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(54) **CURTAIN HOLDING DEVICE**

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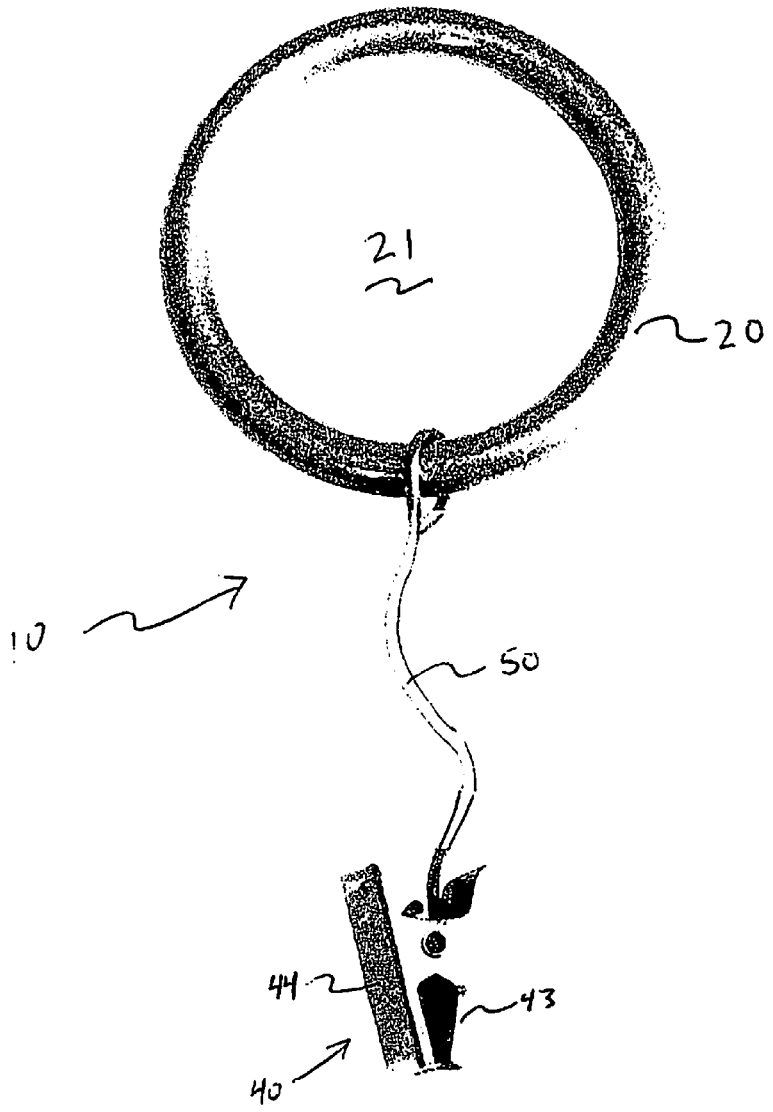
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus for holding curtains includes a retainer and a clip tethered to the retainer. The tether is optionally retractable by a retractor. A decorative element is optionally secured to the retainer. The present disclosure is directed to an apparatus for retaining curtains. The apparatus includes a clip tethered to a retainer. The clip is capable of securing to a curtain. The retainer includes a bore for receiving a curtain therethrough.



