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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Brunelle-Wright(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0209235 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 13, 2007**(54) **SHOE STRAP AND METHOD OF
EMPLOYMENT****Publication Classification**(76) Inventor: **Debra M. Brunelle-Wright**, Fridley,
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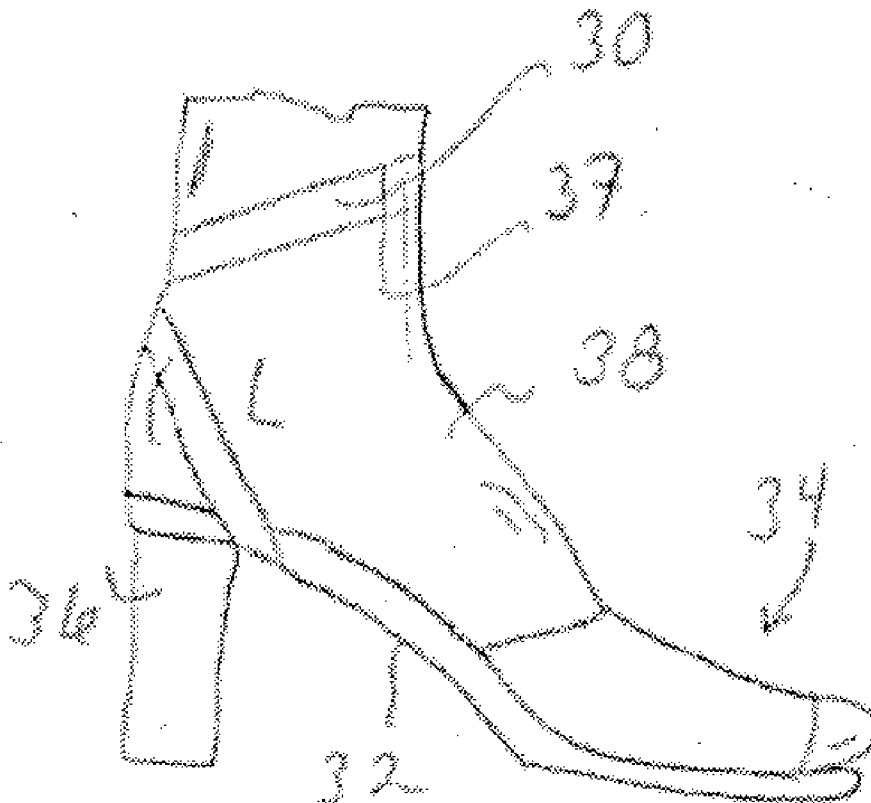
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402 (US)**(51) **Int. Cl.****A43C 11/00** (2006.01)**A43B 7/20** (2006.01)**A43B 23/00** (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.** **36/50.1; 36/89; 36/136**

(57)

ABSTRACT(21) Appl. No.: **11/677,849**(22) Filed: **Feb. 22, 2007****Related U.S. Application Data**(62) Division of application No. 11/036,918, filed on Jan.
14, 2005.

A shoe support and ornamentation system that allows a wearer to customize the look of a shoe. The system may include material having a first end and a second end and having a sufficient length to enwrap a portion of a sole of a shoe proximate its heel and a portion of a wearer's foot wherein after the material is wrapped around the portion of the sole and the wearer's foot, the first end is secured to the second end.



