A cover (10) for a lidded container or pail that is decorative, removable for cleaning, and effective at helping improve the appearance of a typically unsightly object, a garbage or diaper pail. The cover is especially intended for use with the Diaper Genie™ (Playtex Corporation, New Jersey, see U.S. Pat. No. 4,869,049 for complete, detailed description of the pail to be used in the preferred embodiment, the Diaper Genie™, David Richards, Brian Ward and Maurice Williams, United Kingdom, issued Sep. 26, 1989)) brand diaper pail, and provides a means for parents to include the diaper pail in their nursery decorating schemes.

The preferred embodiment is for the cover to transform the appearance of the pail into that of a large stuffed animal, such as a teddy bear. The teddy bear’s head (70) would attach to the top of the lid cover (72) or be an integral part of it. The pail cover (20) would be shaped to imitate a bathrobe, complete with stuffed arms (74), collar (76), belt (78) and bathrobe pockets (79) attached to it to make it look like a teddy. The lid cover (40) could be made to look like a cravat (neck kerchief). The materials and stuffing for the teddy bear’s head (70) would be as lightweight as possible, to prevent the weight of the pail lid cover from making the lid difficult to open or shut. The simplest version of the invention involves a one-piece cover made of a highly elastic textile that requires no sewing nor any attachment means to cover a lidded container, and potentially to be made of an insulating material.

Options include the following: the lid cover (40) could contain a music box that starts to play when the pail is opened; the pail cover (20) which envelops the main body of the pail could be stuffed to add roundness or other shape (to make a teddy bear’s belly, for example); the pail cover (20) could include a pocket (80) that would hold a refill cartridge for the Diaper Genie™ or a dispenser of garbage bags; the fabrics or materials used to make the cover—or a lining for the cover—could be odor proof, filtering, scented, or deodorizing; or the lid cover (40) could include a means for attaching another object, such as a stuffed animal, toy or decorative object, that the user could attach as they pleased.
COVER FOR THE DIAPER GENIE™ OR OTHER LIDDED PAIL OR CONTAINER

BACKGROUND

[0001] 1. Field of Invention

[0002] This invention is a cover for a lidded container or lidded garbage pail and for the Diaper Genie™ (patent held by Playtex Products, Inc., 75 Commerce Drive, Alendale, N.J.) and similar diaper pails.

[0003] 2. Description of Prior Art

[0004] While a few designs have been patented for covers for containers and pails, there has not been one that will work to cover a container or pail with a lid. For people wishing to disguise trash pails that have pedals that pop the lid open for easy disposal of trash, there has been no option to date. In particular, there has been no design that would work for a self-sealing/diaper encasing pail such as the Diaper Genie™.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 5,318,821, a Container Cover patented by Bradley, Jr., Jun. 7, 1994, could not be used to cover a bin with a lid; it would not allow easy access to the bin itself since the lid would be prevented from being opened by the accessory.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 4,216,620, a Flower Pot Wrap with Lace Pattern Edging, patent issued to Weder et al. Aug. 12, 1980, would serve only to cover the outside of a pail, and would not cover a lid. Moreover, it would not remain fixed in place firmly enough for the rugged use a pail would undergo.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 5,165,567, “Bathroom Accessories,” Nov. 24, 1992, R. A. Briggs & Company, Robert Orlando and Jeffrey Richardson, while effectively providing for the decoration of a number of pail types, would unfortunately inhibit the placement of a lid, since the portion of the cover that holds it in place is located inside the rim of the pail, and also is somewhat bulky and would not allow for the quick and easy placement of a lid on the pail. Also, it does not provide for a cover for a lid.

[0008] Finally, U.S. Pat. No. 5,562,229, issued Oct. 8, 1996, invented by Edward Callahan and applied for by Abernathy, Bernstein and Callahan, for a Decorative Receptacle with Removable Cover, is both a pail and a cover. The cover works only with the patented pail, which would require those wanting to cover their existing pails to instead have to purchase an entirely new pail and cover combination. Furthermore, the receptacle does not provide for a lid to retain odors. The lid cannot be flipped up with a pedal. The receptacle and cover’s appearance and materials limit the ability of the cover to be decorated.

OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES

[0009] Parents preparing nurseries for their babies are extraordinarily interested in properly decorating their child’s room. They often buy sets of decorative items that are all in the same fabric or theme, including such items as comforters, lamp shades, diaper stackers, and crib bumpers.

[0010] Millions of households own diaper pails, and the majority of these diaper pails are the Diaper Genie™ brand diaper pail (U.S. Pat. No. 4,869,049). This pail is unique in that the diaper is inserted to a certain point in the pail, where it is surrounded by a long continuous flexible tube of plastic, at which time it is then rotated, thereby encasing the diaper in its own "sausage casing" of tubular plastic, twist-sealed at either end; it then falls to the bottom of the pail. This special pail drastically reduces odors, and has resulted in the tremendous popularity of the Diaper Genie™ pail. Similarly, there are traditional diaper pails with hinged lids that do not possess elaborate casing mechanisms.

[0011] It would be of great interest to new parents to be able to buy a cover for the Diaper Genie™ (or any similar diaper pail), perhaps in a fabric or theme matching that of their nursery, to help make it less conspicuous and to blend in with the rest of the decor.

[0012] Alternatively, they may like the novelty of having an amusing cover to their diaper pail. Similarly, people in general might like to improve the appearance of their kitchen garbage pails by putting a cover on them.

[0013] To this end, it is an object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that allows the Diaper Genie™ or other pail or container with lid to be decoratively covered.

[0014] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a container or pail cover that is easily detachable and easily washable or which is disposable, or portions of which are washable or disposable.

[0015] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that allows for a multitude of options for decoration, and for the customization of the decoration by the user with his or her own items.

[0016] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that retains odors that might otherwise escape from the pail.

[0017] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that filters escaping odors through a charcoal filter.

[0018] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that contains a pocket to conveniently hold a refill cartridge or box of plastic bags for the pail.

[0019] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a pail cover that provides entertainment, via music, to babies while their diapers are being changed.

[0020] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a container cover that insulates the container from heat and cold.

[0021] To these and other ends, the present invention broadly envisions providing a lidded pail cover comprising a fabric tube pail cover that conforms to the body of the pail and a cover that conforms to the lid of the pail, without interfering with the removal or opening of the lid. The lidded pail cover can be used to cover pails that do or do not have hinges and which do or do not have locking mechanisms. Holes will be cut out of the lid cover and the pail cover as needed to prevent interference with hinges, locking mechanisms, release buttons, levers, or pedals that may be present, depending upon the type of pail or container.

[0022] The pail cover will have attachment means, such as Velcro™ (Velcro USA, Manchester, N.H.) strips (a plurality of flexible hook fasteners that mate with a plurality of
The lid cover will primarily be held in place by an elastic band which is sewn to its edges so that when placed over the lid its shape conforms to it. The force of the elastic holds it in place underneath the lid where it cannot be seen when the lid is in place on the pail. The elastic will pull the fabric taught so that the bulk of the fabric does not interfere with the closure of the pail; when in place, the elastic of the lid cover will be located toward the center of the underside of the lid. Slits, holes and darts may be located as necessary to avoid interference with hinges and locking mechanisms, to conform to the shape of the object to be covered, and to reduce the bulk of the fabric to prevent interference. The lid cover optionally will have attachment means located on its inside surface, such as velcro strips, that will communicate with mating attachment means that can be affixed to the outside surface of the lid to more sturdily hold it in place.

Preferably, the lid cover will be made of an elastized fabric such as Lyca™ (DuPont Corp., Wilmington, Del.) blended with velour, in order to reduce the bulk of the cover, to prevent interference with the closing of the pail and to have an attractive appearance. In all embodiments, vents or slits, holes, or darts may be made in the lid and pail covers to better enable them to be put in place, to allow for easier removal, or to better fit, depending upon the construction of the lidded pail.

