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(54) **POCKET-EQUIPPED SHOWER CURTAIN**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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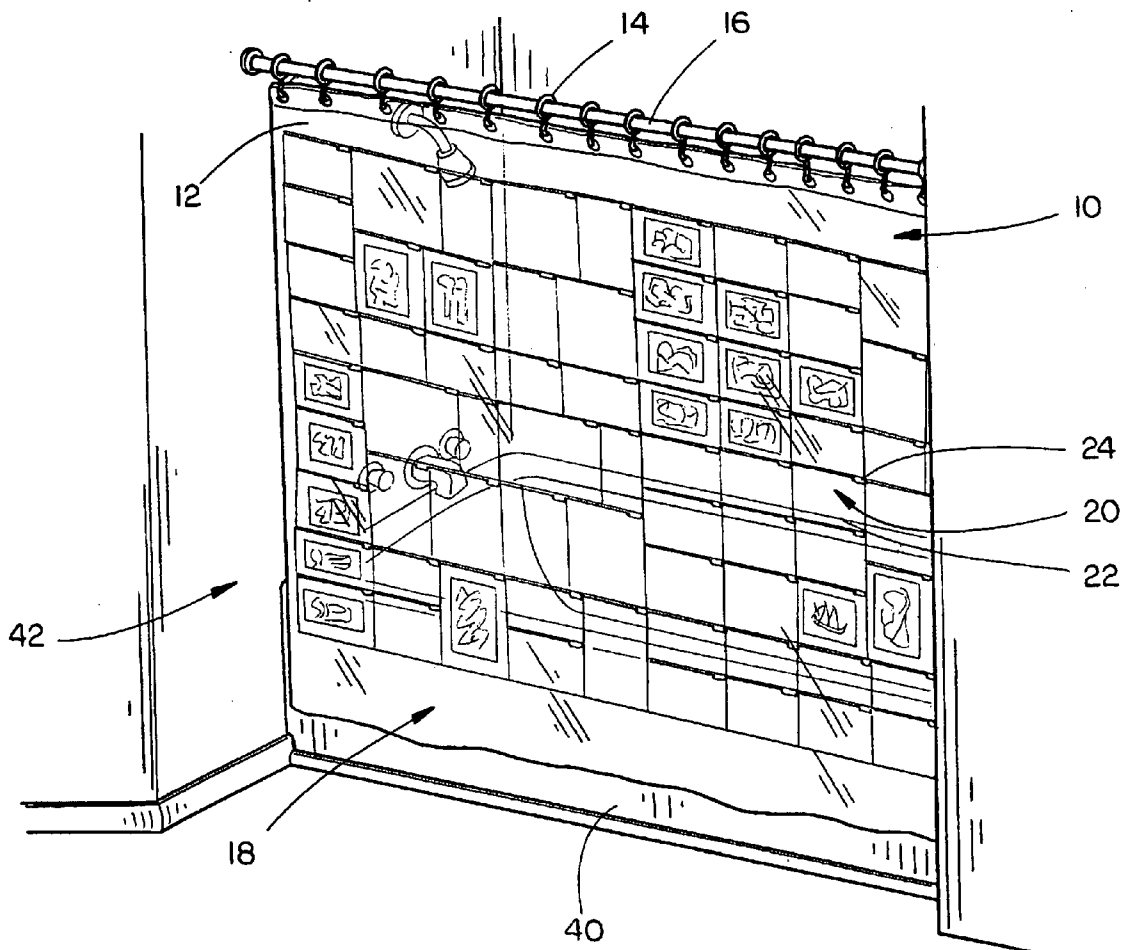
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(60) **Provisional application No. 60/619,235, filed on Oct. 15, 2004.**

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A pocket-equipped shower curtain includes a generally planar flexible panel having at least two generally transparent sections, an exterior surface and an interior surface and at least two pockets each including an outer wall, the outer wall mounted on the exterior surface of the generally planar flexible panel over the generally transparent sections of the flexible panel. Each of the pockets includes an opening operative to permit the insertion of an object into each pocket, the object thus being viewable from either side of the generally planar flexible panel. Finally, at least two closure devices are mounted adjacent each of openings of the pockets, the closure devices operative to alternatively open and close each opening to generally prevent incursion of fluids into the pockets when the closure devices are closed thereby generally preventing damage to objects placed within the pockets.