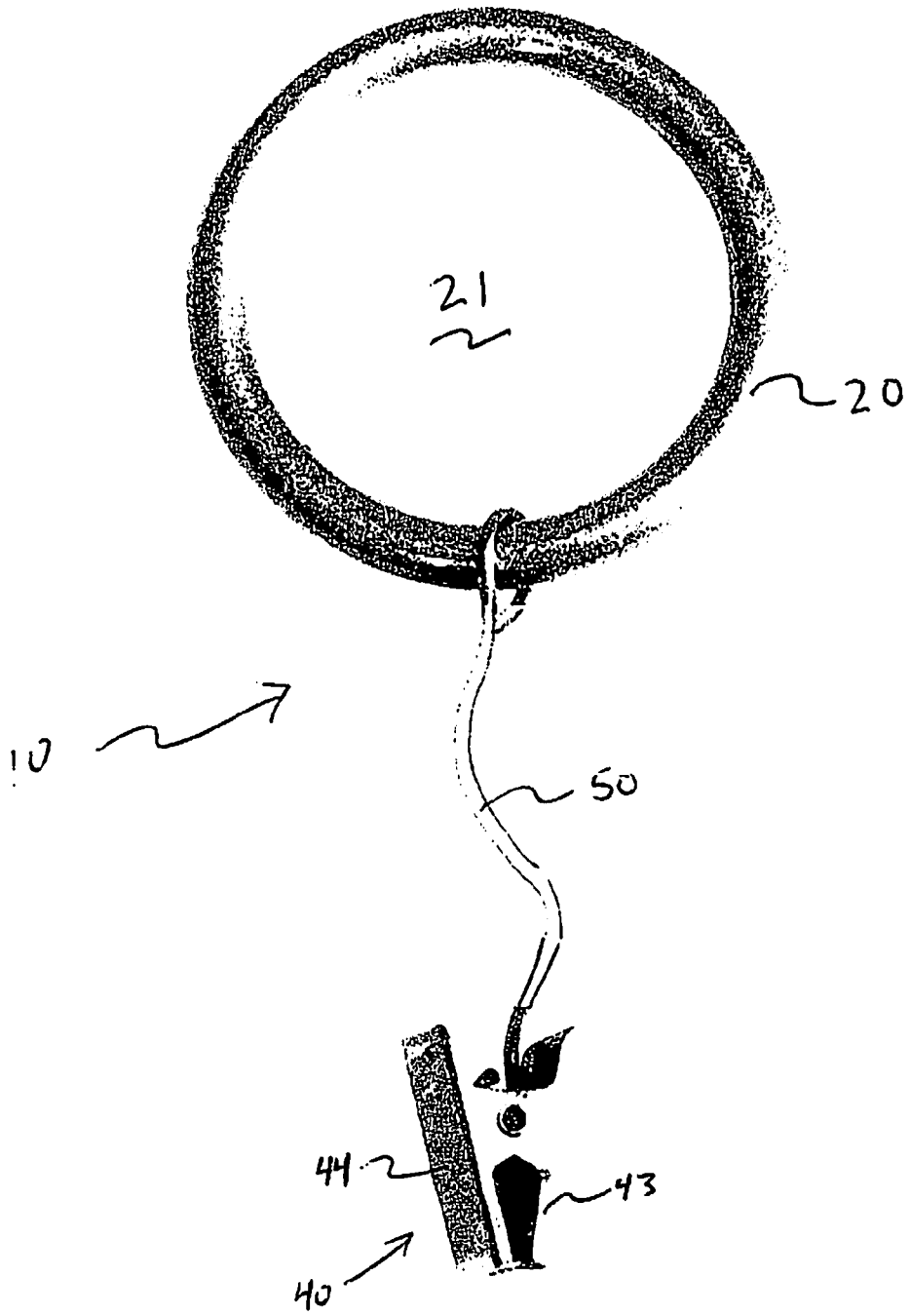


Fig. 1

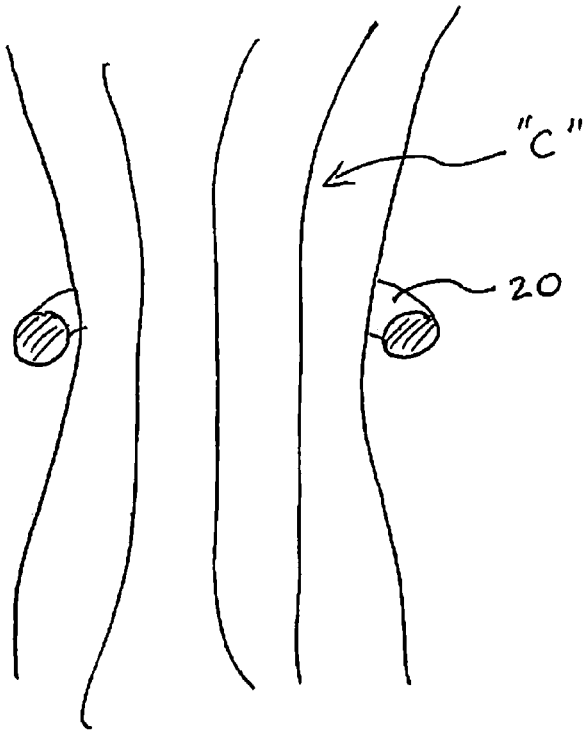


Fig 2A

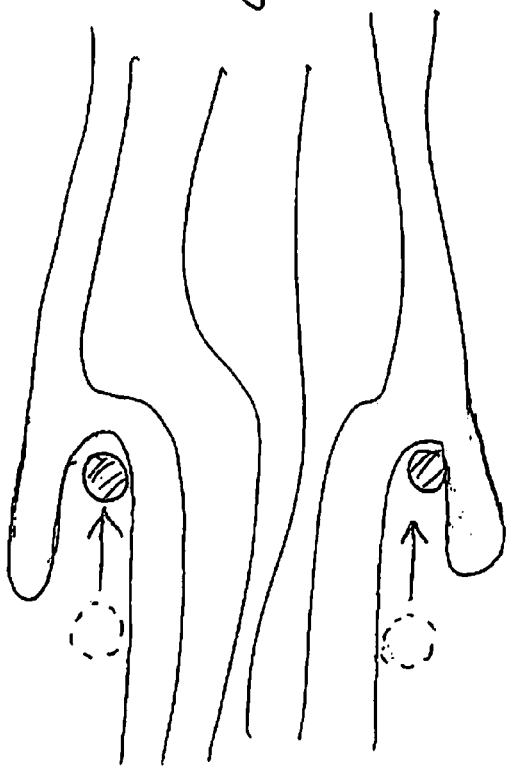


Fig. 2B

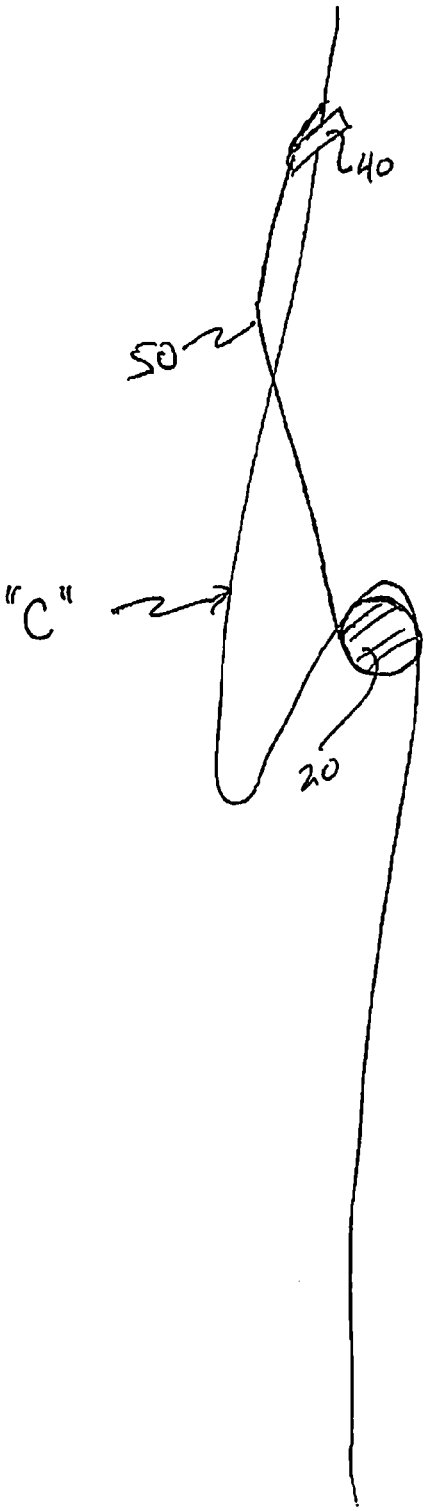


FIG. 2C

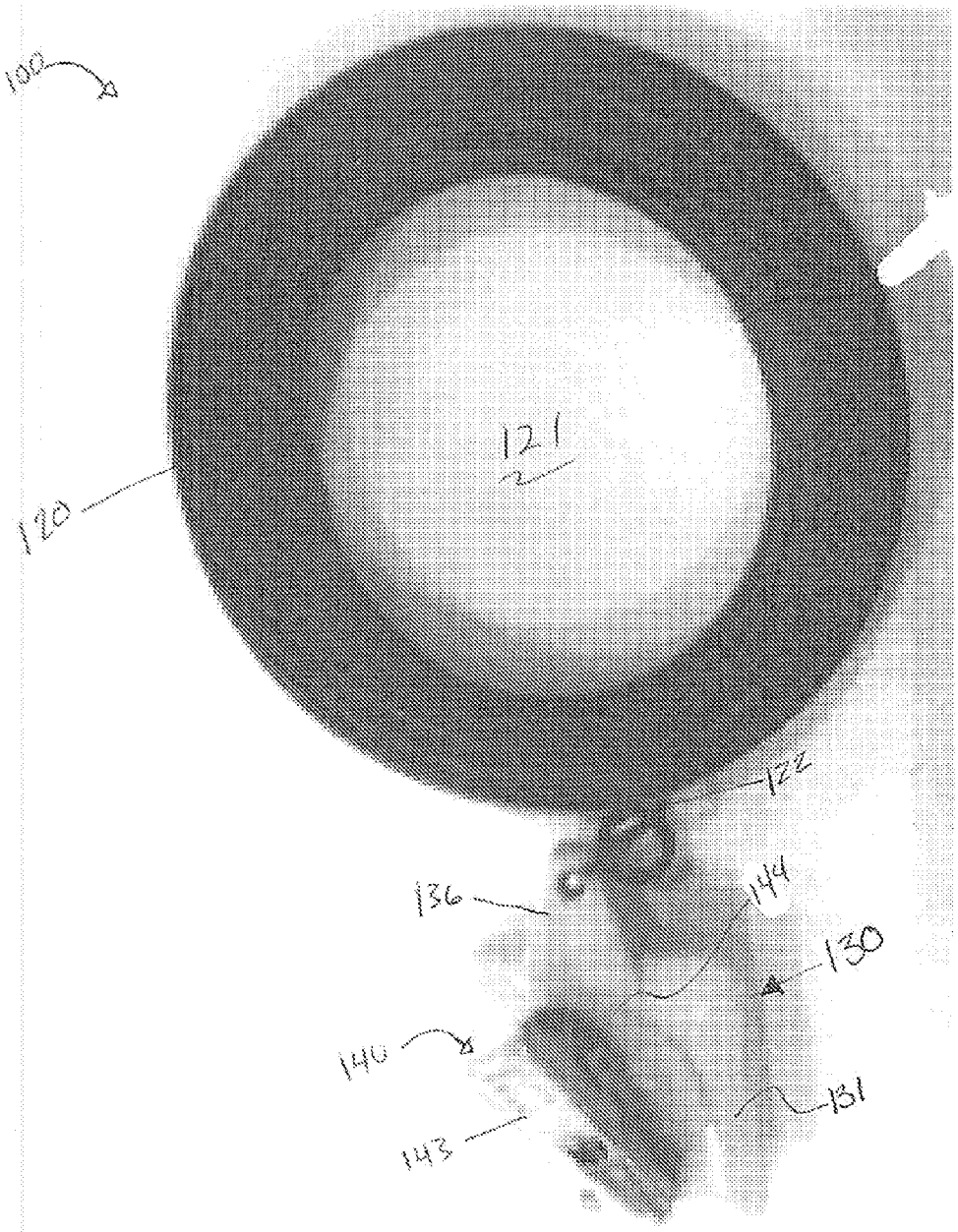


