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VanTiem et al.

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(54) **CANDLE BLOWING APPARATUS**
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(60) Provisional application No. 62/664,316, filed on Apr. 30, 2018.

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F23Q 25/00 (2006.01)
B01D 46/00 (2022.01)
B01D 46/24 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **F23Q 25/00** (2013.01); **B01D 46/0005** (2013.01); **B01D 46/0028** (2013.01); **B01D 46/2414** (2013.01); **B01D 2275/202** (2013.01); **B01D 2279/65** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**
A candle blowing apparatus may have a main housing, a mouthpiece, at least one filter cartridge, and an ornamental endpiece. The main housing may have a first end and a second end. The mouthpiece may be removably attached to the first end of the main housing. The at least one filter cartridge may include at least one filter. The filter cartridge may be removably disposed within the main housing between the first end and the second end. The filter cartridge may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece. The ornamental endpiece may be removably attached to the second end of the main housing and be in fluid communication with the filter cartridge. The ornamental endpiece together with the mouthpiece and the filter cartridge may define an air flow path for hygienic delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle.

20 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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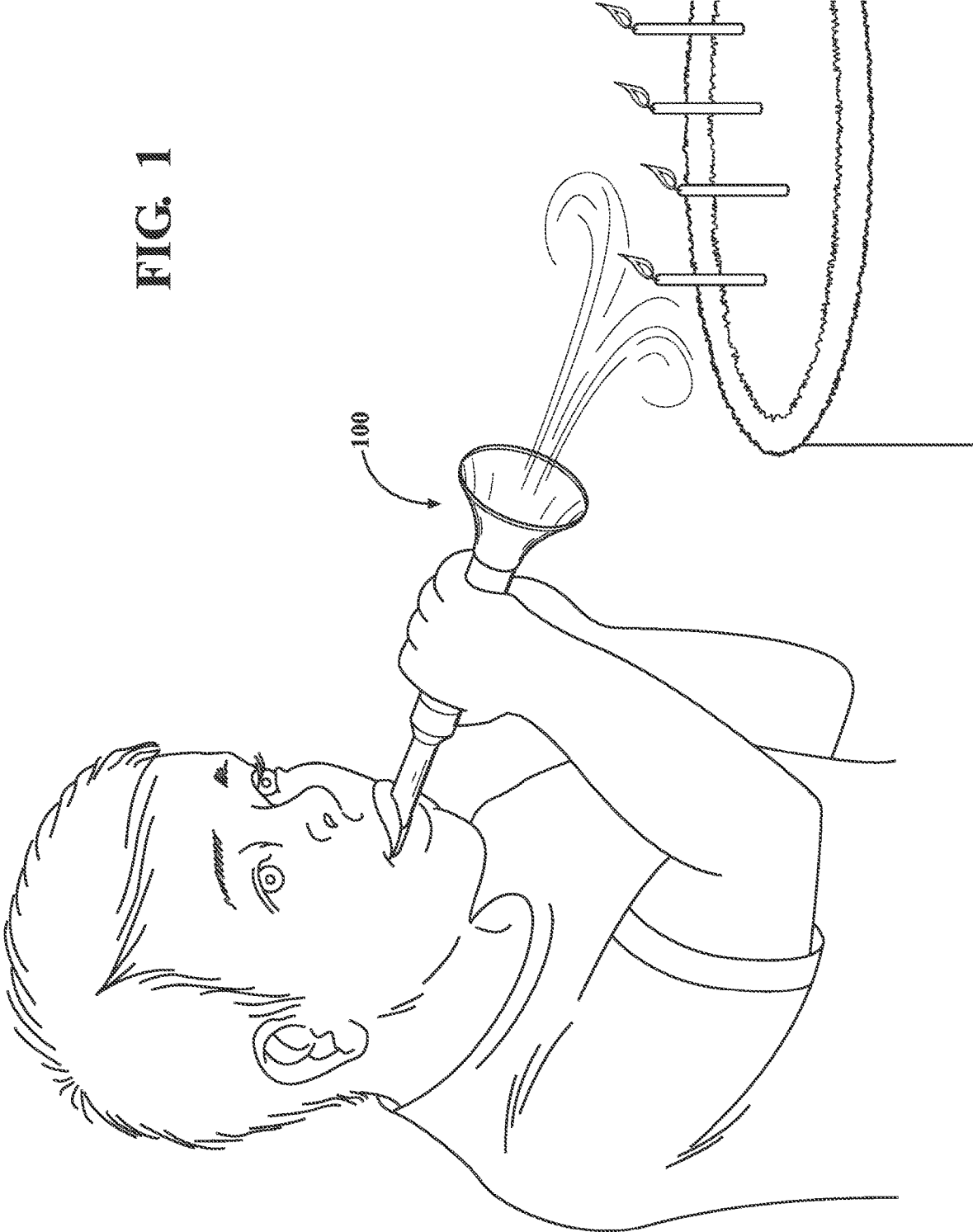
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FIG. 1



