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PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53(c).

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112975 U.S. PTO
60/681972

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INVENTOR(S)			
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<input type="checkbox"/> Additional inventors are being named on the _____ separately numbered sheets attached hereto			
TITLE OF THE INVENTION (500 characters max) FLEXIBLE WALL SYSTEM			
Direct all correspondence to: CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS			
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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification	Number of Pages	9	<input type="checkbox"/> CD(s), Number
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s)	Number of Sheets	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Application Data Sheet.	See 37 CFR 1.76		
Total # of sheets	14	Application Size Fee =	\$0.00
METHOD OF PAYMENT OF FILING FEES FOR THIS PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT (check one)			
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The invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government.			
<input type="checkbox"/>	No.		
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Respectfully submitted,

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TELEPHONE

John R.S. Orange

416-863-3164

Date

May 18, 2005

REGISTRATION NO.

29,725

(if appropriate)

Docket Number:

69350/2

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FLEXIBLE WALL SYSTEM

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

4 [0001] The present invention relates to partitions.

5

6 **DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART**

7 [0002] Partitions are frequently used to subdivide spaces, or create more intimate spaces.
8 Typically such partitions are rigid, or have rigid frames, or are formed from rigid interconnected
9 panels and they are relatively large, heavy, and cumbersome, and therefore difficult to set-up,
10 take down, store, and transport.

11 [0003] Moreover, the inherent rigidity of such partitions limits the extent to which they can
12 be dynamically extended (or contracted) and reshaped to suit varying spaces and requirements.

13 [0004] Additionally, such partitions are typically formed from opaque panels which inhibit
14 the transmission of light, therefore necessitating increased use of, or rearrangement of artificial
15 lighting to restore adequate lighting levels.

16 [0005] In domestic, working, and public environments it is frequently desirable to be able to
17 subdivide space on a temporary basis. For example, visitors may require a temporary sleeping
18 area, office workers may need to convert an open plan area into temporary meeting space, trade
19 show participants may need to demarcate a temporary display area, and designers may need to
20 create a temporary backdrop for a designed area, such as in a window display in a retail setting,
21 in a showroom, or in a theatrical setting. For these types of applications, a partition that is rigid,
22 heavy, and/or cumbersome may be costly to transport, difficult to set up/take down, and may
23 require significant storage space. A partition that is rigid will also place significant constraints
24 on the ways in which a given space can be partitioned, limiting its functionality. A partition that
25 is fully opaque will severely disturb natural lighting.

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1 [0006] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a partition in which the
2 above disadvantages are obviated or mitigated.

3 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

4 [0007] According therefore to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a
5 partition having a plurality of laminar panels formed from a flexible flaccid material. Each panel
6 has a pair of oppositely-directed major faces with faces of adjacent panels being inter-connected
7 to provide a lattice structure upon movement of the faces away from each other. Each one of a
8 pair of supports is provided at opposite ends of the partition connected to respective ones of the
9 faces. The supports are self-supporting to provide rigidity to the partition. In this way, the
10 supports may be moved apart to expand the lattice and extend the overall length of the partition.

11

12 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

13 [0008] An embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example only with
14 reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

15 [0009] Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a partition.

16 [0010] Figure 2 is a perspective view showing three panels used in the partition of Figure 1.

17 [0011] Figure 3 is a view on the line III-III of Figure 1.

18 [0012] Figure 4 is a series of views showing the sequential operations required to erect the
19 panel of Figure 1.

20 [0013] Figure 5 is a detailed view of the portion shown in circle A in Figure 4.

21 [0014] Figure 6 is a view showing the sequential steps to join a pair of panels shown in
22 Figure 1 end-to-end.

23 [0015] Figure 7 is a detailed view of the inter-connection of the panels shown in Figure 6.

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1 [0016] Figure 8 is a top perspective view showing the arrangement of a panel within a living
2 area.

