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(54) **PORTABLE WEATHER SHIELDING CANOPY**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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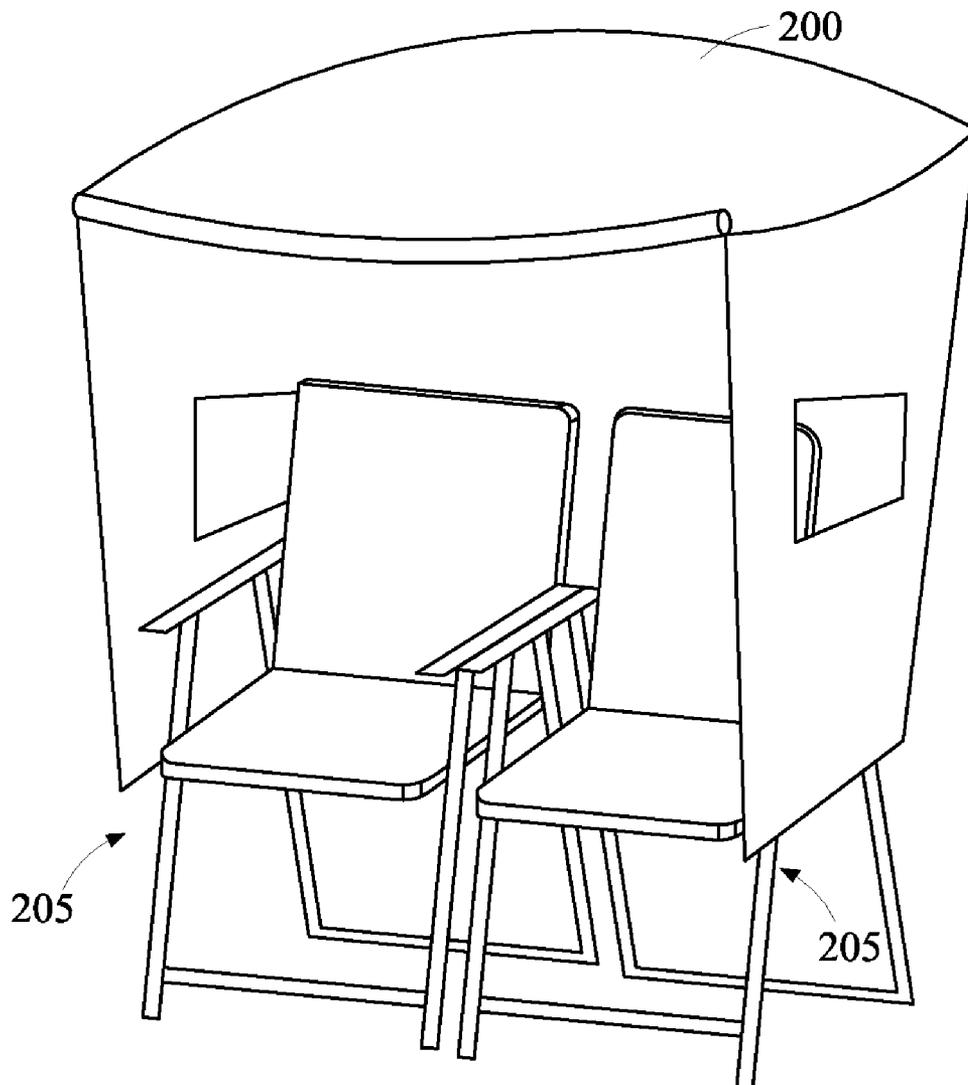
A weather shielding canopy apparatus for shielding a chair is presented. The apparatus includes a canopy that has a surface area that is sufficient to substantially cover a seating area of the chair. A tension rod frame embedded in the fabric material, maintains the canopy in an open position for covering the seating area and a closed position where the canopy retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case for portability. Side panels extending downward from a bottom side of the canopy when the canopy is in the open position at least partially shelter sides of the chair from weather. A vertical support attaches the apparatus to the chair where the top and sides of the volume are at least partially shielded from weather.

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/876,477, filed on Dec. 22, 2006.



