PORTABLE SEAT SHELTER

A seat-shelter is formed from an inflatable closure can be collapsed for ease in transport and inflated on-site to form a free-standing five-sided shelter.
PORTABLE SEAT SHELTER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates generally to a portable seat. In one aspect, the invention relates to a portable seat-shelter.

[0002] Portable seats are desirable for many outdoor activities, such as at sporting events, for hunting, or for relaxing, such as at the beach. At these same activities, too much sun or inclimate weather can detract from the user’s enjoyment. A portable seat which provides some protection from the sun, rain or a cold wind would be very desirable.

[0003] The addition of a sheltering structure in the past has reduced the transportability of the seat. What is needed is a sheltering structure which is as easy to transport as the seat.

[0004] An object of the invention is to provide a combination seat-shelter which is easy to transport and erect, and which has a low profile to permit its use in stadiums, arenas and the like.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, an apparatus suitable for use as a combination seat and shelter, for use such as in a stadium, as a hunting blind, or at the beach, comprises a cushion member and a pair of sheet members. The cushion member has a first end and a second end and a length measured between the first end and the second end, and a first side edge and a second side edge extending for substantially the length. A first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion of the cushion member extends from the first end toward the second end and a second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion of the cushion member extends from the second end toward the first end. A third generally rectangularly shaped panel portion connects the first generally rectangularly shaped panel portion and the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion. The second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion is superposed over the first generally rectangularly shaped panel portion. The first sheet member is fastened along the length of the first side edge of the cushion member and a second sheet member is fastened along the length of the second side edge of the cushion member.

[0012] In accordance with the invention, the cushion member further forms means for biasing the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion away from the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion. Preferably, and as illustrated, the cushion member forms means for biasing the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion away from the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion to straighten the first sheet member and the second sheet member and form a shelter for accommodating a person. If desired, the shelter can be made double wide to accommodate two people.

[0013] Although the cushion member could be formed from various materials, such as a resilient foam, the cushion member preferably comprises a self-supportive inflatable closed structure. A cushion member formed from a plurality of air-impermeable longitudinally-extending tubes has been tested with good results. The plurality of tubes is preferably arranged with the tubes in parallel side by side relationship, and more preferably, the tubes are configured to provide the cushion with a thickness of about one inch.

[0014] Suitable materials are well known, and can be selected from thermoplastic, rubber and coated fabrics for example, as are used in beach tos, vehicle tires, and life rafts. For economy and low weight, thermoplastic is preferred. Sheets of thermoplastic can be heat welded or glued to form an interconnected array of tubes.

[0015] The cushion member preferably further comprises means for inflating the tubes. Preferably, the means forms a selectively scalable flow path from an outside of the cushion to an inside of the plurality of tubes. A nozzle operatively associated with a valve for sealing the nozzle will provide good results.

[0016] More preferably, the apparatus further comprises a second nozzle associated with a second valve for selectively deflating the plurality of tubes. The second nozzle preferably provides a larger flow path than the first to permit the device to be rapidly deflated.

[0017] In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus preferably comprises a covering connected to an outside surface of the plurality of tubes which is stretched taut when the plurality of tubes is in an inflated condition to provide the cushion with protection and a smooth outside appearance.
The sheet members 14 and 16 are preferably also stretched taut when the plurality of tubes is in an inflated condition. The covering and the sheet members can be formed from thermoplastic or fabric, for example, and are preferably constructed of a material which can be printed, such as with camouflage colors or with sports team insignia. The elements can be interconnected by heat welding, glue or stitching, as appropriate.

[0018] The sheet members are also preferably each provided with at least one means 36, 36 for forming a window. Each means for forming a window preferably comprises a clear panel 38, 38 located in a middle portion of each sheet member, each such clear panel having a periphery which is fastened to the sheet member. More preferably, each clear panel is releasably fastened to the sheet member along at least a portion of its periphery. In the illustrated embodiment, zippers are employed. Most preferably each clear panel folds toward the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion when in a released position, to provide ventilation to permit the user to hold a conversation with another person positioned alongside, such as in an adjacent seat-shelter.

[0019] The first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion is preferably larger than the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion. In this embodiment, the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion forms a seat structure and the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion forms a roof structure. A portion of the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion can slope toward the first generally shaped panel portion near the second end of the cushion member to form a visor 21. The third generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion connects the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion and the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion and preferably forms a sloping rear wall structure.

[0020] While certain preferred embodiments of the invention have hereinabove described, the invention is not to be construed as being so limited, except to the extent that such limitations are found in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus comprising
   a cushion member having a first end and a second end and a length measured between the first end and the second end, a first side edge and a second side edge extending for substantially the length of the cushion member, a first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion extending from the first end toward the second end, a second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion extending from the second end toward the first end, and a third generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion connecting the first generally rectangularly shaped panel portion and the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion, wherein the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion is superposed over the first generally rectangularly shaped panel portion, a first sheet member fastened along the length of the first side edge of the cushion member, and a second sheet member fastened along the length of the second side edge of the cushion member.

2. Apparatus as in claim 1 wherein the cushion member further forms means for biasing the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion away from the second generally rectangularly shaped panel portion.

3. Apparatus as in claim 2 wherein the cushion member forms means for biasing the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion away from the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion to straighten the first sheet member and the second sheet member and form a shelter for accommodating a person.

4. Apparatus as in claim 3 wherein the cushion member comprises a self-supportive inflatable closed structure.

5. Apparatus as in claim 4 wherein the cushion member comprises a plurality of air-impermeable longitudinally-extending tubes.

6. Apparatus as in claim 5 wherein the tubes of the plurality of tubes are arranged in parallel side by side relationship.

7. Apparatus as in claim 6 wherein the cushion member further comprises means for inflating the tubes.

8. Apparatus as in claim 7 wherein the means for inflating comprises means for forming a selectively sealable flow path from an outside of the cushion to an inside of the plurality of tubes.

9. Apparatus as in claim 8 wherein the means for forming a selectively sealable flow path comprises a nozzle operatively associated with a valve for sealing the nozzle.

10. Apparatus as in claim 9 further comprising a second nozzle associated with a second valve for selectively deflating the plurality of tubes.

11. Apparatus as in claim 10 further comprising a covering connected to an outside surface of the plurality of tubes which is stretched taut when the plurality of tubes is in an inflated condition to provide the cushion with protection and a smooth outside appearance.

12. Apparatus as in claim 11 wherein the sheet members are stretched taut when the plurality of tubes is in an inflated condition.

13. Apparatus as in claim 12 wherein the sheet members are each provided with at least one means for forming a window.

14. Apparatus as in claim 13 wherein the sheet members are each provided with at least one means for forming a clear panel located in a middle portion of each sheet member, each such clear panel having a periphery which is fastened to the sheet member.

15. Apparatus as in claim 14 wherein each means for forming a window comprises a clear panel located in a middle portion of each sheet member, each such clear panel having a periphery which is fastened to the sheet member.

16. Apparatus as in claim 15 wherein each clear panel is releasably fastened to the sheet member along at least a portion of its periphery.

17. Apparatus as in claim 16 wherein each clear panel folds toward the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion when in a released position.

18. Apparatus as in claim 1 wherein first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion is larger than the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion, the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion forming a seat structure and the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion forming a roof structure.

19. Apparatus as in claim 18 wherein the roof structure is formed with a second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion.
member panel portion forming a roof structure, and the third generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion connects the first generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion and the second generally rectangularly shaped cushion member panel portion and forms a sloping rear wall structure.

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