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(54) **ILLUMINATED SHOE INSERT**

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(71) Applicant: **Sam Escamilla**, Martin, SD (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(72) Inventor: **Sam Escamilla**, Martin, SD (US)

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An illuminated shoe insert that can be secured to a conventional shoe. The shoe insert comprises an elongated body for placement over the tongue of a shoe. The body has an arcuate shape to match the curvature of the front portion of a shoe. The body includes multiple side openings for receiving shoe laces therethrough, and may further include center openings for receiving loops on the tongue of a shoe. The shoe insert can be secured to the shoe by threading the shoe laces through the openings thereon and through the eyelets of the shoe. The body of the shoe insert includes one or more lights thereon that illuminate the area in front of the user's feet. The lights are selectively powered by a power source disposed in a housing on the shoe insert.

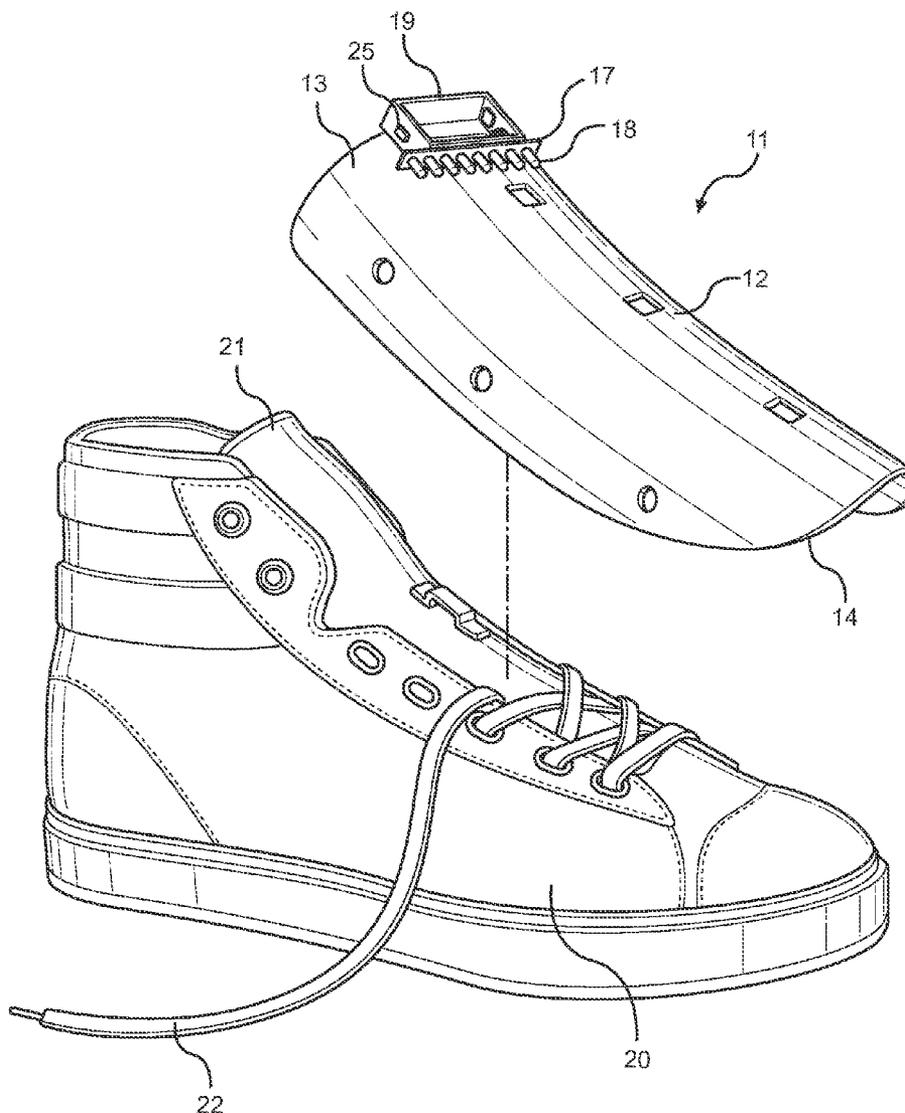
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Related U.S. Application Data