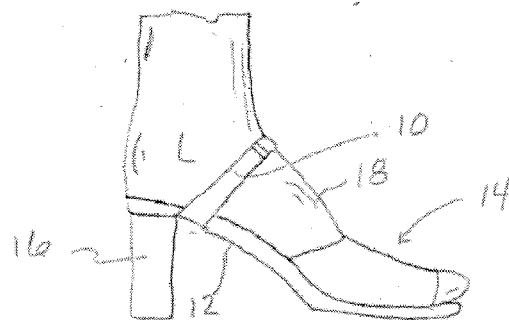


FIG. 1

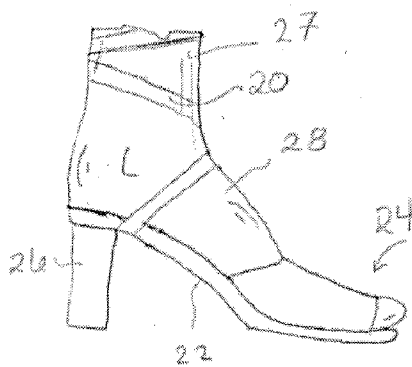


FIG. 2

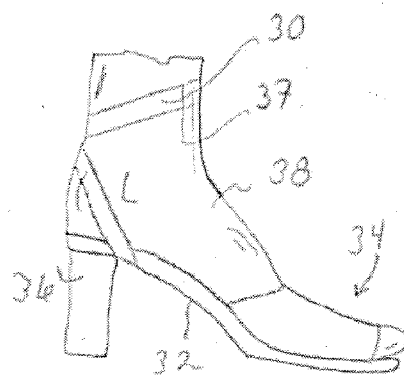


FIG. 3

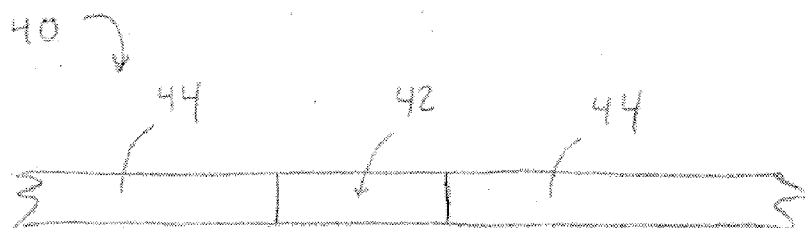


FIG. 4

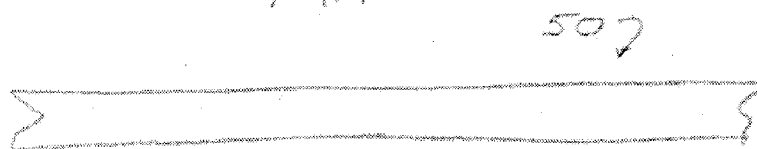


FIG. 5

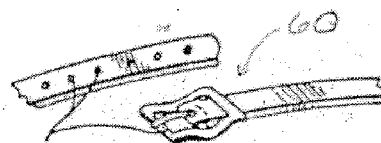


FIG. 6

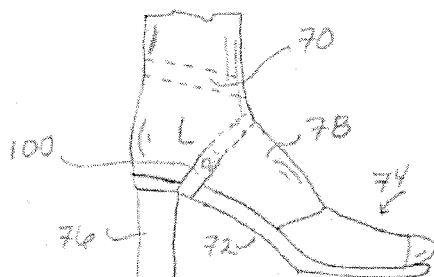


FIG. 8



FIG. 12

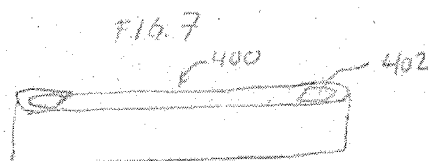


FIG. 13

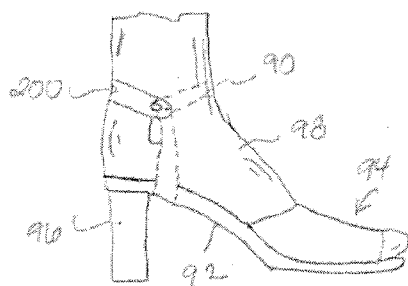


FIG. 10



FIG. 9

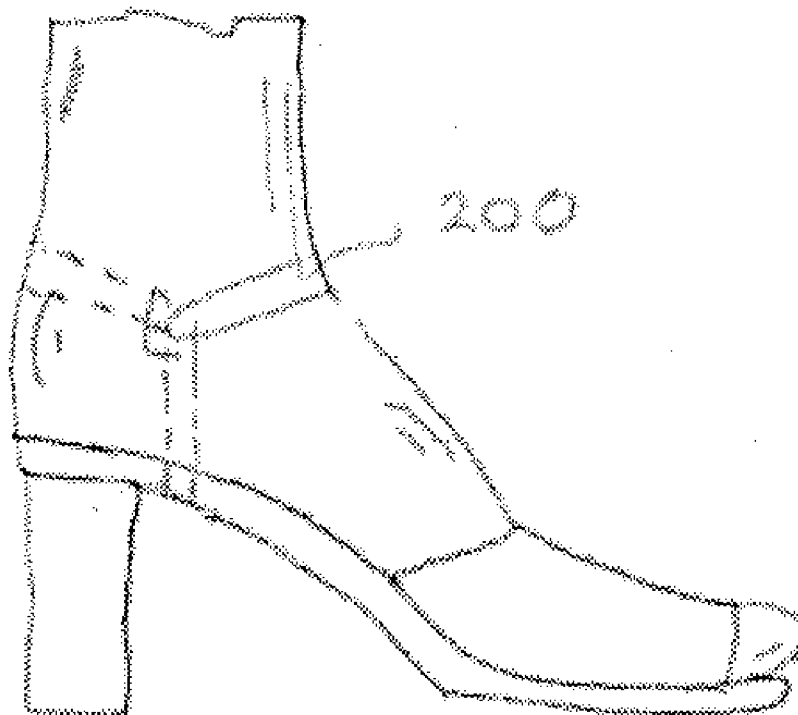


Fig. 11

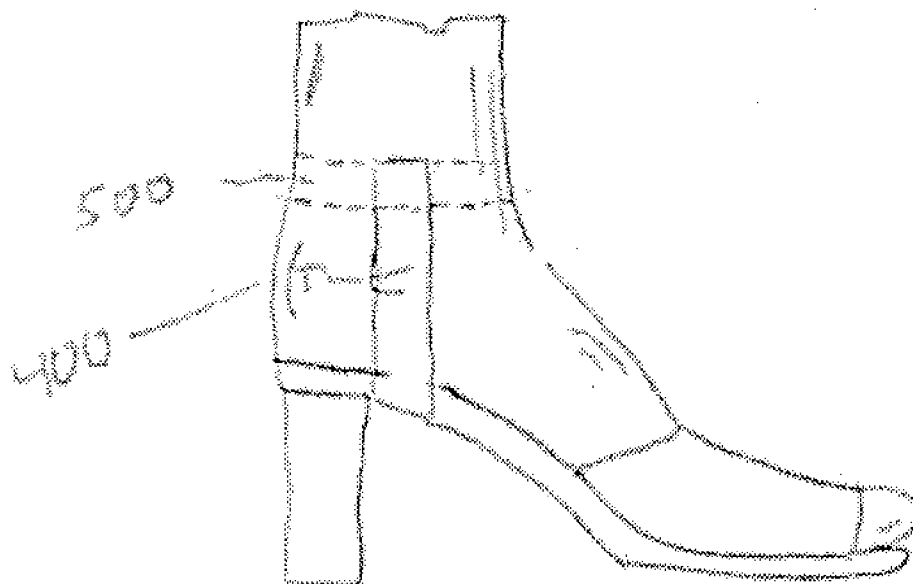


FIG. 17



FIG. 18

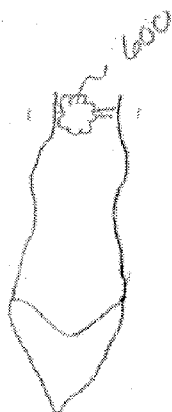


FIG. 14

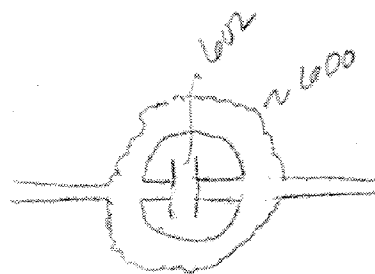


FIG. 16

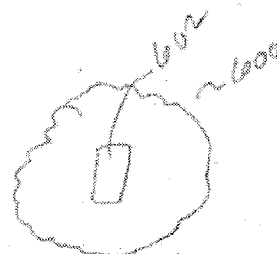


FIG. 15

SHOE STRAP AND METHOD OF EMPLOYMENT

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The embodiments of the invention relate to the field of footwear, and, more particularly, to shoe straps that may provide additional structural support to a shoe as well as ornamentation.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Certain footwear, in particular, a woman's slip-on style of shoe, generally referred to as a mule, has a sole on which the foot rests and a strap that goes over the top, front portion of the wearer's foot. The shoe does not provide a support structure for the back of the foot. Also, because the back of the wearer's foot is not secured to the shoe, clothing can get caught between the wearer's heel and the shoe especially when longer pants or skirts are worn. Oftentimes, when a mule is worn, there is the annoying sound of the back of the shoe slapping against the wearer's foot. In addition, because of the lack of structure in the back of the shoe, it can be very unstable especially depending on the type of terrain encountered by the wearer. Thus, it would be desirable to provide a structure to render a slip-on style of shoe more stable without altering the design of the shoe itself.

