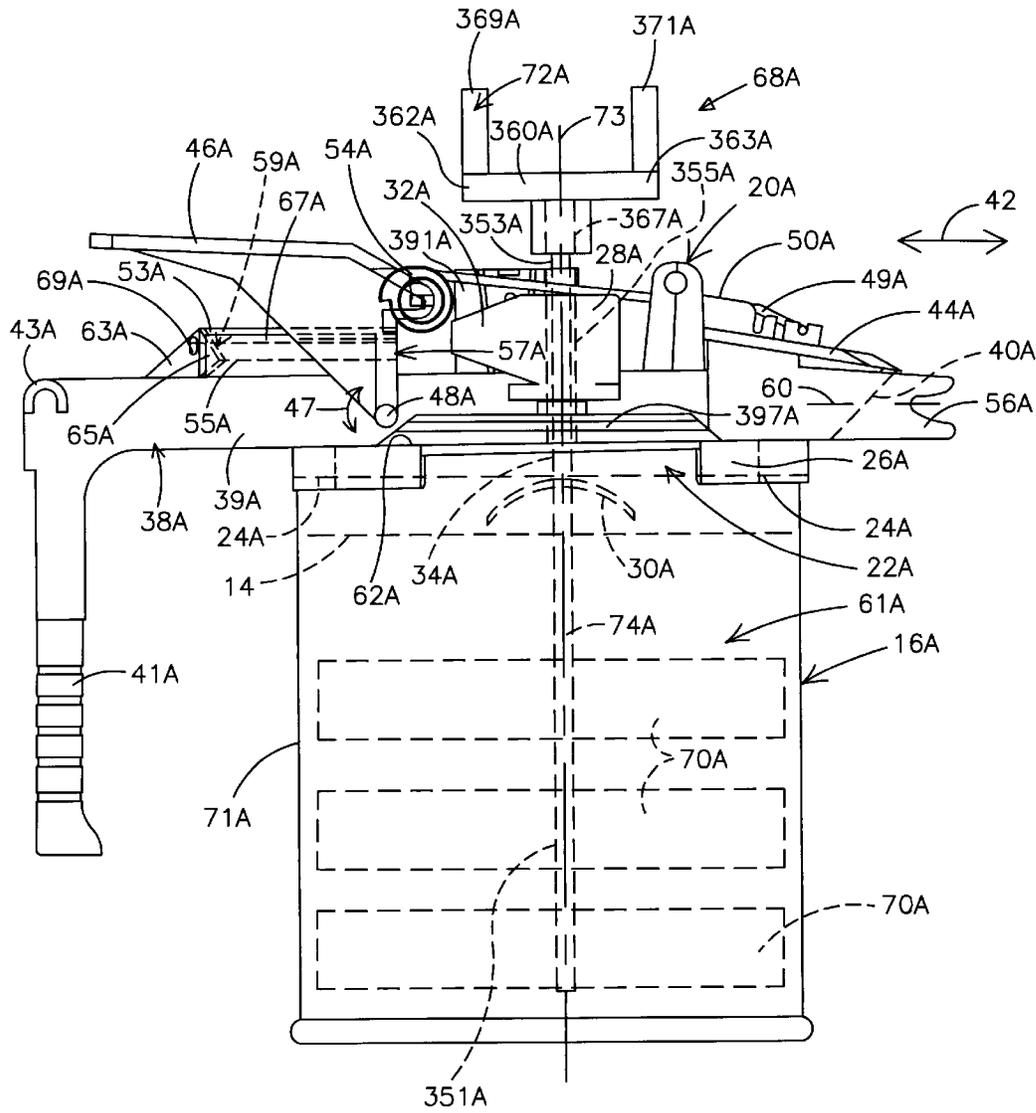


Fig. 3A

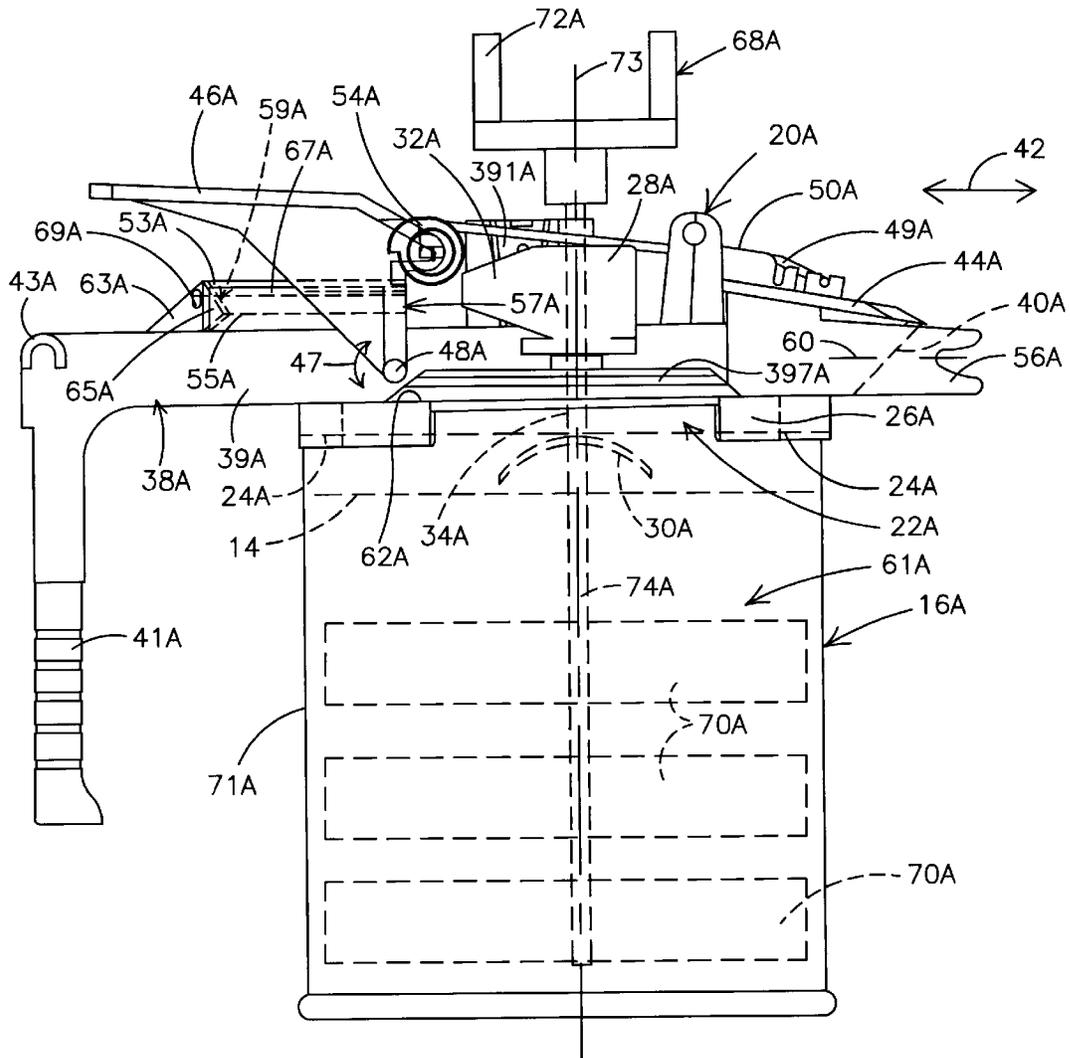


Fig. 3B

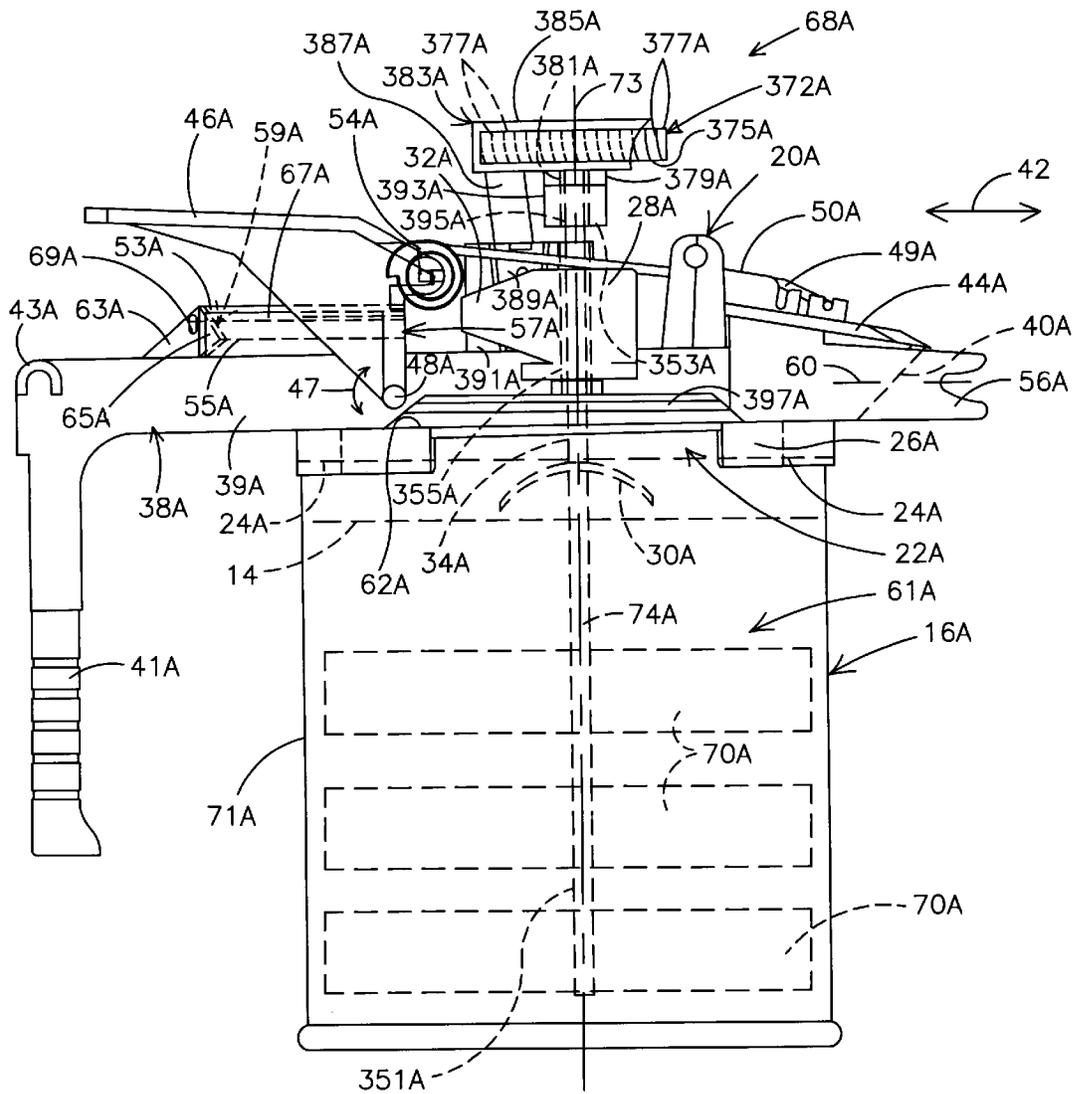


Fig. 3C

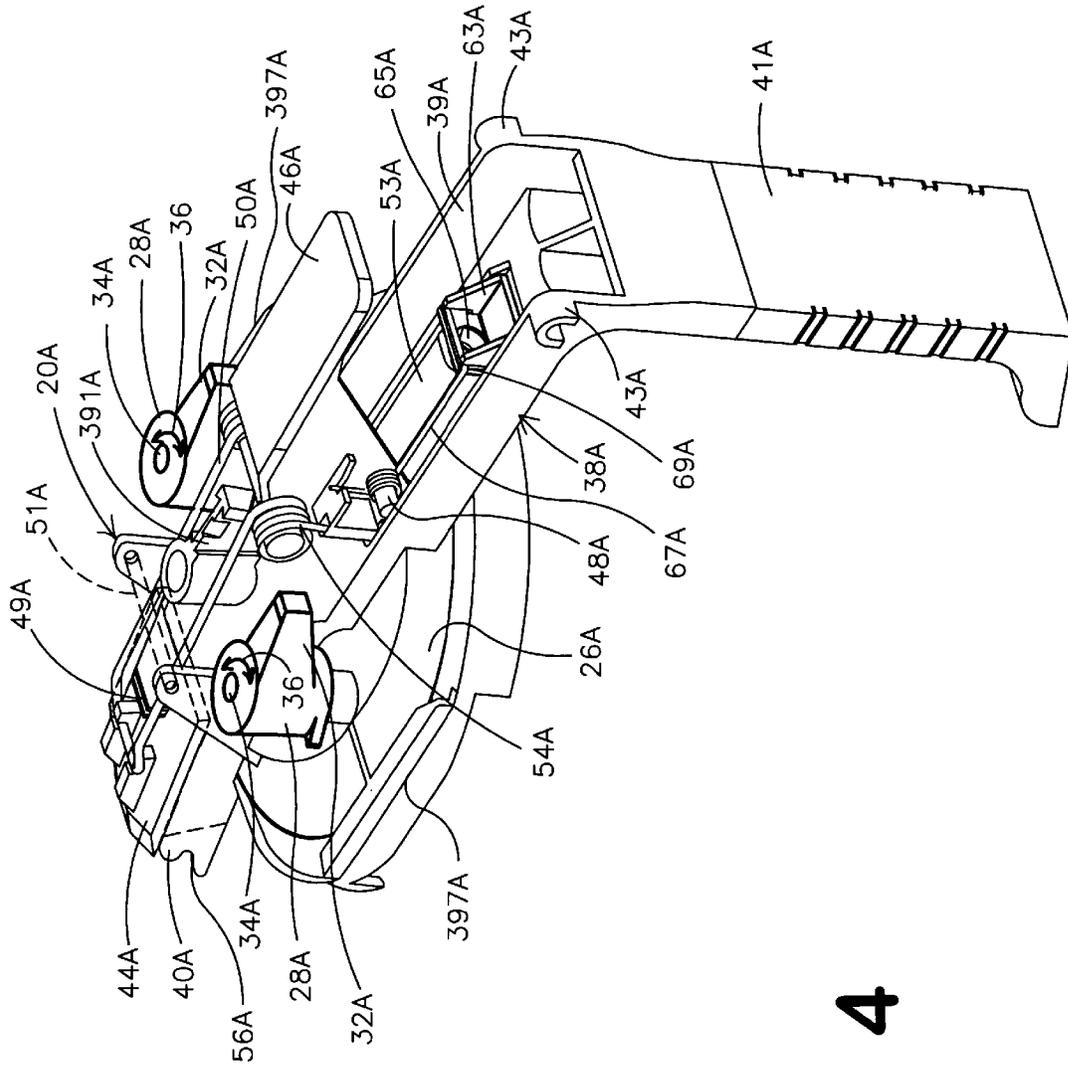


Fig. 4

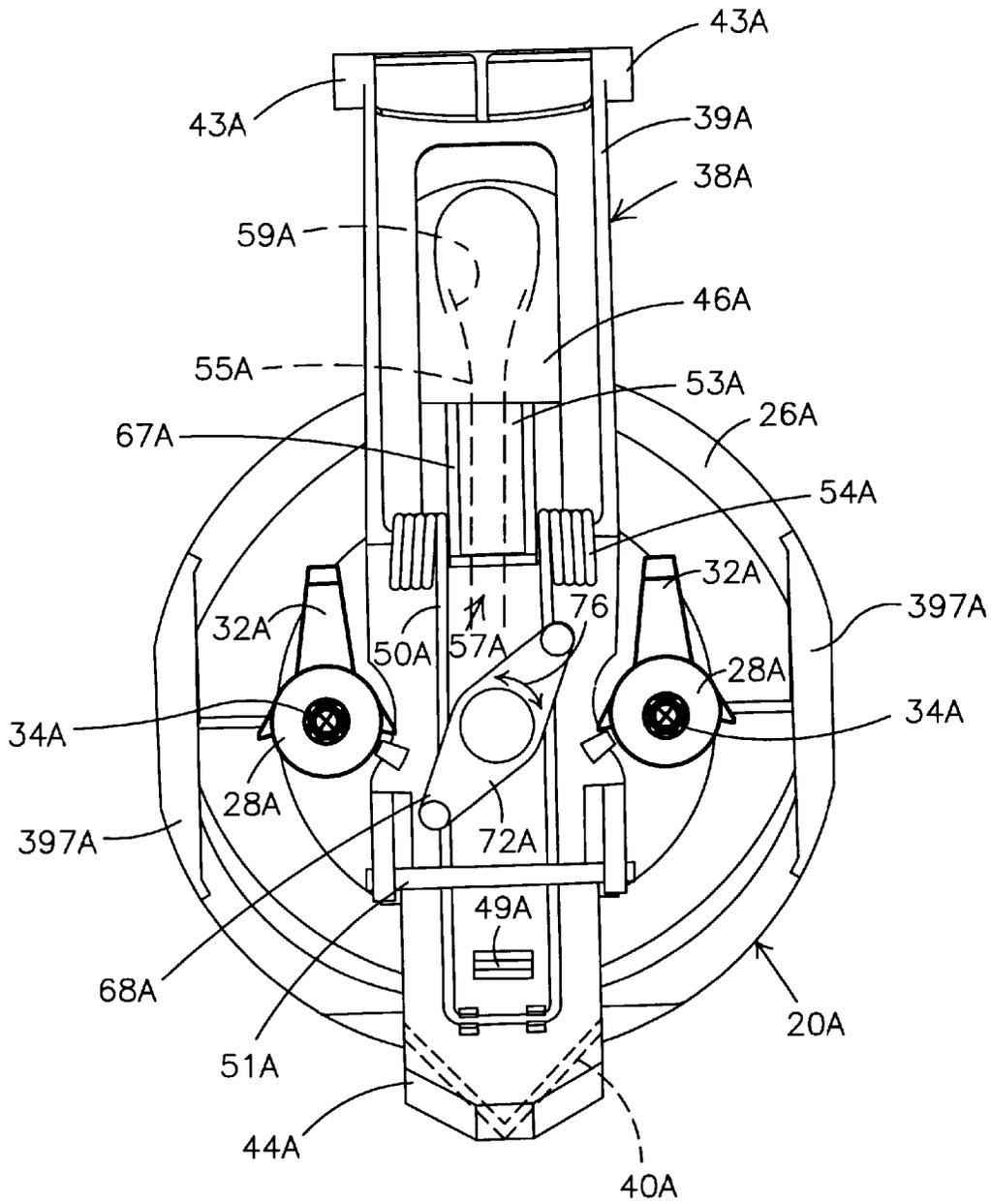


Fig. 5

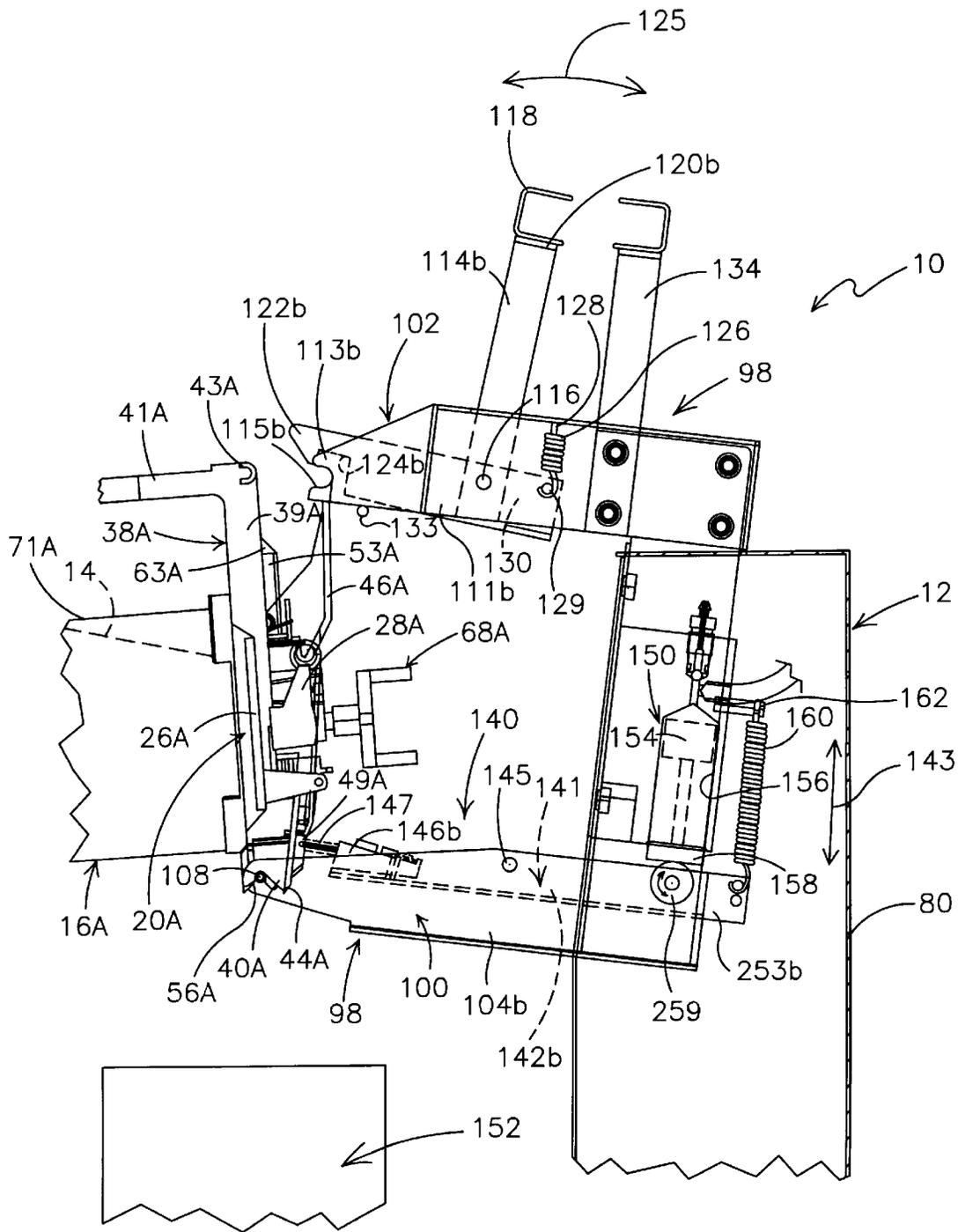


Fig. 6

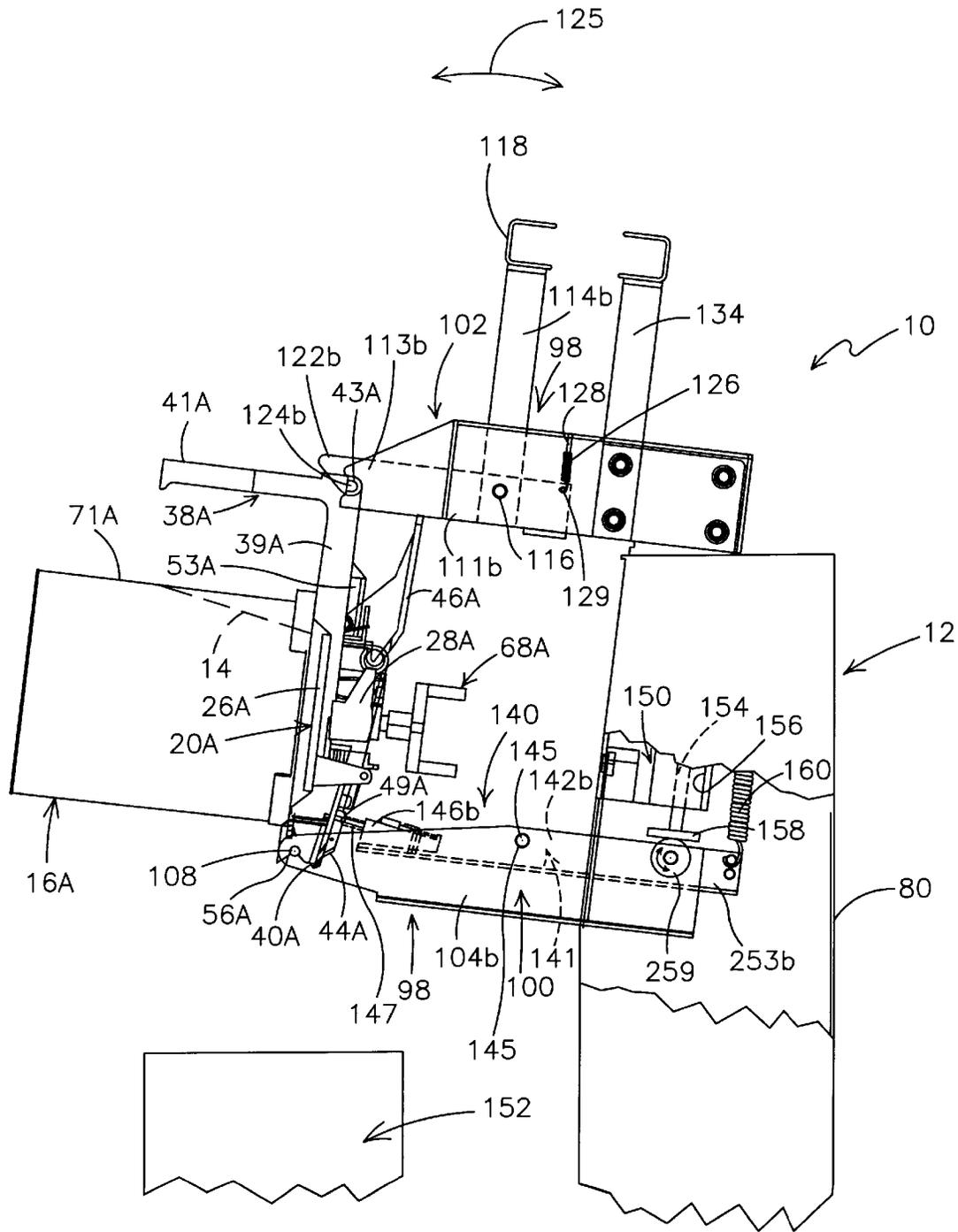


Fig. 7

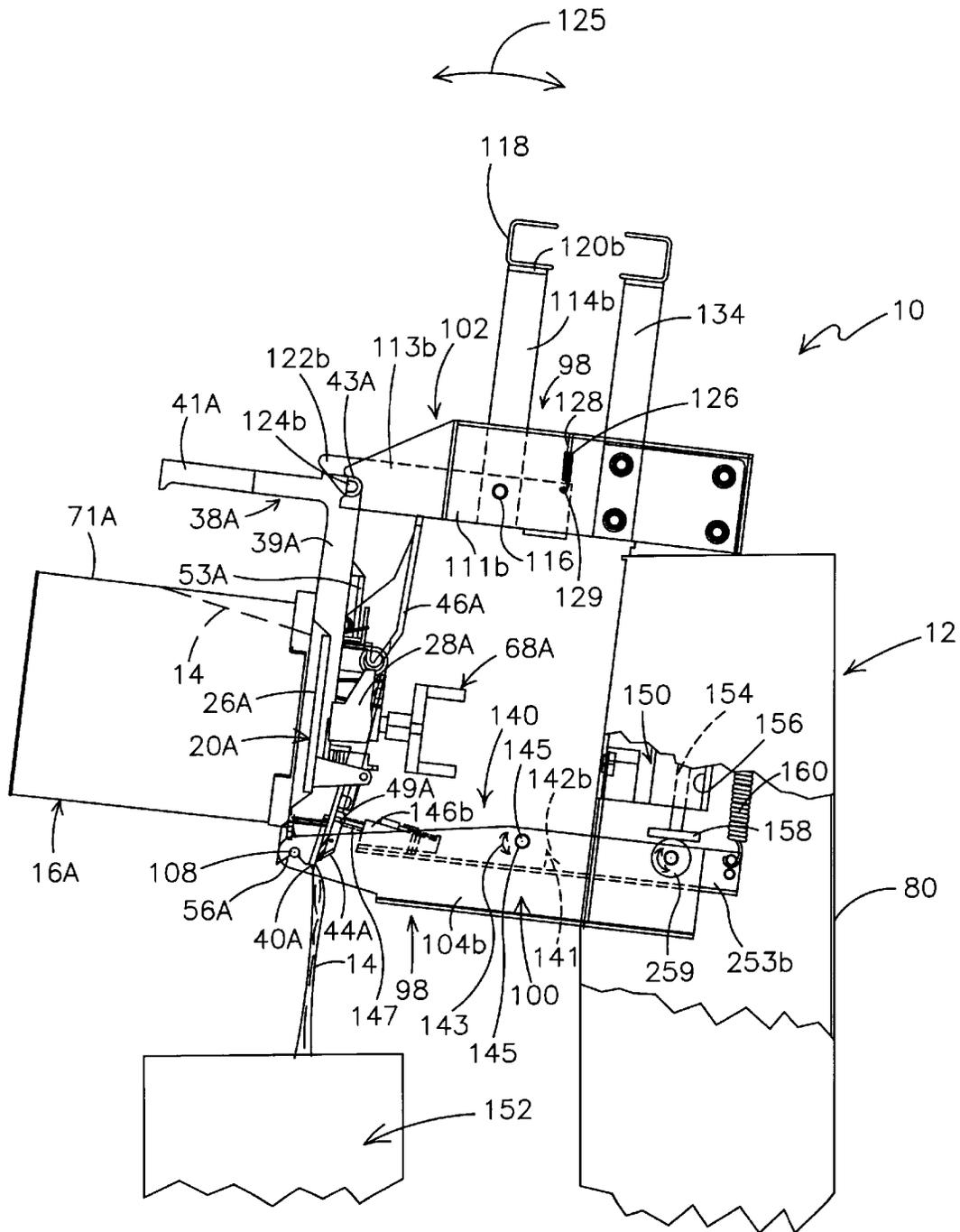


Fig. 8

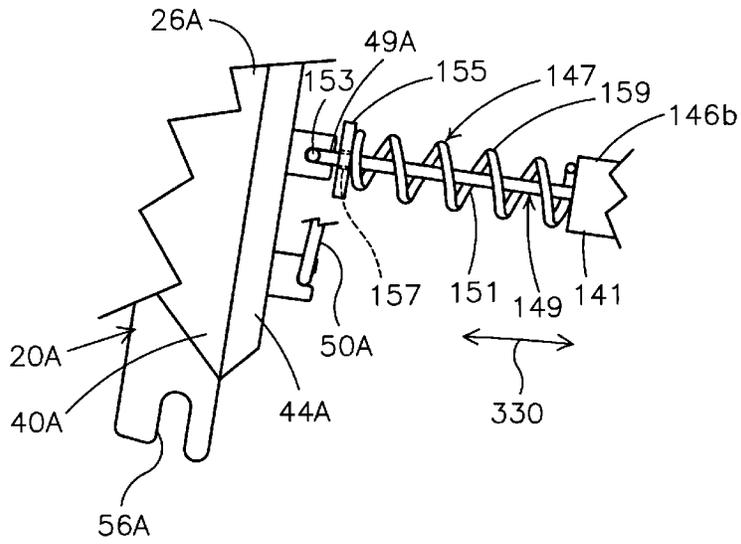


Fig. 9A

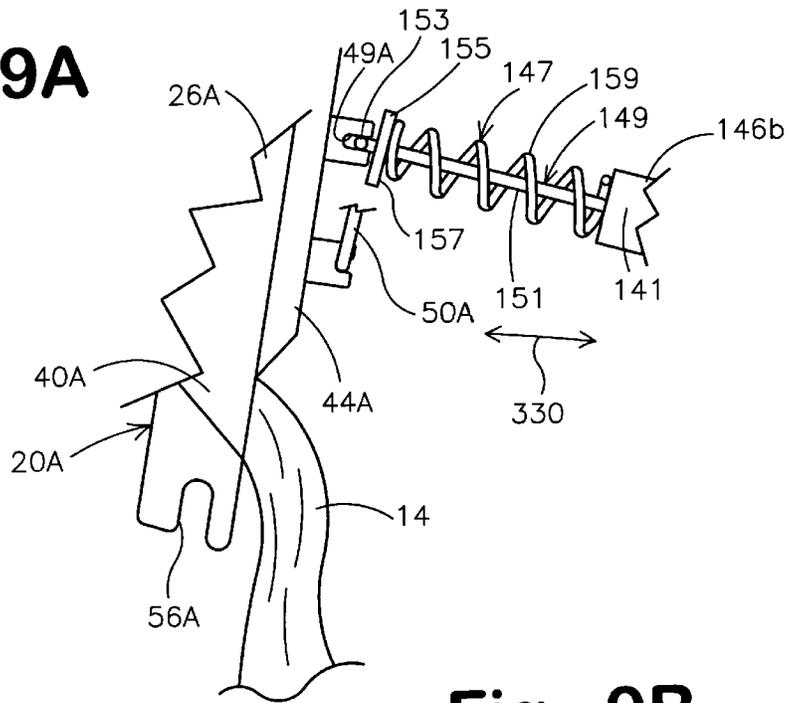


Fig. 9B

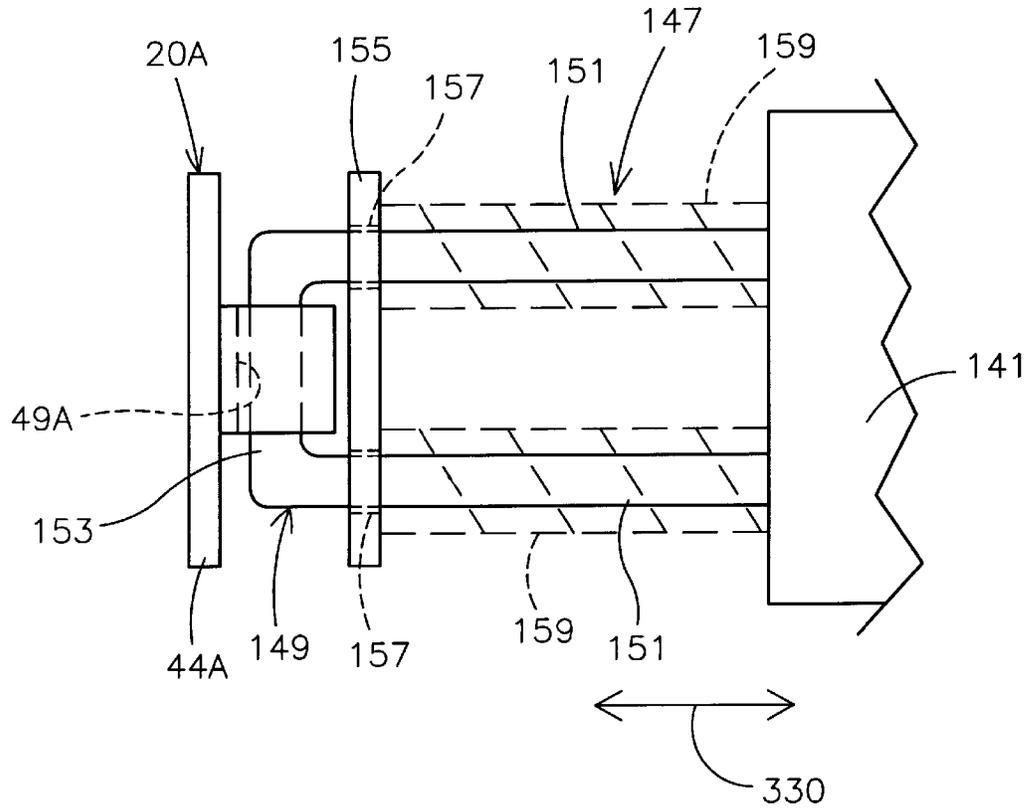


Fig. 10

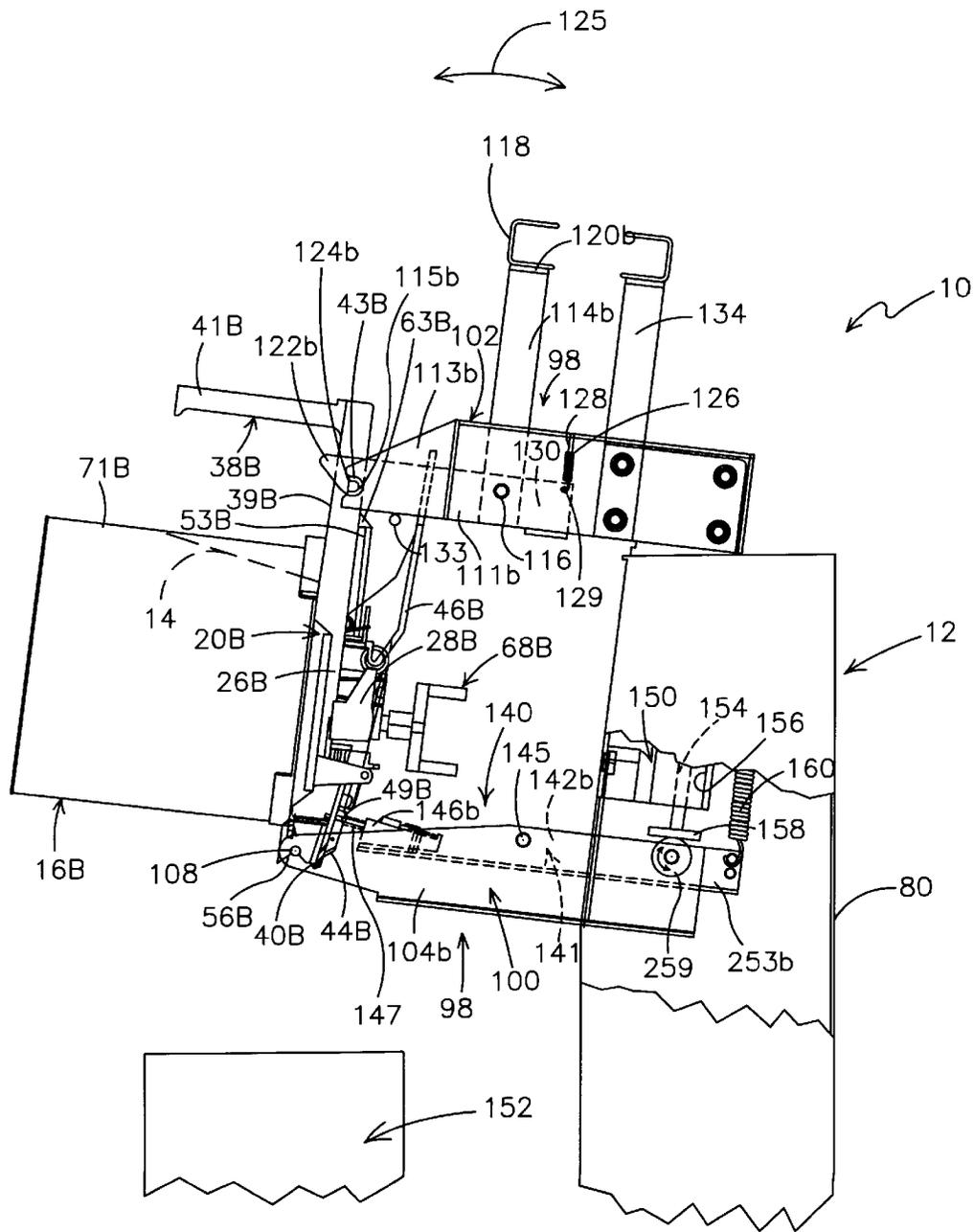


Fig. 11

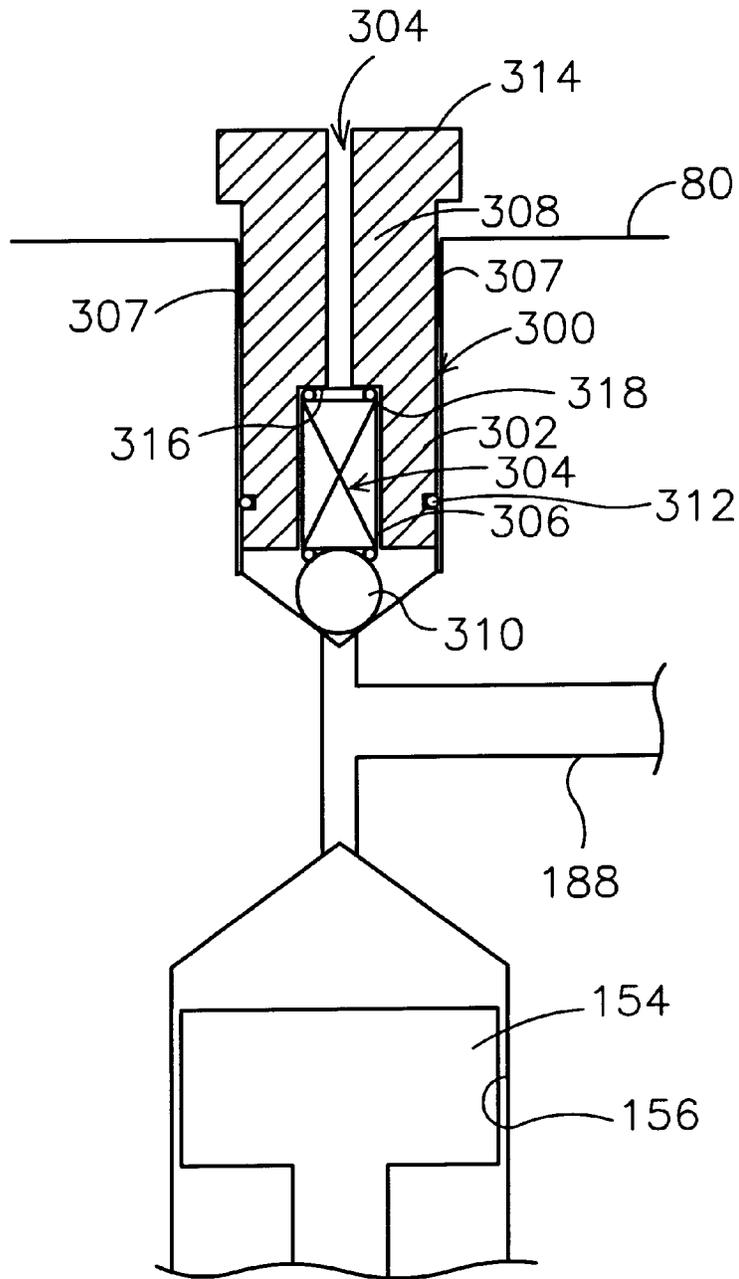


Fig. 12

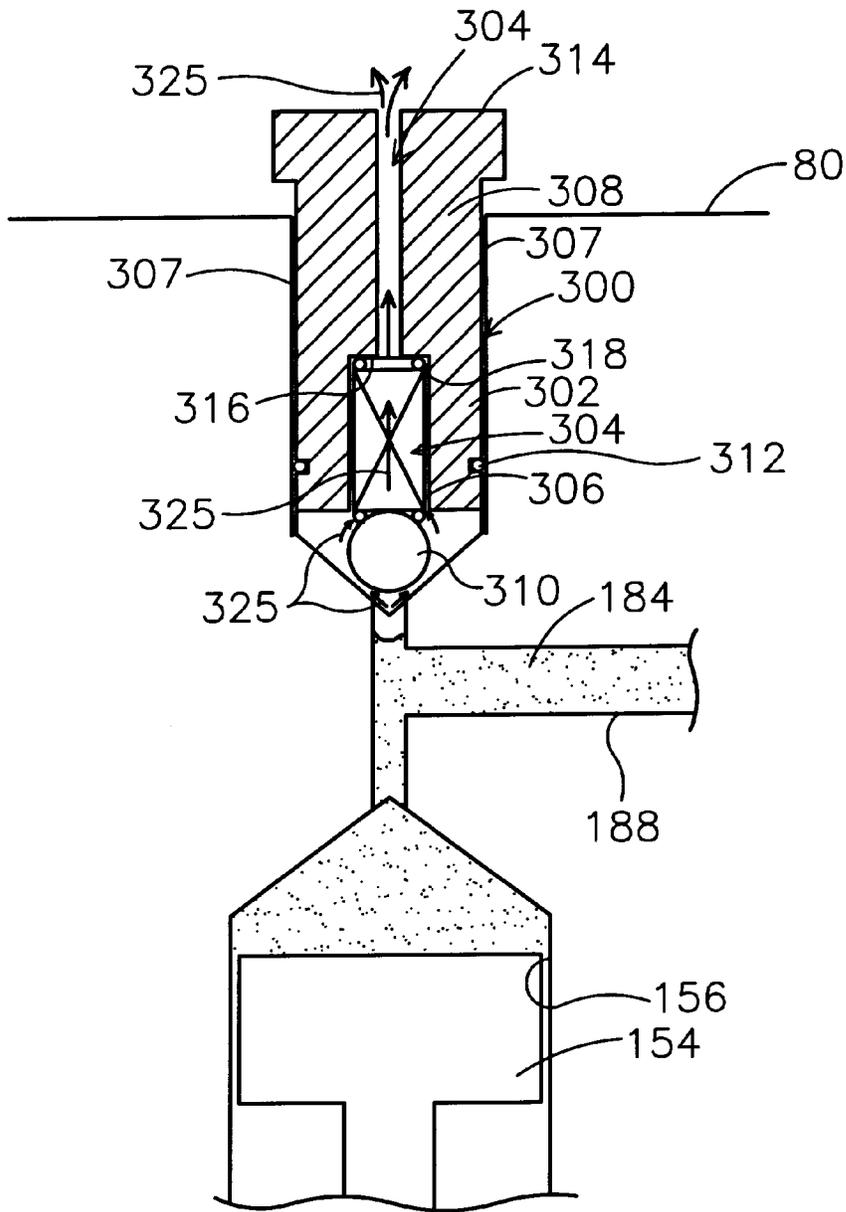


Fig. 13

**PAINT CONTAINER LID MEMBER
ADAPTABLE FOR USE WITH A PLURALITY
OF PAINT MIXING SYSTEMS**

