Jan. 21, 1969 G. A. O'BRIEN 3,422,464

SHOWER ENCLOSURE TRACK ASSEMBLY

Filed March 11, 1966

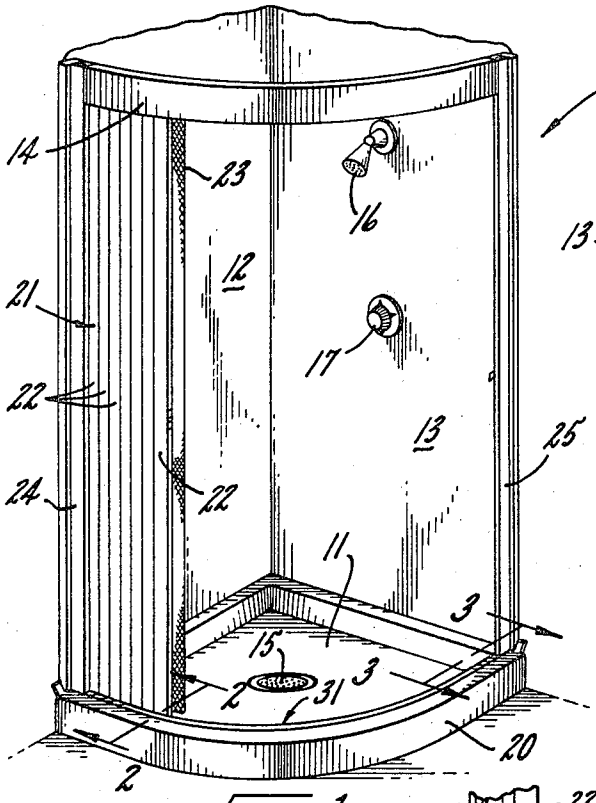


Fig. 1.

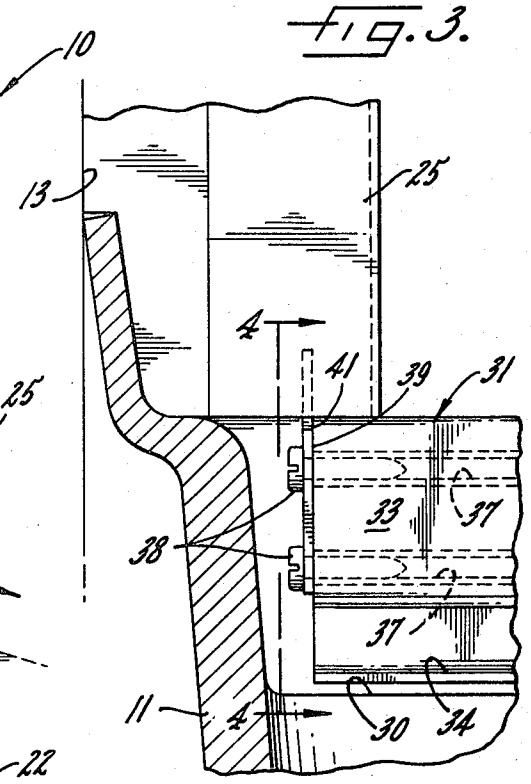


Fig. 3.

