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(54) **SHOWER CURTAIN**

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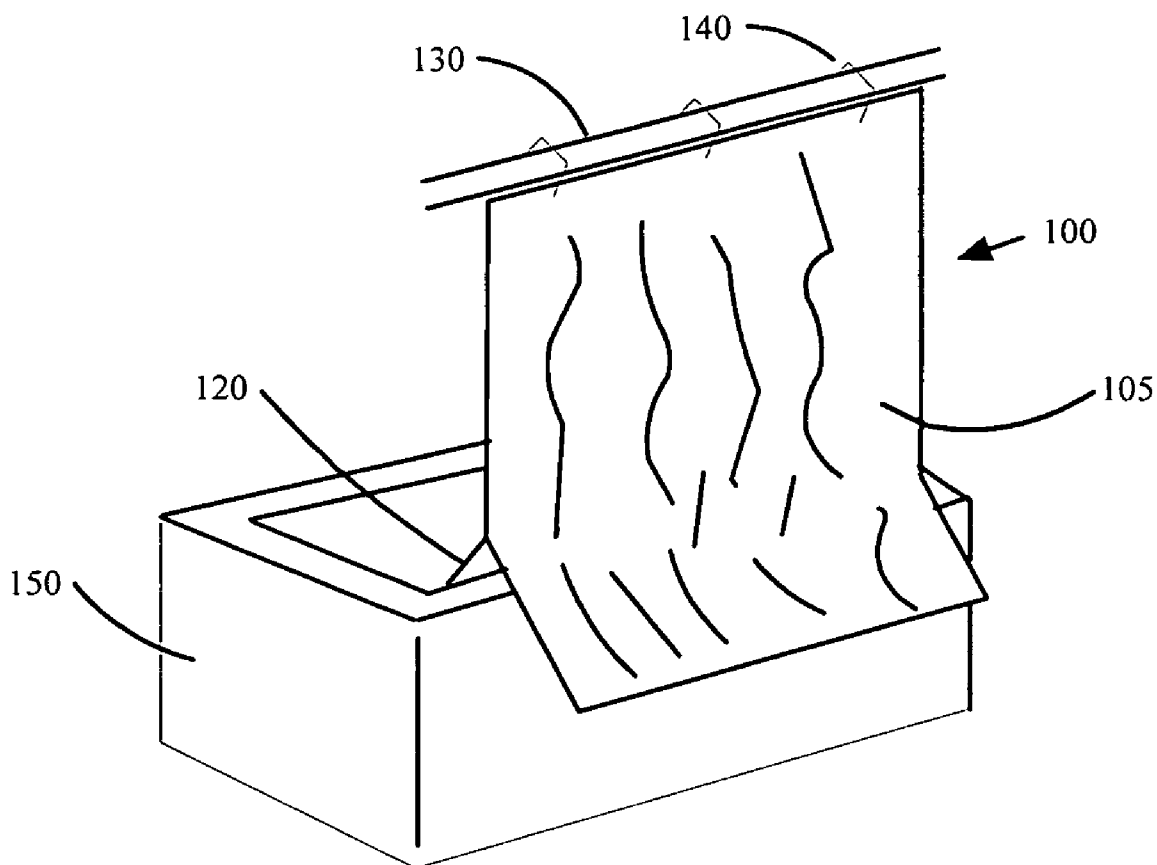
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A shower curtain for mounting over an outer rim of a bathtub includes a main shower curtain portion having a bottom portion, an inside surface that faces the interior of the bathtub and an outside surface opposite the inside surface. The bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion covers an outer surface of the outer rim of the bathtub. An inside flap is permanently attached to and extends from the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion. The inside flap covers an inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub.

