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(54) **AXIALLY FASTENED, ILLUMINATED,
FIXTURE STANDOFF**

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(76) Inventors: **Phillip Roe Goodlett**, Tustin, CA (US);
Steven Phillip Arendt, Newport Beach,
CA (US)

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Correspondence Address:
**GENE SCOTT; PATENT LAW & VENTURE
GROUP**
3140 RED HILL AVENUE
SUITE 150
COSTA MESA, CA 92626-3440 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

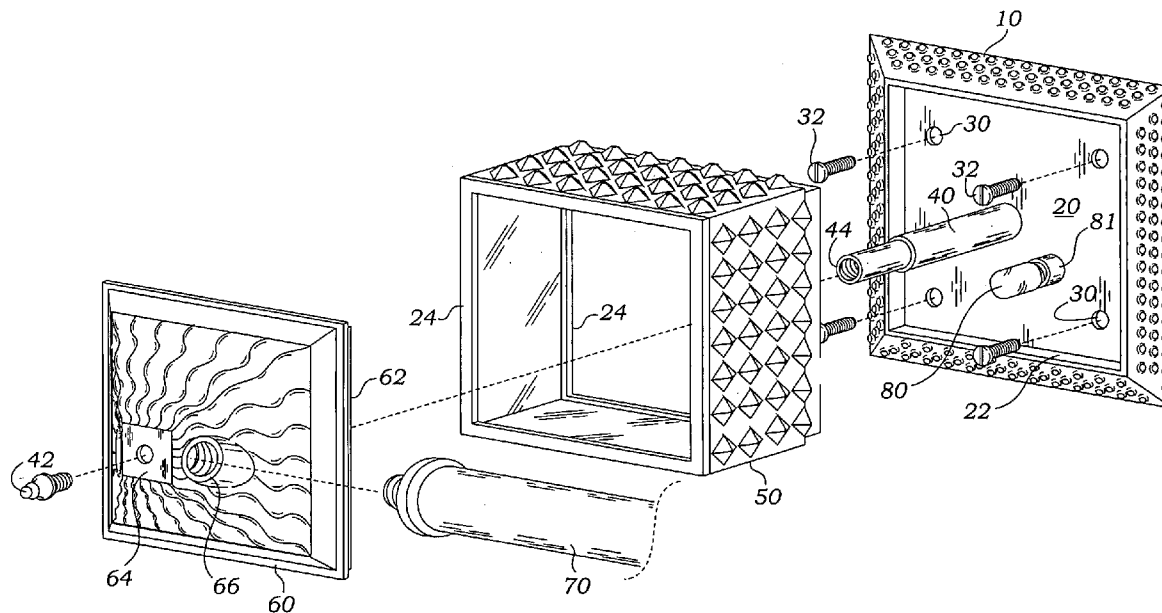
An illuminated rod standoff has a base with a recessed surface mountable to a wall, and an axially positioned fastener oriented normal to the recessed surface. The fastener engages a cap which centers a cylindrical sidewall resting on the recessed surface within a close-fitting peripheral edge. The cap closes an open end of the sidewall and provides, at mutual right angles, a pair of cap engagement features, one fixed to the fastener, thereby holding the cap securely to the cylindrical sidewall and the cylindrical sidewall to the base. The other feature receives a towel or tissue rod. A lamp is mounted on the base for transmitting light through the transparent cylindrical sidewall for illuminating a space.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 10/117,242, filed on Apr. 5, 2002.



