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(54) **UNDERGARMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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An undergarment having mating fasteners on opposing sides of front and rear panels and an elasticized waistband on each panel, thereby allowing easy and quick removal and attachment, in which the rear panel has a left panel and a right panel attached on respective sides to a portion of a center panel that connects to a bottom edge of the front panel thereby creating a bridge between the front and rear panel, providing the wearer with independence and a sense of self-confidence due to the wearer's ability to dress or to use a bathroom without assistance. Thus, the undergarment provides a wearer with a feeling of normalcy while eliminating the embarrassment associated with exposure of intimate body parts.

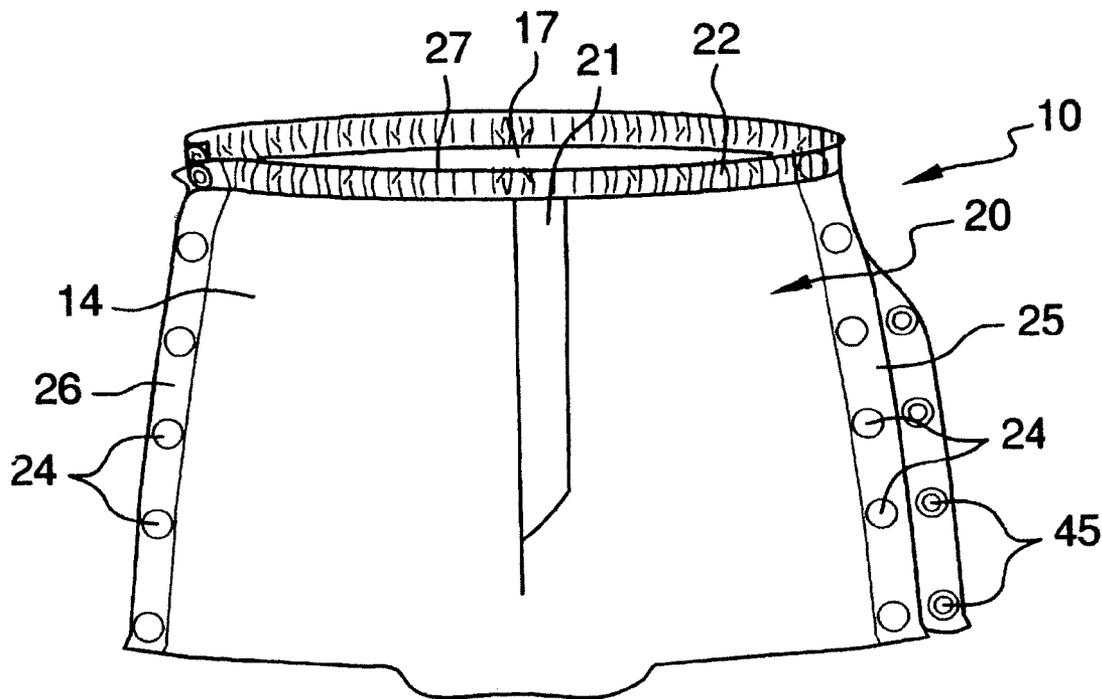
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Related U.S. Application Data

