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(54) **FLOOR MAT**

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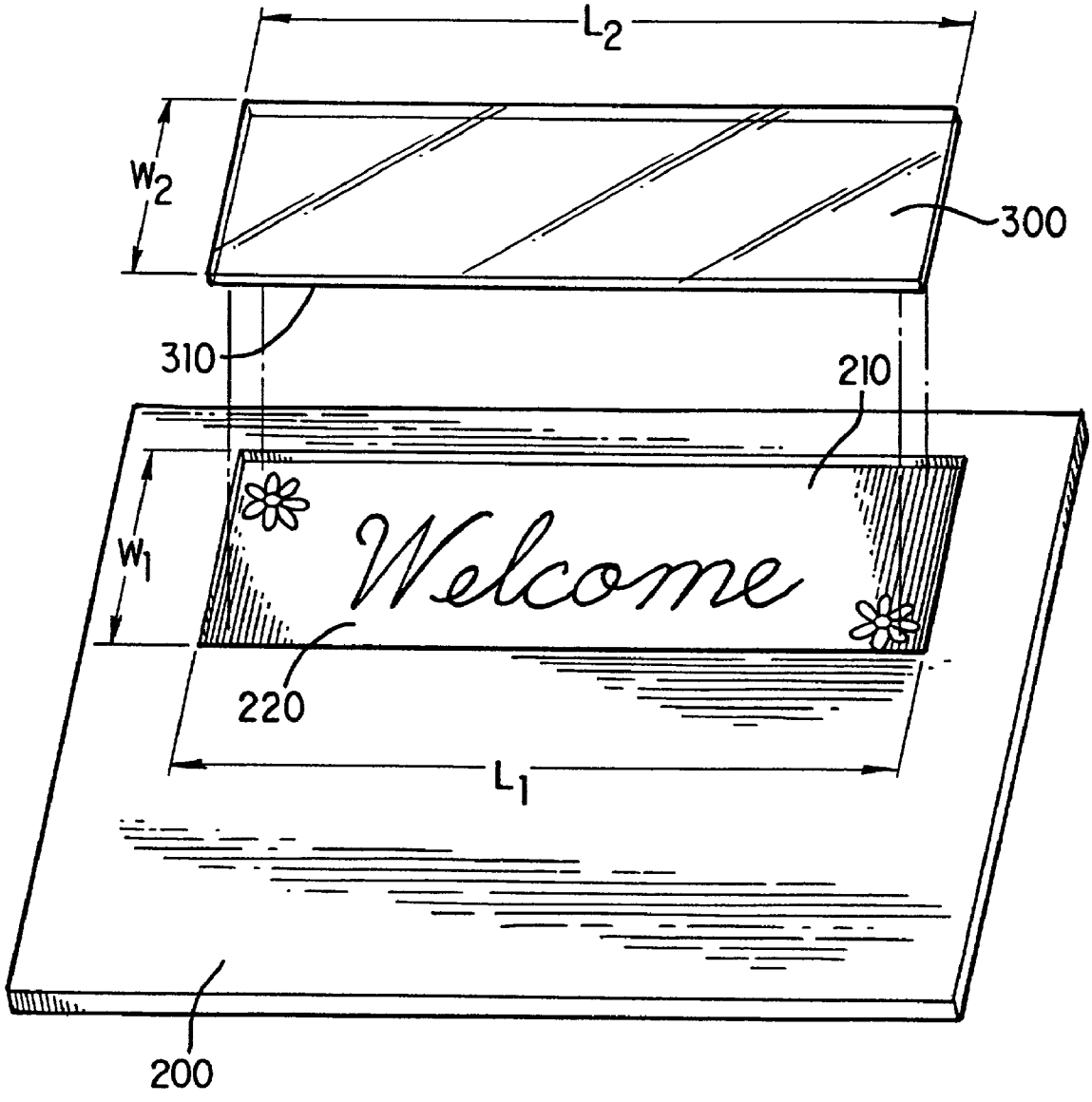
(57) **ABSTRACT**

An improved floor mat is disclosed. In an embodiment of the present invention, the floor mat that includes a cleanable portion. The floor mat may also include a water absorbing component, a cushioning component, customized graphics, a transparent cleanable portion, a tacky surface on the cleanable portion, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, and a fragrance. Additionally, the cleanable portion may be erodible and may include a plurality of cleanable reusable layers.



