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Ramos

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- (54) **TOILET VENTILATION SYSTEM**
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- (22) Filed: **Nov. 7, 2011**

Related U.S. Application Data

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- (51) **Int. Cl.**
E03D 9/04 (2006.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC 4/213; 4/216; 4/218; 4/348
- (58) **Field of Classification Search** 4/213, 211, 4/216, 218, 348, 349, 350, 351
See application file for complete search history.

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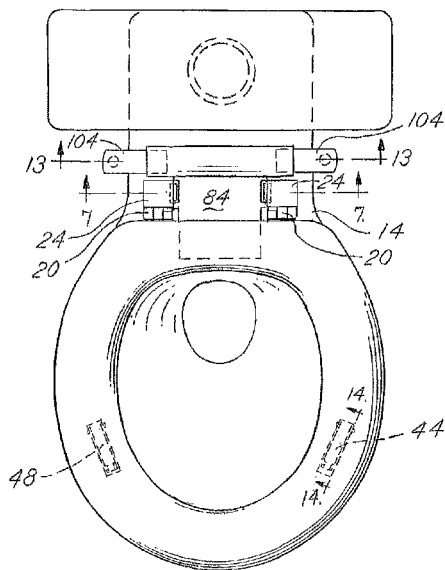
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A toilet ventilation system for removing unpleasant odors from a toilet efficiently. The toilet ventilation system has a manifold with an inlet that rests on an upper surface adjacent to the toilet bowl. The manifold has an outlet that is in communication with the inlet and the manifold has protrusions that extend from its sides. The protrusions are on cantilevered tabs. The toilet seat has hinges that have mounting portions being spaced apart and including mortices facing inward. The protrusions are designed to snap fit into the mortices and the tabs may be bent inwardly for easy removal of the manifold for cleaning. A fan is connected to the manifold to draw air through the inlet out of the manifold and exhaust the air to a remote location from the toilet and outside of the room where the toilet is located.

17 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



US 8,434,170 B1

Page 2

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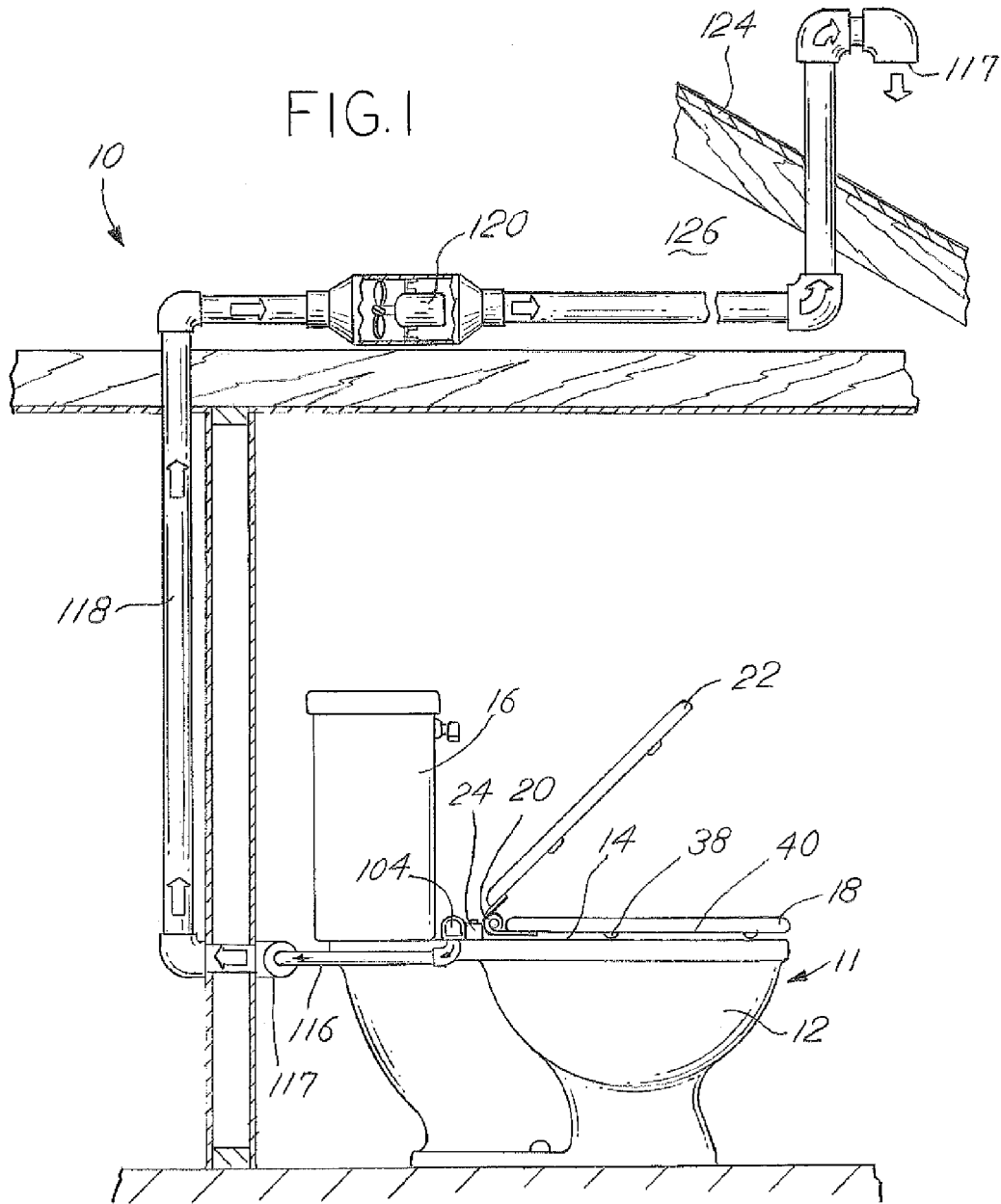


