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Higgins

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(54) **FLAPPER-TYPE FLUSH VALVE AND MOUNTING ADAPTER**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **E03D 1/35**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **4/393**; 4/404; 4/415

(58) **Field of Search** 4/392–404, 415, 4/324, 325, 39.5; 137/391, 395, 434, 4.42, 362; 251/356, 298, 357

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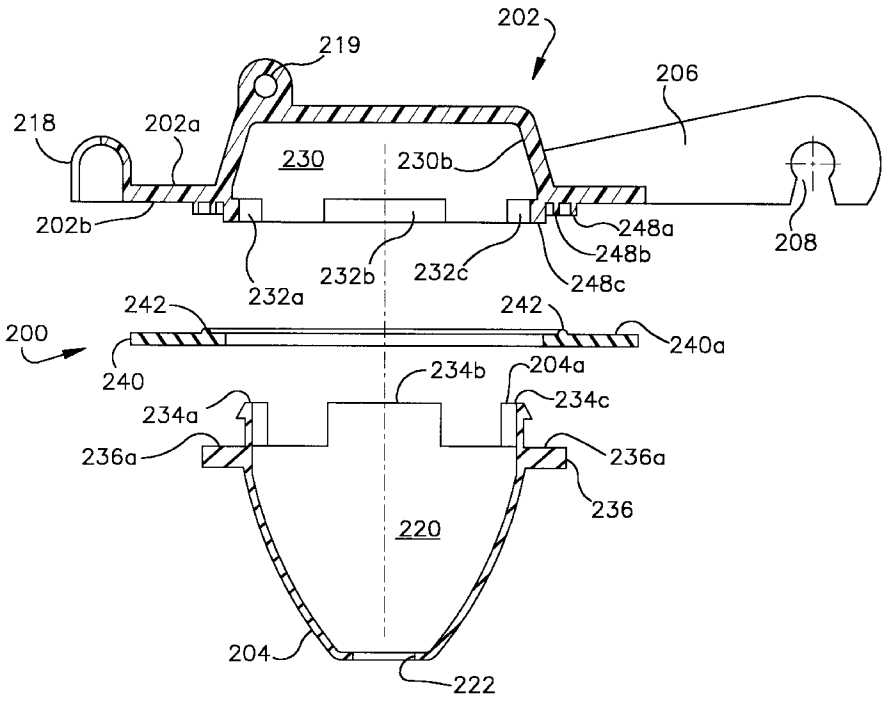
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A flapper-type toilet flush valve having multiple components. A float member component is assembled to a flapper body component. Both components are made of resilient plastic compounds that resist chlorine and chemical bleaches of the type commonly used in tank style toilets. A pair of arms extend from the flapper body component for pivotally mounting the flush valve to corresponding trunnions on an overflow pipe in the toilet tank. An annular recess in the lower surface of the flapper body component has lugs, and corresponding teeth are provided on a top edge of the float member component for mating with the locking lugs. An annular flange extends from the float member component near its top edge to form a first sealing surface. A portion of the lower surface of the flapper body component forms a second sealing surface. A replaceable seal ring is disposed between the first and second sealing surfaces. A mounting adapter, comprising a collar having trunnions is provided for overflow pipes lacking trunnions. The collar is slid down over the overflow pipe into a selected position, and secured in place by a C-shaped spring which fits snugly about an outer surface of the collar to secure the collar in place on the overflow pipe.

16 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



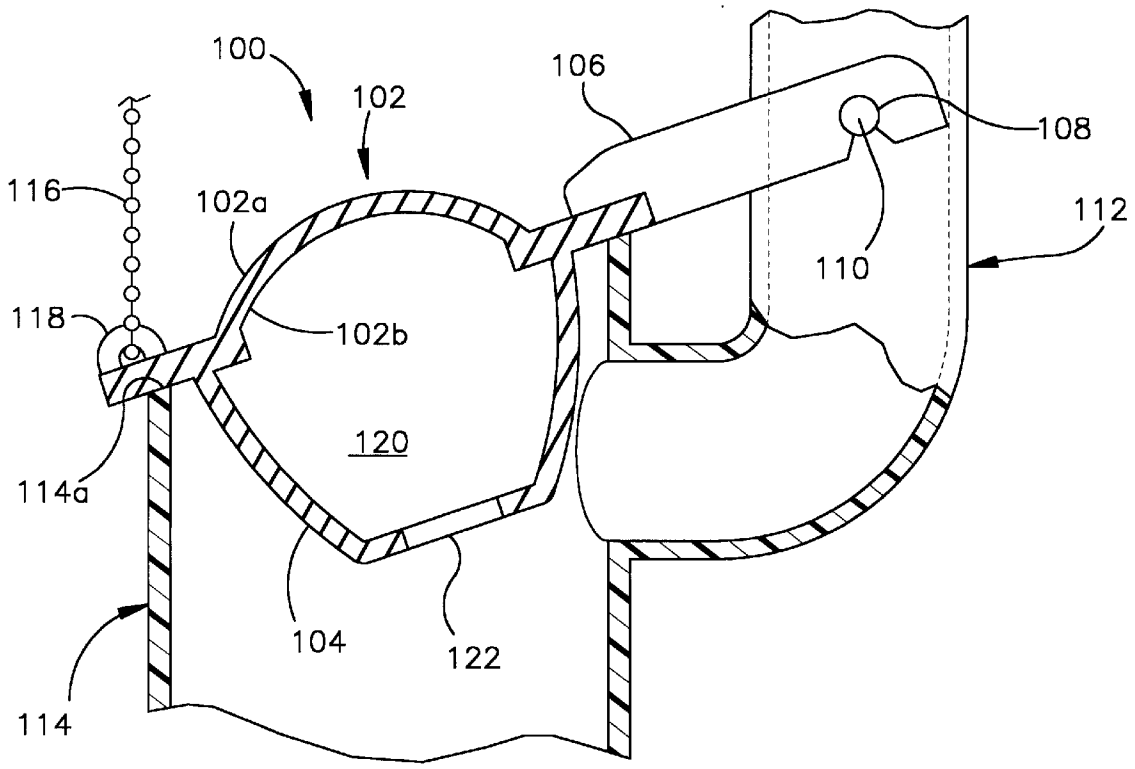


FIGURE 1
(PRIOR ART)

