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(54) **GOLF CLUB HEAD COVER DEVICE**

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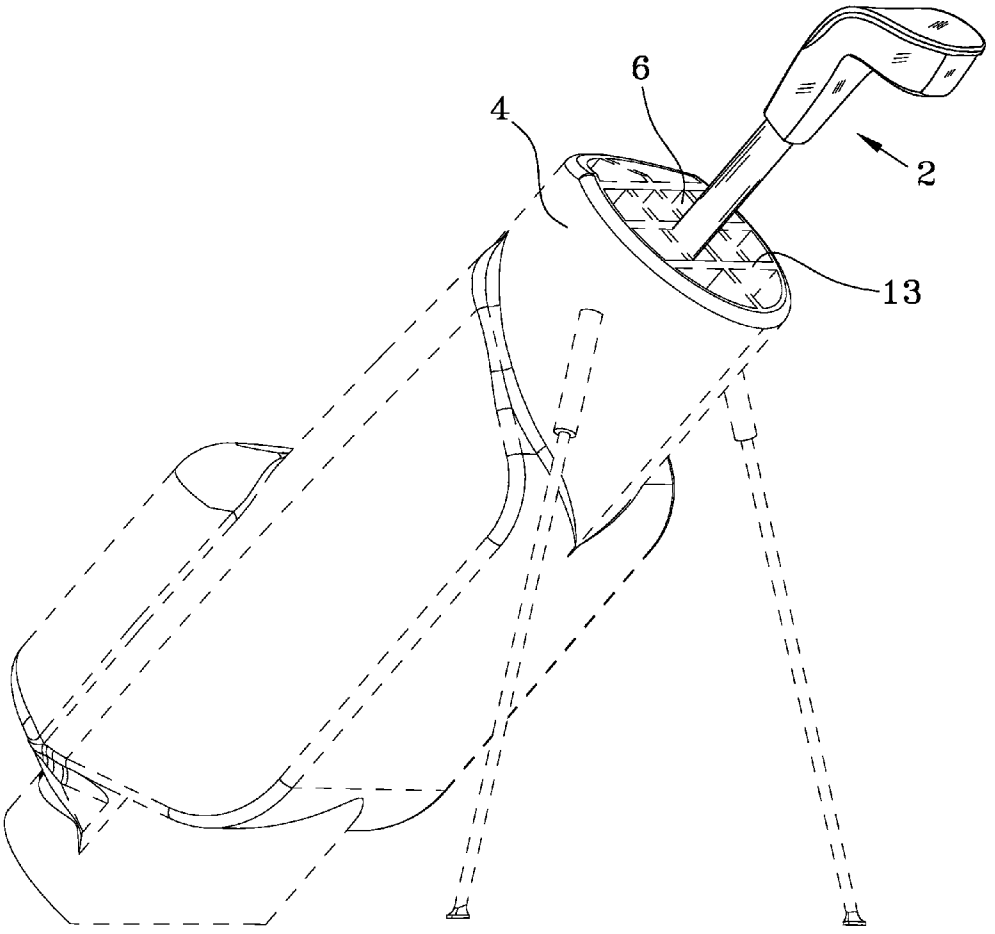
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A user-friendly golf club head cover system adapted for full operation while never leaving its spot in the golf bag. It allows access to the club via a simple downward physical movement of the incorporated tube. The club head cover portion remains open until the golf club is reinserted into the system. The club head cover has a partially connected top panel that is closed via a simple upward physical movement of the incorporated tube. An internal spring panel may assist the opening and closing of the top panel. A magnetic closure keeps the club head cover portion closed. The opening and closing may be facilitate by manual manipulation of the top panel alone.



