MASK OR OTHER DEVICE HAVING ADJUSTABLE SCENT CARRIER

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Abstract

A face mask assembly includes a face mask having inner and outer surfaces, with a first receiving portion defined between the inner and outer surfaces and a scent carrier removably installed in the first receiving portion. The scent carrier has a housing that defines a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material. Scent releasing apertures are defined in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber. The effective size of the apertures is adjustable by a selective closing mechanism. The face mask can also have a second receiving portion, and a thermal ballast can be removably inserted into the second receiving portion.
MASK OR OTHER DEVICE HAVING ADJUSTABLE SCENT CARRIER

[0001] This application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/394,214, filed on Oct. 18, 2010, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention
[0003] The present invention generally relates to a face mask or other device and more specifically to a face mask or device that has an adjustable scent carrier for adjusting the amount, strength or both of the scent released by the carrier.
[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art
[0005] In the past, there have been a multitude of methods and devices directed to addressing the ill effects of the common cold or other similar ailments. This has included the use of humidifiers, scented inhalation devices and face masks. The use of face masks has further been enhanced in prior art devices by the addition of heating and cooling mechanisms to the mask. Through use of these heating and cooling mechanisms, a user can adjust the temperature of the mask before applying it to the face.
[0006] Additionally, prior art masks included vapor or fragrance delivery mechanisms that, for example, deliver medication or provide aromatherapy to a user. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,707,655 to Brunner et al., which is incorporated herein by reference, discloses a therapeutic face mask including “thermal delivery pads” that deliver heat to the face of a user. The mask also optionally includes one or more removable “vapor delivery devices” that emit a therapeutic fragrance or vapor through the mask to a user. The prior art mask disclosed in the ’655 patent, however, does not allow a user to adjust the amount of aroma being emitted through the mask.
[0007] Another prior art mask is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,538,013 to Brannon, incorporated herein by reference, which discloses a face mask that is worn over the nose and mouth to block out unpleasant odors. The mask of the ’013 patent includes an interchangeable scenting means which permits the use of various insertable “scented portions,” each of which may emit a different aroma. The interchangeable scented portions provide the user with some flexibility regarding the type and amount of scent that is provided, however, they do not allow a user to adjust the amount or strength of aroma being emitted without replacing the scented portion, which can become very costly and inconvenient for a user of the device.
[0008] Therefore, a need exists for a device, such as a face mask, that has an adjustable scented carrier that allows a user to dynamically adjust the desired amount of fragrance or vapor being emitted without having to replace the scented portion.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] Various embodiments disclose a face mask device having an adjustable scented carrier for adjusting the amount, strength or both of the scent being released by the carrier.
[0010] Various embodiments provide a face mask assembly that includes a face mask having inner and outer surfaces, with a first receiving portion defined in the face mask, and a scent carrier removably installed in the first receiving portion. The scent carrier has a housing defining a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material, and at least one scent releasing aperture is formed in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber having an effective size adjustable by a selective closing mechanism. Preferably, the first receiving portion is disposed between the inner and outer surfaces of the face mask.
[0011] In preferred embodiments the housing of the scent carrier comprises first and second cover plates that are removably connected to each other, and which are hinged together. In a specific embodiment of the scent carrier, the first and second cover plates are coupled together with a child-proofing mechanism.
[0012] In various embodiments the selective closing mechanism includes a sliding portion for selectively increasing and decreasing the effective size of the at least one aperture.
[0013] In other preferred embodiments the face mask further includes a second receiving portion, and the face mask assembly further utilizes a thermal ballast insert that is installed in the second receiving portion to heat or cool the face mask. The thermal ballast is used as a heat sink or heat source to cool or warm the mask, respectively. Preferably, the second receiving portion is disposed between the inner and outer surfaces of the face mask. More preferably still, the scent carrier is disposed between the thermal ballast insert and the outer surface of the face mask. In various specific embodiments the thermal ballast insert is formed from a flexible bladder defining an interior space that holds a thermal ballast, such as a thermal gel. The thermal ballast insert is preferably substantially identical to a shape of a portion of the face mask and is removably installed in the second receiving portion.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The various aspects and embodiments disclosed herein will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like components. For the purposes of illustrating aspects of the present application, there are shown in the drawings certain preferred embodiments. It should be understood, however, that the application is not limited to the precise arrangement, structures, features, embodiments, aspects, and devices shown, and the arrangements, structures, features, embodiments, aspects and devices shown may be used singularly or in combination with other arrangements, structures, features, embodiments, aspects and devices. The drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale and are not in any way intended to limit the scope of this invention, but are merely presented to clarify illustrated embodiments of the invention. In these drawings:
[0015] FIG. 1A is a front view of an embodiment face mask assembly;
[0016] FIG. 1B is a back view of an embodiment face mask assembly;
[0017] FIG. 2A is a bottom-front perspective view of an embodiment scent carrier;
[0018] FIG. 2B is a top-front perspective view of an embodiment scent carrier;
[0019] FIG. 2C is a back view of an embodiment scent carrier;
[0020] FIG. 2D is an end view of an embodiment scent carrier;
FIG. 2E is a side view of an embodiment scent carrier;