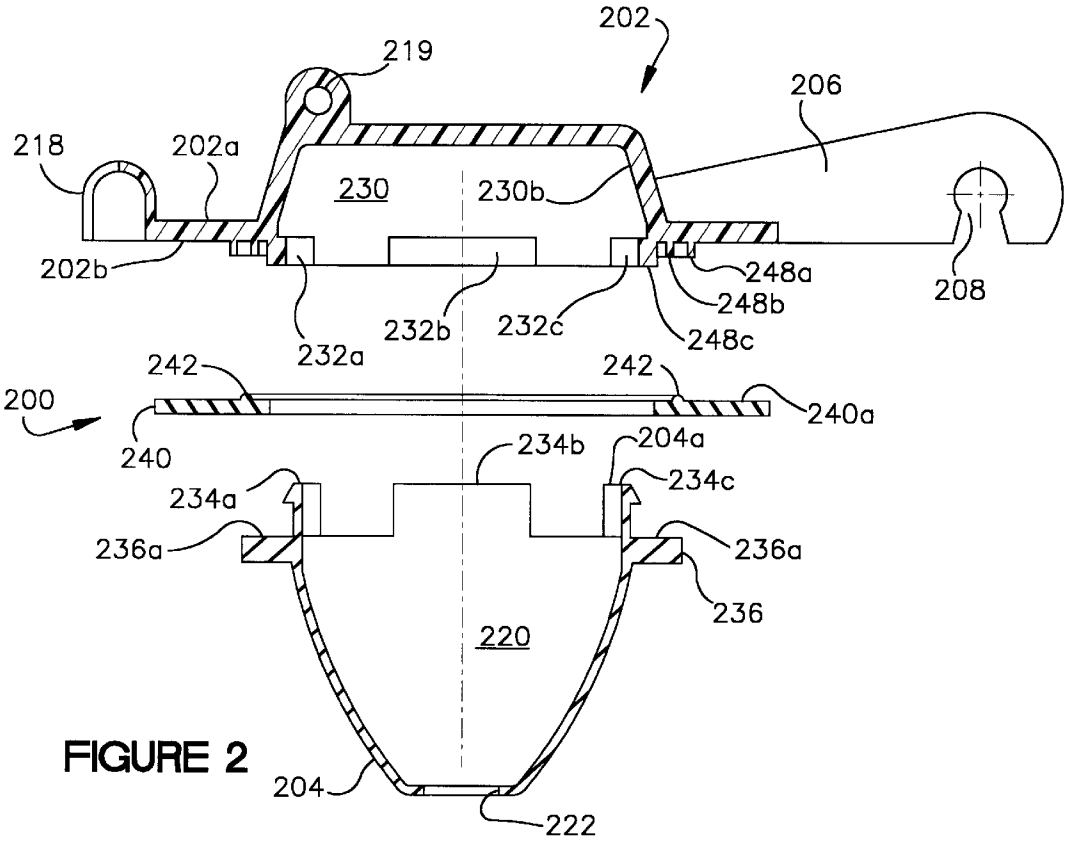


FIGURE 2

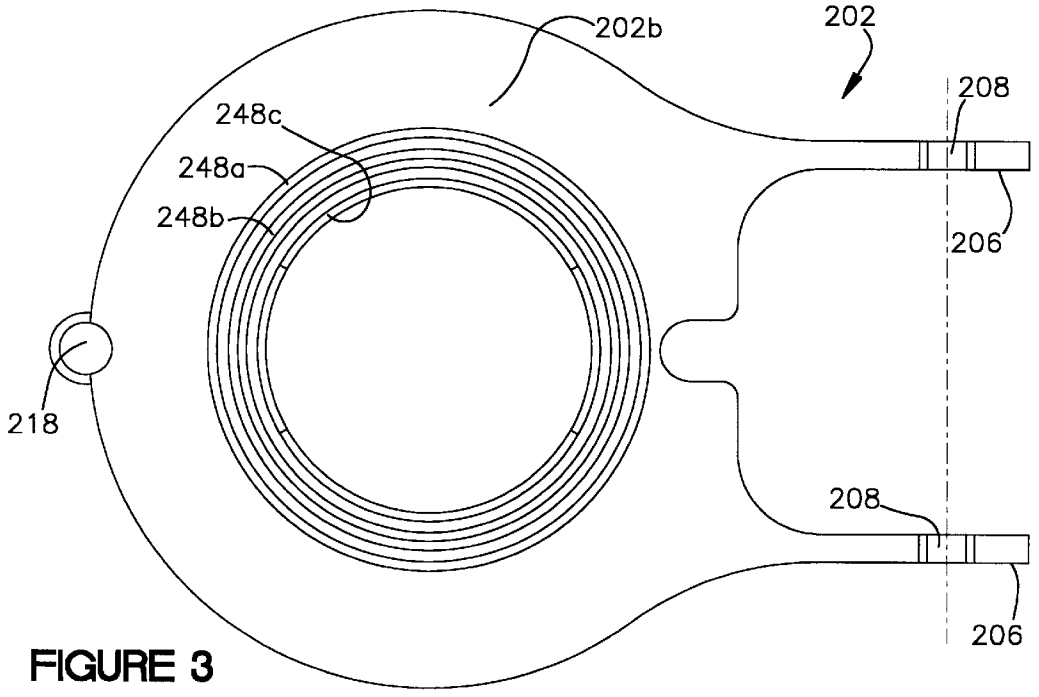


FIGURE 3

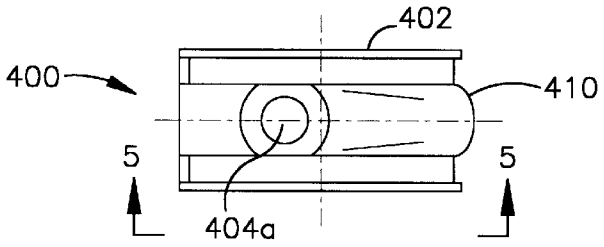


FIGURE 4

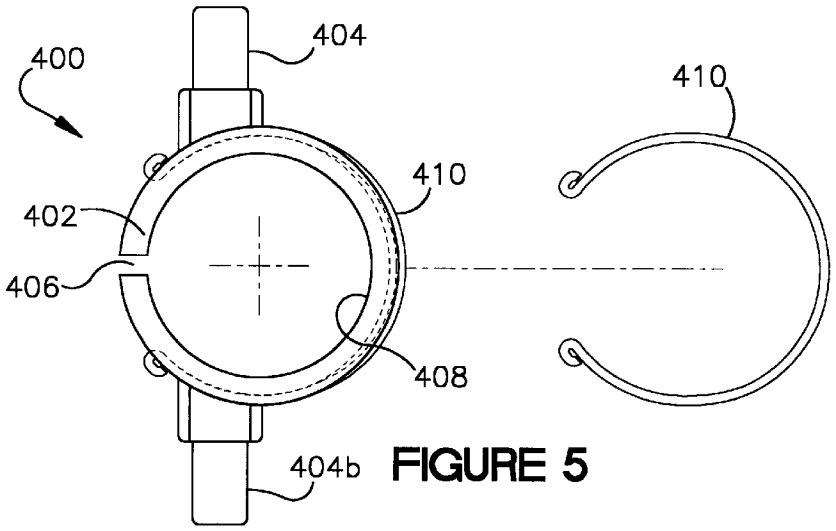


FIGURE 5

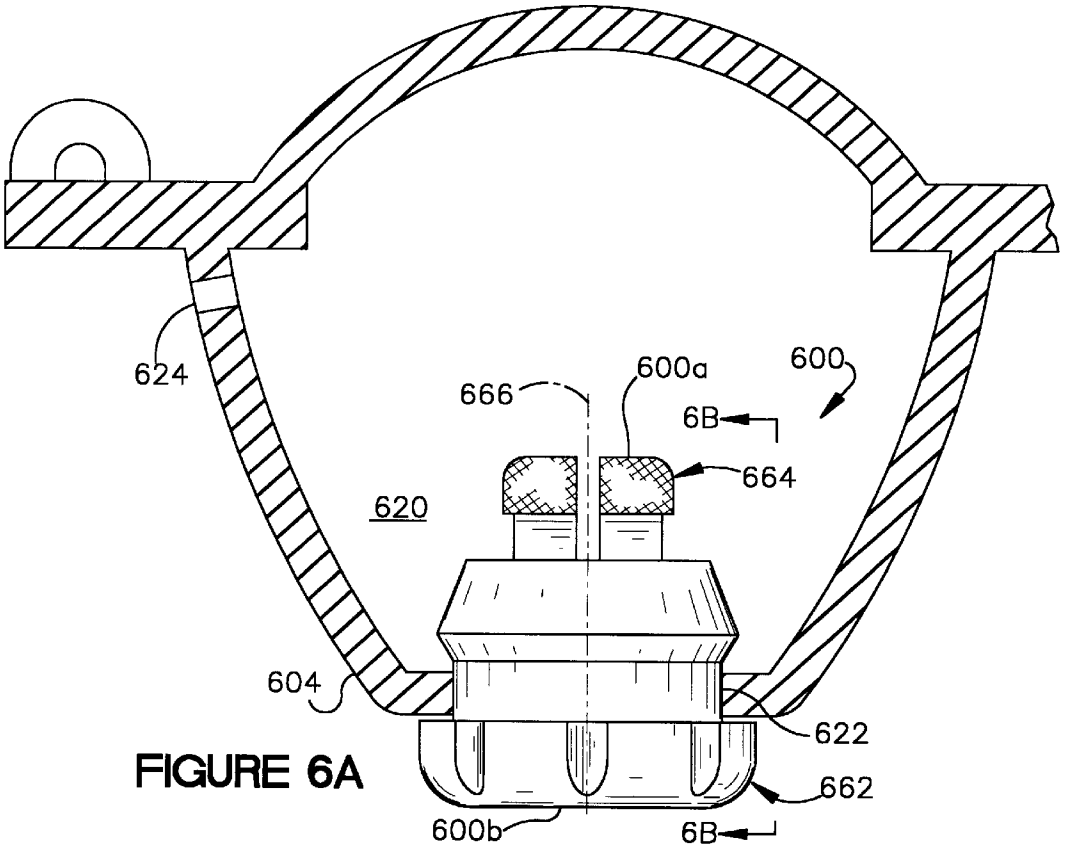


FIGURE 6A

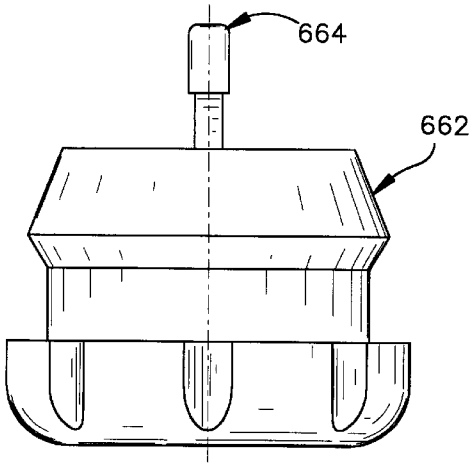


FIGURE 6B

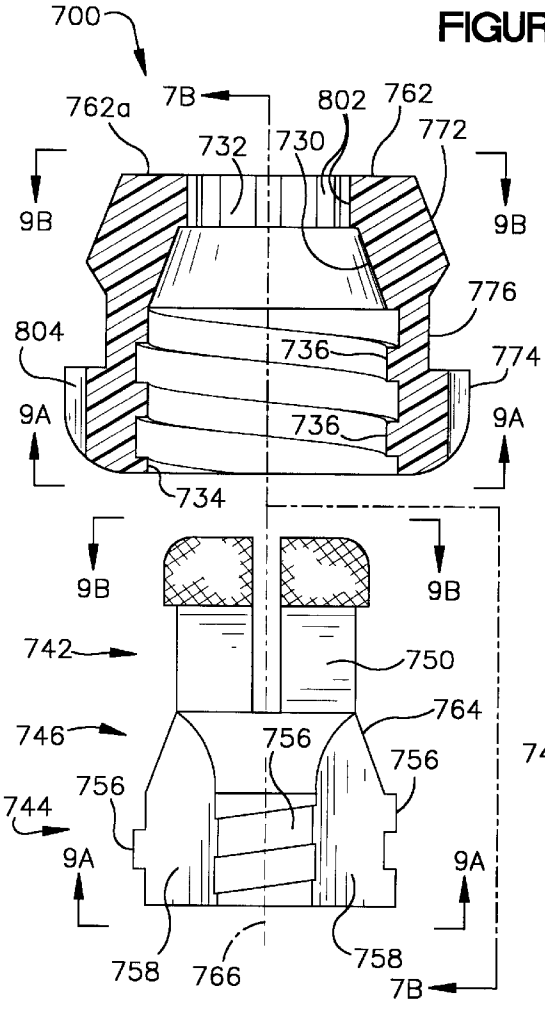


FIGURE 7A

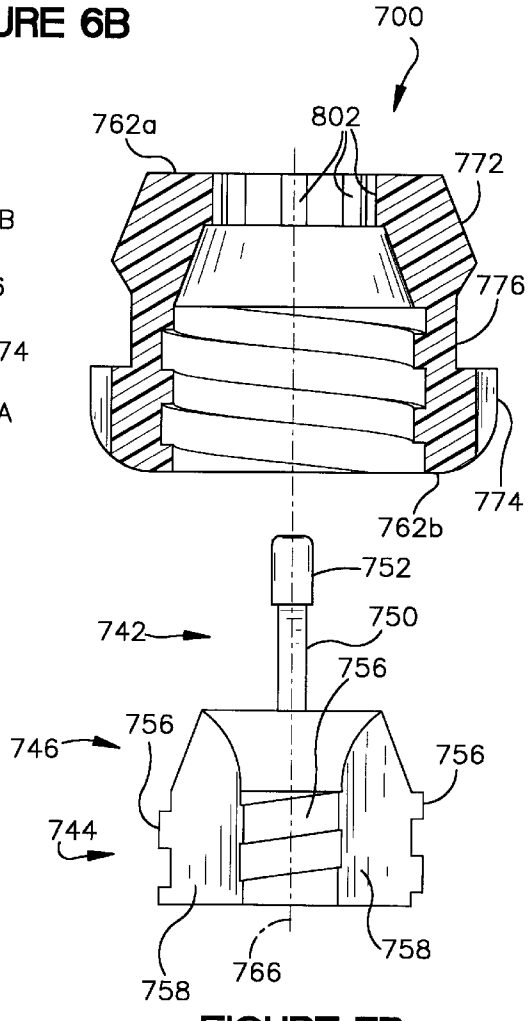


FIGURE 7B

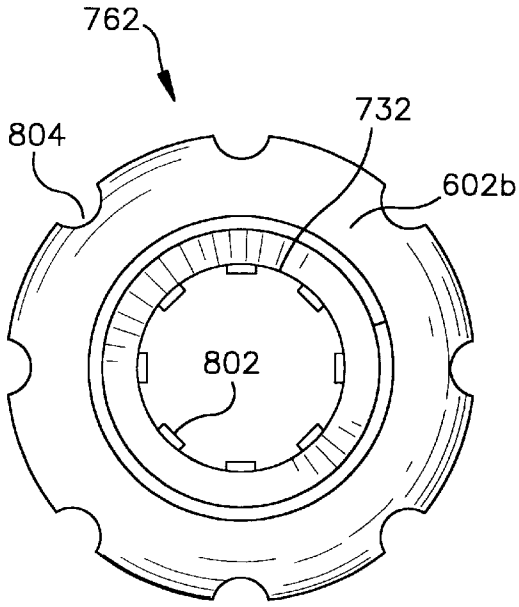


FIGURE 8A

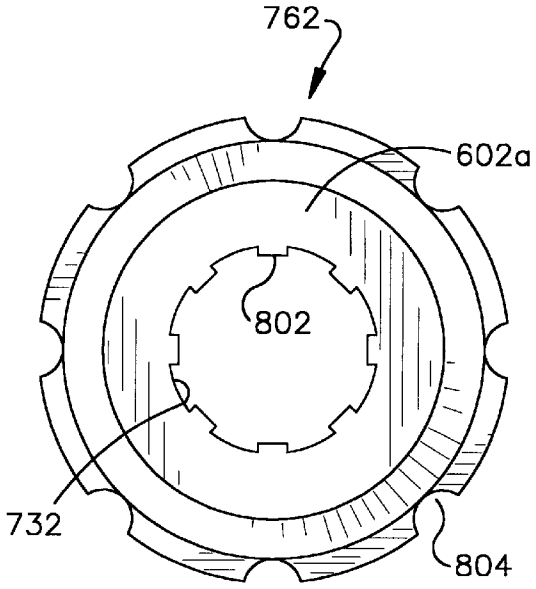


FIGURE 8B

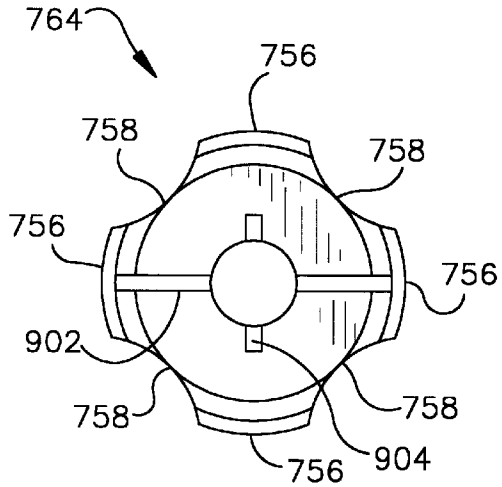


FIGURE 9A

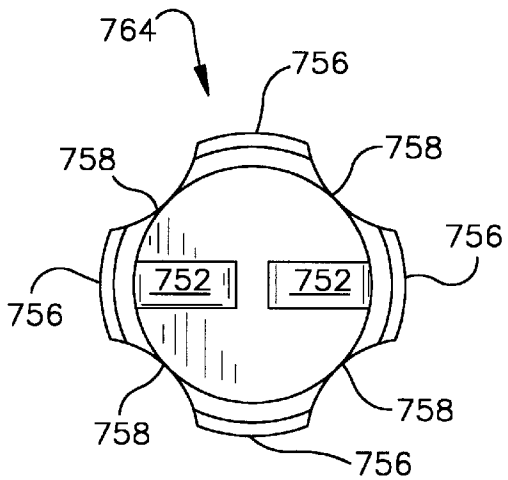


FIGURE 9B

FLAPPER-TYPE FLUSH VALVE AND MOUNTING ADAPTER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation-in-part of copending U.S. Provisional Patent Applications Nos. 60/089,955 filed Jun. 19, 1998 by Gary Higgins, and 60/089,826 filed Jun. 19, 1998 by Gary Higgins.

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to flapper-type flush valves (sometimes referred to as "flapper valves") for toilets, particularly for tank-style, gravity flow toilets.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A typical tank-style, gravity flow toilet comprises a tank and a bowl. The purpose of the tank is to receive and store a quantity of water for flushing the toilet. A ball cock assembly is disposed in the tank, and includes an inlet tube that allows water under pressure to flow into the tank, to a predetermined level (quantity). A water supply line is connected to the ball cock assembly. A flush valve is disposed in the