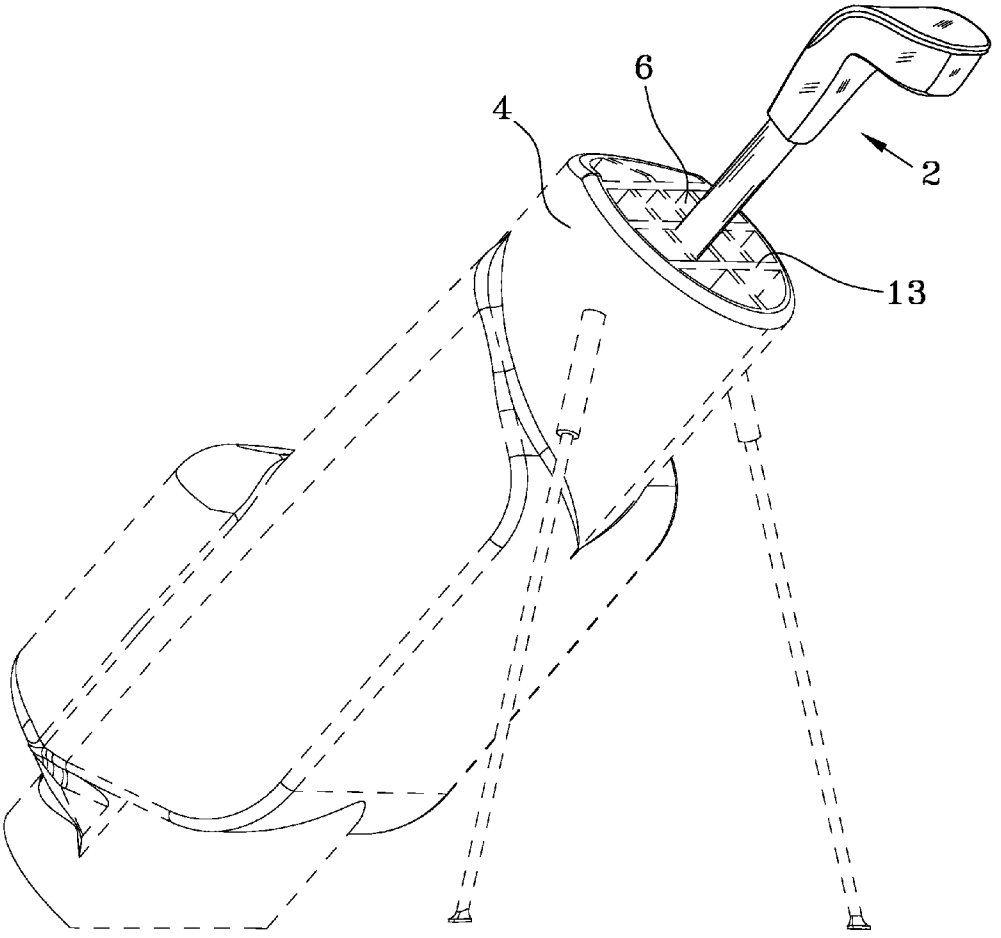


FIG. 1

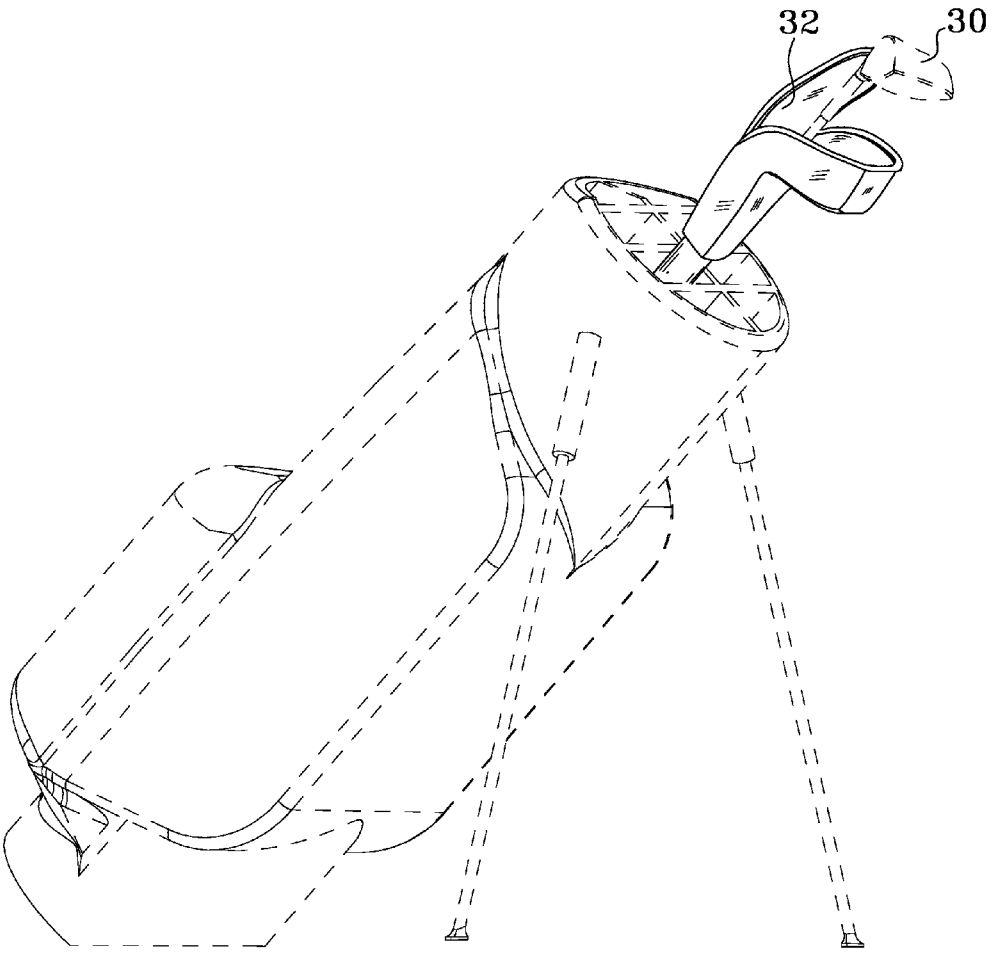


FIG. 2

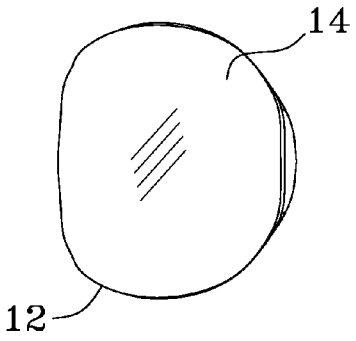


FIG. 3

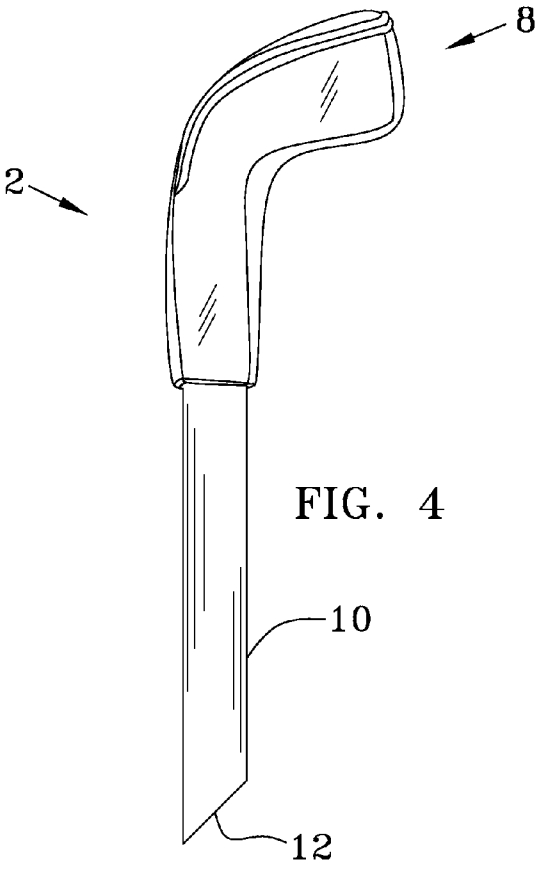


FIG. 4

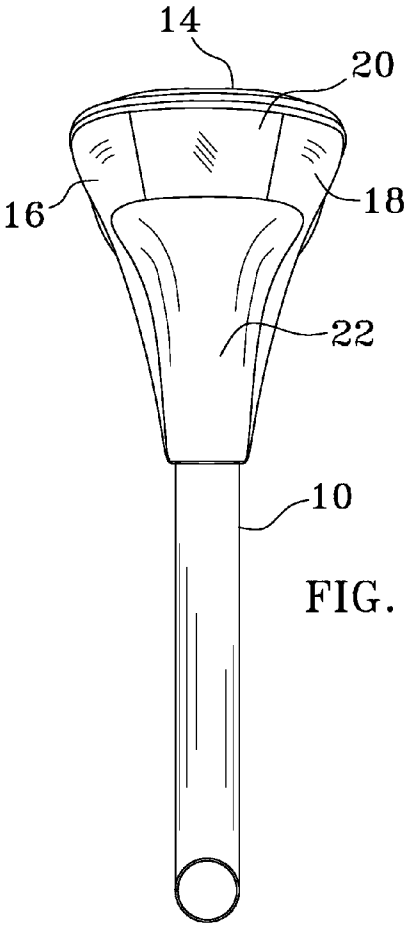


FIG. 5

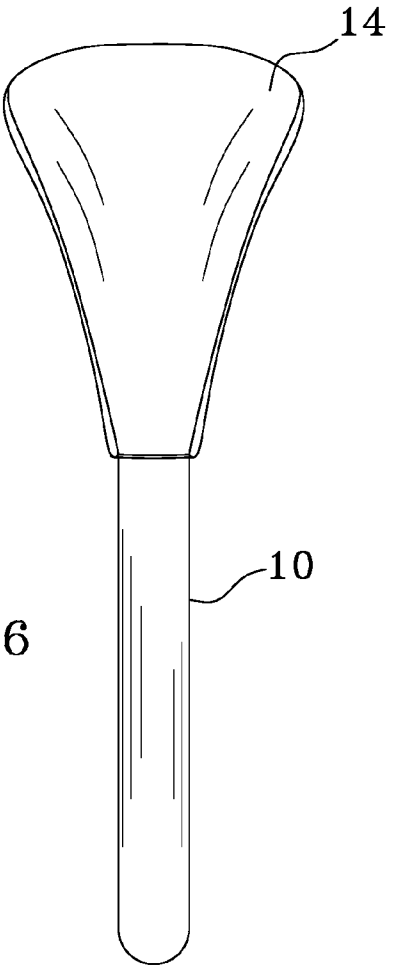


FIG. 6

