A curtain track assembly comprising a telescopic track apparatus (12) with waterproof pressure-sensitive adhesive pads (18), a shower curtain and or liner cartridge with a unique fold pattern and a permanently attached curtain carriers (20) and or curtain clips (24). The telescopic track apparatus (12) consists of two parts, one half being of a larger inner dimension than the other, so that the smaller half of the track (14A) is smoothly fitted into the larger part of the track (14B). The track parts (14A and 14B) have an open seam shaft or c-channel (30) running lengthwise along the bottom to allow the curtain carriers (22) and curtain clips (24) to slide smoothly along the track parts (14A and 14B). The track parts (14A and 14B) are open at either end (50) allowing for insertion of the curtain liner cartridge (20), curtain clips (24) and end caps (26).
SNAP 'N TRACK SHOWER CURTAIN AND LINER SYSTEM WITH TELESCOPIC ROD

REFERENCES CITED
[0001] U.S. Pat. No. 5,367,742 issued on Nov. 29, 1994 to Bindman
[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 4,088,174 issued on May 9, 1978 to Edwards
[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 6,098,699 issued on Aug. 8, 2000 to Junius
[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 5,421,393 issued on Jun. 6, 1995 to M. Wolfe

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION
[0008] Shower curtains, liners, rods, rings and hooks are often used in combination to address the problem of keeping splashing water from a shower stall in use from being spread to the walls and flooring outside of the shower stall itself. One unavoidable problem is the accumulation of mold and mildew on the shower curtain and liner due to the humid and damp shower environment. This creates a need to wash or change the shower curtain and liner frequently throughout the course of any given year. Most products address the issue of splashing water, however few products attempt to address the additional time-consuming and tedious problem of changing the shower curtains and liners quickly, in a timely fashion once they need to be changed.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION
[0009] The present invention is directed to the hanging of a specially designed shower curtain and or liner using a unique curtain carrier, or a standard shower curtain and liner using a unique curtain carrier clip, and a specially designed adjustable curtain track assembly to enable the entire track system, curtain and liner to be attached between a pair of parallel walls. The unique curtain carriers, curtain clips and accompanying liner cartridges make it easier and faster to replace the curtains and liners. The specially designed telescopic track is made to receive the curtain carriers, curtain carrier clips and accompanying liner cartridges with ease. The end caps are specially designed to produce a snapping or clicking sound when the curtain cartridge, curtain carriers, or curtain clips are inserted.

DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART
[0010] Several inventions have been created in order to address the problem of water splashing out of the shower stall or enclosure when in use, by means of a shower curtain and shower curtain liner usually hung with hooks and rings from a bar or rod. Many of the inventions deal with the simple hanging and removing of a standard shower curtain and shower curtain liner, however few address the issue of completing this task in a timely fashion. Of the few that attempt to address the issue of time-consumption, none achieve their objective as quickly as The Snap 'n Track Shower Curtain and Liner System and do not demonstrate the unique method of dealing with the problem of time-consumption in the same manner as the Snap 'n Track Shower Curtain and Liner System and are hereinafter contrasted.
[0011] The following is a list of researched patents which relate to a shower curtain.
[0012] U.S. Pat. No. 5,367,742 issued on Nov. 29, 1994 to Bindman describes a click-lock ring for use in hanging shower curtains designed in the form of a split ring wherein one end of the split ring contains a stepped anchoring recess formed from two cooperating lateral openings for receiving a locking head formed at the other end of the split ring. The ring is produced by injection molding a flexible plastic material in a cam-free mold.
[0013] U.S. Pat. No. 5,148,580 issued on Sep. 22, 1992 to D. W. Dyckow describes a shower curtain sealing and fastening arrangement kit. A strip of hook and loop material is attached to the edge of a shower curtain to mate with another strip of loop or hook material on the shower stall wall. A sealing protrusion strip is also provided to apparently clamp the edge of a shower curtain.
[0014] U.S. Pat. No. 6,216,287, invented by, Wise, entitled, Shower curtain rod, an improved shower curtain rod. It is adapted for use with an enclosure defined by left and right walls, and a back splash wall defining a bath tub enclosure above a bath tub. The bathroom is oval or elliptical and fits in an oval or elliptical hole in a horizontal dock. The shower curtain rod of the present disclosure has ends connected with a curved middle portion which ends are anchored at end fittings. There is, between the two ends, a curving portion which conforms with an oval or elliptical bathtub shape.
[0015] U.S. Pat. No. 5,662,297 issued on Sep. 2, 1997 to Christensen, et al. describes an adjustable shower curtain rod. The shower curtain support rod assembly which mounts between opposing bathtub stall walls, which when installed allows a shower curtain to be slidably movable in an inward and outward direction with respect to the longitudinal edge of a bathtub, thereby creating more space for a shower taker. When a shower is not in progress, the shower curtain can be slid inward thereby creating more space in the bathroom area.
[0016] U.S. Pat. No. 4,088,174 issued on May 9, 1978 to Edwards describes a shower curtain anchor attachment. An apparatus to retain and guide the lower edge of a conventional shower curtain in relation to the inner surface of a shower or bathtub enclosure is mainly used to prevent water from spraying on the floor.
[0017] U.S. Pat. No. 5,421,393 issued on Jun. 6, 1995 to M. Wolfe describes a shower curtain edge stay to prevent a shower curtain from curling inward. A stiffening rib member is disposed at the bottom of and on at least one side of a shower curtain. The stiffening rib member is at the edge of the shower curtain and extending parallel to a horizontal edge of the shower curtain. The Snap 'n Track is for a totally different use from Wolfe’s invention.
[0018] Of particular note is U.S. Pat. No. 6,098,699 to Junius. The Junius patent discloses an adjustable rod with bead attachment members that replace standard ring connectors. The bead attachment members are then inserted one at a time into a small opening in the rod. The Snap 'n Track is a completely different approach to the individual bead attachments, as all of the permanently attached curtain carriers are compiled into a unique curtain and or liner cartridge to allow
the user to insert all of the curtain carriers at once and then open the curtain and or liner in one swift motion. The Snap 'n Track also has several additional key design differences such as a unique ninety degree turn at both ends of its track or curved portion of it’s entire length, removable end caps which are inserted onto either side of the track which make the distinctive snapping sound when a curtain liner cartridge or curtain clip is inserted into the track, it’s unique fold pattern which allows for easy opening in a single motion once initially inserted into the telescopic track, and it’s pressure-sensitive waterproof adhesive pads used for mounting the track system which will not damage existing surfaces as it easily sticks onto wall surface areas without nails, screws, drilling or glue.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0019] In accordance with the invention, The Snap ‘n Track Shower Curtain and Liner System makes it easier for users to change their shower curtains and liners in a timely fashion. The telescopic track is open at both ends to accept the curtain liner cartridges or curtain clips and is composed of two sections of open-seam tubing or c-channel track to allow the curtain carriers and clips to slide with ease. The telescopic track is mounted on the wall surface areas of the desired location via pressure-sensitive adhesive pads. Two end caps are placed onto each open end of the telescopic track. The shower curtains and liners have a plurality of special curtain carriers which are sewn or heat-sealed into the top hem of each curtain and or liner and are packaged into a unique curtain assembly for easy hanging onto the telescopic rod. When the shower curtain/liner cartridge is inserted into the telescopic track through one of the end caps, a “clicking” or “snapping” noise is made as each curtain carrier passes through the small flange on the inside of the end cap. The shower curtain liners have a unique fold pattern that allows for easy opening in a single motion once initially inserted into the telescopic track. The additional curtain clips can be used to hang standard shower curtains if needed, and removal of the track is not necessary to install a new shower curtain or shower curtain liner.

[0020] The advantage of the invention is a greatly improved means of replacing the shower curtain and or liner with regards to time consumption. The combination of the unique curtain cartridge, the telescopic track, and fold pattern of the shower curtain allows one to insert all of the curtain carriers at once, eliminating the tedious and often frustrating job of attaching standard rings, hooks, or even the attachments of the Hookless® systems one at a time.

[0021] Most of the problems addressed by the prior art are concerned with the prevention of water splashing outside of the shower stall. However, this invention provides a faster and easier means of changing the shower curtain and shower curtain liner. Two patent attempts to address this concern of the time in which it takes to change the shower curtain and liner, but fall short as they still force the user to install each curtain carrier or bead attachment one at a time. The Snap ‘n Track Shower Curtain and Liner System solves this problem with its unique shower curtain liner cartridge design and open-ended telescopic track, completely eliminating the need to individually connect any type of curtain carriers, hooks, rings or bead attachments to the standard shower curtain or liner itself. Further features and advantages of the present invention will be set forth in, or apparent from, the detailed description of preferred embodiments thereof which follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0022] FIG. 1 is a front angled view of the track apparatus.

[0023] FIG. 2 is an angled top view of one end of the track apparatus with extension and pressure-sensitive adhesive pad.

[0024] FIG. 3 is a top view of one end of the track apparatus.

[0025] FIG. 4 is a front view of one end of the track apparatus with an open end.

[0026] FIG. 5 is a bottom view of one end of the track apparatus with c-channel.

[0027] FIG. 6 is a side angled view of the shower curtain liner in cartridge formation.

[0028] FIG. 7 is an exploded view of the shower curtain liner after it has been unfolded from the cartridge.