tank and, when operated, allows the quantity of water stored in the tank to be delivered to the bowl for flushing the toilet. A typical flush valve is a "flapper-type" flush valve, including a disc-like "flap" which closes off an end of a discharge pipe. A flush lever controls the operation of the flush valve. The bowl sits atop a sewage pipe. A seat and lid are disposed atop the bowl.

FIG. **1** illustrates an exemplary flapper-type flush valve **100** of the prior art, the structure and operation of which is well known. The flush valve **100** comprises an upper flapper body portion **102** and a lower float member portion **104**. The flapper body portion **102** is generally in the form of a disc, having an upper surface **102***a* and a lower surface **102***b*. The float member portion **104** extends from the lower surface **102***b* of the flapper body portion **102**. A pair of generally parallel, spaced-apart arms **106** extend in a rearward direction from a rearward position (right hand side, as viewed) of the flapper body portion **102**. A hole **108** is provided in a distal end of each arm **106** for pivotally securing the flush valve **100** to a corresponding pair of pins or trunnions **110** extending from an overflow pipe **112**. The trunnions **110** are disposed at diametrically-opposed positions on an outer surface of the overflow pipe **112**. The rearward-extending arms **106** and trunnions **110** extending through the holes **108** serve to position and align the flush valve **100**, and to guide the flush valve **100** as it moves between a "closed" position and an "open" position.