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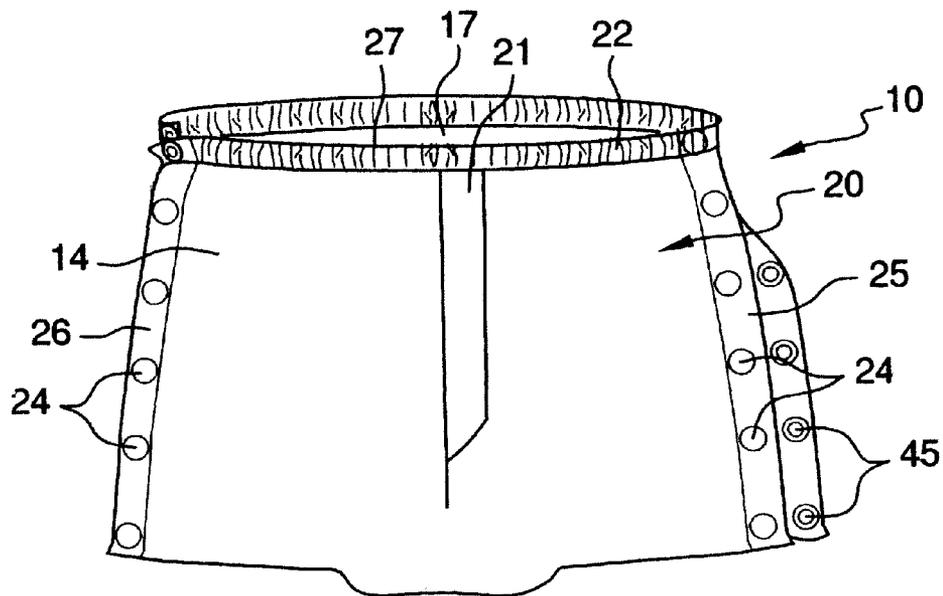


