A hat is provided, such as a knit winter cap, that includes a hole surrounded by stitching that provides a barrier from unraveling or unweaving of the hat. The hat provides a hole for a ponytail to extend through such that the wearer's hair does not cause air gaps which would otherwise reduce the hat's effectiveness in protecting the wearer from environmental elements.
KNIT HEADGEAR WITH HOLE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] None.

[0002] A portion of the disclosure of this patent document contains material which is subject to copyright protection. The copyright owner has no objection to the facsimile reproduction by anyone of the patent document or the patent disclosure, as it appears in the Patent and Trademark Office patent file or records, but otherwise reserves all copyright rights whatsoever.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The invention relates to headgear and, more particularly, to a hat with a hole or opening provided through which hair passes and/or is held. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Currently, hats or headgear are worn for a variety of purposes. Some hats are purely ornamental, some have origins in deeply-rooted religious beliefs, some have a purely utilitarian purpose, and some combine these aspects.

[0005] One purpose of headgear is for protection from environmental elements, including cold air, wind, and snow or precipitation. In order to protect someone from these or other elements, the headgear should keep the element from reaching the wearer’s body and head.

[0006] Often, winter hats are loose-knit from fibrous material such as wool, cotton, or a synthetic fiber. The fiber and the knit pattern provide the hat with a certain amount of elasticity so that the hat is stretched somewhat through the act of putting the hat on one’s head, and the hat will then contract and conform to the shape of the wearer’s head.

[0007] Typically, hats used for protection against the weather are used in conjunction with other apparel items. Specifically, a person will wear a hat, and a coat, and possibly a scarf. Overlapping the items, such as with a scarf being wrapped over the collar of a coat, is ideal for minimizing the reach of cold or wind.

[0008] With or without a scarf protecting the neck area, a hat’s utility is dependent on its ability to prevent cold air to reach the wearer’s head, particularly at the hat’s opening. For instance, a person who wears eyeglasses may pull a hat down on their head only to have gaps where the temples of the eyeglasses hold the hat away from the head, thereby allowing cold air to pass to the person’s head.

[0009] The same issue is present for someone wearing a hat where the person has long hair. If the hair is allowed to drape down the neck and back, the combination of elasticity of the hat and of the fact that the hair provides a slick surface over which the hat is pulled causes the hat to creep up and off of the head. This reduces the effectiveness of the hat to keep the person warm, and it requires the wearer to repeatedly adjust the hat. Alternatively, the hair may be put into a holder so that it is in a ‘pony-tail’ which then hangs down just one portion of the neck. In such a scenario, the hat typically remains seated on the head better than without the pony-tail. However, the pony-tail usually causes gaps between the hat and the neck in the area immediately adjacent to where the pony-tail is positioned. As a further alternative, the hair may be put up under the hat, such as in a ball of hair. Many hats simply do not have enough size to allow a large ball of hair to placed underneath and still be pulled down over the head to a proper and secure position. In addition, as the hat is typically a knit hat, a ball of hair on the top of the head allows air to blow through the hat, thereby reducing its effectiveness.

[0010] Baseball hats are known which provide an opening in the hat specifically located for ponytails. However, these hats present certain drawbacks. First, baseball caps are not useful for warding off of environmental elements. Any hole or edge made in a woven or knit material requires securing of the edges and ends of the fibers. Baseball caps are made of a tightly woven material such as cotton twill or wool felt, whereas winter caps are often made of a loose-knit yarn such as wool or acrylic. Making a hole in such a winter cap designed to be stretched presents issues of the yarn becoming unravelled which baseball caps do not present.

[0011] Furthermore, people value individualism. For many, this means the clothing and apparel one wears is a unique combination of items that expresses a personal style. Oftentimes, personal style may be expressed through customisation of common apparel items, such as by having their name placed on a shirt, or having a custom image applied to an article of clothing.

[0012] Accordingly, there has been a need for a new and improved hat or headgear for protecting a person’s head from environmental elements when the person has hair that is long enough to hang out of the hat.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a hat with a hole formed therein and positioned for receiving an amount of hair of the person is disclosed. The hat is formed of a thread yarn material suitable for protection from cold air, the yarn being in a construction pattern so that the hat stretches and contracts upon application and release of force upon the hat, and the hat is provided with a shape suitable for securing the hat around a person’s head so as to conform to the contours of the head to substantially minimize gaps between the hat and the head. The hat has edge stitching along its periphery to secure and retain the thread yarn material, and the hat has a substantially closed-path of stitching around the edge stitching. The stitching provides a closed barrier which prevents forces upon the hat so that the yarn does not unravel at the hole. In some forms, the hat may include a decoration between the closed paths of stitching.

[0014] The hole of the hat may be generally positioned at the crown of the head. The hole may receive a ponytail of the person, and the hole may be approximately two inches in diameter.