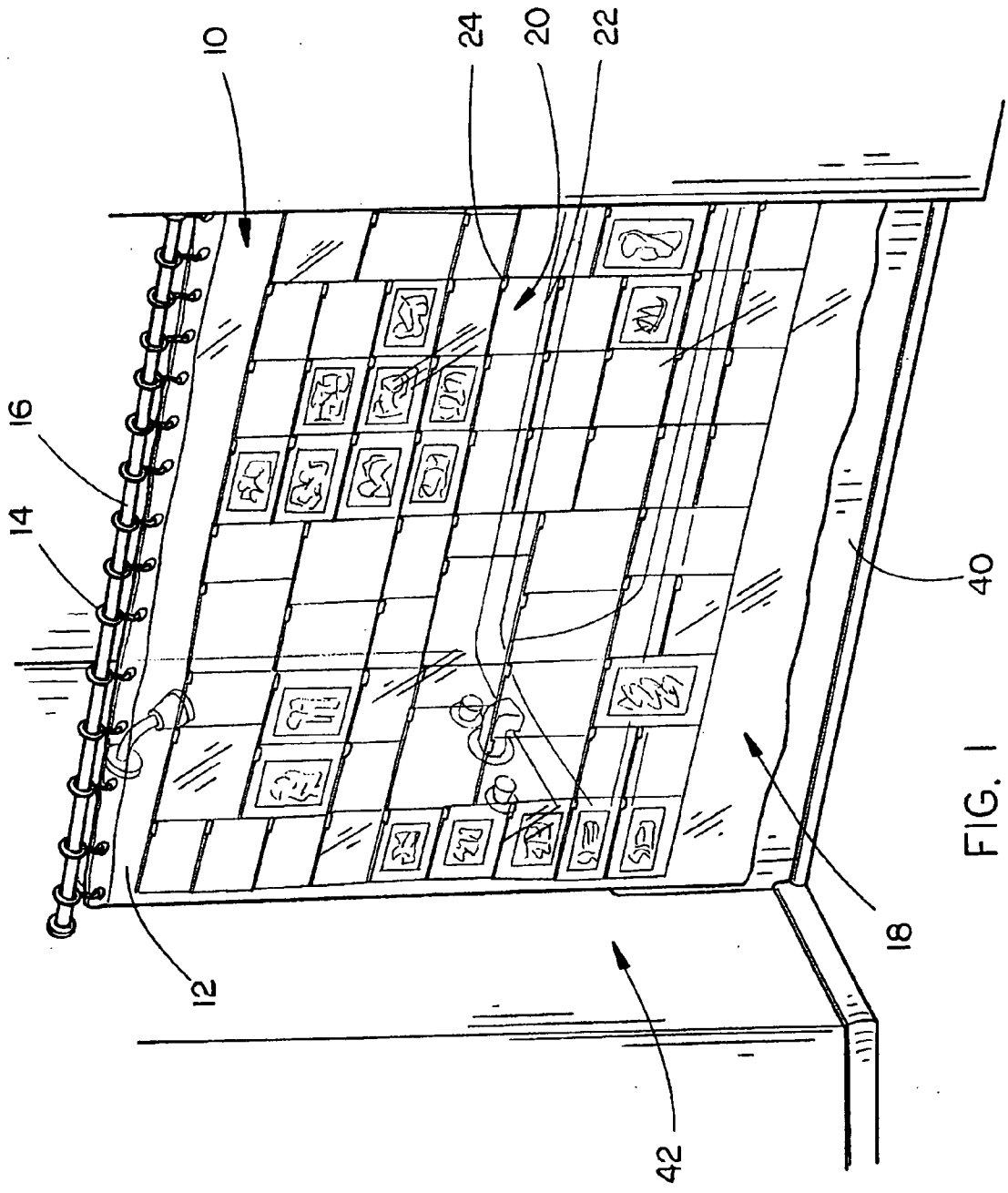


FIG. 1

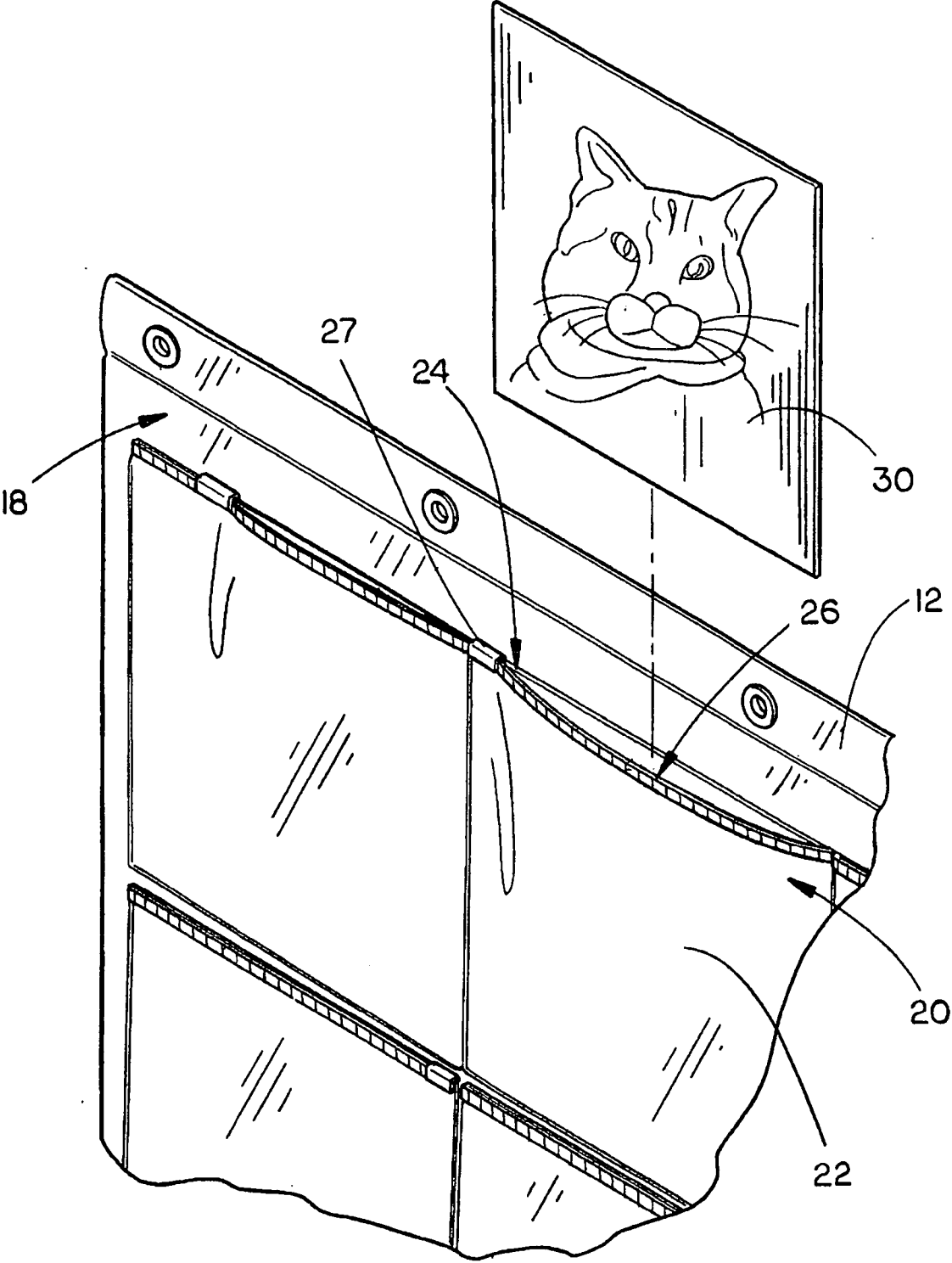


FIG. 2

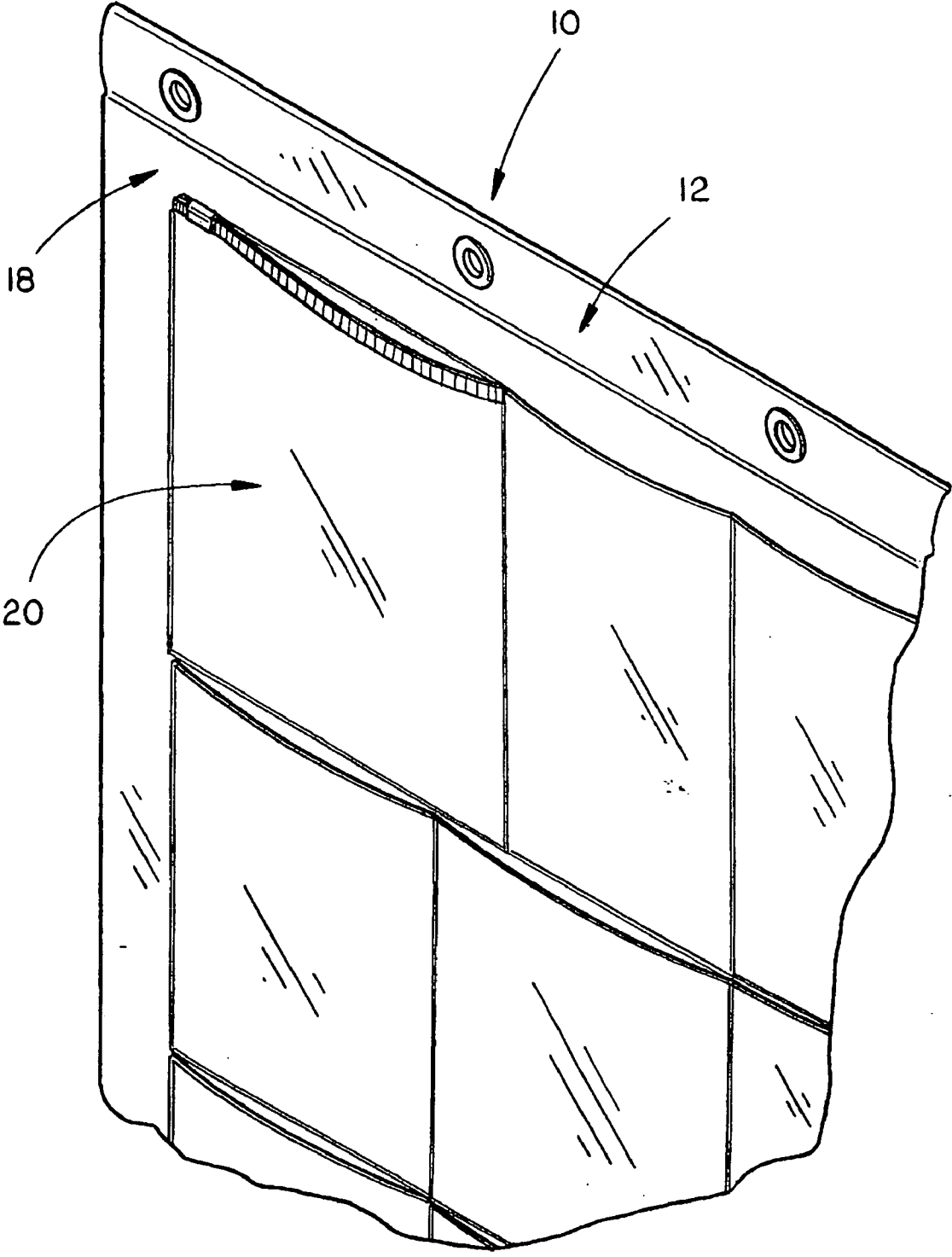


FIG. 3

POCKET-EQUIPPED SHOWER CURTAIN

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
PROVISIONAL PATENT**

[0001] This application claims priority based on a provisional patent, specifically on the Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/619,235 filed Oct. 15, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Technical Field

[0003] The present invention is directed to shower curtains and, more particularly, to a shower curtain having a plurality of object-receiving pockets mounted or formed on the outer surface thereof such that pictures, photos, or other objects may be housed within the pockets on the shower curtain for viewing thereof.

[0004] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] Photographs and pictures serve as wonderful reminders of places and people from our past, and these are most enjoyable when they can be viewed and reviewed on a regular basis. Various methods have been proposed by which to accomplish this, including placing the photos and pictures in photo albums or by scrapbooking the photos and pictures to connect the photos and pictures with the events and people shown therein. However, to experience the photos and pictures when housed in a photo album or the like, one still needs to page through the photo album and thus see the pictures as small groups of pictures which can diminish the enjoyability of reviewing the photos and pictures. There is therefore a need for a display system for photos and pictures which permits the viewing of a large number of pictures at one time.