In FIG. **1**, the flush valve **100** is illustrated as being in a "closed" position. In this closed position, the lower surface **102***b* of the flapper body portion **102** sealingly engages a top end **114***a* of a discharge pipe (flush outlet) **114**, the top end of the discharge pipe **114** functioning as a valve seat. The discharge pipe **114** has a diameter sufficiently large that the float member portion **104** fits easily within the bore of the discharge pipe **114**. The float member portion **104** also helps to center the flapper body portion **102** on the top end **114***a* of the discharge pipe **114**.

A chain (e.g., ball chain or "S" chain) or strap **116** extends from a flush lever lift arm (not shown) to a mounting lug **118** which is disposed on the front (left, as viewed) of the flapper body portion **102**, generally diametrically-opposed to the rearwardly-extending arms **106**. When the flush lever lift arm is momentarily operated depressed, the chain **116** pulls upward on the flush valve **100**, causing the flapper body portion **102** to move away from the top end **114***a* of the discharge pipe **114**, thereby "opening" the flush valve **100**. In this "open" position, water (not shown) in the toilet tank (not shown) is allowed to flow into the toilet bowl (not shown) to "flush" the toilet. As the water level in the toilet tank is replenished, at the end of the flush cycle, the flush valve **100** automatically returns to its "closed" position.

