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(54) **TOWEL HOLDER**

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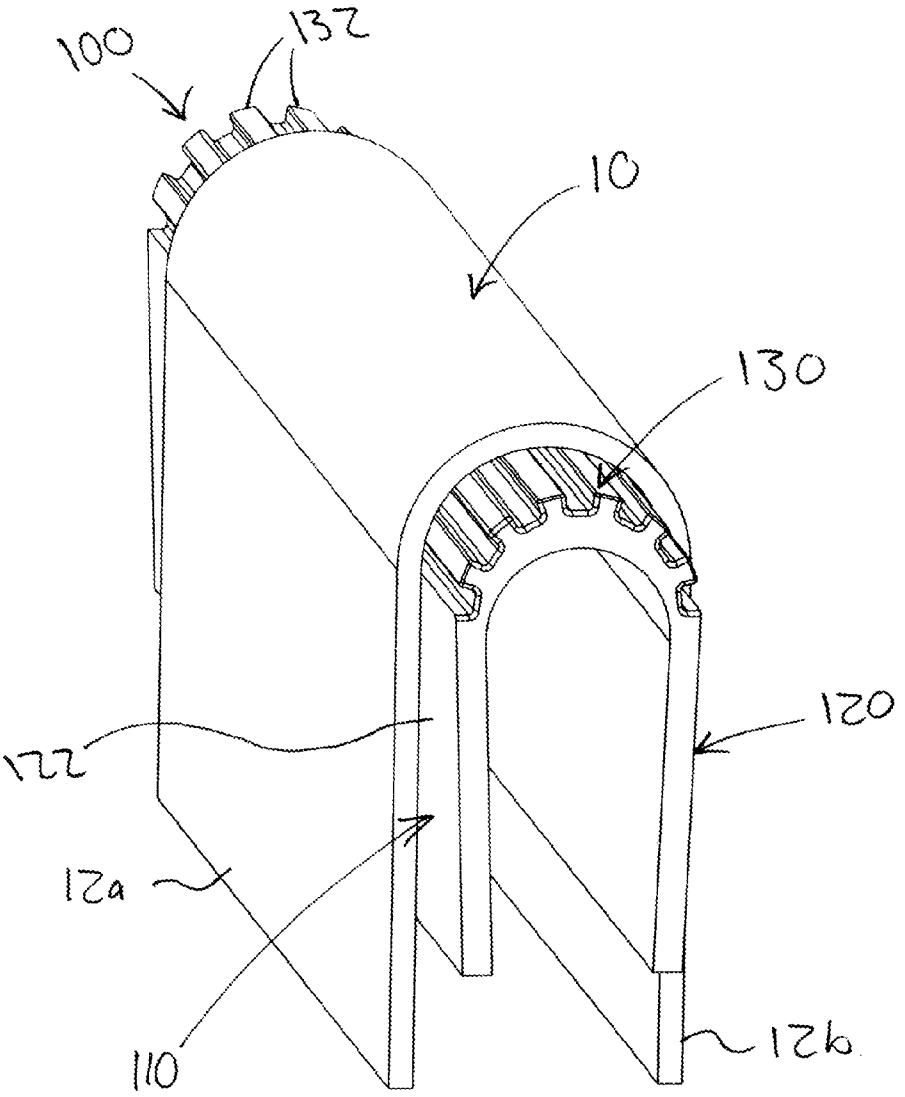
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A towel holder for selectively holding and releasing a towel according to the present invention includes first and second sides, each side having upper and lower ends, respectively. The towel holder also includes an elastic top portion adjoining the first and second side upper ends, the top portion biasing the respective side lower ends toward one another yet allowing the lower ends to be separated as needed to be force fitted onto a fixed member such as a stove handle. Preferably, the top portion includes a rounded configuration over which a towel may be draped. The top portion may also include a configuration that resists a towel from sliding thereon, such as a plurality of ridges, bosses, or constructed of a soft rubber material. Conversely, the sides are constructed of a low-friction material such that a towel slides easily thereon when being intentional lifted from the towel holder.