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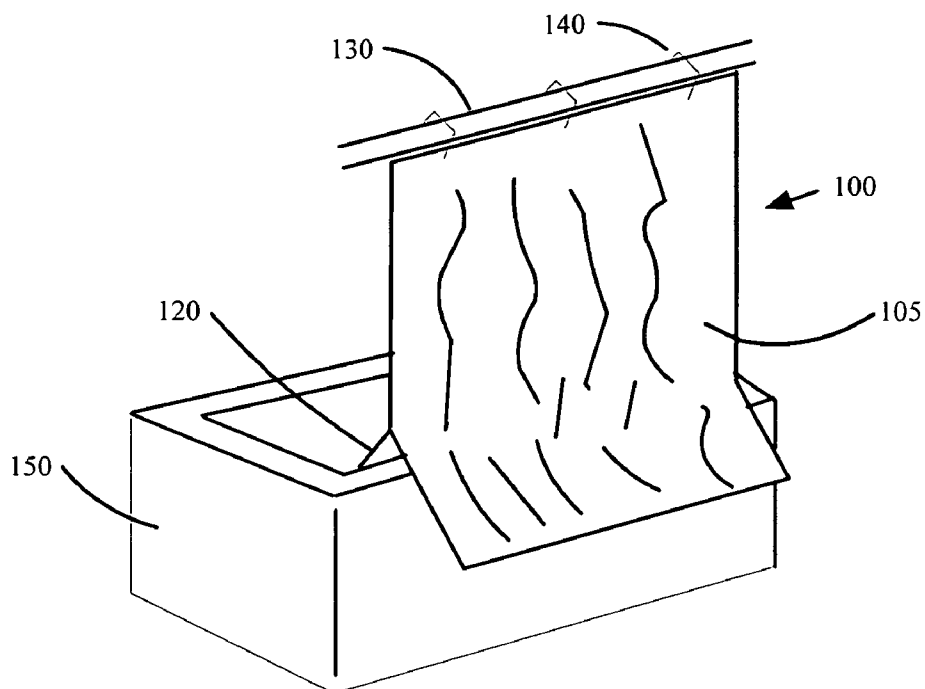