[0003] In addition, in general, the design of any kind of shoe, including a mule, or boot is created by a designer and typically cannot be changed by the wearer. It is desirable to provide a wearer with the ability to change the appearance of the footwear so that it can be coordinated with a particular outfit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a shoe strap for use with a shoe. The strap includes material having a first end and a second end and having a sufficient length to enwrap a portion of a sole of a shoe proximate its heel and a portion of a wearer's foot wherein after the material is wrapped around a portion of the sole and a portion of the wearer's foot, the first end is secured to the second end to secure the strap to the shoe and the wearer's foot.

[0005] According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a shoe support and ornamentation system for a shoe. The system includes a guide element having a first end and a second end; and a shoe strap threadable through the first and second ends of the guide element, the shoe strap has a first and second end that can be secured to one another.

[0006] According to a third aspect of the invention, there is provided a shoe fastening system including a support structure having a first end and a second end wherein the support structure has a sufficient length to wrap around a portion of a shoe's sole proximate its heel and extend up a length of wearer's foot, the support structure having an aperture in its first and second end.

[0007] According to a fourth aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of decorating a shoe, the method comprising the steps of:

[0008] (a) wearing a shoe;

[0009] (b) holding a material having a first end and a second end and having a sufficient length to enwrap a portion of a sole of a shoe proximate its heel and a portion of a wearer's foot;

[0010] (c) wrapping the material around the portion of the sole of the shoe proximate its heel; and

[0011] (d) after completing step (c), securing the first end to the second end to secure the strap to the shoe and a wearer's foot.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap constructed and employed according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap constructed and employed according to another preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap constructed and employed according to still another preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a top elevation view of a shoe strap according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a top elevation view of a shoe strap according to another preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary view of a clasp arrangement according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 7 is a top elevation view of a support element according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 8 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap employed in conjunction with the support element shown in FIG. 7 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 9 is a top elevation view of a guide element according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 10 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap employed in conjunction with the guide element shown in FIG. 9 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0022] FIG. 11 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap employed in conjunction with a guide element according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0023] FIG. 12 is a top view of a guide element/support element according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0024] FIG. 13 is a perspective view of a guide element/support element according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0025] FIG. 14 is a front view of a shoe strap provided with an ornamental accessory according to preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0026] FIG. 15 is a rear view of an ornamental accessory according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0027] FIG. 16 is a rear view of an ornamental accessory employed in conjunction with a shoe strap according to another preferred embodiment used in conjunction with a shoe strap.

[0028] FIG. 17 is a side elevation view of the guide element/support element shown in FIG. 13 used with a shoe strap according to another preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0029] FIG. 18 is a side elevation view of the guide element/support element and shoe strap shown in FIG. 17 employing an ornamental accessory according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0030] FIG. 1 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap 10 constructed and employed according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. In this particular embodiment, the shoe strap 10 is a short length strap that is placed under the sole 12 of the shoe 14 in the area of the arch proximate the heel 16 and extends over the wearer's top of the foot where the ends of the strap are secured as will be discussed in detail hereinafter with reference to FIG. 6. It can be seen that when the shoe is a mule-type shoe, the shoe strap 10 provides added structure to the shoe 14 in its back area and helps better secure the shoe 14 to the wearer's foot 18. The shoe strap according to the embodiments of the invention may be used with all types of shoes, not just mule-type.

[0031] FIG. 2 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap 20 constructed and employed according to another preferred embodiment of the invention. In this particular embodiment, the shoe strap 20 is long in length. The shoe strap 20 is again placed under the sole 22 of the shoe 24 proximate of the heel 26. The strap is then wrapped around the wearer's leg 27, in particular, starting from the front of the leg and wrapping around the back. Depending on the style wanted and the length of the strap it may be wrapped just once or it may be wrapped a multiple number of times going up the wearer's leg. It can be seen that the shoe strap 20 provides added structure to the shoe 24 in its back area and helps better secure the shoe 24 to the wearer's foot 28 while also providing ornamentation to the shoe and the wearer's leg.