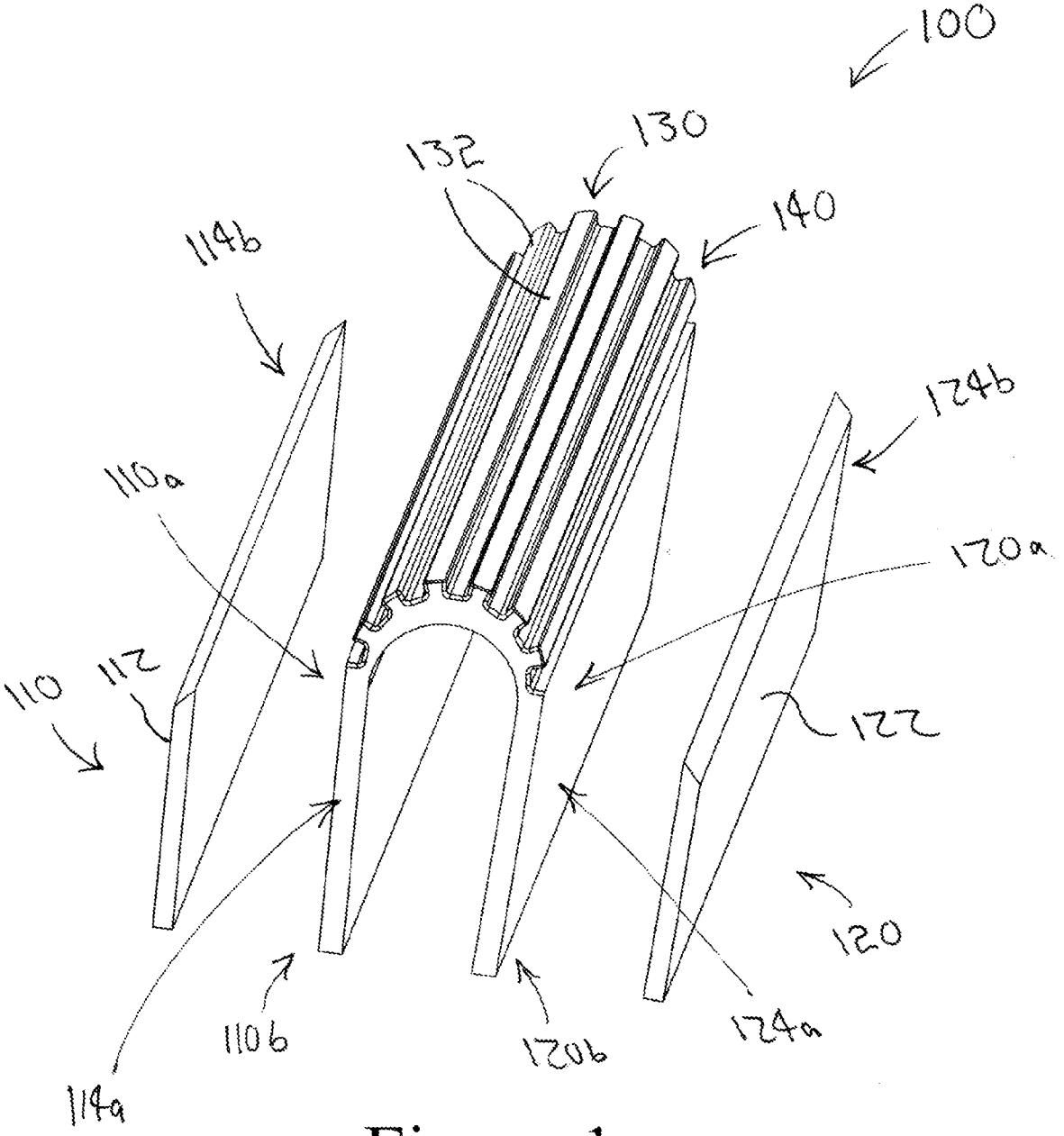

100
130
132
140
114b
124b
110a
120a
110
112
122
120
114a
110b