FIG. 1

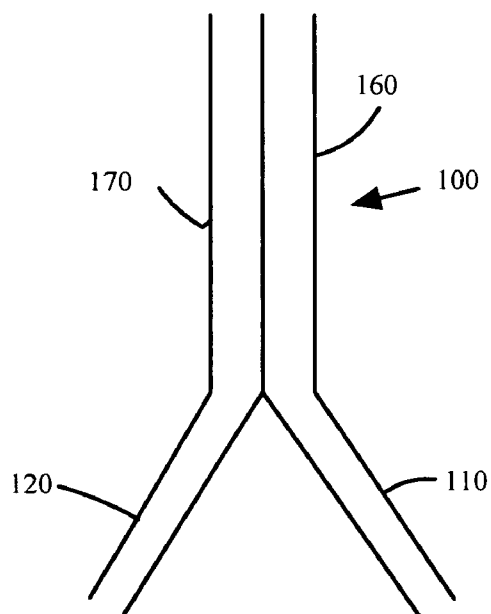


FIG. 2

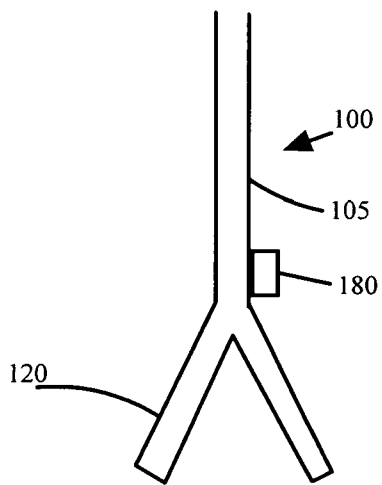


FIG. 3A

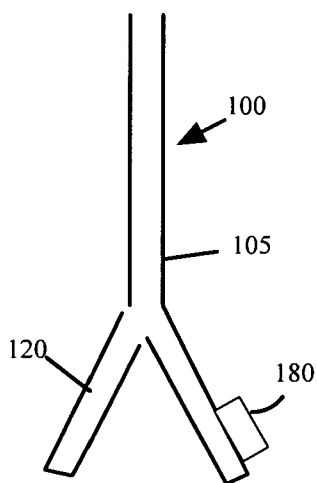


FIG. 3B

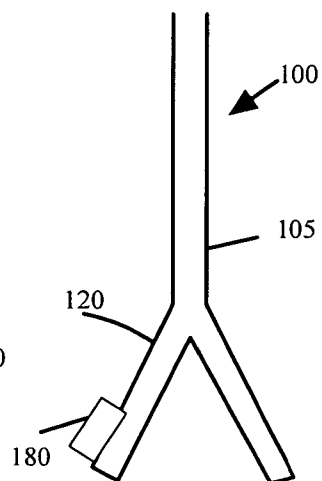


FIG. 3C

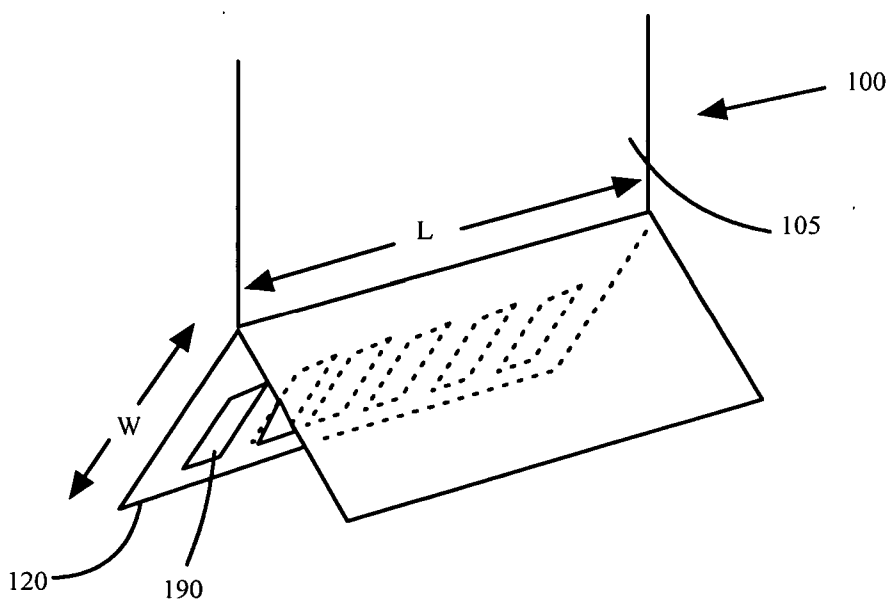


FIG. 4A

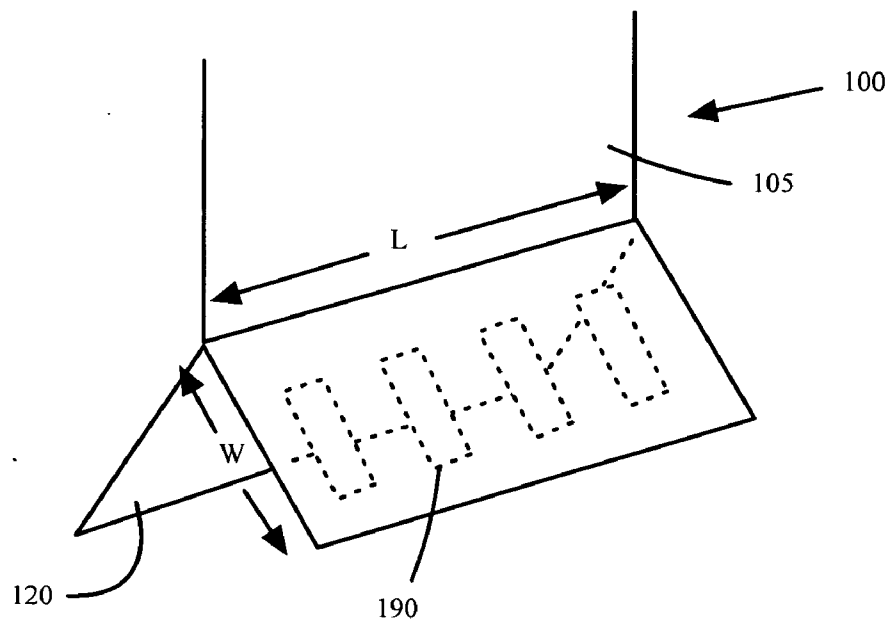


FIG. 4B

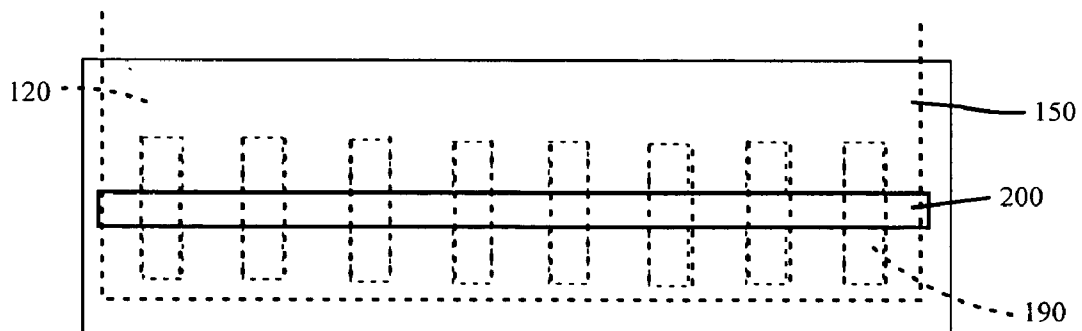


FIG. 5

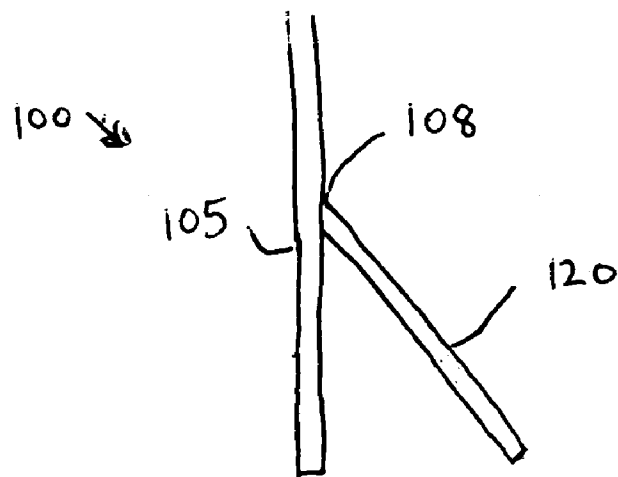


FIG. 6

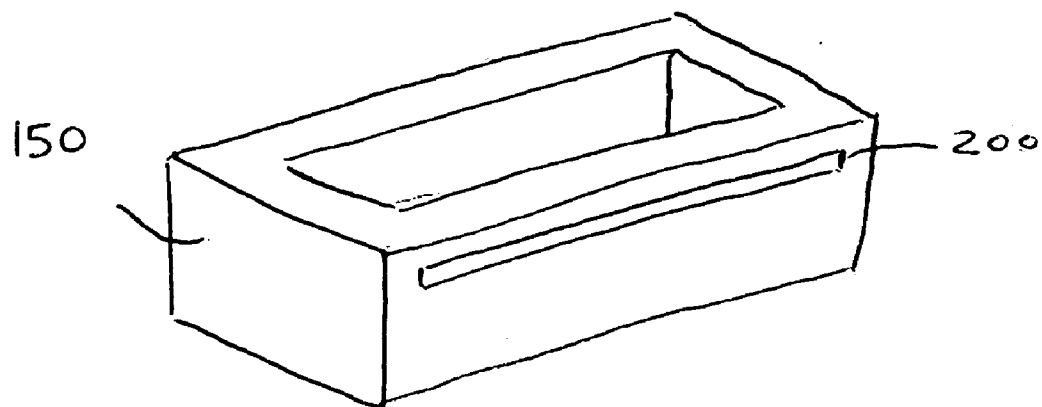


FIG. 7

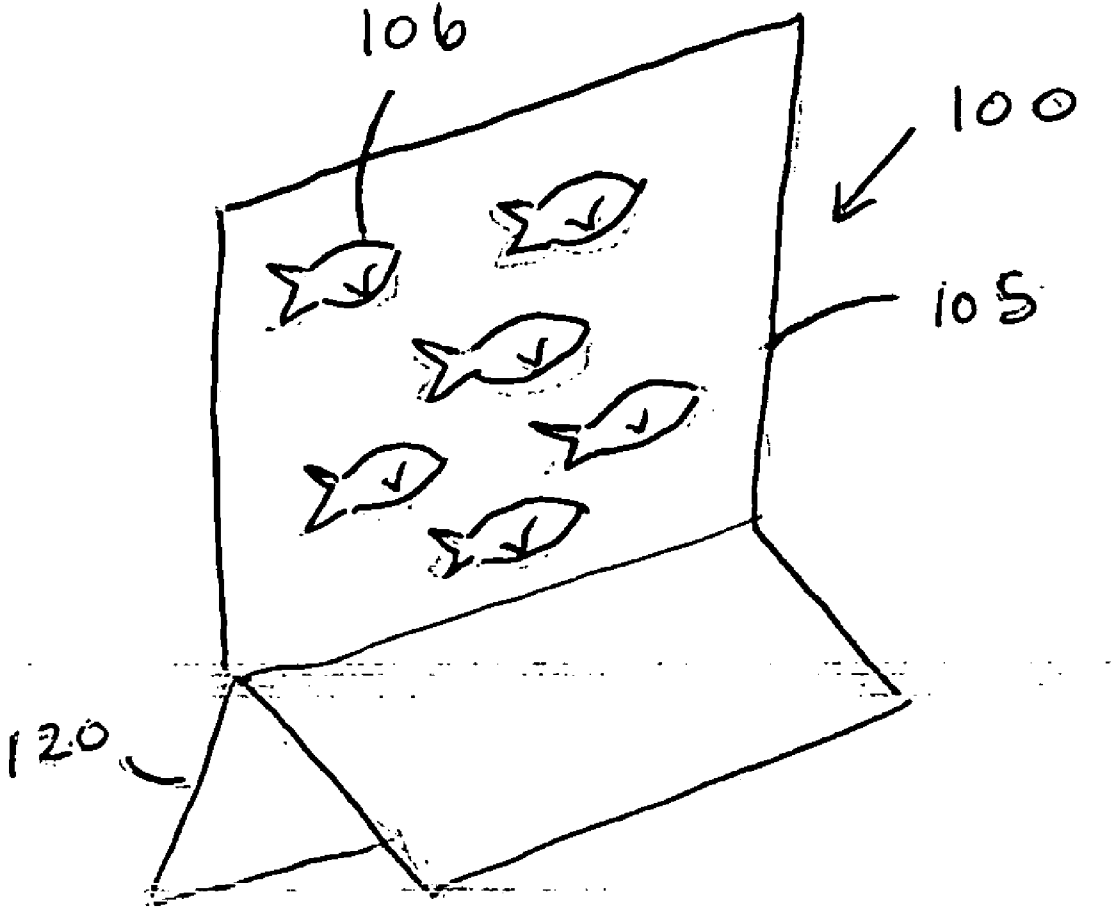


FIG. 8

SHOWER CURTAIN

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention is related to shower curtains and liners, and in particular to shower curtains and liners that are not susceptible to billowing in the bathing area.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Conventional shower curtains hang freely from a shower rod or other type of curtain support, and preferably are effective in keeping the other areas of the bathroom dry while giving the bather a feeling of comfort and privacy. Shower curtains typically cover an open bathtub surrounded by two or three walls, with a showerhead disposed on at least one of the walls. A common complaint concerning these shower curtains is that they tend to billow inwards towards the bather when the shower is on, thereby reducing the shower space and, in some instances, causing the shower curtain to stick to the bather. Further, the billowing movement of the curtain often allows water to escape onto floor areas outside of the shower enclosure.