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This patent application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/189,338, entitled "Paint Container Lid For A Semi-Automated Automotive Paint Dispensing System"; and U.S. Pat. No. 6,053,218 entitled "Semi-Automated System For Dispensing Automotive Paint", both of which were filed on Nov. 10, 1998, assigned to the same assignee as herein, and incorporated herein by reference thereto. In addition, this patent application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/417,933, entitled "Semi-Automated Automotive Paint Dispensing System" filed on even date herewith, assigned to the same assignee, and incorporated herein by reference thereto; to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/416,871, entitled "Fluid Seal For A Pour Spout Of A Paint Container Lid Member" filed on even date herewith, assigned to the same assignee, and incorporated herein by reference thereto; and to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/416,729, entitled "Lid Member For A Paint Container Useable With A Semi-Automated Paint Dispensing System" filed on even date herewith, assigned to the same assignee, and incorporated herein by reference thereto.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to mixing paint components, such as colorants, tints and pearls, to create automotive paint formulas. In particular, the present invention is a paint container lid member that can be secured to an original paint component container. The lid member includes a stirring device for mixing the paint component within the original container. The stirring device is adapted to receive any one of a plurality of stirring device actuators to adapt the lid member to be useable in a plurality of different pourable component mixing systems.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the automotive body repair industry, paint vendors provide auto body repair businesses, such as body shops and jobbers, with their paint formulas. Generally, these paint formulas are a composition (i.e., mixture) of paint components, such as colorants, tints, pearls, metallics, binders and/or balancers, that, once mixed, produce the desired color of paint to be applied to a repaired vehicle. The paint formulas of the paint vendors are formulated to match the colors that have been applied to vehicles by new car manufacturers over the years. In addition, these paint formulas include variants, to match the color fading of paint that can occur to a vehicle over years of service. Moreover, the palettes of paint formulas of the paint vendors also have custom colors (i.e., unconventional colors not typically used by vehicle manufacturers) that may be used to produce special finishes for custom or show cars. Hence, paint vendors provide body shops and jobbers with literally thousands of paint formulas for producing the vast spectrum of colors needed in the automotive body repair industry.