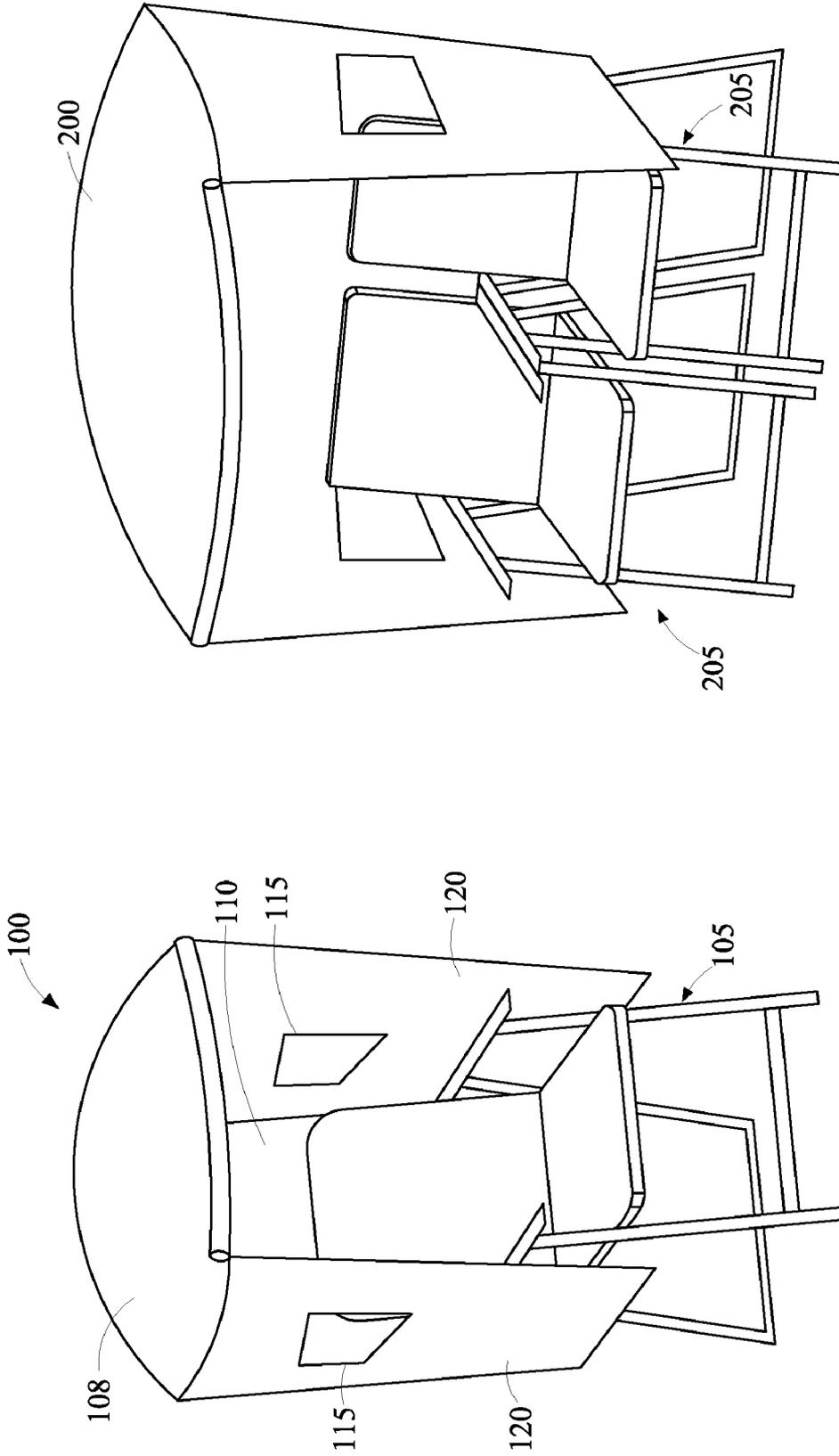


Figure 1

Figure 2

**PORTABLE WEATHER SHIELDING CANOPY**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

**[0001]** The present Utility patent application claims priority benefit of the U.S. provisional application for patent Ser. No. 60/976,477 filed on Oct. 1, 2007 under 35 U.S.C. 119(e). The contents of this related provisional application are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

**FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

**[0002]** Not applicable.

**REFERENCE TO SEQUENCE LISTING, A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER LISTING APPENDIX**

**[0003]** Not applicable.

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**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

**[0005]** The present invention relates generally to sporting goods. More particularly, the invention relates to a portable canopy for shielding a user from weather conditions.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0006]** While participating in or watching outdoor activities, a person is exposed to various weather conditions such as, but not limited to, rain, wind and sun. In many of these instances the person is seated and may wish to be shielded from the weather, for example, without limitation, while camping, fishing, enjoying the beach, or watching a sporting event. A method for shielding the person from the weather involves incorporating a canopy into outdoor furniture. However, current portable chair canopies incorporate cumbersome poles into the design, making assembly and transportation difficult.