FIG. 1

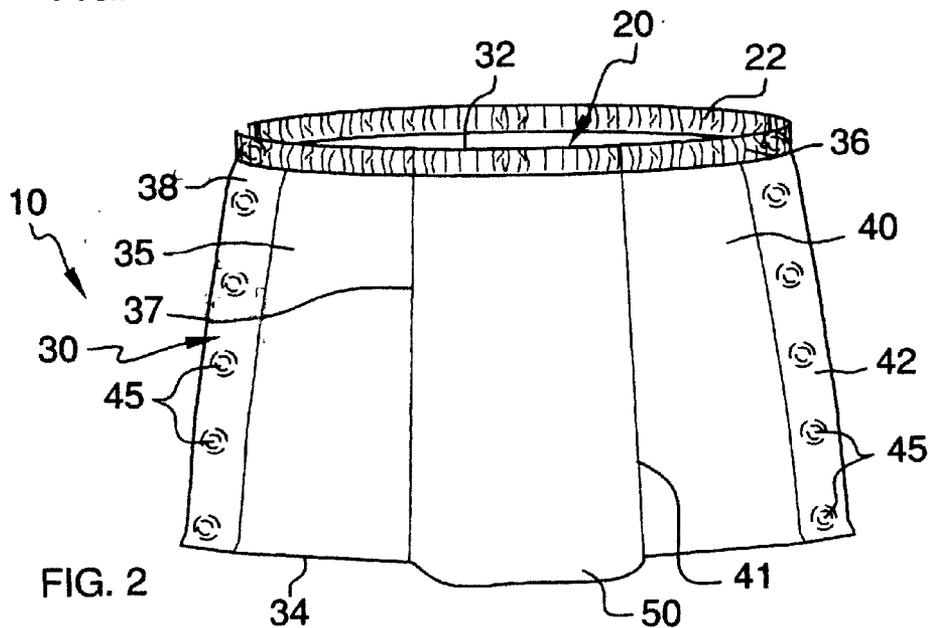


FIG. 2

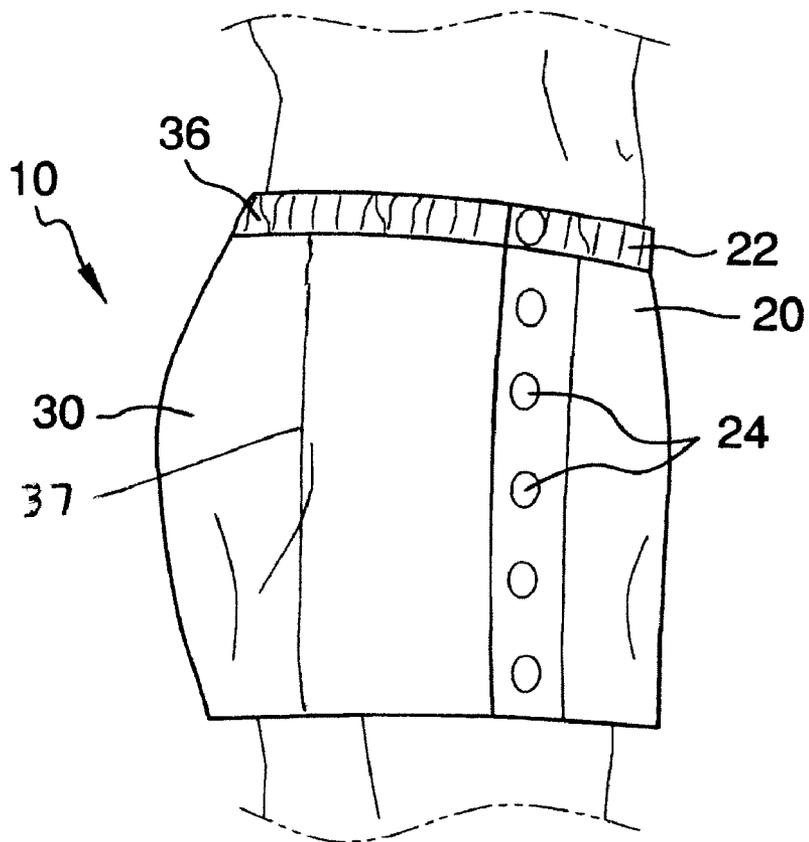


FIG. 3

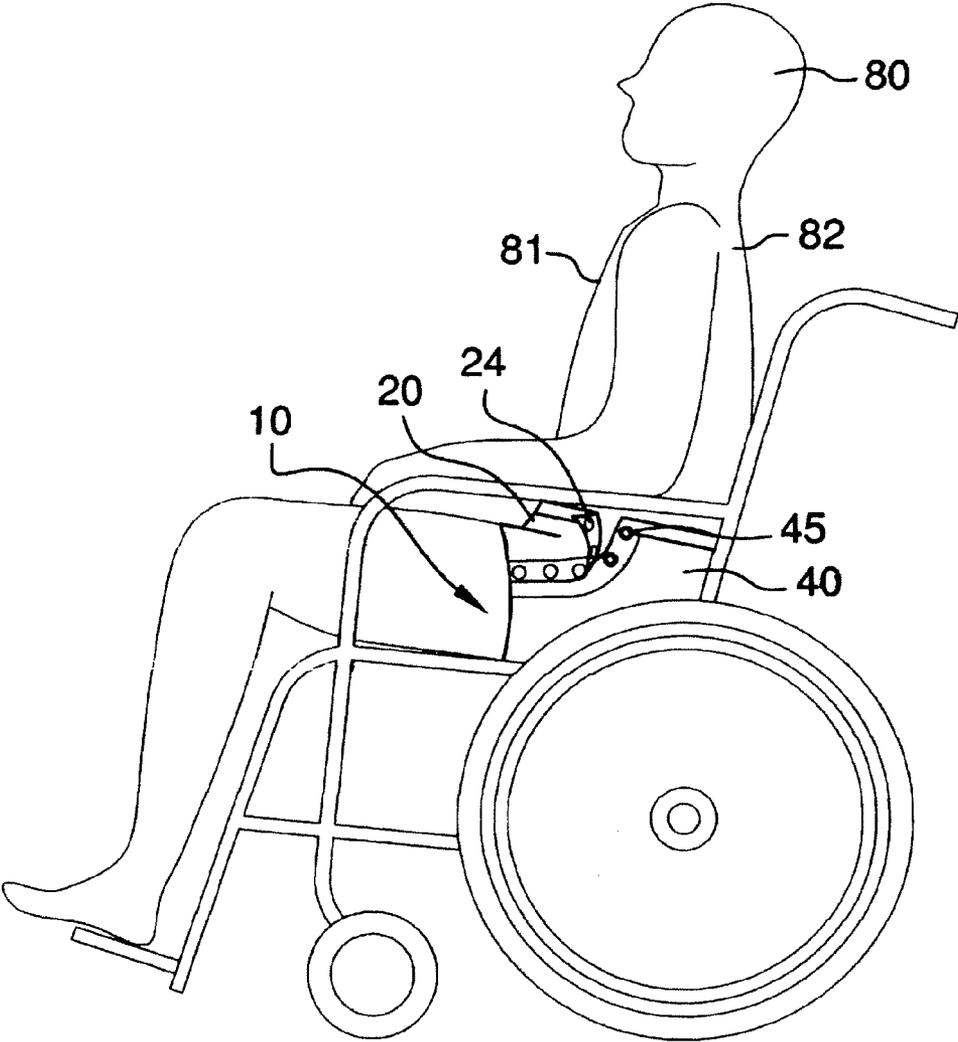


FIG. 5

UNDERGARMENT

[0001] The present application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/132,441 filed Jun. 3, 2008.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to undergarments. More particularly, the present invention relates to undergarments readily positioned for wearing and selectively detachable for utilization by physically and mentally challenged persons.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Various undergarments which are absorbent, have refastenable side members, snap-like attachments or a combination thereof and may be used by individuals who are invalid or incontinent are provided in prior art.

[0004] However, what is needed is an undergarment which allows a user to dress himself or to use a bathroom more easily and quickly without assistance. It is to such that the present invention is directed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention meets the need in the art by providing a wrap-around type undergarment with snap fasteners positioned on both sides, in which the undergarment comprises a front panel and a rear panel. The front panel has a reinforced right side, a reinforced left side, a top edge, and a bottom edge. A plurality of first fastener members each having a first character are disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of each of the right side and left side of the front panel. The rear panel comprises a left panel having an interior edge and a reinforced exterior edge, a right panel having an inside edge and a reinforced outside edge, and an elongated narrow center panel having a left lateral edge and an opposing right lateral edge and a leading edge. The leading edge centrally affixes to the front panel bottom edge. The left lateral edge attaches to the interior edge of the left panel and the right lateral edge attaches to the interior edge of the right panel. The central panel extends continuously from the front panel bottom edge to a top edge aligned with a respective top edge of the left panel and the right panel, and the central panel defines a bridge between the front panel and the rear