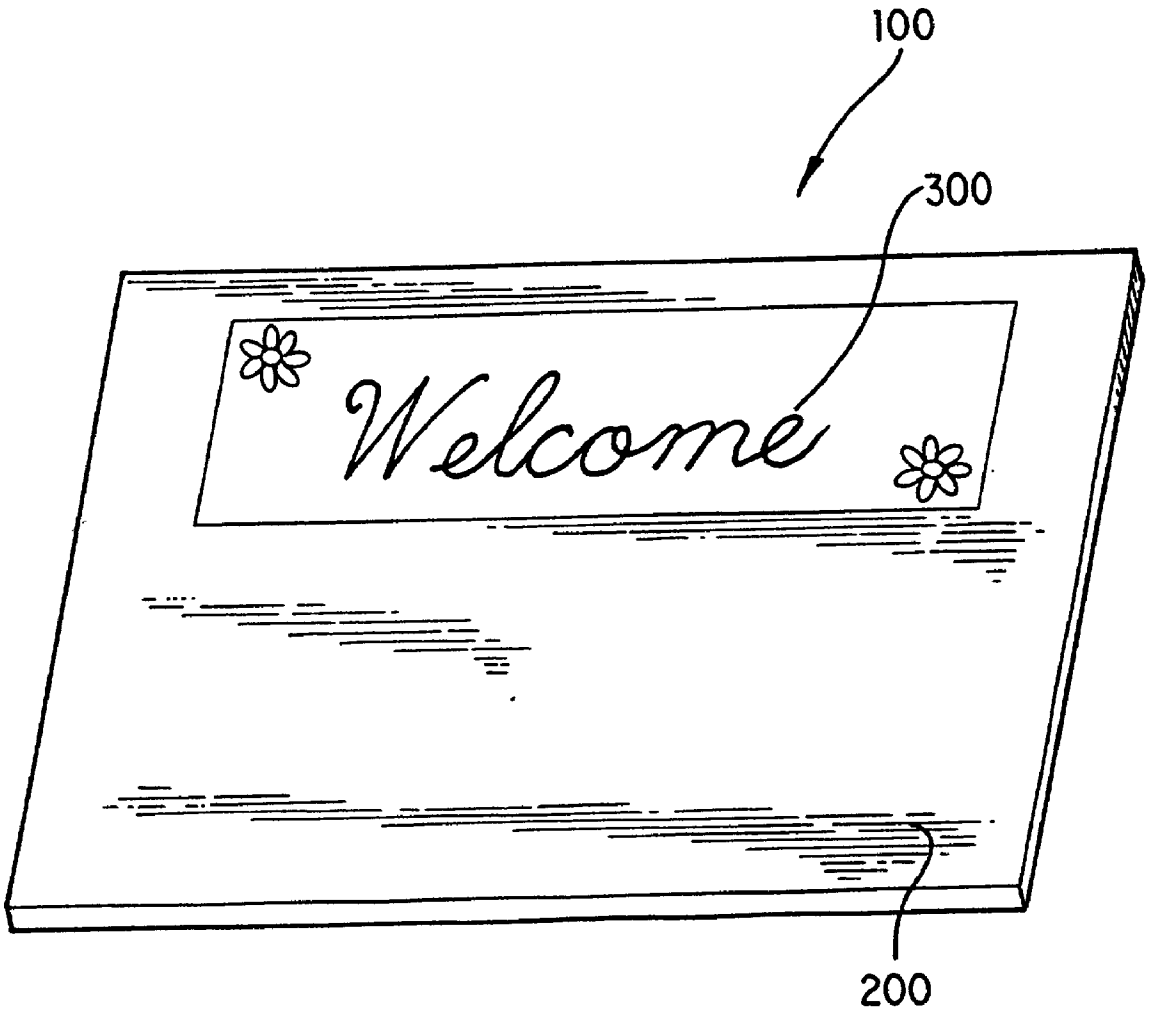


FIG. 1

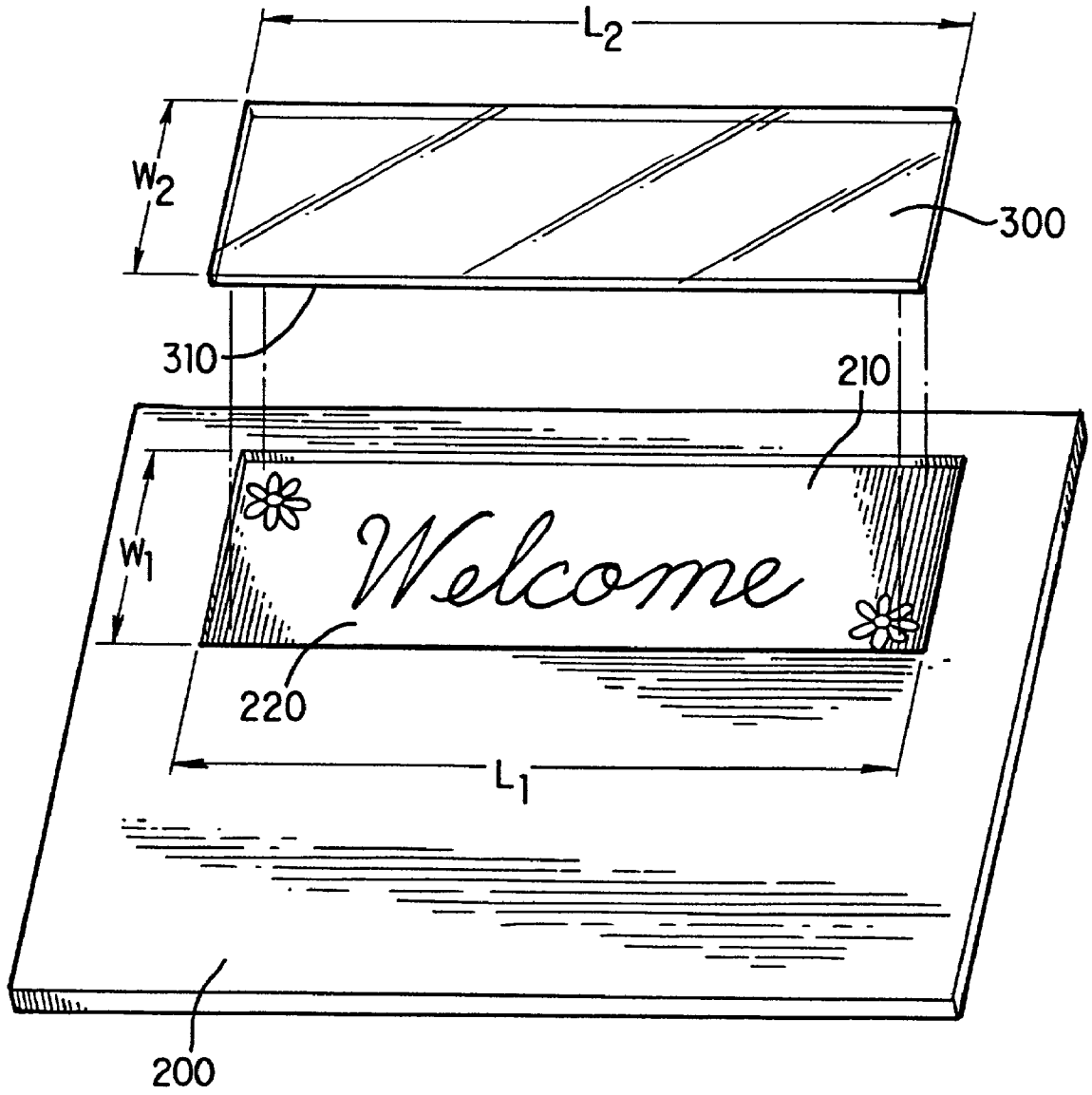


FIG. 2

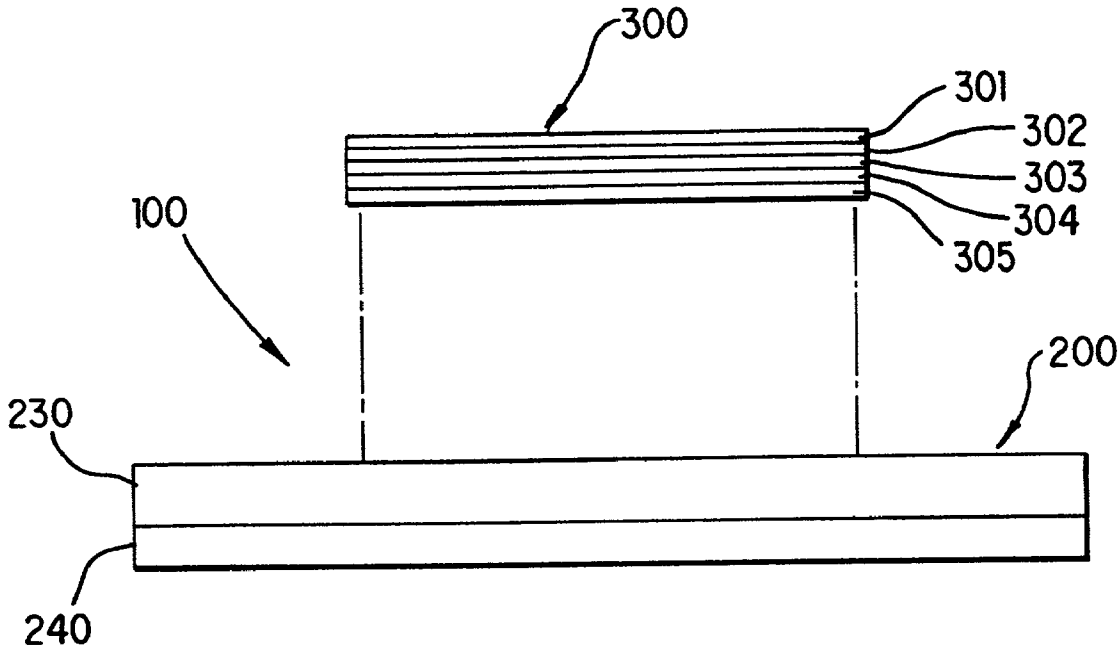


FIG. 3

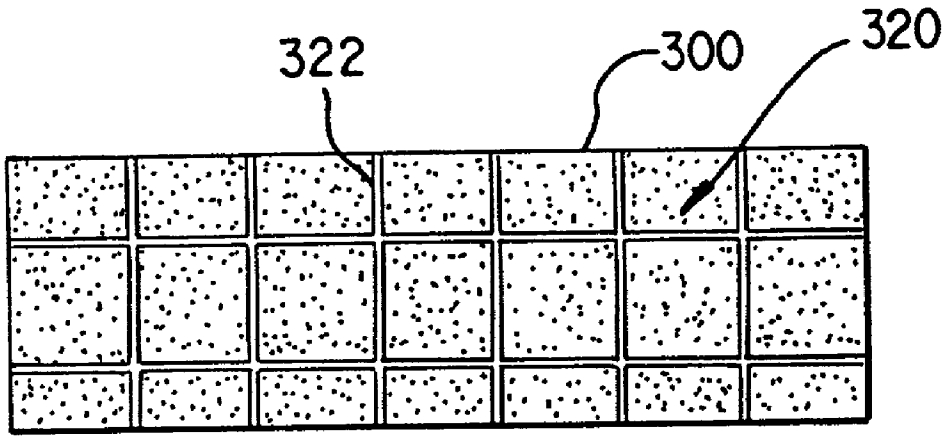


FIG.4

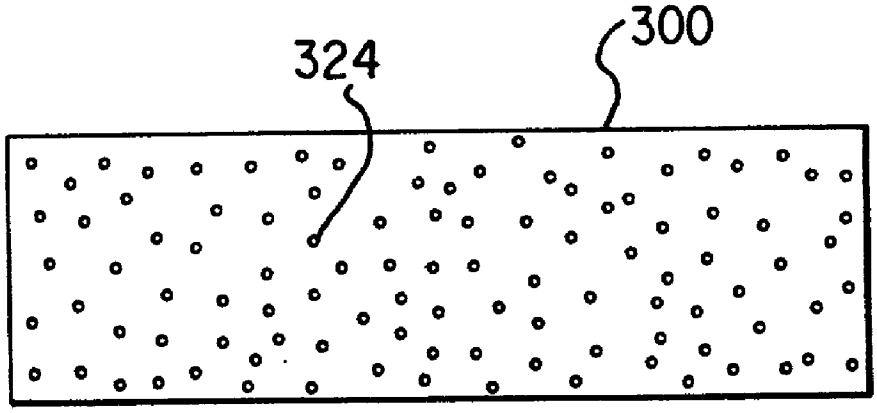


FIG. 5

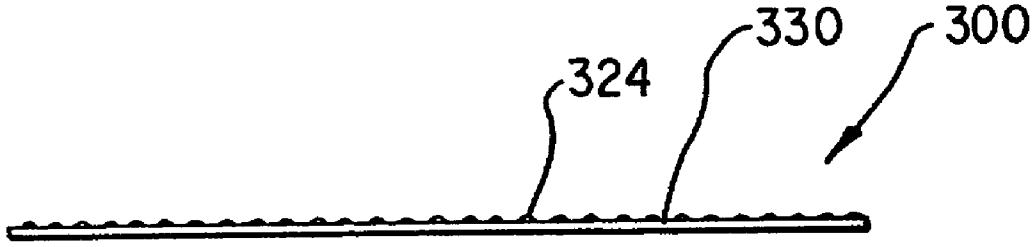


FIG. 6

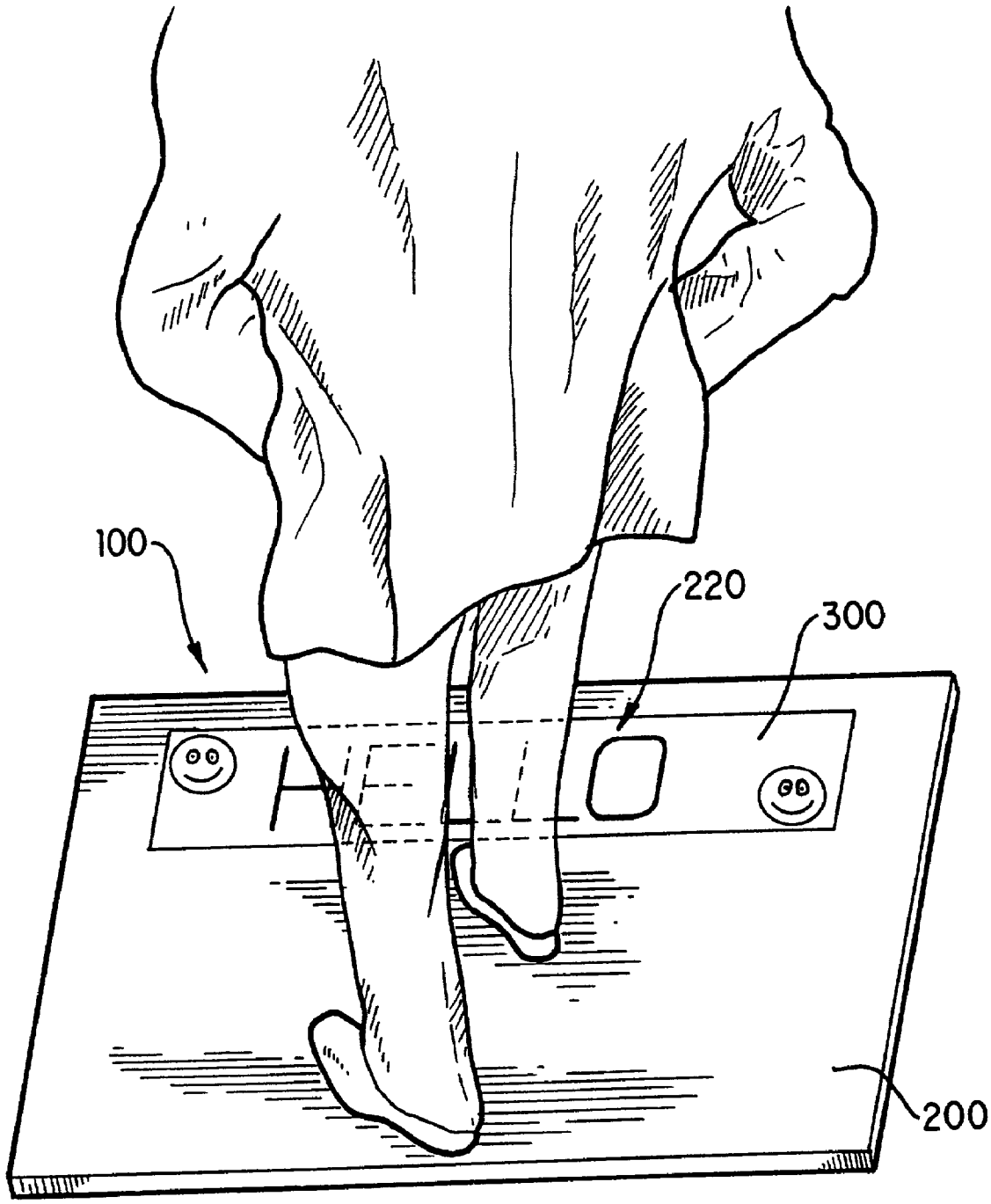


FIG. 7

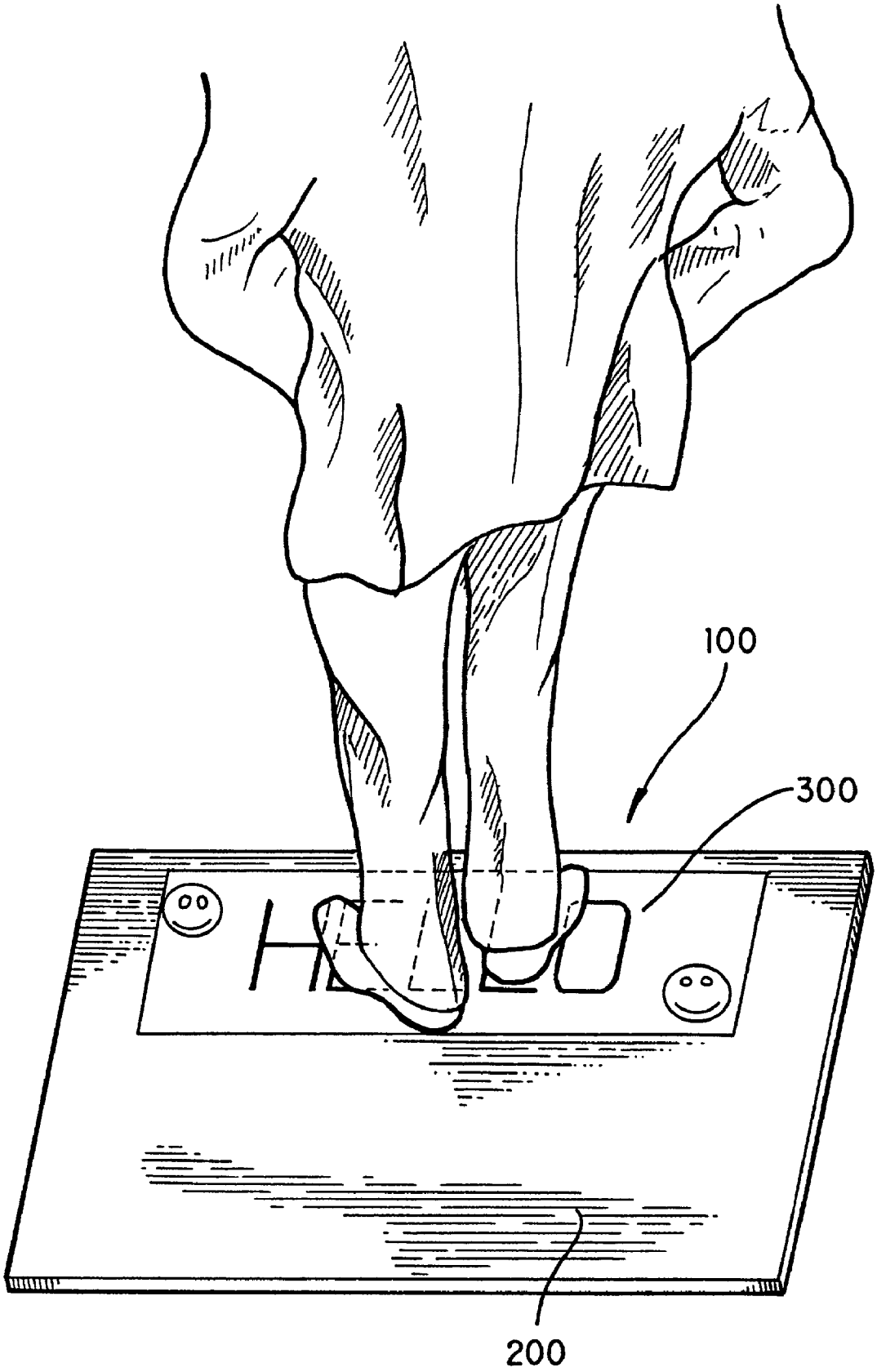


FIG. 8

FLOOR MAT

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a floor mat. More specifically, the invention provides a floor mat that includes a cleanable portion. The floor mat may also include a water absorbing component, a cushioning component, customized graphics, a transparent cleanable portion, a tacky surface on the cleanable portion, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, and a fragrance. Additionally, the cleanable portion may be erodible and may include a plurality of cleanable reusable layers.

[0002] Floor mats are known for cleaning the soles of a person's shoes who is about to enter a particular area or room. One problem with floor mats in general is how to keep the floor mat sufficiently clean such that it may perform its function of cleaning the person's shoes when, by its very nature, it is purposefully dirtied when performing its function.

[0003] Known floor mats may be comprised of a single, unitary piece of material. Whereas these single structure floor mats may be kept clean by, for example, washing the floor mat, it may be required that the entire floor mat be removed from its location for washing and thus, the floor mat is not available where desired while the entire mat is being cleaned. Alternatively, even if the mat can be cleaned in-place, which may not be a possibility if it is located in, for example, a carpeted area, it may be inconvenient to clean the mat in-place.