FIG. 3A is an illustration of an embodiment gel insert;

FIG. 3B is an exploded view of an embodiment face mask assembly; and

FIGS. 4A-4G illustrate an embodiment scent carrier having a tamper resistant, child safety feature.

FIG. 5 shows an embodiment toy with an adjustable scent carrier.

FIG. 6 shows an embodiment stuffed animal toy with an adjustable scent carrier.

FIG. 7 shows an embodiment pillow with an adjustable scent carrier.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

It should be noted that although the below description describes the embodiment device as being a face mask that can be placed over the eyes, the mask can be designed to cover any portion of the face including the nose, mouth or both. Moreover, the mask can be shaped in any manner including for example an oval, square, rectangle or trapezoidal shape and can be placed upon any part of the body or article of clothing without departing from the spirit of the invention. In addition to a face mask, aspects of the invention are also directed to other devices which can be provided with a scent carrier, such as a pillow, toy, stuffed animal, clothing, linens, towels, and in particular any product which can be brought into close contact with a person’s body.

As can be seen in FIG. 1A and FIG. 1B, a face mask assembly 100 includes a face mask 101 having an inner surface 198 and an outer surface 199, the inner surface 198 of which contacts the user’s skin and hence is preferably made from a soft, washable material, such as cotton, wool or a synthetic fabric. The outer surface 199 faces away from the wearer’s skin and is visible to others when worn by the user. The inner and outer surfaces 198, 199 may be made from the same material, or may be made from different materials. In a specific embodiment the inner and outer surfaces 198, 199 may both be formed from the same type of material that is both soft and water absorbent, such as terrycloth or the like. The inner and outer surfaces 198, 199, which may be made from a single piece of material or from multiple pieces of material sewn, glued or otherwise coupled together, together define a shape that includes eye covering portions 105 and 110, a forehead covering portion 115 and nose indentation 120, thereby defining a mask for placement over a user’s forehead and eyes. Moreover, face mask 101 also includes straps 125 and 130, each of which preferably has a corresponding hook-and-loop fastener portion 107 (such as Velcro® or the like) so as to connect the two straps 125, 130 together when they are placed around a user’s head. The straps 125, 130 preferably range in size between 8-12 inches and may be adjustable in length, elastic or both to accommodate different users with varying head sizes. Alternatively, for example, a single elastic strap may be employed. It will be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art that other attachment mechanisms may be used to attach the two straps 125, 130 to each other and/or to removably affix the mask 101 to a user’s face.

In the preferred embodiment, face mask 101 has a first receiving portion 150 located above the nose indentation 120 for receiving a removable scent carrier 200 as will be discussed in more detail below. The first receiving portion 150 may be formed as a pocket between the inner 198 and outer 199 surfaces of the mask 101. Although placing the first receiving portion 150 above the nose is a preferred location, placing the first receiving portion 150 in other locations on the mask 101 to distance the scent carrier 200 from the nose is also envisioned. First receiving portion 150 is preferably shaped as a pocket that snugly fits at least an end portion of scent carrier 200 and allows a top portion of scent carrier 200 to protrude out of first receiving portion 150, as can be seen in FIG. 1.