The float member portion **104** is cup-shaped, defining an air chamber **120**. The air chamber **120** is typically sized to contain 2.25 to 2.50 cubic inches of air. An opening **122** is provided at the base of the float member portion **104**. In use, when the flush valve **100** is opened, the buoyancy of the air inside the air chamber **120** assists in maintaining the flush valve **100** in the open position until the water level drops below the float member portion **104**, at which time the weight of the flapper body portion **102** causes the flush valve to drop and close.

The flapper body portion **102**, float member portion **104**, rearwardly-extending arms **106** and the mounting lug **118** are typically integrally formed of a resilient material, such as soft rubber or an elastomer. In the event of a failure of only a portion of such an integrally-formed flush valve **100**, the entire flush valve **100** would need to be replaced. The discharge pipe **114**, the top end **114***a* of which serves as a valve seat for the flush valve **100**, is a part of the toilet, not a part of the flush valve **100**.

The operation of a tank-style, gravity flow toilet, such as has been described with respect to FIG. **1**, is generally well known. The tank typically holds (stores) anywhere from about 1.6 gallons to about 8 gallons of water. When the water in the tank is released by opening the flush valve, the first few gallons of water are forced into the toilet bowl by volume and weight of the remaining water in the tank. As the water flows through the toilet bowl and down into the sewer drain, it creates a suction which pulls all the waste and water from the toilet bowl, assisted by ambient air pressure. This method of eliminating liquid or solid waste from the toilet bowl is referred to as "siphon jet action". The siphon jet action only requires a few gallons to work efficiently. The balance (remainder) of the water in the toilet tank serves to generate the force and velocity to drive the first few gallons from the toilet tank into the toilet bowl with sufficient force to sustain the siphon jet action.

Typical tank-style gravity-flow toilets (3.5 gallons or larger) use substantially all of the water that is stored in the toilet tank to flush the toilet bowl. It has been recognized that this practice is somewhat wasteful, and has contributed to a sewage waste water problem. Government regulations have been directed to reducing the quantity of water that a toilet may use to flush waste from the toilet bowl. Currently, most states have adopted regulations that require toilets used in new construction to use no more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush. However, there are millions of older style toilets in use that use 3.5 gallons, or more, of water per flush.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the invention is to provide an improved flapper-type flush valve for tank-style, gravity flow toilets.

Another object of the invention to provide a flapper flush valve as an assembly of cooperating components—for example, as a four piece assembly including an adapter collar, and a three-piece body comprising an upper flapper body, a float member and a seal ring. In this manner, in the event of failure, only the faulty component of the flush valve need be replaced.

Another object of the invention is to provide a flapper flush valve that can inexpensively be fabricated and mass-produced using high volume plastic injection molding equipment.

Another object of the invention is to construct a flapper flush valve of inexpensive polymer compounds which are extremely resistant to chlorine and commercially available bleach tablets that are commonly used in conventional toilet tanks to sanitize the tank and the bowl.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved adapter collar for mounting the flapper flush valve to an existing overflow pipe in the toilet tank.

Another object of the invention is to provide a technique for controlling a rate at which a flapper-type toilet flush valve closes, thereby controlling (reducing) an amount of water used to flush a standard tank-style, gravity flow toilet.

Another object of the invention is to provide an air control valve that can be easily installed into an opening located at the base of the float member of a standard toilet flapper valve and easily adjusted to provide the means of reducing the amount of water used to flush the toilet.

Another object of the invention is to provide an air control valve that can be inexpensively mass-produced.

According to the invention, a flapper-type toilet flush valve comprises a flapper body component, and a float member component which is assembled to the flapper body component. Both components are made of resilient plastic compounds that resist chlorine and chemical bleaches of the type commonly used in tank style toilets. A pair of arms extend from the flapper body component for pivotally mounting the flush valve to corresponding trunnions on an overflow pipe in the toilet tank.

According to an aspect of the invention, an annular recess is formed in the lower surface of the flapper body component. A plurality of spaced-apart locking lugs are provided on an inside surface of the annular recess. A plurality of spaced-apart teeth are provided on a top edge of the float member component for mating with the locking lugs, thereby enabling rapid assembly and disassembly of the float member component to the flapper body component.

According to an aspect of the invention, an annular flange extends from the float member component near its top edge, a top surface of the flange forming a first sealing surface. A portion of the lower surface of the flapper body component forms a second sealing surface. A replaceable seal ring is disposed between the first and second sealing surfaces.

According to an aspect of the invention, a mounting adapter, comprising a collar having trunnions is provided for overflow pipes lacking trunnions. The collar is slid down over the overflow pipe into a selected position, and secured in place by a C-shaped spring which fits snugly about an outer surface of the collar to secure the collar in place on the overflow pipe.

According to another aspect of the invention, an adjustable air control valve is disposed in an opening of a float member of a flapper-type flush valve to control the rate at which the flush valve closes. The float member may be a portion of a conventional (standard) flapper-type flush valve, or a may be a component of the inventive flush valve described herein. In a preferred embodiment, the air control valve comprises a valve body having a bore, and a valve core which can be threaded into the valve body. The valve can be adjusted between substantially a fully closed position and a fully opened position by threading the valve core partially or fully into or out of the bore of the valve body. Air flow channels and a tapered surface are provided on the valve core. A corresponding tapered surface is provided in the bore of the valve body. The valve core has two arms which extend through an opening at an end of the valve body. The two arms are pinched together to turn the valve core and, when released, resiliently engage the valve body.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become apparent in light of the following description thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Reference will be made in detail to preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. The drawings are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. Although the invention will be described in the context of these preferred embodiments, it should be understood that it is not intended to limit the spirit and scope of the invention to these particular embodiments.

Certain elements in selected ones of the drawings may be illustrated not-to-scale, for illustrative clarity. The cross-sectional views, if any, presented herein may be in the form of "slices", or "near-sighted" cross-sectional views, omitting certain background lines which would otherwise be visible in a true cross-sectional view, for illustrative clarity.

Elements of the figures are typically numbered as follows. The most significant digits (hundreds) of the reference number corresponds to the figure number. Elements of FIG. **1** are typically numbered in the range of 100–199. Elements of FIG. **2** are typically numbered in the range of 200–299. Similar elements throughout the drawings may be referred to by similar reference numerals. For example, the element **199** in a figure may be similar, and possibly identical to the element **299** in an other figure. In some cases, similar (including identical) elements may be referred to with similar numbers in a single drawing. For example, each of a plurality of elements **199** may be referred to individually as **199***a*, **199***b*, **199***c*, etc. Such relationships, if any, between similar elements in the same or different figures will become apparent throughout the specification, including, if applicable, in the claims and abstract.