In a first embodiment, the pail cover covers a cylindrically-shaped pail, in which case the lid cover will be shaped from a circular panel. In a second embodiment, the pail cover covers a rectangular-shaped pail, in which case the lid cover will be shaped from a rectangular panel. In a third embodiment, the pail cover includes a pocket into which a refill cartridge for the Diaper Genie™ can be placed for storage, or which can hold trash bags to replace fill bags that have to be removed from the pail. A fourth embodiment includes the addition of lining the pail cover with a sheet of charcoal filter paper or filter paper such as Filtrete™ (3M Corporation, Valencia, Calif.) to filter air that may escape from the pail, thus reducing odors. A fifth embodiment includes the attachment of a battery-operated music box to the pail cover or to the lid cover, which is activated by opening the pail. When the pail is opened, the opening of the lid forces a button on the music box against the pail, activating it so that it plays through once. The lid does not need to remain open for the music to continue; once the “musical piece” is over, the music box automatically shuts off until the next time the pail is opened. The music box may be deactivated; such music boxes are commercially available.

The above and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which the same reference numerals are used to identify the same or similar parts in the several views.
DESCRIPTION

[0081] Referring to FIGS. 1-6, the invention in the form there shown is embodied in a cover 10 for a lidded pail, comprising a pail cover 20 and a lid cover 40. The pail cover, best seen in FIG. 1, is a tube of any suitable washable fabric (e.g., woven cloth), open at the top and bottom, and is shaped and dimensioned to receive a pail in surrounding, generally conforming relation to the side walls thereof. It includes a fabric wall panel 21 whose side edges are stitched together at seam 22 (FIG. 3), so as to constitute a tube. As indicated at 24 (FIG. 1), the fabric of the wall panel, measured upwardly from the base 26 is approximately the same as that of the pail it is to cover, measured from the pail's base up to the point where the pail joins the pail lid.

[0082] Velcro™ (Velcro USA, Manchester, N.H.) strips 36 (FIG. 2) are mounted within or on a hem 28 formed by folding the top margin of wall panel 21 downwardly and inwardly around the entire periphery of the top opening of the tube shaped pail cover 20, and stitching as indicated at 30. The periphery of the top opening of the tube shaped pail cover 20 is slightly greater that the outer circumference of the pail opening. Mating Velcro™ strips are affixed to the body of the pail near and below the point where the pail joins the pail lid and in registration with the mating attachment means 36 on the pail cover. Other joining materials may be used instead of Velcro™, such as snaps, double-sided sticky tape, plastic clips, glue, or a strip of elastic run through the hem 28. Depending upon the shape of the pail opening 34, the upper hem may need to be contoured or may need to be narrower or wider in some places in order to conform to the periphery of the pail opening, such as to accommodate an overlapping lip 42 (FIG. 3) on the lid, or to accommodate hinges where a lid attaches to a pail 44, or to accommodate rods that might be part of the pail which are activated from a pedal at the front base of the pail so as to act on a pail hinge located near 44 to flip open the lid. The pail cover may have a notch for pedal 62 (FIG. 1) to allow access to a pedal that would activate the flip top action of a pail. The notch for pedal 62 would be made by cutting a notch in the bottom edge of the fabric wall panel 21 prior to finishing the base edge with a stitched hem.

[0083] The lid cover, best seen in FIG. 4, is a circular shape of any suitable washable fabric (preferably of elastized fabric, such as a Lycra™ blend (DuPont Corporation, Wilmington, Del.)), open at the bottom, and is shaped and dimensioned to receive a pail lid in surrounding, generally conforming relation to the top, bottom and side walls thereof. To this end, using a stretchy fabric such as Lycra™ simplifies fitting the lid cover to the lid, and more importantly allows for any lock release button 57, that may be located on the lid itself. To depress it, the lid may be depressed. If one did not use a stretchy fabric, the tension of a non-stretchy fabric, such as cotton, could inhibit the user from being able to depress a lid release button in order to open the lid.