Further, as shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the face mask assembly 100 can include a thermal ballast insert 300, which is preferably in the form of a gel pack, although other configurations are also possible. The thermal ballast insert 300 can act as a heat sink to cool the mask 100, or as a heat source to warm the mask 100. In the preferred embodiment the thermal ballast insert 300 is a bladder made from a flexible material, such as rubber, plastic or the like, which defines a sealed, interior space 330 in which a thermal gel 335 is held. The thermal gel 335 may be of any suitable type as known in the art and is used as a thermal ballast to cool or heat the insert 300 as preferred by the user. For example, the gel pack 300 may be refrigerated to provide a subsequent cooling effect, or may be placed in warm water or even microwaved to provide a heating effect. The thermal ballast insert 300 preferably has a shape that is substantially conformal to that of the face mask 101, when inserted into the second receiving portion 160, the thermal ballast insert 300 preferably aligns with at least between 70% to 100% of the surface area of the face mask 101, more preferably between 80% and 100% of the face mask 101 surface area, and even more preferably still between 90% and 100% of the face mask 101 surface area. Hence, in conformance with the face mask 101, in an embodiment the thermal ballast insert 300 can include eye covering portions 305, 310, a forehead covering portion 315 and an indentation 320 for the user’s nose.

In a preferred embodiment, face mask 101 further defines a second receiving portion 160 for accepting the thermal ballast insert 300, and the face mask assembly 100 can thereby provide a soothing heating or cooling effect as desired by the user by way of the thermal ballast insert 300. Hence, the thermal ballast 300 may be removably inserted within the face mask 101, entirely covered by and disposed between the inner and outer surfaces 198, 199 of the mask 101. The forehead 115 and eye 105, 110 portions of the inner and outer surfaces of the mask 101, completely covering the respective forehead 315 and eye 305, 310 portions of the thermal ballast insert 300. In a preferred embodiment, when the face mask assembly 100 is fully assembled, the removable thermal ballast insert 300 is fully inserted within the second receiving portion 160 and the removable scent carrier 200 is partially inserted within the first receiving portion 150, with the scent carrier 200 at least partially disposed between the outer surface 199 of the mask 101 and the thermal ballast insert 300. Within the first receiving portion 150 the scent carrier 200 may directly contact the thermal ballast insert 300, or may be separated from the thermal ballast insert 300 by a material layer or the like. Hence, the first and second receiving portions 150, 160 may be connected and continuous with each other; or, alternatively, they may define separate enclosures or pockets, with the first receiving portion 150 being disposed over the second receiving portion 160.
[0033] In other embodiments, respective heating or cooling materials may be used, as known in the art, for the thermal ballast insert 300 rather than a single thermal gel 335. That is, materials that cool or heat as a result of chemical reactions may be used instead of the gel 335 to provide the desired cooling or heating characteristic of the thermal ballast insert 300. In such embodiments the thermal ballast 300 may be disposed of and replaced with a new ballast 300 once the materials used to chemically create the desired heating or cooling effect are exhausted.

[0034] Although in preferred embodiments the thermal ballast pack 300 is removable, in other embodiments the thermal ballast pack 300 can be permanently enclosed within the inner and outer surfaces of the mask 101 so that it is not removable by the user; hence, in such embodiments the second receiving portion 160 is not accessible to the user.

[0035] In certain embodiments the face mask 101 may further include a temperature measuring mechanism 170, such as disposed on the outer surface of mask 101, that is able to measure the temperature of the face mask 101, the thermal ballast 300 or both. Any suitable temperature measuring mechanism 170 may be employed, but is preferably of the type that employs temperature-sensitive materials that change color at predetermined temperatures, such as liquid crystal or the like, so that the user may easily visually determine the approximate temperature of the mask 101.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. 2A-2E, the embodiment scent carrier 200 has a housing that defines a chamber 201 for holding a scent or vapor releasing material, such as a pad, a liquid, a gel or the like, in which the housing is formed by a cover plate 202 that fits over base plate 204, where the plates 202, 204 are shown in a closed position with respect to each other. The housing includes one or more scent releasing apertures 205, fluidically coupled to the chamber 201, defined in cover plate 202, and a selective closing mechanism that is provided by a sliding portion 210 in sliding engagement with cover plate 202 that can at least partially cover apertures 205 and that is slidable along tracks 215a and 215b defined in relation to the cover plate 202 and the sliding portion 210, such as by a tongue and groove arrangement or the like. Sliding portion 210 preferably has a projection 220 which is used as a grip for the user to move sliding portion 210 along tracks 215a and 215b. The selective closing mechanism of sliding portion 210 allows the user to adjust the effective size of apertures 205 which are used to adjust how much of the vapor or scent within the chamber 201 is released to the environment via the apertures 205. Base plate 204, together with cover plate 202 define the inner chamber 201 for holding a liquid, gel, pad or the like for releasing a scent or vapor. The pad can be coupled to the inner surface of the base plate 204 or the cover plate 202 and held in place when the cover plate 202 and base plate 204 are brought into contact with each other in a closed position. In one embodiment, the inner chamber 201 may be integrally scented through a spray or other mechanism so that a fragrance and/or vapor may be released through apertures 205.