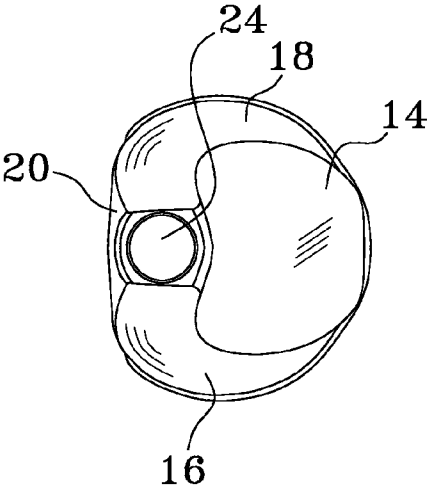


FIG. 7

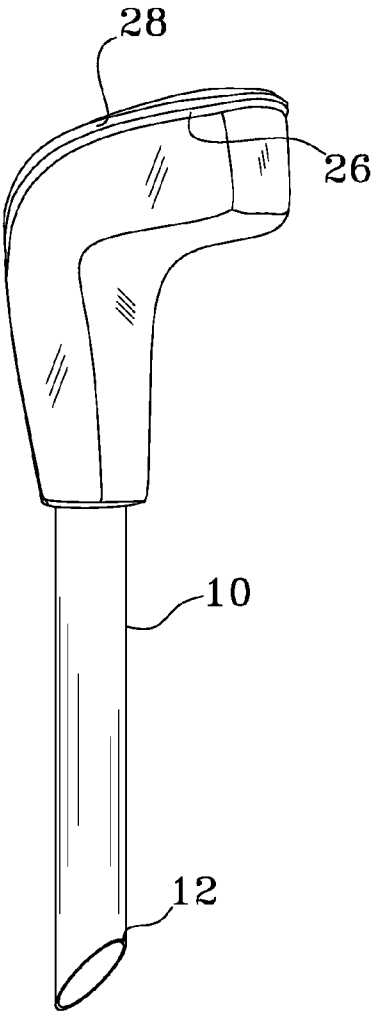


FIG. 8

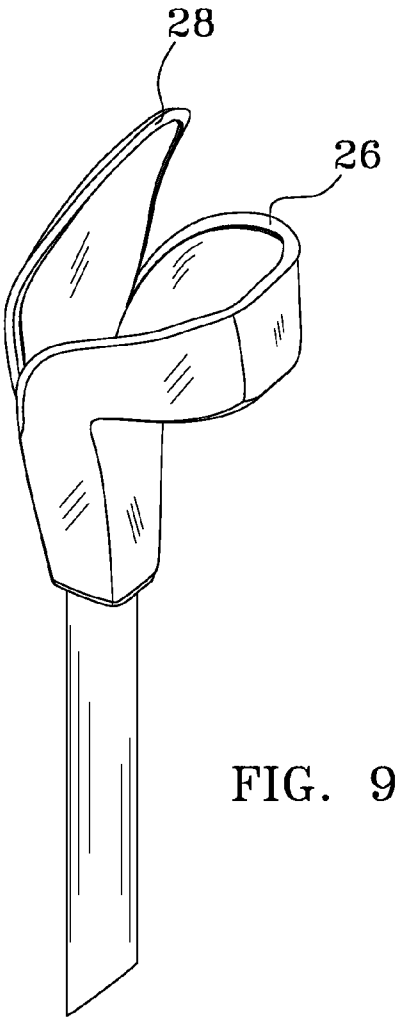


FIG. 9

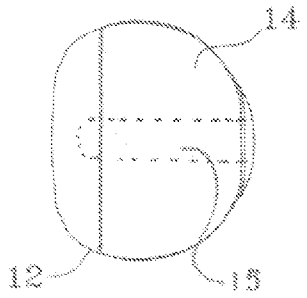


FIG. 12

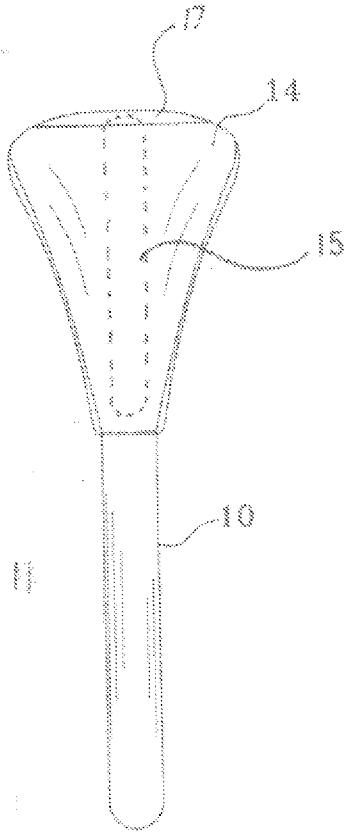


FIG. 11

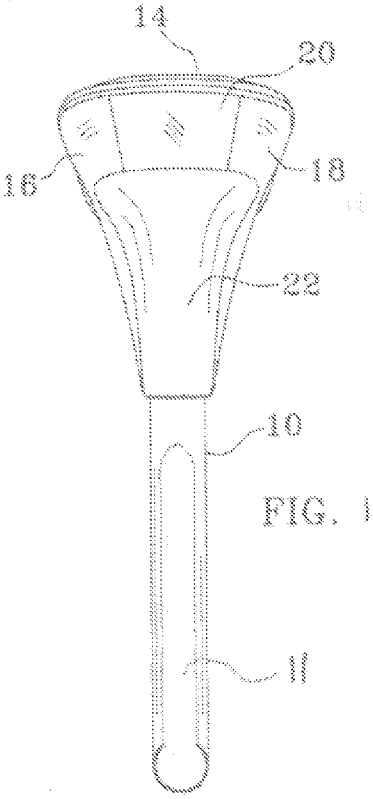


FIG. 10

GOLF CLUB HEAD COVER DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to an extremely compact system for a golf club's quick, unhampered removal from, and insertion into, it's club head cover. More particularly, to a user friendly golf club head cover device adapted for full operation while never leaving its spot in the golf bag.

