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(54) SNAP TOP TOTE APPARATUS

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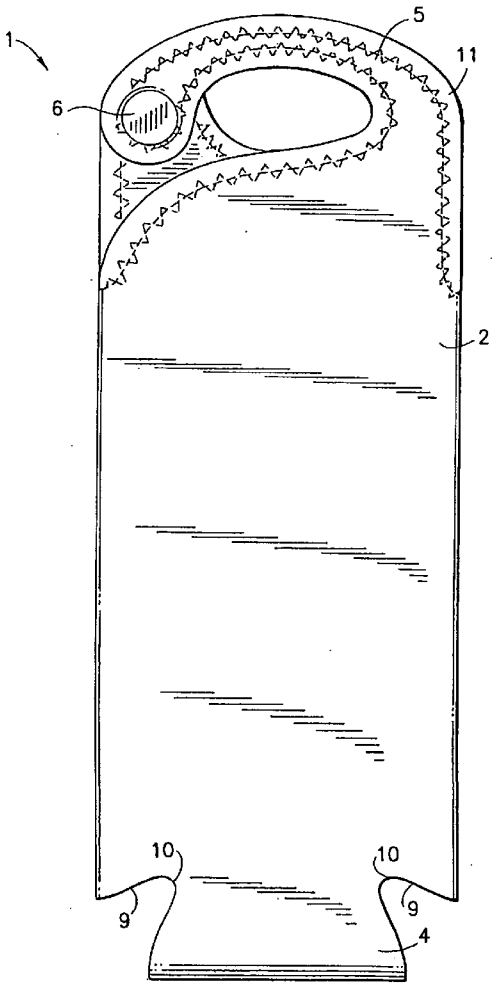
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tote bag apparatus includes a central bounded opening and a top closure allowing a contained item to urge the tote outwardly while forming a seamless bottom member into close contact with the contained item. During use, the tote bag stands upright without an unsightly bunching at an interface between the bottom member and side members, and enables a strap to secure both the contained item from unintended separation and optionally the tote bag to an external support for ready and secure transport.