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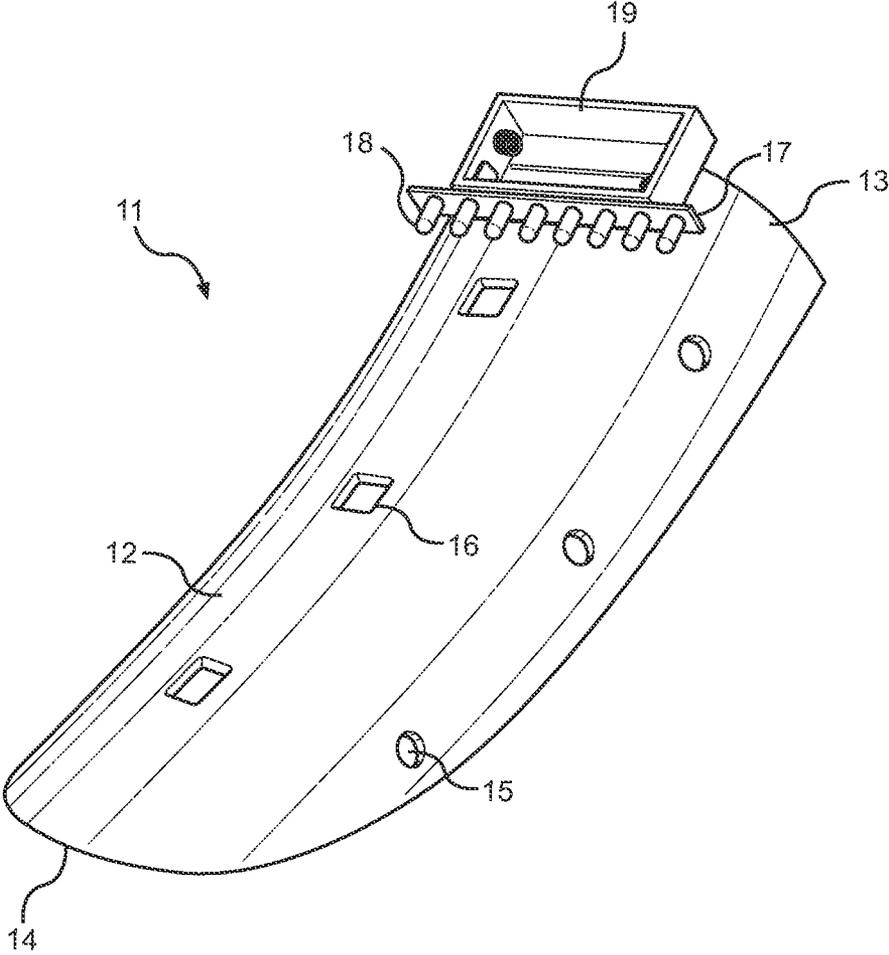