[0015] In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, a method of forming a hat is disclosed including the steps of providing a knit cap, providing a desired position for a hole for a particular wearer of the hat, stitching a periphery defining the hole in the desired position, and removing material of the hat within the periphery of the hole. The method may include stitching a second periphery around and spaced from the stitched periphery defining the hole. The method may also include decorating the space between the stitched peripheries.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] In the drawings, FIG. 1 is a plan schematic view of a first exemplary embodiment of a hat of the present invention;
[0017] FIG. 2 is a plan schematic view of a second exemplary embodiment of a hat of the present invention;
[0018] FIG. 3 is a first perspective of an embodiment of the present invention as being worn by a person;
[0019] FIG. 4 is a second perspective of the embodiment of FIG. 3; and
[0020] FIG. 5 is a third perspective of the embodiment of FIG. 3.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0021] Referring to the Figs., hats 10 of various embodiments of the present invention are depicted. The hat 10 has a top 12, a bottom edge 14, and a body material 16 therebetween, as are commonly known for hats. In the preferred embodiment, the hat 10 is made of a thread in the form of a yarn, such as wool, cotton, or synthetic yarn, for instance acrylic. In the preferred embodiment, the thread is knitted in a loose knit-pattern such that the material forming the body material 16 may be stretched in one or more directions when force is applied to the hat 10, and such that the material tends to return to its natural shape when the force is released or removed, as is also known for knit hats such as winter hats, commonly referred to as ski hats.

[0022] A hole 20 is formed in the body material 16. The hole 20 may be positioned at the top 12 of the hat 10, or at any other point above the bottom edge 14. The hole 20 is sized to receive a portion of a wearer’s hair. In general, it is believed that a two inch (2") hole provides enough size for allowing a wearer to pull hair through the hole 20 and to arrange properly a ponytail holder, if desired, on the hair, while being small enough that a significant area is not exposed to elements and that the hat 10 itself may provide a ponytail holder featured, if so desired. The position of the hole 20 may be determined by a wearer or the position may be provided in anticipation of a commonly desired point for a ponytail.

[0023] The hole 20 is surrounded by a periphery 30 or ring of stitching in the body material 16. As the hat 10 is made from loose-knit yarn, the hole 20 creates loose threads which may unravel or unwave. Accordingly, the periphery 30 is a closed-path, such as a circle, that secures the threads therein. In addition, when stress (such as stretching) is applied to the hat 10, the strain tends to pull at the hole 20. Therefore, the stitched periphery 30 holds the threads in place against such strain. Furthermore, a second stitched periphery 32 is provided at a distance D from the stitched periphery 30. This second periphery 32 is also a closed-path, such as a circle, and serves to minimize or eliminate strains upon the hat 10 from translating through the hole 20 such that the rest of the hat 10 provides the stretching or resilience in response to the strain.

[0024] As can be seen, a decoration 40 may be provided between the stitched peripheries 30, 32. The decoration 40 may be provided by a manufacturer, or may be custom-applied in response to a wearer’s desire. This allows personalization of the hat 10. In Figs. 1-3, the decoration is in the form of stars, a business’ name (Dodd’s Gym), and flowers.

[0025] As can be seen in FIG. 2, the hat 10 includes a center seam 50. Often, knit caps are made of several panels, or may be made of a single panel that has a seam, such as center seam 50 for holding the hat 10 together. In preferred embodiments, the center seam 50 overlaps with the stitched peripheries 30, 32 around the hole 20 such that the peripheries 30, 32 provide additional reinforcement to the center seam 50.

[0026] While the invention has been described with respect to specific examples including presently preferred modes of carrying out the invention, those skilled in the art will appreciate that there are numerous variations and permutations of the above described systems and techniques that fall within the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A hat comprising:
   a thread yarn material suitable for protection from cold air;
   a construction pattern for the yarn that stretches and contracts upon application and release, respectively, of force upon the hat;
   a shape suitable for securing the hat around a person’s head so as to conform to the contours of the head to substantially minimize gaps between the hat and the head;
   a hole formed in the hat positioned for receiving an amount of hair of the person;
   edge stitching along a periphery of the hole to secure and retain the thread yarn material thereat; and
   a substantially closed-path of stitching around the edge stitching.
2. The hat of claim 1 wherein the closed-path of stitching is a barrier such that stretching forces upon the hat are not transmitted to the edge stitching.
3. The hat of claim 1 wherein a decoration may be included between the edge stitching and the closed-path of stitching.
4. The hat of claim 3 wherein the closed-path of stitching is a barrier such that stretching forces upon the hat are not transmitted to the decoration.
5. The hat of claim 1 wherein the hole may be generally positioned at a crown of the head.
6. The hat of claim 5 wherein the hole may receive a ponytail of the person.
7. The hat of claim 6 wherein the hole is approximately two inches in diameter.
8. A method of forming a hat including:
   providing a knit cap;
   providing a desired position for a hole for a particular wearer of the hat;
   stitching a periphery defining the hole in the desired position; and
   removing material of the hat within the periphery of the hole.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the steps further include stitching a second periphery around and spaced from the stitched periphery defining the hole.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the steps further include decorating the space between the stitched peripheries.

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