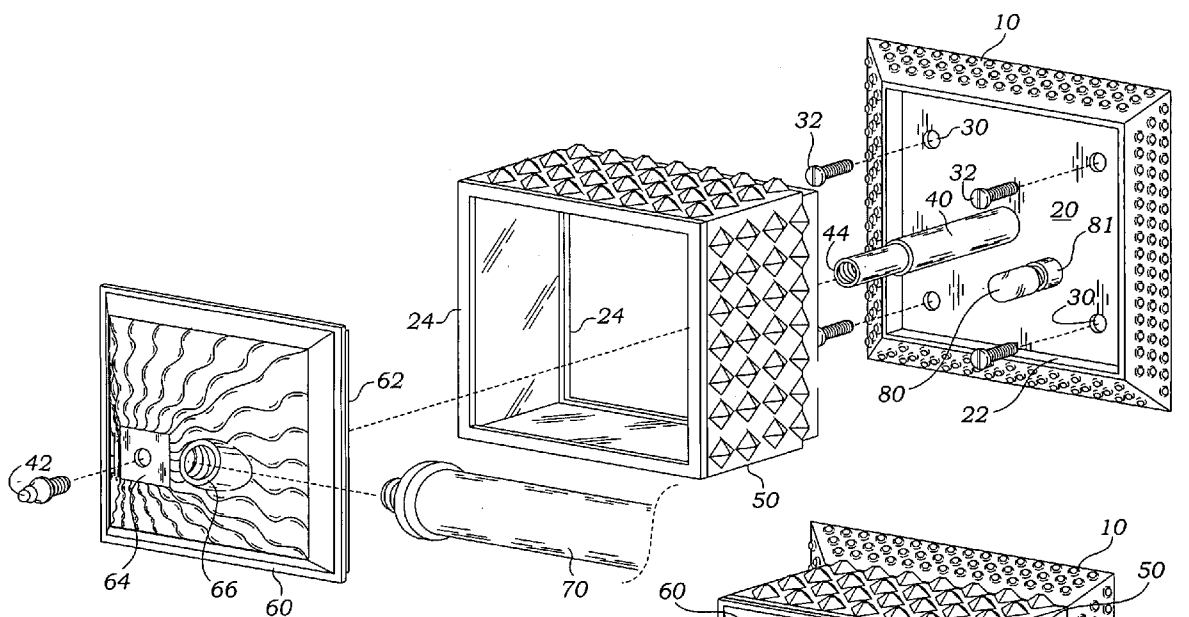


Fig. 1

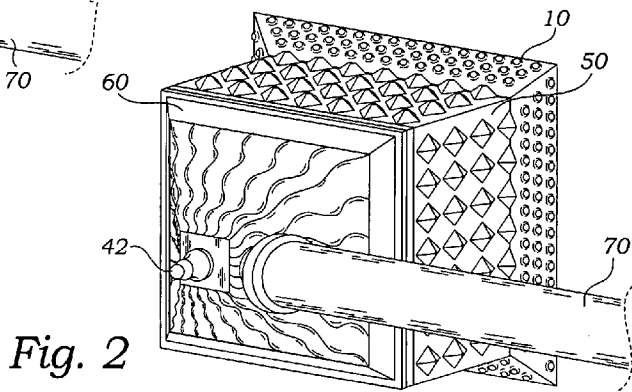


Fig. 2

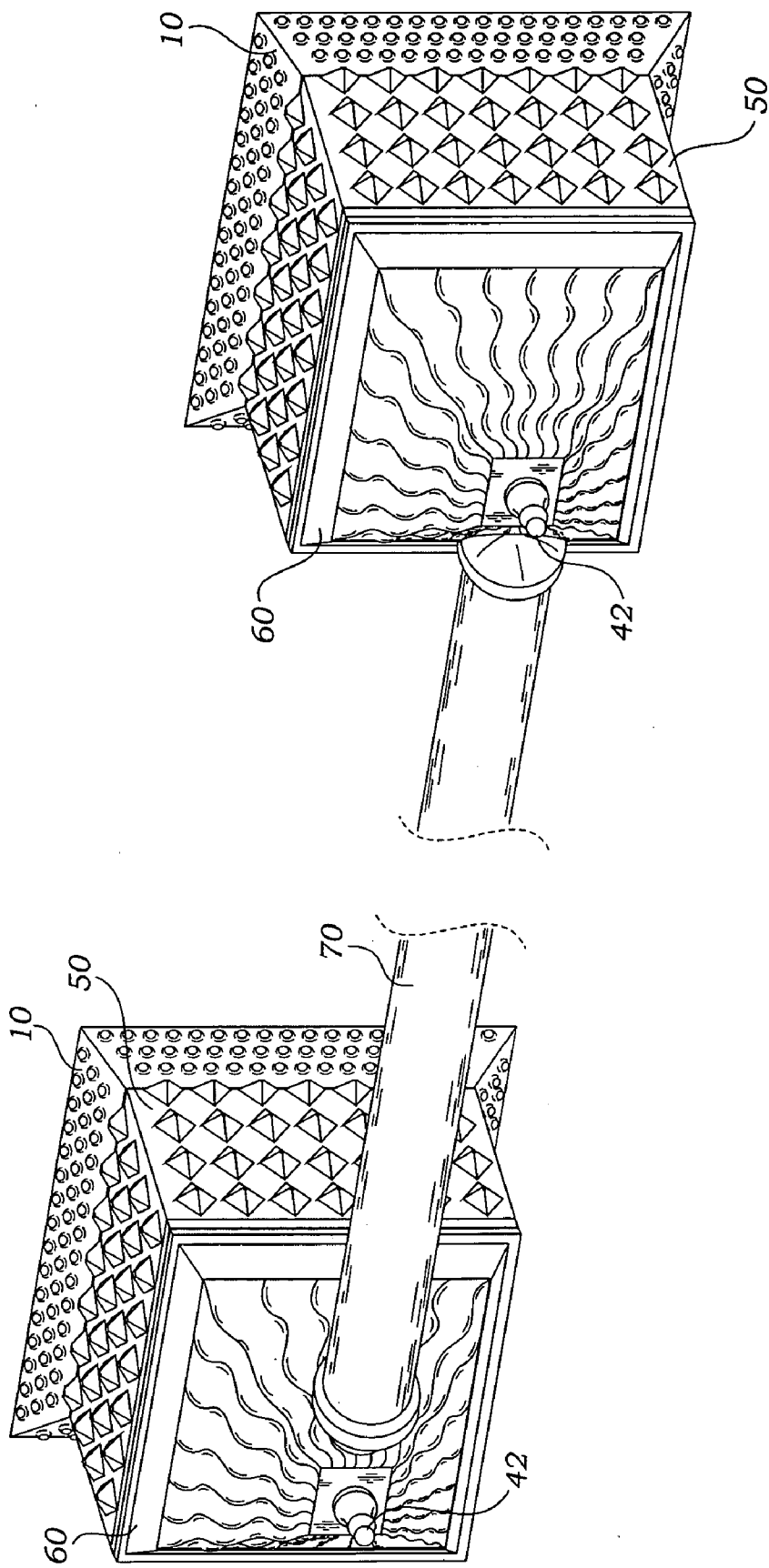


Fig. 3

**AXIALLY FASTENED, ILLUMINATED, FIXTURE
STANDOFF**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a Continuation of a prior filed application having Ser. No. 10/117242 and filing date of Apr. 5, 2002 and entitled: Axially Fastened, Illuminated, Moisture Resistant, Fixture Standoff

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This invention relates generally to bathroom fixtures and more particularly to such fixtures having lighting features.

[0004] 2. Description of Related Art

[0005] The following art defines the present state of this field:

[0006] Murphy, U.S. Des. Pat. No. 381,734 describes a submersible fish attracting light design.

[0007] Larson et al., U.S. Pat. No. 2,217,688 describes a combination of spaced wall brackets adapted to be secured to a side wall of a vehicle, a baggage rack unit, means for removably supporting the unit on the brackets, each of the brackets being in the form of a box housing, extending throughout substantially the entire width of the rack unit and being of relatively deep cross section and supported from the wall at vertically spaced points to make the brackets cantilevers of sufficient strength to carry the baggage rack load, a source of light within each bracket, the major portion of the bottom wall of the housing being light transmitting.

[0008] Woolley, U.S. Pat. No. 2,827,555 describes a combination lighting and rail fixture for clothes closets and the like, comprising an elongate frame having front and rear portions and means at its ends adjoining said rear portion for attaching it to a support; and glass envelope carried by the frame at its ends and extending substantially coextensive therewith; and elongate, opaque shade having a substantially U-shaped cross section, said shade extending substantially coextensive with and partially enclosing said light-producing means and being arranged to block some of the light therefrom; and a garment rail having a relative large surface per unit length, connected with the frame and extending substantially coextensive therewith, said rail being spaced from and located below the said light-producing means and being located wholly below said frame and accessible in a horizontal direction from the front of the fixture said rail having a diameter commensurate with the diameter of the said tubular glass envelope, and being adapted to receive and support garment hangers by which light colored garments hung thereon may reflect light from the light-producing means upward.