panel. A plurality of second fastener members, each having a second character for mating engagement with a respective one of the first fastener members, are disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of the reinforced exterior edge of the left and right panels, with each second fastener member positioned for alignment with a respective one of the first fastener members. The front panel and the rear panel selectively detachably connect by mating engagement of the aligned first fastener members and second fastener members.

[0006] In yet another aspect, the present invention provides an undergarment has a parallelogram-shaped front panel, a parallelogram-shaped rear panel having a left panel and a right panel on each side of a portion of a center panel, and an elongated narrow center panel, a portion of which connects to a bottom edge of the front panel. The front panel has center openable fly, an elasticized waistband, and a plurality of spaced-apart female snap receivers along the entire length of each side of the front panel. The rear panel has an elasticized

waistband, an interior side and an exterior side, the exterior side having male snap adaptors along the entire length of the left and right panels which are adapted removably connect to the female snap receivers.

[0007] The present undergarment allows a user to quickly and easily position or remove the undergarment without the necessity of assistance by simply pressing the fasteners together or pulling them apart, respectively. The present undergarment fulfills the need to allow a bed-ridden individual, wheelchair-bound individuals, elderly persons, or people who are physically or mentally challenged to be able to dress or use a bathroom more easily and quickly due to the inclusion of snap fasteners along the entire length of both sides of the undergarment. The present undergarment is time saving and is provided at a reasonable cost. The undergarment provides a wearer with independence and a sense of self-confidence due to the wearer's ability to dress himself or herself or to use a bathroom without assistance. Thus, the undergarment provides a wearer with a feeling of normalcy while eliminating the embarrassment associated with exposure of intimate body parts.