FIG. 1

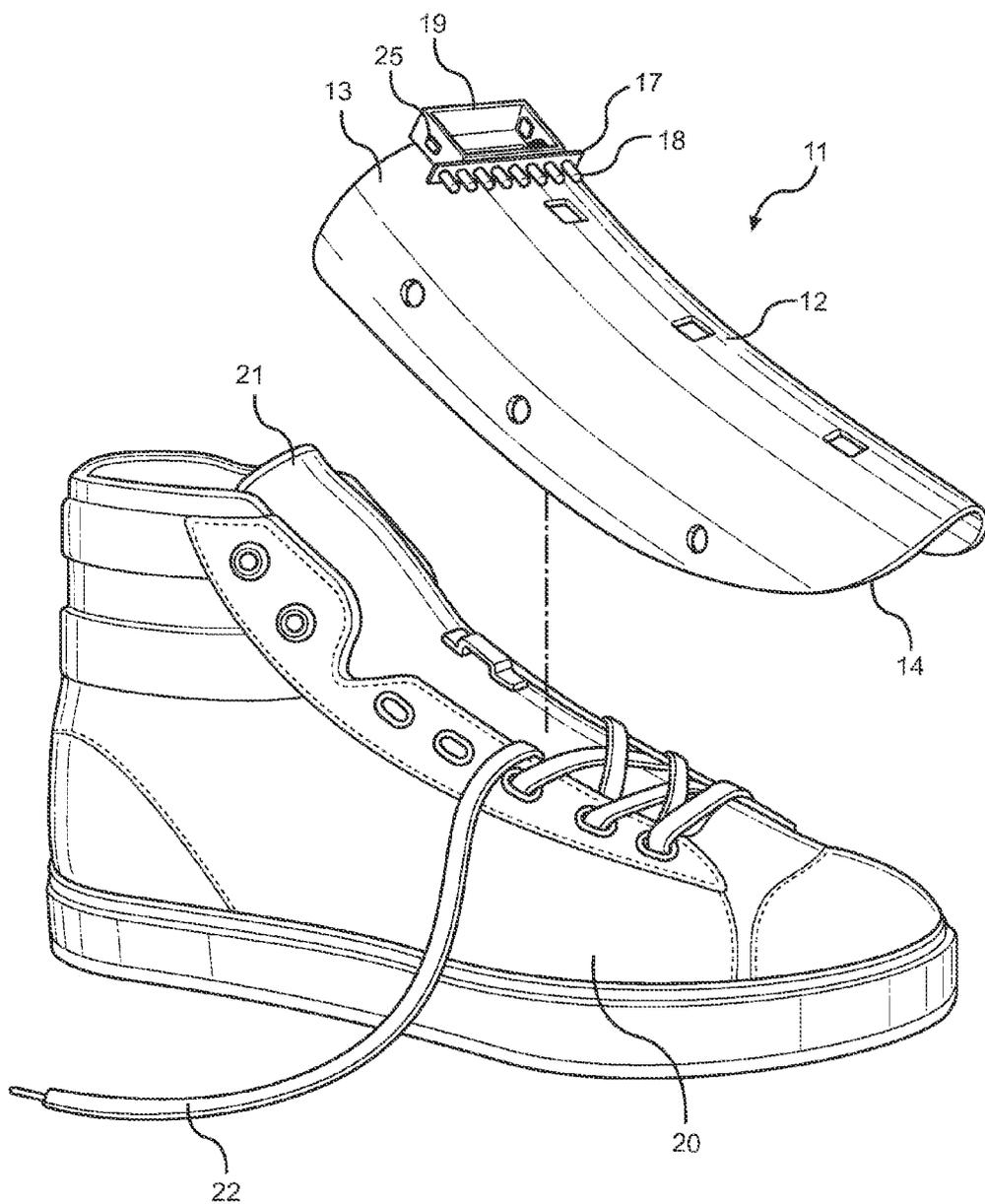


FIG. 2

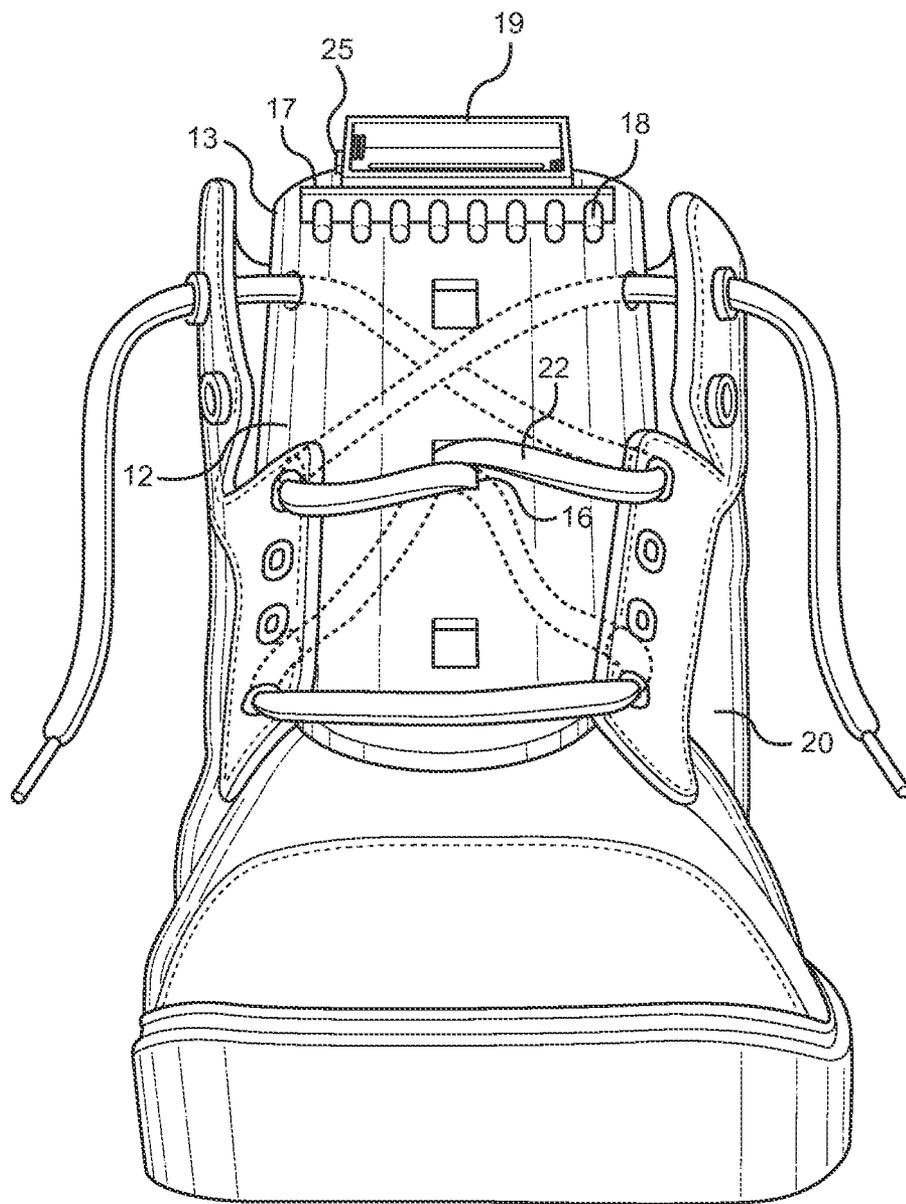


FIG. 3

ILLUMINATED SHOE INSERT
CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/972,586 filed on Mar. 31, 2014. The above identified patent application is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety to provide continuity of disclosure.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to an illuminated shoe insert. More specifically, the present invention provides a shoe insert to be placed over the tongue of a shoe and that can be secured thereto by threading the laces of the shoe through openings on the shoe insert, wherein the shoe insert includes one or more lights thereon for selectively providing illumination.

[0004] Many individuals enjoy running or walking during the night for exercise or for leisure. However, running or walking outside during periods of low light can be dangerous as obstacles, such as sticks, rocks, potholes, and uneven surfaces can be hard to detect. As a result, a person may stumble or fall, resulting in injury due to the person's inability to see the obstacle. This is especially problematic for runners who are moving at a faster rate of speed and have less time to visualize obstacles prior to encountering the same. Further, a runner may be distracted or preoccupied and may not be paying close attention to the ground and objects thereon.

[0005] As a result, some people walk or run with flashlights in order to allow the person to see more easily. However, flashlights can be heavy and unwieldy, particularly for a runner. The flashlight creates an imbalance since the weight of the flashlight is on one side of the user. Further, it can be difficult to hold the flashlight steady while walking or running, and holding the flashlight prevents the person from using their hands for other purposes, such as carrying a water bottle, a cell phone, or other such items.