[0037] A hinge 230 may support the cover plate 202 on the base plate 204 for pivotal movement between the closed position shown in FIGS. 2-5 and an open position, such that the base plate 204 and cover plate 202 have a clamshell arrangement with respect to each other by way of hinge 230. A snap-fit arrangement can be provided between the base plate 204 and cover plate 202 so that the plates 202, 204 are removable and may then lock together. For example, when the cover plate 202 is moved pivotally into the closed position, a locking tab 240 on the cover plate 202 may be received in a slot 245 on the base plate 204 such that the cover plate 202 snaps into an interlocking engagement with the base plate 204. Other engaging mechanisms that allow pivotal movement to mate the cover plate 202 and base plate 204 may be used as can be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art. The pivotal arrangement of the base plate 204 with the cover plate 202 permits the user to gain access to the inner chamber 201 to fill the inner chamber 201 with additional scent or vapor releasing material.

[0038] Scent carrier 200 is preferably designed so that it can be inserted into first receiving portion 150 where at least a portion of the apertures 205 of scent carrier 200 protrude out of the top end of receiving portion 205 to allow the scent and/or vapor to emit through apertures 205. Scent carrier 200 can be physically held in first receiving portion 150 by friction engagement or it can be held in first receiving portion 150 through an adhesive mechanism as is known in the art. Prior to the scent carrier 200 being placed into the first receiving portion 150 or even in one embodiment once it has already been placed into the first receiving portion 150, a user of face mask assembly 100 can manually adjust the amount of vapor and/or fragrance being released through apertures 205 by way of the selective closing mechanism to adjust the effective size of the apertures 205 (i.e., adjust how readily the apertures 205 release scent or vapor held within carrier 200); for example, by moving sliding portion 210 along tracks 215a and 215b the user can adjust how much of sliding portion 210 covers the openings of apertures 205, thereby adjusting the effective size of the apertures 205. In one embodiment, tracks 215a and 215b may include steps or ramped surfaces to provide varying resistance when sliding portion 210 is moved along tracks 215a and 215b. Moreover, in one embodiment another mechanism in addition to or instead of projection 220 may be used to move sliding portion 210 as would be known by one of ordinary skill in the art. For example, a switch or cranking mechanism can be included to move sliding portion 210 along tracks 215a and 215b.

[0039] It will be appreciated that any suitable selective closing mechanism for adjusting the effective size of the apertures 205 may be employed for the scent carrier 200. For example, a twisting arrangement between base and cover portions may be employed to selectively open and close the apertures 205, or a separate shutter mechanism disposed between the base and cover portions may be used to adjustably cover the apertures 205. The sliding top cover arrangement of FIGS. 2A-2E is just one possible selective closing mechanism.

[0040] When sliding portion 210 is moved towards the top end of scent carrier 200 and blocks part of the openings of apertures 205, reducing the effective size of the apertures 205, the scent and/or vapor emitting through the apertures 205 will be dulled and/or reduced. Conversely, when the sliding portion 210 is moved towards the bottom end of scent carrier 200 it obstructs less of aperture 205, increasing the effective size of the apertures 205 and therefore allows the amount of scent and/or vapor being released through aperture 205 to increase.
Thus, using the selective closing mechanism, a user can easily select how much or how little vapor is emitted through apertures 205 without having to replace or adjust the scent pad or material itself, as will be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art. According to one embodiment, in practice, a user puts on the face mask 101 with the scent carrier 200 already inserted into the first receiving portion 150 and then is able to move sliding portion 210 so as to adjust the level of vapor and/or scent being emitted through apertures 205 while the face mask 101 is in place. It will be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art that this enables a user of the face mask to more comfortably manage the effects that the scented pad or vapor may have. Also, the selective closing mechanism, such as sliding portion 210, may be moved to completely cover apertures 205 so as to eliminate or reduce any scent release to allow for storage of scent carrier 200 during periods of nonuse.