[0029] FIG. 8 is a top angled view of one type of the curtain clip with a permanently attached curtain carrier.

[0030] FIG. 9 is a front view of the curtain carrier.

[0031] FIG. 10 is a top angled view of the end cap with the small flexible flange which protrudes from the interior, and the attached lid having a circumventing flange or lip.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0032] Referring to FIG. 1, a telescopic track apparatus manufactured from a stiff material such as metal, metal alloy, plastic, plastic composite, fiberglass, fiberglass composite, epoxy, epoxy composite, wood, or wood composite, which is generally denoted (12), includes a smaller half of the track (14A), and a larger half of the track (14B), which mount onto desired wall surface areas with waterproof pressure sensitive adhesive pads (18). Each end of the track apparatus (12) is shown in more detail in FIG. 2, and as illustrated includes an open seam shaft or c-channel (30), which is open at each end (50) to receive the curtain carriers (22) of the curtain liner cartridge (20), curtain clips (24), and end caps (26). Each end of the track apparatus (12) also includes a single extension (32) to allow for a suitable amount of clearance when inserting the curtain carriers (22) of the shower curtain liner cartridge (20), curtain clips (24), and end caps (26). FIG. 5 shows an underneath view of the track end including the open seam shaft or c-channel (30), single extension (23), and a ninety degree turn (54) of the open seam shaft or c-channel (30), however the track (12) may also be manufactured in a curved fashion as well.

[0033] FIG. 6 shows the a shower curtain liner cartridge (20), with its curtain carriers (22) permanently fixed into the top hem (34) of the shower curtain liner (19). A user inserts the shower curtain liner cartridge (20) into either open end (50) of the track apparatus (12) through an end cap (26), which makes a snapping sound as each curtain carrier (22) passes through a small flexible flange (42B) located inside of the end cap (26). Once the shower curtain or liner cartridge (20) is installed into the telescopic track apparatus (12), a user then closes the end cap (26) by affixing the attached lid (24C). A user then unfolds the shower curtain liner (19), by pulling the exposed corner of the shower curtain or liner (19) downward at a forty-five degree angle. FIG. 7 shows an exploded view of the shower curtain (19), after it has been unfolded from its cartridge formation (20), including its curtain carriers.
(22), which are sewn, heat-sealed, or otherwise permanently fixed into the top hem (34) of the shower curtain or liner (19).

FIG. 8 shows a close up view of the curtain clip (24), with its curtain carrier (22) permanently attached. A user inserts the curtain clip (24) into the telescopic apparatus (12) through the end caps (26) and alternatively clips and hangs traditional shower curtains that would be otherwise non-compatible with the Snap n’ Track Shower Curtain and Liner System. This unique curtain clip (24) effectively broadens the invention’s scope of use and is an added benefit of using the Snap n’ Track Shower Curtain and Liner System.

FIG. 9 shows a close up view of the curtain carrier (22), which is permanently attached to the shower curtain or liner (19) and curtain clip (24). The curtain carriers (22) can be produced in any variety of shapes to best facilitate ease of use and consist of a bottom part (36A), and shaft part (36B), and a head part (36C). FIG. 10 shows a close up view of the end cap which is comprised of a body part (42A) with a small flexible flange (42B) protruding from the interior, and an attached lid (42C) with a circumventing flange or lip (42D).

What is claimed is:

1. A shower curtain and or liner and track assembly comprising:
   A telescopic track having a slot along the entire length of the track and having an opening at both ends to receive a plurality of curtain carriers, curtain clips, and end caps.

2. A shower curtain and or liner with attached curtain carriers having distinct folding pattern to facilitate ease of initial opening; said plurality of curtain carriers permanently attached along the upper edge of the shower curtain and or liner

3. Said curtain carriers having elongated ends dimensioned to fit through an opening at either end of the track and having a diameter larger than the width of the track slot, to thereby be received and held within the track and support the shower curtain and or liner along the length of the upper edge.

4. A plurality of end caps, each having a device, mechanism, or extruded part to create a snapping or clicking sound as curtain carriers are inserted, and having attached lids.

5. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said shower curtain and or liner includes an infused or applied fragrance to help fight common bathroom odors.

6. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said curtain clips include a spring mechanism to facilitate support of standard curtains and liners.

7. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said telescopic track includes waterproof pressure sensitive adhesive pads at distal ends to facilitate mounting on wall surface areas.

8. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said end caps include a device to create a snapping or clicking sound.

9. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said track includes an opening at distal ends to receive said curtain carriers, curtain clips, and end caps.

10. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said curtain and or liner is folded in a unique pattern to allow for easy opening in a single motion.

11. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said curtain, liner, track, or individual parts can be changed to different colors or patterns for decorative purposes.

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