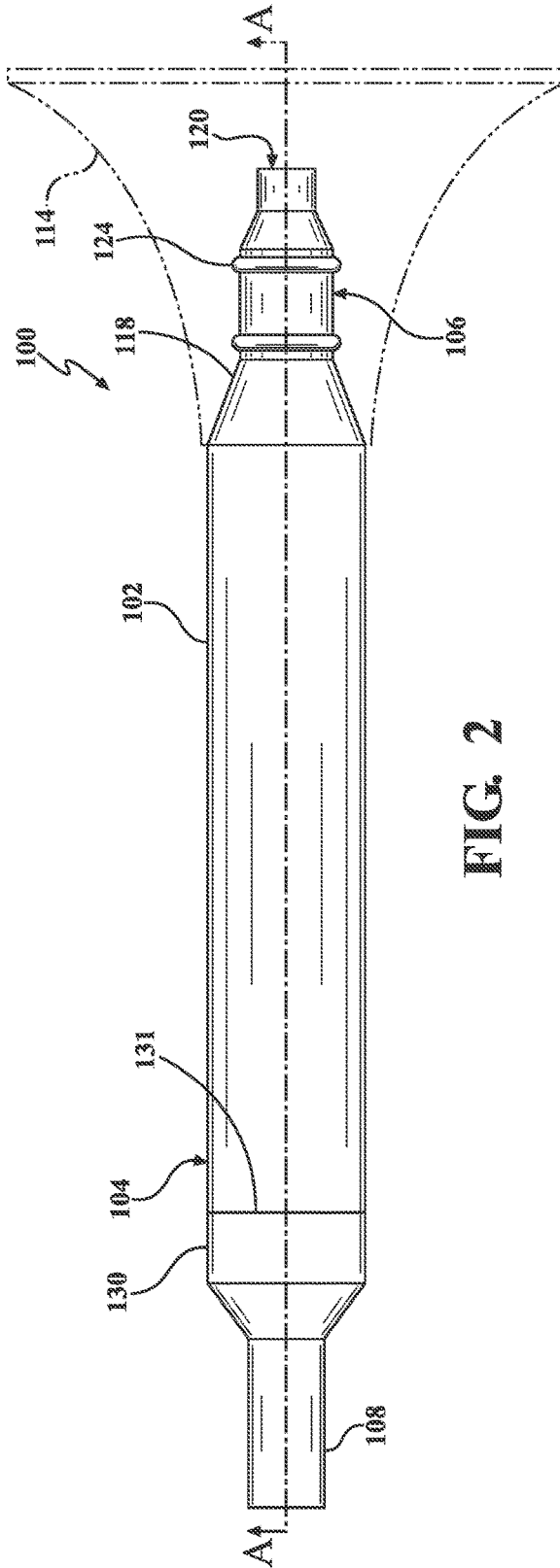


FIG. 2

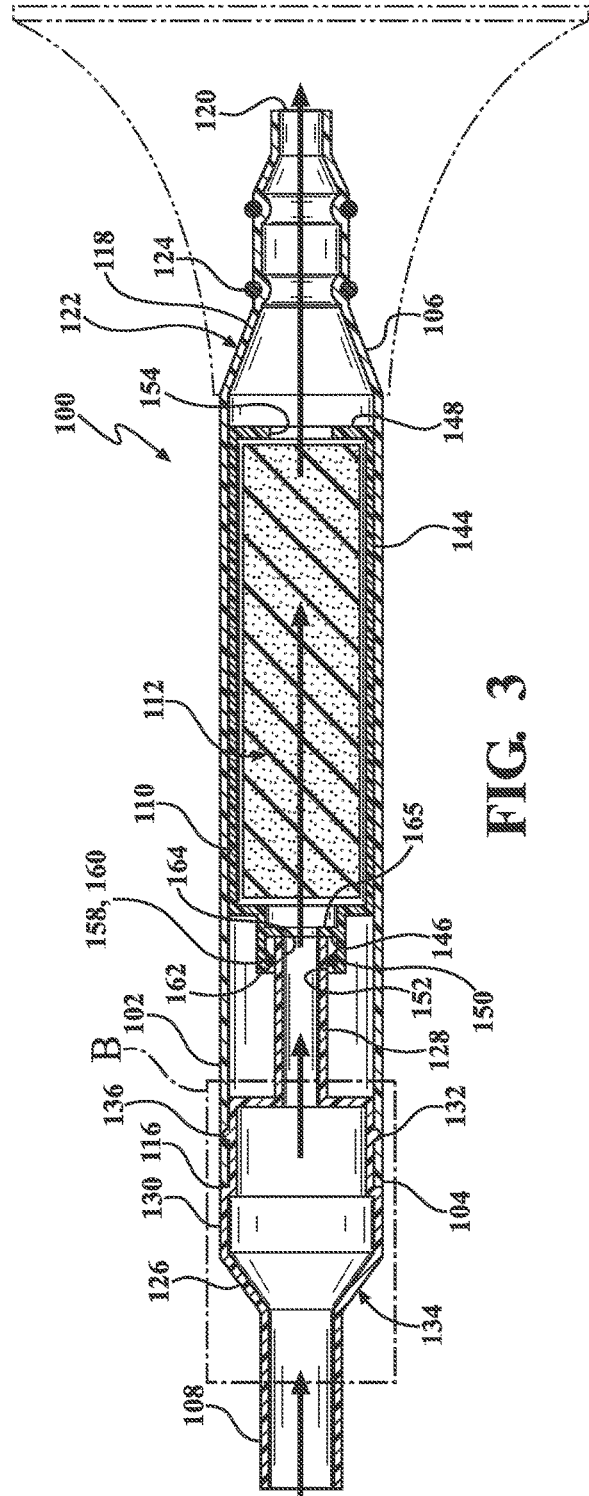


FIG. 3

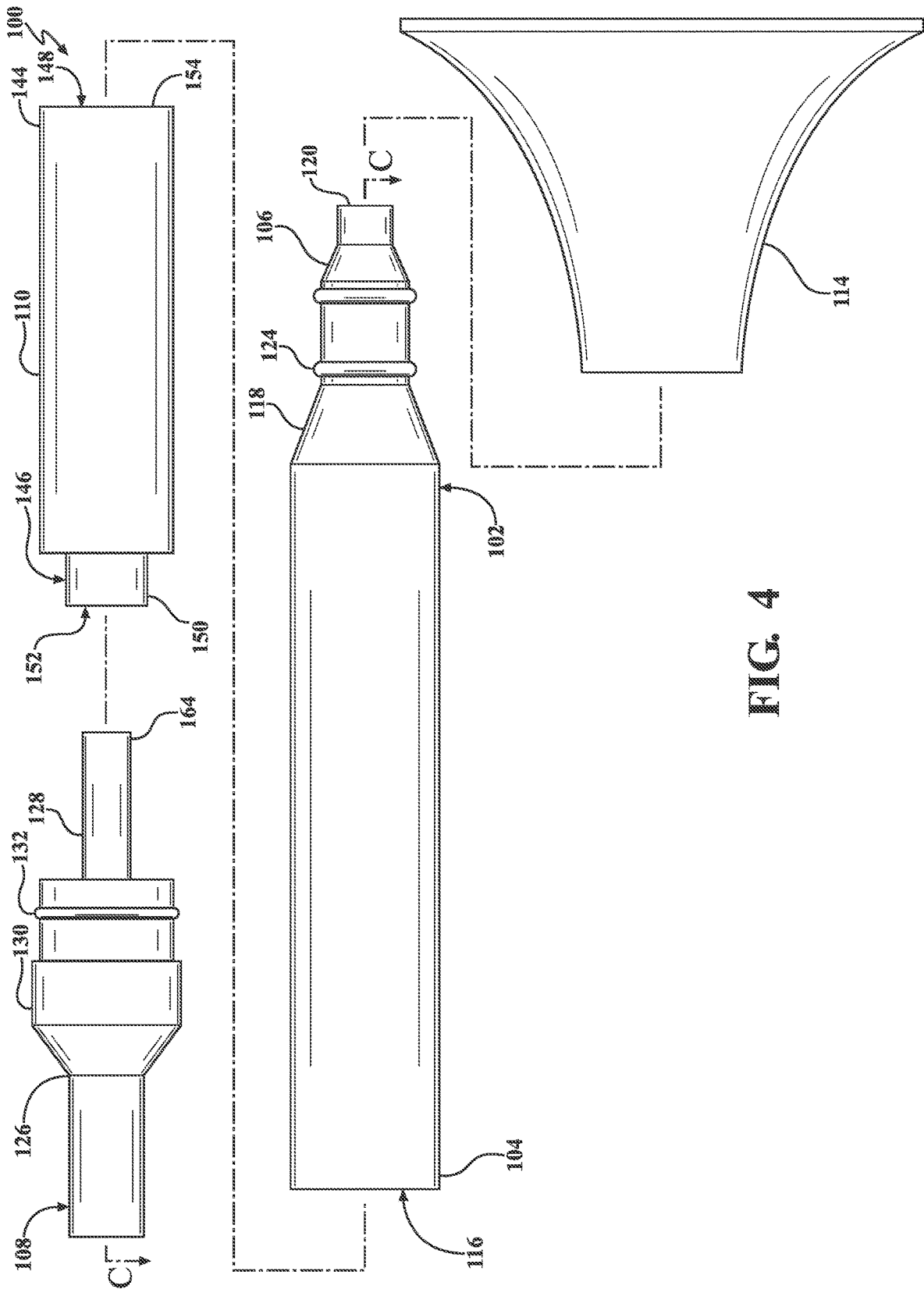


FIG. 4

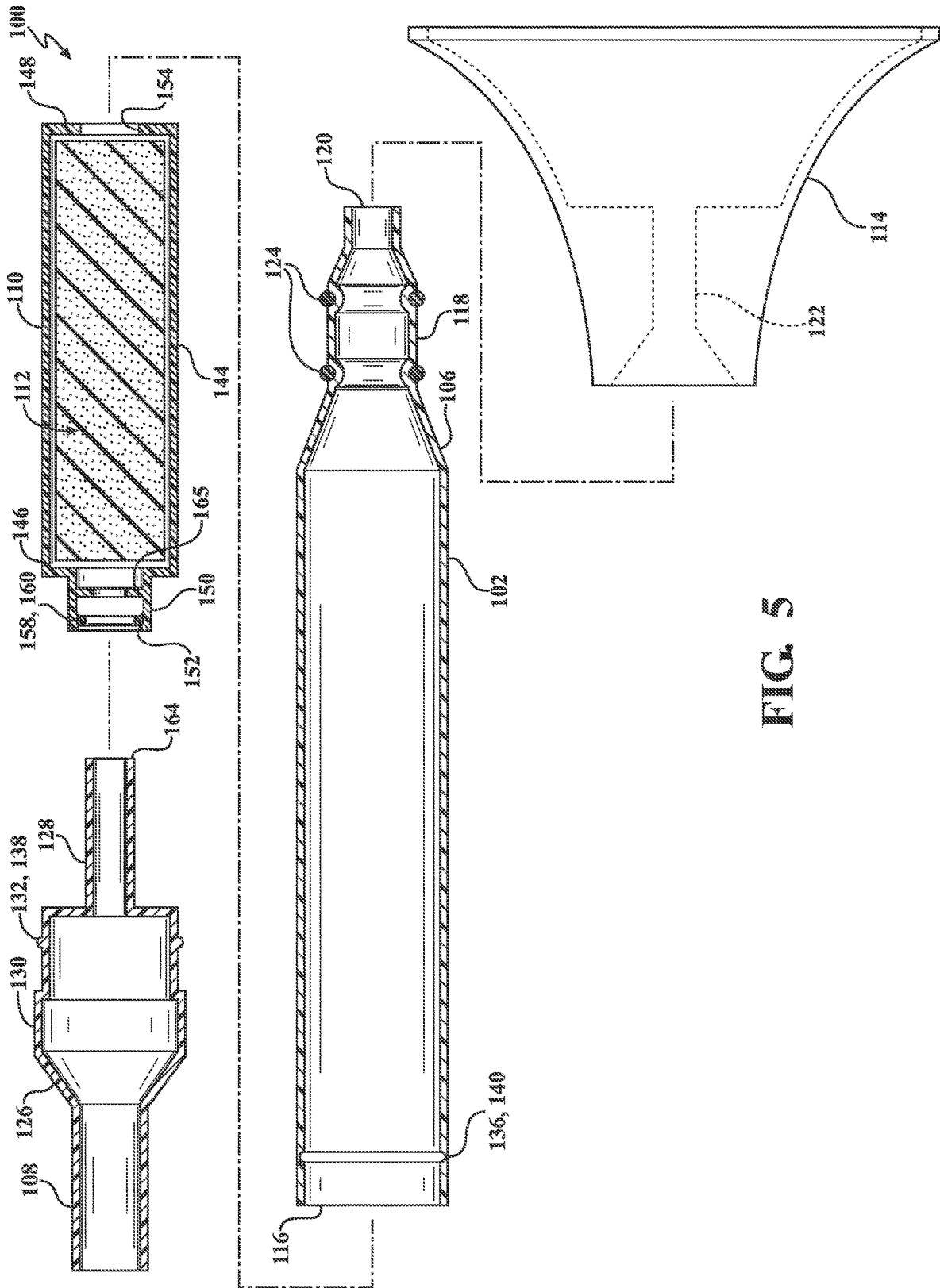
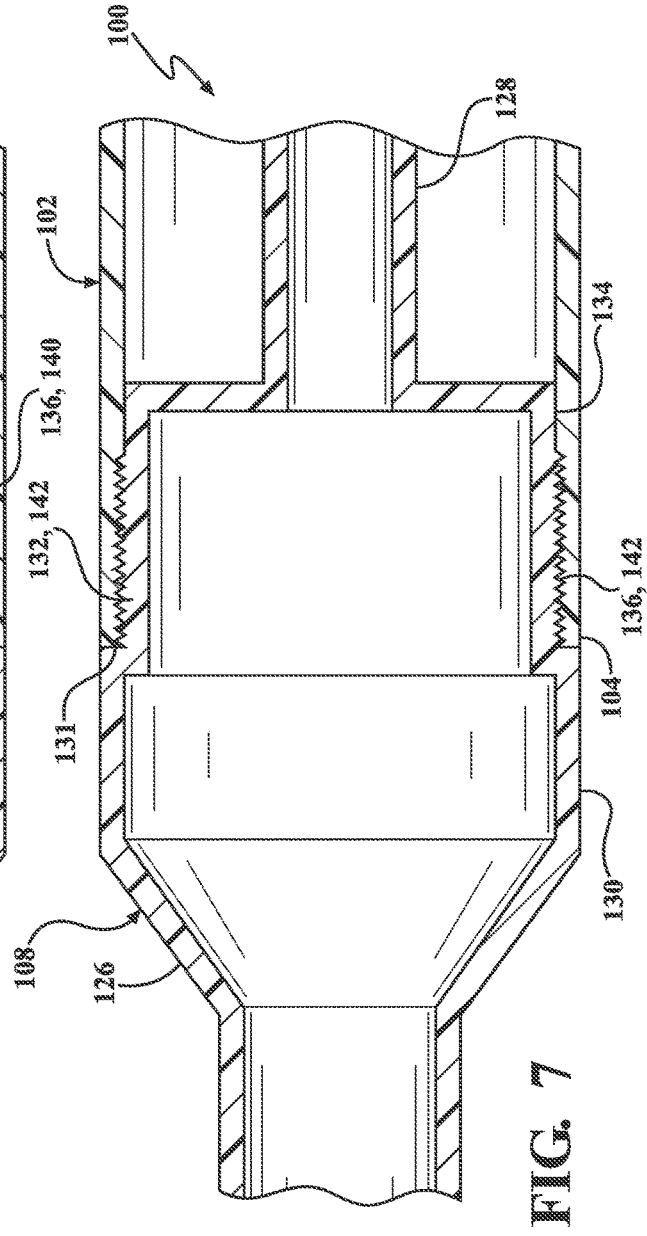
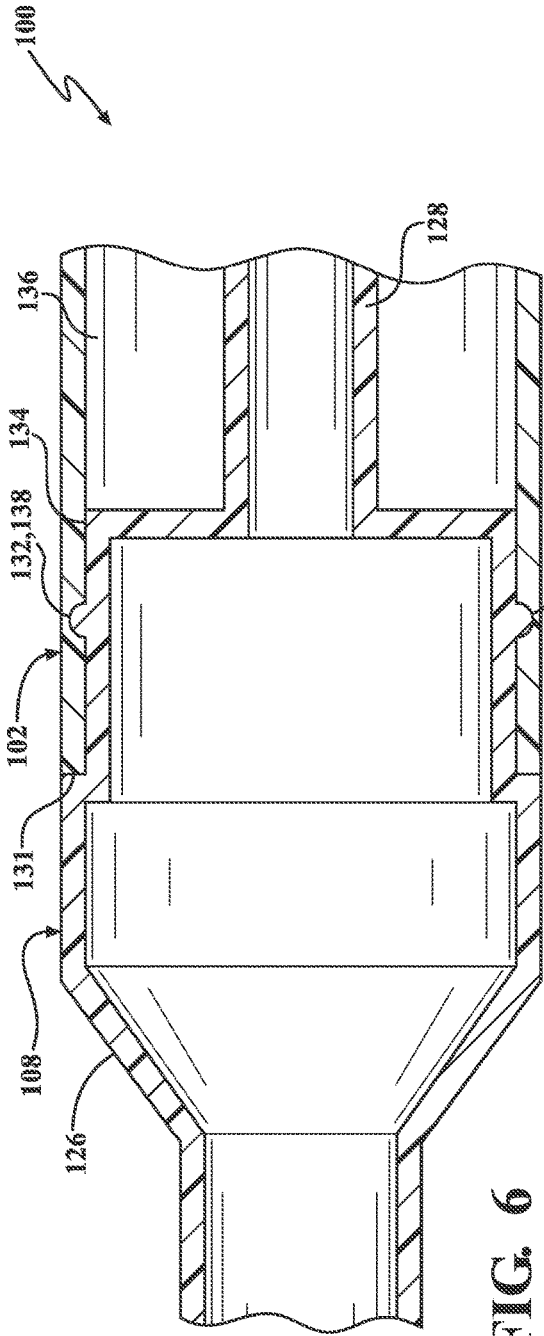


