



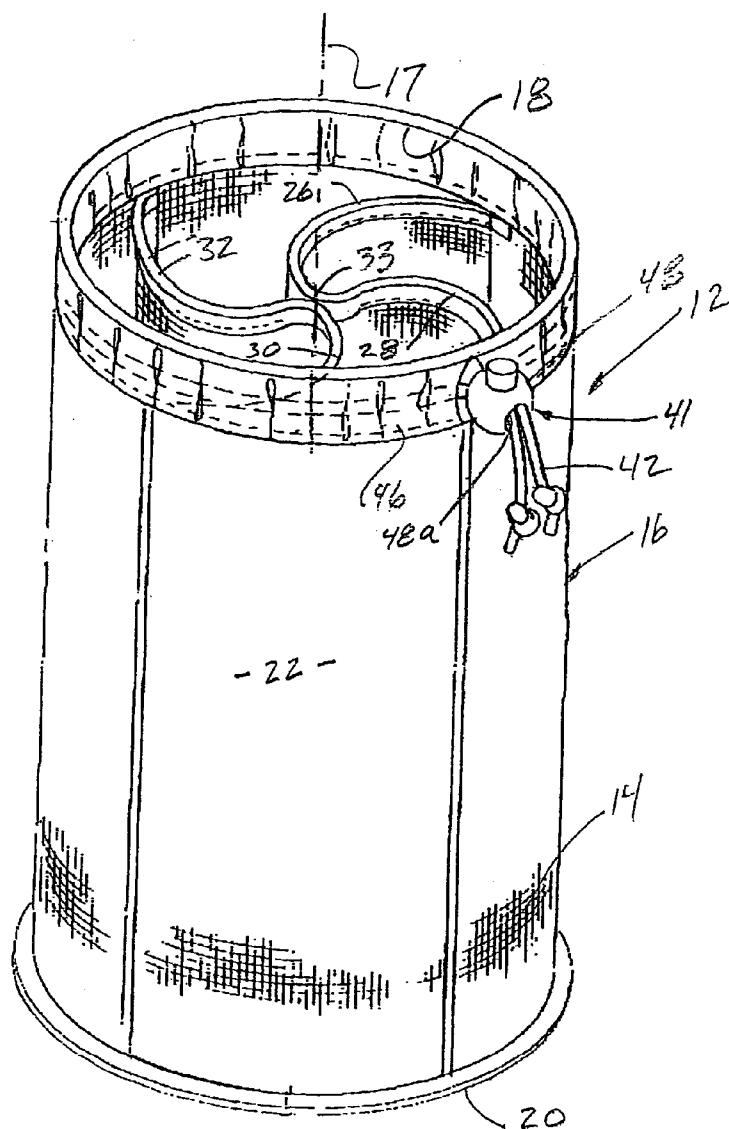
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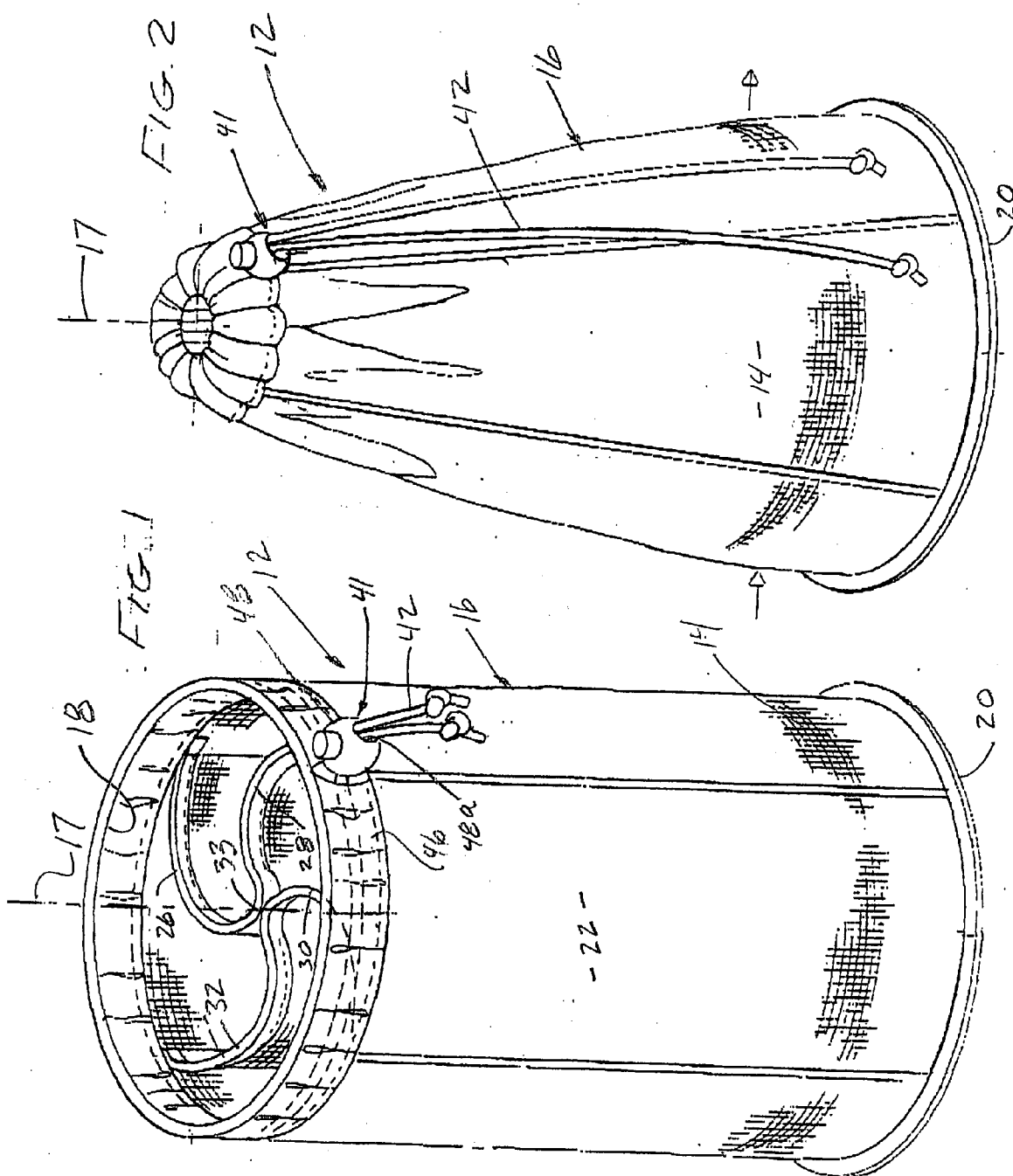
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Penson(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0249439 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 10, 2005**(54) **APPARATUS FOR MAINTAINING
SEPARATION OF SMALL LAUNDRY ITEMS****Publication Classification**(76) **Inventor: Errol David Penson, Riverside, CA
(US)**(51) **Int. Cl.⁷ B65D 30/22**(52) **U.S. Cl. 383/38; 383/117; 383/75;
383/104**