[0006] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0007] Devices have been disclosed in the prior art that relate to shoe lights. These include devices that have been patented and published in patent application publications. These devices generally relate to a shoes having lights thereon and light attachments for shoes. The following is a list of devices deemed most relevant to the present disclosure, which are herein described for the purposes of highlighting and differentiating the unique aspects of the present invention, and further highlighting the drawbacks existing in the prior art.

[0008] One such device, U.S. Pat. No. 7,762,680 to Miller et al. discloses a shoe light attachment. The device includes a harness fitted to the dimensions of a shoe upper. The harness includes a mounting panel disposed over the shoe laces and that includes sockets for receiving a light device. The light device includes extensions for moving the light device to various positions on the mounting panel. The device further includes an elongated ridged member to be secured under the shoe laces. Thus, Miller et al. fails to disclose an illuminated shoe insert having a body with openings thereon for threading shoe laces therethrough, and that further includes one or more lights permanently affixed on an upper portion thereof.

[0009] Another device, U.S. Pat. No. 8,444,284 to Malone discloses a shoe lace shaped light securable to a shoe. The

shoe lace shaped light can be pre-folded and tied so that it may not become unfolded. The shoe lace shaped light can be powered by batteries or can be solar powered. Thus, Malone discloses a light securable to shoes shaped light shoe laces, and does not disclose a body shaped similarly to a shoe upper and securable to the shoe by threading the shoe laces through openings on the body.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 2,671,847 to Lerch discloses a toe light to be applied to a shoe. The device comprises a rectangular casing having a central opening on the front wall thereof. A flashlight bulb is secured within the bore of a protective shield positioned within the opening on the front wall. Thus, while Lerch discloses a shoe light, Lerch fails to disclose a shoe light having a body portion shaped similarly to a shoe tongue that can be secured to the shoe by threading the shoe laces through openings on the body.