**[0007]** In view of the foregoing, there is a need for improved techniques for providing a portable canopy for shielding an individual from various weather conditions while enjoying outdoor activities.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[0008]** The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings and in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements and in which:

**[0009]** FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of an exemplary portable canopy attached to a standard lawn chair, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

**[0010]** FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of an exemplary portable canopy attached to two lawn chairs, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

**[0011]** Unless otherwise indicated illustrations in the figures are not necessarily drawn to scale.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

**[0012]** To achieve the forgoing and other objects and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, portable weather shielding canopy is presented.

**[0013]** In one embodiment, a weather shielding canopy apparatus for shielding a chair is presented. The apparatus includes a canopy including a fabric material that has a surface area that is sufficient to substantially cover a seating area that is greater than an area of a top surface of a volume defined by a width and depth of the chair. A tension rod frame embedded in the fabric material, maintains the canopy in an open position for covering the seating area and a closed position where the canopy retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case for portability. Side panels extending downward from a bottom side of the canopy when the canopy is in the open position at least partially shelter sides of the volume from weather. And, a vertical support extends downward from the bottom side of the canopy for removably attaching the apparatus to the chair where the top and sides of the volume are at least partially shielded from weather. In other embodiments the side panels include windows, the windows include means for opening and closing and the windows include a screen. In further embodiments the vertical support includes means for adjusting a height of the apparatus above the chair and when the apparatus is attached to the chair, the side panels extend to the ground. In yet other embodiments, the chair is a lawn chair and the vertical support includes means for attaching to a backside of the lawn chair and the vertical support is a flat rigid element. In still other embodiments, the canopy is constructed from a durable lightweight material that is weather-proof and the canopy further includes a dome shape in the open position. In still other embodiments, the seating area is sufficient to cover a plurality of chairs and the vertical support removably attaches to the chairs.

**[0014]** In another embodiment a weather shielding canopy apparatus for shielding a chair is presented. The apparatus includes means for substantially covering a seating area of the chair, means for providing an open position and a closed position for the covering means where, in the closed position, the covering means retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case for portability, means for at least partially sheltering sides of the chair from weather and means for removably attaching the apparatus to the chair where the top and sides of the chair are at least partially shielded from weather. Further embodiments include means for windows and means for adjusting a height of the apparatus above the chair. In still other embodiments the seating area is sufficient to cover a plurality of chairs and the attaching means further includes means for attaching to the chairs.

**[0015]** Other features, advantages, and object of the present invention will become more apparent and be more readily understood from the following detailed description, which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

**[0016]** The present invention is best understood by reference to the detailed figures and description set forth herein.

[0017] Embodiments of the invention are discussed below with reference to the Figures. However, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the detailed description given herein with respect to these figures is for explanatory purposes as the invention extends beyond these limited embodiments. For example, it should be appreciated that those skilled in the art will, in light of the teachings of the present invention, recognize a multiplicity of alternate and suitable approaches, depending upon the needs of the particular application, to implement the functionality of any given detail described herein, beyond the particular implementation choices in the following embodiments described and shown. That is, there are numerous modifications and variations of the invention that are too numerous to be listed but that all fit within the scope of the invention. Also, singular words should be read as plural and vice versa and masculine as feminine and vice versa, where appropriate, and alternative embodiments do not necessarily imply that the two are mutually exclusive.

[0018] The present invention will now be described in detail with reference to embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0019] Embodiments of the present invention provide portable canopies that shield a user from weather conditions such as, but not limited to, rain, wind, snow, and sun. The preferred embodiment is a lightweight portable mini-dome canopy that easily attaches to any standard lawn chair to protect an individual from sun, rain, snow and other adverse weather conditions.

[0020] FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of an exemplary portable canopy 100 attached to a standard lawn chair 105, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the present embodiment, portable canopy 100 measures approximately three and one half feet (3½') high. However, alternate embodiments may be larger or smaller depending factors such as, but not limited to, the intended use and size of the chair to which the canopy is to be attached. In the present embodiment, portable canopy 100 is made of a durable lightweight material that is weatherproof and has a tension rod frame 108 embedded to the fabric lining for easy opening. Side panels 120 made of a weatherproof material extend downward from portable canopy 100 toward the ground to further shelter a user from the elements. Alternate embodiments may not include side panels. In the present embodiment, portable canopy 100 attaches to standard lawn chair 105 by attaching a vertical support 110 to the frame of lawn chair 105 with means such as, but not limited to, hook and loop material, snaps, buckles, clips, etc. Vertical support 110 is a flat rigid element that may be made of various materials such as, but not limited to, plastic or metal. Alternate embodiments may use different means for the vertical support such as, but not limited to, one or more collapsible rods, non-collapsible rods etc. In some embodiments the vertical support may be adjustable, for example, without limitation, a telescoping pole, enabling the user to set the height of the canopy above the chair. In the present embodiment, portable canopy 100 comprises side windows 115 in side panels 120. Side windows 115 may be completely opened, zipped to a screen or closed. Alternate embodiment may not comprise windows or may comprise windows that have various different features, for example, without limitation, windows that do not open and close or windows that do not comprise screens. Embodiments of the present invention may be customized with original or licensed logos in a variety of colors.