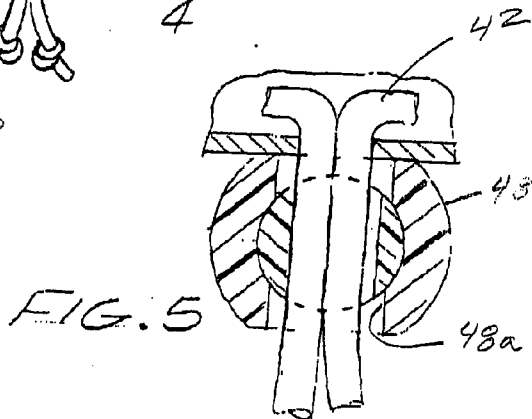
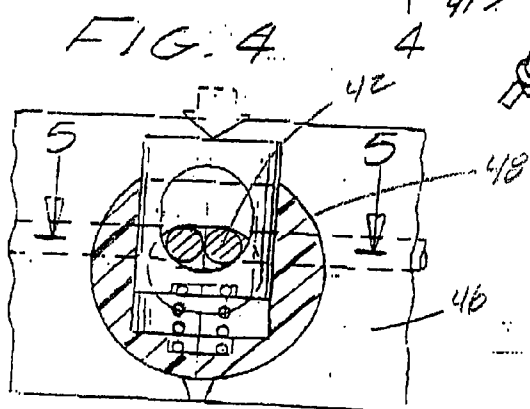
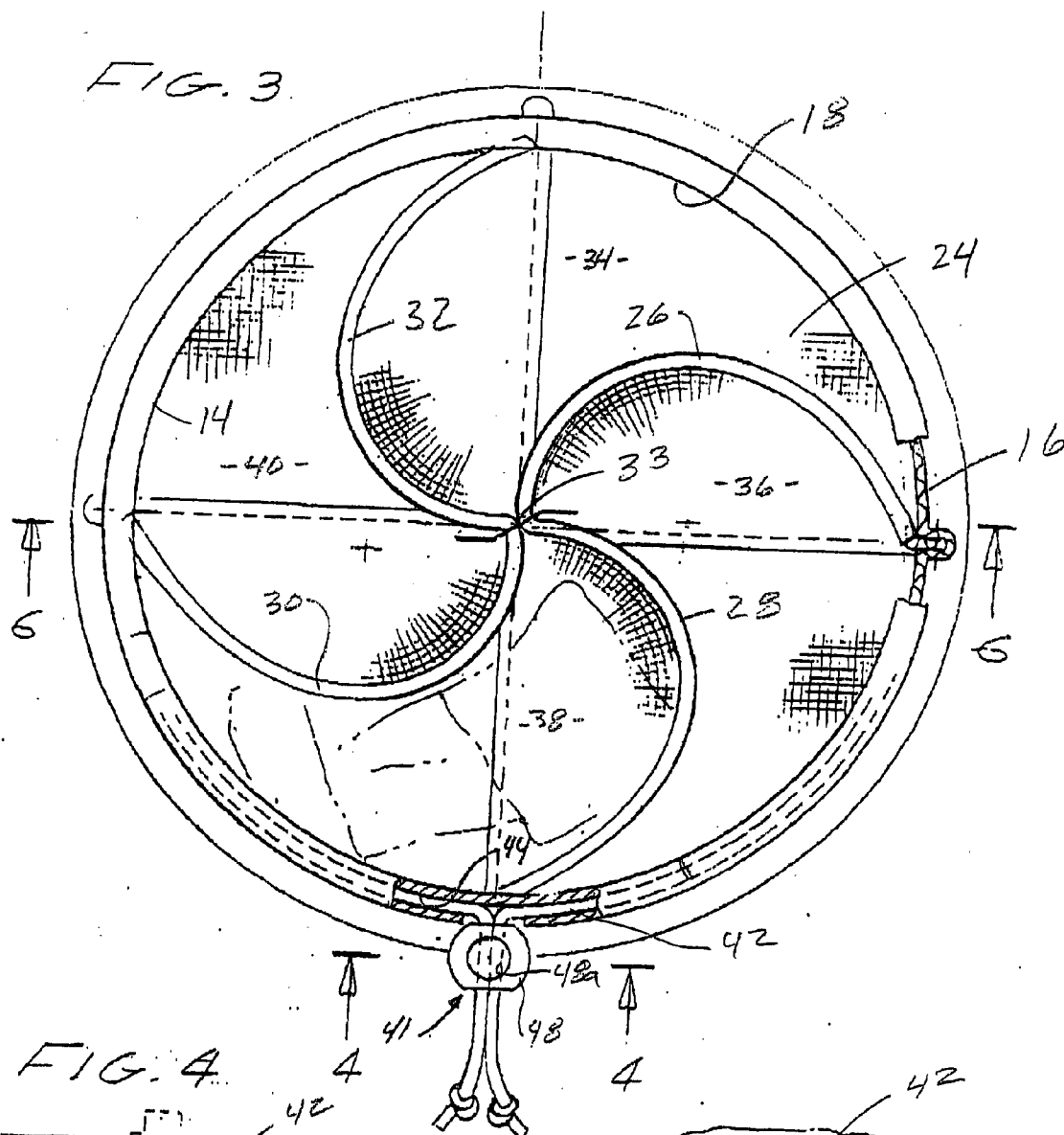
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A compartmentalized laundry bag for washing and drying small laundry items. The bag includes a collapsible mesh body having a closeable top portion, a bottom portion and a central portion. A flexible mesh bottom wall is connected to the bottom portion of the mesh body and further includes first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth mesh partition walls which are disposed interiorly of the mesh body and are interconnected together at a location proximate the axial center line of the mesh body. The laundry bag also includes a drawstring arrangement for closing the top portion of the mesh body.