120b
124a

Figure 1

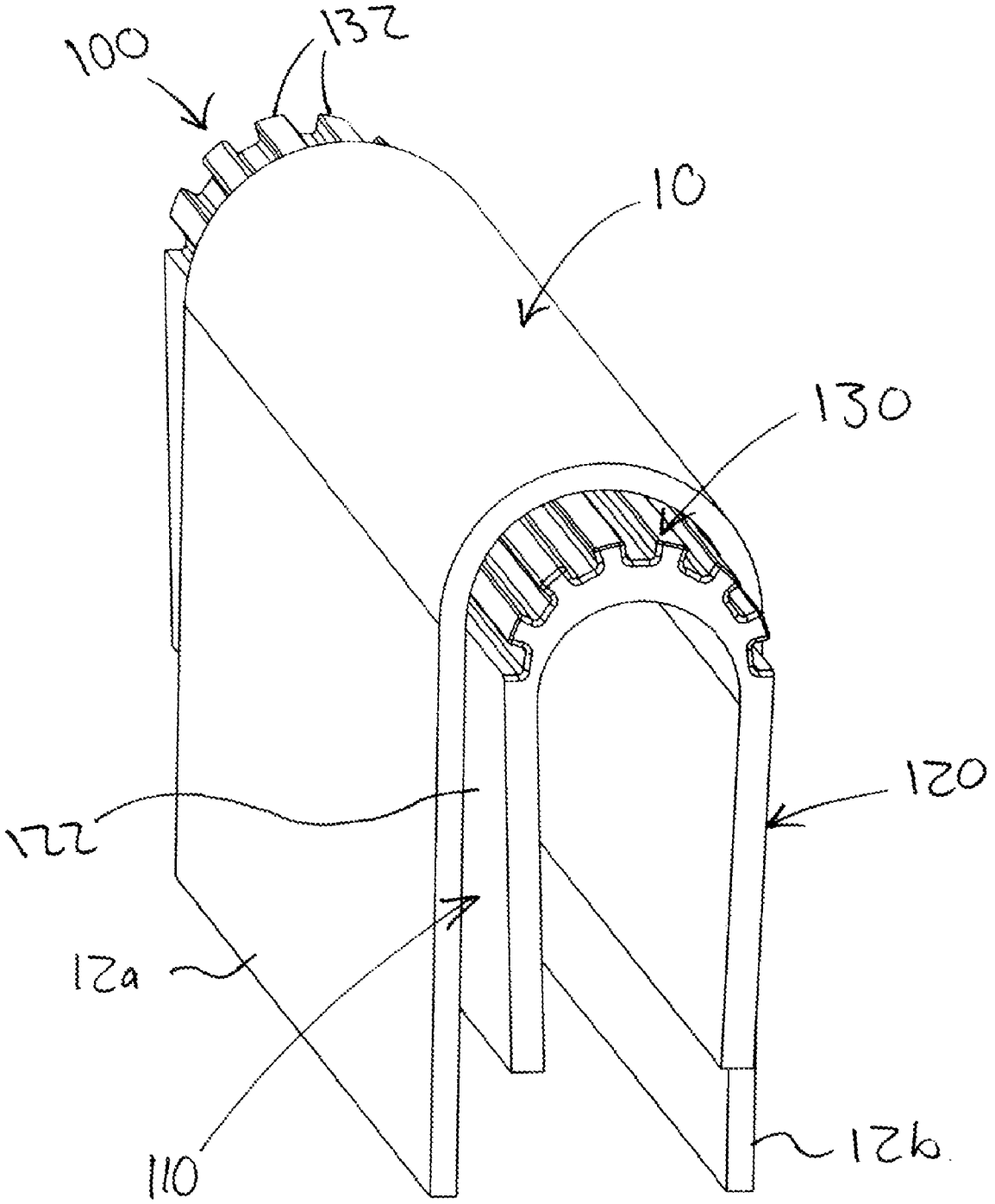


Figure 2

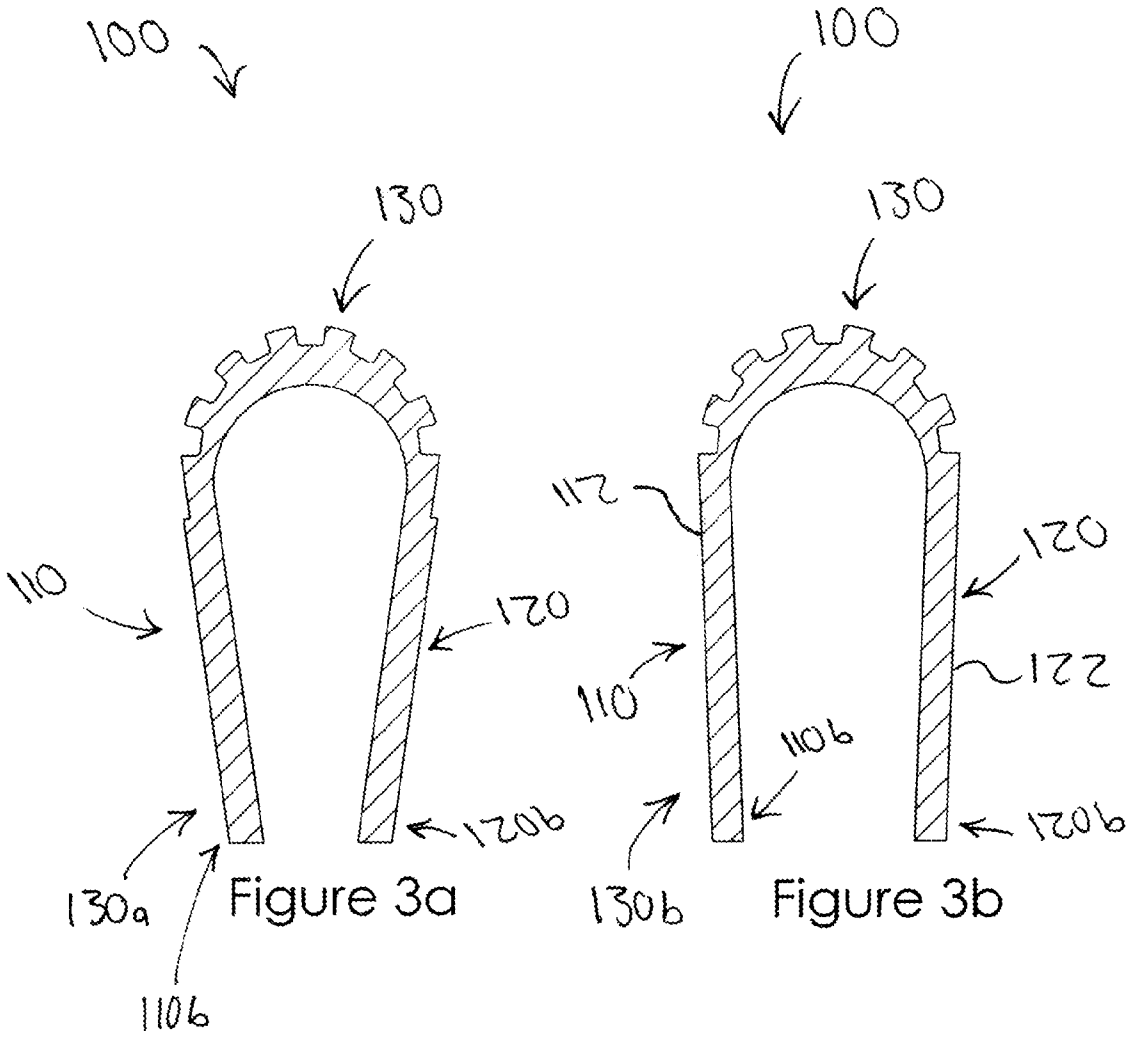

100
130
110
120
120b
130a
1106
Figure 3a
100
130
112
120
110
122
1106
120b
130b
Figure 3b