FIG. 3

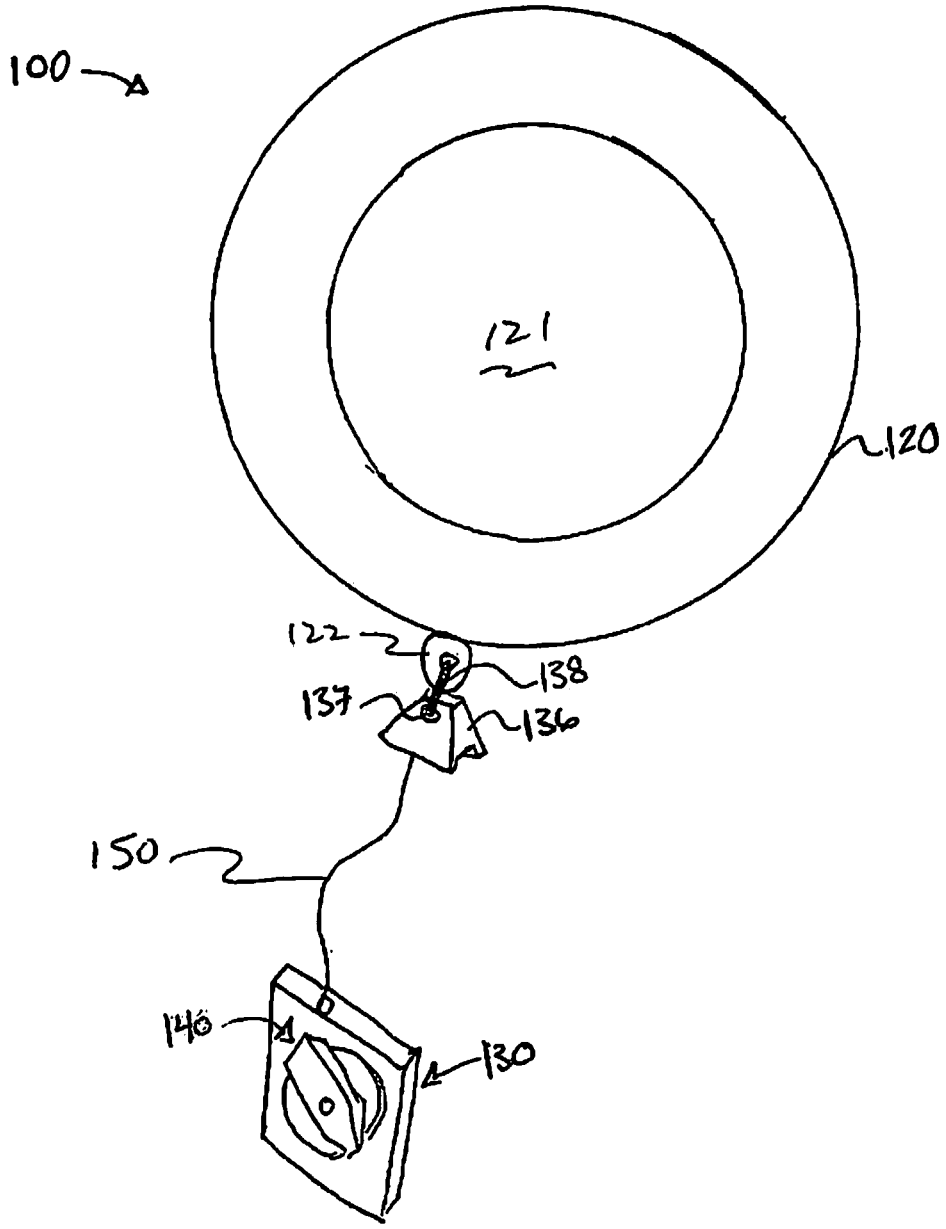


FIG. 4

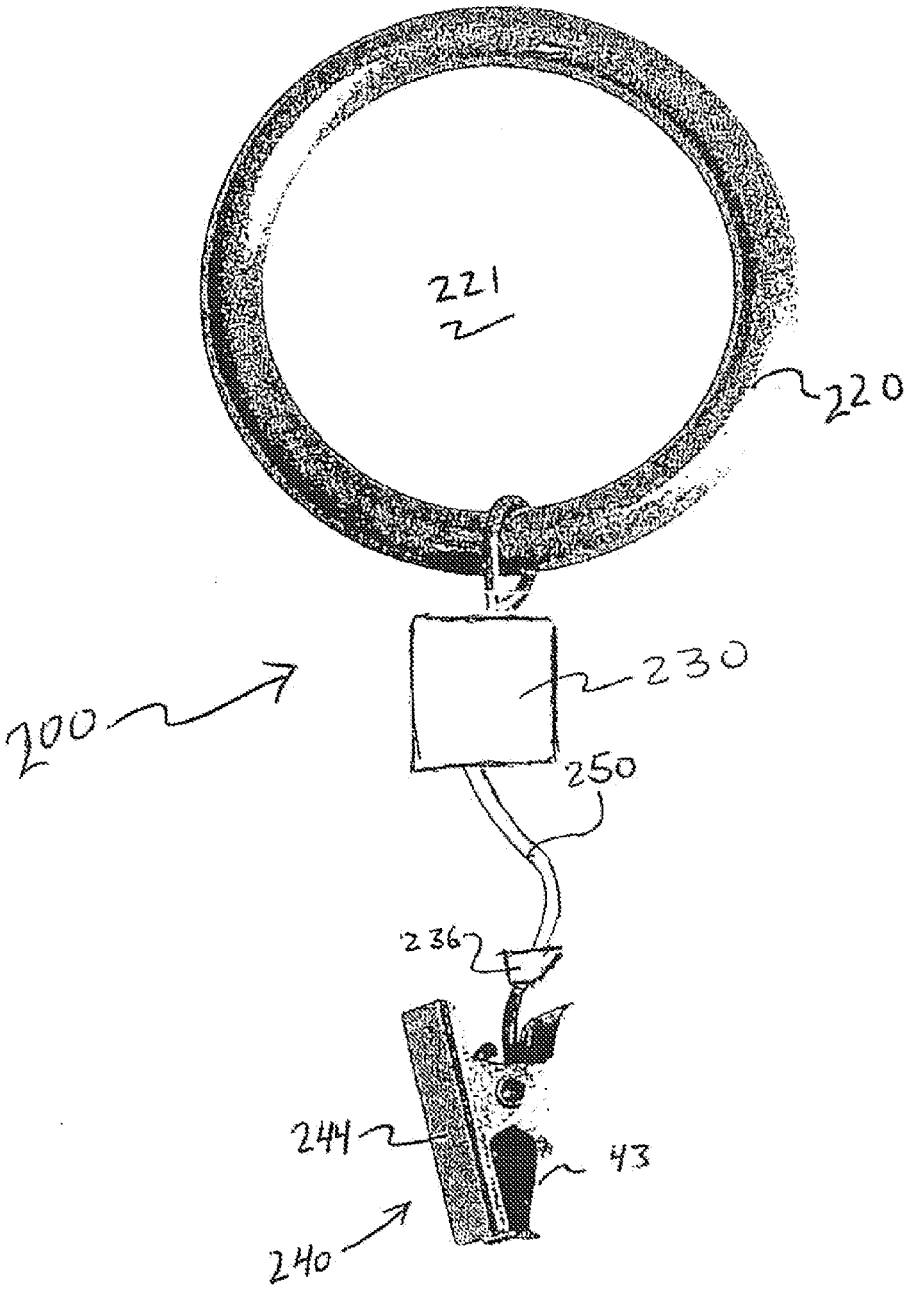


Fig. 5

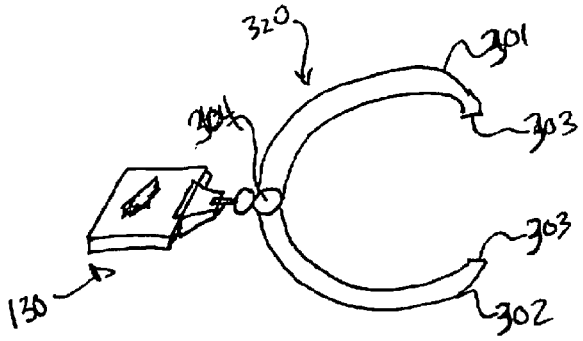


FIG. 6

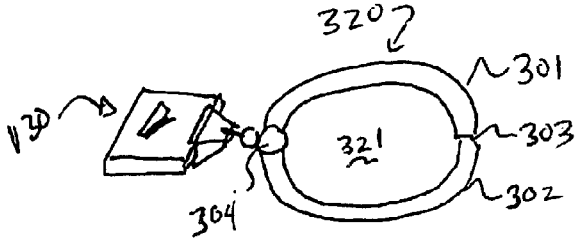


FIG. 6A