[0003] Most of the previous attempts to address the above-mentioned problem involve the use of magnets. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 2,212,326 discloses a shower curtain having one or more magnets inserted in to the bottom hem of the shower curtain, so that the curtain is held in position by the magnets' attraction to the metal bathtub. Other patents use weights placed at the bottom of the shower curtain to maintain the shower curtain in a straightened position. However, placing magnets and/or weights on a shower curtain increases the overall weight and diminishes the appearance of the shower curtain. Further, due to their relatively high cost and weight, metal bathtubs are not often used these days, thereby rendering such shower curtain magnets useless.

[0004] Another common complaint is that the shower curtains typically require a separate shower liner. Although these shower liners prevent leakage onto the bathroom floor and keep the shower curtain dry, they are an added expense and add unwanted bulkiness and sloppiness to the overall appearance of the showering area. Further, shower liners tend to exacerbate the problem of billowing.

[0005] Accordingly, there is a need for a shower curtain that does not billow inward when the water is running and that maintains the dryness of the areas outside the shower, while exhibiting a pleasing appearance.

[0006] One aspect of the present invention provides an improved shower liner or curtain that does not billow when the shower is running.

[0007] Another aspect of the present invention provides a shower liner that can be both decorative and function effectively to keep the area surrounding the shower dry.

[0008] Another aspect of the present invention provides a shower curtain that does not require a separate shower liner.

[0009] A shower curtain for mounting over an outer rim of a bathtub according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention includes a main shower curtain portion having a bottom portion, an inside surface that faces the interior of the bathtub and an outside surface opposite the inside surface. The bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion

covers an outer surface of the outer rim of the bathtub. An inside flap is permanently attached to and extends from the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion. The inside flap covers an inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub.

[0010] In at least one embodiment, the inside flap is permanently attached to the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion by heat-sealing or sewing.

[0011] In at least one embodiment, the main shower curtain portion is made of a laminate of at least a first laminate and a second laminate.

[0012] In at least one embodiment, first laminate is separated from the second laminate at the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion, such that the first laminate extends away from the second laminate to form the inside flap.

[0013] In at least one embodiment, the first laminate is made of a water-resistant or water-proof material.

[0014] In at least one embodiment, the second laminate is made of fabric.

[0015] In at least one embodiment, the shower curtain further includes at least one weight member disposed on the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion.

[0016] In at least one embodiment, the shower curtain further includes at least one weight member disposed on the inside flap.

[0017] In at least one embodiment, the at least one magnetic member is disposed on an inside surface of the inside flap.

[0018] In at least one embodiment, the at least one magnetic member has a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension, the vertical dimension being longer than the horizontal dimension.

[0019] In at least one embodiment, the at least one magnetic member interacts with a magnetic strip disposed on and extending horizontally across an inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub.

[0020] In at least one embodiment, the shower curtain further includes at least one magnetic member disposed on the inside surface of the main shower curtain portion.

[0021] In at least one embodiment, the main shower curtain portion and the inside flap are made of a water-resistant or water-proof material.

[0022] In at least one embodiment, the outside surface of the main shower curtain portion includes a decorative design.

[0023] These and other features of this invention are described in, or are apparent from, the following detailed description of various exemplary embodiments of this invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] Various exemplary embodiments of this invention will be described in detail, with reference to the following figures, wherein:

[0025] **FIG. 1** shows a shower curtain according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention suspended in front of a bathtub;

[0026] **FIG. 2** shows a shower curtain according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention;

[0027] **FIGS. 3A-3B** show a shower curtain according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention;

[0028] **FIGS. 4A and 4B** show a shower curtain according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention; and

[0029] **FIG. 5** shows a shower curtain according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention interacting with the inner surface of the outer rim of a bathtub.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0030] Various exemplary embodiments of the present invention are directed to a shower curtain that does not billow inwards when the shower is running. Although the below description is directed to a shower curtain, it should be appreciated that the various structures discussed herein can be equally applicable to a shower liner. Thus, for the purposes of this disclosure, the term "shower curtain" is meant to encompass any type of flexible panel that can be draped in front of a shower.