Figure 3

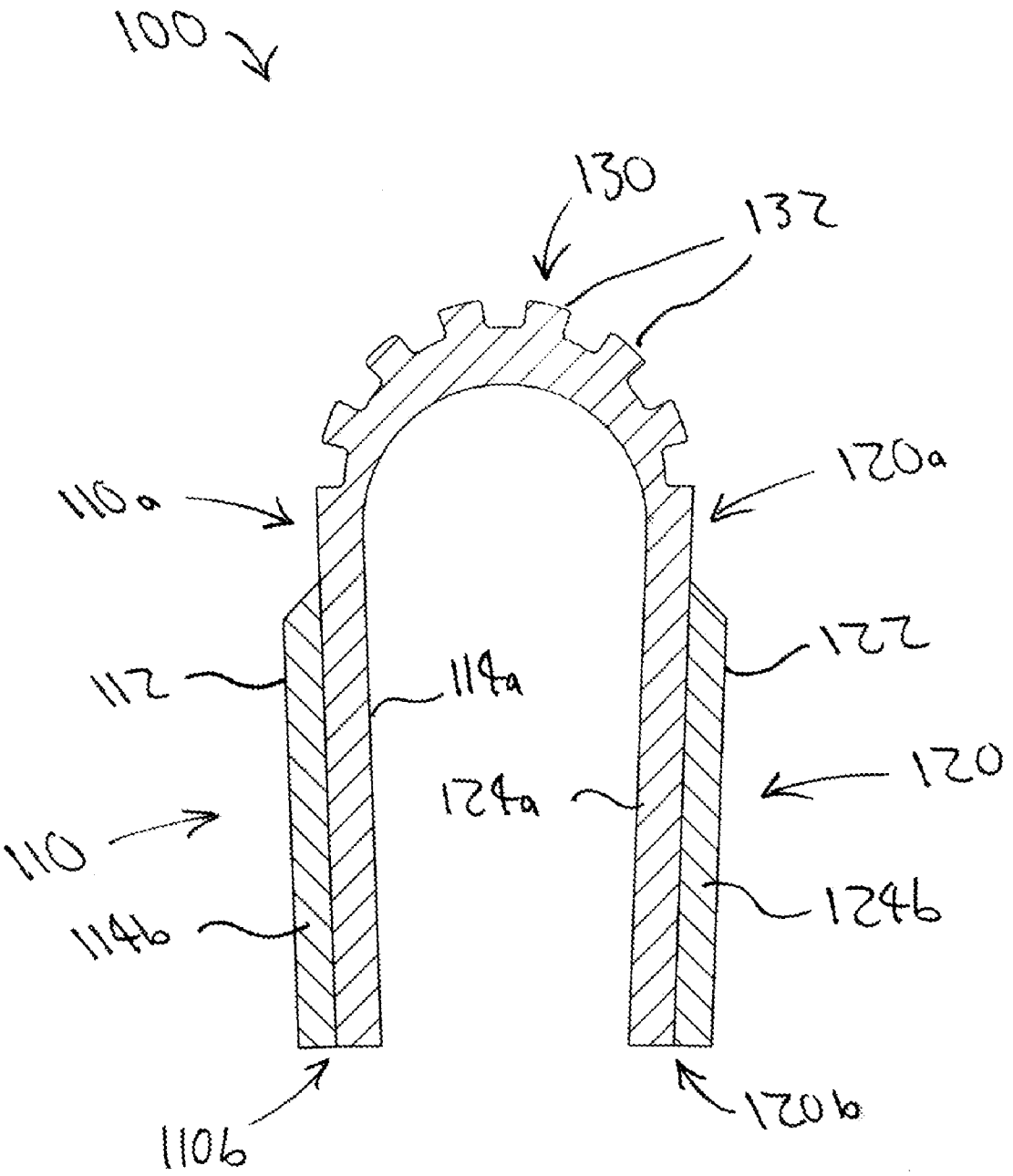

100
130
132
110a
120a
112
114a
122
120
124a
110
114b
124b
110b
120b

Figure 4

TOWEL HOLDER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to holding accessories and, more particularly, to a towel holder that is biased to grip a handle, includes a non-slip portion that inhibits a towel from sliding, and other portions that enable a towel to be easily released.

[0002] It is desirable to keep dish towels in a kitchen close to a sink, countertop, or appliances so that they are instantly accessible when needed. In this regard, they are frequently draped on a stove or refrigerator handle. Unfortunately, towels secured in this way are easily dislodged when bumped by an adult or child and wind up falling on the floor.

[0003] Various devices have been proposed in the art for securing towels, both in the kitchen and bathroom environment. Although assumably effective for their intended purposes, the existing devices include the disadvantages of requiring a user to fasten or unfasten a towel from the holder or require installation of the holder into a wall or the like.

[0004] Therefore, it would be desirable to have a towel holder that may be quickly and easily secured or removed from an appliance handle or other fixed member. Further, it would be desirable to have a towel holder having a configuration that resists sliding of a towel that is draped thereon. In addition, it would be desirable to have a towel holder that enables a towel to be quickly and easily released from the holder when intentionally lifted therefrom.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Accordingly, a towel holder for selectively holding and releasing a towel according to the present invention includes first and second sides, each side having upper and lower ends, respectively. The towel holder also includes an elastic top portion adjoining the first and second side upper ends, the top portion biasing the respective side lower ends toward one another yet allowing the lower ends to be separated as needed to be force fitted onto a fixed member such as a stove handle.