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 3,785,102 to Amos discloses a throw-away pad comprising a plurality of stacked disposable sheets where, when a particular sheet is dirtied, the dirty sheet is removed and disposed of. The next sheet that is exposed after the dirty sheet is discarded is clean and thus, a clean surface is again available. However, there may be problems with comprising the floor mat of disposable sheets. Disposing of each dirty sheet may be uneconomical since each sheet is discarded after it becomes dirty. Additionally, after some finite number of sheets are disposed of, no sheets will remain and thus no effective cleaning surface is available.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 3,785,102 to Amos also discloses that an adhesive can be provided on each sheet's top surface to improve its ability to remove dirt from a person's shoes. However, again, these sheets are not cleanable and therefore are not reusable.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 3,717,897 to Amos et al. discloses a pad for cleaning shoes and wheels. The pad includes a thin water-washable adhesive covering its upper surface for removing dirt from shoes and wheels. Whereas the '897 patent discloses a pad with a water-washable adhesive upper surface, the pad is not known for use domestic or office-type applications. As stated in the '897 patent, the pad is placed at an entrance doorway leading into a clean room.

[0007] It is not known to utilize a sticky, tacky floor mat in domestic or office-type applications because of problems with currently known tacky floor mats. Tacky floor mats are only known for utilization in indoor environments that are far removed from exterior outside entrances, such as for clean rooms that are well-within the interior of the building in which they are used, e.g., hospital rooms, computer chip manufacturing spaces, and gymnasiums. Thus, tacky floor mats are not known for use in areas that are adjacent to entrances that lead from the outdoor environment for cleaning the soles of a person's shoes prior to entry into the interior of a building, such as for example in an entry foyer or on an outdoor porch.

[0008] Tacky floor mats are not known for use in domestic or office-type applications, e.g., home or business office use, because of several known deficiencies. One of these deficiencies is that their tacky surface will not be as effective if it becomes wet. Therefore, if the tacky surface floor mat was utilized in an outdoor environment, such as the outdoor porch mentioned above, or in an indoor environment that is adjacent to or near an outdoor entrance, such as an entry foyer of a home or business, for cleaning a person's shoes prior to further entering the home or business, the mat is likely to become wet and therefore not effective. The mat could become wet from, for example, the moisture in the atmosphere or from moisture carried on the soles of the person's shoes who steps on the mat. Additionally, if the tacky surface becomes wet it may become slippery and thus cause a hazard for the person who steps on it.

