Dec. 31, 1968 B. W. NICKERSON, JR 3,419,024

PORTABLE SHELTER

Filed Aug. 1, 1966

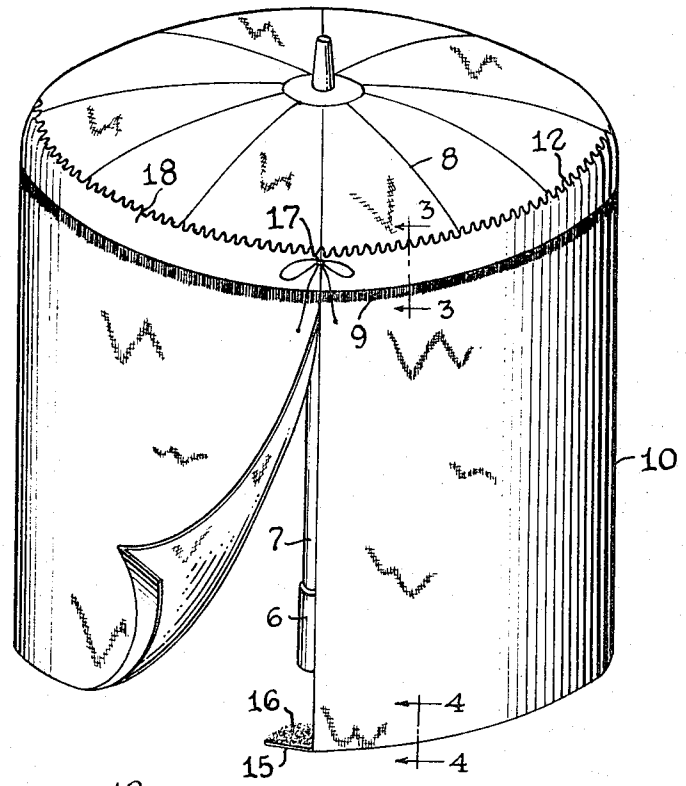


FIG. 1.

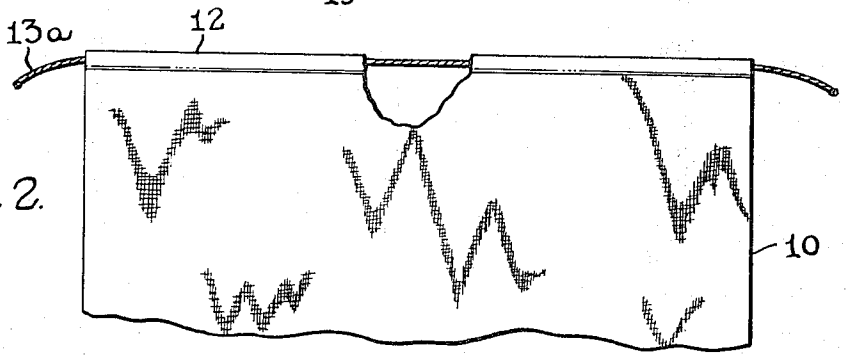


FIG. 2.

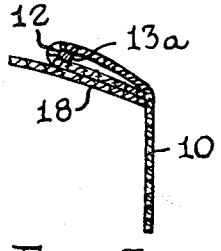


FIG. 3.

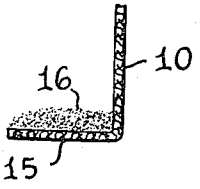


FIG. 4.

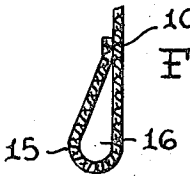


FIG. 5.

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PORTABLE SHELTER

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This invention relates to outdoor shelters and more particularly to a beach dressing room.

For years the beach patron who does not own a cottage at the seashore has been inconvenienced when changing from street clothes to a swimsuit and, conversely, back to street clothes again. In the past attempts have been made to provide a dressing room that could be erected on the beach and used for this purpose, but they have been too elaborate involving bothersome and bulky frames and an assortment of latches and catches. Further, the very nature of their elaborate character necessitated prohibitive cost. Prior efforts indicate that artisans could not conceive of a means for eliminating the bulky frames, catches, latches, etc. Yet, for all the elaborate designs, past efforts have not provided a feasible structure.

It is a general object of the present invention, therefore, to overcome the above shortcomings and disadvantages by providing a portable dressing room that is superiod in results and operation; one that is easier to erect and use; nevertheless one that is simple and inexpensive to manufacture.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a structure that adapts itself to being combinable with existing beach equipment and environment, viz, the beach umbrella and beach sand.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a shelter that is so simple in construction that it requires a minimum amount of manufacturing work on a straight panel of material, thereby keeping costs at a heretofore unattainable figure.

Still another object of the present invention is to eliminate all framework and provide a structure, with the exception of the beach umbrella, that will fold into a pack small enough to fit into a beach bag.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a windproof and see-through-proof sealed enclosure, a prerequisite for a beach shelter.