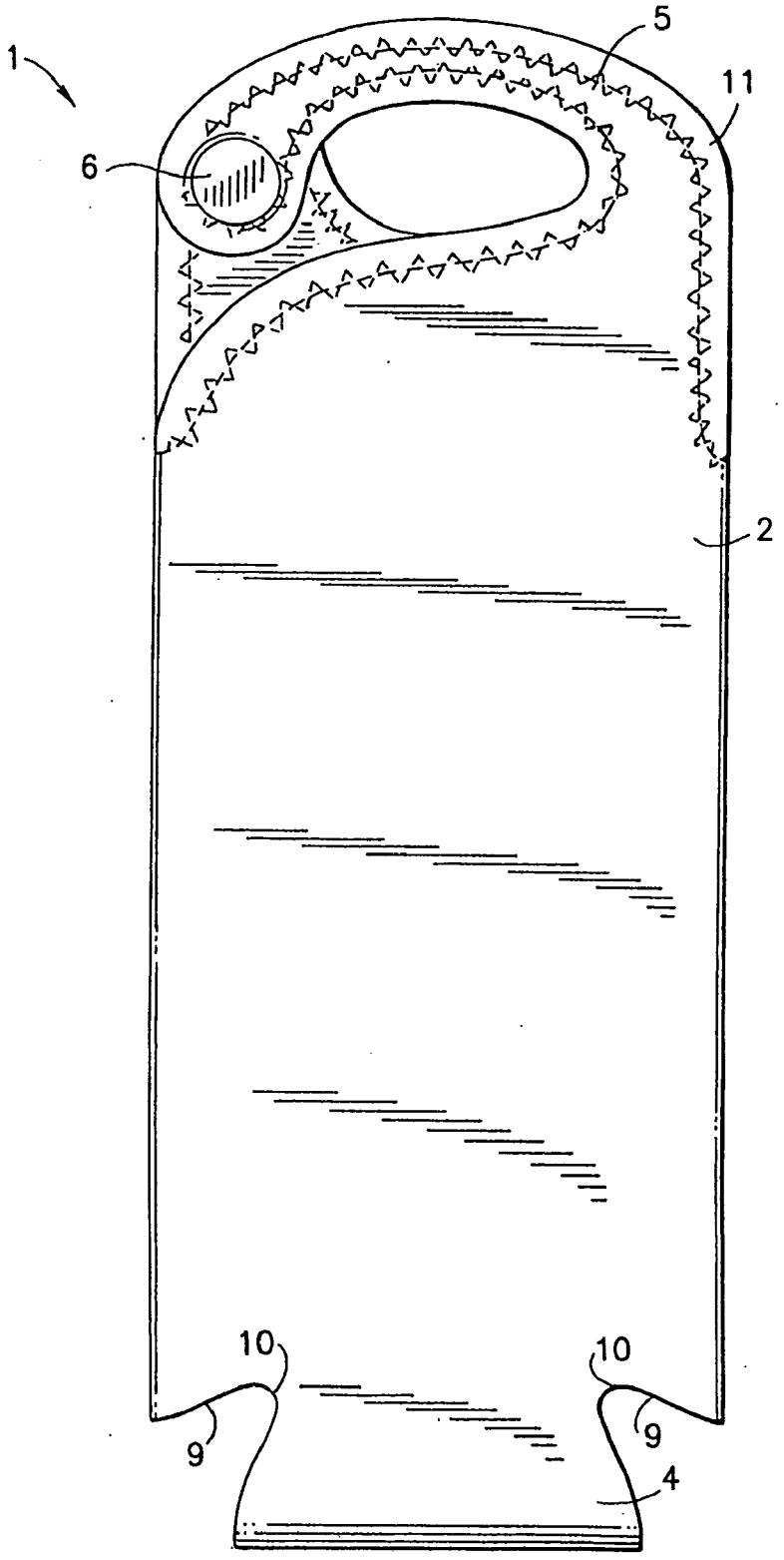


FIG. 1

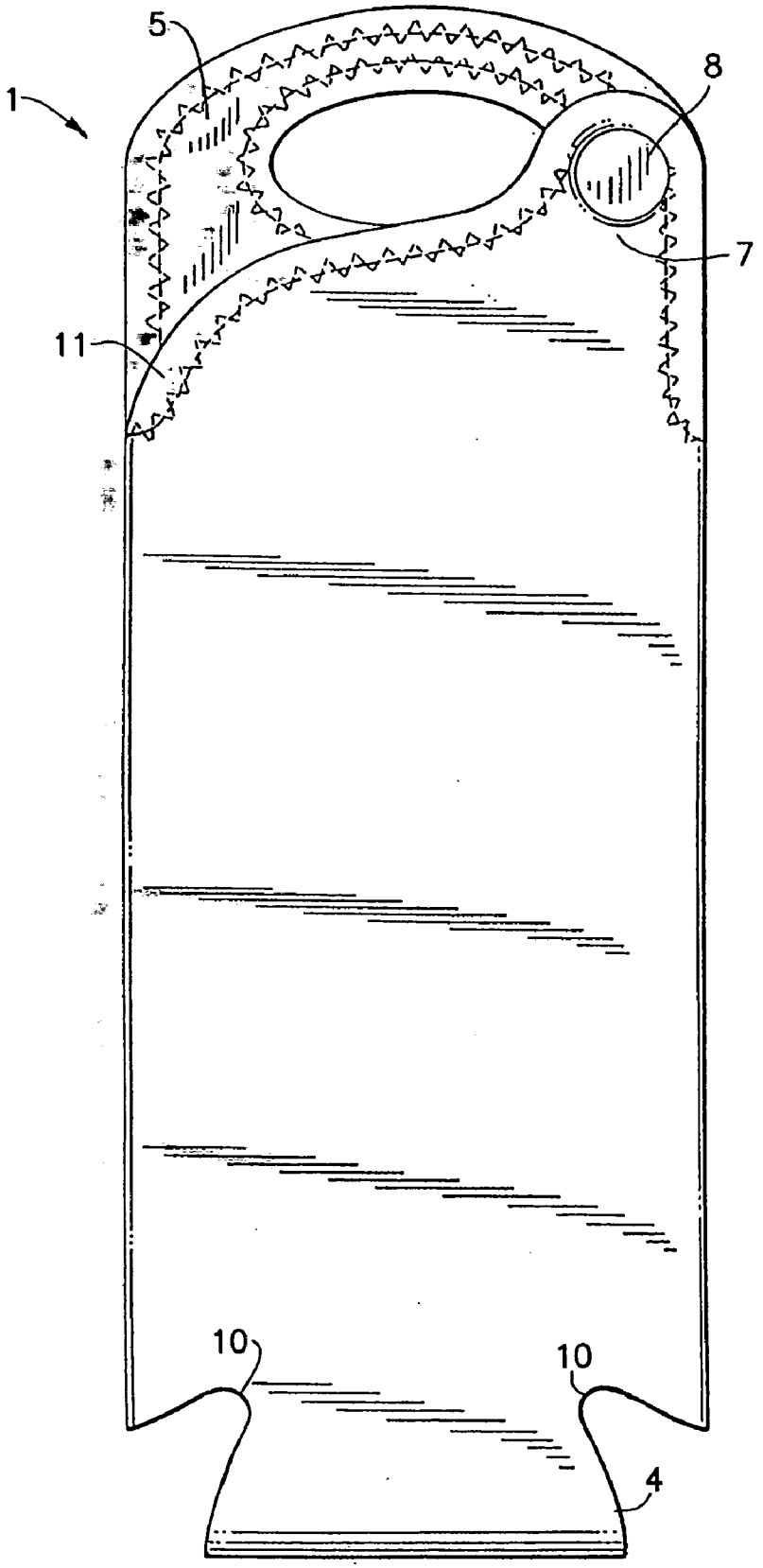


FIG.2

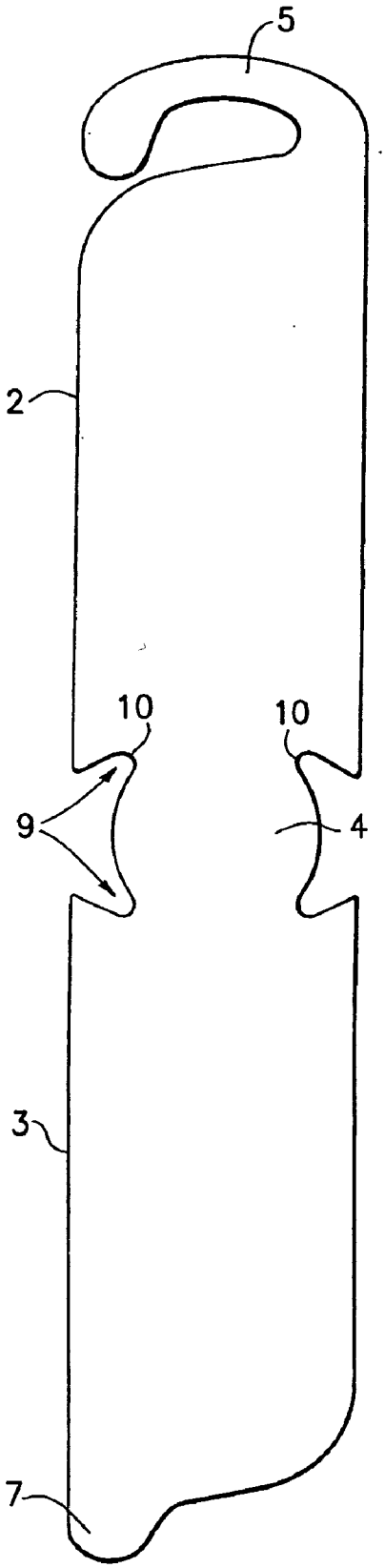


FIG.3

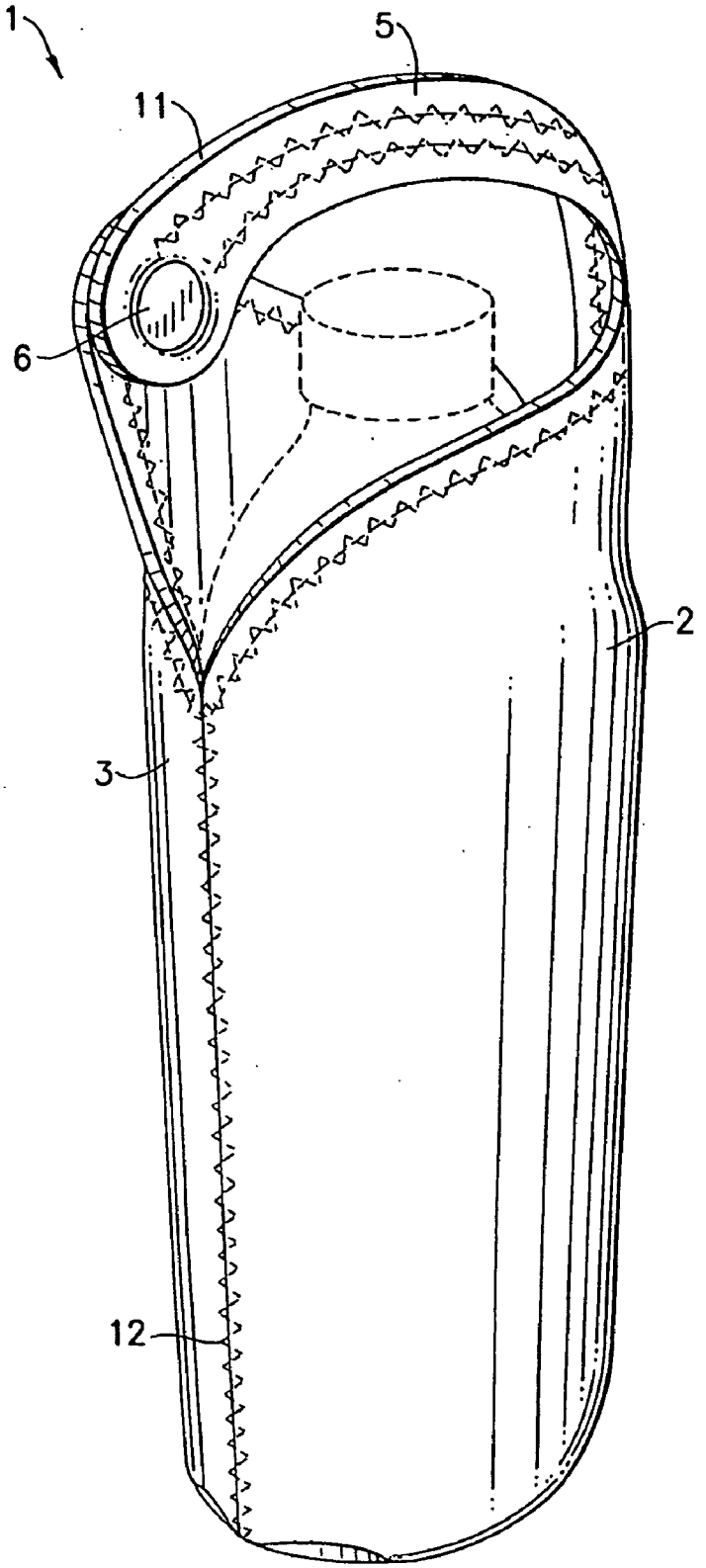


FIG.4

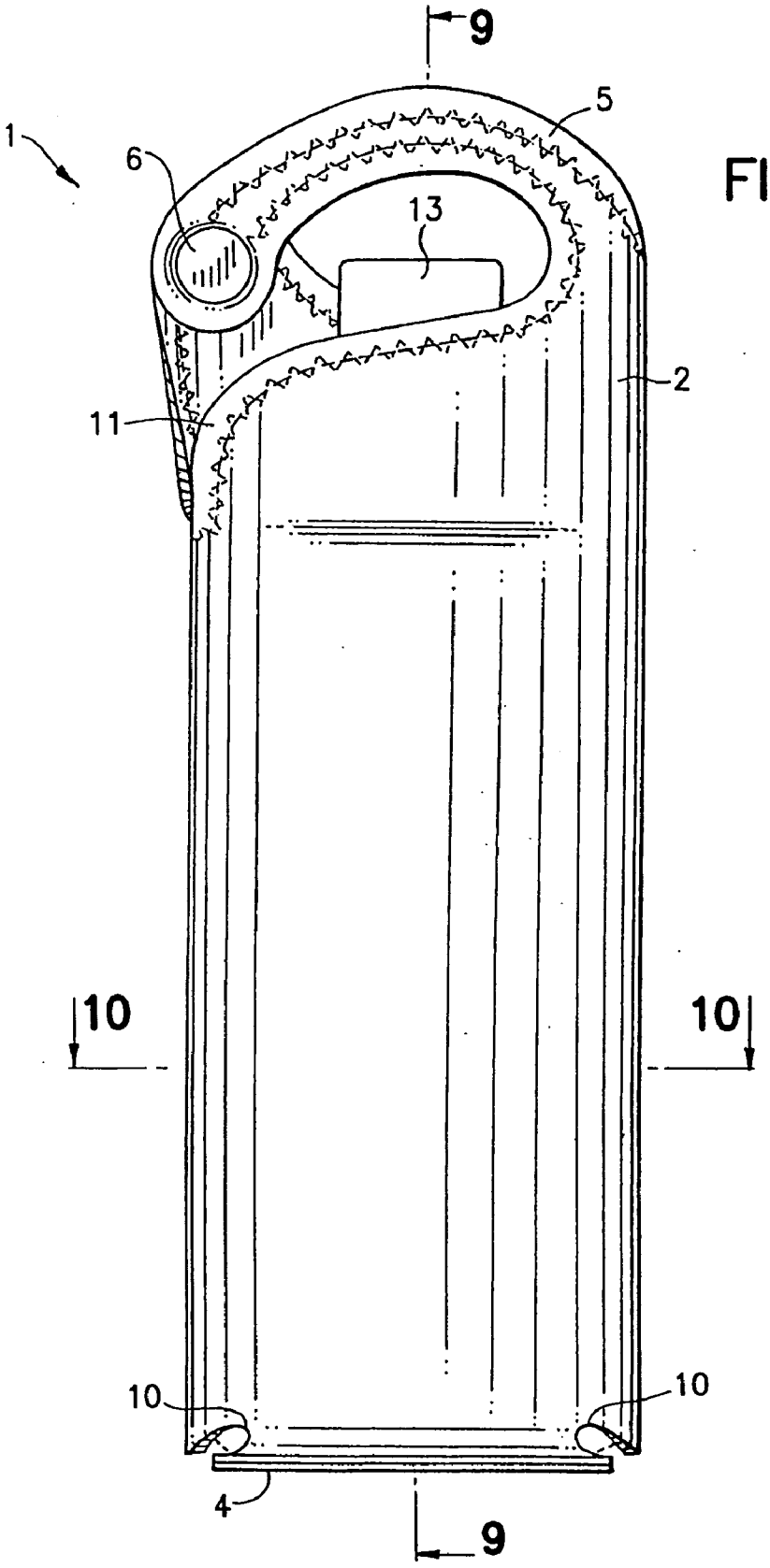


FIG.5

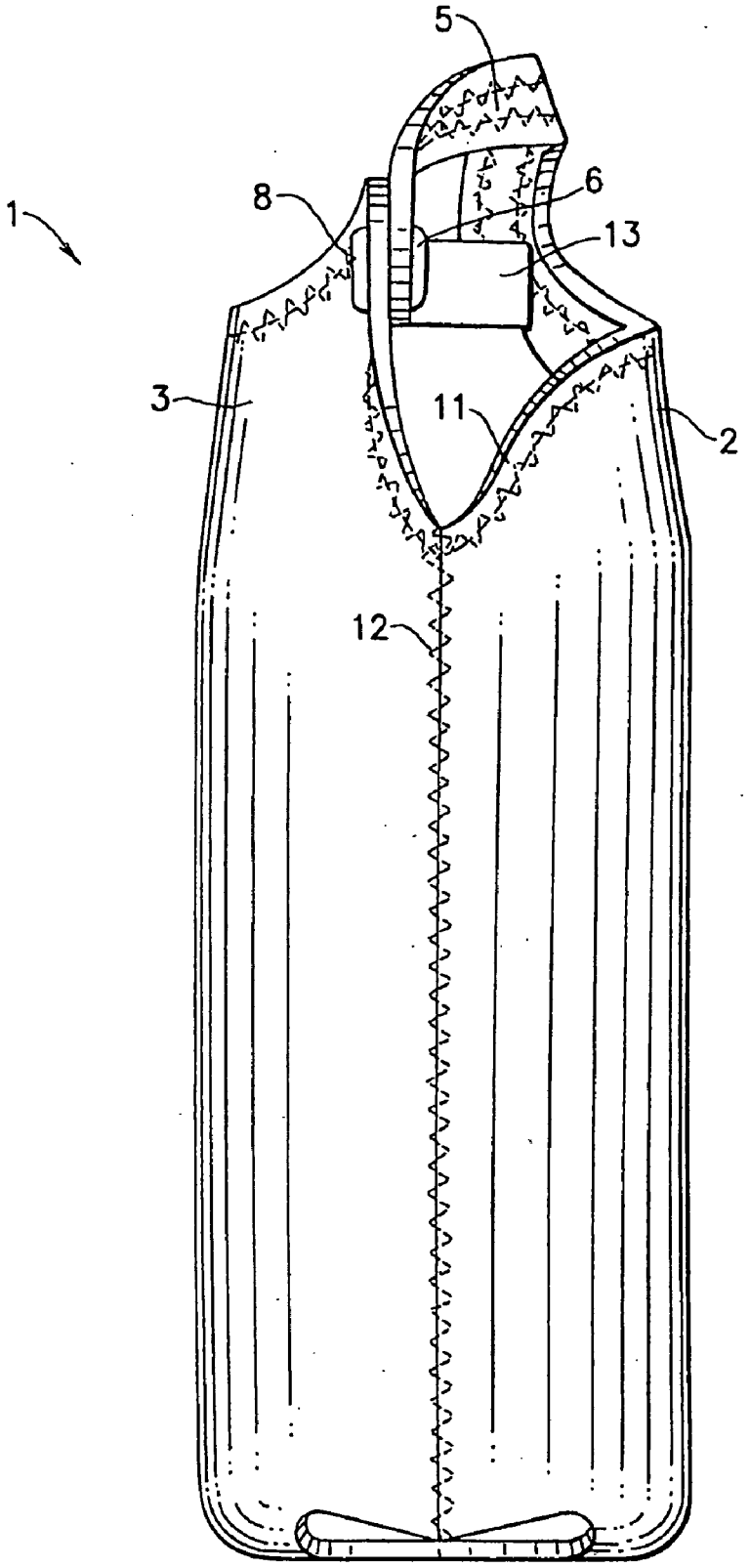


FIG.6

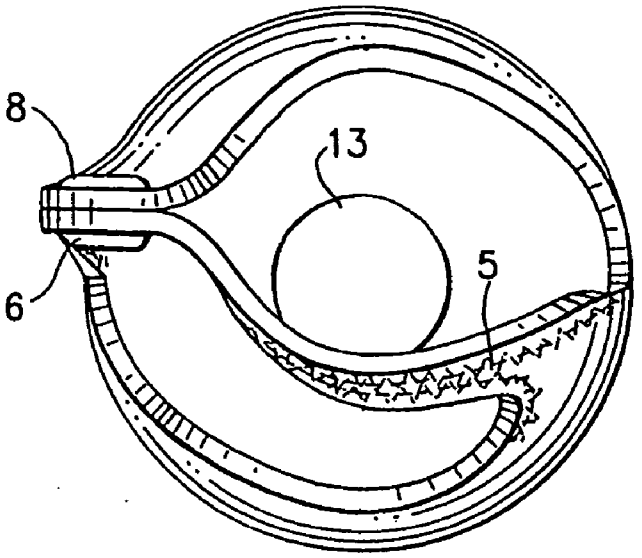


FIG.7

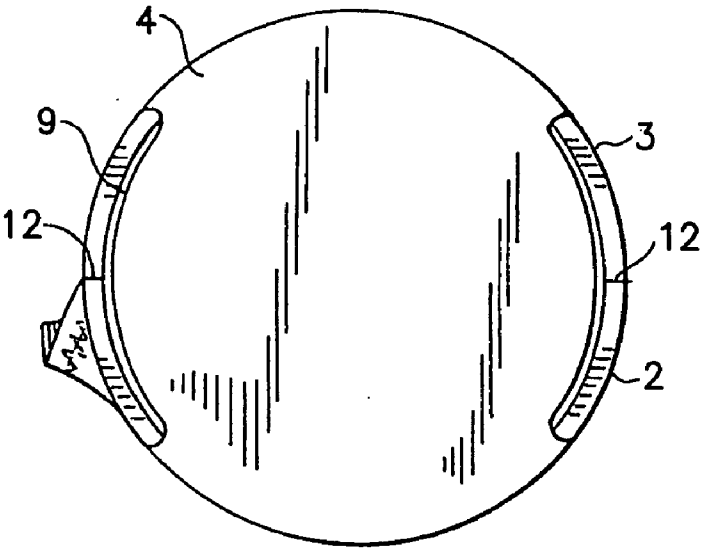


FIG.8

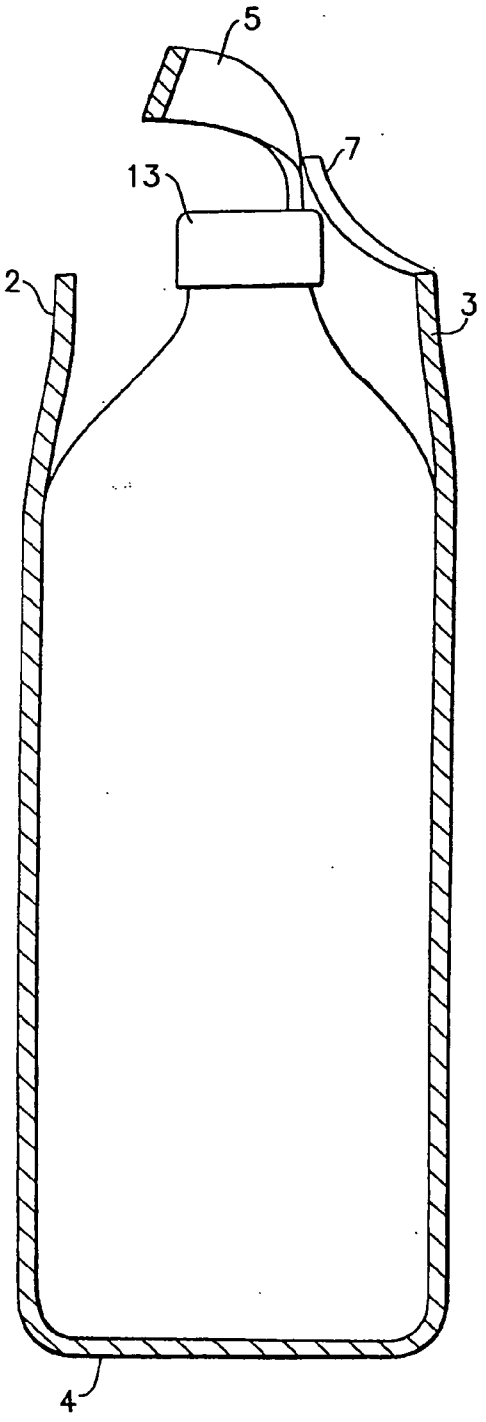


FIG.9

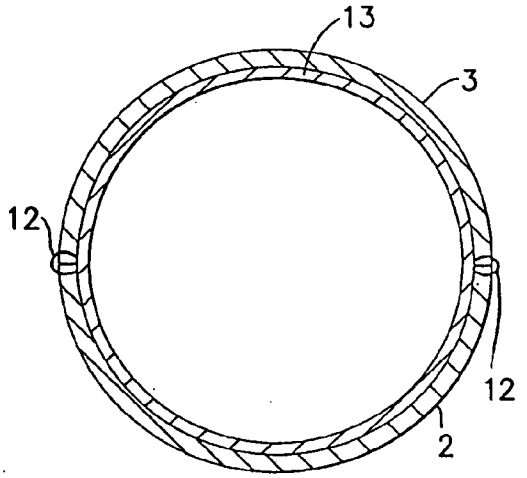


FIG.10

SNAP TOP TOTE APPARATUS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Prov. App. No. 60/642,363 filed Jan. 8, 2005 now abandoned, is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Design App. No. 29/220,939 filed Jan. 8, 2005 currently pending and allowed, is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Design App. No. 29/230,683 filed May 25, 2005 currently pending, is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Design App. No. 29/,230,704 filed May 25, 2005 currently pending, and is a continuation of PCT/US2005/_____ filed Jan. 8, 2006 (Attorney Ref. No. Built.P045), the contents of each of which is herein fully incorporated by reference.

VIEW SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION

[0002] **FIG. 4**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] 1. Field of the Invention