[0006] Many houses incorporating bathtubs in the bathroom area also include a shower curtain which is used to close off the bathtub area from the remainder of the bathroom when a person is showering in the bathtub. The majority of these shower curtains are constructed of a plastic material and include various designs or indicia imprinted thereon to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the shower curtain. Ordinarily, the shower curtain is approximately 72" by 72" and hangs from a shower curtain bar or the like such that the shower curtain may be extended or retracted depending on the need for the shower curtain. When in extended position, however, the shower curtain presents upwards of 36 square feet of vertical mounting space which could be used for the presentation of photos and pictures if only there were a means by which such a display could be quickly and easily accomplished. Merely affixing pictures to the surface of the shower curtain is impractical, however, as the photos and pictures will likely be damaged or destroyed through contact with water or water vapor, or they would be damaged or destroyed by the adhesive material used to secure the photos to the shower curtain. There is therefore a need for a mounting and display structure which may be made integral to a shower curtain which permits display of photos and pictures while simultaneously protecting them from exposure to the adjacent water and/or water vapor which is found in the bathroom.

[0007] Therefore, an object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain.

[0008] Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain which includes a plurality of object-receiving pockets mounted on the exterior surface of the shower curtain, the pocket and adjacent shower curtain material being generally transparent to permit viewing of the object held within the pocket from either side of the shower curtain.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain in which the pockets each include a closure device such as a ziplock seal or flap which can be closed to prevent moisture from entering the pocket, thus preventing damage to objects held within the pocket.

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain which includes pockets of a variety of sizes in order to permit the present invention to hold and display objects of varying sizes and shapes.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain which includes the aforementioned pockets, yet which also functions in its primary role as a curtain device for preventing water from exiting the shower area.

[0012] Finally, an object of the present invention is to provide an improved pocket-equipped shower curtain which is relatively simple and inexpensive to manufacture and is safe, efficient and effective in use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] The present invention provides a pocket-equipped shower curtain which includes a generally planar flexible panel having at least two generally transparent sections, an exterior surface and an interior surface and at least two pockets each including an outer wall, the outer wall mounted on the exterior surface of the generally planar flexible panel over a selected one of the at least two generally transparent sections of the generally planar flexible panel. Each of the at least two pockets includes at least one opening operative to permit the insertion of an object into each of the at least two pockets, the object being viewable from either side of the generally planar flexible panel. Finally, at least two closure devices are mounted on at least one of the at least two pockets and the generally planar flexible panel, one of the at least two closure devices adjacent each of the at least one openings of the at least two pockets, the at least two closure devices operative to alternatively open and close each of the at least one opening of the at least two pockets to generally prevent incursion of fluids into the at least two pockets when the at least two closure devices have closed each of the at least one opening thereby generally preventing damage to objects placed within the at least two pockets.

[0014] As thus described, the pocket-equipped shower curtain of the present invention provides numerous advantages over those devices found in the prior art. For example, because the pockets are designed to display objects both on the exterior and interior of the shower area, the pictures and objects displayed in the pockets can be appreciated and enjoyed by both persons taking showers and persons merely in the bathroom area. Also, because the pockets each include closure devices to generally seal the opening of the pocket, the user of the present invention need be far less concerned

that his or her treasured belongings being displayed in the pockets will be damaged by inadvertent contact with water or water vapor. Finally, because the pockets of the present invention come in various shapes and sizes, display of may different types of objects, including photographs, keepsakes, mementoes and small statuary may be achieved by use of the present invention. It is thus seen that the pocket-equipped shower curtain of the present invention provides a substantial improvement over those devices found in the prior art.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the pocket-equipped shower curtain of the present invention;

[0016] FIG. 2 is a detailed perspective view of the present invention showing a photograph being inserted into one of the pockets; and

[0017] FIG. 3 is a detailed perspective view of the present invention showing pockets equipped with closure devices and pockets having standard openings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] The pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 of the present invention is shown best in FIGS. 1-3 as including a generally flat flexible shower curtain 12 preferably constructed of a PVC-type plastic sheet material or the like which is movably supported on a plurality of shower curtain rings 14 mounted on a shower curtain bar 16. It is preferred that the shower curtain 12 have dimensions of approximately 6 feet by 6 feet, although the precise size and shape of the shower curtain 12 will generally be determined by the size and shape of the bathtub 40 and wall opening 42 in which the bathtub 40 resides. This is to ensure that the shower curtain 12 substantially encloses and separates the bathtub 40 from the rest of the bathroom to prevent the unintended discharge of water from the interior of the bathtub area.