FIG. 2

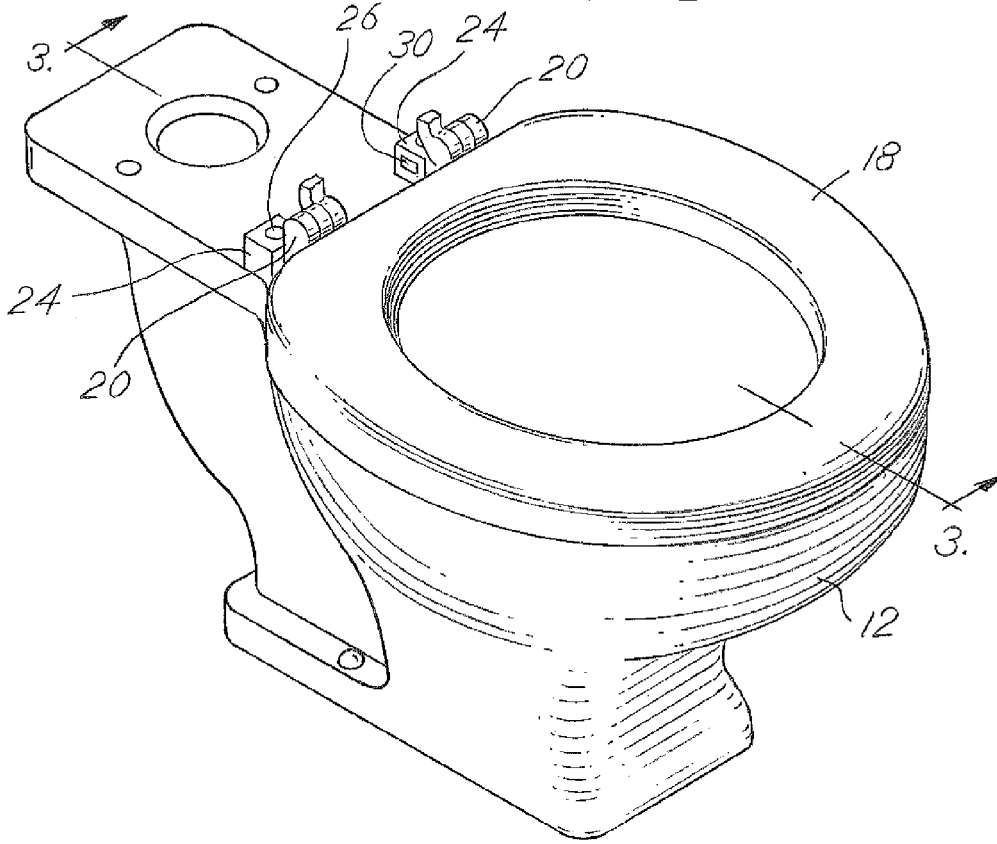
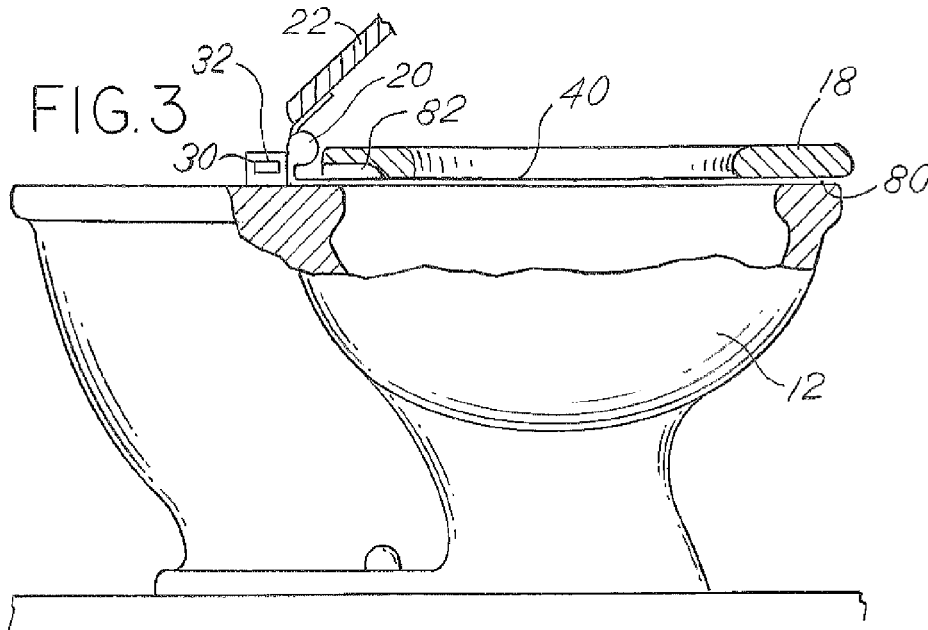