In the past, paint vendors would provide the body shops and jobbers with microfiche containing their paint formulas. Today the paint formulas are stored in computer memory. To determine the particular paint formula for a particular vehicle repair/paint job, a system operator, such as an employee of the body shop or jobber, first obtains the color code from the vehicle. This color code is typically part of the

vehicle's identification number. In the case of an unconventional color, to be used to produce a custom paint finish, the code for a particular color is obtained from a catalog. This color code is then entered into the microprocessor of the computer, which accesses the computer memory, and displays, via a monitor, the paint vendor's paint formula which matches the identified vehicle color code.

The paint formulas are displayed according to the weight of the different paint components for mixing specific quantities of the paint formula, and the order in which the displayed paint components are to be mixed. Typically, paint formula mixing quantities are listed in quart, half gallon and gallon sizes, while the weight of the particular paint components needed to mix the desired quantity of paint, are listed in grams to a precision of a tenth of a gram. Generally, the paint components comprising tints, colorants, pearls and/or metallics are mixed first, while the paint components comprising binders and/or balancers are added last. Depending on the desired color, the paint formula can require just a few paint components, or over a dozen paint components, that must be mixed with a great degree of precision, to achieve a perfect color match.

Once the system operator determines that the correct desired paint formula is displayed on the computer monitor, the operator places a paint receptacle on a weigh cell that is linked to the microprocessor of the computer. Generally, a receptacle larger than the quantity of paint formula to be mixed is used to accommodate any excess paint inadvertently mixed by the operator. With the receptacle on the weigh cell, the weigh cell is zeroed by the operator, to make ready for the process of adding paint components to the receptacle to mix the desired color paint formula. Generally, the various paint components (of which there are dozens) are stored in containers kept within a rack. The rack has a mechanism that periodically stirs the paint components within the containers, so that the various paint components are ready to be dispensed as part of the paint formula mixing process. Typically, these containers are the original quart and gallon sized metal containers within which the paint components are shipped to the body shop or jobber. In metric system countries, these containers are the original one liter and four liter sized metal containers within which the paint components are shipped to the body shop or jobber. The original covers of these containers are replaced by specialized paint container lids that include stirring paddles that work with the stirring mechanism of the rack. These specialized paint container lids also have pour spouts that allow the paint components of the containers to be dispensed (i.e., poured out) into the receptacle atop the weigh cell. The pour spout of the specialized paint container lid is covered by a cover element that helps to protect the paint component within the container from contaminants. The cover element for the pour spout is movable between an opened state in which the paint component can be poured from its container through the pour spout by tipping (i.e., tilting) the container, and a closed state.

To reproduce the desired paint formula, the system operator begins by identifying the first listed paint component of the paint formula to be mixed. The operator then pours, by hand, the paint component into the weigh cell supported paint receptacle, until the weight of the paint component dispensed (i.e., poured) into the receptacle matches what is displayed on the computer monitor. The operator continues along on this course (i.e., hand pouring the paint components from their containers), until the correct weight of all paint components, needed to mix the desired color paint formula, have been added to the paint receptacle atop the weigh cell.

Although the above described system for mixing paint components (according to a paint formula), using the original containers of the liquid paint components and the above described specialized container lids, allows a skilled system operator to dispense the needed paint components to adequately recreate paint colors needed for repair/paint jobs, there are some disadvantages to this system. For example, there are at least two different types of paint component mixing racks for storing original containers of paint components. Each of these paint component mixing storage racks has a unique mixing system for stirring the liquid paint components within the original containers. As such, each of these unique mixing systems requires a unique lid member and associated stirring paddle device to allow the original container to be accommodated within the particular paint component mixing storage rack. Moreover, to mix a desired paint formula requires that the paint components be added to the paint receptacle, atop the weigh cell, with a great degree of accuracy. This accuracy, as stated earlier, is typically to a precision of 0.1 grams. For even a highly skilled operator this great degree of precision is difficult to obtain when hand pouring the paint components needed to mix the desired paint formula. It is especially difficult when many paint components must be poured into the paint receptacle in order to duplicate the paint formula.

The most common error on the part of the system operator of the body shop or jobber is over pouring which is due primarily to the manual labor intensive nature of the paint component dispensing process. Over pouring occurs when the weight of the paint component added to the receptacle atop the weigh cell, exceeds the weight of the component shown on the computer display for the desired paint formula. When this happens, the microprocessor of the computer recalculates the weights of the other paint components that need to be added to the receptacle to compensate for the over poured component. This recalculation is done automatically by the microprocessor since the weigh cell is linked to the computer. Based upon this recalculation, the system operator then needs to re-pour the other paint components to offset the over poured component of the paint formula.

While this re-pouring task may not be difficult when the paint formula only has a few paint components, the re-pouring task is particularly time consuming when there is a great number of components in the paint formula. Specifically, if an over pouring error is made in the last paint component of a series of ten components of a paint formula, then all of the previous nine components may have to be re-poured to compensate. This re-pouring task may be further complicated if another error is made during the re-pouring of the paint components, as this further error may require that some components be re-poured two or three times until the paint formula is finally accurately reproduced. Hence, over pouring errors can be costly to a body shop or jobber because of the additional man hours needed to mix the paint formula.

Not only are over pouring errors expensive because of the additional man hours needed to reproduce the paint formula, over pouring errors are also costly in the amount of additional paint formula that is mixed because of the errors. Automotive paint can cost in excess of \$100.00 per quart. An over pouring error of just one pint may translate into an additional cost of \$50.00 that a body shop or jobber may have to absorb, unless this additional paint cost can be justified to an automobile collision insurance carrier. Moreover, this additional paint, if not used in the repair/paint job, becomes a hazardous waste that must be disposed of properly, thereby adding still more costs that are attributable to paint component over pouring errors.

There is a need for an improved system for mixing paint components according to a paint formula. In particular, there is a need for a paint container lid member, that can be used with the an original container of the paint component, and is compatible with more than one paint component mixing storage rack. In addition, the lid member should be compatible with a system for dispensing paint components according to a paint formula that substantially eliminates system operator errors, specifically over pouring errors, that can be costly to a body shop or jobber. The paint container lid members together with the paint component dispensing system should be easy to use, so as not to require a highly skilled operator, and should make better use of an operator's time to allow an operator to mix a greater number of paint formulas during a work day. In addition, the paint component lid members and the paint component dispensing system should comply with all regulations and laws governing the handling and mixing of paint components for the duplication of automotive paint formulas.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a lid member for an original container of a pourable component, such as a liquid paint component. The lid member is usable in a plurality of different liquid paint component mixing systems. In addition, the lid member is useable with a system for dispensing the paint component from its original cylindrical container into a paint receptacle according to a paint formula to form a liquid paint mixture. The lid member includes a base portion that is adapted to releasably engage an open top of a side wall of the paint component container. The base portion defines a stirring device aperture. The base portion also has a pour spout through which the paint component can be dispensed and a movable cover element. The cover element is movable between a closed state, wherein the cover element covers the pour spout and the liquid paint component is prevented from being dispensed from its original container, and an opened state, wherein the pour spout is uncovered and the paint component can be dispensed from its original container, through the pour spout, and into the paint receptacle upon tilting of the original cylindrical container. A stirring device for mixing the paint component within the container is mounted to the base portion of the lid member. The stirring device includes a shaft member rotatably received within the stirring device aperture of the base portion. The shaft member has a first end positioned within the paint component container and an opposite second end. At least one mixing paddle is secured to the first end of the shaft member. The at least one mixing paddle stirs the liquid paint component within the paint component container. The stirring device also includes a plurality of different paddle actuators. Each of the plurality of different paddle actuators is singly mountable to the second end of the shaft member to adapt the lid member to a desired mixing system of the plurality of different liquid paint component mixing systems.

This lid member can be used with the original container of a liquid paint component. In addition, this lid member is compatible with more than one paint component mixing system, and is further compatible with a semi-automated system for dispensing liquid paint components from their original containers that virtually eliminates system operator errors, in particular over pouring errors, that can be costly to a body shop or jobber. The lid member and the semi-automated dispensing system are easy to use, and do not require a highly skilled operator, since operator interface with the lid members and the dispensing system is substan-

tially limited to identifying the desired paint formula, and loading and unloading the proper containers of the liquid paint components to and from the dispensing apparatus. This lid member/dispensing system automatically dispenses (i.e., pours) the liquid paint components from their containers, thereby ensuring a highly accurate, precision liquid paint component pour. This highly accurate liquid paint component pour substantially limits the additional cost of the added paint components attributable to over pouring errors. In addition, the lid members of the present invention together with the paint dispensing system makes efficient use of the operator's time, since the operator is free to perform other duties instead of manually pouring the proper amounts of the liquid paint components from their containers. This efficiency gain allows the operator to mix a greater number of paint formulas during a work day. Lastly, the paint component lid members, of the present invention, together with the semi-automated dispensing system complies with all regulations and laws (such as being explosion protected) governing the safe handling and mixing of liquid paint components for the duplication of automotive paint formulas.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding of the present invention and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate the embodiments of the present invention and together with the description serve to explain the principals of the invention. Other embodiments of the present invention and many of the intended advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated as the same become better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals designate like parts throughout the figures thereof, and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating a dispensing and control apparatus of a semi-automated system for dispensing liquid paint components from their original containers in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged perspective view better illustrating the dispensing apparatus of the dispensing system of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3A is a side elevational view of a quart size original paint container and lid member for holding a liquid paint component with a cover element and vent mechanism shown in a closed position, and further illustrating a first stirring device paddle actuator that is compatible with a first type of liquid paint component mixing system.

FIG. 3B is a side elevational view similar to FIG. 3A of the quart size original paint container and lid member for holding a liquid paint component with the cover element and vent mechanism shown in an open position.

FIG. 3C is a side elevational view similar to FIG. 3A but illustrating a second stirring device paddle actuator that is compatible with a second type of liquid paint component mixing system.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the quart size lid member shown in FIG. 3A.

FIG. 5 is top elevational view of the paint container and lid member shown in FIG. 3A.

FIG. 6 is partial side elevational view with some parts omitted for clarity of the dispensing apparatus of FIGS. 1 and 2, illustrating a quart size original container of a paint component being loaded into/unloaded from the dispensing apparatus.

FIG. 7 is a partial side elevational view with some parts omitted for clarity similar to FIG. 6, illustrating the quart size original container ready for dispensing of the liquid paint component.

FIG. 8 is a partial side elevational view with some parts omitted for clarity similar to FIG. 7, illustrating the liquid paint component being dispensed from its quart size original container.

FIG. 9A is an enlarged, partial side elevational view of a force applying mechanism for a cover element of the lid member with the cover element shown in a closed position corresponding to FIG. 7.

FIG. 9B is an enlarged, partial side elevational view similar to FIG. 9A with the cover element shown in an open position corresponding to FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is an enlarged, partial top elevational view of the force applying mechanism shown in FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 is a partial side elevational view with some parts omitted for clarity similar to FIG. 7, illustrating a gallon size original container ready for dispensing of a liquid paint component.