[0021] In typical use of the present embodiment, a user opens portable canopy 100 and attaches portable canopy 100 to lawn chair 105 using the provided attachment means. The user may then sit in lawn chair 105 while being sheltered from the weather. When the user is finished using portable canopy 100, portable canopy 100 is removed from lawn chair 105 and retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case, not shown, for easy portability. In some embodiments the carrying case unsnaps and expands to double as a small blanket.

[0022] FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of an exemplary portable canopy 200 attached to two lawn chairs 205, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the present embodiment, portable canopy 200 is large enough to shelter both lawn chairs 205. Embodiments of the present invention may be configured in various sizes to shelter various numbers of chairs and differently sized chairs, for example, without limitation, child sized chairs and adult sized chairs.

[0023] Alternate embodiments of the present invention may be designed to attach to items other than lawn chairs such as, but not limited to, park benches, bleachers, stadium seats, people, etc. Other alternate embodiments may incorporate support means into the portable canopy itself so that the canopy stands without being attached to a chair. For example, without limitation, the canopy may comprise extendable poles long enough to reach the ground or a collapsible frame may be integrated into the vertical side panels as well as in the canopy.

[0024] Having fully described at least one embodiment of the present invention, other equivalent or alternative methods of providing a portable weather shelter according to the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art. The invention has been described above by way of illustration, and the specific embodiments disclosed are not intended to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed. For example, the particular implementation of the canopy may vary depending upon the particular type of frame used. The canopies described in the foregoing were directed to dome shaped implementations; however, similar techniques provide frames and canopies of various shapes, for example, without limitation, flat canopies, triangular canopies, etc. Differently shaped implementations of the present invention are contemplated as within the scope of the present invention. The invention is thus to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A weather shielding canopy apparatus for shielding a chair, the apparatus comprising:
  - a canopy comprising a fabric material that has a surface area that is sufficient to substantially cover a seating area that is greater than an area of a top surface of a volume defined by a width and depth of the chair;
  - a tension rod frame embedded in said fabric material, said frame maintaining said canopy in an open position for covering said seating area and a closed position where said canopy retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case for portability;
  - side panels extending downward from a bottom side of said canopy when said canopy is in said open position to at least partially shelter sides of said volume from weather; and
  - a vertical support extending downward from said bottom side of said canopy for removably attaching the appara-

tus to the chair where said top and sides of said volume are at least partially shielded from weather.

2. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said side panels comprises windows.

3. The apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said windows comprises means for opening and closing.

4. The apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said windows comprises a screen.

5. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said vertical support comprises means for adjusting a height of the apparatus above the chair.

6. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein when the apparatus is attached to the chair, said side panels extend to the ground.

7. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the chair is a lawn chair and said vertical support comprises means for attaching to a backside of the lawn chair.

8. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said vertical support is a flat rigid element.

9. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said canopy is constructed from a durable lightweight material that is weatherproof.

10. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said canopy further comprises a dome shape in said open position.

11. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said seating area is sufficient to cover a plurality of chairs.

12. The apparatus as recited in claim 11, wherein said vertical support removably attaches to said chairs.

13. A weather shielding canopy apparatus for shielding a chair, the apparatus comprising:

means for substantially covering a seating area of the chair;

means for providing an open position and a closed position for said covering means where, in said closed position, said covering means retracts to fold neatly into a carrying case for portability;

means for at least partially sheltering sides of the chair from weather; and

means for removably attaching the apparatus to the chair where said top and sides of the chair are at least partially shielded from weather.

14. The apparatus as recited in claim 13, further comprising means for windows.

15. The apparatus as recited in claim 13, further comprising means for adjusting a height of the apparatus above the chair.

16. The apparatus as recited in claim 13, wherein said seating area is sufficient to cover a plurality of chairs.

17. The apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said attaching means further comprises means for attaching to said chairs.

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