FIG. 5



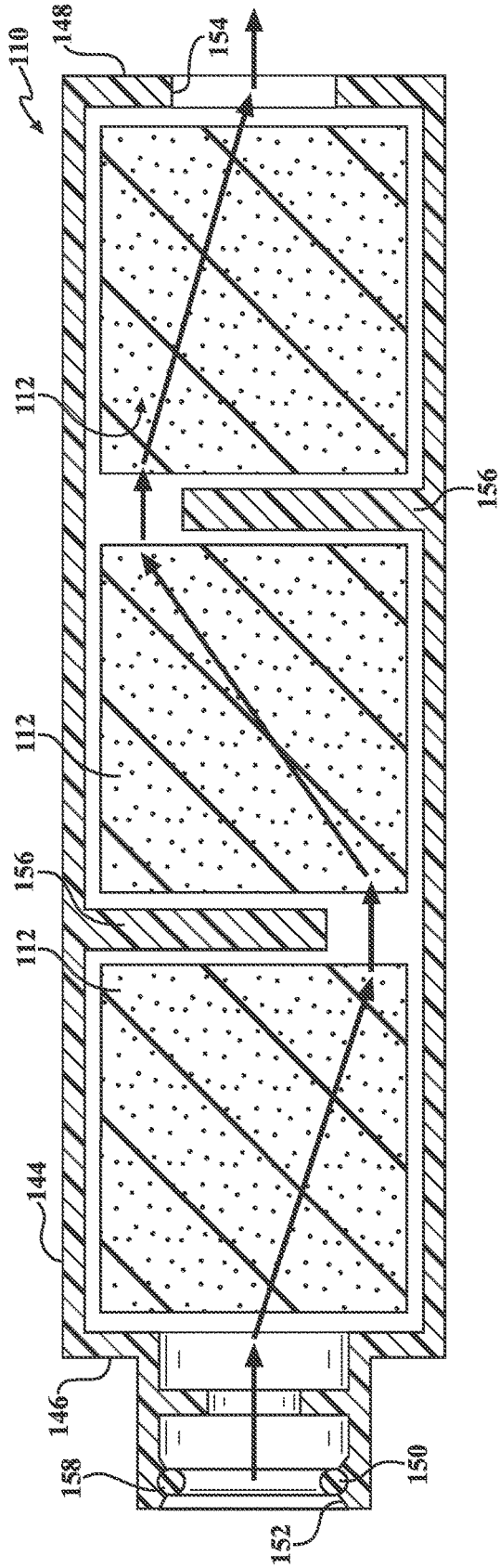


FIG. 8

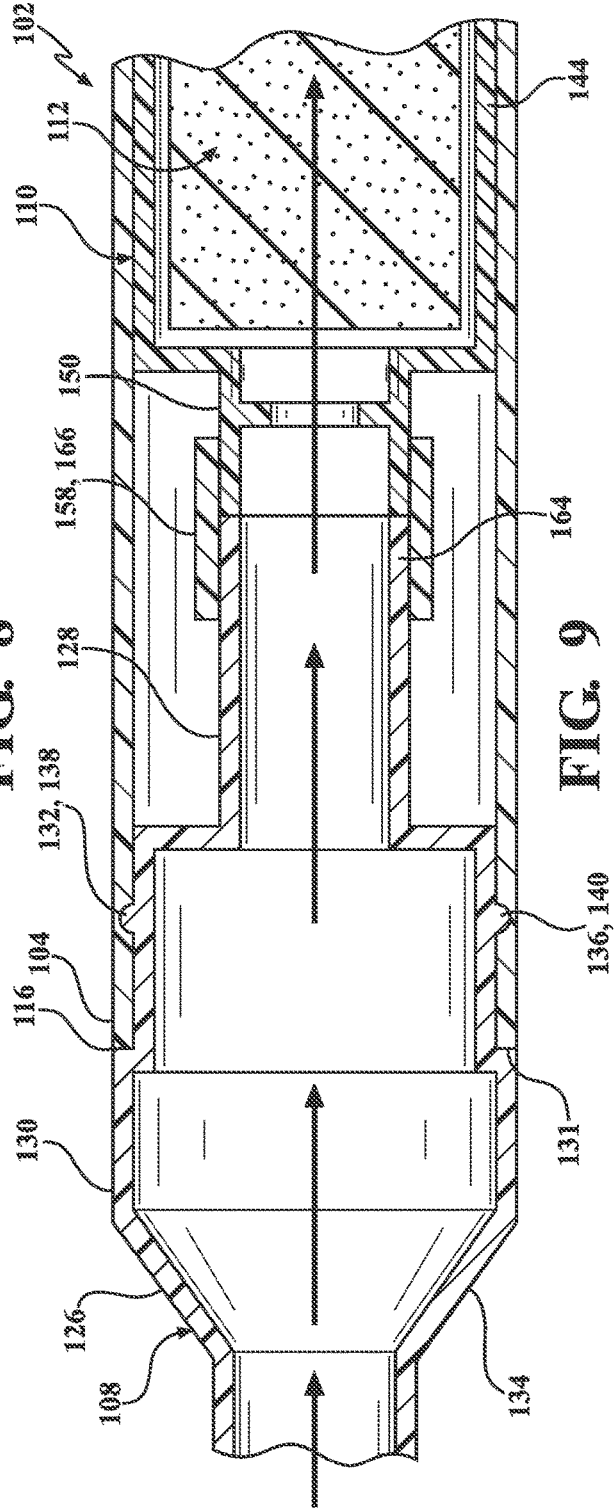


FIG. 9

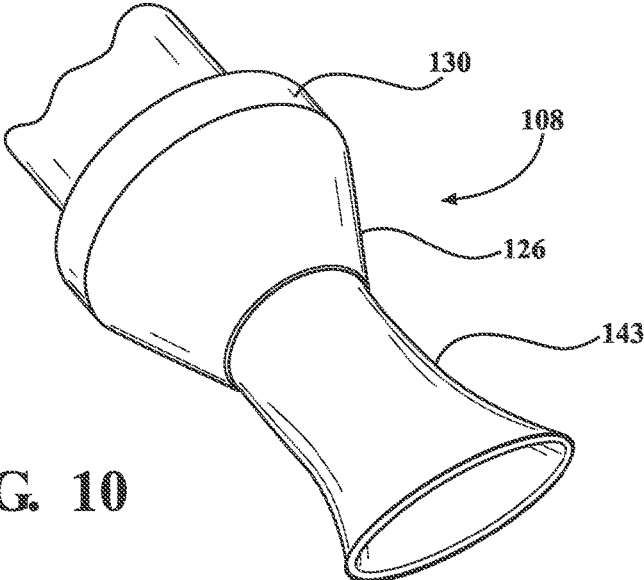


FIG. 10

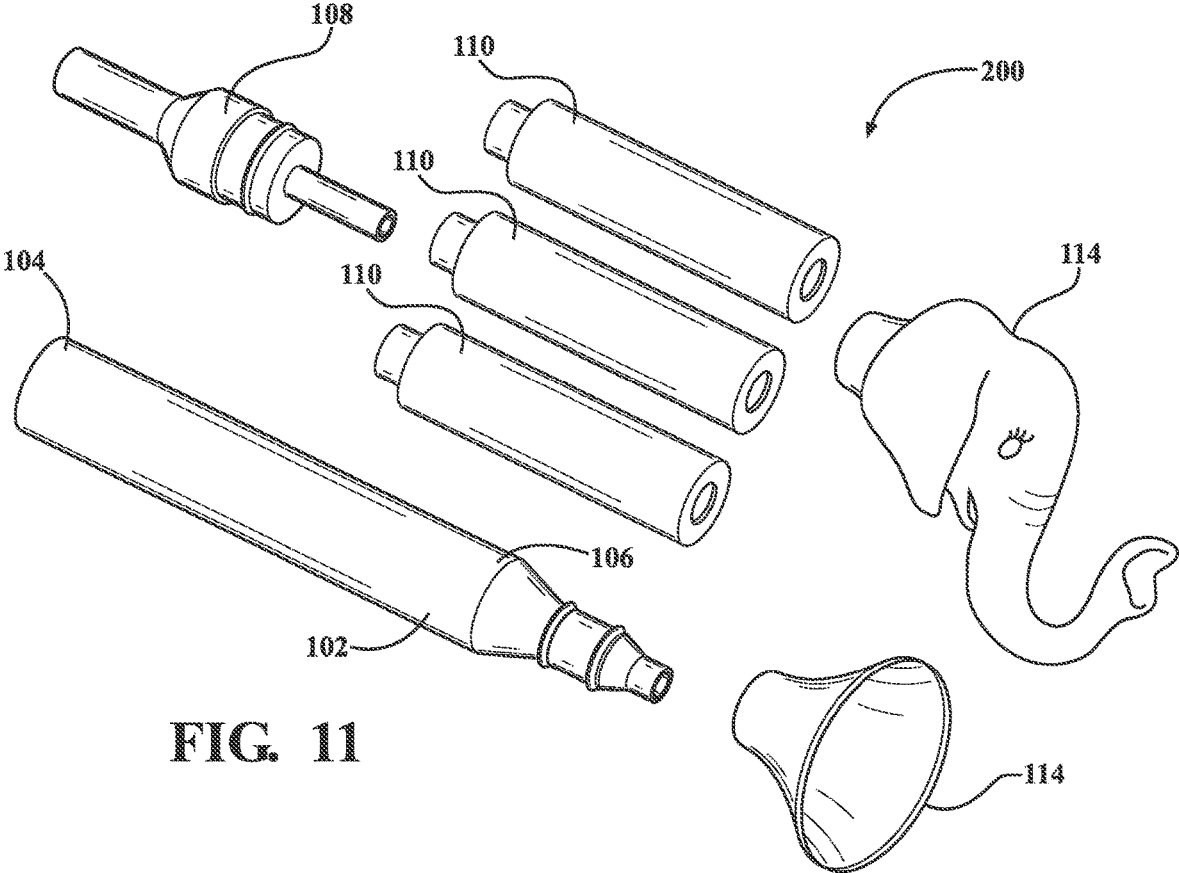


FIG. 11

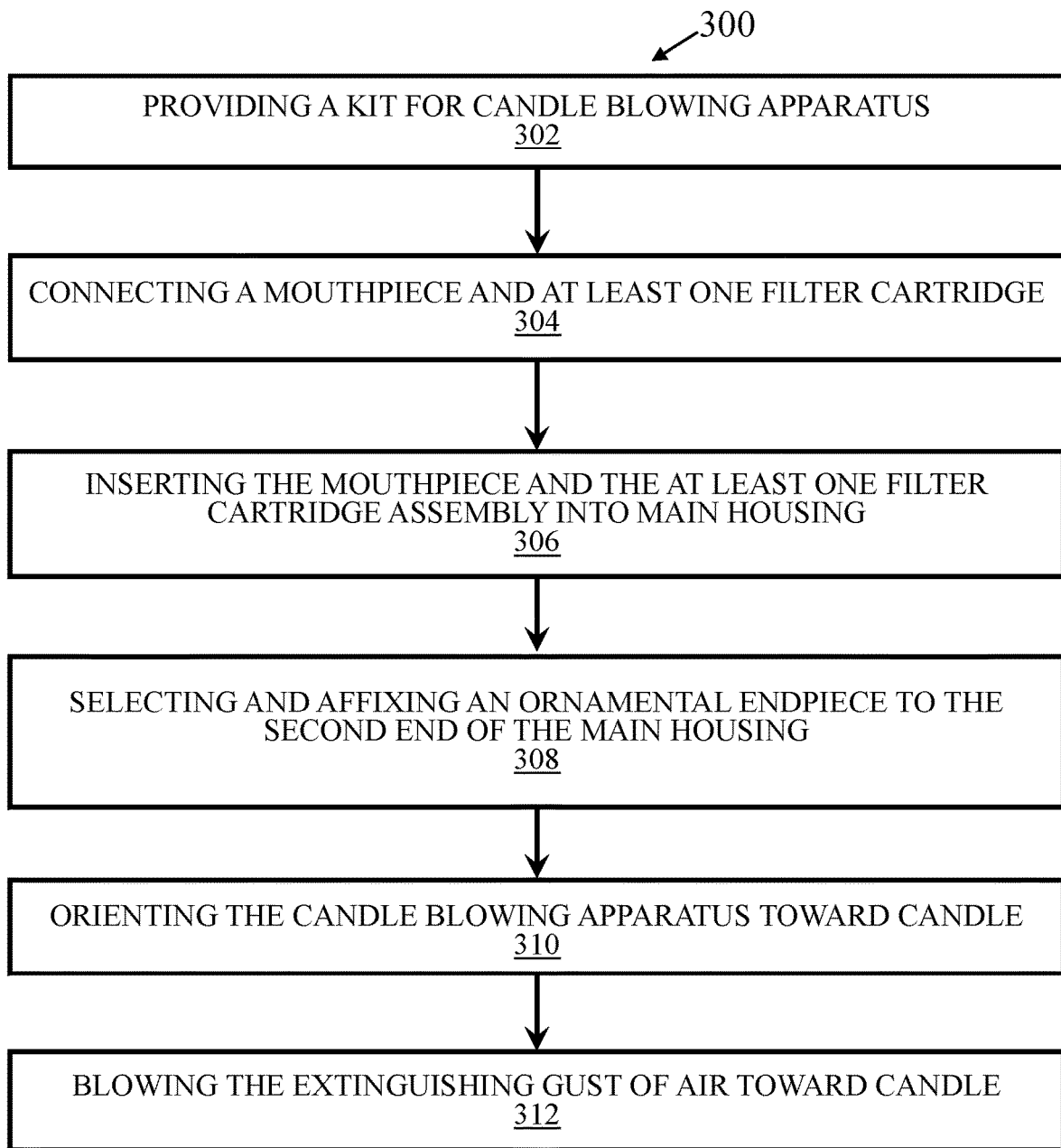
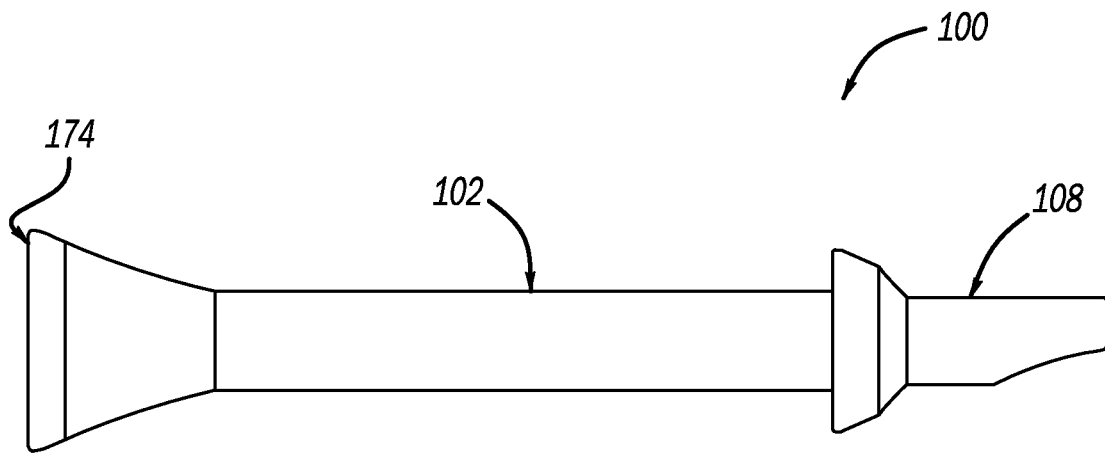
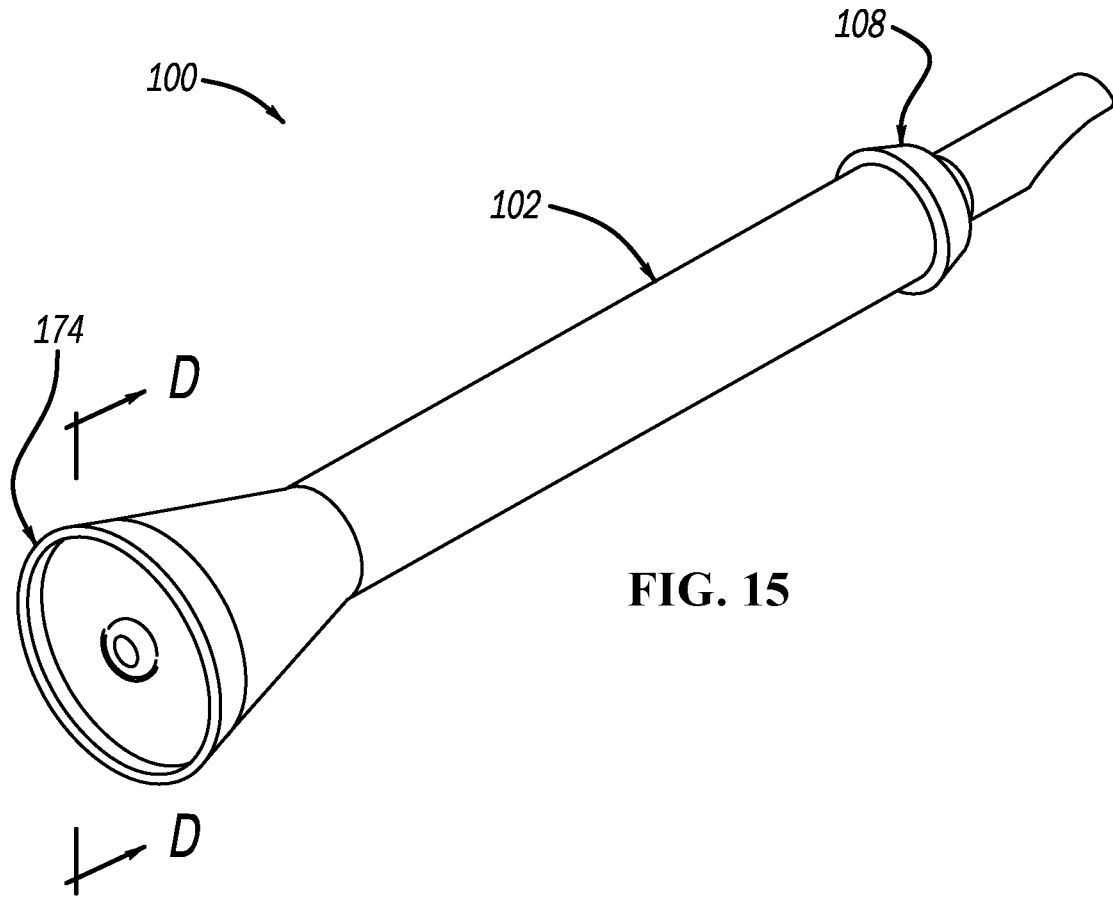