[0002] Americans have a love for the game of golf, and for this reason the sport is growing in popularity. As it does, there are more players on the course and playing time becomes more critical. Many courses do not allow golfers to walk anymore and have mandated the use of golf carts. Simply stated, golfers are sensitive regarding their wait time to tee off each hole. Additionally, golf clubs are expensive and somewhat sensitive to prolonged contact with the elements. As such, golfers cloak the heads of their golf clubs with removable, protective covers. Installing and removing these covers is time consuming. Typical designs involve zippers, hook and loop fasteners, stretchable fabric and the like. Once removed, these club head covers must be placed somewhere until it is reinstalled. Commonly, they end up on the ground, causing their aesthetic deterioration.

[0003] Henceforth, an inexpensive, quick, golf club head cover system which could remain in the golf bag and require a minimal amount of physical manipulation to open, and close would fulfill a long felt need in the golfing industry. It would decrease the time needed at each tee to extract and replace the golf club. This new invention utilizes and combines known and new technologies in a unique and novel configuration to overcome the aforementioned problems and accomplish this.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The general purpose of the present invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide an inexpensive, compact golf club head cover device that does not have to leave the golf bag, and requires simple physical movements to both remove it and install it on the club head.

[0005] It has many of the advantages mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new golf club head cover device which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art, either alone or in any combination thereof.

[0006] In accordance with the invention, an object of the present invention is to provide an improved golf club head cover device that upon removal of a club, readies its physical configuration for a quick reinsertion of the same club.

[0007] It is another object of this invention to provide an improved golf club head cover device capable of auto closing itself about the golf club head after reinsertion of the club.

[0008] It is a further object of this invention to provide an improved golf club head cover device that requires a minimal amount of physical manipulation to open.

[0009] It is still a further object of this invention to provide for an improved golf club head cover device that may be maintained at all times on the golf bag.

[0010] In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of descriptions and should not be regarded as limiting.

[0011] There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. **1** is a perspective front side view showing the general arrangement of all components of the golf club head cover device in its closed position on a club that resides in the golf bag;

[0013] FIG. **2** is a perspective front side view showing a lowered golf club head cover device in its open position on a club that resides in the golf bag;

[0014] FIG. **3** is a top view of the golf club head cover device;

[0015] FIG. **4** is a side view of the golf club head cover device;

[0016] FIG. **5** is a front view of the golf club head cover device;

[0017] FIG. **6** is a rear view of the golf club head cover device;

[0018] FIG. **7** is a bottom view of the golf club head cover device:

[0019] FIG. **8** is a perspective front view of a closed golf club head cover device;

[0020] FIG. **9** is a perspective front view of an open golf club head cover device;

[0021] FIG. **10** is a front view of the golf club cover device with an alternate embodiment linear member;

[0022] FIG. **11** is a back view of an alternate embodiment golf club cover device with the spring panel shown in phantom; and

[0023] FIG. **12** is a top view of an alternate embodiment golf club cover device with the spring panel shown in phantom;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0024] The subject matter of the present invention is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the concluding portion of this specification. However, both the organization and method of operation, together with further advantages and objects thereof, may best be understood by reference to the following description taken in connection with accompanying drawings wherein like reference characters refer to like elements.

[0025] The above description will enable any person skilled in the art to make and use this invention. It also sets forth the best modes for carrying out this invention. There are numerous variations and modifications thereof that will also remain readily apparent to others skilled in the art, now that the general principles of the present invention have been disclosed.

[0026] FIG. **1** illustrates the golf club head cover device **2** in place over a golf club head that resides in the interior **6** of a golf bag **4**. The golf bag **4** may have a single cavity interior design or may have a divided interior design. Golf bags **4**

commonly have divided interiors that function to keep the the shafts of the golf clubs, parallel and organized within the golf bag **4**. As can be seen, when installed on a golf club head, the device **2** sits high out of the bag **4** but not enough to expose the bottom of linear member **10**.

[0027] Looking at FIGS. **3-8** the parts of the golf club head cover device **2** can best be seen. The golf club head cover device **2** consists of a flexible fabric club head cover **8** permanently affixed at its bottom to the proximate end of a linear member **10** that extends partially into the interior of the golf bag **4** (divided or otherwise.) This linear member **10** must not extend to the bottom of the golf bag **4**. In the preferred embodiment the linear member **10** is a cylindrical tube with an angular distal end **12** (for ease of installation onto a divided cavity golf bag) although it is known that the linear member may be any of a plethora of rigid members such as a rod, a U shaped channel, a partially U shaped channel, reinforced fabric strip, etc. The inexpensive, commercially available, lightweight, polymer golf bag tube has been found quite suitable for this application.

[0028] This club head cover **8** is basically a sleeve body sized for the enclosure of a golf club head (generally a wood or driver) therein. The linear member **10** has a diameter larger than the outer diameter of the golf club shaft, yet smaller than the minor dimension of bag divider **13**. FIG. **10** shows an alternate embodiment of the golf club head cover device **2** wherein the linear member **10** has the configuration of a partially U shaped channel—which can be accomplished by removing a portion of a golf club tube. The slotted section **11** can be seen cut into the front side of the linear member **10**. It is to be noted that in another embodiment, that the linear member (regardless of configuration) may also be covered with the same fabric that the club head cover **8** is made of.