[0008] The undergarment is provided in a wide variety of sizes, colors, and designs to accommodate the needs of a wide range of patients or other persons, depending upon age, sex, and personal taste in design and color.

[0009] As such, the general purpose of the improved undergarment which has all of the advantages of the prior art mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in an improved undergarment which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by the prior art, either alone or in combination thereof.

[0010] An object of the present undergarment is to allow a wearer to remove an undergarment for urination more easily and quickly.

[0011] Another object of the present undergarment is to permit a wearer to put on an undergarment more quickly and easily.

[0012] Yet another object of the present undergarment is to assist physically and mentally challenged individuals in dressing themselves without assistance.

[0013] Still another object of the present apparatus is to assist physically and mentally challenged individuals in urinating without the need of assistance.

[0014] Still yet another object of the present undergarment is to eliminate the embarrassment associated with requiring assistance in removing or putting on an undergarment.

[0015] Thus has been broadly outlined the more important features of the improved undergarment so that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated.

[0016] These together with additional objects, features and advantages of the improved undergarment will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art upon reading the following detailed description of presently preferred, but nonetheless illustrative, embodiments of the improved undergarment when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. In this respect, before explaining the current embodiments of the improved undergarment in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustration. The invention is capable of other examples and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. It is also to be

understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for purposes of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

[0017] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the concept of this disclosure may be readily utilized as a basis for the design of other structures, methods, and kits for carrying out the several purposes of the improved undergarment. It is therefore important that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0018] Objects of the improved undergarment, along with various novel features that characterize the invention are particularly pointed out in the claims forming a part of this disclosure. For better understanding of the improved undergarment, its operating advantages and specific objects attained by its uses, refer to the accompanying drawings and description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view.

[0020] FIG. 2 is a rear elevation view.

[0021] FIG. 3 is a side elevation view in closed position.

[0022] FIG. 4 is a top plan view in open position.

[0023] FIG. 5 is a left side elevation, in-use view illustrated in a partially open position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0024] With reference now to the drawings in which like parts have like reference numerals, and in particular FIGS. 1 through 5 thereof, examples of the employing the principles and concepts of the present undergarment, generally designated by the reference number 10, will be described.

[0025] Referring to FIGS. 1 through 5, the present undergarment 10 has an exterior side 14 and an interior side 17. The present undergarment comprises a parallelogram-shaped front panel 20 and a parallelogram-shaped rear panel 30. The front panel 20 has a right side 25, a left side 26, a top edge 27, and a bottom edge 28. The rear panel 30 has an upper edge 32 and a lower edge 34, and comprises a left panel 35, a right panel 40, and an elongated narrow center panel 50. The left panel 35 and right panel 40 have an interior edge 37 and an inside edge 41, respectively. The left panel 35 and right panel 40 also have an exterior edge 38 and an outside edge 42, respectively.

[0026] The center panel 50, affixed at one end to the center of the front panel 20 bottom edge 28, extends continuously from the bottom edge 28 of the front panel 20 to the upper edge 32 of rear panel 30, thereby creating a bridge 52 between the front panel 20 and the rear panel 30. Side portions of the center panel 50 affix to the interior edge 37 of the left panel 35 and the inside edge 41 of the right panel 40.

[0027] The front panel 20 comprises a center openable fly 21, an elasticized waistband 22 in portion adjacent the top edge 27, and a plurality of spaced-apart first fastener members 34 having a first mating character. The first fastener members 34 are positioned in space-apart relation along a length of the right side 25 and the left side 26, and thus disposed from the top edge 27 to the bottom edge 38 of the front panel. In the illustrated embodiment, the first fastener members 34 are female snap receivers. A first one of the first fastener members 34 is placed proximate the top edge 27 and another one of the first fastener members is placed proximate

the bottom edge 38, with other of the first fastener members spaced-apart along the respective right side 25 and left side 26.