[0009] Additional deficiencies with using known tacky floor mats for home or office-type applications as discussed above is their likelihood of becoming trip hazards and their lack of aesthetic appeal. In the '897 patent, because the pad is designed for use in clean room environments, it is adhesively adhered to the passageway floor in front of the entrance doorway. This may be satisfactory for retaining the mat in-place in clean room-type of applications, however, if it was attempted to use the '897 pad on a carpeted floor, the pad would not properly adhere to the carpet and thus a trip hazard would be present. This could result in significant liability issues. The '897 pad does not have sufficient mass for it to remain in-place without utilizing an adhesive. Regarding aesthetics, because tacky floor mats are known only for their functional characteristics, and thus for use only in "clean room"-type applications, they are not aesthetically pleasing. Therefore, for at least the above reasons, tacky floor mats are not known for use in home or office-type applications.

[0010] Additional drawbacks with known floor mats exist that are directed to issues of customization for a particular purchaser and a lack of additional cleaning properties. A floor mat may be the first object that a visitor to a particular home or business encounters. As such, the owner of the home or business may want to utilize the floor mat to graphically convey an initial greeting or message to the visitor. Whereas floor mats are known that may include a greeting on them, it is not currently known to allow for a particular purchaser to customize the displayed graphic so that the message is tailored to convey a particular message desired by the purchaser. For example, on Halloween the purchaser may want the floor mat to display a "Happy Halloween" message. In another situation, the purchaser may want to greet a particular visitor with a message such as "Hello, Joe". Currently, it is not known to provide a floor mat where an individual can customize the floor mat to display a particular message that they want to convey and in certain circumstances even change the floor mat's message they want to convey.

[0011] An additional problem with known floor mats, as mentioned above, is that they are limited in their ability to

clean the soles of a person's shoes. Whereas known floor mats may be capable of removing dirt particles from the shoe's soles, they are not able to disinfect the soles nor provide a scent to the soles to assist in masking any unpleasant odors that may be associated with the shoes.

[0012] Therefore, it would be desirable to provide an improved floor mat that could address deficiencies that exist with currently known floor mats. The improved floor mat of the present invention overcomes deficiencies in the prior art and may include a base portion which incorporates a cleanable portion that is adapted to be removably received within the floor mat. The floor mat may also include features such as a water absorbing capability, a cushioning capability, customized graphics, a transparent portion, a tacky surface on the cleanable portion, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, and a fragrance. Additionally, the cleanable portion may include the features of being erodible and containing a plurality of cleanable reusable layers. Other features will be apparent from the detailed description which follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] The various features of the invention will best be appreciated by simultaneous reference to the description which follows and the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0014] FIG. I is a perspective view of a floor mat in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0015] **FIG. 2** is an exploded perspective view of the floor mat of **FIG. 1**;

[0016] **FIG. 3** is an exploded side view of an alternative embodiment of the floor mat of the present invention;

[0017] **FIG. 4** illustrates a third alternative embodiment for a tacky insert portion of the floor mat of the present invention;

[0018] **FIG. 5** illustrates a fourth alternative embodiment for a tacky insert portion of the floor mat of the present invention;

[0019] **FIG. 6** is a side view of the embodiment for the tacky insert portion of **FIG. 5**;

[0020] **FIG. 7** is a perspective view of an embodiment of the floor mat of the present invention as being used in one step of a process for utilizing the floor mat; and

[0021] **FIG. 8** is a perspective view of the floor mat of **FIG. 7** as being used in a second step of a process for utilizing the floor mat.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] **FIG. 1** illustrates a first embodiment for a floor mat **100** in accordance with the principles of the present invention. As can be seen in **FIG. 1**, floor mat **100** includes a base portion **200** and a cleanable insert portion **300**. As will be further described later in this specification, in this embodiment, cleanable portion **300** is received within base portion **200** and is removable from base portion **200**.

[0023] **FIG. 2** illustrates an exploded, perspective view of the floor mat of **FIG. 1**. As can be seen in **FIG. 2**, base portion **200** is formed as a generally flat, planar member and defines a recess **210** within the top surface of base portion **200**. Base portion **200** provides sufficient weight and mass for supporting cleanable insert portion **300** and maintaining the floor mat's positioning on the surface on which it is placed. Base portion **200** may include, as will be discussed below, a water absorption capability and a cushioning capability and may be comprised of materials such as polyurethane, polyisoprene and other cross-linked elastomeric materials, such as nylon-6, molded or woven to form a porous structure. Recess **210** can be configured in any of a variety of geometric configurations, however, in the present embodiment, recess **210** is configured in a rectangular shape. Recess **210** has a length L_1 and a width W_1. The depth of recess **210** is such that it is able to receive within it cleanable insert portion **300** such that when cleanable insert portion **300** is received within recess **210**, the top surface of cleanable insert portion **300** lies generally in the same plane as the top surface of base portion **200**.

[0024] The top surface of base portion **200** may be colored with any color depending upon the desires of a particular purchaser, however, it is preferable that a color be utilized that will minimize the visibility of any dirt that is accumulated by base portion **200**. For example, it may be desirable that darker colors be utilized for the top surface of base portion **200** rather than lighter colors. However, again, any particular color may be utilized for base portion **200**, and particularly the top surface of base portion **200**, depending upon the particular desires of an individual.

[0025] As can be seen in **FIG. 2**, the surface of base portion **200** which defines the bottom of recess **210** may include graphics **220** on that surface. In the illustrated embodiment, the graphics include pictorial representations of flowers and a text message which spells out the word "WELCOME". The present invention is not limited to any particular graphic within recess **210** and the present invention may include any of a variety of different forms of graphics.

[0026] Graphics **220** may be modified, and thus customized, by an individual after the floor mat has been purchased by the owner. The owner may customize the mat at their home or office and, thus, a graphic that may be appropriate for a particular situation may be modified by the individual for display in another situation. For example, the graphic may display a message stating "Happy Halloween" for Halloween and may be modified to display "Happy Holidays" during the winter holiday season. Thus, as can be understood, the graphics are modifiable by a user and thus, may be customized for the particular desires of a particular user.

[0027] As stated above, the present invention is not limited to any particular form for graphics **220**. The graphics **220** can be customized by a user to include any of a variety of different colors, pictures, messages, or other representations that the user may want to display. In addition, the visible intensity of a color(s) can be modified. For example, a color that glows at night could be included in graphics **220** for an occasion such as Halloween.

[0028] Any of a variety of different types of structures or methods may be practiced in the present invention for modifying graphics **220** of floor mat **100** and the present invention is not limited to any particular methodology or structure for modifying graphics **220**. Additionally, all of the various embodiments contemplated for providing a modifi-

able graphic display in the floor mat of the present invention can be incorporated in either, or both, of the base portion or the insert portion. For example, the graphics may consist of pre-formed messages or art forms which may be adhered to either the surface which defines the bottom of recess **210**, such as by using an adhesive or fastener assembly, e.g., a hook and loop assembly, or to the underside of insert portion **300** such that, when insert portion is placed within base portion **200**, the graphics would be visible through a transparent insert portion.