[0029] The club head cover **8** is comprised of several connected but partially separable, flexible panels. Generally, in the preferred embodiment, the panels are constructed of a fabric although thin skin polymers are also well adapted for this purpose. Although sewing/stitching is the preferred method of permanent connection between the panels, other methods of mechanical connection between the panels may also be utilized if they also provide durability, strength and leak-tightness, including but not limited to heat sealing, adhesive bonding, ultrasonic and dielectric welding, and laser seaming.

[0030] The back top panel **14** is a unitary piece that extends from the interface between the club head cover **8** and the linear member **10** and extends over the entire upper surface or top of the remainder of the club head cover **8**. In its preferred embodiment, it is permanently joined to the approximately bottom one-third of the upper perimeter of a curved left side panel **16**, and the approximate one-third of the upper perimeter of a mirror image curved right side panel **18**. (Although this may vary between the bottom one sixth and bottom one half of the curved side panels **16** and **18** as detailed herein.) Between the left side panel **16**, and right side panel **18** connecting these side panels, resides a central panel **20**. This central panel **20** has no permanent connection to the back top panel **14**. A bottom panel **22** is connected to the lower perimeter of the left side panel **16**, the lower perimeter of the right side panel **18** and the lower perimeter of the central panel **20**. The overall configuration of the club head cover **8** is that of a curved tapering, flexible sleeve having a back top panel **14** that is partially separable from a curved body. The curved body is made of a series of conjoined panels or from a single panel and resides in a generally horizontal position. The back top panel **14** resides in a vertical position when open to form a throat between it and the curved body, and in a horizontal position when closed.

[0031] Although illustrated as having 5 panels, it is known that the critical design feature of the club head cover **8** is that of the separate top panel **14**. The remainder of the club head cover **8** may be made of a different configuration of panels provided that they form a flexible shell for a golf club head that narrows to surround the shaft/golf club head interface.

[0032] The bottom end of the bottom panel **22** the left side panel **16**, the right side panel **18** and the back top panel are connected so as to form a circular opening **24** at the bottom of the club head cover **8** through which the golf club shaft can pass. In the region adjacent the circular opening **24** the linear member **10** is affixed to the club head cover **8**. The linear member **10**, in the preferred embodiment, at least partially encases the golf club shaft when the golf club head cover device **2** is placed over a golf club head that resides in the interior **6** of a golf bag **4**. This may be done in a plethora of ways including stitching, bolting or other mechanical fastening, adhesive bonding, ultrasonic and dielectric welding. Small gusset plates may alternatively be utilized with or without mechanical fasteners such as rivets, or blind nuts and bolts (to name a few), as is well known in the industry.

[0033] Since the back top panel **14** is only fixed about its bottom one third to the side panels **16** and **18**, the upper two third of the back top panel **14** is free to be opened and flexed up and back away from its closed position so that its approximate upper two thirds are not in contact with the sides **16** and **18**. The material used for construction of the back top panel **14** is selected for its rigidity and memory. This panel, while being held magnetically in a curved closed deformed configuration as illustrated in FIG. **1**, has residual forces within that continually urge it to return to its planar shape. Proper selection of the material and material thickness is one way of accomplishing permanent, strong enough residual forces in the back top panel **14** so that when contact between the upper and lower magnetic lips is broken, the back top panel **14** will move to its vertical position. Alternatively, as can be seen in the alternative embodiments shown in FIGS. **10** and **11**, a spring panel **15** that maintains a constant force to urge the top back panel **14** into a vertical planar configuration can be incorporated into the back top panel **14**. The spring panel **15** has a linear configuration. It has a top end that resides adjacent to the leading edge of the back top panel **14** and a bottom end that is affixed at the interface/junction of the cover with the linear member. Such a device may be as simple as a rigid, thin planar sheet of thin metal or plastic that has been affixed to the back top panel **14** by sewing, gluing, welding, etc. Looking again at FIGS. **11** and **12**, the spring panel **15** can be seen in a ghost image, residing beneath the back top panel **14**. It extends from the top leading edge of the back top panel **14** down to the connection point between the linear member **10** and the club head cover **8**. Generally the spring panel **15** will be connected between these two, with the attendant mechanical connectors passing through the spring panel's thickness and holding the spring panel rigidly and vertically from this connection point.

[0034] There are two different types of linear spring panels. One merely biases the back top panel straight for when the golf club is out of the device **2**. It can be made out of a thin linear strip of metal wherein its width and thickness is optimized to provide enough residual force to hold the back top

panel **14** straight but yet not strong enough to overcome the magnetic or hook and loop holding force of the device's closure mechanism. The other spring panel **15** biases the back top panel in the curved closed deformed configuration of FIG. **1** discussed herein, yet when straightened (as in FIG. **9** when the club is removed from the device **2**) retains the back top panel **14** in the upward "open" position.) Here, the spring panel **15** is a thin piece of metal having a deformable curl along its longitudinal axis with a slight curve set therein across its width, so as to allow it to remain rigid in the fully extended position yet when its leading edge is urged forward, will attempt to curl toward the front of the device **2**. This second type of spring panel **15** is commonly used in coiling rulers. This second type of spring panel **15**, eliminates the need for the device's magnetic or hook and loop closure mechanism. It is to be noted that the insertion of either of these linear spring panels **15** may facilitate the use of a reinforcement strip **17** across the leading edge of the front end of the back top panel **14**.