The structure, operation, and advantages of the present preferred embodiments of the invention will become further apparent upon consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. **1** is a cross-sectional view of a flapper-type flush valve pivotally mounted to an overflow pipe, in a closed position, according to the prior art;

FIG. **2** is a cross-sectional, exploded view of a flapper-type flush valve, according to the invention;

FIG. **3** is a bottom plan view of a flapper body component of the flapper-type flush valve shown in FIG. **2**, according to the invention;

FIG. **4** is a side view of a mounting adapter of the present invention;

FIG. **5** is a top view of the mounting adapter of FIG. **4**, showing a "C"-shaped steel spring, according to the invention;

FIG. **6**A is a side view of an air control valve, according to the invention;

FIG. **6**B is a side view of the air control valve of FIG. **6**A, rotated 90 degrees, according to the invention;

FIG. **7**A is a side exploded view of the air control valve of FIG. **6**A, showing the main body component in cross-section and the valve core component in full, according to the invention;

FIG. **7B** is a side exploded view of the air control valve of FIG. **6B**, showing the main body component in cross-section and the valve core component in full, according to the invention;

FIG. **8A** is a bottom view of the valve body of the air control valve of FIG. **6A**, according to the invention;

FIG. **8B** is a top view of the valve body of the air control valve of FIG. **8A**, according to the invention;

FIG. **9A** is a bottom view of the valve core of the air control valve of FIG. **6A**, according to the invention; and

FIG. **9B** is a top view of the valve core of FIG. **9A**, according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A flapper-type flush valve **100** of the prior art has been described hereinabove. A flapper-type flush valve of the present invention is described hereinbelow. A mounting adapter of the present invention is described hereinbelow. An adjustable air flow control valve of the present invention is described hereinbelow.

Multiple Component Flush Valve

FIG. **2** illustrates an embodiment of the flapper-type toilet flush valve **200** of the present invention. The flush valve **200** (compare **100**) comprises an upper flapper body component **202** (compare **102**) and a lower float member component **204** (compare **104**), both of which are suitably formed of resilient plastic compounds that resist chlorine and chemical bleaches of the type commonly used in tank style toilets and that accelerate the deterioration and failure of conventional soft, rubber style toilet flush valves and cause them to leak badly and waste valuable water resources and money.

The flapper body component **202**, which is also shown in bottom plan view in FIG. **3**, is generally in the form of a disc, having an upper surface **202***a* and a lower surface **202***b*. The float member component **204** attaches to the lower surface **202***b* of the flapper body component **202**, as described in greater detail hereinbelow. A pair of generally parallel, spaced-apart arms **206** extend in a rearward direction from a rearward position (right hand side, as viewed) of the flapper body component **202**. A hole **208** is provided in a distal end of each arm **206** for pivotally securing the flush valve **200** to a corresponding pair of pins or trunnions (not shown, compare **110**) extending from an overflow pipe (not shown, compare **112**). The arrangement of arms **206**, holes **208** and trunnions allow the flush valve **200** to pivot between a "closed" position atop a top end (not shown, compare **114***a*) of a discharge pipe (not shown, compare **114**) functioning as a valve seat, and an "open" position as described hereinabove.

A chain or strap (not shown, compare **116**) extends from a flush lever lift arm (not shown) to a mounting lug **218** (compare **118**) which is disposed on the front (left, as viewed) of the flapper body component **202**, generally diametrically-opposed to the rearwardly-extending arms **206**. When the flush lever lift arm is operated (e.g., depressed), the chain pulls upward on the flush valve **200**, causing the flapper body component **202** to move away from the top end of the discharge pipe, thereby "opening" the flush valve **200** and initiating flushing of the toilet, as described hereinabove.

The float member component **204** is cup-shaped, defining an air chamber **220** (compare **120**). The air chamber **220** is typically sized to contain 2.25 to 2.50 cubic inches of air. An opening **222** (compare **122**) is located at the base of the float member component **204**. In use, when the flush valve **200** is opened, the buoyancy of the air inside the air chamber **220** assists in maintaining the flush valve **200** in the open position until the water level drops below the float member component **204**, at which time the weight of the flapper body component **202** causes the flush valve to drop and close. Since prior art one-piece float valves (e.g., **100**) have a flapper body (e.g., **102**) and float member (e.g., **104**) integrally formed with one another, a failure of only a portion of such an integrally-formed flush valve would require the replacement of the entire float valve. The assembly of flapper body component **202** and float member component **204** allow for the replacement of only a defective component, rather than the entire flush valve **200**.

As best viewed in FIG. **2**, the lower surface **202***b* of the flapper body component **202** is recessed, forming an annular recess **230**. A plurality (three are shown) of spaced-apart locking lugs **232***a*, **232***b* and **232***c* are provided on the inside surface **230***b* of the annular recess. These lugs **232***a*, **232***b* and **232***c* may be evenly-spaced, or unevenly-spaced. The top edge **204***a* of the float member component is provided with a corresponding plurality (three are shown) of spaced-apart lug teeth **234***a*, **234***b* and **234***c* which mate with the lugs **232***a*, **232***b* and **232***c*, respectively, when the float member component **204** is assembled to the flapper body component **202**. This is suitably a so-called "bayonet" type of mounting, where one part (e.g., **204**) is inserted into another part (e.g., **202**), then twisted to secure (releasably interlock) the two parts together. (Compare typical pill bottle twist caps.) It is within the scope of the invention that the float member component **204** is assembled by threading, rather than by twisting, to the flapper body component **202**.

The float member component **204** has an annular flange **236** near its top edge. A top (as viewed) surface **236***a* of the annular flange **236** is a sealing surface. A corresponding portion of the lower surface **202***b* of the flapper body component **202** is also a sealing surface. Preferably, prior to assembling the float member component **204** to the flapper body component **202**, a seal ring **240** is disposed between the two components, between their respective two sealing surfaces.

The seal ring **240** is in the form of a planar disc, having a central opening, and is formed of very flexible, thermoplastic material which is highly resistant to harsh chemicals normally found in the water supply. The top (as viewed) surface **240***a* of the seal ring **240** can include a raised, circular step **242** which provides an air tight seal between the assembled upper flapper body component **202**, seal ring **240** and float member component **204**. The locking lugs **232***a*, **232***b* and **232***c* and the lug teeth **234***a*, **234***b* and **234***c* can be disconnected by twisting the float member component **204** and the flapper body component **202** in an appropriate counter-clockwise or clockwise direction. This movement causes the teeth **234***a*, **234***b* and **234***c* to become disengaged from the locking lugs **232***a*, **232***b* and **232***c*, respectively, and also provides the means and method of changing the seal ring **240** in event of its damage or failure.

The sealing portion of the bottom surface **202***b* of the upper flapper body component **202** is best viewed in FIG. **3**, wherein it can be observed that the sealing surface suitably comprises three concentric rings **248***a*, **248***b*, **248***c* which are raised slightly to provide a means and method for visually centering the seal ring **240**.

As best viewed in FIG. **2**, in addition to the mounting lug **218** on the front of the flapper body component **202**, an "S" chain mounting lug **219** may be included and positioned

preferably centered on the forward top most point of the upper flapper body component **202**.