Summarily, in contrast with prior efforts in the art to provide a beach dressing room, the present invention takes its patentable life from the fact that its extreme simplicity is only equaled by its excellence in all areas of functionalism and results.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of a preferred embodiment thereof taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of the present invention showing the combination to include a conventional beach umbrella.

FIGURE 2 is a plan view of the apron part of the invention before it is combined with a beach umbrella, said apron in FIGURE 2 being inproportionate.

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary view taken through line A—A of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 4 is a fragmentary view taken through line B—B of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary view taken through line C—C of FIGURE 1 showing a modification of FIGURE 4

Referring to the drawing, there is shown in FIGURE 1 a conventional beach umbrella providing a support **6** and comprising a shaft or leg member **7** having a branch portion **8** mounted contiguous the top thereof. Said branch portion including a periphery **9** located around the circumferential extremity of said branch portion.

The construction of a conventional beach umbrella or support **6** is well known in the art, therefore it will not be described in detail here. However any support that comprises a leg member, a branch portion mounted contiguous the top thereof, and said branch portion to include a periphery, may be used in the present combination.

Operatively combined with the support **6** is a sheet-like apron **10** that hangs downwardly from the periphery **9** of the branch portion **8** and is supported from the ground thereby.

Referring to FIGURE 2 and the apron **10**, per se, there is, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, a straight panel of opaque plastic film, or some suitable material, having a length equal to or greater than the circumference of the periphery **9** of the branch portion **8** and a width slightly more than the height of the periphery **9** from the ground when the umbrella is erected on the beach in the usual manner. It has been found that a generally feasible size of the panel in plan view will measure approximately 23 feet by 6 feet.

The apron **10** comprises a top portion **11** that shall include any part, but not necessarily the whole, of the top half of the apron. Along the top lengthwise edge of the top portion is a terminus **12** and provided contiguous thereof a drawcord, gathering means, or, more broadly referred to herein, as a perimeter reducing means **13**.

In the present embodiment a drawcord is used and is provided by causing a hem to be formed in the top portion **11** contiguous the terminus **12**. Said hem is arranged to receive a cord **13***a* that runs the length of the apron **10** when it is in a straight panel status, as best seen in FIGURE 2, and extends beyond both ends of said panel to facilitate tying. The cord **13***a* operatively arranged with the hem, shall be designated as the drawcord, gathering means, or perimeter reducing means **13**. A more exact nature and function of this perimeter reducing means will be described in due course.

Referring again to FIGURE 2, the apron **10** further comprises a bottom portion **14** that shall include any part, but not necessarily the whole, of the bottom half of said apron. The bottom portion **14** is characterized, in the present embodiment, as a straight, unaltered panel. A stabilizing means **15** is manifested, however, in a part of the bottom portion being arranged to hold sand or ballast **16** as shown in FIGURE 4 and in modified form in FIGURE 5, the arrangement and nature of which will be found in the erection description herein. The stabilizing means **15**, as used herein, shall be taken to mean the combination of the arranged bottom portion **14** and the sand or ballast **16**.

Having set forth the support and apron, taken separately, following is a description of the combination and the coaction of the parts therein to provide a novel and utilitarian result.

Referring now to FIGURE 1, there is shown the apron **10** operatively combined with the umbrella or support **6**. The combination, optionally consummated, i.e., use of the stabilizing, means **15** is optional, by wrapping the apron **10** circumferentially around the periphery **9** and tying the cord **13***a* into a knot **17**. The drawcord **13** has functioned to reduce the size of the perimeter of the terminus **12** by gathering the area of the top portion involved, to a degree that it is smaller than the size of the perimeter of the periphery **9** of the branch portion **8** so that said top portion overlaps said branch portion, said overlap designated as **18** and shown in FIGURE 3, causing said top portion of said apron to be supported from the ground by the branch portion **8**.

The stabilizing means **15**, the function of which is to positionally stabilize the bottom portion **14**, is manifest in

the arrangement of said bottom portion to lie flat on the ground or beach on the inside of the enclosure as seen in FIGURES 1 and 4. Lying in this manner, the bottom portion is adapted to have sand or ballast piled thereon.

There is found in the present invention an additional coaction between the support **6**, the apron **10**, and the stabilizing means **15** that is a completely new result of the present combination. This new result is a seal, or the like, of a windproof, see-through-proof nature that is created in the overlap **18** by means of the preferred use of the present invention. The foregoing is brought about by the stabilizing means **15** functioning to pull the apron **10** downwardly in a taut manner. This action will tighten the overlap **18** thereby providing the seal. Said seal is not airtight but does provide a windproof and private natured shelter.