FIG. 3



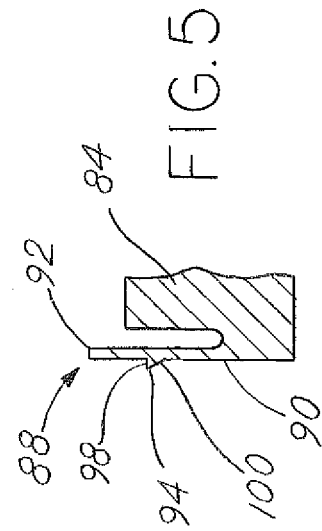
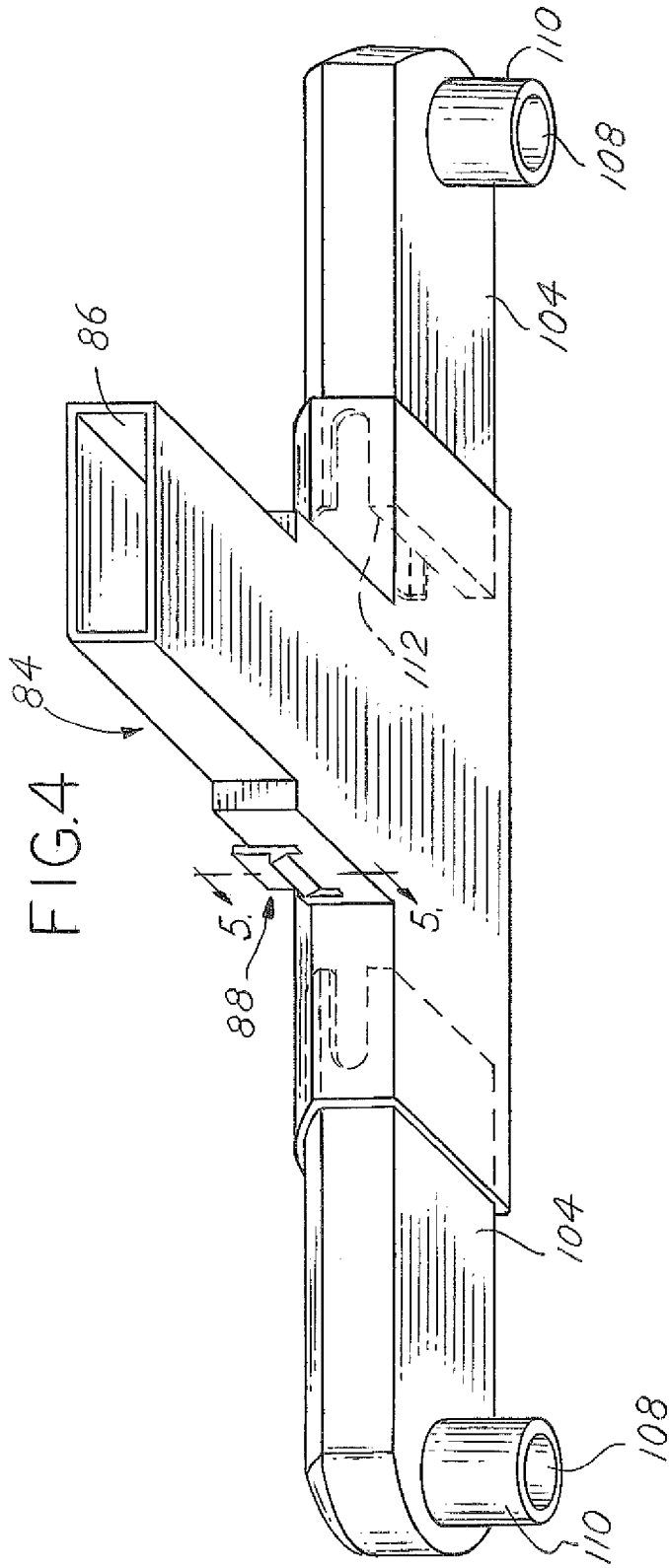


FIG.6

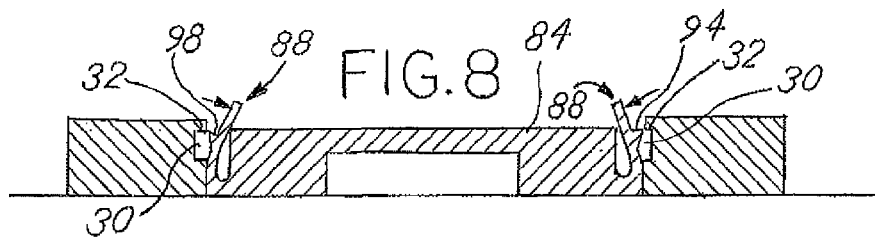
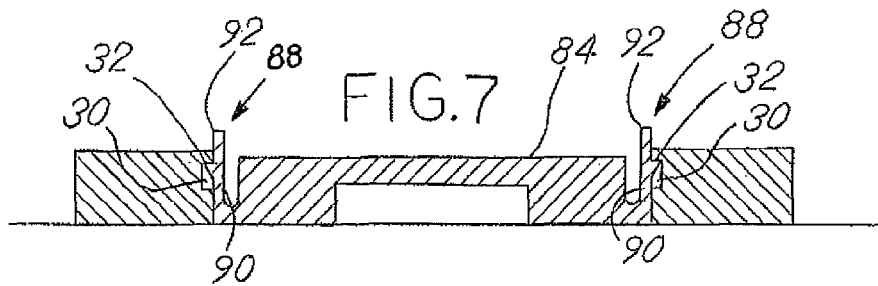
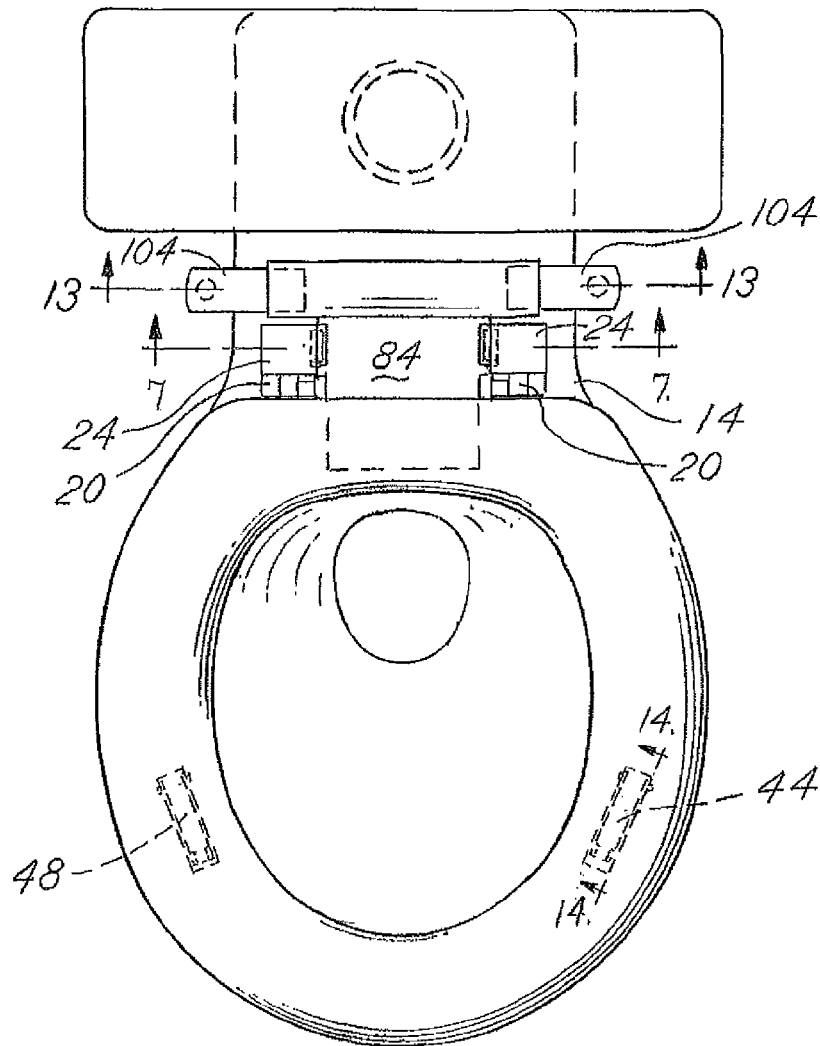