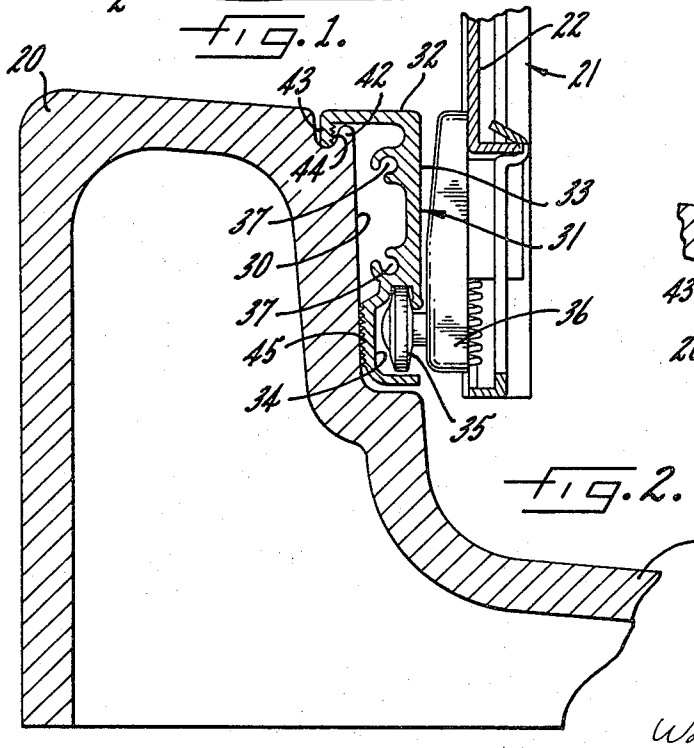


Fig. 2.

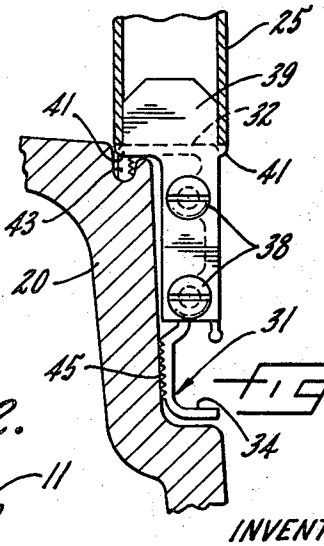


Fig. 4.

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SHOWER ENCLOSURE TRACK ASSEMBLY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A shower enclosure assembly of a base, rail member and sliding panel in which the base has a wall recessed along its top edge and the rail member fits in and fills the recess. The rail member is extruded and formed with a flange hooked over a lip on the base, a groove guiding a panel guide element, and fastener receiving grooves for mounting pilot plates.

Description of the invention

This invention relates generally to shower bath enclosures and more particularly concerns an assembly for holding and guiding the lower edge of a shower door or curtain.

It is common practice to mount a track member along the top of a shower-equipped tub or receptor, and to provide the lower edge of a shower door or curtain with glides or rollers that move along the track to guide and hold the door or curtain as it is opened and closed. The present invention concerns an improved arrangement of this kind.

One aim of the invention is to provide a shower enclosure having a significantly improved appearance because of a "hidden" flush positioning of the lower track member. The flush mounting of the track member, with both the top and bottom wall of the tub or receptor, also minimizes the chances of inadvertent damage to the assembly. A related object is to achieve ease in alining and installation while maintaining the flush mounting of the track member.

Another object of the invention is to provide an enclosure in which the track member can be readily cleaned and which does not trap water so as to avoid the build-up of soap residue.

A further object is to provide an enclosure assembly which can be economically manufactured and easily installed.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective of a shower enclosure embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary enlarged section taken approximately along the line 2—2 in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary enlarged section taken approximately along the line 3—3 in FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary section taken approximately along the line 4—4 in FIG. 3.

While the invention will be described in connection with a preferred embodiment, it will be understood that I do not intend to limit the invention to that embodiment. On the contrary, I intend to cover all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

Turning to the drawing, there is shown a shower enclosure **10** in which the invention is embodied and which includes a base in the form of a receptor **11**, a pair of walls **12** and **13**, a top band **14**, and the usual drain **15**, showerhead **16** and water control **17** for the showerhead.

In the illustrated construction, the walls **12**, **13** are at right angles to one another and the receptor **11** and the band **14** have quarter-circle fronts so that the enclosure **10** is suitable for installation in the corner of a room. Normally, the walls **12**, **13** are defined by tile or a similar covering applied directly to the room walls of the corner in which the enclosure **10** is installed.