Mounting Adapter

As mentioned above, holes (**108, 208**) are provided in the ends of arms (**106,206**) for pivotally securing the flush valve (**100, 200**) to a corresponding pair of pins or trunnions (**110**) extending from diametrically-opposed positions on an outer surface of an overflow pipe (**112**). In the event that the overflow pipe (**112**) does not have trunnions (**110**), a mounting adapter may be provided for pivotally mounting the flush valve to the overflow pipe (**112**).

FIGS. **4** and **5** illustrate a mounting adapter **400** of the invention for mounting a flush valve (not shown, compare **100, 200**) to an overflow pipe (not shown, compare **112**). The adapter **400** comprises a collar **402** and, as best viewed in FIG. **5**, has a pair of trunnions **404***a* and **404***b* projecting radially outward from the collar **402** in diametrically opposed directions. The collar **402** is generally cylindrical (circular), and has a gap **406** so that the collar **402** can expand and be mounted to the overflow pipe by spreading open the collar **402** and sliding the collar **402** over the top of the overflow pipe and moving it down into an appropriate position near the base of the overflow pipe. A "C"-shaped stainless steel, rust-resistant spring **410** fits snugly about an outer surface of the collar **402** and provides a spring force that presses the interior surface **408** of the collar **402** against the outer surface of the overflow pipe to secure the mounting adapter **400** in place on the overflow pipe. In FIG. **5**, the clip **410** is illustrated both before and after being fitted about the collar **402**.

Adjustable Air Control Valve

An adjustable air control valve for a flapper-type toilet flush valve is now described. Generally, the air control valve of the present invention can be installed in the float member component (e.g., **104**) of a conventional toilet flush valve (e.g., **100**) or can be installed in the float member component **204** of the flush valve **200** of the present invention. In either case, the adjustable air control valve provides a technique for controlling the rate at which air enters the chamber **120**, **220** of the float member **104**, **204**, thereby controlling the rate at which the toilet flush valve closes, thereby controlling (e.g., limiting) the amount of water that is released from the toilet tank into the toilet bowl during a normal flush—in other words, how much water is used to flush the toilet, even when the toilet has a large (e.g., 8 gallon) tank.

FIG. **6**A illustrates the adjustable air control valve **600** of the present invention. The air control valve **600** comprises a valve body **662** and a valve core **664**. FIG. **6**B illustrates the same adjustable air control valve **600** with the valve core **664** turned **90** degrees on its axis **666**.

The air control valve **600** is generally cylindrical overall, having a top end **600***a* and a bottom end **600***b*, and is sized and shaped to be inserted into an opening **622** (compare **122, 222**) at the base of a float member **604** (compare **104, 204**). The overall purpose of the air control valve **600** is to selectively limit (throttle down) the amount of air entering the chamber **620** (compare **120, 220**) of the float member **604** (**104, 204**), thereby controlling the rate at which the flush valve closes, thereby reducing the quantity of water used to flush the toilet. The float member **604** has an air exhaust vent hole **624** for allowing air to escape from the chamber **620** as it is displaced by water entering the chamber **620**.

FIGS. **7**A and **7**B illustrate a preferred embodiment of the air control valve **700**. FIG. **7**A illustrates the air control valve **700**, in an exploded view, with the valve body **662** shown in cross-section and separated from the valve core **764** which is shown in full. The valve core **764** has the same orientation on its axis **766** as in FIG. **6**A. FIG. **7**B illustrates the air control valve **700**, again in an exploded view, with the valve body **762** shown in cross-section and separated from the valve core **764** which is shown in full, with the valve core turned 90 degrees on its axis **766**, as in FIG. **6**B. The valve core **764** is suitably shown in full in FIGS. **7**A and **7**B because it is not hollow. In contrast thereto, the valve body **762** is hollow, and warrants showing in cross-section.

The valve body **762** is generally cylindrical, has a top end portion **772**, a bottom end portion **774** and a middle portion **776**. The middle portion **776** has an OD (outside diameter) which is approximately equal to the diameter of the opening **622** in the float member **626**. The top end portion **772** is tapered, and has a maximum OD which is greater than the diameter of the opening **622** in the float member **626**. The taper of the external surface of the top portion **772** of the valve body **762** provides the means to slidingly insert the valve **700** into the opening **622** at the base of float member **626**. The bottom end portion **774** has an OD which is greater than the diameter of the opening **622** in the float member **626**, to limit how far the valve body **762** can be inserted into the opening **622**. The two end portions **702** and **704**, both having a larger diameter than the opening **622** in the float member **626**, ensure that the air control valve **700** will not accidentally be dislodged from the float member **626**.

A bore **730** extends completely through the valve body **762**, from the top **762***a* to the bottom **762***b* thereof, and has an opening **732** at the top **762***a* of the valve body **762** and an opening **734** at the bottom **762***b* of the valve body **762**. The interior wall of the bore **730** is provided with a spiraling (helical) thread **736**, as illustrated. The thread **736** is preferably continuous, rather than segmented. As described hereinbelow, the valve core **764** has an external thread which cooperates with the thread **736** to adjust the position of the valve core **764** in the valve body **762**.

As best viewed in FIGS. **7**A and **7**B, a top portion of the bore **730** is tapered (frustro-conical), and the top bore opening **732** has a smaller diameter than the bottom bore opening **734**. As described in greater detail hereinbelow, the bore **730** permits air to flow into the chamber **620** in the float member **604**, the rate of which can be regulated by the valve core **664**.

The valve core **764** has a top portion **742**, a bottom portion **744** and a middle portion **746**.

As best viewed in FIGS. **7**A and **7**B, the top portion **742** comprises two parallel, spaced-apart arms **750** which terminate in tabs **752** which, when compressed towards one another, fit through the opening **732** in the valve body **762**, allowing the valve core **764** to be inserted into the valve body **762**. The middle portion **746** of the valve core **764** is tapered (frustro-conical). The bottom portion **744** of the valve core **764** is generally cylindrical, and is threaded and fluted. More particularly, a thread **756** spirals around the exterior surface of the bottom portion **744** of the valve core **764**. This thread **756** is the mate to the thread **736** in the valve body **762**, and allows the valve core **764** to be threaded into the valve body **762**. As described in greater detail hereinbelow, how far the valve core **764** is threaded into the valve body **762** determines the flow rate through the valve **700**.

FIGS. **8**A and **8**B are a bottom and top view (respectively) of the valve body **762**, and FIGS. **9**A and **9**B are a bottom and top view (respectively) of the valve core **764**. Referring to FIGS. **7**A, **7**B, **8**A, **8**B, **9**A and **9**B, the valve core **764** is

provided with a plurality of flow channels (grooves, "flutes") **758** extending axially along the outer surface of the bottom portion **744** of the valve core **764**, continuing along the outer surface of the middle portion **746**. Air flows along these channels **758**, and is metered by how far the valve core **764** is threaded into the valve body **762**. The channels **758** interrupt the continuity of the thread **756**, as shown in FIGS. **7**A, **7**B, **9**A and **9**B.