[0084] The lid cover includes a roughly circular panel 46 whose edges 48 (FIG. 5) are stitched to a strip of elastic 50, such as is done when making a shower cap, so as to constitute a lid cover 40. As indicated at 52, the fabric of the lid cover may be gathered or pleated. The diameter of the lid cover 40, is approximately the same as the diameter of the pail lid. Depending upon the type of lid to be covered, the lid cover may need to be shaped to conform to the periphery of the lid to enhance its appearance or to prevent interference with the opening or closing of the lid.

[0085] For example, to accommodate a lip 42 (FIG. 3), darts would need to be made in the circular panel 46 as shown at 54 (FIG. 5). To accommodate a pail hinge area 44 (FIG. 3), hinge slits 56 (FIG. 5) would need to be cut out of the circular panel 46. The edges of these slits may be sewn to a strip of elastic to prevent the fabric from interfering with the operation of the hinges. It may be necessary to dismantle the pail hinge in order to place the lid cover correctly in place, which requires simply unsnapping the hinge on the Diaper Genie™. Otherwise, additional slits and closures may need to be added to allow the lid cover to be placed around a hinge without interference. To accommodate a locking mechanism area 64 (FIG. 2), where a mechanism may be located on a pail to hold the lid shut, a rectangular slot 58 (FIG. 5) would need to be cut out of the circular panel 46. The edges of this slot may be sewn to a strip of elastic to prevent the fabric from interfering with the operation of the hinges. A strip of Velcro™ is affixed to the inside surface of the lid cover 60, to hold it firmly yet removably in place on the lid. A mating strip of Velcro™ would be affixed to the lid itself in registration with the Velcro™ on the lid cover.

[0086] When it is desired to remove the cover 10 (FIG. 1) from the lidded pail, the attachment means, such as at 36 (FIG. 2) and at 60 (FIG. 5), are simply pulled apart manually from the mating attachment means on the pail and lid. For lidded pails with hinges, in order to remove the lid
cover one may need to first unlock the locking mechanism, if there is one, and then undo the hinges attaching the lid to the pall (For example, on the Diaper Genie brand patented pall, there may be snapped out of attachment with the pall, then reattached without difficulty). The lid cover’s elastic strips should then be stretched outwards past the edges of the lid until the lid is uncovered. Next, the pall may now be pulled out of the pall cover so that the cover may be laundered and remounted on the container by the procedure already described. In this way, the cover may easily be maintained in an attractively clean and sanitary condition.

[0087] Ordinarily the cover fabric will be colored or printed with a design, for example a fabric color or design also used on curtains, bedding, etc. If it is desired to change the decor, such as upon the birth of another child, the cover may simply be replaced with a new cover having a new color or design.

[0088] Referring to FIG. 6, the invention in the form there shown is an embodiment which includes the pocket 80 and music box 90 features as they might appear for a rectangularly shaped garbage pall with a hinged lid. The pocket 80 is made of a long narrow strip of fabric 82 sewn to three edges of a rectangular piece of fabric 86. The unstitched fourth edge of the rectangular piece of fabric 86, along with the unfinished ends of the narrow strip of fabric 82 is then folded over and stitched in place to form a hem 84. The music box 90 is affixed to the back of the lid cover 40 and is activated to play a song when an activation switch 92 is triggered by the action of opening the lid; as the lid is opened the music box activation switch 92 moves closer to the body of the pall to a point where it eventually hits the back of the pall, depressing the activation switch 92, causing the music box to play.

[0089] Referring to FIG. 7, the invention in the form there shown is the preferred embodiment of the invention. The head of a stuffed animal 70 is affixed to the top of the lid via a large velcro square located on the bottom of the head at 72, the mate being affixed either to the lid cover 40 or to the lid of the pall. If the head were to be attached directly to the lid of the pall, it would be necessary to cut a square hole in the lid cover 40 at 72.