[0009] Nestrock, U.S. Pat. No. 4,569,689 describes a grab bar or handrail system that not only incorporates its own spaced directional illumination sources but also its complete electrical cabling. Thus, installation of the system requires virtually no special electrical cabling or conduit within the wall, such ducting being limited to that required for a single end connection, or to bridge a discontinuity in the handrail, as where the wall is interrupted for a doorway, window, or the like opening. Illumination sources are provided within and as part of each supporting bracket, and individual electrical connection thereof to the supply cabling is made adjacent each support and within the grab bar. Provision is

made for automatic transfer from house voltage supply to standby storage supply, in the event of power failure, thus assuring the maximum safety that constant illumination can provide.

[0010] Wojski, U.S. Pat. No. 5,412,553 describes a lighted curtain hardware assembly for a wall having an opening therein having a curtain support hardware device. The hardware device is mountable adjacent the opening, such as a window or door, for supporting a curtain in front of and adjacent the opening without visually obstructing the opening. The hardware device has a light mounted thereon. Electrical means are included for providing electricity to the light to provide an attractive lighted decoration to the window or door and adjacent wall.

[0011] Hixon, U.S. Pat. No. 5,624,024 describes a multi-purpose toilet tissue dispenser comprising: a housing having a front wall and including means for holding a roll of toilet paper; means for holding a night light assembly; a pencil holder; and means for holding an air freshener, the apparatus further including means for attaching the housing to a bathroom wall, the means for holding a roll of toilet paper including a generally semi-cylindrical shaped recess positioned in the front wall and a spindle for holding a roll of toilet paper, the spindle being releasably coupled within the recess, the spindle holding and permitting rotatable dispensing of toilet tissue when desired by a user.

[0012] McCall, Jr., U.S. Pat. No. 6,00,658 describes a toilet paper dispenser in which a roll of toilet paper is supported on a rotatable spindle with a music box activated by rotation of the spindle. The toilet paper dispenser is equipped with an aromatic fragrance dispenser which is automatically activated by rotation of the spindle.

[0013] Von Schenk, U.S. Pat. No. 6,056,233 describes a cover system for toilet paper to protect the toilet paper from dispersal by children and pets comprising a wall-mounted plastic casing completely covering upper and lower rolls of paper. The upper and lower rolls are covered by respective upper and lower swivelable covers, each having a safety latch system. Each safety latch system includes a pair of button-releasable latches with one button on each side of the casing and each cover may be released only by pushing both such buttons at the same time. The covers are light permeable and night lights may be mounted to the inside of the casing or as part of each holder going through each toilet paper roll.

[0014] Schroder, EP 0851170 A1 describes a curtain rod in the form of a tube in holders. In at least one end of the rod, or elsewhere within the rod, there is a holder for a bulb or other light. A lead runs from the bulb holder to the outside of the rod. The holder may be externally threaded to fit into an internal thread in the rod end. The bulb holder may have a connection device, from which a lead passes through a slit in the wall of the tubular rod. It may be possible to screw a lampshade onto the external thread of the bulb holder.

[0015] The prior art teaches illumination in a curtain rod, tissue rod, grab bar, fish attracting bar, and in an assembly for supporting a tissue roll. The prior art also teaches illumination of filials on a curtain rod, in a closet fixture and mounted on an undersurface of standoffs for holding a luggage rack. However, the prior art fails to teach illumination means mounted within a structural standoff for bathroom fixtures. This is most likely because the structural standoff typically is not robust enough to be made of glass or other transparent material. However, the present inven-

tion is a solution to this need providing illumination and structural strength in a standoff that requires only a single fastener to assemble. This fulfills the needs described and provides further related advantages as further described in the following summary.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0016] The present invention teaches certain benefits in construction and use which give rise to the objectives described below.

[0017] An illuminated rod standoff has a base with a recessed surface mountable to a wall, and an axially positioned fastener oriented normal to the recessed surface. The fastener engages a cap which centers a cylindrical sidewall resting on the recessed surface within a close-fitting peripheral edge. The cap closes an open end of the sidewall and provides, at mutual right angles, a pair of cap engagement features. One of these features is fixed to the fastener, thereby holding the cap securely to the cylindrical sidewall and the cylindrical sidewall to the base. The other feature receives a towel or tissue rod. A lamp is mounted on the base for transmitting light through the transparent cylindrical sidewall for illuminating a space or for decorative purposes. Clearly, the prior art teaches the use of illumination in conjunction with utility items such as curtain rods and bathroom fixtures. The usefulness of such items is well regarded. The benefit of placing illumination within the standoffs for a bathroom fixture such as a towel rod or toilet paper roll rod is that the electrical components of an illumination circuit are secure from rough handling and from moisture.