[0019] The shower curtain 12 as thus described is relatively standard in format, however, the critical features of the present invention will now be described. Specifically, mounted on the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12 are a plurality of pockets 20 which, in the preferred embodiment, would each be constructed of a generally rectangular sheet of transparent plastic (the "outer wall 22") which would be affixed at the sides and base thereof to the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12, as shown best in FIG. 2. It is preferred that the outer wall 22 of pocket 20 be connected to the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12 via heat welding, adhesive, or another such securement method, although it is expected that a standard plastic sheet heat-welding process would be used to provide the connection between the outer wall 22 of each of the pockets 20 and shower curtain 12. Because the outer wall 22 of pocket 20 and the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12 are both constructed of generally flexible plastic sheet material, the outer wall 22 and shower curtain 12 may be deformed away from one another to permit the insertion of photos 30, such as shown in FIG. 2. Depending on the orientation of the printed side of the photo 30, the photo 30 may be viewed by persons in the interior of the bathtub 40 or on the outside of bathtub 40 in the bathroom area. This determination may be made by the user of the pocket-equipped shower curtain 10

of the present invention and alternatively it may be desirable to insert two photos into the pocket 20, with one facing inwards and one facing outwards in order to provide an aesthetically pleasing shower curtain surface for persons both inside the bathtub 40 and outside of the bathtub 40 in the bathroom area.

[0020] Although the pockets 20 are preferably positioned on the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12, there is still the possibility that water or water vapor could enter the pocket 20 and degrade or damage the photo 30 stored within the pocket 20. Therefore, there is a need to provide a closure device 24 mounted adjacent the upper edge 23 of outer wall 22 of pocket 20, as shown best in FIGS. 2 and 3, which can be used to seal the pocket interior once the photo 30 is placed within the pocket 20. In the preferred embodiment, the pocket closure device 24 would be a zipper lock mechanism 26 which includes a plastic or metal zipper pull 27 which is operative to releasably seal the upper edge 23 of outer wall 22 to the exterior surface 18 of shower curtain 12 via a zip-lock type of connection, as shown best in FIG. 2. It is preferred that the zipper lock mechanism 26 produce a generally fluid-type seal which will generally prevent the incursion of water and/or water vapor into the interior of pocket 20, thus providing substantial protection for the photo 30 from damage and destruction caused by contact with water or water vapor. Of course, other types of pocket closure devices 24 such as a sealable flap (not shown) or a standard zip-lock plastic connection system which does not include a zipper (not shown) may be substituted for the zipper lock mechanism 26 of the present invention, and such substitution would be well known by those skilled in the art of providing closure devices. It should also be noted that the pockets 20 may be constructed as not including any type of closure device as shown in FIG. 3, although it is preferred that a closure device 24 be provided to provide protection for the photos 30 stored within each of the pockets 20.

[0021] One of the important features of the pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 of the present invention is that each of the pockets 20 may be constructed to have different sizes and shapes to accommodate various sizes of photos, pictures, or other objects therein. For example, many of the pockets 20 may be constructed as having a standard 3x5 or 4x6 dimension to accommodate standard photographs, but a small number of pockets may be provided which include larger dimensions to accommodate larger prints, posters, photo blowups or other such objects. Furthermore, the pockets 20 may be constructed as including additional room therein to accommodate lightweight objects such as children's toys, souvenirs, memorabilia, or other such objects which the user of the present invention wishes to display. In fact, one of the main benefits of the pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 of the present invention is that it may be adapted or modified to accommodate many different sized and shaped objects beyond the standard photographs or pictures with which the present invention is intended to be used. It is thus seen that the present invention is easily modified to accommodate and display many different types of objects depending upon the display desires of the user of the present invention.