FIG. 12 is a partial side elevational view of an automatic bleeder valve of the semi-automated dispensing system of the present invention with the valve shown in a closed position.

FIG. 13 is a partial side elevational view similar to FIG. 12 illustrating the automatic bleeder valve in an opened position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A semi-automated dispensing system 10 for dispensing liquid paint components according to a paint formula to form a liquid paint mixture in accordance with the present invention is illustrated generally in FIGS. 1 and 2. The dispensing system 10 generally comprises a dispensing apparatus 12 for dispensing a liquid paint component 14 from its original container 16A and 16B, and a control apparatus 18 for controlling the dispensing apparatus 12. FIGS. 1, 3-8 show the quart size original container 16A having a lid member 20A, while FIG. 11 illustrates the gallon size original container 16B having a lid member 20B. In metric system countries, the lid member 20A fits a one liter size original container and the lid member 20B fits a four liter size original container. The containers 16A and 16B (without the lid members 20A and 20B) are typical cylindrical shaped, metal vessels within which liquid paint components 14, such as tints, colorants, pearls, metallics, binders and balancers (used to mix automotive paint according to a paint formula) are shipped from a liquid paint component manufacturer to customers, such as body shops and jobbers. Beyond their size differences, the quart size and gallon size containers 16A and 16B are substantially identical. Therefore, only the quart size original container will be described with particularity. The lid members 20A and 20B are substantially similar, therefore the quart size lid member 20A will be described with particularity, and only the differences in the gallon size lid member 20B relative to the quart size lid member 20A will be described with particularity.

As seen best in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the original container 16A is cylindrical shaped having an open top 22A defined by a circumferential lip 24A. As seen best in FIGS. 3A-5, the lid member 20A includes a base portion 26A adapted to engage and seal the open top 22A of the container 16A to

protect the liquid paint component **14** within the container **16A**. The base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A** includes a pair of spaced, pivotable cam lock mechanisms **28A** that are used to releasably secure the lid member **20A** to the original container **16A**. Each of the cam lock mechanisms **28A** is defined by a cam element **30A** connected to a cam actuator **32A** by way of a post member **34A**. Pivotally moving the cam actuators **32A** by hand, as represented by double headed arrow **36** (see FIG. 4), moves the cam elements **30A** into and out of engagement with the lip **24A** to secure and release the lid member **20A** from the original container **16A**.

The lid member **20A** farther includes a handle **38A**, for easy handling of the original container **16A** when the lid member **20A** is secured thereto. The handle **38A** includes a first portion **39A** generally parallel to the lip **24A** of the original container **16A**, a second portion **41A** (grasped by a user) that extends substantially perpendicular to the first portion **39**, and a pair of oppositely directed dispensing system latch lugs **43A** positioned at the intersection of the first and second portions **39A**, **41A**. The purpose of the pair of dispensing system latch lugs **43A** will become clear below. In the gallon size lid member **20B**, as illustrated in FIG. 11, the pair of oppositely directed dispensing system latch lugs **43B** are positioned along the length of the first portion **39B** of the handle **38B** instead of at the intersection of the first and second portions **39A** and **41A** as in the quart size lid member **20A**. Other than the size differences between the quart size lid member **20A** and the gallon size lid member **20B**, this different positioning of the dispensing system latch lugs **43A**, **43B** constitutes the main and only real difference between the lid members **20A** and **20B**.

The lid member **20A** also includes a liquid paint component pour spout **40A**. The pour spout **40A** is covered by a linearly movable, as represented by double headed directional arrow **42** (see FIGS. 3A and 3B), cover element **44A**. The cover element **44A** is linearly movable between a closed state (shown in FIG. 3A) and an opened state (shown in FIG. 3B). In the closed state of the cover element **44A**, the liquid paint component **14** is prevented from being poured (i.e., dispensed) from the original container **16A** through the pour spout **40A**. In the opened state of the cover element **44A**, the liquid paint component **14** can be poured from the original container **16A** through the pour spout **40A** by tilting the container **16A** using the handle **38A**.

As seen when comparing FIGS. 3A and 3B, the cover element **44A** is movable between its closed and opened states via a thumb actuator **46A** that is pivotally secured to the base portion **26A** by way of a pivot pin **48A**. The thumb actuator **46A** is pivotally movable as shown by double headed directional arrow **47**. As seen best in FIG. 4, the thumb actuator **46A** is connected to the cover element **44A** via a wire loop **50A**. When the thumb actuator **46A** is positioned as shown in FIG. 3A, the cover element **44A** is in its closed state. The thumb actuator **46A** is biased to this normal position in a known manner by a coil spring element **54A** (see FIGS. 3A and 3B). The coil spring element **54A** acts between the base portion **26A** and the thumb actuator **46A**. When the thumb actuator **46A** is positioned as shown in FIG. 3B, the cover element **44A** is in its opened state. The cover element **44A** is moved, from its closed state to its opened state, through the connecting wire loop **50A** by pivoting the thumb actuator **46A** about the pivot pin **48A** against the bias of the spring element **54A**. The cover element **44A** is allowed to return to its closed state from the opened state by simply releasing the thumb actuator **46A**. The lid member **20A** also includes a rotatable roller element

51A (see FIGS. 4 and 5) that bears against the wire loop **50A** to help maintain a seal between the cover element **44A** and the pour spout **40A**. As seen in FIGS. 3A–5, the cover element **44A** also includes a slot **49A** the purpose of which will be made clear below.

As seen in FIGS. 3A–4, the base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A** includes a vent member **53A** defining a vent passage **55A** that has a first open end **57A** and an opposite second open end **59A**. The vent passage **55A** passes through the base portion **26A** such that the first open end **57A** communicates with an interior region **61A** of the original container **16A** and the second open end **59A** communicates with atmosphere. The second open end **59A** is sealable by way of a linearly movable plug element **63A**. As seen best when comparing FIGS. 3A and 3B, the plug element **63A** is linearly movable between a sealed position (see FIG. 3A) wherein a cone shaped end **65A** of the plug element **63A** is engaged with the second open end **59A** of the vent passage **55A**, and an unsealed position (see FIG. 3B) wherein the cone shaped end **65A** of the plug element **63A** is disengaged from the second open end **59A** of the vent passage **55A**.

The plug element **63A** is linearly movable between the sealed and unsealed positions by actuation of the thumb actuator **46A**. The thumb actuator **46A** is coupled to the plug element **63A** by way of a wire loop element **67A** that engages a groove **69A** in the plug element **63A**. Movement of the thumb actuator **46A** between the positions shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B moves the plug element **63A** (by way of the wire loop element **67A**) between the sealed and unsealed positions. In the sealed position of the plug element **63A**, contaminants are prevented from entering the vent passage **55A**. In the unsealed position of the plug element **63A** (which occurs when the liquid paint component **14** is being dispensed from the original container **16A** through the pour spout **40A** upon actuation of the thumb actuator **46A**), air is allowed to enter the vent passage **55A** through the second open end **59A** so that the air passes into the interior region **61A** of the original container **16A** through the second open end **57A** to fill the void of the dispensed liquid paint component **14**.

As seen best in FIGS. 3A–8, the second open end **59A** of the vent passage **55A** is located radially exterior to the cylindrical side wall **71A** of the original container **16A**. This location of the second open end **59A** of the vent passage **55A** prevents the liquid paint component **14** from flowing out of the original container **16A** through the vent passage **55A** and the subsequent fouling of the exterior portions of the lid member **20A**. This undesirable condition is prevented because the second open end **59A** of the vent passage **55A** is located above the fluid level of the liquid paint component **14** in the dispensing state of the liquid paint component illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 11. The vent passage **55A** extends substantially perpendicular to and radially from a central axis **73** of the original container **16A** (see FIG. 3A).

As seen best in FIGS. 3A–3C and 4, the lid member **20A** further includes an alignment slot **56A** positioned at a first portion of the lid member **20A** at the pour spout **40A** adjacent to the cover element **44A**. As seen in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the alignment slot **56A** is positioned so as to define a plane **60** that is parallel to an upper surface **62A** of the circumferential lip **24A** of the original container **16A**. The purpose of the alignment slot **56A** will become clear below. The alignment slot **56A** is formed integrally with the base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A**.

As seen best in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the lid member **20A** further includes a stirring device **68A** for stirring the liquid

paint component **14** within the original container **16A**. The stirring device **68A** includes a shaft member **74A** having a first end **351A** positioned within the interior region **61A** of the original container **16A** and an opposite second end **353A**. The shaft member **74A** is rotatably received within a stirring device aperture **355A** of the base portion **26A**. A plurality of paddles **70A** are connected to the first end **351A** of the shaft member **74A** such that upon rotation of the shaft member **74A** relative to the base portion **26A**, the paddles **70A** stir the liquid paint component **14** within the interior region **61A** of the original container **16A**. The second end **353A** of the shaft member **74A** is adapted to receive a plurality of different paddle actuators so as to adapt the lid member **20A** to be useable with a plurality of different liquid paint component mixing systems. Each of the paddle actuators is individually mountable to the shaft member **74A** of the base portion **26A** to adapt the lid member **20A** to a desired mixing system of the plurality of different liquid paint component mixing systems.

The advantage of having a lid member **20A** that is adaptable to a plurality of different liquid paint component mixing systems is readily apparent. For example, a manufacturer of paint component lid members need not manufacture and keep on hand a supply of different lid members for each type of liquid paint component mixing system. Instead, this manufacturer need only manufacture and store a single generic (i.e., universal) lid member **20A**, **20B** and a supply of paddle actuators compatible with the various liquid paint component mixing systems. This results in a huge reduction in inventoried components as well as a related reduction in the man power needed to track and restock this inventory. When an order is received by the manufacturer from a customer for a particular lid member for a liquid paint component mixing system, the manufacturer need only take the universal lid member **20A**, **20B** and install the particular paddle actuator for the mixing system of the customer.

A first type of paddle actuator **72A** is illustrated in FIG. **3A**. The paddle actuator **72A** includes a bar portion **360A** having first and second opposite ends **362A** and **363A**, respectively. A base portion **365A** is integral with and extends from a median region of the bar portion **360A**. The base portion **365A** defines a mounting hole **367A** for receiving the second end **353A** of the shaft member **74A**. First and second legs **369A** and **371A**, respectively, are integral with and extend from the first and second ends **362A**, **363A** of the bar portion **360A**. The base portion **365A** and the first and second legs **369A**, **371A** extend substantially perpendicular to the bar portion **360A**. The first and second legs **369A**, **371A** are engageable by only one type of liquid paint component mixing system of the plurality of mixing systems. This liquid paint component mixing system is adapted to rotate the paddle actuator **72A**, as represented by double headed directional arrow **76**, which causes the shaft member **74A** and the paddles **70A** to rotate and stir the liquid paint component **14**.

A second type of paddle actuator **372A** is illustrated in FIG. **3C**. The paddle actuator **372A** includes a drive gear **375A** having a plurality of gear teeth **377A** extending about a circumference of the drive gear **375A**. A base portion **379A** is integral with and extends from the drive gear **375A**. The base portion **379A** defines a mounting hole **381A** for receiving the second end **353A** of the shaft member **74A**. The paddle actuator **372A** further includes a shroud member **383A** having a shroud portion **385A** that extends about a portion of the drive gear **375A**, and a mounting portion **387A** that is integral with and extends from the shroud portion

385A. A free end **389A** of the mounting portion **387A** engages a shroud mounting extension **391A** that is adjacent to the stirring device aperture **355A** on the base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A**. Engagement of the free end **389A** of the mounting portion **387A** with the shroud mounting extension **391A** mounts the shroud member **383A** to the base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A**. The drive gear **375A** is engageable by only a second type of liquid paint component mixing system of the plurality of mixing systems. This second liquid paint component mixing system is adapted to rotate the paddle actuator **372A**, as represented by double headed directional arrow **76**, which causes the shaft member **74A** and the paddles **70A** to rotate and stir the liquid paint component **14**. The paddle actuator **372A** further includes a spacer member **393A** having a mounting hole **395A** extending therethrough. The mounting hole **395A** is adapted to receive the shaft member **74A** such that the spacer member **393A** is positioned between the base member **26A** and the drive gear **375A**. The spacer member properly positions the drive gear **375A** relative to a pair of mounting channels **397A** integrally formed in the base portion **26A** of the lid member **20A**. The mounting channels **397A** are only engageable with corresponding guide members of the second type of liquid paint component mixing system.

