TABLECLOTH WITH INFLATABLE STRUCTURES

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ABSTRACT
A party tablecloth includes one or more inflatable structures that extend upwardly from a top side of the tablecloth to provide an ornamental centerpiece that corresponds with a desired celebratory theme, such as a birthday or holiday. The centerpiece may also function as an activity in which people seated at the table can participate, such as a miniature basketball, hockey or soccer game. At least one valve is provided for inflating and deflating the centerpiece structures. In a preferred embodiment, the tablecloth and inflatable structures are formed as one piece from a non-absorbent material, such as a polyvinyl composition, that is easy to wash and wipe clean.
TABLECLOTH WITH INFLATABLE STRUCTURES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This non-provisional patent application is based on provisional patent application Ser. No. 61/208,791 filed Feb. 27, 2009.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a tablecloth with a centerpiece structure and, more particularly, to a party tablecloth having one or more inflatable structures integrally formed with the tablecloth on the top side thereof, and wherein the inflatable structures correspond to a particular theme for a birthday, holiday or other special occasion, and further wherein the inflatable structures may provide a table activity for active participation by people seated at the table.

DISCUSSION OF THE RELATED ART

[0003] Parties are often held to celebrate special occasions and holidays. Guests are invited to gather and celebrate by socializing and consuming food and drink. Party decorations that correspond with the particular theme of the occasion or holiday are an essential element to create a festive atmosphere. Typically, party decorations include balloons, banners, disposable (e.g., paper) tablecloths, decorative centerpieces for tables, and decorative napkins. Disposable cups and plates with ornamental designs and colors may also be provided to correspond with the particular party theme. Decorating a party area, including numerous tables, can often be the most costly aspect of holding a party. Additionally, decorating numerous tables with tablecloths, centerpieces, napkins and dining ware is time consuming. The creation of ornamental table decorations, such as a centerpiece, may also be a time consuming and expensive ordeal. Once the party gets under way, and particularly a children’s birthday party, many of the decorations are quickly removed from the table and, in some instances, are destroyed. When the party ends, the cleanup process is every bit as time consuming as setting up the decorations. And, some of the decorations, such as paper tablecloths, cannot be reused and are simply discarded in the trash.

[0004] Accordingly, there remains a need for an easier and more cost effective means for decorating a party area, and particularly the tables at a party. More specifically, there is a definite need for a one piece reusable and washable tablecloth with a collapsible and ornamental centerpiece that corresponds with a particular party theme.

OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Considering the foregoing, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a party tablecloth with an integral and ornamental centerpiece structure that is easy to wipe clean and collapse for storage and subsequent use.

[0006] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a party tablecloth having one or more integral inflatable structures on a top side of the tablecloth, and wherein the inflatable structures extend upwardly when inflated to provide an ornamental centerpiece that corresponds with a desired celebratory theme, such as a birthday or holiday.

[0007] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a party tablecloth that includes one or more inflatable structures for providing an ornamental centerpiece, and wherein the tablecloth and inflatable structures are integrally formed from a non-absorbent material, such as a polyvinyl composition, that is easy to wash and wipe clean for subsequent use.

[0008] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a washable party tablecloth that includes one or more inflatable structures, and wherein the tablecloth releasably attaches to the table to hold the tablecloth and inflatable centerpiece structures in fixed position throughout a party.

[0009] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a washable party tablecloth including one or more inflatable centerpiece structures, and wherein the party tablecloth is easy to install and remove from a table, thereby minimizing the time to decorate before a party and also minimizing the time to cleanup after a party.

[0010] It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide a washable party tablecloth that includes one or more inflatable centerpiece structures, and wherein the party tablecloth is affordable and reusable.

[0011] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a party tablecloth that includes one or more inflatable structures that create a table activity such as a miniature basketball, hockey, or soccer game, to entertain the party guests seated at the table.

[0012] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a washable party tablecloth that includes one or more inflatable centerpiece structures, and wherein the tablecloth further includes an electronic sound producing device that plays music and/or a voice message.

[0013] These and other objects and advantages of the present invention are readily apparent with reference to the detailed description and accompanying drawings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0014] The present invention is directed to a party tablecloth with one or more inflatable structures that extend upwardly from a top side of the tablecloth to provide an ornamental centerpiece that corresponds with a desired celebratory theme, such as a birthday or holiday. The centerpiece may also function as an activity in which people seated at the table can participate, such as a miniature basketball, hockey or soccer game. At least one valve is provided for inflating and deflating the centerpiece structures. In a preferred embodiment, the tablecloth and inflatable structures are formed as one piece from a non-absorbent material, such as a polyvinyl composition, that is easy to wash and wipe clean.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] For a fuller understanding of the nature of the present invention, reference should be made to the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0016] FIG. 1 is a front, top perspective view showing one preferred embodiment of the party tablecloth of the present invention installed on a table;

[0017] FIG. 2 is a front, top perspective view showing a second preferred embodiment of the party tablecloth of the present invention installed on a table and providing a table activity in the form of a miniature basketball game;

[0018] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view in cross-section showing the inflated interior chamber of the several inflated structures on the top side of the tablecloth; and
FIG. 4 is an isolated side elevational view, in partial cross-section, illustrating releasable attachment of the tablecloth to an edge of a table using hook and loop fasteners. Like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the several views of the drawings, and initially FIG. 1, the present invention is shown and directed to a party tablecloth 10 for installation on a table 20. In each of the several preferred embodiments of the invention, the party tablecloth 10 includes a flexible sheet 30 forming a base that covers the top table surface and drapes downwardly on the sides of the table. The party tablecloth 10 further includes one or more inflatable structures 40 on a top side of the flexible sheet base. The one or more inflatable structures are preferably positioned within a central area on a top side 32 of the sheet base 30 and extend upwardly when inflated, as seen in FIGS. 1-3. The inflatable structures 40 form a decorative centerpiece and are filled with air or another gas using a pump (electric or manual powered) or orally by forced exhalation using one's lung power.