FIG. 12



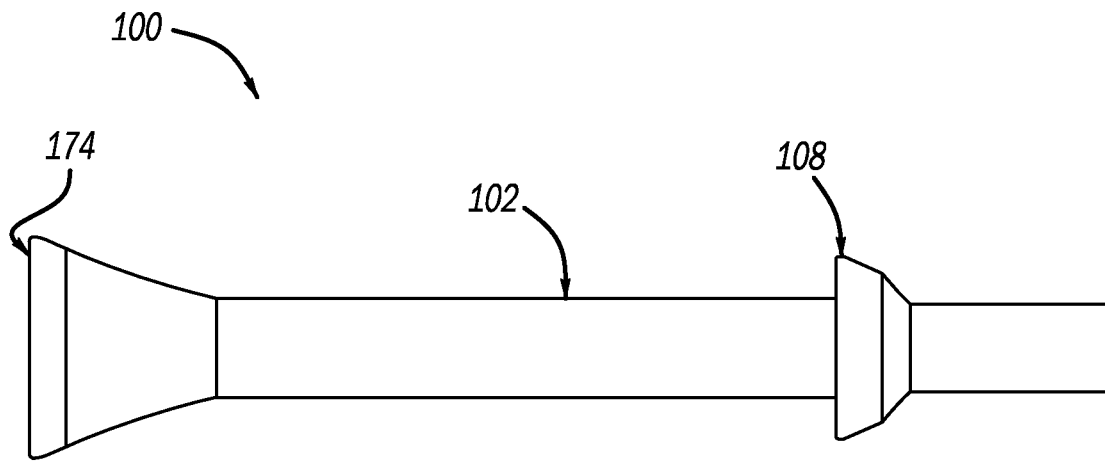


FIG. 17

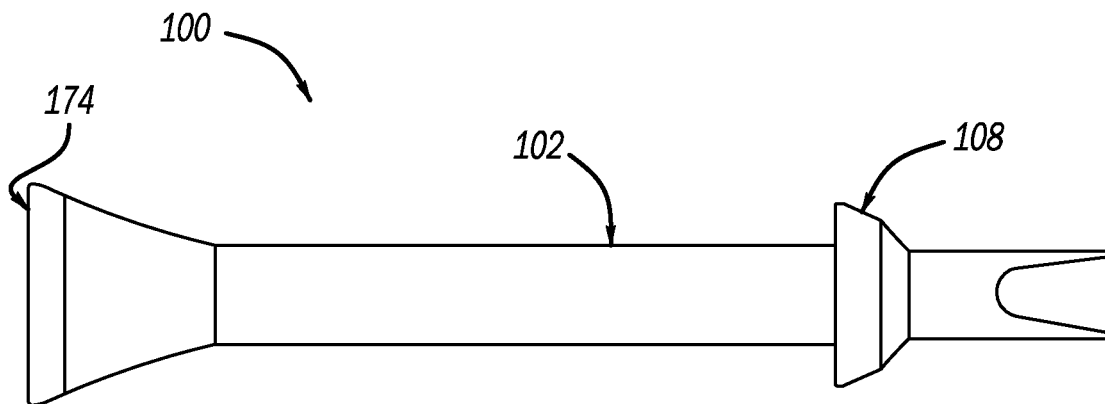


FIG. 18

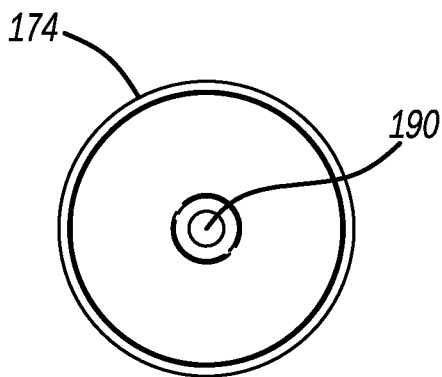


FIG. 19

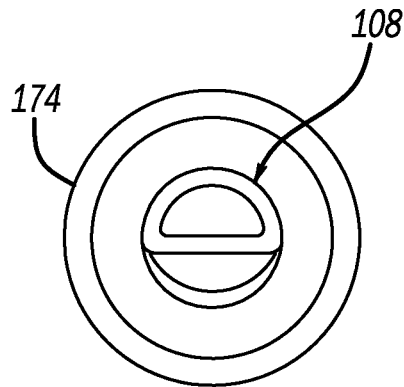


FIG. 20

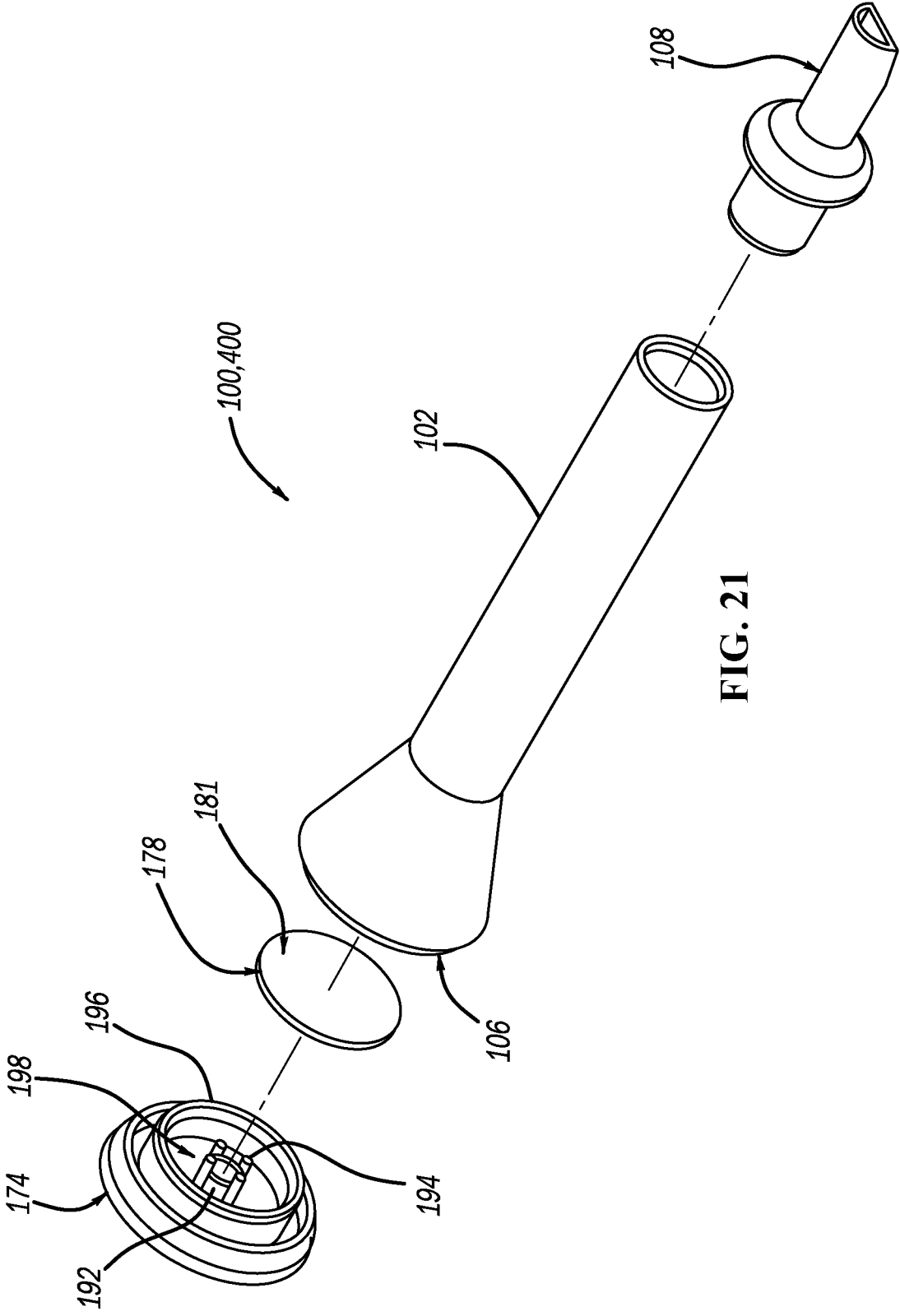
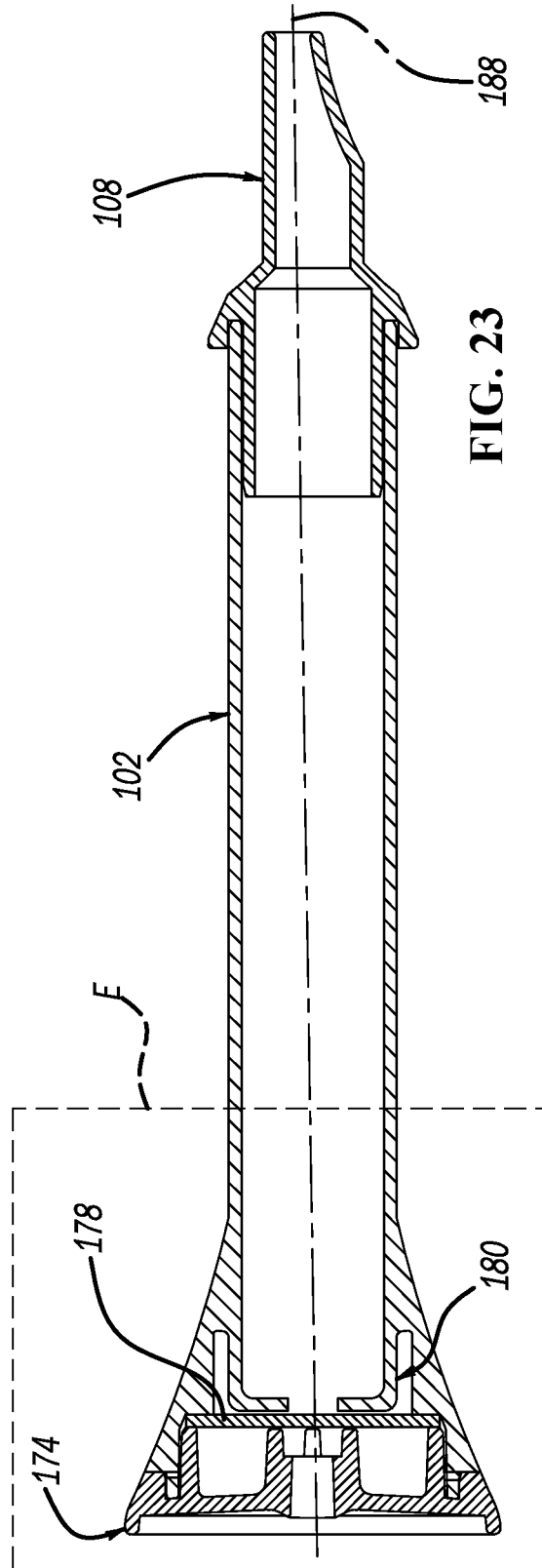
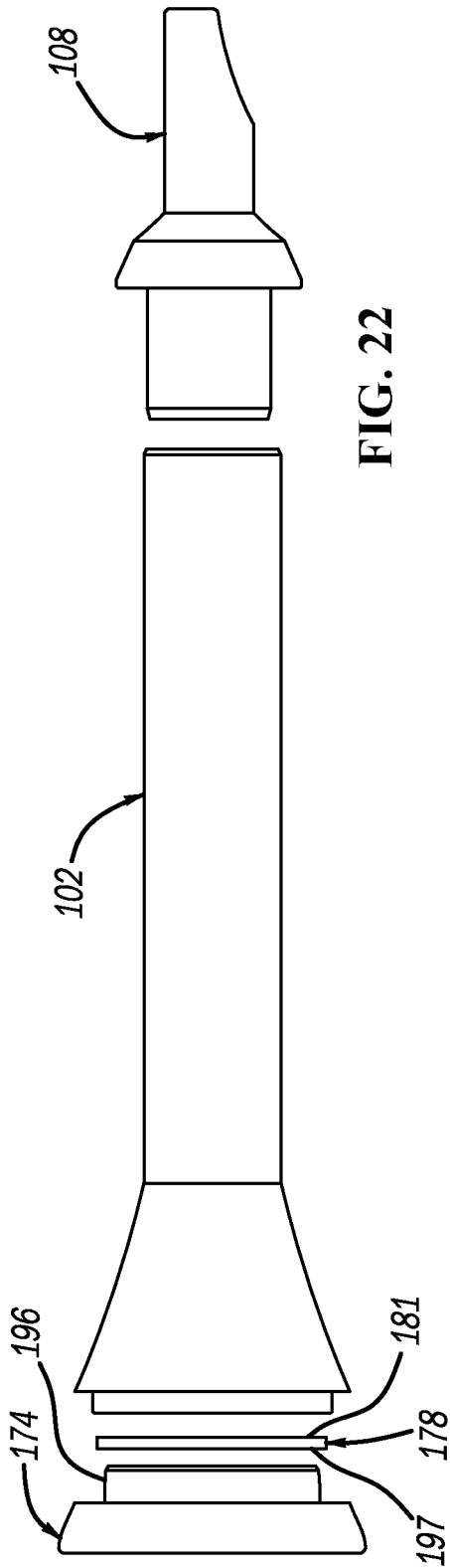


FIG. 21



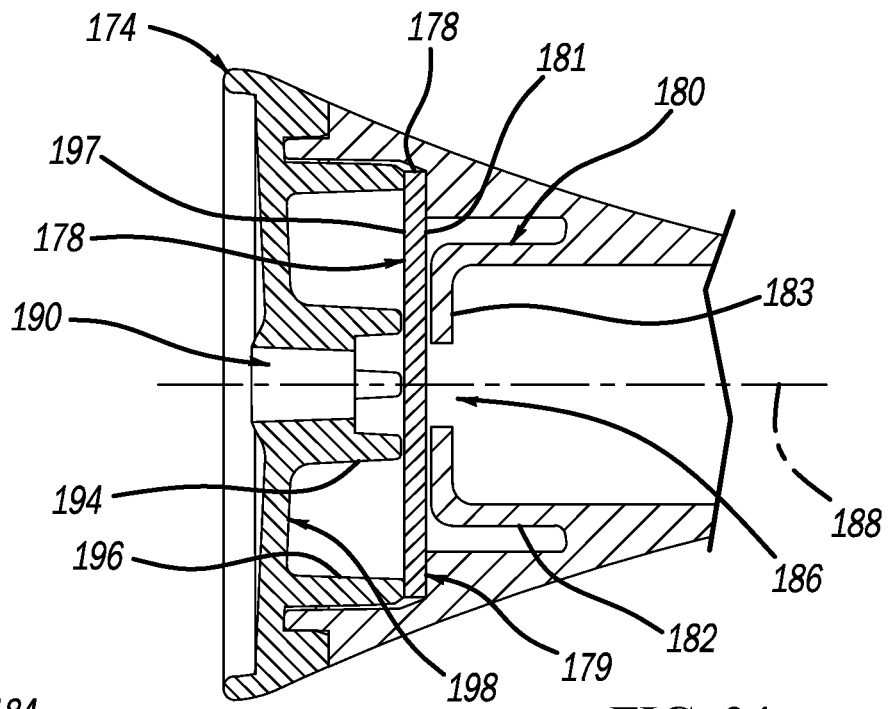


FIG. 24

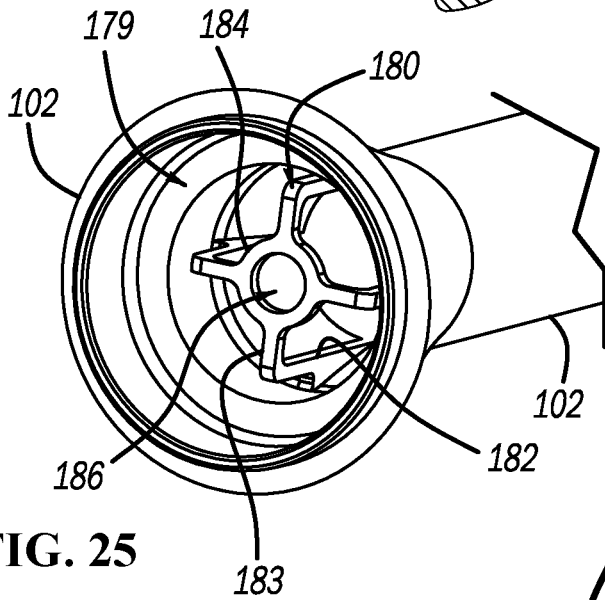


FIG. 25

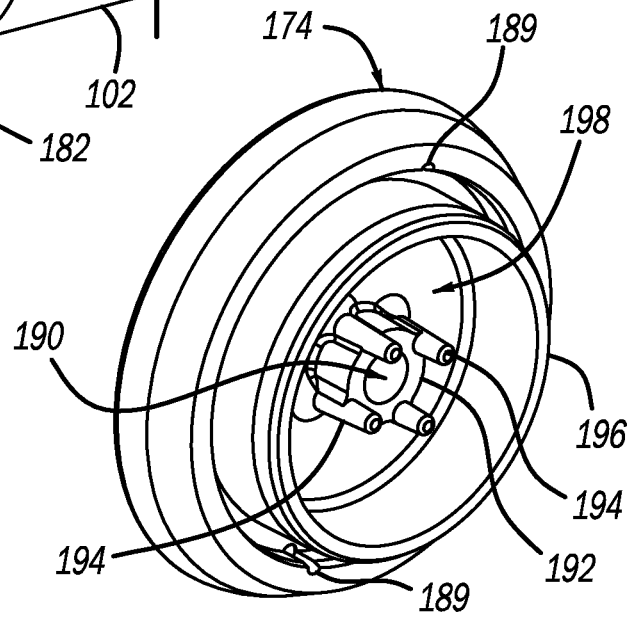


FIG. 26

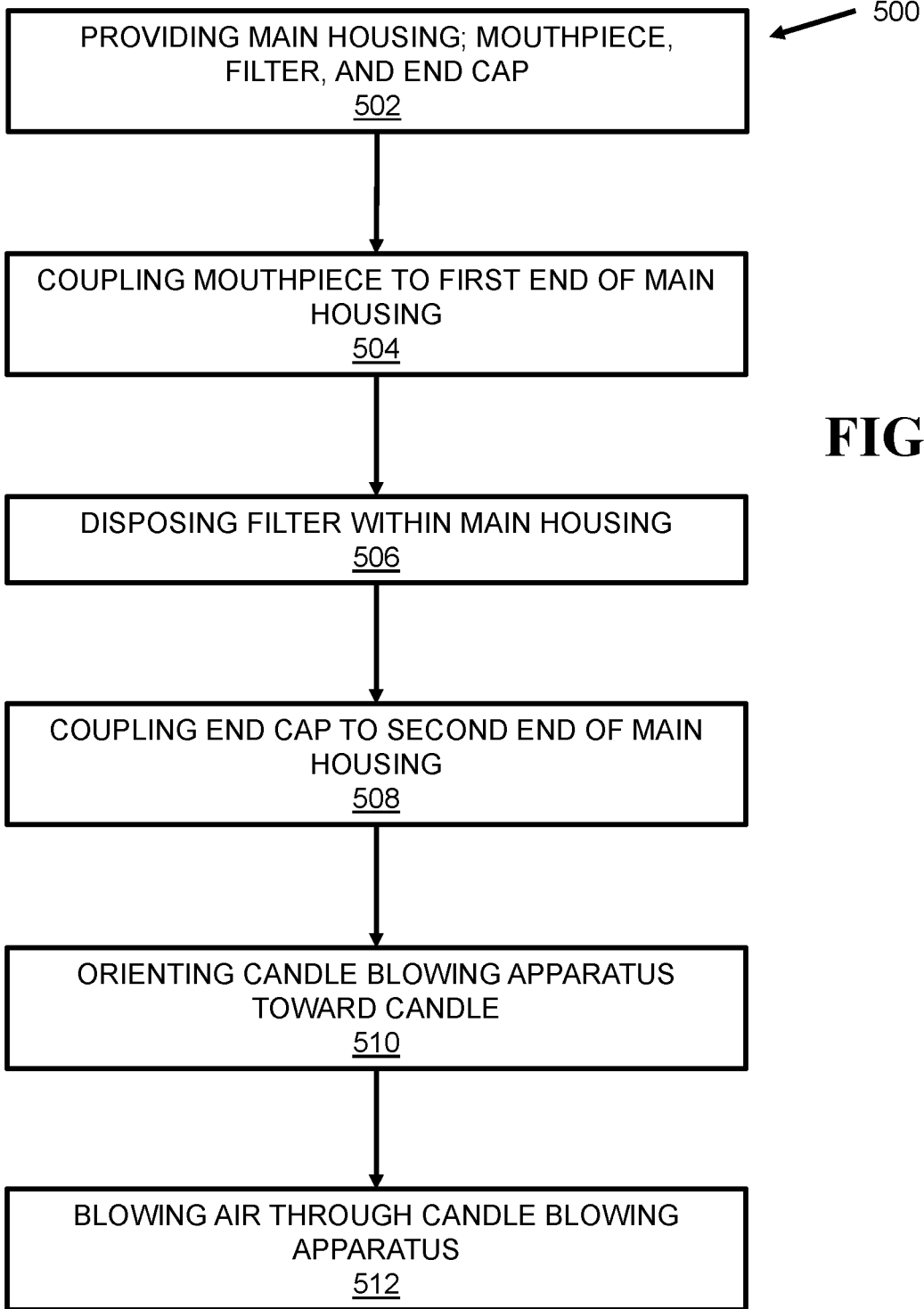


FIG. 27

1

CANDLE BLOWING APPARATUS**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/396,968, filed on Apr. 29, 2019, which in turn claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/664,316, filed on Apr. 30, 2018. The entire disclosures of the above applications are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD

The present disclosure relates to candle blowing devices and, more particularly, to a candle blowing device that minimizes the spreading of germs and pathogens when blowing out candles.