[0028] The rear panel 30 has an elasticized waistband 36 that extends across portions of the left panel 35, the center panel 50, and the right panel 40 adjacent the upper edge 32. The rear panel 30 has a plurality of spaced-apart second fastener members 45 having a second mating characteristic for matingly joining or connecting to the first fastener members 24. The second fastener members 45 are positioned in spaced-apart relation along a length of the left and right panels 35, 40, thus from the upper edge 32 to the lower edge 34 of the rear panel 30. The second fastener members 45 are positioned to align with and adapted to removably detachably connect to the first fastener members 24. In the illustrated embodiment, the second fastener members 45 are male snap adaptors for engaging the illustrated female snap receivers 24.

[0029] The right side 25 and left side 26 of the front panel 20, the exterior edge 38 of the left panel 35, and the outside edge 42 of the right panel 40 are reinforced. The reinforcement is provided by overlapping a side portion and tacking such as by sewing or by attaching an elongated webbed band or twill tape to the side portion or within an overlapping of the side portion. The reinforcement is important to the functionality of the present undergarment 10 in that the reinforcement provides sufficient strength to the right side 25, left side 26, exterior edge 38, and outside edge 42 to allow a user, such as a physically or mentally challenged individual, to easily pull the snap receivers 24 and snap adaptors 45 apart for removal of the undergarment 10 or to easily hold onto the right side 25, left side 26, exterior edge 38 and outside edge 42 to easily connect the female snap receivers 24 and male snap adaptors 45 together.

Use:

[0030] To put on the present garment 10, the undergarment 10 is placed in open position as shown in FIG. 4, with the front panel 20 separated from the rear panel 30. Then, a user 80 places the center panel 50 bridge 52 longitudinally between the user's legs with undergarment 10 exterior side 14 facing outwardly, away from the user 80, and further with the front panel 20 placed on the user's front side 81 and the rear panel 30 placed on the user's rear side 82. Next, the user 80 inwardly folds the exterior side 14 of the undergarment 10 along the right panel 40 outside edge 42 over the interior side 17 and further aligns the female snap receivers 24 on the front panel 20 right side 25 with the male snap adaptors 45 on the right panel outside edge 42 and presses the female snap receivers 24 and the male snap adaptors 45 to connect the female snap receivers 24 and the male snap adaptors 45 together. The user 80 also inwardly folds the exterior side 14 of the undergarment 10 along the left panel 35 exterior edge 38 over the interior side 17 and further aligns the female snap receivers on the front panel 20 left side 26 and the male snap adaptors 45 on the left panel 35 exterior edge 38 and presses the female snap receives 24 and the male snap adaptors 45 to connect the female snap receivers 24 and the male snap adaptors 45 together.

[0031] When desiring to remove the present undergarment 10, a user 80 pulls apart the connection of the female snap receivers 24 on the front panel 20 right side 25 and the male snap adaptors 45 on the right panel outside edge 42 and the female snap receivers 24 on the on the front panel 20 left side

26 and the male snap adaptors 45 on the left panel exterior edge 38, thereby releasing the undergarment 10 for removal.

[0032] With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the undergarment, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and the manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

[0033] Directional terms such as “front”, “back”, “in”, “out”, “downward”, “upper”, “lower”, and the like may have been used in the description. These terms are applicable to the examples shown and described in conjunction with the drawings. These terms are merely used for the purpose of description in connection with the drawings and do not necessarily apply to the position in which the present invention may be used.