FIG. 9

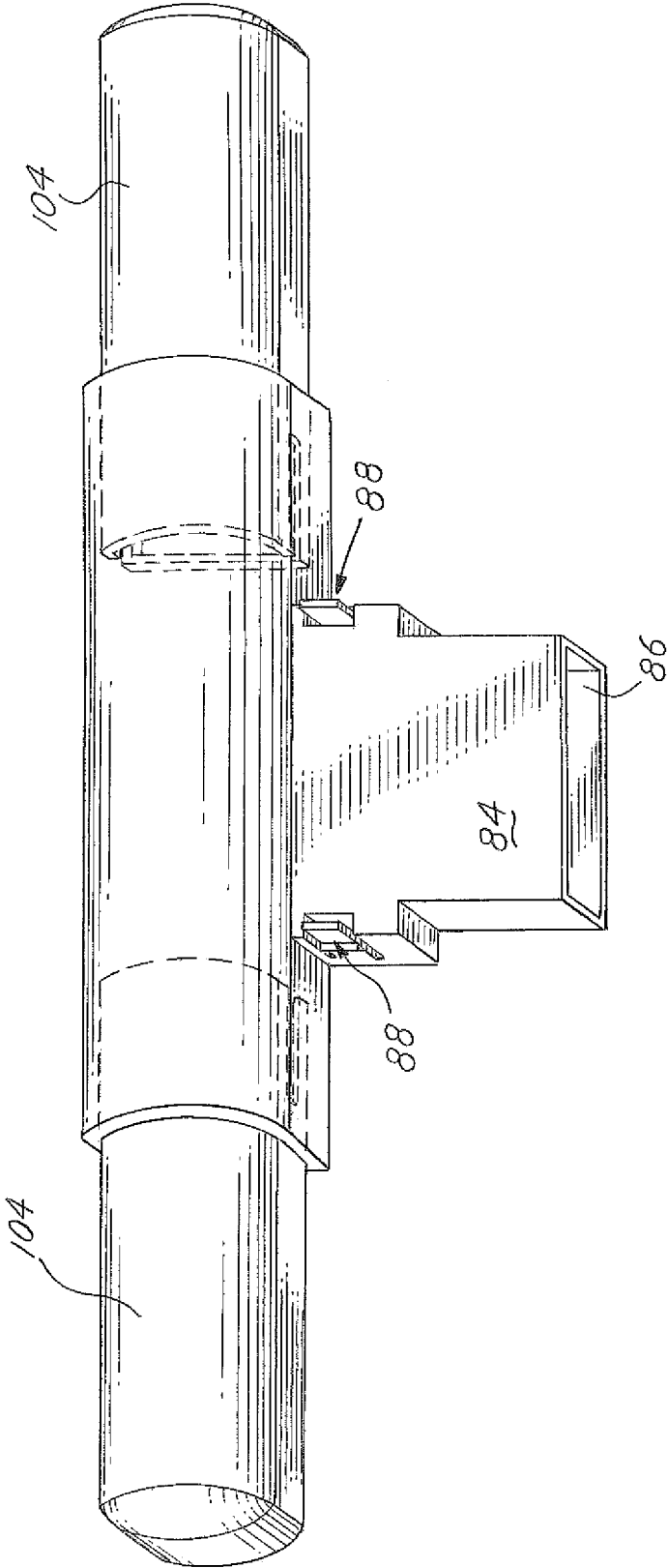


FIG.10

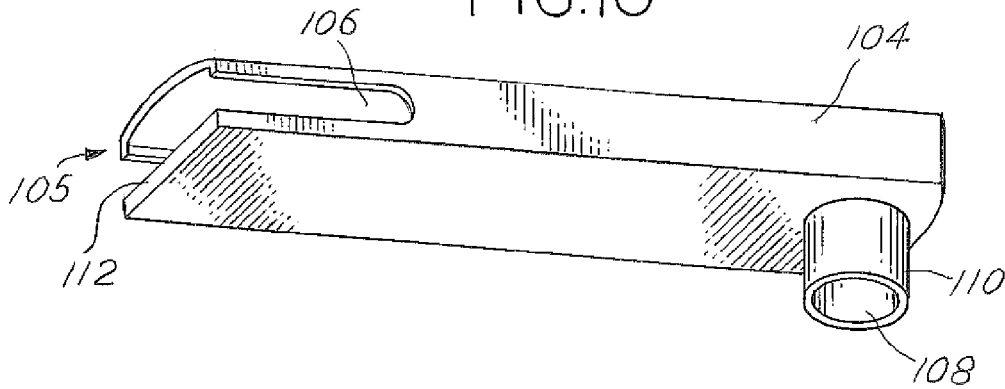


FIG.11

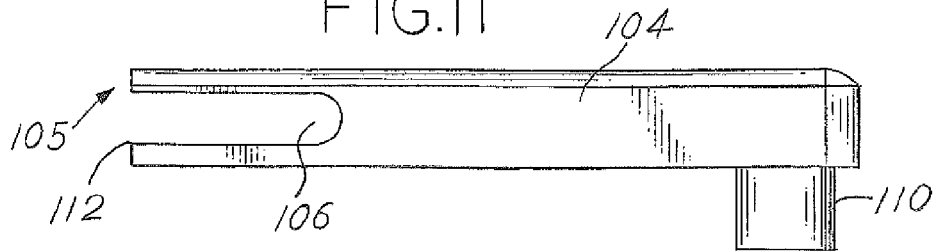


FIG.12

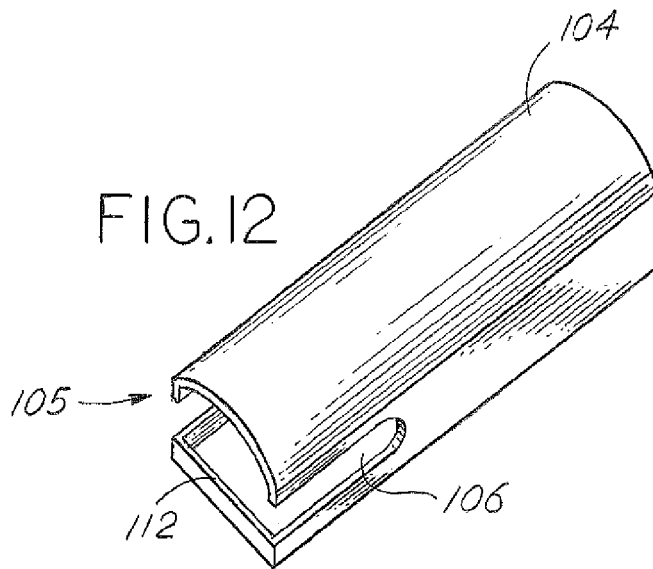


FIG.13

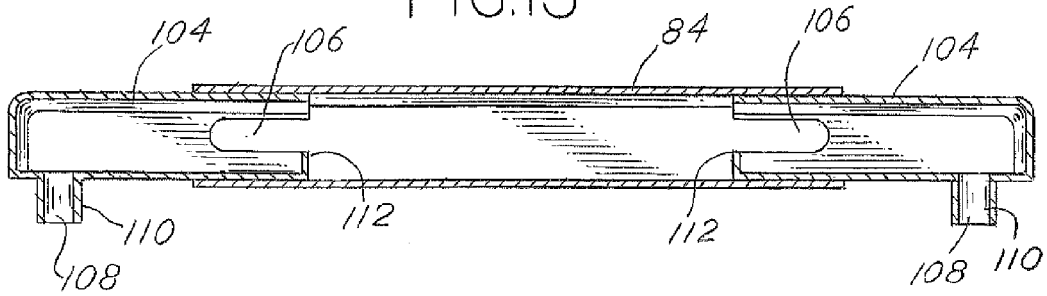


FIG.14

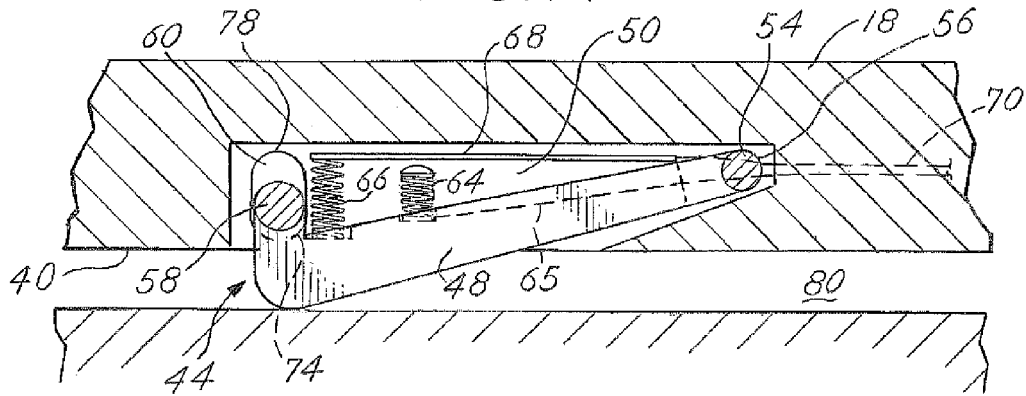
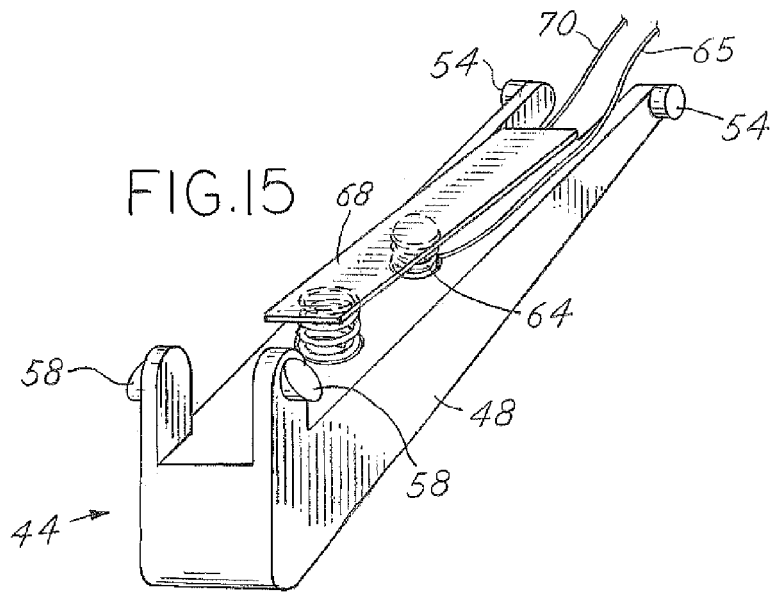


FIG.15



1

TOILET VENTILATION SYSTEM**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application is a continuation-in-part claiming the benefit of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/380,876, filed Mar. 4, 2009 now abandoned, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Ventilation of a bathroom having a toilet is well known in the art. For example, it is known to include an exhaust fan drawing air out of the bathroom generally, and often this fan is in the ceiling of the room. This will remove unpleasant odors, but is inefficient. It requires a large amount of air to be evacuated from the room to remove odors. Also drawing air from the room generally does not draw unpleasant odors from their source. Drawing a large amount of air from a bathroom consumes energy due to the fact that the air in the room was likely heated or cooled depending on the season.

Other systems exist that attempt to eliminate the unpleasant odors by collecting air nearer the source of unpleasant odors by collecting air near the toilet have been tried. They have been commercially unsuccessful because of the difficulty in collecting air while necessarily avoiding collection of water.

Another problem of previous toilet ventilation systems is the difficulty in cleaning the toilet and seat area because removing other prior art systems is cumbersome. Existing toilet ventilation systems fail to provide a means for easy removal and therefore, easy cleaning.