(21) **Appl. No.: 11/178,641**(22) **Filed: Jul. 11, 2005****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) **Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/687,399,
filed on Oct. 15, 2003.**





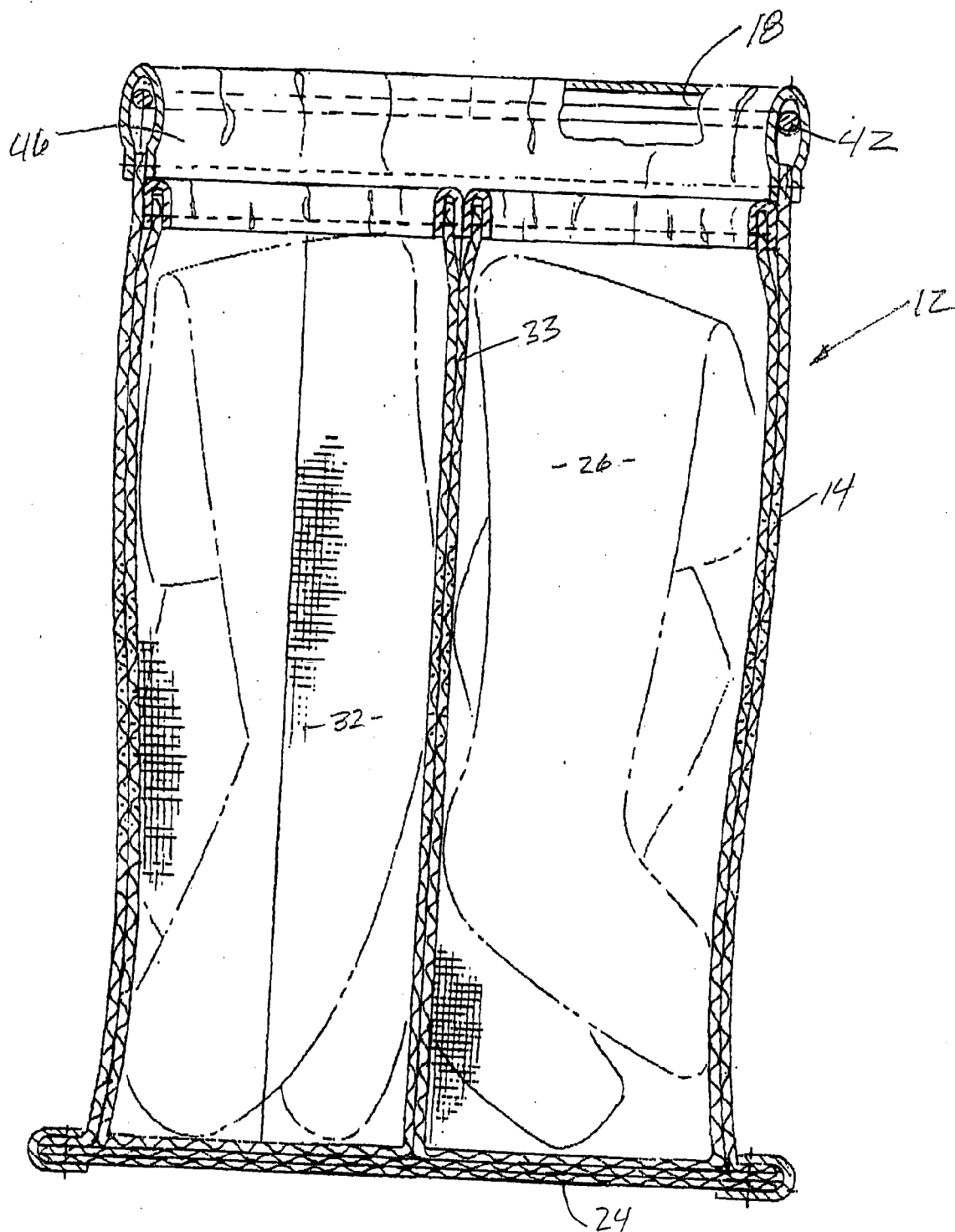
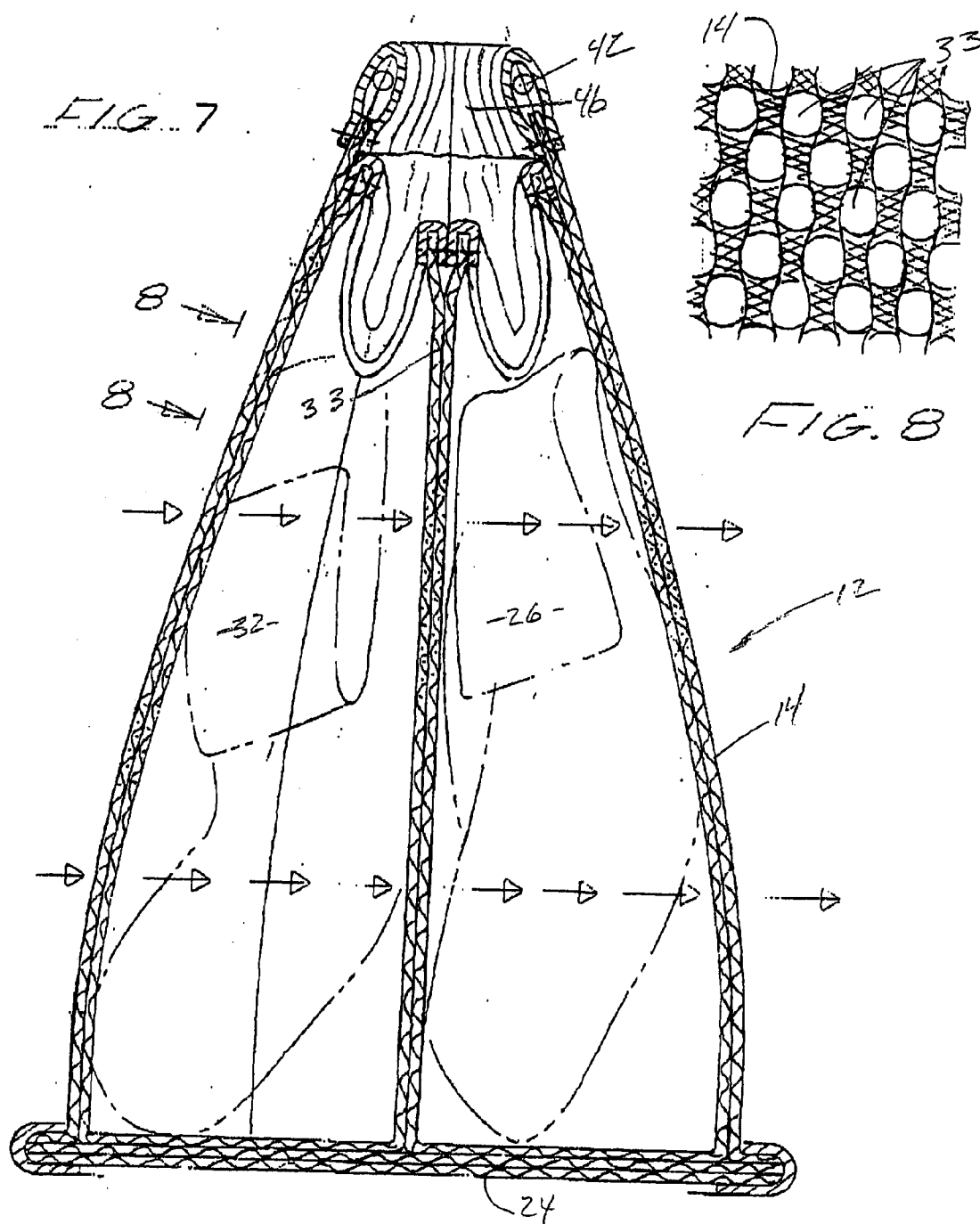