[**0029**] Alternatively, a variety of different graphics may be stored within floor mat **100** such that a user is able to selectively uncover a particular graphic for display while the other available graphics remain covered within floor mat **100**. This type of selectability is known in other mediums where selectivity between a variety of different graphics within a common display panel is desired. For example, advertising bulletin boards at sporting events are able to selectively display a first particular message during a first particular period of time and display a second message during a second period of time on the same bulletin board. A third possible alternative is to provide a modifiable display surface on either the bottom surface of recess **210** or a panel attached to the bottom of insert portion **300** such that a user may design and display their customized graphic and may subsequently modify that graphic such that it is replaced with another graphic. A display surface such as an erasable writing board could be utilized for this purpose.

[**0030**] It is also contemplated that a modifiable electronic display surface could be provided, such as, for example, a liquid crystal display panel. The display panel could be connected to a computer and a computer generated image could be displayed on the display panel. Thus, the image displayed on the display panel could be modified by generating a different computer image and displaying that computer image on the display panel. The display panel could be associated with base portion **200**, such as included within recess **210**, or could be included on a bottom surface, facing upward, of insert portion **300**. Alternatively, the display panel could be integrally formed with either of the base portion or the insert portion.

[**0031**] In further describing base portion **200**, as mentioned above, base portion **200** may also include both a water absorbing component and a cushioning component. The water absorbing component provides for absorbing moisture from the soles of a person's shoes that is standing on floor mat **100** to reduce the degree of moisture transferred to cleanable insert portion **300** and the cushioning component provides for conforming the floor mat **100** to the shape of the person's soles such that a greater amount of the debris on the person's soles may be removed by floor mat **100**. The present invention is not limited to any particular structure or material for the water absorbing component and the cushioning component. For example, the water absorbing component may be comprised of any of a wide variety of known water absorbing materials, such as polyamides, vinylics, and polyisoprene. It is desirable, but not required, that the water absorbing component dissipate or move the water and not retain the water. Thus, porous materials, and not hydrophilic materials, are desired. If the water was retained in the floor mat rather than being dissipated, the mat could become soaked. The cushioning component may be comprised of any of a variety of cushioning components to include, for example, foam rubber.

[**0032**] **FIG. 2** also further illustrates cleanable insert portion **300** of this embodiment. As can be seen, cleanable insert portion **300** has a geometric shape which is complementary in size and form to the recess **210** that is formed within base portion **200**. As such, cleanable insert portion **300** is able to be received securely within recess **210**. Thus, cleanable insert portion **300** has a length L_2 which is just slightly smaller than the length L_1 of recess **210**. Likewise, cleanable insert portion **300** has a width W_2 which is also just slightly smaller than width W_1 of recess **210**.

[**0033**] On the bottom side **310** of cleanable insert portion **300**, i.e., that surface which contacts the surface which defines the bottom of recess **210**, an attachment mechanism may be provided such that cleanable insert portion **300** may be removably attached to base portion **200** within recess **210**. Any of a variety of different attachment mechanisms may be provided on the bottom surface of cleanable insert portion **300** to include, for example, a hook and loop fastener assembly or an adhesive. Regardless of the particular securement mechanism used to removably attach cleanable insert portion **300** to base portion **200**, in this embodiment, cleanable insert portion **300** may be removed from base portion **200** such that it may be cleaned by a user and, after cleaning, be reinserted within recess **210** such that a clean surface is now provided for floor mat **100**.

[**0034**] As stated above, cleanable insert portion **300** may be formed from a transparent material such as hydrophilic aliphatic acrylic polymers and copolymers incorporating acrylic acid, hydroxy ethyl methacrylate, and glycerin monomethacrylate. Forming cleanable insert portion **300** of a transparent material allows an individual to view the customized graphics that are provided within floor mat **100**, as discussed previously. Additionally, the top side of cleanable insert portion **300** may include a tacky surface. The tacky surface would provide for assisting in removing debris from the soles of a person's shoes that is standing on cleanable insert portion **300**. When the top tacky surface of cleanable insert portion **300** is dirtied to such an extent that the user desires to clean insert portion **300**, in this embodiment, the user removes insert portion **300** from base portion **200** and cleans insert portion **300** to remove the accumulated debris. The insert portion **300** is then reinserted into base portion **200**.

[**0035**] The tacky surface that is provided on the top side of cleanable insert portion **300** could be comprised of any of a variety of materials, such as polyvinyl chlorides combined with a suitable plasticizer, plasticized neoprene, polysulfides, and polyurethanes. Additionally, acrylics, such as butyl acrylate and many of its homologues, may be utilized. Again, the present invention is not limited to any particular material. The only consideration, in this embodiment, is that the surface should maintain its tacky characteristic even after repeated cleaning cycles.

[**0036**] The present invention is not limited to any particular methodology for cleaning insert portion **300**. Insert portion **300** may be cleaned by any of a variety of methods depending upon a particular material composition for insert portion **300**. For example, insert portion **300** may be cleaned by placing insert portion within a washing machine and

washing insert portion **300** or insert portion **300** may be cleaned by scrubbing insert portion **300** with a scrub brush and soap and water or with a cleaning agent such as "Spic 'N Span".

[**0037**] Additionally, the insert portion **300** could be cleaned by utilizing a roller that also includes a tacky surface around the circumference of the roller. The tacky surface of the roller is comprised of a stronger adhesive than that of the tacky insert portion such that, as the tacky surface of the roller is rolled over the tacky surface of the insert portion, any dirt and debris on the tacky insert portion will be drawn off of the tacky insert portion and will adhere to the roller. In this manner, a roller with a tacky surface could be utilized to clean the tacky insert portion.

[**0038**] Again, however, the present invention is not limited to any particular methodology or cleaning agent for cleaning insert portion **300** and any cleaning methodology or agent compatible with the composition of insert portion **300** is contemplated.

[**0039**] Floor mat **100** may also include additional features for assisting in the cleaning of the soles of a person standing on floor mat **100**. For example, base portion **200** and/or insert portion **300** may include an antibacterial composition and an antifungal composition. Antibacterial compositions such as anthraquinone derivatives of polyethylene glycol mono- and di-methacrylate could be utilized. Thus, floor mat **100** would be bacteriacidal. The antibacterial feature would be particularly desirable because the floor mat would be able to both clean structural debris from the soles of the person's shoes and remove any potentially harmful bacteria from the person's soles as well.

[**0040**] Additionally, in order to further provide for a desirable sole surface prior to entering a particular area, floor mat **100** could also be provided with a fragrance. Flavones such as tricyclic molecules with aromatic substitution or organic ethers, e.g., liminolic acid, could be utilized. The fragrance is transferred from floor mat **100** to the soles of the person's shoes such that any undesirable odors are favorably masked by the fragrance.

[**0041**] The present invention is not only limited to utilizing an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, and/or a fragrance in floor mat **100**. Rather, floor mat **100** could also incorporate a variety of other substances that would assist in cleaning the soles of a person's shoes.

[**0042**] Any variety of structures or methods could be utilized for associating an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, a fragrance, or any other composition, with floor mat **100**. The substances could be applied as releasable, or dissipatable, coatings to floor mat **100** or could be releasably embedded as, for example, pellets within the structure of floor mat **100** such that as pressure is applied to floor mat **100** the substances are dispensed to the soles of the person's shoes.