[0011] U.S. Pat. No. 7,207,688 to Yuen et al. discloses an interactive shoe light. The interactive shoe light comprises a power source, a motion switch for generating an activation signal, an integrated circuit, and lighting elements. The lighting elements are illuminated in one or more predetermined patterns. Thus, Yuen discloses a shoe light device, but does not disclose a shoe light removably securable to a shoe and that is secured to the shoe by engaging the laces of the shoe therewith.

[0012] U.S. Pat. No. 5,865,523 to Chien discloses a shoe with a light strip. The device comprises a DC power supply, a DC-AC inverter, and an electro-luminescent element mounted on an upper portion of the shoe. The DC power supply and DC-inverter can be mounted on the bottom of a shoe. Thus, Chien discloses a shoe having lights integrated therein and does not disclose a removable attachment for a shoe.

[0013] These prior art devices have several known drawbacks. Several devices disclose lights integrated into a shoe. Thus, the user must purchase a specific shoe having lights integrated therein and cannot use a conventional pair of shoes, which can be inconvenient and undesirable. Other devices provide removable shoe lights but do not allow the user to easily secure the shoe lights by securing the device to the shoe using the shoe laces. The user must instead use separate fastening means and straps which can be cumbersome and inconvenient for the user.

[0014] In light of the devices disclosed in the prior art, it is submitted that the present invention substantially diverges in design elements from the prior art and consequently it is clear that there is a need in the art for an improvement to existing shoe light devices. In this regard the instant invention substantially fulfills these needs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0015] In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types of shoe lights now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new shoe light wherein the same can be utilized for providing convenience for the user when providing light in an area around the user's feet.

[0016] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved shoe light device that has all of the advantages of the prior art and none of the disadvantages.

[0017] It is another object of the present invention to provide a shoe light device shaped similarly to the tongue of a shoe so that it can be disposed thereover.

[0018] Another object of the present invention is to provide a shoe light device comprising a plurality of openings adapted to receive a shoe lace therethrough for securing the shoe light device to the shoe.

[0019] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a shoe light device having one or more lights thereon adapted to illuminate an area adjacent to a user's feet.

[0020] Another object of the present invention is to provide a shoe light device that may be readily fabricated from materials that permit relative economy and are commensurate with durability.

[0021] Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] Although the characteristic features of this invention will be particularly pointed out in the claims, the invention itself and manner in which it may be made and used may be better understood after a review of the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein like numeral annotations are provided throughout.

[0023] FIG. 1 shows front perspective view of an embodiment of the illuminated shoe insert of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 2 shows a side perspective view of the illuminated shoe insert as positioned adjacent to a shoe for installation.

[0025] FIG. 3 shows a front view of the illuminated shoe insert as secured to a shoe.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0026] Reference is made herein to the attached drawings. Like reference numerals are used throughout the drawings to depict like or similar elements of the shoe light attachment. For the purposes of presenting a brief and clear description of the present invention, the preferred embodiment will be discussed as used for providing light in the area surrounding a user's feet. The figures are intended for representative purposes only and should not be considered to be limiting in any respect.

[0027] Referring now to FIG. 1, there is shown a front perspective view of an embodiment of the illuminated shoe insert of the present invention. The illuminated shoe insert 11 comprises a body 12 shaped similarly to the tongue of a shoe. The body 12 is elongated and comprises an arcuate shape so that it conforms to the shape of a shoe. The body 12 is preferably semi-rigid and is composed of a durable, plastic material. The body 12 includes an upper end 13 adapted to be adjacent to the upper portion or opening of a shoe when installed thereon, and a lower end 14 adapted to be disposed adjacent to the toe portion of the shoe.

[0028] The body 12 of the shoe insert 11 comprises a plurality of side openings 15 thereon. The side openings 15 are positioned on the periphery of the body 12 and along the side edges of the body 12. The side openings 15 are preferably arranged in pairs on opposing sides of the body 12 such that the side openings 15 are arranged similarly to the eyelets on a shoe. The side openings 15 are equally spaced and are adapted to be positioned adjacent to the eyelets on a shoe so that shoe laces can be threaded therethrough. Further, the body 12 may include center openings 16 disposed between each pair of side openings 15. The center openings 16 allow loops on a

shoe tongue to pass therethrough so that the loops are more easily accessed. The user can lace his or her shoes in the desired fashion, and thread the laces through the side openings 15 and/or the center openings 16 so as to securely position shoe insert 11 thereon.