One or more valves 44 are provided for directing a forced flow of air into the inflatable structures 40 to fill interior air chambers 46. The valves 44 also function to allow release of the air (or other gas) from the air chambers 46 in order to deflate the inflatable structures after use of the party tablecloth.

The sheet base 30 and one or more inflatable structures 40 are preferably formed as an integral one piece unit from a non-absorbent material such as a polyvinyl composition or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) that is easy to wash and wipe clean after a party for future use.

The inflatable structures 40, providing a centerpiece on the party tablecloth, correspond with a particular party theme. For example, FIG. 1 illustrates a girl’s birthday party theme with the inflatable structures 40 forming female rock stars 50, musical instruments 52, and an audio speaker 54 presented on a stage 56. An electronic sound producing device (not shown) may also be incorporated within the centerpiece structure for playing a prerecorded segment of a song and/or a voice message. Both the inflatable centerpiece 40 and sheet base 30 may be printed with colorful graphics that correspond with the particular theme, such as the word “DOLLZ” in FIG. 1 corresponding with a female rock and roll group or the word “HOOPS” with the basketball theme shown in FIG. 2.

The inflatable centerpiece structures 40 may also serve to provide a table activity for entertaining the guests seated at the table. For example, FIG. 2 illustrates a basketball theme, wherein the inflatable centerpiece structure 40 forms a miniature basketball game having multisided backboards 60 and baskets 62 allowing the guests seated at each side of the table to participate in a miniature basketball game. Other sports themes, including, but not limited to, soccer and hockey are contemplated as well as other active participation games.

Referring to FIG. 4, the sheet base 30 of the tablecloth 10 may be releasably secured to the table 20 so that the sheet base 30 and inflatable centerpiece structures 40 do not become moved or separated from the table during a party. Specifically, the bottom side 34 of the sheet base 30 may be provided with one component 70 of a hook and loop fastener for releasable engagement with the corresponding component 72 of a hook and loop releasable fastener that is fixed to the table. In a preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener component 72 on the table 20 is secured to the vertical side edge 22 of the tabletop, as shown in FIG. 4. Use of these releasable fasteners, to secure the party tablecloth 10 in place, helps to withstand the forces of the active participants seated at the table, particularly children, as well as wind and other external forces that may otherwise cause the tablecloth to be lifted, moved and/or dislodged from the table top.

While the present invention has been shown and described in accordance with several preferred and practical embodiments, it is recognized that departures from the instant disclosure are fully contemplated in the spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A table decorating apparatus comprising: a base sheet formed of a flexible polyvinyl composition and including a top side and a bottom side, and said base sheet defining a tablecloth for covering a table surface; at least one inflatable structure extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet and including a sealable airtight interior chamber adapted to be filled with a gas to inflate said structure; and at least one valve communicating with the interior chamber of said inflatable structure for filling the interior chamber with the gas and for releasing the gas from the interior chamber.

2. The apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is attached to the top side of said base sheet.

3. The apparatus as recited in claim 2 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is formed of the same flexible polyvinyl composition of said base sheet.

4. The apparatus as recited in claim 3 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is formed and shaped as an animated character.

5. The apparatus as recited in claim 3 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is a component of an interactive activity.

6. The apparatus as recited in claim 3 wherein further comprising a plurality of said inflatable structures extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet.

7. The apparatus as recited in claim 3 further comprising: a plurality of said inflatable structures each extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet and each of said plurality of inflatable structures including a sealable airtight interior chamber adapted to be filled with the gas to inflate said plurality of inflatable structures; and each of said plurality of inflatable structures including said valve communicating with the interior chamber for filling the interior chamber with the gas and for releasing the gas from the interior chamber.

8. A table decorating apparatus comprising: a base sheet formed of a flexible polyvinyl composition and including a top side and a bottom side, and said base sheet defining a tablecloth for covering a table surface; at least one inflatable structure formed of a flexible polyvinyl composition and attached to and extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet and including a sealable airtight interior chamber adapted to be filled with a gas to inflate said structure; and
at least one valve communicating with the interior chamber of said inflatable structure for filling the interior chamber with the gas and for releasing the gas from the interior chamber.

9. The apparatus as recited in claim 8 wherein at least one inflatable structure is integrally formed with said base sheet.

10. The apparatus as recited in claim 8 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is formed and shaped as an animated character.

11. The apparatus as recited in claim 8 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is a component of an interactive activity.

12. The apparatus as recited in claim 8 wherein further comprising a plurality of said inflatable structures extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet.

13. The apparatus as recited in claim 8 further comprising: a plurality of said inflatable structures each extending upwardly from the top side of said base sheet and each of said plurality of inflatable structures including a sealable upright interior chamber adapted to be filled with the gas to inflate said plurality of inflatable structures; and each of said plurality of inflatable structures including said valve communicating with the interior chamber for filling the interior chamber with the gas and for releasing the gas from the interior chamber.

14. The apparatus as recited in claim 11 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is a basketball backboard and hoop.

15. The apparatus as recited in claim 11 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is a hockey goal.

16. The apparatus as recited in claim 11 wherein said at least one inflatable structure is a soccer goal.

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