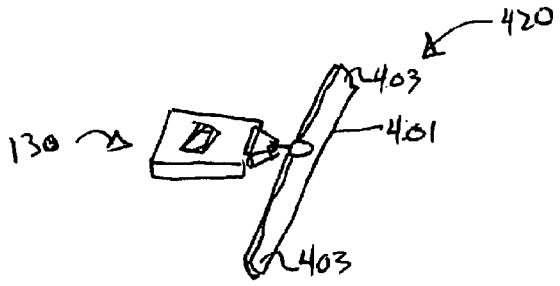


FIG. 7

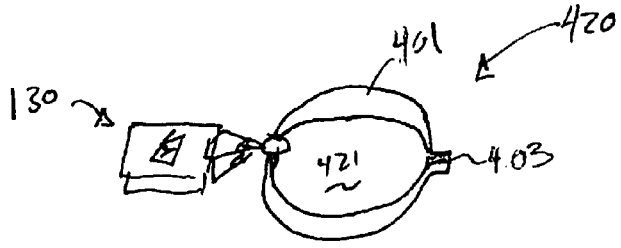


FIG. 7A

FIG. 10A

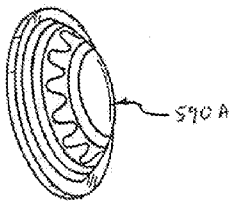


FIG. 10B



FIG. 10C

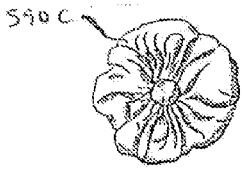
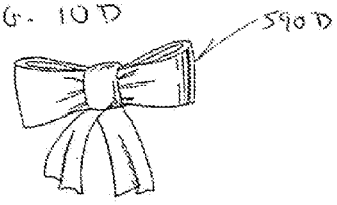