[0029] The upper end 13 of the body 12 includes one or more lights 18 thereon. Preferably, the lights 18 are supported on a strip 17 and are arranged in a row. The lights 18 are preferably directed toward the area in front of the user when the shoe insert 11 is secured to a shoe. In this way, the lights can illuminate the area adjacent to the user's feet and can illuminate an area directly in front of the user so that the user can see obstacles on the ground prior to encountering the same. The lights 18 preferably include one or more LED lights. The lights 18 are powered by a power source, such as one or more batteries. The power source is contained within a housing 19 positioned on the upper end 13 of the body 12. The housing 19 further includes a control switch thereon that allows the user to turn the lights on or off. The housing 19 and the lights 18 are constructed so as to be waterproof in order to prevent any damage to the device if the user is outside in the rain or other inclement weather.

[0030] Referring now to FIG. 2, there is shown a side perspective view of the illuminated shoe insert as positioned adjacent to a shoe for installation. The shoe insert 11 is shaped similarly to a tongue 21 of a shoe 20 so that it can be positioned thereover. In this way, the shoe insert 11 is arranged on the front portion of the shoe 20 so that the lights 18 thereon are directed towards the area in front of the user. The shoe insert 11 can be placed directly over top of the shoe tongue 21 so that it is substantially flush thereagainst and spans from the upper end of the shoe to the lower end thereof. The shoe insert 11 is sized so as to fit on the tongue and between opposing sides of the shoe 20.

[0031] Referring now to FIG. 3, there is shown a front view of the illuminated shoe insert as secured to a shoe. The body 12 of the shoe insert 11 is positioned directly over the tongue of the shoe 20 and fits between the sides of the shoe 20. The body 12 is positioned so the side openings 15 align with the eyelets on the shoe 20. In this way, the shoe lace 22 can be laced through the eyelets in the traditional manner, and the laces 22 are also threaded through the side openings 15 on the shoe insert 11. In this way, the shoe insert 11 is easily secured to the shoe 20 by means of the laces 22 thereon. The center openings 16 are adapted to allow loops on shoes having loops on the tongue to extend therethrough. Thus, the user can lace their shoes in the ordinary manner such that the laces 22 are disposed underneath the shoe insert 11 of the present invention. However, the user can lace their shoes in any desired manner such that the laces are used to secure the shoe insert 11 to the shoe 20.

[0032] The upper end 13 of the shoe insert 11 includes one or more lights 18 thereon. The lights are preferably arranged on a light strip 17 which supports the lights 18. The lights are powered by a power source enclosed within a housing 19. The power source is preferably one or more batteries. The housing further includes at least one control switch 25 adapted to allow the user to turn the lights on or off so that the user can selectively illuminate the lights. The user may wish to turn off the lights 18 when the shoes are not in use or when the shoes are used during the day time. The housing 19 is disposed on the exterior of the body 12 so that the housing 19 is not in contact with the user's foot or ankle when the shoe insert 11 is secured to the shoe 20.

[0033] It is therefore submitted that the instant invention has been shown and described in what is considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments. It is recognized, however, that departures may be made within the scope of the invention and that obvious modifications will occur to a person skilled in the art. With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

[0034] Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

I claim:

- 1) An illuminated shoe insert, comprising:
 - a body adapted to be positioned over a tongue of a shoe;
 - a plurality of side openings disposed on opposing sides of said body adapted to receive shoe laces therethrough for securing said body to said shoe;
 - one or more lights disposed on said body.
- 2) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, wherein said body is arcuate so as to conform to the shape of said shoe.
- 3) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, wherein said body is semi-rigid.

4) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, wherein said plurality of side openings are evenly spaced.

5) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, wherein said plurality of side openings are arranged in pairs on opposing sides of said body.

6) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, further comprising one or more center openings adapted to receive a portion of said tongue of said shoe therethrough.

7) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, wherein said one or more lights are arranged in a row.

8) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, further comprising a housing for a power source.

9) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 8, wherein said power source comprises one or more batteries.

10) The illuminated shoe insert of claim 1, further comprises a control switch for selectively illuminating said one or more lights.

11) A illuminated shoe insert, comprising:

an arcuate body adapted to be positioned over a tongue of a shoe;

a plurality of side openings disposed on opposing sides of said body adapted to receive shoe laces therethrough for securing said body to said shoe;

one or more lights disposed on an upper portion of said body that are selectively illuminable;

a housing adapted to hold a power source for powering said one or more lights;

a control switch for selectively illuminating said one or more lights.

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