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a toilet ventilation system for removing unpleasant odors from a toilet efficiently. The toilet ventilation system has a manifold with an inlet that rests on an upper surface adjacent to the toilet bowl. The manifold has an outlet that is in communication with the inlet and the manifold has protrusions that extend from its sides. The toilet seat has hinges that have mounting portions being spaced apart. The mounting portions have mortices in them that are designed to receive the protrusions on the manifold. A fan is connected to the manifold to draw air through the inlet out of the manifold and exhaust the air to a remote location from the toilet and outside of the room where the toilet is located.

The protrusions may be located on cantilevered tabs that extend from the sides of the manifold. The protrusions are designed for a snap fit into the mortices on the mounting portions of the hinges. Bending the cantilevered tabs inward toward the manifold retracts the protrusions from the mortices. This facilitates easy removal of the manifold so that the toilet may be easily cleaned.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a sectional overview of the toilet ventilation system installed in a home;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a toilet showing the mortices in the mounting portions of the hinges;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken about the line 3-3 in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the manifold and telescoping sleeves;

2

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken about the line 5-5 in FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a top view of a toilet with the manifold installed between the mounting portions of the hinges;

FIG. 7 is a sectional view taken about the line 7-7 in FIG. 6 showing the protrusions on the cantilevered tabs engaged in the mortices on the mounting portions of the hinges;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view similar to FIG. 7, but with the cantilevered tabs bent inwardly to disengage the protrusions from the mortices on the mounting portions of the hinges;

FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing the top of the manifold with the sleeves installed;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of one of the sleeves;

FIG. 11 is a side view of the sleeve shown in FIG. 10;

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of the sleeve shown in FIGS. 10 and 11 showing the dam;

FIG. 13 is a sectional view taken about the line 13-13 in FIG. 6;

FIG. 14 is a sectional view of the switch taken about the line 14-14 in FIG. 6; and

FIG. 15 is a perspective view of the switch outer cover and contacts.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

FIG. 1 shows an overview of the toilet ventilation system 10 installed in a home. The toilet 11 has a bowl 12 that has an upper surface 14 that defines the uppermost portion of the bowl 12. The upper surface 14 extends behind the bowl 12 toward where a tank 16 is mounted to the toilet 11. A seat 18 is attached to the toilet 11 at its upper surface 14 behind the bowl 12 with hinges 20. The hinges 20 are opposite each other and also are pivotally attached to a lid 22. The hinges 20 are typically made of plastic and have mounting portions 24 with holes 26 to receive screws that are driven through the upper surface 14. The screws are not shown, but it is well known to those in the art that such fasteners are typically used to affix the mounting portions 24 to the toilet 11. The mounting portions 24 have mortices 30 that are rectangular recessed pockets. The mortices 30 on the mounting portions are opposite each other and face inwardly. As can be seen in FIGS. 3, 7, and 8, the mortices 30 have flat inner surfaces 32 that are perpendicular to inner faces 34 of the mounting portions. As can be seen in FIG. 6, the upper surface 14 between the tank 16 and bowl 12 has a fixed width that is determined by the manufacturer. This width is large enough to accommodate the spaced mounting portions 24 and the fasteners that hold them to the upper surface 16.