[0032] FIG. 3 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap 30 constructed and employed according to still another preferred embodiment of the invention. In this particular embodiment, the shoe strap 30 is long in length. The shoe strap 30 is again placed under the sole 32 of the shoe 34 proximate of the heel 36. The strap 30 is then wrapped around the wearer's leg 37, in particular, this time starting from the back of the leg and wrapping around the front. Depending on the style wanted and the length of the strap it may be wrapped once or it may be wrapped a multiple number of times up the wearer's leg. It can be seen that the shoe strap 30 provides added structure to the shoe 34 in its back area and helps better secure the shoe 34 to the wearer's foot 38 while also providing ornamentation to the shoe and the wearer's leg.

[0033] FIG. 4 is a top elevation view of a shoe strap 40 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. As discussed above, the length of the shoe strap may vary. It can range from a length of about 4 inches to a length of about 32 inches. Preferably, the strap 40 has a width ranging from about $\frac{3}{16}$ inches to about 3 inches. In this particular embodiment, the strap 40 includes a support section 42 and connection sections 44 extending from each end of the support section. The support section may be made of rubber, elastic or any other pliable and/or stretchy material. The support section 42 may be clear or it may be colored the same color as the sole of the shoe with which it is being used. The connection sections 44 may be made of various material such as leather, vinyl, fabrics such as silk, satin or cotton, rope, for example. The connection sections 44 may be joined to the support section 42 by adhesion, stitching, mechanical coupling, for example. In a preferred embodiment, the support section 42 is designed to stretch and conform to the width of the undersole of the shoe. The free ends of the connection sections 44 may be provided with a clasping mechanism such as that shown in FIG. 6 or they may be left unadorned in which case the wearer can simply tie the connection sections 44 to each other.

[0034] FIG. 5 is a top elevation view of a shoe strap 50 according to another preferred embodiment of the invention. The shoe strap 50 shown in this embodiment is similar to that shown in FIG. 4 and may be made of the same materials and have the same dimensions. The difference is that the strap 50 does not have a separate support section per se. Instead, the entire strap is made of the same material.

[0035] FIG. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary view showing a clasping arrangement 60 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. As was discussed with reference to FIG. 1, the ends of the shoe strap are secured together to hold the shoe strap in place. Various structures may be used to secure the ends together. As shown in FIG. 6, the clasping arrangement is a buckle fastener secured to the ends of the strap. Alternatively, other connection structures may be used such as a clasp, Velcro, buttons, snaps, zippers, hook-and-eye for example, or the shoe strap can be made long enough that its ends are held together by tying them together.

[0036] FIG. 7 is a top elevation view of a support element 100 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The support element 100 is designed to fit under the sole of the shoe proximate the heel and extend about 2 to about 6 inches up the sides of the shoe. At each end of the support element 100 is an aperture 102 formed in the support element. The support element may have other structures as will be described with reference to FIGS. 12 and 13. The support element 100 provides additional structure to the shoe. The support structure may be made of any kind of material such as cloth, a synthetic material, leather, for example. Preferably the support element has a length of about 4 inches.

[0037] FIG. 8 is a side elevation view of a shoe strap employed in conjunction with the support element shown in FIG. 7 according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The support element 100 is shown wrapped under the sole of the shoe and up its sides. The shoe strap 70 is threaded through the apertures 102 of the support element 100. The shoe strap 70 is shown in phantom line. It would be understood that the aperture in the support element 100

would not be visible once the shoe strap was threaded through the element **100**. Also, while the shoe strap **70** is shown wrapped around the wearer's leg, it alternatively could be shorter in length and provided with a clasping arrangement shown in FIG. **6** so that it is secured over the top of the wearer's foot as shown in FIG. **1**.

[0038] FIG. **9** is a top elevation view of a guide element **200** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The shoe strap according to the preferred embodiment in particular, that shown in FIG. **5** may also be used with the guide element shown in FIG. **9**. The guide element is a piece of material that has a loop or aperture **202** at each end. Preferably, the guide element has a length of about 4 inches and is made of a natural or synthetic material, chain, metal, for example. The guide element **200** may be placed across the upper front of the foot and/or ankle as shown in FIG. **11** or it may be wrapped across the back of the upper heel and/or ankle as shown in FIG. **10**. Each end of the shoe strap is inserted into one of the apertures **202** formed on the guide element **200**. The shoe strap is pulled tight and wrapped in front of or around the wearer's leg depending on the type of closure provided on the shoe strap. The guide element **200** may have other structures as will be described with reference to FIGS. **12** and **13**. While the guide element **200** is shown having a slight curvature, it may be straight like the support element. As will be seen with reference to FIGS. **12** and **13**, the guide element and support element may have the same structure.