FIG. 10D



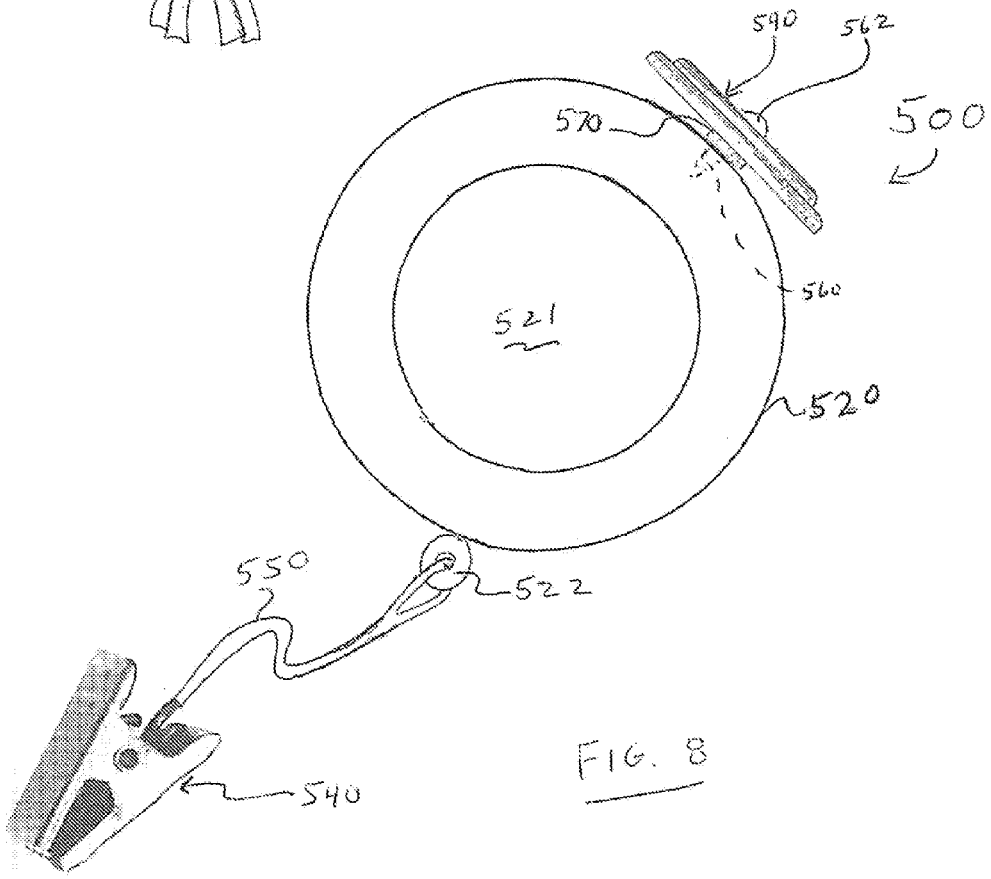


FIG. 8

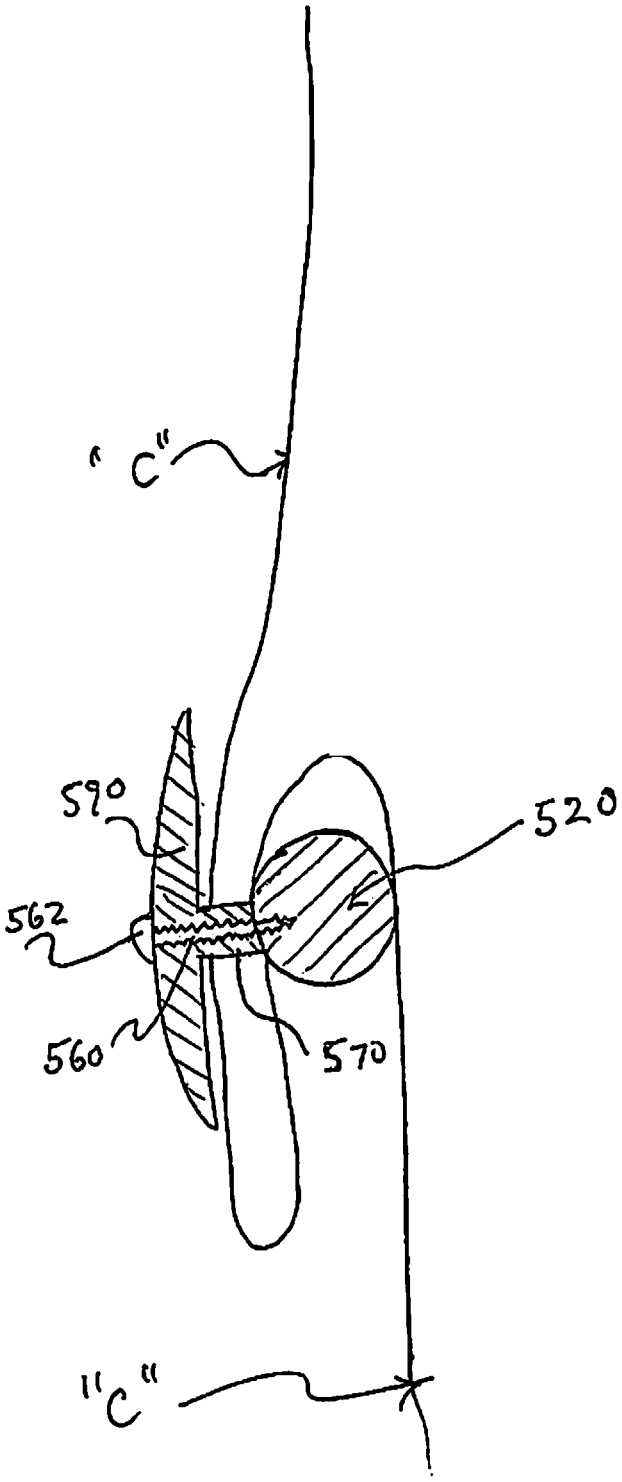


FIG. 9

CURTAIN HOLDING DEVICE

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure relates generally to a device that retains curtains, draperies, or the like, in a desired orientation (such as, for example in a poufed orientation to create a bishop sleeve or simply in a tied back position) and methods for using the device.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Devices and accessories for drawing back curtains, draperies, or the like not only enable sunlight to enter a room but also may provide a decorative flair to the window treatment or decor of the room.

[0003] Simple holdback devices, such as a tie back, consist of a rope or similar device that is looped around the drape and tied to a wall mounted hook. While these devices provide the ability to adjust the amount the drape is drawn back, the tie back must ultimately be mounted to a wall, prohibiting portability and damaging the wall.

[0004] Therefore, a continuing need exists for an improved device and an improved method for retaining drapes in a desired configuration.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present disclosure is directed to an apparatus for retaining curtains. The apparatus includes a clip tethered to a retainer. The clip is capable of securing to a curtain. The retainer includes a bore for receiving a curtain therethrough.

[0006] In embodiments, the clip is retractably tethered to the retainer by a retractor. The retractor includes a housing and a retractable tether disposed within and extendable from the housing. The retractable tether is capable of being extended in a first direction and retracted in a second direction, and is biased in the second direction by a biasing element. In embodiments, the retractor includes a lock capable of maintaining the tether at a desired length when extended from the retractor.

[0007] In embodiments, the retainer is in mechanical cooperation with and end of the retractable tether and the clip disposed on an outer surface of the housing of the retractor. In other embodiments, the retainer is in mechanical cooperation with the housing of the retractor and the clip disposed on an end of the retractable tether.

[0008] In aspects of the present disclosure, the retainer is a toroid.

[0009] In embodiments, a decorative element is secured to the retainer.

[0010] In embodiments, the retainer includes first and second jaw members movable from a first open position to a second approximated position. In the approximated position, the first and second jaw members of the retainer form a bore through which a curtain may be received. The first and second jaw members of the retainer are rotatably affixed on a first end and capable of movement relative to each other. In embodiments, a second end of the first jaw member of the retainer is releasably coupled to a second end of the second jaw member of the retainer while first and second jaw members of the retainer are in an approximated position. In embodiments, a biasing element biases the first and second jaw members of the retainer toward the approximated position.

[0011] In embodiments, the retainer includes an elongate body having a first and second end. The retainer is affixed to an end of the retractable cord between the first and second ends of the elongate body. The first end of the elongate body is releasably coupled to the second end of the elongate body to define a bore through which a curtain can be placed. In embodiments, the first end of the elongate body is releasably coupled to the second end of the elongate body by at least one magnet or by hook and loop fastener.