FIG. 6



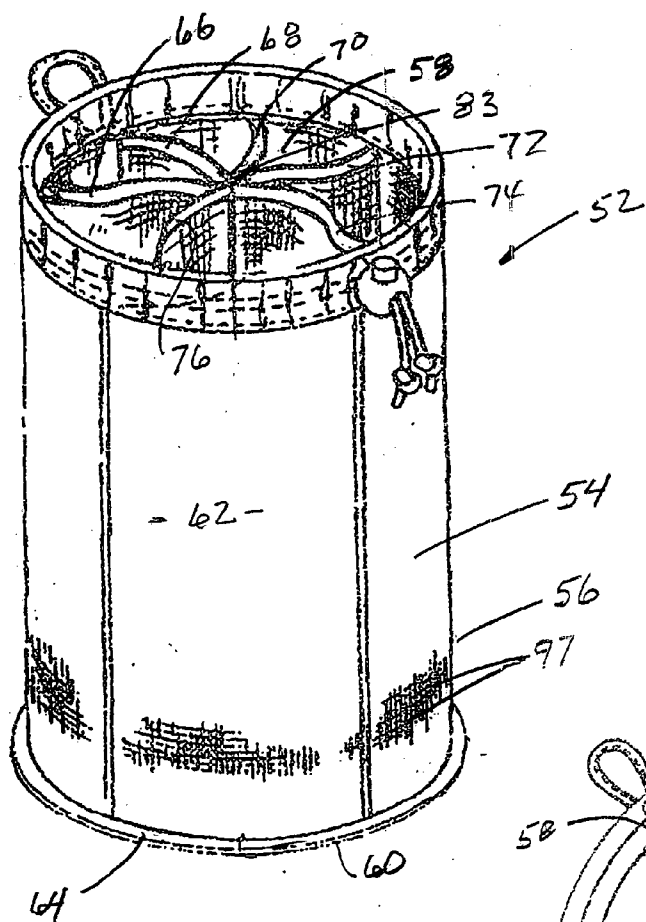


FIG 9

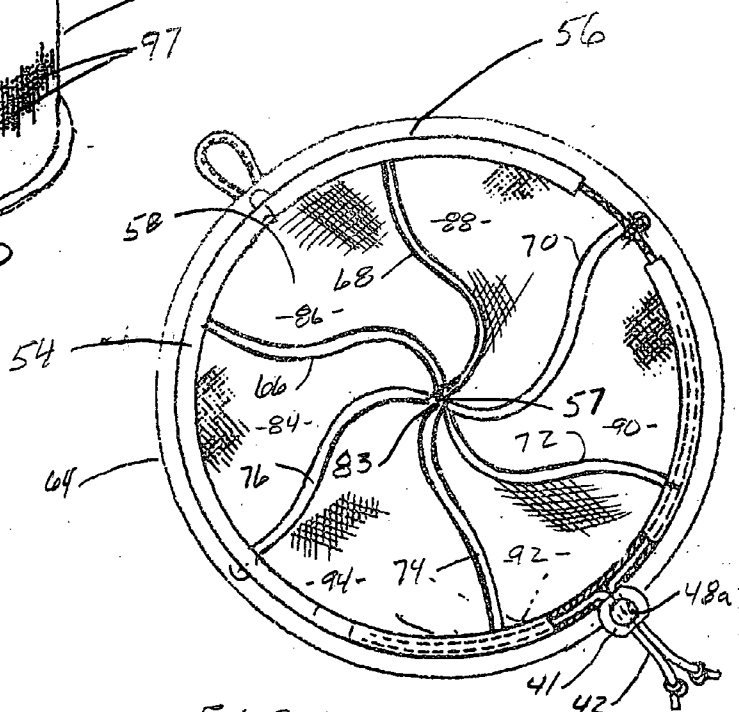


FIG 10

APPARATUS FOR MAINTAINING SEPARATION OF SMALL LAUNDRY ITEMS

[0001] This is a Continuation In Part Application of co-pending application Ser. No. 10/687,399 filed Oct. 15, 2003.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates generally to devices for use in the machine laundering of small articles. More particularly, the invention concerns a novel, compartmentalized apparatus for maintaining separation of small laundry items during machine washing and drying operations.

[0004] 2. Discussion of the Prior Art

[0005] A common household problem is keeping track of small laundry items such as socks and small undergarments during washing and drying operations. If small laundry items are intermixed with larger items such as shirts, pants, dresses and the like, they tend to become tangled with the larger items and are sometimes lost, mismatched or misplaced during the sorting operations. This frequently results in the annoying mismatching of socks and the frustrations encountered in attempting to properly rematch the socks.

[0006] Several types of devices have been suggested in the past to maintain separation of small laundry items. One such device is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,500,998 issued to Wachtel. The Wachtel device comprises a dual laundry bag that has a front panel, a rear panel and a central panel which divides the laundry bag into two compartments. The rear panel includes a pair of adjustable carrying straps and the front panel includes a flap and an adjustable belt for attachment to the laundry bag of clothing which is been hung on hangers.

[0007] Another prior art laundry bag apparatus is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,630,312 issued to Milstein. This latter patent discloses an improved laundry bag construction of generally trapezoidal configuration composed of an open weave material such as a fine gauge nylon net for secure machine laundering and drying of articles made from delicate fabrics such as lingerie.

[0008] A common drawback of many prior art laundry bags is their somewhat complex and costly construction. Additionally, certain of the prior art laundry bags are bulky and are often difficult and cumbersome to use.

[0009] Accordingly, one of the primary objects of the present invention is to provide a novel, compartmentalized laundry bag that is of a simple symmetrical construction and one, which is easy to use and can be manufactured simply and inexpensively.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] By way of summary, the compartmentalized laundry bag of the present invention comprises a collapsible mesh body having a closeable top portion, a bottom portion and a central portion; a flexible mesh bottom wall connected to the bottom portion of the mesh body; and first, second, third and fourth mesh partition walls which are disposed interiorly of the mesh body and are interconnected together at a location proximate the axial center line of the mesh

body. In the preferred form of the invention, the laundry bag includes a drawstring arrangement for closing the top portion of the mesh body.

[0011] With the foregoing in mind, it is an object of the present invention to provide a novel, compartmentalized laundry bag that is of a simple, symmetrical construction and one which can be manufactured easily and inexpensively using conventional fabrication processes.

[0012] A particular object of the invention is to provide a compartmentalized laundry bag of the aforementioned character that is strategically arranged to prevent the loss of small laundry items such as men's socks.

[0013] Another object of the invention is to provide a laundry bag of the character described that is easy and convenient to use and one that is readily receivable within and retrievable from conventional washing and drying machines.