[0039] FIG. **11** is a side elevation view of a shoe strap employed in conjunction with guide element **200** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. Unlike FIG. **10**, the guide element **200** is placed over the top of the wearer's foot and the shoe strap is wrapped under the sole of the shoe, proximate the heel, and around the back of the wearer's heel. Depending on the length of the shoe strap used, it may be wrapped up the wearer's leg.

[0040] FIG. **12** is a top view of a guide element/support element **300** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The guide element/support element **300** has a loop or ring **302** formed at each end. Preferably, the rings **302** are metal, wood, or bone, for example, and they are sewn into the ends of the guide element/support element **300**.

[0041] FIG. **13** is a perspective view of a guide element/support element **400** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. The guide element/support element **400** has loops **402** formed in its ends. The loops **402** are preferably the same material as the rest of element **400**.

[0042] FIG. **14** is a front view of a shoe strap provided with an ornamental accessory according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0043] FIG. **15** is a rear view of an ornamental accessory **600** that may be used with any of the preferred embodiments of the shoe strap. While the ornamental accessory **600** is shown having a particular design, it may of course have various designs and the embodiments of the invention are not limited to the particular embodiment illustrated. FIG. **16** is a rear view of the ornamental accessory **600** according to

another preferred embodiment used in conjunction with a shoe strap. Located on the rear surface of the ornamental accessory **600** is a structure **602** such as a loop to secure the accessory to the strap. The securing structure **602** may alternatively be a clip, slit or an aperture, for example. The ornamental accessory **600** may be placed anywhere on the shoe strap or guide element/support element as the wearer sees fit to provide the desired ornamentation to the shoe.

[0044] FIG. **17** is a side elevation view of the guide element/support element shown in FIG. **13** used with a shoe strap according to another preferred embodiment of the invention. In this preferred embodiment, the guide element/support element **400** shown in FIG. **13** is used as a support element. A short shoe strap **500** is threaded through the loops **402** of element **400** and the ends of the strap **500** may be secured by any of the structures already discussed.

[0045] FIG. **18** is a side elevation view of the guide element/support element and shoe strap shown in FIG. **17** employing an ornamental accessory **600** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

[0046] The shoe strap according to the embodiments described herein may be provided with various ornamentation. For example, the ends of the strap may have dangling jewelry applied thereto. Decorative pieces may be added to provide unique designs. The shoe strap of the embodiments described herein provide another way of wearing a shoe without altering the fundamental design of the shoe so the user can accessorize the shoe according to the outfit with which it will be worn while not fundamentally changing the existing shoe.

[0047] In addition, although the shoe strap was described with reference to a mule type shoe, it may be used with any other type of shoe that has some kind of heel. In such a case, while the shoe strap may not be used to provide needed structure to the shoe, it is being used to provide ornamentation to change the look of any shoe or boot.

1-11. (canceled)

11. The shoe strap of claim **8** wherein the second section is made of fabric.

12. A shoe support and ornamentation system for a shoe comprising:

a guide element having a first end and a second end; and

a shoe strap threadable through the first and second ends of the guide element, the shoe strap has a first and second end that can be secured to one another.

13. The system of claim **12** wherein the guide element is positioned over the back of the wearer's heel and the shoe strap is first wrapped around a sole of the shoe proximate its heel and then threaded through the guide element.

14. The system of claim **12** wherein the guide element is positioned over the top of a wearer's foot and the shoe strap is first wrapped around a sole of the shoe proximate its heel and then threaded through the guide element.

15. A shoe fastening system comprising:

a support structure having a first end and a second end wherein the support structure has a sufficient length to wrap around a portion of a shoe's sole proximate its heel and extend up a length of wearer's foot, the support structure having an aperture in its first and second end; and

a strap threaded through the first and second end of the support structure and secured around the wearer's ankle.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising a decorative ornament secured to the strap.

17. The system of claim 15 further comprising a decorative ornament secured to the support structure.

18. The shoe strap of claim 1 further comprising a decorative ornament secured to the material.

19. The system of claim 12 further comprising a decorative ornament secured to the shoe strap.

20. (canceled)

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