[0090] The pall cover 20 is modified into the shape of a bathrobe, and sleeves that are stuffed with filling 74 to make them look like arms that have been stitched directly onto the fabric of the pall cover. These stuffed arms 74 are stitched to look as though the hands are inserted into the bathrobe pockets 79. A collar 76, cravat 75 and fabric self-tie belt 78, such as are found on bathrobes, are respectively stitched and tied round the pall cover 20. FIG. 8 shows the preferred embodiment of the invention in a front view, indicating in dotted lines the location of the Diaper Genie™100 as it would appear beneath the cover 10.

[0091] An alternative embodiment, and perhaps the simplest, involves a neoprene tube, or other highly elastic textile, which is cut somewhat longer than to the same length as the height of the pall which it will cover. Next, a cut is made in the cylinder so that the edges of the cut conform to the outline of the opening between the lid and the pall. The area where the pall hinge 44 (FIG. 9) is located is left uncut. The excess fabric at the top of the tube must be long enough to allow for it to be gathered and knotted 142, or cramped and held together by a piece of string or other gathering means, thus closing the opening of the top end of the tube. No further work is required to create the cover. To fit the cover over the pall, simply stretch it and place it over the pall so that the edges of the pall match up with the edges of the cover. The hinges will be covered by the flap which connects the lid and pall portions of the cover. Whether the pall be circular, oval or rectangular in shape, the cover, due to its elasticity, will conform to its profile. Simply insert the pall through the bottom opening of the cover in correct alignment with the cover 10. It may be easiest to wait until the container is inserted into the tube to gather and knot or crimp the top end of the tube 142.

[0092] An alternative embodiment of the simplest version involves a neoprene tube which is cut to the same length as the height of the pall which it will cover. Next, a cut is made in the cylinder so that the edges of the cut conform to the outline of the opening between the lid and the pall. The area where the pall hinge 44 is located is left uncut. Afterwards, a lid cap top 148 (FIG. 11) is cut from a piece of neoprene to conform to the top, rather flat surface of the lid. This lid cap top 148 is simply stitched 144 or bonded via adhesive, rubber webbing plus adhesive and heat (in the manner used to make surf booties), to the opening on the top end of the lid cap 140. A slit 146 for a container handle 150 may be cut out of the lid cap top 148 to allow access to and free movement of the handle 150. The elasticized fabric may have insulating properties, such as neoprene does, that keep the contents of the container at a more stable temperature than without the cover.

[0093] It is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the features and embodiments herein above specifically set forth, but may be carried out in other ways without departure from its spirit.

CONCLUSION, RAMIFICATIONS AND SCOPE OF INVENTION

[0094] The reader will see that the decorative covering for the Diaper Genie™ Playtex Corporation, New Jersey) or other lidded diaper, container or trash pall provides a means for integrating the object into one’s home decor, a means for camouflaging a trash or diaper pall, a potential means for further eliminating odors, and a method for making the object easy to clean (just remove the cover and launder it!).

[0095] While the above description contains many specificities, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of the invention, but rather as an exemplification of one preferred embodiment thereof. Many other variations are possible. For example: the lid cover could contain a music box that starts to play when the pall is opened; the portion of the cover which envelops the main body of the pall could be stuffed to add roundness or other shape (to make a teddy bear’s belly, for example); the cover could include a pocket that would hold a refill cartridge for the Diaper Genie™; the fabrics or materials used to make the cover—or a lining for the cover—could be odor proof, or scented, or decolorized, or plastic; or the lid cover could include a means for attaching another object, such as a stuffed animal, toy or decorative object, that the user could attach as they pleased; the pall cover could be made to close at the bottom, underneath the pall, to completely enclose the entire pall to help escape of any odors. Accordingly, the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, not by the embodiment(s) illustrated.
I claim:

1. A Cover for a Lidded Container comprising:
   a textile tube for covering a container with lid or a diaper pail with lid, said tube having a top and a bottom and conforming to the side wall shape of the container, and having an extension which is a shorter textile tube having a top and a bottom and conforming to the side wall shape of the lid, the end of the tube being knotted so as form a stocking-cap type cover to cover the top of the lid, made of a fabric of sufficient resiliency, such as neoprene, that the elasticity of the fabric itself holds the cover in place on the container and cover;

2. A Cover for a Lidded Container comprising:
   a textile sheath for covering a container with lid or a diaper pail with lid, said sheath having a top and a bottom and conforming to the side wall shape of the container;
   retaining means to affix the sheath to the container;
   a textile cap for covering a container lid or a diaper pail lid, that is either a separate piece of material or that is an extension of the sheath, and which covers the lid of the container, allowing for the lid to be freely opened or closed.
   retaining means to affix the container lid cap to the lid.

3. A container cover according to claim 2, further including:
   retaining means to affix the cap to the lid comprises elastic attached to the cap, perhaps running along the entire opening edge or edges, such as a shower cap, holding the cap in place on the container or pail lid;

4. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   a hole in the lid cap allows for the locking mechanisms on the container lid to communicate with the mating locking mechanism of the container.

5. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   the hole in the lid cap is lined with elastic or has a retaining means to prevent interference between the fabric of the lid cover and the locking mechanism of the container.

6. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   the sheath and lid cap may be lined with filter sheets to inhibit escape of odors.

7. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   a decorative piece attached to the top of the container via a hole in the lid cap or to the lid cap via a retaining means such as a large piece of sticky-back Velcro™ (owned by Velcro USA, Manchester, N.H., multiple interlocking textile hooks and loops).

8. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   there is a music box affixed to the sheath or the lid cap which is activated by the action of opening the lid.

9. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
   there is a means for creating an air-tight seal at the top and/or bottom ends of the sheath and the lid cap to prevent escape of odors.

10. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
    there is a slot or pocket or other attachment or holding means for the placement of a charcoal filter at the bottom end of the sheath to absorb escaping odors.

11. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
    there is a textile means for closing the opening at the bottom of the sheath to prevent escape of odors.

12. A container cover according to claim 2, wherein:
    there is a pocket or slot for holding a refill cartridge for the Diaper Genie™ diaper pail, or for other items such as a box of garbage bags, on the middle portion of the sheath.

13. A cover adapted to cover a pail that has a lid, both the lid and the pail having inner and outer surfaces, and the lid being attached by a hinge to the pail (see U.S. Pat. No. 4,869,049 for complete, detailed description of the pail to be used in the preferred embodiment, the Diaper Genie™, David Richards, Brian Ward and Maurice Williams, United Kingdom, issued Sep. 26, 1989), and the lid and the pail having a locking mechanism, which is released by pressing a button on the lid, said cover comprising:
    a flexible, fabric covering adapted to conform to the outer surface of the side wall of the container for completely covering the outer surface of the side wall and attaching to the upper rim of such pail, and a flexible fabric covering, optionally contiguous to the covering adapted to conform to the outer surface of the pail lid for completely covering the outer surface of the lid, while allowing the lid to open at the hinge and allowing the lid release button to be pressed, and the lid to be reclosed without interference;
    fastener means attached to said flexible cover for the body of the pail and disposed along at least one end of said flexible covering for selectively and non-permanently attaching cover for the body of the pail to the pail body;
    fastener means attached to said flexible cover for the lid and placed on at least one end of said flexible covering for selectively and non-permanently attaching cover for the lid to the lid.

14. The cover of claim 13 wherein:
    said fastener means includes Velcro (Velcro USA, Inc., Manchester, N.H.) (multiple interlocking textile hooks and loops).

15. The container decorative cover of claim 13 and further including:
    attachment means located on the exterior surface of the lid cover for selectively and non-permanently attaching decorative objects to the lid.

16. The cover of claim 15 wherein said attachment means includes Velcro (multiple interlocking textile hooks and loops).