[0006] Preferably, the top portion includes a rounded configuration over which a towel may be draped. The top portion may also include a configuration that resists a towel from sliding thereon, such as a plurality of ridges, bosses, or constructed of a soft rubber material. Conversely, the sides are constructed of a low-friction material such that a towel slides easily thereon when being intentional lifted from the towel holder.

[0007] Therefore, a general object of this invention is to provide a towel holder for easy attachment to a handle or similar fixed member for securing and releasing a towel.

[0008] Another object of this invention is to provide a towel holder, as aforesaid, that includes a top portion having elastic properties for biasing depending sides toward one another such that the towel holder grips a handle.

[0009] Still another object of this invention is to provide a towel holder, as aforesaid, having a non-slip configuration that resists a towel from sliding.

[0010] Yet another object of this invention is to provide a towel holder, as aforesaid, having sides constructed of low-friction materials that enable a towel to slide easily when being intentionally removed from the towel holder.

[0011] A further object of this invention is to provide a towel holder, as aforesaid, that is easy and economical to manufacture.

[0012] Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein is set forth by way of illustration and example, embodiments of this invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. **1** is an exploded view of a towel holder according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0014] FIG. **2** is a perspective view of the towel holder as in FIG. **1** with a towel draped thereover;

[0015] FIG. **3***a* is cross-sectional view of the towel holder as in FIG. **1** in a closed configuration;

[0016] FIG. **3***b* is another cross-sectional view of the towel holder as in FIG. **3***a* in an open configuration; and

[0017] FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view of the towel holder as in FIG. **1** illustrating the inner and outer portions of respective sides.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] A towel holder **100** according to the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to FIGS. **1** through **4** of the accompanying drawings. More particularly, a towel holder **100** according to the current invention includes first and second sides **110**, **120** and an elastic top portion **130**.