The seat 18 is pivotable about the hinges 20 and rests upon the upper surface. The seat 18 has pads 38 that extend from its lower surface 40 to prevent the lower surface 40 from resting directly on the upper surface 14 of the bowl. The seat 18 also has a switch 44 at a location forward of the pad 38. The location of the switch 44 is shown in FIG. 6. The switch 44 is illustrated in detail in FIGS. 14 and 15. The switch 44 has a cover 48 that is pivotally installed within a recess 50 in the seat 18. The rearmost portion of the cover 48 has hinge pins 54 that snap into rear pockets 56 within the recess 50. The front most portion of the cover 48 has catch pins 58 that are chamfered and are made to catch in front slots 60 within the recess 50 in the seat 18. A first spring 64 attached to the cover 48 includes a first wire 65 extending therefrom and the first spring acts as a first contact in a circuit. A second spring 66 biases the cover 48 away from a second contact 68 that is a metal strip that extends from the second spring 66 toward the hinge pins 54 so that it passes adjacent to the first spring 64. The second contact 68 has a second wire 70 that extends from

it. The switch cover **48** has a first position in which the cover **48** is biased until the catch pins **58** are caught against the lowermost end **74** of the slot **60**. The first position corresponds to the maximum extension of the second spring **66**. The switch cover **48** is pivotable about the hinge pins **54** into a second retracted position in which the second spring **66** is compressed and the first spring **64** contacts the second contact **68**. The second spring **66** is chosen to be of a stiffness that will bias the cover **48** away from the seat **18** with a force that will ensure that the first spring **64** does not touch the second contact **68** when the seat **18** is in its down position as shown in FIG. 3. When the force of a person sitting on the seat **18** is present, the force will overcome the second spring **66** and push the cover **48** into its second retracted position, which corresponds to the catch pins **58** being adjacent to the uppermost ends **78** of the slots **60**. First spring **64** contacting the second contact **68** completes the circuit between the first wire **65** and second wire **70**. A second cover **48** with a single spring may be included on the opposite side of the switch **44** to have even support on both sides of the seat **18** against the upper surface **14**. As an be seen in FIG. 3, there is a gap **80** between the seat **18** and the upper surface **14**. The seat **18** also includes a rearward facing notch **82** that faces the tank **16**.

A manifold **84** is adapted for resting on the upper surface **14** between the seat **18** and the tank **16**. The manifold **84** is generally hollow and is made of injection molded plastic. The manifold **84** has an inlet **86** that is rectangular and designed to fit adjacent to the rearmost portion of the seat **18** and adjacent to the notch **82**. On the sides of the manifold **84** there are cantilevered tabs **88** that have an attached end **90** at their lowermost portion and a free end **92** that faces upward and extends above the manifold **84**. The free ends **92** of the tabs **88** may easily be grasped and bent inward. Upon being bent inward, the tabs **88** being resilient, are biased outward. Each tab **88** has a protrusion **94** on it between the attached end **90** and the free end **92**. The protrusion **94** has a flat surface **98** and an angled surface **100** that meet to form an acute angle. The flat surface **98** is on the upper side of the tab facing toward the free end **92**, and the angled surface **100** faces the attached end **90**. The tabs **88** are spaced so the protrusions **94** extend into the mortices **30** of the mounting portions **24**. FIG. 7 shows the spacing of the tabs **88** and the protrusions **94** extending into the mortices **30**. The tabs **88** can be bent inwardly, as shown in FIG. 8, so that the protrusions **94** are retracted from the mortices **30**. The angled surfaces **100** on the protrusions **94** urges the tabs **88** inward when the manifold **84** is pushed down between the mounting portions **24**, and after the protrusions **94** are adjacent to the mortices **30**, the tabs **88** will snap the protrusions **94** into the mortices as shown in FIG. 7. This results in the manifold **84** being held in place between the mounting portions **24**.

The manifold **84** holds sleeves **104** in a telescoping manner within itself. The inner end **105** of the sleeves include a notch **106** allowing the inner end to flex some as it moves slidingly within the manifold **84**. In addition to close dimensional tolerances with the inside of the manifold **84** and the outside of each sleeve **104**, the resilient flexing of the inner end **105** of the sleeves helps provide an airtight seal between the sleeves **104** and the manifold **84**. The sleeves **104** are adjustable in their width to accommodate the upper surface **14** between the seat **18** and tank **16**. As known to those skilled in the art, this surface can vary between different toilet manufacturers. The sleeves **104** provide for a wide range of adjustment and will even allow air to be drawn through them when the ends **105** touch each other because the notches **106** will allow air to be drawn from the sleeves **104**. The sleeves **104** are hollow and are in communication with the inlet **86**. Each sleeve **104** has

an outlet **108** that has a raised collar **110**. Inside each sleeve **104** is a dam **112**, that is on the lower side inside the sleeves **104**. The dam **112** is most clearly seen in FIG. 12. The dam **112** prevents the inadvertent flow of water into the sleeves should water accidentally enter the inlet **86**, which could happen if the toilet **11** were to overflow.