[0004] The present invention relates to a tote bag with a flexible enclosing member at a top section. More specifically, the present invention relates to a snap top tote bag having a simplified and rugged construction and a convenient closing mechanism that readily minimizes tipping during use while retaining thermal energy and minimizing construction costs and container damage during transport.

[0005] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0006] Various bottle totes and bags are known in the art, but lack the valuable features found in the present invention.

[0007] In multiple disclosures by Hamilton (US D441,612, US D409,450, US D414,083) [collectively Hamilton], a top loading wine bottle bag includes a body section formed from three sewn-together pieces and two separately attached handle portions that bound sides of the top opening. The body sections are sewn to bulge outwardly and loosely contain a wine bottle while providing a carry handle in two parts. Alternative embodiments include small zipper pockets on the outer surface of the body section. While Hamilton provides a convenient top loading wine bag it fails to provide for the option of securing the wine bottle securely within a closure to prevent unintended escape, jiggling, or for securing the product to another item for easy security or transport. Hamilton similarly fails to optimize a convenient and speedy construction, requiring multi-dimensional stitches and the assembly of multiple pieces requiring waste during shape cut-out.

[0008] In Plooster (U.S. Pat. No. 1,808,375), a shopping bag is formed from two main pieces of flexible material that are sewn together. In a continuous top piece, a carry strap and two side panels are formed, and a bottom piece is sewn to the bottom portion of each side panel joining them and forming a supportive bottom member. In this embodiment, the material selected is simply fabric and is therefore not readily shaped to enable thermal retention, secure a bottle from rattling and breakage, provide a tight engagement strap to retain a bottle within the bag, or provide an attachment mechanism to join the shopping bag to another item for easy security against tipping or to secure transport. As an additional negative, the bottom panel includes continuous seams that bunch and risk tipping a bottle, preventing a bottle bottom from flat contact without manually "pulling up" the shopping bag about the loosely contained bottle.

[0009] There is therefore a need for a conveniently constructed, preferably insulating tote container, that flattens during non-use, securely contains a container , allows engagement with another item for easy security or transport, and provides a flatenable bottom without bunching or "pulling up" the container prior to placement on a support surface.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] An object of the present invention is to provide a snap top tote apparatus that responds to one of the needs noted above.

[0011] An object of the present invention is to provide a tote bag having a simple and robust construction that provides superior protection to a container and easy transport.

[0012] An alternative object of the present invention is to provide a tote bag formed from a material having a thermal retention capability.

[0013] Another object of the present invention is to provide a tote bag formed from a single or continuous piece of material to minimize construction costs and waste.

[0014] Another object of the present invention is to provide a design easily adapted between a cut-n-sew side-seam construction to a continuously manufactured construction without side seams.

[0015] Another object of the present invention is to provide a tote bag with a secure bottom closure that allows a filled tote-bag to stand upright without budging or protruding thereby minimizing risk of tipping.

[0016] Another object of the present invention is to provide a tote bag product with a simple closure top member, securing the contents and allowing the product to be carried as a handle, or strapped to a second product for secure and ready transport.

[0017] The present invention relates to a tote bag apparatus optionally including a central bounded opening and a top closure allowing a contained item to urge the bag outwardly while forming by flattening a bottom member into close contact with the contained item. During use, the tote bag stands upright without an unsightly bunching at an interface between the bottom member and side members, and enables a strap member to secure both the contained item and optionally the tote bag to an external support for ready and secure transport.