[0012] A method for holding curtains provided in accordance with the present disclosure includes positioning a curtain through a bore defined through a retainer at a first location on a curtain, elevating the retainer to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer, and securing a clip that is tethered to the retainer to the curtain at a second location on the curtain vertically above the first location to maintain the retainer at the elevated height. In embodiments, the clip is retractably tethered to the retainer and the method further includes extending a retractable tether from a retractor housing, wherein the retractable tether is biased by a biasing element to pull the clip towards the retainer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] The above and other aspects, features, and advantages of the present disclosure will become more apparent in light of the following detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0014] FIG. **1** illustrates an apparatus in accordance with the present disclosure;

[0015] FIGS. **2**A, **2**B and **2**C illustrate the steps of a method of using an apparatus in accordance with the present disclosure;

[0016] FIG. **3** illustrates an apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0017] FIG. **4** illustrates the apparatus of FIG. **3** with the tether in an extended position;

[0018] FIG. **5** illustrates an apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0019] FIG. **6** is a perspective view of another apparatus for holding a curtain provided in accordance with the present disclosure shown in an open position;

[0020] FIG. **6**A is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **6** shown in an approximated position;

[0021] FIG. **7** is a perspective view of another apparatus for holding a curtain provided in accordance with the present disclosure shown in an open position;

[0022] FIG. **7**A is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **7** shown in an approximated position;

[0023] FIG. **8** illustrates an apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0024] FIG. **9** illustrates the apparatus of FIG. **8** installed on a curtain; and

[0025] FIGS. **10**A, **10**B, **10**C, and **10**D illustrate exemplary embodiments of decorative elements useful in connection with the embodiment of FIG. **8**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0026] Embodiments of the present disclosure are now described in detail with reference to the drawings in which like reference numerals designate identical or corresponding elements in each of the several views. In the drawings and in the description that follows, terms such as front, rear,

upper, lower, top, bottom, and similar directional terms are used simply for convenience of description and are not intended to limit the disclosure. In the following description, well-known functions or constructions are not described in detail to avoid obscuring the present disclosure in unnecessary detail.

[0027] FIG. **1** illustrates a curtain holding device **10** provided in accordance with the present disclosure that generally includes a retainer **20** and a clip **40** tethered to retainer **20** by tether **50**. Retainer **20** includes a bore **21** defined therethrough. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, retainer **20** is generally shown as being toroidal, although other configurations are also contemplated, such as square, rectangular, or the like. Bore **21** is configured and/or dimensioned to enable a curtain "C" to be advanced therethrough. Retainer **20** can be made of any material, including metal, plastic, rubber, and the like. In embodiments, the material of construction from which retainer **20** is made will have sufficient frictional engagement with a curtain positioned through bore **21** to maintain retainer **20** at a desired position on the curtain.

[0028] Clip **40** may be any type of clip within the purview of those skilled in the art, such as, for example, any articulating clip, such as an alligator clip. As illustrated in the exemplary embodiment of FIG. **1**, clip **40** includes first and second jaw members **43**, **44** capable of movement relative to each other. A biasing element (not shown) biases first and second jaw members **43**, **44** toward a closed position.