[0035] It is to be noted that generally, for the optimal operation of the opening and closing of the back top panel **14**, this panel must not have the permanent affixation to the sides extending more than one half of its height, and not less than one sixth of its height as measured with the panel **14** in its open vertical position.

[0036] Looking at FIGS. **8** and **9**, it can be seen that about the perimeter of the left side panel **16**, the right side panel **18** (in the area not permanently affixed to the back top panel **14**) and the central panel **20** (along its upper edge), is a contiguous, lower flexible magnetic lip **26**. Similarly, about the perimeter of the back top panel **14** (in the area not permanently affixed to the left side panel **16** and the right side panel **18**) is an upper magnet lip **26**. These magnetic lips **24** and **26** are shaped for mating magnetic engagement. The attraction between these two magnetic lips **24** and **26** is strong enough to keep the golf head club cover closed, maintaining contact between the back top panel **14**, the left side panel **16**, the right side panel **18** and the central panel **20** despite the forces attempting to return the back top panel **14** to its relaxed, planar open configuration. In an alternate embodiment, there need be only a first portion of a magnetic closure on the back top panel **12** and a second portion of a magnetic closure either on one or all of the side and central panels.

[0037] In the preferred embodiment, the linear member **10** is a hollow tube, generally made of a polymer and cut at an acute angle at its distil end **12**. A typical hollow, open ended, cylindrical golf club tube works well. The angle cut allows for the easy insertion of the device **2** into the divided compartments **6** of a conventional golf bag **4**. Its inner diameter exceeds the outer diameter of the shaft of a golf club including the gripping, so that the golf club shaft can be raised through the linear member **10** while the linear member **10** remains in the golf bag.

[0038] In operation, the design of the preferred embodiment golf club head cover device **2** can best be explained in reference to FIGS. **1**, **2**, **8** and **9**. The golf cub head cover device **2** is inserted into a golf club bag **4**. (See FIG. **1**) The device **2** is held by the tube **10** while the back top panel **14** is peeled up and back from the rest of the club head cover **8**. The back top panel **14** is released wherein it's residual forces will maintain it in a generally planar, vertical configuration. (See FIG. **9**) The golf club is inserted, shaft first into the throat of the opening created between the back top panel **14** and the remainder of the club head cover **8**. The back top panel **14** is then pulled downward until its upper magnetic lip **26** contacts the lower magnetic lip **24** which is attached and residing in a contiguous line along the central and side panels **16**, **18** and **20**. Magnetic attraction holds the head cover enclosure **8**. This procedure is followed the first time the device **2** is used. Thereafter the use is greatly simplified and proceeds as discussed below.

[0039] The user grabs the linear member **10** and gently pulls it downward. This action causes the linear member **10** to move further down into the golf bag **4** and the golf club head **30** to contact the inner face of the back top panel **12** pushing this panel upward so as to break the magnetic attraction that holds the club head cover **8** closed. (See FIG. **2**) The back top panel **14** then moves to its vertical relaxed position as the club head **30** reveals itself inches above the opened head cover enclosure **8**. While the player makes his shot the club head cover **8** remains open, awaiting insertion of the club. Upon reinsertion of the club head through the open throat of the head cover enclosure **8** the golfer merely grabs the liner member **10** and pulls it upward until the club head contacts the inner face of the bottom panel **22**. This causes an axial jarring to the back top panel **14** such that it tips forward and reaches a point of magnetic attraction between its upper magnetic lip **28** and the lower magnetic lip **24** that is strong enough to overcome the residual forces trying to maintain the back top panel **14** vertical, and closes the device.

[0040] The operation of the alternate embodiment golf club head cover devices FIGS. **10** and **11** remain the same except that with the second type of spring panel **15**, the magnetic or hook and loop fastener closure system may not be incorporated as the deformable curl (when activated) will provide a constant closing force for the back top panel **14**.

[0041] In this manner, the club head cover **8** never leaves the bag, the golfer does not have to fiddle with zippers, hook and loop fasteners, dome fasteners, laces and the like to get his club in and out of it's protective cover. Additionally, the insertion of the golf club into the device **2** is aided by the maintenance of an open throat configuration established by the process of pulling down the linear member **10**. (See FIG. **9**) The only motions required by the golfer is the gentle downward jerk of the linear member **10** into the bag **4** to open the club head cover **8** and the reverse gentle upward jerk of the tube to close the club head cover **8**.

[0042] Although the above method of closing the back top panel **14** discusses using the abrupt upward motion of the linear member **10** to bring into motion a series of events that closes the device, if the linear member is gently raised until the club head lightly contacts the inner face of the bottom panel **22**, the golfer may manually grab and tip the back top panel **14** forward until it reaches the point of magnetic attraction with the lower magnetic lip **24** to close the device.

[0043] In an alternate embodiment, the upper magnetic lip **28** and the lower magnetic lip **24** may be replaced with connectable halves of a flexible fabric, hook and loop fastener. With this embodiment, the operation to open and close the device would remain unchanged although there would need to be slightly greater forces applied through the linear member **10** as this embodiment would not have any magnetic attraction closing assist and the holding force of the hook and loop fastener would exceed that of the magnetic lips.