[0022] It is to be understood that numerous additions, modifications, and substitutions may be made to the pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 of the present invention which fall within the broad scope of the above description. For

example, the size, shape, and construction materials used in connection with the pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 may be modified or changed so long as the intended functional features of the present invention are neither degraded nor destroyed. Furthermore, the color, design, and shape of the pockets 20 and shower curtain 12 may be modified or changed to appeal to various purchasing segments of the population and to coordinate with various design features of bathrooms and the like. Finally, the pocket closure device 24 may be of various types, including zipper-type closure devices, flap-type closure devices or many other such closure devices, so long as the intended functional feature of protecting the object or photo 30 enclosed within the pocket 20 is maintained.

[0023] There has therefore been shown and described a pocket-equipped shower curtain 10 which accomplishes at least all of its intended objectives.

I claim:

1. A pocket-equipped shower curtain comprising:

a generally planar flexible panel having at least two generally transparent sections, an exterior surface and an interior surface;

at least two pockets each including an outer wall, said outer wall mounted on said exterior surface of said generally planar flexible panel over a selected one of said at least two generally transparent sections of said generally planar flexible panel;

each of said at least two pockets including at least one opening operative to permit the insertion of an object into each of said at least two pockets, the object being viewable from either side of said generally planar flexible panel; and

at least two closure devices each mounted on at least one of said at least two pockets and said generally planar flexible panel, one of said at least two closure devices adjacent each of said at least one openings of said at least two pockets, said at least two closure devices operative to alternatively open and close each of said at least one opening of said at least two pockets to generally prevent incursion of fluids into said at least two pockets when said at least two closure devices have closed each of said at least one opening thereby generally preventing damage to objects placed within said at least two pockets.

2. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 1 wherein said generally planar flexible panel is constructed of plastic sheeting.

3. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 1 wherein said outer wall of each of said at least two pockets is constructed of a generally rectangular sheet of transparent plastic affixed at the sides and base thereof to said exterior surface of said generally planar flexible panel, said opening being formed where the top of said outer wall is not affixed to said generally planar flexible panel.

4. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 3 wherein said outer wall and said generally planar flexible panel may be deformed away from one another to open said opening at said top of said outer wall thereby permitting insertion of an object for display into at least one of said at least two pockets.

5. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 1 wherein said at least two closure devices each comprise a zipper lock mechanism including a zipper pull operative to releasably close said opening, said zipper lock mechanism operative to generate a generally fluid-type seal which will generally prevent the incursion of water and/or water vapor into the interior of said at least two pockets, whereby objects held within said at least two pockets are generally protected from damage and destruction caused by contact with water or water vapor.

6. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 1 wherein said at least two closure devices each comprise a flap means mounted on said generally planar flexible panel extending over and releasably covering said opening and flap closure means operative to releasably secure said flap means in an opening covering position whereby objects held within said at least two pockets are generally protected from damage and destruction caused by contact with water or water vapor.

7. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 1 wherein said at least two pockets have at least one of different longitudinal and transverse size dimensions whereby various sizes of objects are placeable therein.

8. A pocket-equipped shower curtain comprising:

a generally planar flexible plastic panel having a generally transparent section, an exterior surface and an interior surface;

a pocket including an outer plastic wall, said outer plastic wall mounted on said exterior surface of said generally planar flexible plastic panel over said generally transparent section of said generally planar flexible plastic panel;

said pocket including at least one opening operative to permit the insertion of an object into said pocket, the object being viewable from either side of said generally planar flexible plastic panel;

a closure device mounted on at least one of said pocket and said generally planar flexible plastic panel adjacent said opening of said pocket, said closure device including a zipper lock mechanism including a zipper pull operative to releasably close said opening, said zipper lock mechanism operative to generate a generally fluid-type seal to generally prevent incursion of fluids into said pocket when said closure device has closed said opening thereby generally preventing damage to an object placed within said pocket.

9. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 8 wherein said outer plastic wall of said pocket is constructed of a generally rectangular sheet of transparent plastic affixed at the sides and base thereof to said exterior surface of said generally planar flexible plastic panel, said opening being formed where the top of said outer plastic wall is not affixed to said generally planar flexible plastic panel.

10. The pocket-equipped shower curtain of claim 9 wherein said outer plastic wall and said generally planar flexible plastic panel may be deformed away from one another to open said opening at said top of said outer wall thereby permitting insertion of an object for display into at least one of said at least two pockets.