3 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

4 [0017] Referring therefore to Figure 1, a partition 10 comprises a core 12 and a pair of
5 supports 14, 16 at opposite ends of the core 12. As can best be seen from Figures 2 and 3, the
6 core 12 is formed from a plurality of panels 18. The panels 18 each have a pair of oppositely-
7 directed major faces 19, 20, and are formed from a flexible flaccid material. In the preferred
8 embodiment, the material forming the panels 18 is standard white, flame retardant tissue paper,
9 having a weight of approximately 13.5lbs (500 sheets @ 24"x 36" = 13.5lbs). Each panel has a
10 height h and a width w which may be adjusted to suit particular environments. Typically the
11 height will be in the order of 2 metres and the width in the order of 30 centimetres. Adjacent
12 panels 18 are inter-connected to one another at spaced intervals that alternate across the width of
13 the face of the panel. As indicated in Figure 2, the connection between panels 18a and 18b is
14 through a series of parallel, laterally-spaced strips 24 on the face 19 of panel 18b. The strips 24
15 are defined by stripes of adhesive, which connects the panels 18a, 18b to one another, as shown
16 in Figure 3.

17 [0018] Similarly, the inter-connection between a panel 18b and 18c is through spaced
18 parallel strips 28 on the face 19 of panel 18c which are offset from the strips 24. Each of the
19 panels 18 is therefore alternately connected to the panel 18 on opposite sides so that, as shown in
20 Figure 3, upon extension of the panel in a horizontal direction, a lattice structure having voids 30
21 is formed within the core. The voids 30 extend vertically from top to bottom of the core 12 with
22 the panels 18 providing a continuous transverse barrier. The lateral outer ends of each of the
23 panels 18 are connected so as to form vertical pleats on the exterior faces of the core 12.

24 [0019] An end panel 18d of the core is connected to respective ones of the supports 14 and
25 16 over its entire width. The supports 14 and 16 are made from a self-supporting material,
26 typically a felt material which has a degree of flexibility but also has sufficient rigidity to resist
27 collapse of the core 12. In a typical application, the felt is a 1.95 nominal pounds per square yard
28 felt having a thickness in the order of 3 millimetres although other weights and thicknesses may

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1 be utilized as appropriate depending upon the overall dimensions of the partition 10. The
2 supports 14 and 16 extend laterally beyond the core as indicated at 32 and is adhered to the end
3 panel 18d.

4 [0020] A pair of loop and hook strips 34, such as that sold under the trade name "Velcro" are
5 stitched to the felt supports 14 and 16, and extend vertically from one end to the other.

6 [0021] The core 12 is collapsible so that the major faces of adjacent panels 18 lay parallel to
7 one another and in abutment. In this position, as shown in Figure 4a, the partition 10 may be
8 stored in a flat, collapsed position. When the partition is required, it can be oriented vertically (
9 figure 4b) and the opposite supports 14 and 16 used to manipulate the partition. The supports 14
10 and 16 are moved away from one another as shown in Figure 4c to expand the core so that the
11 lattice is opened within the core 12.

12 [0022] Once partially extended, the supports 14 and 16 may be folded along a vertical axis to
13 provide enhanced rigidity at each end of the partition 12. This may be seen in more detail in
14 Figure 5 where it will be seen that the opposite edges of the supports 14 and 16 may be brought
15 together with the loop and hook strips 34 brought into abutment. The loop and hook strips 34
16 engage one another and thus hold the support in a folded tubular configuration. This movement
17 is accommodated by the flexible nature of the lattice structure which expands towards the lateral
18 edges to accommodate the folding of the supports 14 and 16. With the supports 14 and 16 folded
19 into a tubular support, extension of the core 12 continues as shown in view (e) of Figure 4, until
20 the desired overall length is reached.

21 [0023] With the partition expanded, it has sufficient width to remain stable in a vertical
22 position with the rigidity provided by the end supports 14 and 16. The material forming the
23 panels 18 is preferably translucent so that a pleasing transmission of light through the panel may
24 occur, while still providing a degree of privacy.

25 [0024] The extended panel as shown in Figure 4e may be adjusted to different configurations
26 as illustrated by the curve shown in Figure 1 and the wrapped curve shown in Figure 8. The core

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