As best viewed in FIG. **8**B (but also seen in the far end of FIG. **8**A), a top view of the valve body **762**, the opening **732** at the top **762***a* of the valve body **762** is scalloped, having a plurality (eight shown) of teeth **802** protruding radially into the bore. When the valve core **764** is inserted into the valve body **762**, the tabs **752** at the end of the arms **750** resiliently engage the valve body **762** by snugly fitting between diametrically opposed spaces between selected ones of the teeth **802**. This prevents the valve core **764** from turning and also prevents the valve core **764** from falling out of the valve body **762**. In order to turn the valve core **764**, one must compress (pinch) the two arms **750** together, releasing them from the teeth **802**. After turning the valve core **764** a desired amount, the arms **750** are released, return to their original shape, and seat within the diametrically opposed gaps between the teeth **802**.

Also shown in FIGS. **7**A, **7**B, **8**A and **8**B are a plurality of scallops **804** about the periphery of the bottom portion **744** of the valve body **762**. These scallops **804** are merely to aid in grasping the valve body **762**, in a manner akin to "knurling".

As best viewed in FIGS. **7**A and **7**B, a top portion of the bore **730** of the valve body **702** is tapered. This taper, and the location of the taper, correspond to the taper of the valve core **764** when the valve core **764** is fully threaded into the valve body **762**. Fully screwing the valve core **764** into the valve body **762** will shut off flow through the valve **700**. By selectively screwing the valve core **764** only partially into the valve body **762**, a flow rate through the valve may be selected by the user from substantially zero to fully opened simply by turning the valve core **764** into or out of the interior threads of the valve body **762** so that the tapered exterior surface of the valve core **764** is moved closer to or further from the tapered internal surface of the valve body **762**. By increasing the distance between the tapered surfaces, air flow through the valve is increased. By decreasing the distance between the tapered surfaces, air flow through the valve is decreased.

In operation, when the flush valve **100** is raised during flushing, tank water enters float member **604** through air control valve **600** while air exits through vent hole **624**. After the tank water recedes, the flapper body **202** drops down and seals the discharge pipe **114**. The greater the water flow (through the air control valve **600**) into the float member **604**, the heavier the float member **604** becomes, and the sooner it drops to seal the discharge pipe **114**. Hence, the air control valve **600** can be adjusted to control the amount of water discharged on each flush.

As best viewed in FIG. **9**A, a bottom surface of the valve core **764** is equipped with two grooves **902** and **904** that intersect at their midpoints and provide the means for using either a slot-type or cross-tip (Phillips) type screw drive to adjust the position of the valve core **764** in the valve body **762**.

While the invention has been described in combination with embodiments thereof, it is evident that many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the foregoing description. Accordingly, the invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications and variations as fall within the spirit and broad scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. Flapper-type toilet flush valve comprising:

a flapper body component having an upper surface and a lower surface;

a float member component assembled by bayonet type mounting to the flapper body component;

an annular flange extending from the float member component near its top edge, a top surface of the flange forming a first sealing surface;

a portion of the lower surface of the flapper body component forming a second sealing surface;

a sealing ring having an inner diameter, an outer larger diameter, upper and lower surfaces there-between, and a preformed, raised circular step on the upper surface thereof offset from and positioned between the inner and outer diameters, wherein the preformed, raised circular step is being disposed between the first and second sealing surfaces; and

a number of slightly raised concentric rings extending from the second sealing surface, wherein the preformed, raised circular step is fitted in between the concentric ring for centering the seal ring onto the flapper body component and for providing an air tight seal between the flapper body component and the float member component.

2. Flush valve, according to claim **1**, wherein:

the flapper body and float member components are formed of resilient plastic compounds that resist chlorine and chemical bleaches of the type commonly used in tank style toilets.

3. Flush valve, according to claim **1**, further comprising:

a pair of generally parallel, spaced-apart arms extending from the flapper body component; and

a hole in a distal end of each arm for pivotally securing the flush valve to an overflow pipe;

thereby enabling the flush valve to pivot between a closed position atop a top end of a discharge pipe and an open position.

4. Flush valve, according to claim **1**, further comprising:

a mounting lug disposed on the upper surface of the flapper body component.

5. Flush valve, according to claim **4**, wherein:

the mounting lug is positioned at a forward top most point of the flapper body component.

6. Flush valve, according to claim **1**, wherein:

the float member component is cup-shaped and defines an air chamber;

further comprising:

an opening in the float member component for admitting water into the air chamber.

7. Flush valve, according to claim **6**, wherein:

a vent hole in the float member component for allowing air to escape from the air chamber when water is being admitted into the air chamber through the opening.

8. Flush valve, according to claim **1**, wherein the bayonet type mounting further comprises:

an annular recess formed in the lower surface of the flapper body component;

a plurality of spaced-apart locking lugs provided on an inside surface of the annular recess; and

a plurality of spaced-apart teeth provided on a top edge of the float member component for mating with the locking lugs.

9. A flapper-type flush valve for use in a toilet tank assembly including a flush outlet surrounded by a valve seat, an overflow pipe and a movable lift arm to initiate flow of water through said valve seat, said flush valve comprising:

a resilient plastic flapper having a upper surface, a lower sealing surface, a number of raised concentric rings extending from the lower sealing surface thereof; and two rearwardly projecting arms for attaching the flapper to the overflow pipe;

a detachable float removably attached to the flapper;

a replaceable seal ring made of very flexible, thermoplastic material, disposed between the flapper and the float, the seal ring having an inner diameter, an outer larger diameter, and upper and lower surfaces there-between; and

a preformed, raised circular step on the upper surface thereof offset from and positioned between the inner and outer diameters, wherein the performed, raised circular step is fitted in between the concentric rings for centering the seal ring onto the flapper and for providing an air tight seal between the flapper and the float.

10. Flush valve, according to claim 9, further comprising:

lugs on an interior surface of the flapper and teeth on a top edge of the float, the teeth interlocking with the lugs.

11. Flush valve, according to claim 9, further comprising:

means for attaching a ball chain or S chain to the flapper for initiating water flow through the valve seat.

12. Flapper-type toilet flush valve for use in a toilet tank comprising:

a flapper component having an upper surface and a lower sealing surface; and

a float member assembled to the lower sealing surface of the flapper component;

a seal ring having an inner diameter, an outer larger diameter, upper and lower surfaces there-between, and a performed, raised circular step on the upper surface thereof offset from and positioned between the inner and outer diameters, wherein the preformed, raised circular step is being disposed between the float member and the sealing surface of the flapper component; and

a plurality of slightly raised concentric rings disposed on the lower sealing surface of the flapper component, wherein the preformed, raised circular step is fitted in between the concentric rings for centering the seal ring onto the flapper body component and for providing an air tight seal between the flapper body component and the float member component.

13. Flush valve, according to claim 12, wherein:

the flapper component and float member components are formed of resilient plastic compounds that resist chlorine and chemical bleaches of the type commonly used in tank style toilets.

14. Flush valve, according to claim 12, wherein:

the float member is assembled by bayonet type mounting to flapper component.

15. Flush valve, according to claim 12, further comprising:

a raised circular step on the seal ring.

16. Flush valve, according to claim 12, wherein:

the seal ring comprises a very flexible, thermoplastic material.

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