[0034] Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An undergarment comprising:

- a front panel having a reinforced right side, a reinforced left side, a top edge, and a bottom edge;
 - a plurality of first fastener members each having a first character and disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of each of the right side and left side of the front panel;
 - a rear panel comprising:
 - a left panel having an interior edge and a reinforced exterior edge;
 - a right panel having an inside edge and a reinforced outside edge; and
 - an elongated narrow center panel having a left lateral edge and an opposing right lateral edge and a leading edge that is centrally affixed to the front panel bottom edge, the left lateral edge attached to the interior edge of the left panel and the right lateral edge attached to the interior edge of the right panel, the central panel extending continuously from the front panel bottom edge to a top edge aligned with a respective top edge of the left panel and the right panel, the central panel defining a bridge between the front panel and the rear panel, and
 - a plurality of second fastener members each having a second character for mating engagement with a respective one of the first fastener members, the second fastener members disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of the reinforced exterior edge of the left and right panels, each second fastener member positioned for alignment with a respective one of the first fastener members,
- whereby the front panel and the rear panel selective detachably connect by mating engagement of the aligned first fastener members and second fastener members.

2. The undergarment as recited in claim 1, wherein the front panel further comprises a center openable fly.

3. The undergarment as recited in claim 1, wherein one of the first fastener members is disposed proximate the top edge of the front panel and another one of the first fastener members is disposed proximate the bottom edge of the front panel with a remainder of the first fastener members disposed along the length of the right side and the left side thereof.

4. The undergarment as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second fastener members are snap fasteners.

5. The undergarment as recited in claim 1, further comprising a first elasticized waistband disposed in a portion of the front panel adjacent the top edge.

6. The undergarment as recited in claim 4, further comprising a second elasticized waistband disposed across respective edge portions of the left panel, the center panel and the right panel adjacent the respective upper edges thereof.

7. The undergarment as recited in claim 1, further comprising an elasticized waistband disposed across respective edge portions of the left panel, the center panel and the right panel adjacent the respective upper edges thereof.

8. A method of using an undergarment comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing an undergarment comprising:
 - a front panel having a reinforced right side, a reinforced left side, a top edge, and a bottom edge;
 - a plurality of first fastener members each having a first character and disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of each of the right side and left side of the front panel;
 - a rear panel comprising:
 - a left panel having an interior edge and a reinforced exterior edge;
 - a right panel having an inside edge and a reinforced outside edge; and
 - an elongated narrow center panel having a left lateral edge and an opposing right lateral edge and a leading edge that is centrally affixed to the front panel bottom edge, the left lateral edge attached to the interior edge of the left panel and the right lateral edge attached to the interior edge of the right panel, the central panel extending continuously from the front panel bottom edge to a top edge aligned with a respective top edge of the left panel and the right panel, the central panel defining a bridge between the front panel and the rear panel, and
 - a plurality of second fastener members each having a second character for mating engagement with a respective one of the first fastener members, the second fastener members disposed in spaced-apart relation along a length of the reinforced exterior edge of the left and right panels, each second fastener member positioned for alignment with a respective one of the first fastener members,

whereby the front panel and the rear panel selective detachably connect by mating engagement of the aligned first fastener members and second fastener members;
- (b) putting on the undergarment, the putting on of said undergarment further comprising the steps of:
 - placing the undergarment in open position with the front panel separated from the rear panel,
 - placing the center panel bridge longitudinally between the user’s legs with undergarment exterior side facing outwardly and away from the user, and further with

the front panel placed on the user's front side and the rear panel placed on the user's rear side,
inwardly folding the exterior side of the undergarment along the right panel outside edge over the interior side,
aligning the first fastener members on the front panel right side with the second fastener members on the right panel outside edge,
pressing the first fastener members and the second fastener members together to connect the first fastener members and the second fastener members,
inwardly folding the exterior side of the undergarment along the left panel exterior edge over the interior side,

aligning the first fastener members on the front panel left side and the second fastener members on the left panel exterior edge, and
pressing the first fastener members and the second fastener members together to connect the first fastener members and the second fastener members; and
(c) removing the undergarment, the removing of said undergarment further comprising the steps of:
pulling apart the first fastener members on the front panel right side and the second fastener members on the right panel outside edge, and
pulling apart the first fastener members on the front panel left side and the second fastener members on the left panel exterior edge, thereby releasing the undergarment for removal.

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