As seen best in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the dispensing apparatus **12** of the dispensing system **10** includes a support frame **80**. As seen best in FIGS. **2** and **6**, the dispensing apparatus **12** further includes a receiving mechanism **98** for releasably engaging the original container **16A**, **16B** of the liquid paint component **14**. The receiving mechanism **98** is defined by first and second engaging mechanisms **100** and **102**, respectively.

As seen best in FIG. **2**, the first engaging mechanism **100** includes first and second spaced arms **104a** and **104b** rigidly mounted to the support frame so as to be fixed against movement relative thereto. A registration rod **108** rigidly connects together the first and second arms **104a** and **104b** at their free ends **110a** and **110b**. The registration rod **108** is adapted to releasably receive (i.e., engage) the alignment slot **56A** of the lid member **20A**. As seen in FIG. **6**, interengagement of the alignment slot **56A** with the registration rod **108** mounts (i.e., secures) and aligns a first portion of the container **16A** and lid member **20A** combination to the receiving mechanism **98** of the dispensing apparatus **12**.

The second engaging mechanism **102** includes first and second spaced plates **111** and **111** fixed to an upper end of the support frame **80**. Free ends **113a** and **113b** of the plates **111a**, **111b** include latch slots **115a** and **115b**, respectively. The second engaging mechanism **102** further includes first and second spaced L-shaped arms **114a** and **114b** pivotally mounted to the support frame **80** via a pivot pin **116**. A handle member **118** rigidly connects together the first and second L-shaped arms **114a** and **114b** at their first ends **120a** and **120b**. Second ends **122a** and **122b** of the first and second L-shaped arms **114a** and **114b** include latching notches **124a** and **124b**. The latching notches **124a** and **124b** are adapted to releasably receive (i.e., engage) the latch lugs **43A** on the handle **38A** of the lid member **20A** for the original container **16A** to secure the latch lugs **43A** in the latch slots **115a** and **115b** of the plates **111a**, **111b**. The L-shaped arms **114a** and **114b** of the second engaging mechanism **102** are pivotally movable as a unit, as represented by double headed arrow **125**, between an unlatched state, wherein the original container **16A** of the liquid paint component **14** can be engaged with and disengaged from the first and second engaging mechanisms **100** and **102** (shown in FIG. **6**); and a latched

state, wherein the original container 16A is securely held between the first and second engaging mechanisms 100 and 102 (shown in FIG. 7). As such the L-shaped arms 114a and 114b (i.e., the second engaging mechanism 102) exhibits only a single-degree-of-freedom of movement (i.e., pivotal movement only) relative to the support frame 80 and the first engaging mechanism 100 (i.e., the first and second spaced arms 104a and 104b). A tension spring element 126 is coupled between a mounting peg 128 of the support frame 80 and a mounting peg 129 of an extension arm 130 on the L-shaped arm 114a. The tension spring element 126 biases the L-shaped arms 114a and 114b defining a portion of the second engaging mechanism 102 to the latched state against the stop 133. A handle/stop member 134 limits movement of the L-shaped arms 114a and 114b in a clockwise direction as viewed in FIG. 6.

As seen best in FIGS. 2 and 6, the dispensing apparatus 12 of the dispensing system 10 further includes dispensing mechanism 140 mounted to the support frame 80 for moving the cover element 44A of the lid member 20A between its closed and open states. The dispensing mechanism 140 includes outwardly extending, first and second arms 142a and 142b that define an operating device 141 pivotally movable, as a unit, as represented by double headed directional arrow 143 (FIG. 8), relative to the support frame 80 about an axle 145. The free ends 146a and 146b, of the first and second arms 142a and 142b, include a force applying mechanism 147 (seen best in FIGS. 9–10) adapted to releasably engage the slot 49A in the cover element 44A on the lid member 20A (see FIGS. 6–10). The force applying mechanism 147 includes U-shaped wire member 149 having legs 151 and a connecting portion 153. The legs 151 are rigidly mounted to the operating device 141. As seen best in FIGS. 9 and 10, the connecting portion 153 is releasably received within the slot 49A of the cover element 44A. The force applying mechanism 147 further includes a force applying plate member 155 that is linearly movable relative to the U-shaped wire member 149 as represented by double headed arrow 330. The force applying plate member 155 includes apertures 157 that freely receive the legs 151 of the U-shaped wire member 149 to permit movement of the plate member 155 along the legs 151. A compression spring 159 surrounds each of the legs 151 and acts between the operating device 141 and the plate member 155 to provide a biasing force urges the plate member 155 against the cover element 44A to prevent inadvertent leakage of the liquid paint component 14 from the pour spout 40A of the lid member 20 atop the original container 16A when the original container 16A is mounted in the dispensing system 10 (see FIG. 7) and the cover element 44A is in a closed position.

As seen in FIG. 8, with the connecting portion 153 of the force applying mechanism 147 of the operating device 141 engaged with the slot 49A of the cover element 44A, a transit mechanism 150 of the dispensing mechanism 140 can pivotally move the operating device 141 between a first position and a second position. In the first position of the operating device 141 (FIG. 7), the cover element 44A of the lid member 20A is in its closed state which prevents the liquid paint component 14 from being dispensed from the original container 16A with the help of the force applying mechanism 147. In the second position of the operating device 141 (FIG. 8), the cover element 44A is in its opened state which allows the liquid paint component 14 to be dispensed (i.e., poured) from the original container 16A into a paint receptacle 152 (FIG. 1).

As set forth previously, the handles 38A and 38B of each of the lid members 20A and 2013 include the latch lugs 43A,

43B. The difference in positioning of these latch lugs 43A and 43B between the quart size lid member 20A and the gallon size lid member 20B results in the latch lugs 43A, 43B being the same position relative to the alignment slot 56A, 56B. This allows the receiving mechanism 98 (defined by the first and second engaging mechanisms 100 and 102) and the dispensing mechanism 140 to accommodate quart size original containers 16A (FIGS. 6–8) and gallon size original containers 16B (FIG. 11).

As seen best in FIGS. 6, the transit mechanism 150 of the dispensing mechanism 140 includes a piston member 154 linearly movable, along directional arrow 143 (FIG. 6), relative to a cylinder member 156. Opposite ends 253a and 253b of the first and second arms 142a and 142b (defining the operating device 141) are coupled to the piston member 154. A pad member 158 of the piston member 154 rides on a roller member 259 rotatably mounted to the arms 142a, 142b. Therefore movement of the piston member 154 within the cylinder member 156 causes the operating device 141 to move between its first and second positions. Tension spring elements 160 are coupled between the opposite ends 253a, 253b of the arms 142a, 142b and a mounting member 162 on the support frame 80. The tension springs 160 bias the operating device 141 to its first position (also known as the primary position of the piston member 154).

As seen in FIG. 1, a drive mechanism 170 of the transit mechanism 150 moves the piston member 154 relative to the cylinder member 156. The drive mechanism 170 includes a piston member 172 linearly movable, along double headed directional arrow 173, relative to a cylinder member 174 mounted to a frame 176 via bracket structure 177. A drive motor, such as a stepper motor 178, is also mounted to the frame 176. The drive motor 178 includes a drive screw 179 that is telescopically received within a drive tube 180 that is secured at one end to the piston member 172. The drive tube 180 is slidably received within a bearing 181 of the frame 176 to allow movement of the drive tube 180, and the piston member 172 therewith, relative to the frame 176, drive motor 178 and cylinder member 174. An opposite end of the drive tube 180 includes a drive nut 183 that threadably receives the drive screw 179 of the stepper motor 178. Operation of the stepper motor 178 turns the drive screw 179 within the drive nut 183. This in turn moves the drive tube 180 and therewith the piston member 172 within the cylinder member 174 along directional arrow 173. A fluid reservoir 182 containing a hydraulic fluid 184 is in fluid communication with the cylinder member 174. A fluid line 188 couples the fluid reservoir 182 to the cylinder member 156. In operation, movement of the piston member 172, via the stepper motor 178, forces hydraulic fluid 184 to move to and from the cylinder member 174 and the fluid reservoir 182 through the line 188 then into and out of the cylinder member 156 to move the piston member 154. Movement of the piston member 154, via the above described hydraulic fluid pressure, in turn moves the operating device 141 which in turn moves the cover element 44A of the lid member 20A between its opened and closed states.

As seen in FIGS. 12 and 13, the dispensing system 10 includes an automatic bleeder valve 300 to aid in initially filling the dispensing system 10 with hydraulic fluid 184. The hydraulic bleeder valve 300 includes a body member 302 defining an orifice 304 that extends through the body member 302 from a first end 306 to a second end 308. The orifice 304 is in fluid communication with the fluid line 188 and the cylinder member 156. A linearly movable ball valve 310 is positioned at the first end 306 of the body member 302. The ball valve 310 is movable between a first position,

wherein the ball valve **310** forms a fluid seal and air/hydraulic fluid **184** is prevented from passing into the orifice **304** (see FIG. 12), and a second position wherein the ball valve **310** acts as a check valve and air and/or hydraulic fluid **184** may pass through the orifice **304** from the first end **306** to the second end **308** (see FIG. 13). The body member **302** threadably engages the support frame **80** via threads **307** so as to be movable linearly relative thereto. The body member **302** includes a nut **314** at the second end **308** used to twist the body member **302** to move the body member **302** relative to the support frame **80**. Near the first end **306**, the body member **302** includes an O-ring seal member **312** to prevent air/hydraulic fluid **184** from flowing past the body member **302** through the threads **307**. An inner end **316** of the body member **302** bears against a compression spring **318** that in turn bears against the ball valve **310**.

In operation, to fill the cylinder member **156** with hydraulic fluid **184**, the body member **302** is loosened using the nut **314** which decompresses the spring **318** and allows the ball valve **310** to move to the position shown in FIG. 13. Hydraulic fluid **184** is then pumped through the fluid line **188** from the reservoir **182** via the piston member **172** of the drive mechanism **170**. The hydraulic fluid **184** passes from the fluid line **188** into the cylinder member **156** primarily due to gravity and because this is the fluid path of least resistance. Air within the fluid line **188** and the cylinder member **156** is automatically bled out (by the introduction of the hydraulic fluid **184**) through the automatic bleeder valve **300**. The air passes around the ball valve **310**, through the spring **318** and through the orifice **304** as represented by the arrows **325** in FIG. 13. The fluid line **188** and cylinder member **156** are full of hydraulic fluid **184** when the hydraulic fluid **184** passes out of the orifice **304**. The body member **302** is then tightened using the nut **314** which causes the inner end **316** of the body member **302** to bear against the spring **318** which compresses the spring against the ball valve **310** sealing off the orifice **304** of the bleeder valve **300**, thereby completing the filling process (see FIG. 12).