[0018] A primary objective of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and method of use of such apparatus that provides advantages not taught by the prior art.

[0019] Another objective is to provide such an invention capable of illumination of one or more wall mounted standoffs for a towel or tissue roll rod.

[0020] A further objective is to provide such an invention capable of being assembled with a single axially oriented fastener.

[0021] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] The accompanying drawings illustrate the present invention. In such drawings:

[0023] FIG. 1 is a perspective exploded view of the preferred embodiment of the invention;

[0024] FIG. 2 is a perspective view thereof as assembled, and

[0025] FIG. 3 is a perspective view thereof showing a two standoff combination.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0026] The above described drawing figures illustrate the invention in at least one of its preferred embodiments, which is further defined in detail in the following description.

[0027] The present invention is an apparatus enabled for, being illuminated and comprises an apparatus base **10** preferably made of a wood, metal, plastic or glass substance, and having a recessed surface **20** as shown in FIG. 1. The recessed surface **20** provides a means for enabling **30** the base to be mounted in parallel to a wall surface (not shown), such as the two mounting holes shown. The surface **20** also provides a fastener **40** oriented normally to it, as shown. The fastener **40** provides a cap engagement means **44** at a distal end thereof. A light transmissive cylindrical sidewall **50** rests directly on the recessed surface **20** within a close-fitting peripheral edge **22** thereby closing one end of the cylindrical sidewall **50**. A rubber gasket **24** may be fitted to each of a top and bottom edges of the sidewall **50** as shown in FIG. 1. A cap **60** is adapted with a rim **62** engaged directly within the cylindrical sidewall **50** for closure of a second end of the cylindrical sidewall. With the base **10**, sidewall **50** and cap **60** assembled, the rubber gaskets **24** maintain a watertight assembly. The cap **60** provides, a first **64** and second **66** engagement means. The first engagement means **64** engages the cap engagement means **44** with screw **42**, thereby holding the cap **60** securely directly to the cylindrical sidewall **50** and the cylindrical sidewall directly to the base **10** as clearly shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. The second engagement means **66** is fixed to a horizontally oriented rod **70** for removably holding a bathroom utility element such as a towel (FIG. 3) or roll of tissue (not shown). A means for illumination, such as light bulb **80** is mounted in a socket **81** through the base **10** and provides illumination through the cylindrical sidewall **50** and the cap **60** for illuminating a space such as a bathroom or toilet and may be useful as a night-light or for decoration.

[0028] Preferably, the cap engagement means **44** of the fastener **40** is a stud with internal threaded end.

[0029] Preferably, the cylindrical sidewall **50** is made of transparent glass which may be translucent or transparent and may have a non-planar exterior surface such as is shown in the figures, and has preferably faceted surfaces as shown. The rod **70** may be adapted by length and diameter for draping a towel or securing a tissue roll thereupon. The entire structure of the standoff may be square, rectangular, round or oval, etc. as desired, including the peripheral edge **22**, the cylindrical sidewall **50**, the cap **60** and the base **10**. It is noted that these three parts are inter-engaging and self-centering so that only one axial fastener is required to assemble the invention, hold it in tight mechanical and hydraulic closure and provide support for the towel or roll fixture. Lamp **80** may be powered by a battery mounted within the apparatus or from the base **10** to which the lamp is attached by a current carrying wire from an external power source.

[0030] It is considered critical and novel in the above described invention that the base **10** receives the lamp socket **81** therethrough in a normal orientation so that the lamp is able to illuminate the sidewall **50** with a minimum of shadowing with only a single lamp or light source. Clearly, the use of two such standoffs as described above provide a novel towel or tissue roll holding means with illumination projected from both. Such lighting is beneficial during nighttime bathroom visits when it is not satisfactory to turn on a bright light. The lighting enables one to see the towel or tissue without difficulty and without spoiling night vision.