BACKGROUND

Holidays, especially birthdays, are often celebrated with cake. These cakes are often adorned with candles and blown out to commemorate the holiday. However, there is growing concern about the health risks associated with this traditional practice of blowing out candles at birthdays and celebrations. Studies have shown that the simple act of blowing out celebratory or birthday candles increases the level of bacteria on the cake frosting by 1400% and above. These concerns are further exacerbated if the person is sick or unaware they are sick.

Currently, there are few viable solutions available to militate against spreading of germs onto cakes with candles. Known solutions include preventative measures such as consumers opting to not blow out candles, use of cupcakes instead of a whole cake, or scraping frosting off the cake. These methods will stop or prevent the spread of germs, but are also inconsistent with the celebratory or birthday tradition and are therefore generally undesirable.

There is a continuing need for a candle blowing apparatus that filters air blown at candles. Desirably, the candles blowing apparatus will feature a removable filter cartridge to allow for repeated hygienic uses of the same apparatus.

SUMMARY

In concordance with the instant disclosure, a candle blowing apparatus that filters air blown at candles, and which features a removable filter cartridge to allow for repeated hygienic uses of the same apparatus, has been surprisingly discovered.

In one embodiment, a candle blowing apparatus may have a main housing with a first end and a second end. A mouthpiece may be removably attached to the first end of the main housing. The candle blowing apparatus also includes at least one filter cartridge with at least one filter. The filter cartridge may be removably disposed within the main housing between the first end and the second end. The filter cartridge may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece. An ornamental endpiece may be removably attached to the second end of the main housing and be in fluid communication with the filter cartridge. The ornamental endpiece, together with the mouthpiece and the filter cartridge, may define an air flow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle in operation.

In another embodiment, a kit for a candle blowing apparatus may include a main housing, a mouthpiece, at least one

2

filter cartridge, and an ornamental endpiece, all provided separately or initially unconnected to one another, for example, in a package. The main housing may have a first end and a second end. The mouthpiece may be configured to be removably attached to the first end of the main housing. The at least one filter cartridge may include at least one filter. The filter cartridge may be configured to be removably disposed within the main housing between the first end and the second end. The filter cartridge may be configured to be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece. The ornamental endpiece may be configured to be removably attached to the second end of the main housing and configured to be in fluid communication with the filter cartridge. The ornamental endpiece, together with the mouthpiece and the filter cartridge, may be configured to define an air flow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle upon assembly and in operation. The kit may further include a plurality of the filter cartridges, to permit for the repeated hygienic use of the same kit over time.

In a further embodiment, a method of using a candle blowing apparatus includes the steps of providing the kit for a candle blowing apparatus. The kit may include the following separate components: the main housing, the mouthpiece, the at least one filter cartridge including at least one filter, and the ornamental endpiece. The method also includes a second step of connecting the mouthpiece and at least one filter cartridge. The mouthpiece and the at least one filter cartridge are then inserted into the main housing, and the ornamental endpiece is disposed on the main housing, in a third step of the method. The method has a further step of securing the mouthpiece to the main housing via connecting means. The method further includes a step of orienting the assembled candle blowing apparatus toward the candle to be extinguished. A final step of the method may include blowing the extinguishing gust of air toward the candle by the user blowing air into the mouthpiece of the assembled apparatus.

In an exemplary embodiment, a candle blowing apparatus may have the main housing, an air outlet endpiece, an air inlet mouthpiece, and the removable filter cartridge. In particular, the disclosure contemplates the use of forced filtered air rather than one's unfiltered breath to extinguish candles, thereby militating against the spread of germs and pathogens. The air can be blown from the inlet mouthpiece, through the removable filter cartridge that is coupled to the main housing, and out through the air outlet piece.

The candle blowing apparatus may, in certain embodiments, include an air inlet mouthpiece that is removably coupled to the filter cartridge. The main housing is removably coupled to both an air outlet piece and a filter cartridge. The filter cartridge may be formed from multiple components, including at least one filter inside of a filter cartridge sheath, as described and shown further herein.

The candle blowing apparatus may, in certain embodiments, include a filter cartridge that utilizes at least one filter, where the filter cartridge functions to force air through the filters within the cartridge. In other embodiments, the filter cartridge includes two or more filters. The removable filter cartridge may also include O-rings, fixed baffle integral seals, and baffle walls for diverting air through the filters from the inlet to the outlet. The O-ring or seal and the baffles may be separately provided or fixedly connected to the filter cartridge.

As a non-limiting example, the filter may be N95 filter material. In another embodiment, the filter cartridge may contain at least one filter chamber, or a series of chambers in sequence, instead of O-rings (or integral seals) and

3

baffles. Other types of filter materials such as N99, P100 and some antiseptic filter materials, as non-limiting examples, are also contemplated and may be used.

The air inlet mouthpiece may be removably coupled to the filter cartridge. The mouthpiece may also be a variety of shapes including a mostly tubular shape, or a tapered shape. One of ordinary skill in the art may select other shapes for the mouthpiece, as desired.

The air outlet may be removably coupled to the main housing unit. The outlet may be a variety of shapes. The filter cartridge may also include a round mesh type screen, which is positioned in the path of airflow before the air outlet. The outlet may also be any endpiece configured to be removably coupled with the main housing unit. As a non-limiting example, the outlet could be a horn or a cartoon character's head. The endpiece may be held in place by a press- or friction-fit, for example; although, other means of securing the endpiece to the main body may also be used. It should be appreciated that a skilled artisan may select any other suitable shape or removable body for the outlet within the scope of the present disclosure.

It should also be appreciated that the filter cartridge or filter may have one or more screens. These additional screens may be fixed in the path of airflow at any point in the at least one filter or the filter cartridge, as desired.

The filter cartridge sheath is configured to be removably coupled to all other elements of the candle blowing apparatus. It is a cylindrical and hollow tube configured to be received in an outermost container in the form of the main housing. The filter cartridge sheath may also have air ports on either end.

Although the apparatus is shown in the drawings being either tube-shaped or generally round in cross-sectional shape, it should be appreciated that any other suitable shapes including rectilinear cross-sectional shapes may also be used.

DRAWINGS

The drawings described herein are for illustration purposes only and are not intended to limit the scope of the present disclosure in any way.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a child using a candle blowing apparatus according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus shown in FIG. 1, with an ornamental endpiece shown in phantom lines to illustrate the underlying end of a main housing;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional, side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus taken at section line A-A in FIG. 2, and showing a path of airflow through the apparatus by arrows;

FIG. 4 is an exploded, side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is an exploded, cross-sectional, side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus taken at section line C-C in FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged, cross-sectional, fragmentary, side elevational view illustrating a connection of a mouthpiece and a main body of the candle blowing apparatus taken at call out B in FIG. 3, according to one embodiment of the disclosure and showing an annular bead received by an annular groove for selectively holding a mouthpiece to the main housing;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged, cross-sectional, fragmentary, side elevational view illustrating the connection of the

4

mouthpiece and the main body of the candle blowing apparatus taken at call out B in FIG. 3, according to another embodiment of the disclosure and showing a threaded cooperation for selectively holding a mouthpiece to the main housing;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged, cross-sectional, fragmentary, side elevational view of a filter cartridge of the candle blowing apparatus taken at section line A-A in FIG. 2, according to another embodiment of the disclosure and showing a path of airflow through the filter cartridge by arrows;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged, cross-sectional, fragmentary, side elevational view illustrating the connection of the mouthpiece and the filter cartridge of the candle blowing apparatus taken at section line A-A in FIG. 2, according to yet another embodiment of the disclosure and showing a flexible sleeve for connecting the mouthpiece and the filter cartridge;

FIG. 10 is a top perspective view of the mouthpiece, according to another embodiment of the disclosure;

FIG. 11 is a top perspective view of a kit according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 12 is a flow chart illustrating a method of use according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 13 is a fragmentary, cross-sectional, side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus according to another embodiment of the present disclosure, and showing an endpiece integrally formed with the main housing;

FIG. 14 is a cross-sectional, side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus according to yet another embodiment of the present disclosure, and showing a hollow filter with port holes for air flow through the filter cartridge, with the path of airflow through the apparatus further shown by arrows;

FIG. 15 is a top perspective view of the candle blowing apparatus, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 16 is a right-side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIG. 15;

FIG. 17 is a top plan view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIGS. 15-16;

FIG. 18 is a bottom plan view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIGS. 15-17;

FIG. 19 is a front elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIGS. 15-18;

FIG. 20 is a rear elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIGS. 15-19;

FIG. 21 is an exploded top perspective view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIGS. 15-20, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 22 is an exploded right-side elevational view of the candle blowing apparatus, as shown in FIG. 21, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 23 is a cross-sectional view taken at section line D-D in FIG. 15, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 24 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken at call-out E in FIG. 23, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 25 is an enlarged top perspective view of the second end of the main housing without an end cap coupled thereto, further depicting a support structure and a shelf of the main body, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 26 is a top perspective view of an interior surface of the end cap, further depicting an inner protrusion and an outer protrusion, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure; and

FIG. 27 is a flow chart illustrating a second method of using the candle blowing apparatus, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following detailed description and appended drawings describe and illustrate various exemplary embodiments of the disclosure. The description and drawings serve to enable one skilled in the art to make and use the disclosure and are not intended to limit the scope of the disclosure in any manner. In respect of the methods disclosed, the steps presented are exemplary in nature, and thus, the order of the steps is not necessary or critical unless otherwise disclosed.

As shown in FIGS. 1-10 and 15-23, a candle blowing apparatus 100 may have a main housing 102. The main housing 102 may have a first end 104 and a second end 106. The candle blowing apparatus 100 may also have a mouthpiece 108. The mouthpiece 108 may be removably attached to the first end 104 of the main housing 102.

The candle blowing apparatus 100 may further have a filter cartridge 110. The filter cartridge may have at least one filter 112. The filter cartridge 110 may be removably disposed within the main housing 102 between the first end 104 and the second end 106. The filter cartridge 110 may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece 108.

The candle blowing apparatus 100 may have an ornamental endpiece 114. The ornamental endpiece 114 may be removably attached to the second end 106 of the main housing 102. The ornamental endpiece 114 may be in fluid communication with the filter cartridge 110.

It should be understood that the main housing 102, together with the mouthpiece 108 and the filter cartridge 110, defines an air flow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle. Advantageously, the candle blowing apparatus 100 allows a user to extinguish the candle while militating against the spread of germs and bacteria from the user's mouth to a cake or the surrounding environment.

The various components of the candle blowing apparatus 100 may be fabricated from a variety of materials including, but not limited to, plastic, metal, or any other suitably rigid material. The main housing 102 of the candle blowing apparatus 100 may be mostly tube shaped, for example. Although the main housing 102 of the candle blowing apparatus 100 is shown in the drawings being either tube-shaped, or otherwise generally round in cross-sectional shape, it should be appreciated that any other suitable shapes including rectilinear cross-sectional shapes may also be used.