[0018] According to one embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus comprising: a first flexible member including a supporting bottom portion joining a front side portion and a rear side portion in a substantially continuous manner and bounding at least one container receiving region there between, a first attachment member projecting from the first side portion distal from the bottom portion, a second attachment section on the second side portion distal from the bottom portion, means for releasably securing the first projecting attachment member

and the second attachment section, whereby the means for releasably securing enables a secure joining between the front side portion and the rear side portion for securing an external container within the container receiving region of the tote apparatus during a use, at least a first and a second notch region defining a flexible transition region between the supporting bottom portion and proximate portions of the front and rear side portions, whereby during the use the first and second notch regions enable the first flexible member to flex and smoothly bound a bottom region of the external container without distending and provide a smooth support surface to the external container.

[0019] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the first front side portion and the rear side portion are joined by one of a seamed and a seamless construction.

[0020] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the front and rear side portions are joined by a seamed construction.

[0021] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the first flexible member is a continuous elastomeric member, and the elastomeric member being one of a closed cell and an open cell rubber material, whereby the tote apparatus enables a thermal retention and an elastic protection of the external container during the use.

[0022] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the first attachment member continuously projects from the first side portion distal from the bottom portion.

[0023] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the elastomeric member includes is at least one of a neoprene material and an SBR (Styrene Butadiene Rubber) material.

[0024] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus wherein: the elastomeric member is coated on at least one side by at least one of an artificial textile material, natural textile material, and a flexible film material, whereby the elastomeric member is protected from unintended abrasion.

[0025] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a carry tote apparatus, further comprising: means for dividing the at least one container region into at least two container receiving regions for containing multiple external containers, and the means for dividing including a dividing stitch line joining regions of the front side and the rear side portions whereby the first flexible member enables secure transport of more than one external container.

[0026] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention there is provided a method of constructing a flexible tote apparatus for releasably containing at least one external container, comprising the steps of:: forming at least a first elongate continuous flexible member including a supporting bottom portion joining a front side portion and a rear side portion in a substantially continuous manner, the continuous member including a first attachment member projecting from the first side portion distal the bottom portion, the continuous member including a second attachment member on the second side portion distal the bottom portion, the step of forming including a second step of forming at least at least a first and a second notch region defining a flexible transition region between the supporting bottom portion and proximate portions of respective the front and rear side portions, whereby during a use the first and second notch regions enable the first flexible member to flex and smoothly bound a support region of the external container without distending and to provide a smooth support surface to the external container, securing respective attachment sides of respective the front side and respective rear side portions and bounding at least one container receiving region there between, and securing at least a first means for releasably securing the first projecting attachment member and the second attachment member on respective the first and second side portions, whereby the means for releasably securing enables a secure joining between the front side portion and the rear side portion for securing the external container within the container receiving region of the tote apparatus during a use.

[0027] According to another alternative embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a flexible tote apparatus for securely transporting at least one external container, comprising: an elongate continuous member, further comprising: a first side portion and a second side portion, a bottom portion continuously joining the first and second side portions at proximate ends thereof, a first and a second notch portion on opposing sides of the bottom portion at the proximate ends of the first and second side portions, means for joining respective portions of the opposing sides of the first and the second side portions thereby defining a container bounding region there between for receiving the at least one external container, an extending attachment member having an attachment end projecting from a distal end of the first side portion, a receiving portion defined on the distal end of the second side portion proximate the attachment end of the attachment member, means for releasably affixing the attachment end of the extending attachment member to the receiving portion thereby preventing an unintended separation of the external container from the container bounding region during a use.

[0028] According to another alternative and optional embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a flexible tote apparatus, wherein: the means for joining includes at least one of stitching, gluing, heat sealing, stapling, riveting, and binding, whereby the means for joining enables substantial flexibility along joined portions of the opposing sides of the first and second side portions and enables the flexible tote apparatus to remain flexible after joining during a use.

[0029] The above, and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description read in conduction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals designate the same elements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0030] **FIG. 1** is a front view of one embodiment of the present invention.

[0031] **FIG. 2** is a rear view of the embodiment shown in **FIG. 1**.

[0032] **FIG. 3** is a view of an unstitched tote element prior to a stitching or construction step.

[0033] **FIG. 4** is a perspective top view of the present invention, shown filled with a container.

[0034] **FIG. 5** is a side view of the view shown in **FIG. 4**.

[0035] **FIG. 6** is a side perspective view of the filled embodiment shown in **FIG. 4**

[0036] **FIG. 7** is a top view of the filled embodiment shown in **FIG. 4**.

[0037] **FIG. 8** is a bottom view of the filled embodiment shown in **FIG. 4**.

[0038] **FIG. 9** is a sectional view along line **9-9** shown in **FIG. 5**.

[0039] **FIG. 10** is a sectional view along line **10-10** shown in **FIG. 5**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0040] Reference will now be made in detail to several embodiments of the invention that are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, same or similar reference numerals are used in the drawings and the description to refer to the same or like parts or steps. The drawings are in simplified form and are not to precise scale or shape. For purposes of convenience and clarity only, directional terms, such as top, bottom, up, down, over, above, and below may be used with respect to the drawings. These and similar directional terms should not be construed to limit the scope of the invention in any manner. Furthermore, the words "connect,""couple," and similar terms with their inflectional morphemes do not necessarily denote direct and immediate connections, but also include connections through mediate elements or devices.

[0041] Referring now to **FIGS. 1 through 3**, a tote apparatus **1** includes a front side portion **2** and a rear side portion **3**. A bottom portion **4** continuously spans front side portion **2** and rear side portion **3**. Front side portion **2** includes a strap member **5** continuously extending from one side edge of front side portion **2** into a narrow shaped member extending toward the opposite side edge of front side portion **2** (as shown). A male snap member **6** is affixed to a distal end of strap member **5**, as shown.

[0042] A joining portion **7** of rear side portion **3** extends outwardly as a protuberance away from one side edge of rear side portion **3**, opposite the origination of strap member **5**. Joining portion **7** extends from a rear side portion **3** on an opposite side edge to strap member **5** extending from front side portion **2**. As a consequence of this design, male snap member **6**, on the distal end of strap member **5** is proximate the protuberance of joining portion **7** on rear side portion **3**. A female snap member **8** is affixed to the distal end of the protruding joining portion **7** proximate the distal end of strap member **5** and male snap member **6**.