As seen in FIG. 1, the control apparatus **18** of the dispensing system **10** includes a weigh cell **190** for supporting the paint receptacle **152** and a control module **192**. The weigh cell **190** determines the weight of the liquid paint component dispensed (i.e., poured) from the original container **16A** into the paint receptacle **152**. The control module **192** includes a display monitor device **194** having a display **195**, a microprocessor device **196**, a data storage device **198** and a user interface device, such as a keyboard **200**. The keyboard **200** is coupled to the microprocessor device **196** via a communication line **202**. The microprocessor device **196** and the data storage device **198** are linked through a communication line **204**. The microprocessor device **196** is linked to the stepper motor **178** and to a sensor **205** for monitoring the position of the drive screw **179** through the communication line **206**. The microprocessor device **196** is linked to the display monitor device **194** through communication line **208** and is further linked to the weigh cell **190** via communication line **210**. Since the control module **192** (i.e., microprocessor device **196**) is linked to the stepper motor **178** and the sensor **205**, the control module **192** can control operation of the stepper motor **178**, and thereby movement of the piston members **172** and **154**, and hence movement of the cover element **44A** to dispense the liquid paint component **14** from the original container **16A**. In addition, since the control module **192** is further linked to the weigh cell **190**, the control module **192** can control the amount (i.e., the weight) of the liquid paint component **14**

dispensed from its original container **16A** to the paint receptacle **152** (atop the weigh cell **190**) based upon data (i.e., information) obtained from the weigh cell **190**. Moreover, since the control module **192** (i.e., the data storage device **198**) stores the paint formulas, the control module **192** can determine which liquid paint components **14** and the weights of these components needed to duplicate a particular paint formula and can control the dispensing mechanism **140** in accordance therewith.

As seen in FIG. 1, the control module **192** and the drive mechanism **170** are positioned in another room such that the communication line **210** and the fluid line **188** pass through a wall **212** so as to provide explosion protection for the dispensing system **10**. Alternatively, one or more of the display monitor device **194**, the microprocessor device **196**, and the keyboard **200** could be located next to the dispensing system **10** provided that these components are explosion protected.

In operation, to mix a particular paint formula, the operator of the semi-automated dispensing system **10** first accesses the control module **192** through the keyboard **200** to call up the desired paint formula using the microprocessor device **196** the data storage device **198**. The paint formula (i.e., the liquid paint components **14**) is then displayed on the display **195** of the display monitor device **194**. The operator then loads the first container **16A**, **16B** of the needed liquid paint components into the dispensing apparatus **12**.

As seen in FIG. 6, to mount (i.e., load) an original container **16A** of a liquid paint component **14** to the receiving mechanism **98** of the dispensing apparatus **12**, the operator of the dispensing system **10** first needs to pivot the second engaging mechanism **102** (defined by the L-shaped arms **114a**, **114b**) clockwise (as viewed in FIG. 6) from its normal latched state to its unlatched state, against the handle/stop member **134** mounted to the support frame **80**. The operator, while gripping both the handle member **118** and the handle/stop member **134** to hold the second engaging mechanism **102** in its unlatched state (against the bias of the spring element **126**), then engages the alignment slot **56A** of the lid member **20A** with the registration rod **108** of the first engaging mechanism **100** (FIG. 6). Next, while still holding the second engaging mechanism **102** in its unlatched state, the operator pivots the container **16A** and lid member **20A** combination clockwise (as viewed in FIG. 6) until the connecting portion **153** of the force applying mechanism **147** of the operating device **141** is fully seated in the slot **49A** of the cover element **44A**, and the latch lugs **43A** are fully seated in the latch slots **115a**, **115b** of the plates **111a**, **111b**. With the alignment slot **56** now fully seated on the registration rod **108**, the connecting portion **153** of the operating device **141** fully seated in the slot **49A** of the cover element, and the latch lugs **43A** fully seated in the latch slots **115a**, **115b**, the operator pivots the second engaging mechanism **102** counterclockwise to its latched state, so that the latching notches **124a** and **124b** engage the latch lugs **43A** of the lid member **20A** securing the original container **16A** lid member **20A** combination to the receiving mechanism **98** the dispensing apparatus **12**. To remove the container **16A** for the dispensing apparatus **12**, this above described process is simply reversed.

The operator then starts the dispensing process using the keyboard **200** of the control module **192**. Since the control module **192** (i.e., microprocessor device **196**) is linked to the stepper motor **178** and the sensor **205**, the control module **192** controls operation of the stepper motor **178**, and thereby movement of the piston members **154** and **172**, and hence movement of the cover element **44A** to dispense (i.e., pour)

the liquid paint component **14** from the original container **16A** into the paint receptacle **152**. The arrangement of the second engaging mechanism **102** and the latch lugs **43A** prevents movement of the cover element **44A** from inadvertently disengaging the alignment slot **56A** from the first registration rod **108**. The weight of the liquid paint component **14** dispensed into the paint receptacle **152** is monitored by the control module **192** through the weigh cell **190**, thereby ensuring an accurate liquid paint component pour. Once the first liquid paint component **14** is poured, its container **16A**, **16B** is removed and is replaced with the next paint component container **16A**, **16B** and so on, until all paint components **14** of the paint formula have been added to the paint receptacle **152**, thereby completing the paint formula mixing process.

This lid member **20A**, **20B** can be used with the original container **16A**, **16B** of a liquid paint component **14**. In addition, this lid member **20A**, **20B** is compatible with more than one paint component mixing system, and is further compatible with the semi-automated dispensing system **10**, for dispensing liquid paint components **14** from their original containers **16A**, **16B** that virtually eliminates system operator errors, in particular over pouring errors, that can be costly to a body shop or jobber. The lid member **20A**, **20B** together with the semi-automated dispensing system **10** is easy to use, and does not require a highly skilled operator, since operator interface with the lid members **20A**, **20B** and the dispensing system **10** is substantially limited to identifying the desired paint formula, and loading and unloading the proper containers **16A**, **16B** of the liquid paint components **14** to and from the dispensing apparatus **12**. The operator need no longer manually pour the paint components **14** from their containers **16A**, **16B**. The lid member/dispensing system automatically dispenses (i.e., pours) the liquid paint components **14** from their containers **16A**, **16B**, thereby ensuring a highly accurate, precision liquid paint component pour. In addition, the lid members **20A**, **20B**, of the present invention, together with the paint dispensing system **10**, makes efficient use of the operator's time, since the operator is free to perform other duties instead of holding the containers **16A**, **16B** and performing the task of manually pouring the proper amounts of the liquid paint components **14**. This efficiency gain allows the operator to mix a greater number of paint formulas during a work day. Lastly, the paint component lid members **20A**, **20B**, of the present invention, and the semi-automated dispensing system **10** comply with all regulations and laws, such as being explosion protected, governing the handling and mixing of liquid paint components **14** for the duplication of automotive paint formulas.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to preferred embodiments, workers skilled in the art will recognize that changes may be made in form and detail without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, although the lid members **20A** and **20B** and the semi-automated dispensing system **10** have been described as useable to dispense liquid automotive paint components **14** from their original containers **16A** and **16B**, lid members and the dispensing system can be used to dispense other pourable components, such as primers, thinners and liquid or powdered chemicals. In particular the lid members **20A** and **20B** and the dispensing system **10** could be used in laboratory or pharmaceutical organizations to accurately dispense liquid and powdered chemicals according to a desired formula.

What is claimed is:

1. A lid member for an original container of a pourable component, the lid member being usable in a plurality of

different pourable component mixing systems, the lid member comprising:

- a base portion adapted to releasably engage an open top of a side wall of the original container of the pourable component, the base portion defining a stirring device aperture;
- a pour spout on the base portion through which the pourable component can be dispensed from its original container;
- a cover element for the pour spout, the cover element being movably mounted to the base portion such that the cover element is movable between a closed state, wherein the cover element covers the pour spout and the pourable component is prevented from being dispensed from the original container, and an opened state, wherein the pour spout is uncovered and the pourable component can be dispensed from its original container through the pour spout; and
- a stirring device for mixing the pourable component within the original container, the stirring device including:
 - a shaft member rotatably received within the stirring device aperture, the shaft member having a first end positioned within the original container and an opposite second end;
 - a least one mixing paddle secured to the first end of the shaft member, such that upon rotation of the shaft member the at least one mixing paddle stirs the pourable component within the original container; and
 - a plurality of different paddle actuators, each of the plurality of different paddle actuators being individually mountable to the second end of the shaft member to adapt the lid member to any mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems.

2. The lid member of claim 1 wherein the plurality of different paddle actuators includes:

- a paddle actuator including:
 - a bar portion having first and second opposite ends;
 - a base portion extending from a median of the bar portion, the base portion defining a hole for receiving the second end of the shaft member; and
 - first and second legs extending from the first and second ends of the bar portion, the first and second legs being engageable by only one mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems for rotating the shaft member and the at least one mixing paddle to stir the pourable component within the original container.

3. The lid member of claim 2 wherein the first and second legs and the base portion extend substantially perpendicular to the bar portion.

4. The lid member of claim 1 wherein the plurality of different paddle actuators includes:

- a first paddle actuator including:
 - a drive gear having a plurality of gear teeth extending about a circumference of the drive gear; and
 - a base portion extending from the drive gear, the base portion defining a hole for receiving the second end of the shaft member, wherein the gear teeth of the drive gear are engageable by only one mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems for rotating the shaft member and the at least one mixing paddle to stir the pourable component within the original container.

5. The lid member of claim 4 wherein the first paddle actuator further includes:

a shroud member including:

a shroud portion that extends about a portion of the drive gear; and

a mounting portion extending from the shroud portion for mounting the shroud member to the base portion of the lid member.

6. The lid member of claim 5 wherein the base portion includes a shroud mounting extension adjacent the stirring device aperture, and wherein a free end of the mounting portion of the shroud member engages the shroud mounting extension to secure the shroud member to the base portion of the lid member.

7. The lid member of claim 6 wherein the first paddle actuator further includes a spacer member having a mounting hole extending therethrough, the mounting hole being adapted to receive the shaft member such that the spacer member is positioned between the base portion of the lid member and the drive gear.

8. The lid member of claim 7 wherein the base portion includes a pair of mounting channels, the mounting channels being engageable with guide members of the one mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems.

9. The lid member of claim 8 wherein the plurality of different paddle actuators includes:

a second paddle actuator including:

a bar portion having first and second opposite ends;

a base portion extending from a median of the bar portion, the base portion defining a hole for receiving the second end of the shaft member; and

first and second legs extending from the first and second ends of the bar portion, the first and second legs being engageable by only another mixing system of the plurality of different pourable component mixing systems for rotating the shaft member and the at least one mixing paddle to stir the pourable component within the original container.

10. The lid member of claim 9 wherein the first and second legs and the base portion extend substantially perpendicular to the bar portion.

11. The lid member of claim 1 wherein the at least one mixing paddle is a plurality of mixing paddles.

12. The lid member of claim 1, and further including:

a manually operable actuator for the cover element, the actuator being coupled to the cover element; and

means for pivotally mounting the actuator to the base portion, such that manually pivoting the actuator moves the cover element between its closed and opened states.

13. The lid member of claim 12 wherein a wire loop member couples the cover element to the actuator.

14. The lid member of claim 1, and further including:

a handle member on the base portion, the handle member being defined by a first portion that extends generally perpendicular to the side wall of the original container, and a second portion that extends substantially perpendicular to the first portion and generally parallel to the side wall of the original container.

15. The lid member of claim 1, and further including:

means on the base portion for releasably engaging a circumferential lip extending about the open top of the original container to releasably secure the lid member to the original container.

16. The lid member of claim 15 wherein the means on the base portion for releasably engaging a circumferential lip of the original container includes:

a pair of spaced pivotable cam lock mechanisms.

17. The lid member of claim 1 wherein the lid member is usable with a system for dispensing the pourable component from its original container into a receptacle according to a formula to form a mixture of pourable components.

18. The lid member of claim 17 wherein the pourable component is a liquid paint component, the receptacle is a paint receptacle, the formula is a paint formula, and the mixture of pourable components is a liquid paint mixture.

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 6,146,009
DATED : November 14, 2000
INVENTOR(S) : Arie Boers

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 10,

Line 47, please delete "plates 111 and 111" and insert -- plates 111a and 111b --.

Column 11,

Line 67, please delete "2013" and insert -- 20B --.

Column 14,

Line 23, please delete "device 196 the data" and insert -- device 196 of the data --.

Signed and Sealed this

Eighteenth Day of December, 2001

Attest:



Attesting Officer

JAMES E. ROGAN
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office