[0044] It is to be noted that the simplicity of the design of this device **2** allows a quick downward jerking motion on the linear member **10** to uncover and reveal the golf club, and after reinsertion of the golf club into the device **2**, a quick

upward jerk on the linear member **10** to close the device. However, it is known that the back top panel **14** may be manually opened or closed by just grabbing and directing its leading edge.

[0045] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception, upon which this disclosure is based, may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

1. A golf club head cover device comprising:
- a golf club head cover forming a sleeve body, sized for the enclosure of a golf club head therein; and
- a rigid linear member having a proximate end and a distil end, said proximate end affixed to said golf club head cover and said distal end adapted for retention in a golf bag; and
- wherein said golf club cover comprised of at least two partially separable elements, a unitary piece constructed top panel and a curved body, said unitary piece top panel fabricated from a material that possesses a residual bias seeking to maintain said unitary piece top panel in a planar, vertical orientation; and
- wherein said golf club head cover device opens as said rigid linear member urges said top panel into a position wherein said residual bias will raise said top cover to reveal said golf club head while said linear member remains in a golf bag.

2. A golf club head cover device comprising:
- a golf club head cover;
- a spring panel; and
- a rigid linear member for opening and closing of said golf club head cover;
- wherein said linear member has a proximate end and a distil end, said proximate end permanently affixed to said golf club head cover, and said distal end adapted for insertion and retention within a golf bag; and
- wherein said golf club head cover is a sleeve body, sized for the enclosure of a golf club head therein, said golf club cover comprised of at least two partially separable elements, a top panel and a curved body, said top panel having said spring panel disposed beneath an outer face of said top panel so as to reside entirely within said golf club head cover, said spring panel when urged upward, by a downward motion of said linear member, will straighten and maintain said top panel in a vertical open position and when a leading edge of said spring panel is urged forward, by an upward motion of said linear member, will curl said top panel toward the curved body for the maintenance of said top panel in a vertical closed orientation.

3. The golf club head cover device of claim **2** further comprising:
- an upper, first portion of a closure; and
- a lower, second portion of a closure;
- wherein said first portion of said closure is affixed to said top panel and said lower, second portion of said closure is affixed to said curved body of said club head cover.

4. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said closure is a magnetic closure.

5. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said closure is a hook and loop fastener.

6. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said linear member is a cylindrical tube.

7. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said distil end of said golf club tube is cut at an acute angle.

8. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said club head cover has an open position and a closed position, wherein said top panel resides in a vertical orientation when said club head cover is in said open position, and wherein said top panel resides in a horizontal orientation when in a closed position.

9. The golf club head cover device of claim **3** wherein said curved body is comprised of a right side panel, a left side panel, a central panel and a bottom panel;
- wherein said central panel resides adjacent to said right side panel and adjacent said left side panel, and
- wherein said bottom panel resides adjacent to said right side panel, said left side panel, and said central panel.

10. (canceled)

11. The golf club head cover device of claim **4** wherein said first portion of said magnetic closure is a magnetic lip affixed about an open periphery of said top panel and said second portion of said magnetic closure is a magnetic lip affixed about an open periphery of said curved body.

12. The golf club head cover device of claim **5** wherein said first portion of said hook and loop closure is a connectable lip affixed about an open periphery of said top panel and said second portion of said hook and loop closure is a matingly engageable lip with said connectable lip and is affixed about an open periphery of said curved body.

13. The golf club head cover device of claim **2** further comprising:
- a mechanical fastener;
- wherein said mechanical fastener affixes said golf club head cover to said linear member.

14. The golf club head cover device of claim **13** wherein said spring panel has a top end and a bottom end, said top end residing adjacent a leading edge of said first portion of said closure and said bottom end affixed by said mechanical fastener to said linear member.

15. The golf club head cover device of claim **1** wherein said linear member is the operational handle that initiates the opening and closing said golf head club cover device.

16. The golf head club cover device of claim **15** wherein a downward motion of said linear member while said distal end remains in said golf bag, opens said golf head club cover, and wherein an upward motion of said linear member while said distal end remains in said golf bag, assists in closing said golf head club cover.

17. A golf club head cover device comprising:
- a golf club head cover forming a sleeve body, sized for housing a golf club head therein made of at least two partially separable elements, a top panel and a curved body;
- a two part magnetic closure having a first portion affixed about an open periphery of said top panel and having a second portion of said magnetic closure affixed about an open periphery of said curved body, and;
- a rigid operational handle having a proximate end and a distil end, said proximate end affixed to said golf club head cover and said distal end adapted for operational retention in a golf bag; and
- wherein said rigid operational handle is a rigid linear member that when urged in a downward direction abuts a golf club head within said golf club head cover, with the top

panel of said golf club head cover so as to break any contact between the two parts of the magnetic closure thereby opening the golf club head cover, and wherein when the rigid linear member is urged in an upward direction so as to initiate the downward travel of said top panel until it contacts the curved body allowing the two parts of the magnetic closure to unite and close said golf club head cover while said golf club head cover remains in a golf bag.

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