[0043] Male and female snap members **6**, **8** serve as mechanisms or means for joining or securing strap member **5** with joining portion **7** and forming an engageable and disengagable securing loop or strap between front and rear side portions **2**, **3** that additionally operates as an openable carry handle. Those skilled in the art of consumer product design will readily recognize that the present embodiment does not limit the invention to snaps, and that alternative mechanisms or means for joining and securing strap member **5** to joining portion **7** may be used. These include, but are not limited to Velcro, buttons, hook and loops, buckles, small metal hooks, snap-gate technologies common to climbing equipment, and many others.

[0044] The materials for constructing tote apparatus **1**, as shown in the preferred embodiments, include neoprene and SBR (Styrene Butadiene Rubber) for its desirable elastic and optionally desirable thermal retention capabilities. Neoprene and SBR are closed cell foam constructions bounded by selectable textile flexible fabric members, commonly nylon on both sides or alternatively a woven terry cloth or other material. It should be recognized that other open and closed cell foam materials may be selected by manufacturers without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. In other embodiments, the material for tote apparatus **1** may be simply woven fabric or multiple layers of fabric. It is not mandatory to the utility of the present invention that the material forming front and rear side portions be elastic or thermally retentive, these are merely preferred qualities of the preferred embodiment discussed. While the manufacturing benefits of a continuous piece are described below, nothing herein shall restrict the present design to mandatory continuous piece construction. Those of skill in the art will recognize that strap member **5** may be formed from any suitable material and be flexible or inflexible, and elastic or inelastic as desired by a manufacturer, and may be separately affixed to the front side portion.

[0045] As clearly shown in **FIG. 3**, the preferred embodiment of the present invention is formed from a continuous piece of material. As can be seen, bottom portion **4** continues from front side portion **2** to rear side portion **3**. Bottom portion **4** is formed by cutting notches **9** having radiused comers **10** in an initial material-cutting step minimizing material waste and hence lowering manufacturing costs.

[0046] In a second manufacturing step fabric piping or edging material **11** is stitched around the cut portions forming strap member **5** and joining portion **7** as shown. Edging material **11** may also be formed about the entire end cut portions of front and rear side portions **2**, **3** to minimize raveling and fraying of the cut edge and to provide a pleasing appearance. Piping or edging material **11** may be formed from any suitable material and may include various colors or patterns pleasing to a consumer or manufacturer. Piping and edging material **11** is an optional addition to the preferred embodiment shown, and while providing utility and a benefit, is not mandatory to the present construction for secure operation. In alternative embodiments, piping or edging material **11** may completely cover the edge of tote apparatus **1**, or may cover only selected portions as desired by a manufacturer without departing from the present invention.

[0047] In an additional and optional step, a binding stitch (not shown) or even an addition of edging material **11** may be provided about the edge of notches **9**, **9** forming bottom portion **4** to minimize edge fraying and support a pleasing appearance. Since radiused corners **10**, **10** form a rather narrow angle along notches **9** when tote apparatus **1** is folded at bottom portion **4**, a flexible binding stitch (not shown) is preferred over edging material **11**, but those of skill in the art

recognize that notches **9**, **9** may remain unfixed or may employ via thermal fusing, gluing, etc. other methods to minimize fraying and edge damage. Those of skill in the consumer products manufacturing arts will readily recognize that alternative means exist for minimizing edge fraying along notches **9** without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

[**0048**] In a third manufacturing step, bottom portion **4** is folded and front and rear side portions **2**, **3** are aligned. In this step, notches **9**, **9** are aligned on each side of bottom portion **4** as shown in **FIGS. 1 and 2**.

[**0049**] Referring now to **FIGS. 4 through 10**, in a fourth manufacturing step, side binding stitches **12**, **12** are used to join the butt portions (or other portions) of each front and rear side portion **2**, **3**, as shown forming a smooth and pleasing exterior look to tote apparatus **1**. In the preferred embodiment shown, stitches **12**, **12**, are shown in a zig-zag pattern, but any suitable stitch pattern may be used to join front and rear side portions **2**, **3**. It should also be understood that any suitable mechanism or method may be used to join front and rear side portions, including thermal binding and gluing of the material portions, or alternative stitching patterns. It will also be readily understood by those of skill in the art that edging material **11** may be applied following the manufacturing step of folding and stitching together front and rear side portions **2**, **3**.

[**0050**] It is also known in the consumer products and fabric arts to create a continuously formed or woven shape, commonly known from knitted tie makers, without side seams. Continuously formed shapes may also be formed from neoprene and other foam based and consumer based product materials while retaining the preferred (not mandatory) beneficial qualities of the preferred embodiment, namely elastic/flexible and thermal limiting qualities. This invention intends to incorporate the understanding that while the preferred embodiment is cut from a single piece of material and stitched into final form, nothing shall prevent this invention from being so limited, and continuously formed final shapes may also be employed.

[**0051**] Where a continuous final shape is formed, the manufacturing process will adapt to remove the edge joining step and to include a step of cutting out notches **9**, **9** and defining and forming bottom portion **4** as a continuous bottom support. Where a continuous shape is formed, the manufacturing process will also include the steps of forming strap member **5** and joining portion **7**. Thus, those skilled in the art of materials forming will readily recognize that various manufacturing methods may be employed without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

[**0052**] In a later step, male and female snap members **6**, **8** are affixed respectively to strap member **5** and joining portion **7** to allow suitable engagement.

[**0053**] During use, when bottle **13** is inserted into tote apparatus and pressed downwardly, side portions **2**, **3** separate and form bottom portion **4** into a floor member allowing tote apparatus **1** to remain upright on a flat surface without bunching of fabric adjacent the edge seams.

[**0054**] It will be understood, by those skilled in the art, that the present invention optionally includes notches **9**, **9** to allow bottom portion **4** to form a flat floor portion and eliminate the risk of fabric bunching adjacent the floor portion, thereby providing a smooth appearance to a consumer, enabling close positioning of multiple filled members, and provides a pleasing appearance. These benefits are more clearly appreciated in **FIGS. 7 and 8**, where the preferred material elastically adapts to the external shape of bottle **13** while the elimination of bottom seams along the edges of front and rear side portions **2**, **3** provides a smooth rounded bottom radius and notches **9**, **9** with radiused comers **10**, **10** minimize unsightly fabric bunching. One benefit of the present invention is that risk of bottle tipping is minimized and a flat support surface is preserved for user convenience.