Manufacturing the apron **10** is done by providing, in a panel of plastic film, a hem along one length side. This may be done by stitching, heat sealing, or some other feasible means. Through said hem is passed a cord **13***a* to combine and provide the drawcord **12**. Said cord having a length slightly greater than that of the panel. The term drawcord, used optionally with gathering means or perimeter reducing means, shall be taken to mean the cord **13***a* and the arrangement associated with the top portion **11** to hold said cord.

The bottom portion **14** is a straight, unaltered panel requiring no manufacturing except in the modified form as shown in FIGURE 5 wherein a part of the bottom portion **14** is tacked back up at intervals along said bottom portion to provide a pocket to receive and hold the sand or ballast **16** thereby providing the stabilizing means **15**.

It should be understood that any support that provides the characteristics of a leg member, and a branch portion including a periphery providing a means for a top portion of an apron to overlap and be supported thereby is within the scope of the present invention. It is conceivable that the apron **10** need not be a flat panel originally, rather it may be a closed, endless curtain that has a terminus smaller in size than the periphery and the entire apron may be assembled by slipping same over the top of the branch portion.

It should be further understood that the weight of the apron alone will facilitate the seal-like effect in lieu of the stabilizing means.

The perimeter reducing means **13** may take the form of a resilient gathering means instead of a drawcord or it may be permanently smaller in size than the size of the periphery.

It should be further understood that any means may be used as a stabilizing means that may be employed to positionally stabilize the bottom portion **14**. However a stabilizing means may be optionally omitted and the apron hang downwardly with its own weight.

Erecting the preferred embodiment of the present invention is accomplished by raising the beach umbrella in the usual manner. The top portion **11** of the apron **10** is wrapped around the periphery **9** overlapping the branch portion **8** by approximately 3 inches. Upon circumventing said periphery and reaching the point of departure, the ends of the cord **13***a* are secured in a knot **17** as best seen in FIGURE 1. The drawcord **13** not only functions as a perimeter reducing means but serves to adapt the apron **10** to any size beach umbrella.

When the apron has been combined with the umbrella and the knot secured, the two vertical edges of the apron will butt together below the knot to provide an entrance into the enclosure as shown in FIGURE 1, (one edge pull back).

Approximately 4 to 6 inches of the bottom portion **14** shall be arranged to lie flat on the beach on the inside of the enclosure and thereon shall be piled sand or ballast **16** to provide the stabilizing means **13** as shown in FIGURE 4 and in modification in FIGURE 5.

The apron **10** is taken down by releasing the knot **17** and folding said apron into a pack measuring about 11 by 11 by 3 inches. Standing alone, the beach umbrella may then be used conventionally.

Further variations may be resorted to within the scope of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A shelter comprising, in combination, a support having a leg member and a branch portion mounted contiguous the top of said leg member, said branch portion including a periphery, a sheet-like apron hanging downwardly from said periphery, said apron having a top portion and a bottom portion, said top portion including a terminus, said terminus forming a perimeter smaller in size than the size of the perimeter of the periphery of said branch portion whereby said top portion overlaps said periphery of said branch portion and is supported from the ground thereby, said apron and said branch portion coacting to provide a seal contiguous said overlap.

2. A combination as set forth in claim **1** wherein a perimeter reducing means is associated with the top portion of said apron whereby the perimeter of the terminus of said top portion is reducible in size below the size of the perimeter of the periphery of the branch portion.

3. A combination as set forth in claim **1** wherein a gathering means is associated with the top portion of said apron whereby the perimeter of the terminus of said top portion is reducible in size below the size of the perimeter of the periphery of the branch portion.

4. A shelter comprising, in combination, an umbrella having a shaft and a branch portion mounted contiguous the top of said shaft, said branch portion including a periphery, a sheet-like apron hanging downwardly from said periphery of said branch portion, said apron having a top portion and a bottom portion, said top portion including a terminus, said terminus forming a perimeter smaller in size than the size of the perimeter of the periphery of the branch portion whereby said top portion overlaps said periphery of said branch portion and is supported from the ground thereby, said apron and said branch portion coacting to provide a seal contiguous said overlap.

5. A combination as set forth in claim **4** wherein a perimeter reducing means is associated with the top portion of said apron whereby the perimeter of the terminus of said top portion is reducible in size below the size of the perimeter of the periphery of the branch portion.

6. A combination as set forth in claim **4** wherein a perimeter reducing means characterized as a gathering means is associated with the top portion of said apron whereby the perimeter of the terminus of said top portion is reducible in size below the size of the perimeter of the periphery of the branch portion.

7. A combination as set forth in claim **4** wherein a stabilizing means characterized as a means for holding ballast and including said ballast is associated with the bottom portion of the apron and adapted to positionally stabilize said bottom portion of said apron and pull said apron dwnwardly in a taut manner thereby tightening the overlap between the top portion and the branch portion causing a windproof and see-through-proof seal-like effect in the area contiguous said overlap.

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