[0019] The first and second sides **110**, **120** have upper ends **110***a*, **120***a* and lower ends **110***b*, **120***b*. The first and second sides **110**, **120** may be generally planar (as shown in FIG. **4**, for example) and have non-stick configurations. For example, the first and second sides **110**, **120** may respectively have generally planar faces **112**, **122** constructed of a low-friction material such as a hard plastic, composite, or metal. The elastic top portion **130** may be coupled to the first side upper end **110***a* and the second side upper end **120***a* and may be rounded (FIG. **1**). As shown in FIGS. **3***a* and **3***b*, the first side **110**, the second side **120**, and the top portion **130** may collectively have a horseshoe shaped cross-section.

[0020] The first and second sides **110**, **120** may have inner portions **114***a*, **124***a* and outer portions **114***b*, **124***b* as shown in FIG. **1**, and the first side inner portion **114***a*, the second side inner portion **124***a*, and the top portion **130** may be constructed from a first material to form a unitary member **140**, though other constructions may also be appropriate. The first side outer portion **114***b* and the second side outer portion **124***b* may be constructed from a second material and coupled to the respective inner portions **114***a*, **124***a*. As shown in FIG. **1**, the outer portions **114***b*, **124***b* may define the generally planar faces **112**, **122**. While the sides of a towel **10** have been removed in FIG. **2** to show the towel holder **100**, the first and second sides **110**, **120** may have respective widths that are less than the width of the towel **10** so that the towel **10** hides the sides **110**, **120** when placed atop the towel holder **100**.

[0021] The top portion **130** may have a non-slip configuration. For example, the top portion **130** may include a plurality of ridges **132**, a plurality of bosses, other non-smooth elements, and/or a high-friction material. More particularly, portions of the top portion **130**, the entire top portion **130**, one or more ridge **132**, and/or one or more boss may include a soft

rubber material (a flexible, high-friction material that may or may not be constructed of natural or synthetic rubber).

[0022] As shown in FIG. **3***a*, the top portion **130** may bias the first side **110** and the second side **120** to a closed configuration **130***a*. The lower ends **110***b*, **120***b* may or may not be touching while the sides **110**, **120** are at the closed configuration **130***a*. As shown in FIG. **3***b*, the top portion **130** may selectively allow the first and second sides **110**, **120** to separate from the closed configuration **130***a*. In other words, the top portion **130** may bias the first side lower end **110***b* and the second side lower end **120***b* to have a predetermined spacing (FIG. **3***a*), and the top portion **130** may selectively allow the lower ends **110***b*, **120** to be moved together or separated (FIG. **3***b*) to distance or narrow the predetermined spacing.

[0023] In use, the first side **110** and the second side **120** may be separated by manually pulling one side **110**, **120** away from the other side **110**, **120**, and the flexible nature of the top portion **130** may allow the separation to occur without damage to the towel holder **100**. While separated, an oven handle or other suitable fixed member may be located between the first and second sides **110**, **120**. In other words, the first and second sides **110**, **120** may be positioned about the fixed member. The top portion **130** may then move the lower ends **110***b*, **120***b* together to secure the towel holder **100** around the fixed member.

[0024] As shown in FIG. **2**, the towel **10** may be placed atop the towel holder **100** so that a portion of the towel **10** contacts the top portion **130**, another portion of the towel **10** contacts the first side **110**, and yet another portion of the towel **10** contacts the second side **120**. Due to its non-slip configuration as discussed above, the top portion **130** may maintain the towel **10** in place on the towel holder **100**. In contrast, the non-stick configurations of the first and second sides **110**, **120** may have little or no effect in maintaining the towel **10** in place on the towel holder **100**. To remove (or "release") the towel **10** from the towel holder **100**, a user may pull upwards on the towel **10** adjacent the top portion **130**, separating the towel **10** from the non-slip configuration of the top portion **130**. Ends **12***a*, **12***b* of the towel **10** may move easily over the first and second sides **110**, **120** due to the non-stick configurations of the sides **110**, **120**.