[**0043**] **FIG. 3** illustrates an alternative embodiment for floor mat **100**. In **FIG. 3**, it is illustrated that base portion **200** may include separate layers for a water absorbing component **230** and a cushioning component **240**. Water absorbing component **230**, in this embodiment, is disposed on a top side of the cushioning component **240**. However, the present invention is not limited to this particular embodiment for water absorbing component **230** and cushioning component **240**. For example, a single hybrid structure could be utilized for base portion **200** that would include the material properties to provide for both water absorption and conforming structure.

[**0044**] **FIG. 3** also illustrates an alternative embodiment for insert portion **300**. Whereas the previously disclosed embodiment for insert portion **300** was discussed as a single structural member that could include a tacky surface on a top side thereof, the embodiment of **FIG. 3** for insert portion **300** is comprised of a plurality of layers. As can be seen, layers **301-305**, comprise insert portion **300**. Each of the layers may include a tacky surface on a top side thereof, as was described previously for insert portion **300**. In use, a top-most layer, e.g., layer **301**, may be removed from its adjacent lower layer, e.g., layer **302**, and may be independently cleaned. After cleaning, the layer may be reinstalled within recess **210** on top of the exposed layer of insert portion **300**. In this manner, insert portion **300** may be cleaned by removing a top-most layer, cleaning that layer, and reinstalling that layer within recess **210**. Whereas each layer is described as being independently cleanable, it is not required that each individual layer be cleanable. Each layer may be formed of materials as described previously when discussing the embodiment of **FIGS. 1 and 2** for the insert portion.

[**0045**] Other alternative embodiments for insert portion **300** are contemplated. For example, whereas the previously disclosed embodiments discussed insert portion **300** as being comprised of one or more layers with a tacky surface on a top side of the layer(s), it is not required that insert portion **300** be formed with only a tacky surface on a top side thereof. More specifically, an alternative embodiment for insert portion **300** could include forming insert portion **300** as a single structural member from a material which is tacky in composition throughout the entire cross-section of the material. A material such as a blend of a noncross-linked hydrophilic thermoplastic, preferably a polyethylene glycol diacrylate with n not exceeding 15, and a hydrophobic material, such as a polyvinyl neoprene chloride, could be utilized for the insert portion of this embodiment. By forming insert portion **300** from a uniform, tacky material, the insert portion **300** does not necessarily have to be removed from recess **210** of base portion **200** to be cleaned. Insert portion **300** could be cleaned in this alternative embodiment by eroding the top surface of the insert portion as a result of use of the insert portion. Thus, by providing an erodible insert portion, the insert portion may be cleaned by the erosion of its top surface as the insert portion is used within floor mat **100**.

[**0046**] As insert portion **300** erodes, the exposed surface of insert portion **300** continues to be tacky in composition because of its uniform cross-section. As the exposed tacky surface erodes, the dirt captured by the exposed tacky surface will dissipate as a result of the erosion and thus, the erosion of the insert portion itself provides for a cleanable insert portion.

[**0047**] Alternatively, even with a uniform cross-section of a tacky substance for insert portion **300**, the user may remove insert portion **300** from recess **210** and separately clean insert portion **300**. Thus, the user is not required to rely solely on the erodible characteristic of insert portion **300** for cleaning of insert portion **300**; rather, the user may utilize the

erodible cleaning feature of the insert portion in combination with a separate cleaning step of removing the insert portion from the base portion and independently cleaning the insert portion.

[0048] It is desirable, but not required, that the floor mat contain a water absorption capability. A water absorption capability is desired to help prevent the tacky surface of the insert portion from becoming wet and, thus, slippery. Whereas it has been discussed that, in order to help prevent a user from slipping on the tacky surface of the insert portion, a water absorbing capability could be included in the base portion to reduce the degree of moisture on the tacky surface, this is not the only structure contemplated for preventing the tacky insert portion from becoming slippery. Alternatively, the tacky insert portion itself could be formed to help prevent slipping. FIGS. **4-6** illustrate alternative embodiments for tacky insert portion **300**. **FIG. 4** illustrates tacky insert portion **300** as including a grid pattern **320** of channels **322** that could be comprised of a non-tacky material. The channels could be either raised from the surface of insert portion **300** or could lie co-planar with the top surface of the insert portion. By forming the channels of a non-tacky material, even if the tacky material of insert portion **300** became wet, a user would be assisted in not slipping on the slippery, wet tacky surface of the insert portion by the presence of the non-tacky surfaces which do not become slippery when wet.

[0049] **FIGS. 5 and 6** illustrate another alternative embodiment for tacky insert portion **300** which includes anti-slip particles **324**, e.g., silicon or sand particles, which extend above the top surface **330** of the tacky insert portion. It is desirable that the anti-slip particles be comprised of a material that does not become slippery when wet and that they be exposed from the tacky surface, however, it is not required. Even if the anti-slip particles are embedded within the tacky surface, their extension above the top surface **330** of the tacky insert portion will provide a physical frictional restraint against slipping for the soles of a person's shoes who is standing on the floor mat.

[0050] Whereas **FIG. 4** illustrates tacky insert portion **300** as including a grid pattern **320** of channels **322** that could be comprised of a non-tacky material and **FIGS. 5 and 6** illustrate another alternative embodiment for tacky insert portion **300** which includes anti-slip particles **324** which extend above the top surface **330** of the tacky insert portion, it is not required that these two alternative embodiments contain features that are mutually exclusive. For example, it is contemplated that tacky insert portion **300** could include both a grid pattern of non-tacky channels and anti-slip particles, which is not illustrated specifically in the Figures but which can be easily understood.

[0051] Additionally, the tacky insert portion could also include a water absorbing capability. The tacky insert portion could be comprised of a hydrophobic porous structure which would assist in dissipating water from the surface of the tacky insert portion.

[0052] It is also contemplated that a water absorbing powder, such as a talcum powder, could be provided in the present invention. The powder could either be integrated into the floor mat or be separately associated with the floor mat. The talcum powder would remove moisture from the soles of a person's shoes when the person stepped into the powder and the tacky insert portion could then remove the powder from the person's soles, in addition to any dirt on the soles, when the person next steps on the tacky insert portion.

[0053] Whereas cleanable portion **300** has been discussed as an insert portion, it is not required that cleanable portion **300** be inserted into floor mat **100**. There exists many alternative possibilities for associating cleanable portion **300** with floor mat **100**. For example, cleanable portion **300** could be placed on top of base portion **200** or could be positioned adjacent to base portion **200**. The present invention is not limited to inserting any of the embodiments for cleanable portion **300** within base portion **200**.

[0054] **FIG. 7** illustrates a first process step in utilizing an embodiment of the floor mat **100** of the present invention. As was described previously, floor mat **100** includes a base portion **200** and an insert portion **300**. As can be seen in **FIG. 7**, and as was also discussed previously, a different graphic display **220** is present in the embodiment of **FIG. 7** than was illustrated in the embodiment of **FIGS. 1 and 2**. Thus, **FIG. 7** displays a "Hello" message with "smiley face" representations in the graphic **220**.