[0041] It will be appreciated that although described as a “scent” carrier, the carrier can also be used to deliver vapor, medication or aromatherapy materials and the like without departing from the spirit of this invention. Also, when using the face mask assembly 100, the user may selectively use one or both of the scent carrier and thermal ballast 300.

[0042] Although the above description relates to a face mask, one of ordinary skill in the art can appreciate that the adjustable scent carrier described herein can be used in differing devices without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, the adjustable scent carrier may be inserted into a pillow or head rest that a user may use when sleeping or reclining. In this manner, the user is able to relieve certain of the symptoms related with a cold and/or other sinus condition by easily regulating the amount of vapor that is being released into the air during their sleep through adjusting the sliding portion 210 of the adjustable scent carrier 200.

[0043] FIGS. 4A-4E illustrate an alternative embodiment of a scent carrier 400 according to the present invention. This embodiment 400 is generally tamper resistant and child proof in that it can be made larger so that it does not present a choking hazard for a child. Additionally, the scent carrier 400 can be formed so as to require the use of two hands to open the scent carrier 400 and thereby provide access to the inner chamber 401. For example, a user may be required to both push and twist the scent carrier 400 to open it up.

[0044] Specifically, in this embodiment, the scent carrier 400 may be formed as two opposed disk-like members 402, 404 that can be twisted relative to each other. A child-proofing locking mechanism can be used to lock and unlock the two disks 402, 404 as desired, as known in the art. For example, when pushed towards the other member 404, teeth 412 on one of the members 402 can engage with the other member 404 to allow the disk-like members 402, 404 to unlock from each other. Or, when pushed towards the other member 404, teeth 412 on one of the members 402 can engage an internal carrier portion of the other member 404 to cause an access slot 415 in the carrier portion to turn and become aligned with a corresponding slot 417 on the other member 402 so as to gain access to the internal chamber 401 defined between the two members 402, 404. Slots 405 can be provided in one of the members 402 such that when the member 402 is rotated, as indicated by arrow 409, the slots 405 can be selectively and partially opened and closed to thereby provide a selective closing mechanism to control the amount of scent being released.

[0045] Embodiments of the invention are not necessarily limited to face masks. For example, as shown in FIG. 5, an embodiment toy 500 may include a receiving portion 502 in an outer surface 501 of the body of toy 500 that defines a pocket into which an embodiment scent carrier 504 may be disposed that permits adjustment of the amount of scent or vapor released by the toy 500. Similarly, as shown in FIG. 6, an embodiment scent carrier 604 can be inserted into a receiving portion 602 defined on an outer surface 601 of a stuffed animal or toy 600, such as a teddy bear to provide either vapor or a specialized fragrance to the stuffed toy 600.

[0046] As shown in FIG. 7, a pillow 700 may include a covering material 701, such as cloth, velvet, leather or the like that defines a cavity 709 and into which is disposed a resilient stuffing material 703, such as cotton or wool batting, feathers, or the like. A pocket 702 is formed on the outer surface of covering material 701 to define a first receiving portion into which an embodiment adjustable scent carrier 704 can be disposed. Through use of the scent carriers 504, 604, 704, the amount of fragrance or vapor being released can be adjusted without replacing the pad or other vapor releasing material. In the case of an infant or child, this would be particularly practical, where a parent can use a child’s toy 500 or stuffed animal 600 to provide medication or other relief for a sinus ailment like the common cold while the child is still comforted by the toy 500, 600.

[0047] One having ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the various mechanisms described for the preferred embodiments of the face mask and/or scent carrier may be adapted and interchanged between the preferred embodiments, without significantly impacting the structure and operation of the face mask and/or scent carrier. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the present invention has many applications, may be implemented in many manners and, as such is not to be limited by the foregoing embodiments and examples. Any number of the features of the different embodiments described herein may be combined into one single embodiment, the locations of particular elements can be altered and alternate embodiments having fewer than or more than all of the features herein described are possible. Functionality may also be, in whole or in part, distributed among multiple components, in manners now known or to become known.