[0025] It is understood that while certain forms of this invention have been illustrated and described, it is not limited thereto except insofar as such limitations are included in the following claims and allowable functional equivalents thereof.

1. A towel holder, comprising:
first and second sides, each respective side having upper and lower ends; and
an elastic top portion coupled to said first side upper end and said second side upper end, said top portion biasing said first side lower end and said second side lower end to have a predetermined spacing, said top portion selectively allowing at least one of distancing from said predetermined spacing and narrowing from said predetermined spacing between said first side lower end and said second side lower end, said top portion having a non-slip configuration.

2. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein:
said top portion is rounded; and
said first side, said second side, and said top portion collectively have a horseshoe-shaped cross-section.

3. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein said first side includes a non-stick configuration and said second side includes a non-stick configuration.

4. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein said non-slip configuration includes a plurality of ridges.

5. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein said non-slip configuration includes a plurality of bosses.

6. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein at least one said boss includes a soft rubber material.

7. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein said first side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction material and said second side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction material.

8. The towel holder as in claim **1**, wherein:
said first side has inner and outer portions;
said second side has inner and outer portions;
said first side inner portion, said second side inner portion, and said top portion are constructed from a first material and form a unitary member; and
said first side outer portion is constructed from a second material and coupled to said first side inner portion.

9. The towel holder as in claim **8**, wherein said second side outer portion is constructed from said second material and coupled to said second side inner portion.

10. A towel holder for selectively holding and releasing a towel, said towel holder comprising:
first and second sides, each respective side having upper and lower ends; and
an elastic top portion adjoining said first side upper end and said second side upper end, said top portion biasing said first side lower end and said second side lower end to have a predetermined spacing, said top portion selectively allowing said first side lower end and said second side lower end to separate from said predetermined spacing;
wherein said top portion includes a non-slip configuration, said first side includes a non-stick configuration, and second side has a non-stick configuration.

11. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein:
said top portion is rounded;
said first side is generally planar;
said second side is generally planar; and
said first side, said second side, and said top portion collectively have a horseshoe-shaped cross-section.

12. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein said non-slip configuration includes a plurality of ridges.

13. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein said non-slip configuration includes a plurality of bosses.

14. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein said non-slip configuration includes a soft rubber material.

15. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein said first side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction material and said second side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction material.

16. The towel holder as in claim **10**, wherein:
said towel has a width;
said first side has a width that is less than said towel width;
said second side has a width that is less than said towel width; and
said top portion has a width that is less than said towel width.

17. The towel holder as in claim **16**, wherein said first side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction mate-

rial and said second side has a generally planar face constructed of a low-friction material.

18. The towel holder as in claim **16**, wherein:

said first side has inner and outer portions;

said second side has inner and outer portions;

said first side inner portion, said second side inner portion, and said top portion are constructed from a first material and form a unitary member;

said first side outer portion is constructed from a second material and coupled to said first side inner portion; and

said second side outer portion is constructed from said second material and coupled to said second side inner portion.

19. A towel holder, comprising:

first and second sides, each respective side having an upper end; and

an elastic top portion adjoining said first side upper end and said second side upper end, said top portion biasing said first side and said second side to a closed configuration, said top portion selectively allowing said first side and said second side to separate from said closed configuration;

wherein said top portion has a non-slip configuration, said first side has a non-stick configuration, and second side has a non-stick configuration.

20. The towel holder as in claim **19**, wherein:

said first side has inner and outer portions;

said second side has inner and outer portions;

said first side inner portion, said second side inner portion, and said top portion are constructed from a first material and form a unitary member;

said first side outer portion is constructed from a second material and coupled to said first side inner portion; and

said second side outer portion is constructed from said second material and coupled to said second side inner portion.

* * * * *