[**0055**] While a round bottle **13** is employed in the present invention, it should be readily apparent to those of skill in the art that differently sized and shaped containers, including tapered and rounded containers, may be used without departing from the benefits of the present design. For example, rectilinear flexible board containers are commonly used in Europe for juice, milk and other fluids may be readily employed. The rectilinear design is easily stacked and transported by manufacturers in both a filled (by pushing the strap member aside) and unfilled form, and has been broadly adopted in the EU, with a growing use in the US. The present invention, due to its preferable elastic construction easily adapts to accept the rectilinear design and provide the benefits noted above.

[**0056**] Those skilled in the art should also readily recognize the benefits provide by the preferred embodiment by eliminating any bottom seam, and the associated risk of seam failure and loss of contents. The present invention provides a seamless continuous bottom portion that, in the preferred embodiment shown, is integral with front and rear side portions **2**, **3** and therefore enables the transport of heaver loads with greater security. Thus, while the preferred embodiment provides no bottoms seam and a continuously bounded container receiving region, it is recognized that a similar shape of construction maybe assembled from multiple disparate pieces, having seams along a bottom region, without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

[**0057**] Another alternative construction related to the present preferred description is to extend the dimensions of the container receiving region thereby enabling its subdivision by one or more dividing stitches and the formation of at least two container receiving regions.

[**0058**] In the claims, means- or step-plus-function clauses are intended to cover the structures described or suggested herein as performing the recited function and not only structural equivalents but also equivalent structures. Thus, for example, although a nail, a screw, and a bolt may not be structural equivalents in that a nail relies on friction between a wooden part and a cylindrical surface, a screw's helical surface positively engages the wooden part, and a bolt's head and nut compress opposite sides of a wooden part, in the environment of fastening wooden parts, a nail, a screw, and a bolt may be readily understood by those skilled in the art as equivalent structures.

[**0059**] Having described at least one of the preferred embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to those precise embodiments, and that various changes, modifications, and adaptations may be

effected therein by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A tote apparatus, comprising:

a first flexible member including a supporting bottom portion joining a front side portion and a rear side portion in a substantially continuous manner and bounding at least one container receiving region there between;

a first attachment member projecting from said first side portion distal from said bottom portion;

a second attachment section on said second side portion distal from said bottom portion;

means for releasably securing said first projecting attachment member and said second attachment section, whereby said means for releasably securing enables a secure joining between said front side portion and said rear side portion for securing an external container within said container receiving region of said tote apparatus during a use; and

at least a first and a second notch region defining a flexible transition region between said supporting bottom portion and proximate portions of said front and rear side portions, whereby during said use said first and second notch regions enable said first flexible member to flex and smoothly bound a bottom region of said external container without distending and provide a smooth support surface to said external container.

2. A tote apparatus, according to claim 1, wherein:

said first front side portion and said rear side portion are joined by one of a seamed and a seamless construction.

3. A tote apparatus, according to claim 2, wherein:

said front and rear side portions are joined by a seamed construction.

4. A tote apparatus, according to claim 2, wherein:

said first flexible member is a continuous elastomeric member; and

said elastomeric member being one of a closed cell and an open cell rubber material, whereby said tote apparatus enables a thermal retention and an elastic protection of said external container during said use.

5. A tote apparatus, according to claim 1, wherein:

said first attachment member continuously projects from said first side portion distal from said bottom portion.

6. A tote apparatus, according to claim 4 wherein:

said elastomeric member includes is at least one of a neoprene material and an SBR (Styrene Butadiene Rubber) material.

7. A tote apparatus, according to claim 6 wherein:

said elastomeric member is coated on at least one side by at least one of an artificial textile material, natural textile material, and a flexible film material, whereby said elastomeric member is protected from unintended abrasion.

8. A tote apparatus, according to claim 3, further comprising:

means for dividing said at least one container region into at least two container receiving regions for containing multiple external containers; and

the means for dividing including a dividing stitch line joining regions of said front side and said rear side portions whereby said first flexible member enables secure transport of more than one external container.

9. A method of constructing a flexible tote apparatus for releasably containing at least one external container, comprising the steps of:

forming at least a first elongate continuous flexible member including a supporting bottom portion joining a front side portion and a rear side portion in a substantially continuous manner;

said continuous member including a first attachment member projecting from said first side portion distal said bottom portion;

said continuous member including a second attachment member on said second side portion distal said bottom portion;

said step of forming including a second step of forming at least at least a first and a second notch region defining a flexible transition region between said supporting bottom portion and proximate portions of respective said front and rear side portions, whereby during a use said first and second notch regions enable said first flexible member to flex and smoothly bound a support region of said external container without distending and to provide a smooth support surface to said external container;

securing respective attachment sides of respective said front side and respective rear side portions and bounding at least one container receiving region there between; and

securing at least a first means for releasably securing said first projecting attachment member and said second attachment member on respective said first and second side portions, whereby said means for releasably securing enables a secure joining between said front side portion and said rear side portion for securing said external container within said container receiving region of said tote apparatus during a use.

10. A flexible tote apparatus for securely transporting at least one external container, comprising:

an elongate continuous member; further comprising:

a first side portion and a second side portion;

a bottom portion continuously joining said first and second side portions at proximate ends thereof;

a first and a second notch portion on opposing sides of said bottom portion at said proximate ends of said first and second side portions;

means for joining respective portions of said opposing sides of said first and said second side portions thereby defining a container bounding region there between for receiving said at least one external container;

an extending attachment member having an attachment end projecting from a distal end of said first side portion;

a receiving portion defined on said distal end of said second side portion proximate said attachment end of said attachment member;

means for releasably affixing said attachment end of said extending attachment member to said receiving portion thereby preventing an unintended separation of said external container from said container bounding region during a use.

11. A flexible tote apparatus, according to claim 11, wherein:

said means for joining includes at least one of stitching, gluing, heat sealing, stapling, riveting, and binding, whereby said means for joining enables substantial flexibility along joined portions of said opposing sides of said first and second side portions and enables said flexible tote apparatus to remain flexible after joining during a use.

12. A flexible tote apparatus, according to claim 11, wherein:

said elongate continuous member is an elastomeric member.

13. A flexible tote apparatus, according to claim 12, wherein:

said elastomeric member is one of a closed cell and an open cell foam material.

14. A flexible tote apparatus, according to claim 13, wherein:

said elastomeric member includes a surface cover of one of an artificial textile, a natural textile, and a film material, whereby a surface of said elastomeric member is protected from minimal abrasion.

15. A flexible tote apparatus, according to claim 11, wherein:

said means for joining includes stitching;

said elongate continuous member is an elastomeric member;

said elastomeric member is one of a neoprene material and a SBR (Styrene Butadiene Rubber) material; and

said at least one elastomeric member includes a protective covering of a textile material, whereby a surface of said flexible tote apparatus minimizes abrasion.

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