[0014] Another object of the invention is to provide a laundry bag of the class described in the preceding paragraphs that is constructed from a netlike, mesh material having openings formed therein that are large enough to allow sufficient water flow through the openings to enable the efficient washing of the articles therewithin, but small enough to positively contain the contents within the bag.

[0015] Still another object of the invention is to provide an improved compartmentalized laundry bag which is constructed from a relatively small number of simple component parts which can be easily sewn or otherwise connected together so as to enable the manufacture of the laundry bag in a highly efficient and economical manner.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] FIG. 1 is a generally perspective view of one form of the apparatus of the invention for maintaining separation of small laundry items.

[0017] FIG. 2 is a generally perspective view similar to FIG. 1, but showing the top of the apparatus in a closed configuration.

[0018] FIG. 3 is an enlarged top view of the apparatus partly broken away to show internal construction.

[0019] FIG. 4 is an enlarged, cross-sectional view taken along lines 4-4 of FIG. 3.

[0020] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 5-5 of FIG. 4.

[0021] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 6-6 of FIG. 3.

[0022] FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view similar to FIG. 6, but showing the top of the apparatus in a closed configuration.

[0023] FIG. 8 is a greatly enlarged, cross-sectional view taken along lines 8-8 of FIG. 7.

[0024] FIG. 9 is a generally perspective view of an alternate form of the apparatus of the invention for maintaining separation of small laundry items.

[0025] FIG. 10 is a top plan view of the alternate form of the apparatus shown in FIG. 9.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0026] Referring to the drawings and particularly to **FIGS. 1 and 2**, one form of the compartmentalized laundry bag of the present invention is there shown and generally designated by the numeral **12**. The novel and improved laundry bag of the invention here includes a flexible mesh sidewall **14**, which, in the upright, article loading configuration shown in **FIG. 1**, defines a generally cylindrically-shaped, collapsible body **16**. Body **16** has an end axial center line **17**, an open top portion **18**, a bottom portion **20** and a central portion **22**. A flexible mesh bottom wall **24** is connected to mesh sidewall **14** proximate the bottom portion thereof (**FIG. 3**).

[0027] Forming a novel feature of the apparatus of the present invention are first, second, third and fourth mesh partition walls **26, 28, 30** and **32** respectively. As best seen in **FIGS. 1 and 3** these partition walls are disposed interiorly of the central portion of cylindrically-shaped body **16** and are interconnected along their outer edges with mesh sidewall **14** as by sewing or the like. Uniquely, the partition walls are interconnected together along their inner edges as by sewing or the like at a location **33** which is proximate axial center line **17** of body **16**. With this novel construction the partition walls function to divide interior of collapsible body **16** into four compartments **34, 36, 38**, and **40**, which are substantially of equal size (**FIG. 3**). Partition walls **26, 28, 30** and **32**, like side wall **14**, are preferably constructed from a flexible, netlike mesh material, having a multiplicity of openings **33** (**FIG. 8**) which permit the free flow of water therethrough, and, when in the position shown and **FIGS. 1 and 3**, are curved in the manner shown in the drawings.

[0028] To retain the articles of clothing within the flexible bag during the washing and drying operations, closure means are provided for closing the top portion of the cylindrically-shaped body portion. As shown in the drawings, these closure means are here provided in the form of a conventional drawstring assembly generally designated by the numeral **41**.

[0029] As best seen in **FIGS. 3, 4**, and **5**, the drawstring assembly of the present form of the invention comprises an elongated drawstring **42** which is threadably receivable within a passageway **44** that is formed proximate top opening **18** of the apparatus by means of a downwardly extending skirt-like portion **46** (**FIG. 1**) that is sewn proximate its lower extremity to the sidewall **14**. The free ends of drawstring pass through a central bore **48a** which is formed in generally spherical-shaped closure member **48**. With this construction, when it is desired to move the apparatus from the open article receiving or loading configuration shown in **FIG. 1** to the top closed configuration shown in **FIG. 2**, an inward pressure on spherical member **48**, along with an outward force exerted on the drawstring, will cause the drawstring assembly to move from the configuration shown in **FIG. 1** into the closed configuration shown in **FIG. 2** wherein the top portion of the apparatus is closed to prevent accidental escape of the small articles of laundry that have been inserted into the spaced-apart compartments **34, 36, 38**, and **40**.