The receptor **11** includes a front wall **20** which defines the lower edge of the opening into the enclosure **10**. A panel is provided for closing the opening and, in the illustrated embodiment, the panel takes the form of a door **21** defined by vertical bars **22** interconnected by flexible sheets **23**. In the fully open position, shown in FIG. 1, the bars **22** are closely spaced and the sheets **23** bowed inwardly. Pulling the right-hand bar **22** to the right as seen in this figure spaces the bars **22** and flattens the sheets **23** between the bars to form a door panel extending along the receptor wall **20** between a pair of hollow end members **24** and **25** that are fastened against the enclosure walls **12**, **13**, respectively.

The door bars **22** are suspended for sliding movement in a track mounted behind the band **14**, and the lower ends of the bars **22** are also held and guided for movement along the wall **20** by an arrangement embodying the invention.

In accordance with the invention, the receptor wall **20** is formed with a recess **30** running along the upper edge of the wall and opening inwardly, and a rail member **31** for guiding the door bars **22** is secured in the recess **30** with intersecting surfaces **32** and **33** constituting continuations of the top and inner side of the wall **20**. The member **31** substantially fills the recess **30**, and its exposed surfaces **32**, **33** lie flush with the adjacent surfaces of the receptor wall. A track groove **34** is formed in the lower portion of the rail member **31** well below the top of the wall **20**. The groove **34** receives the guide elements of the shower door which, in this case, are rollers **35** journalled on blocks **36** that are resiliently mounted on the lower ends of the bars **22**. The groove **34** is open-bottomed so that water and soap residue cannot accumulate. The low position of the groove **34** with respect to the top of the wall **20** insures that there is no splashing of water out of the receptor **11** when the shower door is closed and the shower is in use.

Preferably, the rail member **31** is extruded so as to economically obtain the desired substantially uniform cross section. The cross section includes a pair of fastener receiving grooves **37** which, at the ends of the member **31**, receive screws **38** locking a pilot plate **39** to each end of the member **31**. Each plate **39** extends upwardly to be snugly received within the overlying one of the end members **24**, **25**. During installation, the rail member **31** is first put in place with the pilot plates **39** attached. The end members **24**, **25** are then piloted over the plates **39**, to establish and maintain proper alinement between the end members and the rail member **31**, and the end members are secured to the adjacent walls. Preferably, the pilot plates are formed with tongs or steps **41** which lie level with the surface **32** and engage the bottom ends of the end members **24**, **25**. With the end members fixed in place, the steps **41** hold the rail member **31** down in position.

For initially positioning and holding the rail member **31** in place, the wall recess **30** includes a wall portion defining an upwardly extending lip **42**, and the rail member **31** includes a flange **43** that is hooked over the lip **42**. In the illustrated construction, the member **31** is also formed with ridged portions **44** and **45** which are adapted to facilitate sealing the member **31** within the recess **30** with a mastic or similar material.

The flush mounting of the rail member **31** with the surfaces of the wall **20** gives the assembly a neat trim

appearance. The flat surfaces **32**, **33** make the assembly easy to clean, as does the open groove **34**. Moreover, the "hidden" flush positioning of the rail member **31** minimizes the likelihood of inadvertent damage to the assembly.

Those familiar with this art will also appreciate that the assembly embodying the invention can be economically manufactured and readily installed.

I claim as my invention:

1. In a shower enclosure, the combination comprising, a base having a wall defining the lower edge of an opening into said enclosure, said wall having a recess running along the upper edge of the wall and opening inwardly of said enclosure, a rail member secured in said recess and having intersecting surfaces constituting continuations of the top and inner side of the wall so that the member substantially fills the recess, said member being formed to define a track groove spaced below the top of the wall and running the length of said member, a panel for closing said opening, and a guide element mounted on said panel and fitted in running engagement within said groove.

2. The combination of claim **1** in which said rail member has a substantially uniform cross section which includes fastener receiving grooves.

3. The combination of claim **1** in which said wall recess includes a wall portion defining an upwardly extending lip, and said rail member includes a flange which is hooked over said lip to hold said member in place.

4. The combination of claim **1** in which said track groove is open-bottomed with no flange to trap water therein.

5. The combination of claim **1** including an end member positioned above one end of said rail member, and a pilot plate secured to said rail member end and being fitted in said end member, said pilot plate having a step abutting the bottom of said end member.

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