[0031] **FIG. 1** shows a shower curtain **100** according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention. The shower curtain **100** includes a main shower curtain portion **105** and an inside flap **120** that extends from a lower section of the main shower curtain portion **105**. The shower curtain **100** is supported by a conventional shower curtain rod **130** and hook **140** arrangement. In this regard, the shower curtain **100** may include reinforced holes (not shown) through which the hooks **140** may pass. The hooks **140** are illustrated in **FIG. 1** as being loop-shaped, but may of course have any other suitable shape. Alternatively, clips may be used to connect the shower curtain **100** to the curtain rod **130**.

[0032] When suspended in front of a bathtub **150**, the shower curtain **100** covers both the front, back and top of the front rim of the bathtub **150**, as shown in **FIG. 1**. Specifically, the main shower curtain portion **105** drapes outside the bathtub **150** over the front of the front rim, and the inside flap **120** drapes inside the bathtub **150** over the back of the front rim. By draping the main shower curtain portion **105** and inside flap **120** over the front rim of the bathtub **150** in such a way, the shower curtain **100** is held in place to enclose the showering area, and in particular is prevented from billowing inwards when the shower water is running. Since the shower curtain **100** does not billow inwards, it does not interfere with the showering area and prevents excess water from escaping from the showering area. The inside flap **120** is preferably permanently attached to the main shower curtain portion **105** by any suitable means, such as, for example, heat sealing or sewing. The shower curtain **100** may be made of any suitable material, such as, for example, silk, cotton, polyester, net, lace, satin, denim, vinyl and plastic. In embodiments, the shower curtain may be made of

a suitably water-resistant or water-proof material, so that the shower curtain itself functions as a shower liner, and a separate shower liner is not required. In addition, the outside surface of the shower curtain **100** may include a decorative design, so that the shower curtain **100** may present both functional and aesthetic aspects.

[0033] **FIG. 2** shows a shower curtain according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, the shower curtain **100** is made of a laminated material including a first layer **160** and a second layer **170**. The first layer **160** may be separated or delaminated from the second layer **170** at the bottom section of the shower curtain **100** to form the inside flap **120** and an outside flap **110**, respectively. The first layer **160** may be made of fabric or similar aesthetically pleasing material, while the second layer **170** may be formed of plastic, nylon or similar water resistant material. Thus, in this embodiment, the shower curtain **100** does not require a separate shower liner, since the second layer **170** itself acts as a built-in water resistant/resilient liner.

[0034] **FIGS. 3A-3C** show a shower curtain **100** according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, weights **180** may be placed at the bottom area of the shower curtain **100**. For example, as shown in **FIG. 3A**, weights **180** may be placed at the bottom area of the shower curtain **100** just above where the inside flap **120** is attached to the main shower curtain portion **105**. Also, as shown in **FIG. 3B**, weights **180** may be placed on at the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion **105**, or, as shown in **FIG. 3C**, weights **180** may be placed on the inside flap **120** of the shower curtain **100**. The weights **180** assist in maintaining the shower curtain **100** in a straight configuration and prevent the shower curtain **100** from billowing towards the bather when the water is running. The placement of the weights **180** is not meant to be limited to those locations shown in **FIGS. 3A-3C**, and the weights **180** may be placed at any suitable areas of the shower curtain. However, the weights **180** are preferably placed at the bottom edge at least the inside flap **120** and the main shower curtain portion **105**. Further, although one weight **180** is shown in **FIGS. 3A-3C**, any number of weights may be placed on the shower curtain **100**. The weights **180** may be placed on the shower curtain **100** by any suitable method, such as, for example, sewing or adhesive. Further, the weights **180** may be placed in pockets formed in the shower curtain **100** so that the weights can be easily removed and the shower curtain **100** can be folded for storage. The weights **180** may be linked together to form a chain or, alternatively, a single strip of material, such as, for example, polyvinylchloride (PVC), may be used.