[0030] In using the apparatus of the invention, the small articles of laundry to be washed are first inserted into the four compartments **34, 36, 38**, and **40** while the apparatus is in the top open configuration shown in **FIG. 1**. After the

various compartments have been appropriately loaded with the small articles to be laundered, the apparatus can be moved into the closed configuration shown in **FIGS. 2 and 7** by pushing on the spherical member **48** and at the same time pulling outwardly on the drawstring **42** so as to move the closure means into the closed configuration shown in **FIG. 2**. After the washing cycle has been completed, the apparatus can be opened into the configuration shown in **FIG. 1** by pulling outwardly on the locking sphere **48** in a manner so that it slides outwardly along the drawstring into the position shown in **FIG. 1**.

[0031] Turning next to **FIGS. 9 and 10** of the drawings an alternate form of the compartmentalized laundry bag of the present invention is there shown and generally designated by the numeral **52**. This alternate form of the invention is similar in many respects to the previously described embodiment and like numerals are used in **FIGS. 9 and 10** to identify like components. The laundry bag of this latest form of the invention includes a flexible mesh sidewall **54**, which, in the upright, article loading configuration shown in **FIG. 9**, defines a generally cylindrically-shaped, collapsible body **56**. Body **56** has an axial center line **57** (**FIG. 10**), an open top portion **58**, a bottom portion **60** and a central portion **62**. A flexible mesh bottom wall **64** is connected to mesh sidewall **54** proximate the bottom portion thereof.

[0032] Forming a novel feature of the apparatus of this latest form of the invention are first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth mesh partition walls **66, 68, 70, 72, 74** and **76** respectively. As best seen in **FIG. 10** these partition walls are disposed interiorly of the central portion of cylindrically-shaped body **56** and are interconnected along their outer edges with mesh sidewall **54** as by sewing or the like. Uniquely, the partition walls are interconnected together along their inner edges as by sewing or the like at a location **83** which is proximate axial center line **57** of body **56**. With this novel construction the partition walls function to divide interior of collapsible body **56** into six compartments **84, 86, 88, 90, 92** and **94**, which are substantially of equal size (**FIG. 10**). Partition walls **66, 68, 70, 72, 74** and **76**, like side wall **54**, are preferably constructed from a flexible, netlike mesh material, having a multiplicity of openings **97** which permit the free flow of water therethrough, and, when in the position shown in **FIG. 10**, are curved in the manner to there shown.

[0033] Having now described the invention in detail in accordance with the requirements of the patent statutes, those skilled in this art will have no difficulty in making changes and modifications in the individual parts or their relative assembly in order to meet specific requirements or conditions. Such changes and modifications may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention, as set forth in the following claims.

I claim:

1. A compartmentalized laundry bag comprising:
 - (a) a flexible mesh sidewall, which, in an upright configuration, defines a generally cylindrically-shaped body having a top portion, a bottom portion and a central portion;
 - (b) a flexible bottom wall connected to said mesh sidewall proximate said bottom portion thereof; and

- (c) first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls interconnected with said mesh sidewall and disposed interiorly of said central portion of said cylindrically-shaped body for dividing said central portion into six compartments.
2. The laundry bag as defined in claim 1 in which said cylindrically-shaped body has an axial center line and in which said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are interconnected together proximate said axial center line.
3. The laundry bag as defined in claim 1 in which said six compartments are of substantially equal size.
4. The laundry bag as defined in claim 1 further including closure means for closing said top portion of said cylindrically-shaped body portion.
5. The laundry bag as defined in claim 1 in which said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are constructed from a flexible, mesh material.
6. The laundry bag as defined in claim 5 in which said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are curved.
7. A laundry bag for holding small laundry items comprising:
- (a) a flexible mesh sidewall, which in an upright configuration, defines generally cylindrically-shaped, collapsible body having an open top portion, a bottom portion and a central portion, said generally cylindrically-shaped collapsible body having an axial center line;
- (b) a flexible mesh bottom wall connected to said mesh sidewall proximate said bottom portion thereof; and
- (c) first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth partition walls interconnected with said mesh sidewall and disposed interiorly of said central portion of said cylindrically-shaped body for dividing said central portion into six compartments, said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls being interconnected together at a location proximate said axial center line of said generally cylindrically-shaped collapsible body; and
- (d) closure means for closing said top of portion of said cylindrically-shaped body portion.
8. The laundry bag as defined in claim 7 in which said six compartments are of substantially equal size.
9. The laundry bag as defined in claim 7 in which said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are constructed from a flexible, mesh material.
10. The laundry bag as defined in claim 7 in which said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are curved.
11. The laundry bag as defined in claim 7 in which said flexible mesh sidewall, said bottom wall and said first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth partition walls are formed of a net material which allows the free flow of water therethrough.
12. The laundry bag as defined in claim 7 in which said closure means comprises a drawstring.

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