[0055] As can be seen in **FIG. 7**, in utilizing an embodiment of the present invention, a user would first step upon base portion **200**. As discussed earlier, base portion **200** includes a water absorbing component and is thus able to assist in removing any moisture from the soles of the person's shoes. As was also discussed earlier, because base portion **200** includes a cushioning component, base portion **200** conforms to the person's soles when the person steps upon base portion **200**. Whereas not illustrated in **FIG. 7**, as discussed previously, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, a fragrance, or any other cleaning substance may also be associated with floor mat **100** and applied to the soles of the person's shoes when the person applies pressure to floor mat **100**.

[0056] As can be seen in **FIG. 8**, the second process step in utilizing the present invention includes the person stepping onto insert portion **300** of floor mat **100**. As discussed previously, insert portion **300** may include a tacky surface on a top side thereof for assisting in removing debris from the soles of the person's shoes. Additionally, antibacterial compositions, antifungal compositions, fragrances, or other cleaning compositions may also be included within insert portion **300** for dispensing to the soles of the person's shoes.

[0057] After the person steps onto insert portion **300**, the user then steps off of floor mat **100**. As described previously, floor mat **100** may be cleaned after an accumulation of dirt on insert portion **300** by any of the methods described previously. Insert portion **300** may be removed from base portion **200** and cleaned, a layer may be removed from insert portion **300** to be cleaned or discarded, or insert portion **300** may be cleaned through erosion of insert portion **300**. The present invention is not limited to any particular methodology for cleaning insert portion **300** of floor mat **100**.

[0058] The disclosed embodiments are illustrative of the various ways in which the present invention may be practiced. Other embodiments can be implemented by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A floor mat, comprising:

a base portion having a non-tacky surface and adapted for receiving the soles of a person's shoes thereon; and

a cleanable portion associated with said base portion having a tacky surface for receiving the soles of the shoes thereon.

2. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said base portion includes a water absorbing component.

3. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said base portion includes a cushioning component wherein when the person's shoes applies pressure to said base portion said base portion conforms to a topography of a bottom of the person's shoes.

4. The floor mat of claim 3 wherein when the person's shoes applies pressure to said cleanable portion said cleanable portion conforms to the topography of the bottom of the person's shoes.

5. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes graphics.

6. The floor mat of claim 5 wherein said graphics may be modified.

7. The floor mat of claim 5 wherein said base portion includes a recess therein and wherein said cleanable portion is removably received within said recess and also wherein said graphics are included within said recess and said cleanable portion is comprised of a transparent material.

8. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said base portion includes a recess therein and wherein said cleanable portion is removably received within said recess.

9. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said cleanable portion includes a tacky surface on a bottom side of said cleanable portion.

10. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said cleanable is comprised of a tacky material and wherein said cleanable portion is cleanable by eroding a top surface of said tacky material through use of the floor mat.

11. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said cleanable portion includes a plurality of cleanable reusable layers.

12. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes a fragrance.

13. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes an-antibacterial composition.

14. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion is bacteriacidal.

15. The floor mat of claim 1 wherein said cleanable portion is adapted to be removably associated with said base portion.

16. A method for cleaning a floor mat comprising the step of cleaning a cleanable portion that is associated with a base portion wherein said cleanable portion includes a tacky surface thereon and said cleanable portion is adapted for receiving a sole of a person's shoe thereon and wherein said base portion includes a non-tacky surface and is adapted for receiving the sole of the person's shoe thereon.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein said step of cleaning said cleanable portion includes the steps of:

removing said cleanable portion from said base portion;

cleaning said cleanable portion; and

re-inserting said cleanable portion within said base portion.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein said step of cleaning said cleanable portion includes the step of eroding said cleanable portion.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein said step of cleaning said cleanable portion includes the step of rolling an adhesive included on a roller across said tacky surface of said cleanable portion.

20. The method of claim 16 wherein said base portion includes a water absorbing component.

21. The method of claim 16 wherein said base portion includes a cushioning component wherein when the person's shoe applies pressure to said base portion said base portion conforms to a topography of a bottom of the person's shoe.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein when the person's shoe applies pressure to said cleanable portion said cleanable portion conforms to the topography of the bottom of the person's shoe.

23. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes graphics.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein said graphics may be modified.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein said base portion includes a recess therein and wherein said cleanable portion is removably received within said recess and also wherein said graphics are included within said recess and said cleanable portion is comprised of a transparent material.

26. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of said base portion and said insert portion includes a fragrance.

27. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes an antibacterial composition.

28. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes an antifungal composition.

29. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion is bacteriacidal.

30. An apparatus for cleaning a person's shoes comprising a floor mat having a modifiable graphic display.

31. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said graphic display is modifiable in an intensity of a color that is included in said graphic display.

32. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said graphic display is modifiable in a textual message that is included in said graphic display.

33. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said graphic display is modifiable in a pictorial representation that is included in said graphic display.

34. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said graphic display includes a liquid crystal display connected to a computer.

35. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said floor mat includes a tacky surface.

36. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said graphic display is modifiable by an owner of said floor mat.

37. An apparatus for cleaning a person's shoes comprising a floor mat having an antibacterial composition associated with said floor mat.

38. The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said antibacterial composition is releasably embedded within said floor mat.

39. The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said antibacterial composition is releasably coated on said floor mat.

40. An apparatus for cleaning a person's shoes comprising a floor mat having a fragrance associated with said floor mat.

41. The apparatus of claim 40 wherein said fragrance is releasably embedded within said floor mat.

42. The apparatus of claim 40 wherein said fragrance is releasably coated on said floor mat.

43. A floor mat having a shoe receiving surface that includes a first tacky portion and a second water absorbing portion wherein both of said first and second portions are adapted to receive a sole of a person's shoe thereon.

44. A floor mat having a shoe receiving surface that includes a first tacky portion and a second non-tacky portion wherein both of said first and second portions are adapted to receive a sole of a person's shoe thereon.

45. The floor mat of claim 44 wherein said first tacky portion includes anti-slip particles extending above a top surface of the tacky portion.

46. The floor mat of claim 44 wherein said first tacky portion includes a grid pattern of channels comprised of a non-tacky material.

47. The floor mat of claim 44 wherein said first tacky portion includes a hydrophobic porous structure and wherein said hydrophobic porous structure dissipates water from a top surface of said first tacky portion.

48. A floor mat, comprising:

a water dissipating base portion having a non-tacky surface and adapted for receiving the soles of a person's shoes thereon; and

a cleanable portion having a tacky surface adapted for receiving the soles of the person's shoes thereon and adapted to be removably associated with said base portion;

wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes a fragrance, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, a cushioning component, and a modifiable graphic display.

49. A floor mat, comprising:

a non-tacky base portion adapted for receiving the soles of a person's shoes thereon; and

a cleanable portion having a tacky surface adapted for receiving the soles of the person's shoes thereon and adapted to be removably associated with said base portion;

wherein at least one of said base portion and said cleanable portion includes a fragrance, an antibacterial composition, an antifungal composition, a cushioning component, and a modifiable graphic display.

50. An apparatus for cleaning a person's shoes comprising a floor mat having a tacky surface that is slip-resistant when wet.

51. The apparatus of claim 50 wherein said tacky surface includes a grid pattern of a plurality of channels comprised of a non-tacky material.

52. The apparatus of claim 50 wherein said tacky surface includes anti-slip particles.

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