[0029] Tether **50** can be a cord, yarn, string or narrow length of fabric. In embodiments, tether **50** is made of an elastic material, thereby biasing clip **40** toward retainer **20** when a curtain is positioned through bore **21** and clip **40** is attached to the curtain at a position remote from retainer **20**. The length of tether **50** is not critical, and can range, for example, from about 1 inch to about 30 inches, in other embodiments, from about 3 inches to about 20 inches, in yet other embodiments from about 6 inches to about 18 inches.

[0030] In operation, curtain holding device **10** retains a curtain in a desired configuration, such as, for example in a poufed orientation to create a bishop sleeve or simply in a tied back position. Initially, curtain "C" is positioned through bore **21** of retainer **20** at a first location on the curtain as shown in FIG. **2**A. Retainer **20** is then elevated to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer as shown in FIG. **2**B. Clip **40** is then secured to the curtain at a second location on the curtain vertically above the first location on the curtain to maintain retainer **20** at the elevated height via tether **50** as shown in FIG. **2**C. As will be appreciated, when in place, retainer **20** is not visible beneath the billowed or poufed fabric of the curtain.

[0031] Turning now to FIGS. **3** and **4**, a curtain holding device **100** provided in accordance with another embodiment of the present disclosure generally includes a retainer **120**, a retractor **130**, and a clip **140** retractably tethered to retainer **120** by tether **150**. Retractor **130** can be any type of retractor within the purview of those skilled in the art, such as retractor reels of the type know for holding keys, badges and the like. Suitable retractor devices are disclosed, for example in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,007,882, 6,290,158, 6,073,875, and 6,364,237, the entire disclosure of each of which is incorporated herein by this reference.

[0032] In embodiments, retractor **130** includes a ratchet mechanism so that the tether can be locked at a desired length when extended. Such retractable reels are typically lockable through a mechanism exerting some amount of force on the reel to prevent the tether from being retracted and therefore keep the tether at a desired length. Suitable lockable retractor devices are disclosed, for example in U.S. App. Pub. No. 2005/0011982 and U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,199,785; 6,019,304; 7,364,109, and 7,384,013, the entire disclosure of each of which is incorporated herein by this reference.

[0033] As illustrated in the exemplary embodiment of FIG. **3**, retractor **130** includes a housing **131** to which clip **140** is affixed. Although shown as being rigidly affixed to an outer surface of housing **131**, it is also contemplated that clip **140** may be affixed to an outer surface of housing **131** such that clip **140** is capable of swiveling **360** degrees about a center region of the outer surface of housing **131**.

[0034] Retainer **120** includes a lug **122** that is affixed to an outer surface thereof. As illustrated in FIG. **3**, lug **122** is integral to retainer **120**, although other configurations are also contemplated.

[0035] While not explicitly shown in the drawings, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the internal structure of retractor **130** includes a reel (not shown) rotatably supported within the interior of housing **131** and around which tether **150** can be wrapped. A biasing element (not shown) is affixed to housing **131** on a first end and to the reel (not shown) on a second end, thereby biasing the reel towards a direction that winds tether **150** about the reel. Tether **150** is secured on a first end to the reel (not shown) and may be any extended from and refracted back into housing **131**. End stop **136** is secured to a second end of tether **150** and is configured and/or dimensioned to prohibit tether **150** from being wound fully within housing **131**. A second end of end stop **136** includes a bore **137** defined through an upper and lower surface thereof. A ring **138** is advanced within bore **137** and is configured and/or dimensioned to engage lug **122** such that refractor **130** and retainer **120** are coupled.

[0036] In operation, curtain holding device **100** functions in the manner described above with respect to curtain holding device **10** to retain a curtain in a poufed configuration or in a tied back position. Initially, curtain "C" is positioned through bore **121** of retainer **120** at a first location on the curtain. Retainer **120** is then elevated to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer. Retractable tether **150** is then extended from retractor **130** and clip **140** is secured to the curtain at a second location on the curtain vertically above the first location on the curtain to maintain retainer **120** at the elevated height via retractable tether **150**.

[0037] In the alternative embodiment of curtain holding device **200** shown in FIG. **5**, retractor **230** is affixed to retainer **220** and clip **240** is secured to an end of retractable tether **250**. In operation, curtain holding device **200** functions in the manner described above with respect to curtain holding devices **10**, **100** to retain a curtain in a poufed configuration. Initially, curtain "C" is positioned through bore **221** of retainer **220** at a first location on the curtain. Retainer **220** is then elevated to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer. Retractable tether **250** is then extended from retractor **230** by pulling on clip **240**. Clip **240** is then secured to the curtain at a second location on the curtain vertically above the first location on the curtain to maintain retainer **220** at the elevated height via retractable tether **250**.

[0038] Another embodiment of a retainer **320** which can be used with any of curtain holding devices **10**, **100**, **200** is

illustrated in FIGS. **6** and **6**A. Retainer **320** includes first and second jaw members **301**, **302** capable of movement relative to each other. First and second jaw members **301**, **302** are rotatably affixed at a first end using any suitable means, such as a pin **304**. A second end includes a lock **303** thereby retaining first and second jaw members **301**, **302** in an approximated position. Lock **303** may be any suitable lock such as magnets, pins, hook and loop, etc.

[0039] In operation, a curtain holding device including retainer **320** functions in the manner described above with respect to curtain holding devices **10**, **100**, **200** to retain a curtain in a poufed configuration or in a tied back position. Retainer **320** is utilized by moving first and second jaw members **301**, **302** into an open position and while in the open position, first and second jaw members **301**, **302** are positioned around a curtain at a first position on the curtain. First and second jaw members **301**, **302** are then moved into an approximated position, to surround the curtain within bore **321** and locked in the approximated position. Retainer **320** is then elevated to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer. A tethered clip can then be used to secure retainer in the elevated height as described hereinabove.