The main housing 102 of the candle blowing apparatus 100 may also include structural bracings (not shown). Advantageously, any such bracing may provide desirably rigidity to the candle blowing apparatus 100. A skilled artisan may select any suitable construction material, shape, and structure for the main housing 102 of the candle blowing apparatus 100, as desired.

As illustrated in FIGS. 2-5, the first end 104 of the main housing 102 may have an aperture 116 formed therein. The aperture 116 may receive the filter cartridge 110. The second end 106 of the main housing 102 may have a tapered portion 118 and an air outlet 120. The air outlet 120 may allow air to exit the main housing 102, in operation. The tapered portion 118 may be adapted to receive the ornamental endpiece 114.

As shown in FIGS. 3 and 5, the ornamental endpiece 114 may have a correspondingly tapered recess 122. The tapered portion 118 of the main housing 102 may be disposed in the

tapered recess 122 of the ornamental endpiece 114. The ornamental endpiece 114 may be connected to the tapered portion 118 via a press- or friction-fit, as non-limiting examples.

In certain embodiments, the press- or friction-fit may be provided by at least one O-ring or seal 124 that is disposed on the tapered recess 122. In an alternative embodiment, not shown, the at least one O-ring or seal 124 may be disposed within the tapered recess 122 of the ornamental endpiece 114. It should be appreciated that the at least one O-ring or seal 124 may form a substantially fluid-tight seal between the main housing 102 and the ornamental endpiece 114. A skilled artisan may select any suitable means for connecting the main housing 102 and the ornamental endpiece 114.

It should be appreciated that the ornamental endpiece 114 may be any suitable shape including, but not limited to, a horn or a decorative toy animal head, as non-limiting examples. In certain examples, the ornamental endpiece 114 may also have the at least one filter 112 disposed therein. The user may interchange a variety of ornamental endpieces 114, as desired. Advantageously, the candle blowing apparatus 100 may be customized by the user via the ornamental endpiece 114. The user may select any suitable shape for the ornamental endpiece 114 of the candle blowing apparatus 100, as desired.

With renewed reference to FIGS. 2-5, the mouthpiece 108 may have a hollow main body 126 and a tube 128. The tube 128 may extend outwardly from, and be in fluid communication with, the hollow main body 126. The mouthpiece 108 may also have a flange 130 that functions as a hard stop during assembly to form the candle blowing apparatus 100. For example, upon assembly, where the mouthpiece 108 is disposed in the aperture 116 of the main housing 102, the flange 130 may abut the first end 104 of the main housing 102 of the candle blowing apparatus 100 to define a junction 131 (shown in FIGS. 2, 6, and 7). The flange 130 may be adapted to be flush with the outer surface of the main housing 102 upon assembly or may have a different diameter or size so as to have a different appearance relative to the remainder of the main housing 102, as desired.

As shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, the mouthpiece 108 may have first connection means 132. The first connection means 132 may be disposed on an exterior surface 134 of the hollow main body 126, for example. The main housing 102 may have corresponding second connection means 136. The second connection means 136 may be disposed on an interior surface of the main housing 102, for example. In particular, the second connection means 136 may be disposed on the interior surface adjacent to, but spaced apart from, the aperture 116 of the first end 104 of the main housing 102.

It should be appreciated that the first connection means 132 and the second connection means 136 are configured to interact and thereby removably secure the mouthpiece 108 to the main housing 102. For example, the first and second connection means 132, 136 may be pressure or snap clips. A skilled artisan may select any suitable connection means 132, 136, as desired.

In certain embodiments, for example, as shown in FIG. 6, the first connection means 132 and the second connection means 136 are configured to removably secure the mouthpiece 108 to the main housing 102 via a press-fit or a friction fit. According to this embodiment, the first connection means 132 may be a male component 138 such as an annular bead. The second connection means 136 may be a female component 140 such as an annular recess. It should be understood that the male component 138 may be adapted to

be received by the female component **140** upon assembly of the candle blowing apparatus **100**, and thereby removably secure the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **102**.

In other embodiments, for example, as shown in FIG. 7, the first connection means **132** and the second connection means **136** are corresponding threaded portions of the mouthpiece **108** and the main housing **102**, respectively, and are configured to removably secure the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **102** via a threaded connection. According to this embodiment, the first and second connection means **132**, **136** may be corresponding threads **142**. In this embodiment, the mouthpiece **108** may be screwed into the main housing **102** upon assembly.

Advantageously, the first and second connection means **132**, **136** securely connect the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **142** while allowing the user to selectively remove the mouthpiece **108**, for example, to install or replace the filter cartridge **110** disposed therein. A skilled artisan may select any other suitable means for connecting the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **102**, as desired.

It should be appreciated that the mouthpiece **108** may be removably secured to the main housing **102**. The mouthpiece **108** may also have the at least one filter **112** disposed therein. Advantageously, the user may remove and replace the mouthpiece **108**, as desired. More than one user may thereby utilize the candle blowing apparatus **100** while further militating against the spread of germs and bacteria in operation.

As shown in FIG. 10, the hollow main body **126** of the mouthpiece **108** may have a contoured end **143**. Advantageously, the contoured end **143** may be ergonomic and allow the user to comfortably use the candle blowing apparatus **100**. Any suitable shape for the contoured end **143** may be selected by the skilled artisan within the scope of the present disclosure.

In alternative embodiments, not shown, at least one of the main housing **102**, the mouthpiece **108**, and the ornamental endpiece **114** may contain a noise maker, such as a whistle, a rattle, or the like. The noise maker is configured to generate a celebratory noise where the candle blowing apparatus **100** is either shaken or blown through. The candle blowing apparatus may also contain lights. The lights may be powered by at least one battery. One of ordinary skill in the art may also select other suitable types and structures for the noise maker and lights, as desired.

It should be appreciated that the filter cartridge **110** of the present disclosure may be removably disposed in the main housing **102**. Advantageously, the user may remove and replace the filter cartridge **110**, as desired, in order to allow for repeated use of the candle blowing apparatus **100** over time. For example, the user may replace the filter cartridge **110** after a single one (1) use or the user may replace the filter cartridge after ten (10) uses, as desired. It should be appreciated that any number of uses for the filter cartridge **110** are contemplated by this disclosure.

With renewed reference to FIGS. 3-5, the filter cartridge **110** may have a cartridge body **144**. The at least one filter **112** may be disposed in the cartridge body **144**. The cartridge body **144** may have a first end **146** a second end **148**. A conduit **150** may be disposed on the first end **146** of the cartridge body **144**. The cartridge body **144** may have an air inlet aperture **152** formed through the conduit **150** at the first end **146**. The cartridge body **144** may also have an air outlet aperture **154** formed in the second end **148**.

As shown in FIGS. 3 and 5, the at least one filter **112** may be a single filter **112** fabricated from foam of a NIOSH-standard filter rating or grade N95, N99, or P100, as non-

limiting examples. Filter materials of a grade N95 or superior have been especially found to be useful for the prevention of spreading certain viruses such as those responsible for the common flu or influenza. In further embodiments, the use of alternative materials for the filter **112** are contemplated, including but not limited to porous metals, meshes, and antiseptic gel filter materials. A skilled artisan may select any other suitable material for the at least one filter **112** within the scope of the present disclosure.

In a further embodiment, for example as shown in FIG. 14, the filter cartridge may be spaced apart from the main housing **102**. The filter **112** may be a hollow cylinder. The filter may line the interior surface of the filter cartridge **110**. In this embodiment, the second end **148** of the cartridge body **144** may be closed. The filter cartridge **144** may have a plurality of airports **176** formed therethrough. In operation, air flow may enter the cartridge body **144**. Air pressure may build at the second end **148** and the air may be forced through the filter **112**. The airflow may pass through the plurality of airports **176** into the main housing **102**. The air may flow from the main housing **102** out the air outlet **120** of the main housing **102**.

With renewed reference to FIGS. 3 and 5, in certain embodiments, the filter **112** may substantially fill an interior of the filter cartridge **110**. The filter **112** may be substantially cylindrical in shape, and have a rectangular cross-section, for example, so as to conform to the interior shape of the cartridge body **144** of the filter cartridge **110**. The filter **112** may have at least one end cap. The end cap may be a mesh screen, as a non-limiting example. Advantageously, the filter **112** may allow air to pass from the air inlet aperture **152** to the air outlet aperture **154** while screening out and effectively militating against germs and bacteria exiting via the air outlet aperture **154**. A skilled artisan may select any other suitable shape for the at least one filter **112**, as desired.

Although the filter cartridge **110** is shown and described primarily herein as having a single, unitary filter **112**, it should be appreciated that the filter cartridge **110** may alternatively be provided with a plurality of the filters **112**. For example, as shown in FIG. 8, the plurality of filters **112** may be disposed in a series and separated from one another by at least one baffle wall **156**. The at least one baffle wall **156** may be formed on an interior surface of the filter cartridge **110**, for example, or may be loosely inserted as non-sealing partitions between the filters **112** upon assembly. Advantageously, the at least one baffle wall **156** may further militate against germs and bacteria exiting the air outlet aperture **154** by diverting the air flow path within the filter cartridge **110**, for example, by causing the air flow path to be serpentine (shown by arrows in FIG. 8) as the air flows through the filter cartridge **110** from the air inlet aperture **152** to the air outlet aperture **154** in operation.

It should be understood that any suitable number of, and other arrangements of, the filters **112** are contemplated by the present disclosure. The filter cartridge **110** may contain the at least one filter **112**, and optionally the baffles **156**, as described hereinabove, but may also contain O-rings and fixed baffle integral seals (not shown), as other non-limiting examples. A skilled artisan may select any other suitable constructions for the filter cartridge **110** and its various components, as desired.

As shown in FIGS. 3 and 5, the filter cartridge **110** may further include sealing means **158**. The sealing means **158** may create a substantially fluid-tight seal between the at least one filter cartridge **110** and the mouthpiece **108** upon assembly. Advantageously, the fluid-tight seal militates against air exiting the main housing **102** without passing

through the at least one filter **112** of the filter cartridge **110**. Thus, the air-tight seal further militates against the spread of germs and bacteria while extinguishing candles and allows for the repeated hygienic use of the same main housing **102**.

In certain embodiments, for example, as depicted in FIG. **3**, the sealing means **158** may be an O-ring **160**. The O-ring **160** may be disposed in the conduit **150** of the filter cartridge **110**. For example, the conduit **150** may have an annular groove **162** formed in a substantially laterally central location on an interior surface of the conduit **150**. The groove **162** may receive a portion of the O-ring **160** and retain it in a lateral position within the conduit **150**. In particular, it should be understood that the groove **162** may hold the O-ring **160** in place spaced apart from the first end **146** of the cartridge body **144**.

Furthermore, as shown in FIG. **3**, an end **164** of the tube **128** of the mouthpiece **108** may be disposed through the conduit **150** of the cartridge body **146** upon assembly. The end **164** may abut an interior stop wall **165** at the first end **146** of the cartridge body **144**, for example, where fully inserted into the conduit **150**. An exterior surface of the tube **128** may contact and compress the O-ring **160**, and thereby create the substantially fluid-tight seal to form the air flow path between the mouthpiece **108** and the filter cartridge **110**.

In other embodiments, for example as illustrated in FIG. **9**, the sealing means **158** may be provided in the form of a sealing sleeve **166**. The sleeve **166** may be substantially tubular in shape and configured to receive each of the end of the tube **128** and the conduit **150** and hold the same together in the fluid-tight sealing arrangement. The sleeve **166** may be flexible and fabricated from rubber or silicone, as one non-limiting example. A skilled artisan may select any suitable material and shape for the sealing sleeve **166**, as desired.

As shown, the sleeve **166** may normally be disposed on the conduit **150** of the cartridge body **146**. Upon assembly, the sleeve **166** may then receive the tube **128** of the mouthpiece **108**. The end **164** of the tube **128** of the mouthpiece **108** may abut or be disposed adjacent the conduit **150** of the cartridge body **146** of the filter cartridge **110**, as shown in FIG. **9**. The sealing sleeve **166** creates the substantially fluid-tight seal, as described hereinabove. The combined mouthpiece **108**, sealing sleeve **166**, and filter cartridge **110** may subsequently be inserted into the main housing **102** for end use.

It should be understood that other suitable means of connecting the mouthpiece **108** and the filter cartridge **110**, and creating a substantially fluid-tight seal, are contemplated and considered encompassed by the present disclosure. These suitable means may militate against air exiting the main housing **102** without passing through the filter **112** of the filter cartridge **110** where the user blows into the mouthpiece **108**, as shown in FIG. **1**.