[0048] It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that changes could be made to the embodiments described above without departing from the broad inventive concept thereof. It is understood, therefore, that this invention is not limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but is intended to cover modifications within the spirit and scope of the present invention. While there had been shown and described fundamental features of the invention as applied to being exemplary embodiments thereof, it will be understood that omissions and substitutions and changes in the form and details of the disclosed invention may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the invention. Moreover, the scope of the present invention covers conventionally known, future developed variations and modifications to the components described herein as would be understood by those skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:
1. A face mask assembly comprising:
a face mask having inner and outer surfaces, the inner surface configured for contacting the skin of a user, a first receiving portion coupled to the outer surface; and
a scent carrier configured to be removably installed in the first receiving portion, the scent carrier comprising:

- a housing defining a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material;
- at least one scent releasing aperture in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber and having an effective size; and
- a selective closing mechanism for adjusting the effective size of the at least one scent releasing aperture.

2. The face mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the housing comprises first and second cover plates that are removably connected to each other.

3. The face mask assembly of claim 2 wherein the first and second cover plates are hinged together.

4. The face mask assembly of claim 2 wherein the first and second cover plates are coupled together with a child-proofing mechanism.

5. The face mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the selective closing mechanism comprises a sliding portion for selectively increasing and decreasing the effective size of the at least one aperture.

6. The face mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the first receiving portion is disposed between the inner and outer surfaces.

7. The face mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the face mask further comprises a second receiving portion, and the face mask assembly further comprises a thermal ballast insert capable of being received in the second receiving portion.

8. The face mask assembly of claim 7 wherein the second receiving portion is disposed between the inner and outer surfaces.

9. The face mask assembly of claim 8 wherein the scent carrier is disposed between the thermal ballast insert and the outer surface.

10. The face mask assembly of claim 7 wherein the thermal ballast insert comprises a flexible bladder defining an interior space holding a thermal gel.

11. The face mask assembly of claim 7 wherein a shape of the thermal ballast insert is substantially identical to a shape of the face mask.

12. The face mask assembly of claim 7 wherein the thermal ballast insert is removably installed in the second receiving portion.

13. The face mask assembly of claim 1 wherein the housing of the scent carrier comprises a first housing member rotatably coupled to a second housing member, the first housing member comprising the at least one scent releasing aperture, and rotation between the first and second housing members adjusts the effective size of the at least one scent releasing aperture.

14. The face mask assembly of claim 13 wherein the first housing member comprises a first access slot, and the second housing member comprises a corresponding second access slot configured such that rotation between the first and second housing members causes the first access slot to align with the second access slot to permit the user to gain access to the chamber.

15. The face mask assembly of claim 13 wherein the housing comprises a child-proof mechanism to couple the first housing member to the second housing member.

16. A toy comprising:
- a body having an outer surface;
- a receiving portion located in or on the body; and
- a scent carrier configured to be removably installed in the receiving portion, the scent carrier comprising:
  - a housing defining a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material;
  - at least one scent releasing aperture in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber and having an effective size; and
  - a selective closing mechanism for adjusting the effective size of the at least one scent releasing aperture.

17. The toy of claim 16 wherein the toy is a stuffed toy.

18. A pillow comprising:
- a covering material defining a cavity;
- a resilient stuffing material disposed inside the cavity; a pocket formed in or on the covering material; and
- a scent carrier configured to be removably installed in the pocket, the scent carrier comprising:
  - a housing defining a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material;
  - at least one scent releasing aperture in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber and having an effective size; and
  - a selective closing mechanism for adjusting the effective size of the at least one scent releasing aperture.

19. A face mask comprising:
- a forehead portion for covering at least a portion of the forehead of a user and two eye portions for covering at least the eyes of the user, wherein the forehead and eye portions define an inner surface configured for contacting the skin of the user and an outer surface;
- a strap for urging the inner surface to contact the face of the user;
- a first receiving portion coupled to the outer surface between the two eye portions; and
- a scent carrier configured to be removably engaged with the first receiving portion, the scent carrier comprising:
  - a housing defining a chamber to hold a scent or vapor releasing material;
  - at least one scent releasing aperture in the housing in fluidic communications with the chamber and having an effective size; and
  - a selective closing mechanism for adjusting the effective size of the at least one scent releasing aperture.

20. The face mask of claim 19 further comprising:
- a second receiving portion defined between the inner and outer surfaces; and
- a thermal ballast insert installed in the second receiving portion; wherein the first and second receiving portions are configured so that the scent carrier is disposed between the thermal ballast insert and the outer surface.

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