[0040] Another embodiment of a retainer **420** which can be used with any of curtain holding devices **10**, **100**, **200** is illustrated in FIGS. **7** and **7**A. Retainer **420** includes an elongate body **401** having first and second ends. Elongate body **401** may be constructed of any suitable material being having compliant properties, e.g., rope, fabric, composites, etc. Elongate body **401** is affixed to retractor **130** at a location between the first and second ends. A lock **403** is disposed on the first and second ends of elongate body **401** such that elongate body **401** may be locked into a loop defining a bore **421** capable of retaining a curtain therein. Lock **403** may be any suitable lock such as magnets, pins, hook and loop, etc. It is also contemplated that the first and second ends of elongate body **401** may be tied together, thereby locking elongate body into a loop including a bore **421** capable of retaining a curtain "C", drape, or the like therein.

[0041] In operation, a curtain holding device including retainer **420** functions in the manner described above with respect to curtain holding devices **10**, **100**, **200** to retain a curtain in a poufed configuration or in a tied back position. Retainer **420** is utilized by wrapping elongate body **401** around a curtain at a first location on the curtain to surround the curtain within bore **421** and locked in this position using lock **403**. Retainer **420** is then elevated to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer. A tethered clip can then be used to secure retainer in the elevated height as described hereinabove.

[0042] In embodiments, the curtain holding device of the present disclosure includes a decorative element for aesthetically embellishing a curtain. As seen in the illustrative embodiment of FIG. **8**, curtain holding device **500** includes a retainer **520** and a clip **540** tethered to retainer **520** by tether **550** which is secured to lug **522**. Retainer **520** includes a bore **521** defined therethrough as in previous embodiments and decorative element **590** secured thereto.

[0043] Decorative element **590** can be secured to retainer **520** in any manner within the purview of those skilled in the art such as, for example, by the use of a magnet, adhesive, welding, hook and loop fastener, a loop of wire, or a mechanical fastener (e.g., a screw, tack, staple, or the like). Those skilled in the art will appreciate that certain securement techniques will allow the decorative element to be changed when desired, while other securement techniques will result in permanent attachment. In the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. **8**, decorative element **590** is secured to retainer **520** using screw **560**, which allows for decorative element **590** to be removed (due to the accessibility of screw head **562**) and replaced as desired.

[0044] Decorative element **590** may include a standoff **570** to create a space between retainer **520** and decorative element **590** to accommodate a curtain "C" therein, so that decorative element **590** is visible and provides an aesthetically pleasing embellishment to the curtain, while maintaining retainer **520** hidden from view when curtain holding device **500** is installed as shown in FIG. **9**.

[0045] Decorative element **590** may be made from any suitable material, such as textiles, plastics, metals, ceramics, or the like, or any combination of materials. In embodiments, the decorative element may include jewelry elements, such as decorative stones, for example diamonds, rhinestones, pearls, or the like, or a precious metal, for example, silver, gold, platinum, or the like.

[0046] Decorative element **590** may be of any desired, aesthetically pleasing design, such as may be achieved by a combination of any artistic features, such as shape, coloring, and/or texture. For example, the decorative element may be a disc which is adorned by a decorative motif or design on one side. An illustrative example of a domed, disc-shaped decorative element **590**A is shown in FIG. **10**C. Alternatively, the decorative member may be in the shape of a flower, including but not limited to fabric flowers, plastic molded flowers, or even fresh flowers. An illustrative example of a flower decorative element **590**C is shown in FIG. **10**C. An illustrative example of a decorative element **590**B in the form of holly as shown in FIG. **10**B is especially useful in embodiments where the securement technique employed allows the decorative element to be changed seasonally or for holidays. Alternatively, the decorative member may be in the shape of an ornamental bow, such as, for example, a rosette bow, double loop rosette bow, bow and flower, tri-color rosette (requires three coordinating fabrics), or combinations and variations of the above-mentioned ornamental bows. An illustrative example of a decorative element **590**D in the form of a bow is shown in FIG. **10**D. Those skilled in the art reading this disclosure will readily envision other aesthetically pleasing designs for decorative element **590**.

[0047] Persons skilled in the art will understand that the structures and methods specifically described herein and shown in the accompanying figures are non-limiting exemplary embodiments, and that the description, disclosure, and figures should be construed merely as exemplary of particular embodiments. It is to be understood, therefore, that the present disclosure is not limited to the precise embodiments described, and that various other changes and modifications may be effected by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of the disclosure. Additionally, the elements and features shown or described in connection with certain embodiments may be combined with the elements and features of certain other embodiments without departing from the scope of the present disclosure, and that such modifications and variations are also included within the scope of the present disclosure. Accordingly, the subject

matter of the present disclosure is not limited by what has been particularly shown and described.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for holding curtains, comprising:

a retainer defining a bore capable of receiving a curtain;

a clip capable of securing to a curtain; and

a tether connecting the retainer to the clip.

2. The apparatus according to claim **1** further comprising a retractor, the retractor biasing the clip toward the retainer.

3. The apparatus according to claim **1** wherein the tether is retractable into a retractor.

4. The apparatus according to claim **2** wherein the clip is mounted on the retractor.

5. The apparatus according to claim **2** wherein the retractor includes a lock capable of maintaining the tether at a desired length.

6. The apparatus according to claim **1** wherein the retainer is a toroid.

7. The apparatus according to claim **1** wherein the retainer comprises first and second jaw members rotatably affixed on a first end and capable of movement relative to each other, wherein the first jaw member is releasably coupled to the second jaw member on a second end while in an approximated position.

8. The apparatus according to claim **1** wherein the retainer comprises an elongate body having a first and second end, wherein the first end of the elongate body is releasably coupled to the second end of the elongate body.

9. The apparatus according to claim **1** further comprising a decorative element attached to the retainer.

10. A method of holding a curtain, comprising:

positioning a curtain through a bore defined through a retainer at a first location on a curtain,

elevating the retainer to an elevated height that allows curtain material to billow over the retainer, and

securing a clip that is tethered to the retainer to the curtain at a second location on the curtain vertically above the first location to maintain the retainer at the elevated height.

11. The method according to claim **10** wherein the clip is retractably tethered to the retainer and the method further comprises extending a retractable tether from a retractor housing, wherein the retractable tether is biased by a biasing element to pull the clip towards the retainer.

12. The method according to claim **10** wherein positioning the curtain through a bore comprises placing a first and second jaw member of a retainer in an open position, advancing the retainer over the curtain, and placing the first and second jaw members of the retainer in an approximated position.

13. The method according to claim **10** wherein positioning the curtain through a bore comprises wrapping an elongate body around the curtain, and affixing the first end of the elongate body to the second end of the elongate body thereby retaining a curtain therein.

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