The collars **110** are designed to accommodate outlet pipes **116** that lead into a main outlet pipe **118**. The outlet pipes **116** connected to the sleeves **104** may be attached to the collars **110** using pipe clamps wire ties, or other methods known to those skilled in the art. The pipes **116** themselves can be of any flexible, rigid, or semi rigid material that can be joined to an outlet tee **117** that leads into a main outlet pipe **118**. The pipes **116** are connected to each sleeve **104** so they straddle the upper surface **14** and the pair of pipes **116** join together in an outlet tee **117**. Having an outlet tee **117** allows for the use of smaller pipes than the main outlet pipe **118** inside the home near the toilet **11**, yet still allows for a large amount of air flow. The main outlet pipe **118** includes a fan **120**. The fan exhausts air drawn in through the manifold **84**. The end **117** of the main outlet pipe **118** may be out of a roof **124** as shown in FIG. 1, or could be in an attic space **126** if an installer does not wish to cut a hole in the roof **124**.

The use of the toilet ventilation system **10** is simple and does not require any significant alterations of the user's ordinary use of the toilet **11**. In the case of the system **10** including an integrated switch **44** the user will simply put the seat down in a normal fashion and upon sitting on the seat **18**, the fan **120** will draw air into the inlet **86**. This will remove any odors emanating from the bowl **12**. In this embodiment of the invention, the wires **65** and **70** will be connected when the first spring **66** touches the second contact **68**. This will connect the fan **120** to a power source, which is usually the wiring of the home in which it is installed. The wires **65**, **70** can be molded into the seat so they may be discretely routed behind the toilet **11** to the fan **120**. As such, the outward appearance of the toilet **11** will be substantially unchanged. It is also contemplated that in some installations, a seat **18** without a switch may be used. In this case, a wall switch near the toilet is included to start the fan **120** when a user wishes to use the toilet.

The present invention is not limited to the details given above, but may be modified within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A toilet ventilation system for removing odors from a toilet having a bowl and an upper surface defining the uppermost portion of said bowl, said ventilation system comprising:

a toilet seat adapted for resting on said upper surface of said toilet, said seat having a hinge including a pair of mounting portions spaced from each other adapted for being affixed to said upper surface of said toilet, said mounting portions including mortices that face each other;

a manifold having an inlet for directing air into said manifold, an outlet in communication with said inlet and extending from said manifold, and protrusions being adapted for fitting into said mortices;

a hose connected to said manifold for drawing air from said outlet; and

a fan connected to said hose for drawing from said outlet, said fan exhausting air drawn from said hose and manifold to a location remote of said inlet of said manifold, wherein said protrusions include a chamfer and a flat surface, said flat surface and said chamfer forming an

5

acute angle, said flat surface adapted for catching in said mortices, said protrusions being biased outwardly from said manifold.

2. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said protrusions extend from cantilevered tabs, an attached end of each said tab being affixed to said manifold, said protrusions being spaced from said attached end so that said tab resiliently biases said protrusions outwardly from said manifold.

3. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said tabs have an unattached end extending above said manifolds.

4. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said manifold includes a pair of hollow sleeves telescopingly held within said manifold, said sleeves including said outlet.

5. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 4, wherein said seat includes pressure sensitive switches for selectively connecting said fan to a power source when a predetermined pressure pushes said seat against said upper surface of said toilet.

6. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 5, wherein said seat includes a notch located between said hinges, said notch adapted for receiving said inlet of said manifold.

7. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 6, wherein said sleeves include a dam located between said outlet and said inlet of said manifold to prevent the flow of liquid through said sleeves and into said outlet.

8. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said protrusions are located on cantilevered tabs having an attached end connected to said manifold and a free end opposite said manifold, said tabs adapted for resiliently biasing said protrusions outward.

9. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said protrusions include a chamfer and a flat surface, said flat surface and said chamfer forming an acute angle, said flat surface adapted for catching in said mortices.

10. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said seat includes a switch for selectively opening and closing a circuit connecting said fan to a power source.

11. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said switch includes an outer cover pivotally connected to said seat at one end, said cover being pivotable between a first extended position and a second retracted position, said spring spaced from said one end and biasing said cover away from said seat, a first contact on said cover and a second contact spaced from said cover so that said first and

6

second contacts touch to complete said circuit when said cover is in its retracted position.

12. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 11, wherein said second contact is a spring.

13. A toilet ventilation system for removing odors from a toilet having a bowl and an upper surface defining the uppermost portion of said bowl, said upper surface extending behind said bowl, said ventilation system comprising:

a toilet seat adapted for resting on said upper surface of said toilet, said seat having a pair of hinged mounting portions hingeably attached to said seat, said mounting portions including mortices opposed to each other and inwardly facing each other;

a manifold adapted for fitting between said mounting portions and having an inlet for directing air into said manifold, an outlet in communication with said inlet and extending from said manifold, and outwardly extending protrusions adapted for extending into said mortices;

a hose connected to said outlet of said manifold; and

a fan connected to said hose for drawing air from said outlet, said fan exhausting air drawn from said hose and manifold to a location remote of said inlet of said manifold, wherein said protrusions are located on cantilevered tabs having an attached end connected to said manifold and a free end opposite said manifold, said tabs adapted for resiliently biasing said protrusions outward.

14. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said protrusions include a chamfer and a flat surface, said flat surface and said chamfer forming an acute angle, said flat surface adapted for catching in said mortices.

15. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said seat includes a switch for selectively opening and closing a circuit connecting said fan to a power source.

16. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said switch includes an outer cover pivotally connected to said seat at one end, said cover being pivotable between a first extended position and a second retracted position, said spring spaced from said one end and biasing said cover away from said seat, a first contact on said cover and a second contact spaced from said cover so that said first and second contacts touch to complete said circuit when said cover is in its retracted position.

17. A toilet ventilation system as claimed in claim 16, wherein said second contact is a spring.

* * * * *