[0031] The enablements described in detail above are considered novel over the prior art of record and are considered critical to the operation of the instant invention and

to the achievement of the above described objectives. The words used in this specification to describe the invention and its various embodiments are to be understood not only in the sense of their commonly defined meanings, but to include by special definition in this specification: structure, material or acts beyond the scope of the commonly defined meanings. Thus if an element can be understood in the context of this specification as including more than one meaning, then its use must be understood as being generic to all possible meanings supported by the specification and by the word or words describing the element.

[0032] The definitions of the words or elements of this described invention and its various embodiments are, therefore, defined in this specification to include not only the combination of elements which are literally set forth, but all equivalent structure, material or acts for performing substantially the same function in substantially the same way to obtain substantially the same result. In this sense it is therefore contemplated that an equivalent substitution of two or more elements may be made for any one of the elements in the invention and its various embodiments or that a single element may be substituted for two or more elements in a claim.

[0033] Changes from the claimed subject matter as viewed by a person with ordinary skill in the art, now known or later devised, are expressly contemplated as being equivalents within the scope of the invention and its various embodiments. Therefore, obvious substitutions now or later known to one with ordinary skill in the art are defined to be within the scope of the defined elements. The invention and its various embodiments are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, what can be obviously substituted, and also what essentially incorporates the essential idea of the invention.

[0034] While the invention has been described with reference to at least one preferred embodiment, it is to be clearly understood by those skilled in the art that the invention is not limited thereto. Rather, the scope of the invention is to be interpreted only in conjunction with the appended claims and it is made clear, here, that the inventor(s) believe that the claimed subject matter is the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An illuminated standoff apparatus comprising: an apparatus base enabled for mounting in parallel to a wall surface; a fastener engaged normally with the base and extending away from the base and the wall surface, the fastener terminally providing a cap engagement means; a right cylindrical light transmissive sidewall resting, at one open end thereof, directly on the base, the base thereby closing the one end of the cylindrical sidewall; a light transmissive cap engaged directly with the cylindrical sidewall and closing a second open end of the cylindrical sidewall, the cap providing, a first and a second engagement means, the first engagement means engaging the fastener, thereby:

- a) holding the cap directly on the cylindrical sidewall, and
- b) holding the cylindrical sidewall against the base;

the second engagement means receiving a bathroom utility element; and a source of illumination providing a

lamp socket mounted in the apparatus base and extending therethrough for electrical interconnection therewith from the wall surface, the source of illumination electrically contacting the lamp socket and extending normally from the lamp socket for transmitting light through the cylindrical sidewall for illuminating a space.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the cap engagement means of the fastener is a stud with internal threaded end.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the cylindrical sidewall is made of one of transparent and translucent glass.

4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the cylindrical sidewall is made of a glass having a faceted surface.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the bathroom utility element is one of a rod adapted for draping a towel thereover, and a tissue roll holder.

6. An illuminated standoff apparatus comprising: a pair of apparatus bases, each enabled for mounting in parallel to a wall surface, the bases positioned in spaced apart positions; a pair of fasteners, each engaged normally with one of the bases and extending away therefrom and from the wall surface, the fasteners each terminally providing a cap engagement means; a pair of right cylindrical light transmissive sidewalls, each resting, at one open end thereof, directly on one of the bases, the bases thereby closing the one end of each of the cylindrical sidewalls; a pair of light transmissive caps, each engaged directly with one of the cylindrical sidewalls and closing a second open end thereof, the caps each providing, a first and a second engagement means, the first engagement means engaging the fasteners, thereby:

- c) holding the caps directly on the cylindrical sidewalls, and
- d) holding the cylindrical sidewalls against the bases;

the second engagement means of each of the caps receiving a bathroom utility element, securing the utility element between the caps; and a pair of sources of illumination each providing a lamp socket mounted in one of the apparatus bases and extending therethrough for electrical interconnection therewith from the wall surface, the sources of illumination electrically contacting the lamp sockets and extending normally from the lamp sockets for transmitting light through the cylindrical sidewalls for illuminating a space.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the cap engagement means of each of the fasteners is a stud with internal threaded end.

8. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the cylindrical sidewalls are made of one of transparent and translucent glass.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the cylindrical sidewalls are made of a glass having a faceted surface.

10. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the bathroom utility element is one of a rod adapted for draping a towel thereover, and a tissue roll holder.

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