[0035] **FIGS. 4A** shows a shower curtain **100** according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, several magnets **190** are spaced laterally across the inner surface (along the dimension L) of the inside flap **120** of the shower curtain **100**. Each of the magnets **190** are preferably rectangular-shaped, with the longer dimension extending along the dimension W of the inside flap **120**. The magnets **190** may be attached to the inside flap **120** by any suitable method, such as, for example, sewing or adhesive. If the bathtub **150** is made of metal, for instance, the magnets **190** are magnetically attracted to the bathtub **150** and thus effectively adhere the inside flap **120** to the bathtub **150**. This prevents the shower curtain **100** from billowing

and maintains a tighter seal between the bathtub **150** and bottom portion of the shower curtain **100**. Alternatively, if the bathtub **150** is made of a non-metallic material, such as, for example, porcelain, a strip **200** of metallic or other magnetic material may be placed along the inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub **150**, as shown in **FIG. 5**. Since the magnets **190** are shaped and disposed on the inside flap **120** as described above, no precise matching up of the magnets **190** with the strip **200** on the bathtub **150** is necessary. The strip **200** may be attached to the bathtub **150** using, for example, adhesive or mechanical fasteners. The location of the magnets **190** is not limited to that shown in **FIG. 4**. For example, in other embodiments, the magnets **190** may be placed on the inner surface of the main shower curtain portion **105**, as shown in **FIG. 4B**, in which case, if necessary, a magnetic strip **200** may be placed along the outer surface of the outer rim of the bathtub **150**.

[0036] While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it would be obvious to those skilled in the art that various other changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to cover in the appended claims all such changes and modifications that are within the scope of this invention.

1. A shower curtain for mounting over an outer rim of a bathtub, the shower curtain comprising:

a main shower curtain portion having a bottom portion, an inside surface that faces the interior of the bathtub and an outside surface opposite the inside surface, the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion covering an outer surface of the outer rim of the bathtub; and

an inside flap permanently attached to and extending from the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion, the inside flap covering an inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub;

at least one magnetic member disposed on the inside surface of the main shower curtain portion, the at least one magnetic member has a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension, the vertical dimension being longer than the horizontal dimension.

2. The shower curtain of claim 1, wherein the inside flap is permanently attached to the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion by heat-sealing or sewing.

3. The shower curtain of claim 1, wherein the main shower curtain portion is made of a laminate of at least a first laminate and a second laminate.

4. The shower curtain of claim 3, wherein the first laminate is separated from the second laminate at the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion, such that the first laminate extends away from the second laminate to form the inside flap.

5. The shower curtain of claim 4, wherein the first laminate is made of a water-resistant or water-proof material.

6. The shower curtain of claim 4, wherein the second laminate is made of fabric.

7. The shower curtain of claim 1, further comprising at least one weight member disposed on the bottom portion of the main shower curtain portion.

8. The shower curtain of claim 1, further comprising at least one weight member disposed on the inside flap.

9. The shower curtain of claim 1, further comprising at least one magnetic member disposed on an inside surface of the inside flap.

10. The shower curtain of claim 9, wherein the at least one magnetic member has a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension, the vertical dimension being longer than the horizontal dimension.

11. The shower curtain of claim 10, wherein the at least one magnetic member interacts with a magnetic strip disposed on and extending horizontally across an inner surface of the outer rim of the bathtub.

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. The shower curtain of claim 1, wherein the at least one magnetic member interacts with a magnetic strip disposed on and extending horizontally across the outer surface of the outer rim of the bathtub.

15. The shower curtain of claim 1, wherein the main shower curtain portion and the inside flap are made of a water-resistant or water-proof material.

16. The shower curtain of claim 15, wherein the outside surface of the main shower curtain portion includes a decorative design.

* * * * *