Referring now to FIG. **11**, the present disclosure further includes a kit **200** for customizing the candle blowing apparatus **100**. The kit **200** contains each of the primary components described hereinabove, both disconnected but arranged in a package for subsequent assembly and use. The kit **200** may have the main housing **102** with the first end **104** and the second end **106**, which is separately provided from the mouthpiece **108**. The mouthpiece **108** configured to be removably coupled to the first end **104** of the main housing **106** and as shown and described hereinabove.

In a further embodiment of the present disclosure, for example as shown in FIG. **13**, the ornamental end piece **114** may be integrally formed with the main housing **102**. The

main housing **102** may have a tube **168** disposed on the tapered end **118** of the main housing **102**. The tube **168** may include at least one brace **172**. The at least one brace **172** may securely hold the tube **168** in the main housing **102**. The main housing **102** may further have a baffle wall **170**. The filter cartridge **110** may abut the baffle wall **170** such that air may pass from the filter cartridge **110** to the tube **168**. The candle blowing apparatus may have an end cap **174**. The end cap may be removably disposed on the tube **168**. Advantageously, the tube **168** may allow for improved airflow through the main housing **102**, in operation.

The kit **200** may have the at least one filter cartridge **110** including at least one filter **112**. The filter cartridge **110** may be configured to be removably disposed within the main housing **102** between the first end **104** and the second end **106**. The filter cartridge may be configured to be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece **108**. The at least one filter cartridge may be a plurality of filter cartridges as shown and described hereinabove.

The ornamental endpiece **114** may be configured to be removably coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102**. The ornamental endpiece **114** may be configured to be in fluid communication with the filter cartridge **110**. The ornamental endpiece **114** together with the mouthpiece **108** and the filter cartridge **110** may be configured to define the air flow path for delivery of the extinguishing gust of air to the candle.

The kit **200** may include a plurality of ornamental endpieces **114**. In operation, the user may select any suitable shape for the ornamental endpiece **114** including but not limited to horns, cartoon characters, and toy animal heads. Any other suitable type of ornamental endpiece **114** may be selected and provide separately or in the kit **200** for use with the candle blowing apparatus **100**, as desired.

With reference to FIG. **12**, the present disclosure further includes a method **300** for using the candle blowing apparatus **100**. In a first step **302**, the kit **200** for the candle blowing apparatus **200** may be provided. The kit **200** may include the following separate components: the main housing **102**, the mouthpiece **108**, the at least one filter cartridge **110** including at least one filter **112**, and an ornamental endpiece **114**, substantially as described hereinabove.

The method **300** may have a second step **304** of connecting the mouthpiece **108** and at least one filter cartridge **110**. In one embodiment, the tube **128** of the mouthpiece **108** may be inserted into the conduit **150** of the cartridge body **144**. In another embodiment, the tube **128** may be inserted into the sealing sleeve **166** of the cartridge body **144** in the second step **304**.

A third step **306** of the method **300** may include inserting the mouthpiece **108** and the at least one filter cartridge **110** into the main housing **102** and disposing the ornamental endpiece **114** on the main housing **102**. The ornamental endpiece **114** may be pressed onto the tapered portion **116** of the main housing **102**.

The third step **106** may further include securing the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **102** via the connecting means **132**, **136**. In one embodiment, the mouthpiece **108** may be snapped into the main housing **102** such that the male component **138** interacts with the female component **140** to removably secure the mouthpiece **108** to the main housing **102**. In another embodiment, the mouthpiece **108** may be screwed into the main housing **102** via the corresponding threads **142**. The candle blowing apparatus **100**, upon assembly in this fashion, may define the air flow path

11

from the mouthpiece **108** to the ornamental endpiece **114**, for delivery of the gust of air to the candle.

The method **300** may have a fourth step **308** of selecting and affixing the ornamental endpiece **114** to the second end **106** of the main housing **102**. The tapered portion **118** of the main housing **102** may be disposed in the tapered recess **122** of the ornamental endpiece **114**.

A fifth step **310** of the method **300** may include an orienting of the candle blowing apparatus **100**. The user may orient the candle blowing apparatus **100** such that the ornamental endpiece **114** is directed towards the candle on the cake, for example.

A sixth step **312** of the method **300** may include the user blowing the extinguishing gust of air toward the candle. The user may blow air into the mouthpiece **108**. The air may flow through the tube **128** to the filter cartridge **110**. The air may be filtered by the at least one filter **110** and exit the cartridge body **144**. The air may pass through the tapered portion **118** of the main housing **102** and out the air outlet **120**. From the air outlet **120**, the air may pass through the ornamental endpiece **114** as the gust of air to extinguish the candle (shown in FIG. 1).

In certain embodiments, as shown in FIGS. **21-25**, the candle blowing apparatus **100** may include a filter **178** rather than the filter cartridge **110**. The filter **178** may be substantially disc-shaped or substantially cylindrically-shaped. The filter **178** may include a pad configured to effectively militate against germs, bacteria, and viruses from passing through the end cap **174**. The filter **178** may be removably disposed within the main housing **102** between the first end **104** and the second end **106**. The filter **178** may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece **108**. As a non-limiting example, the filter **178** may be between 40 mm to 55 mm thick. In another specific example, the filter **178** may include a substantially flat and/or a substantially pleated surface. The filter **178** may be fabricated from a foam or mesh material. For instance, the filter **178** may be constructed from a material having a NIOSH-standard filter rating or grade N95, N99, or P100, as non-limiting examples. One skilled in the art may select other suitable shapes, sizes, materials, and textures to provide the filter **178**, within the scope of the present disclosure.

In certain embodiments, as shown in FIGS. **21-24**, the end cap **174** may be removably coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102**. In another specific example, the end cap **174** may be removably coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102** via a friction fit, pressure fit, complementary nodes/recesses, clips, threads, and/or adhesives. Advantageously, the end cap **174** may be configured to selectively retain the filter **178** within the main housing **102**. Desirably, the filter **178** may be replaced with a new filter **178** within the main housing **102** where the end cap **174** is selectively unengaged from the main housing **102**.

In certain circumstances, as shown in FIGS. **21-26**, the main housing **102** may include ways to adequately support the filter **178**. In a specific example, the main housing **102** may include a shelf **179** configured to contact and support the filter **178**. The shelf **179** may include an annular platform disposed substantially parallel with the filter **178**. In another specific example, the main housing **102** may include a support structure **180**. The shelf **179** and the support structure **180** may both support a first surface **181** of the filter **178**. The support structure **180** may have one or more legs **182** extending from the interior surface of the main housing **102**. The one or more legs **182** may be configured to support the filter **178** while still allowing additional and adequate air flow through the filter **178**. In a specific example, the one or

12

more legs **182** may be particularly positioned to enhance the support of the filter **178** while maximizing the airflow through the filter **178**. For instance, at least a portion of each of the legs **182** may be disposed substantially parallel with the substantially flat and/or the substantially pleated surface of the filter **178**. In other words, the support structure **180** may include a flange **183** configured to be disposed substantially parallel with a surface of the filter **182**. In a more specific example, each of the legs **182** may be connected to one another. For instance, the support structure **180** may further include a ring **184** supported at an end of each of the legs **182** and/or the flanges **183**. The ring **184** may also be disposed substantially parallel with the substantially flat and/or a substantially pleated surface of the filter **178**. Advantageously, the ring **184** includes an aperture **186** to permit air to flow directly through the support structure **180** without substantially being obstructed. In other words, the aperture **186** of the ring **184** may be oriented substantially inline with an airflow path **188** between the mouthpiece **108** and through the end cap **174**. In a specific example, air may flow between each of the legs **182** and through the aperture **186** of the ring **184**. In a more specific example, the support structure **180** may obstruct less than fifty percent of a surface area of the first surface **181** of the filter **178**. In an even more specific example, the support structure **180** may obstruct less than thirty percent of the surface area of the first surface **181** of the filter **178**.

In certain circumstances, with continued reference to FIG. **26**, the end cap **174** may include ways to militate against air from being trapped between the main housing **102** and the end cap **174** while the end cap **174** is being coupled to the main housing **102**. For instance, the end cap **174** may include a vent **189** configured to permit air to escape from between the end cap **174** and the main housing **102**. In a specific example, the vent **189** may include a channel disposed on the end cap **174**. Advantageously, the vent **189** provides a pressure release feature so that the end cap **174** may be more easily coupled to the main housing **102**.

In certain circumstances, the end cap **174** may include ways to adequately retain the filter **178** in the main housing **102**. For instance, the end cap **174** may include an airway aperture **190** disposed substantially inline with the airflow path **188** between the mouthpiece **108** and through the end cap **174**. The end cap **174** may further include a cylindrical tube **192** disposed adjacent to and substantially inline with the airway aperture **190**. The end cap **174** may also include a protrusion **194**, **196** configured to retain the filter **178** in the main housing **102**. In a specific example, the protrusion **194**, **196** may include an inner protrusion **194** and an outer protrusion **196**. The inner protrusion **194** and the outer protrusion **196** may both contact and support a second surface **197** of the filter **178**. The inner protrusion **194** may include a plurality of nodes disposed substantially adjacent to the cylindrical tube **192**, the plurality of nodes extending from an interior surface **198** of the end cap **174**. Advantageously, the plurality of nodes are configured to contact and support the second surface **197** of the filter **178**, while still providing space between each of the nodes for enhanced airflow. The outer protrusion **196** may include an annular wall extending from the interior surface **198** of the end cap **174**. In a more specific example, the inner protrusion **194** may be spaced apart from the outer protrusion **196** on the interior surface **198** of the end cap **174**. As shown in FIG. **24**, a cross-section of the inner protrusion **194**, the outer protrusion **196**, and the interior surface **198** of the end cap **174** may be substantially U-shaped. Advantageously, the spacing formed on the interior surface **198** between the inner pro-

trusion **194** and the outer protrusion **196** may provide a condensation trap. In other words, when air is pushed through the candle blowing apparatus **100**, saliva and/or condensation may collect in the spacing formed on the interior surface **198** of the end cap **174** between the inner protrusion **194** and the outer protrusion **196**. Desirably, the cylindrical tube **192** may militate against the condensation and/or saliva from passing through the airway aperture **190**.

In certain circumstances, as shown in FIG. **21**, the candle blowing apparatus **100** may be provided as a second kit **400**. The kit **400** may include a main housing **102**, a mouthpiece **108**, a filter **178**, and an end cap **174**. The main housing **102** may have a first end **104** and a second end **106**. The main housing **102** may also include a support structure **180** disposed within the main housing **102** and configured to support the filter **178**. As shown in FIG. **25**, the support structure **180** may have a leg **182** configured to enhance the support of the filter **178**. The mouthpiece **108** may be configured to be coupled to the first end **104** of the main housing **102**. The filter **178** may be configured to be removably disposed within the main housing **102** between the first end **104** and the second end **106**. The filter **178** may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece **108**. The end cap **174** may be configured to be removably coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102** and in fluid communication with the filter **178**. Together, the end cap **174**, the main housing **102**, the mouthpiece **108**, and the filter **178** may define an air flow path **188** for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle.

In certain circumstances, as shown in FIG. **27**, the present disclosure may further include a second method **500** for using the candle blowing apparatus **100**. The second method **500** may include a step **502** of providing the candle blowing apparatus **100** having a main housing **102**, a mouthpiece **108**, a filter **178**, and an end cap **174**. The main housing **102** may have a first end **104** and a second end **106**. The main housing **102** may also include a support structure **180** disposed within the main housing **102** and configured to support the filter **178**. The support structure **180** may have a leg **182** configured to enhance the support of the filter **178**. The mouthpiece **108** may be coupled to the first end **104** of the main housing **102**. The filter **178** may be removably disposed within the main housing **102** between the first end **104** and the second end **106**. The filter **178** may be in fluid communication with the mouthpiece **108**. The end cap **174** may be removably coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102** and in fluid communication with the filter **178**. Together, the end cap **174**, the main housing **102**, the mouthpiece **108**, and the filter **178** may define an air flow path **188** for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to a candle. Next, the second method **500** may include coupling the mouthpiece **108** to the first end **104** of the main housing **102**. Then, the second method **500** may include disposing the filter **178** within the main housing **102** between the first end **104** and the second end **106**. The end cap **174** may then be coupled to the second end **106** of the main housing **102**, whereby the candle blowing apparatus **100** is assembled. The candle blowing apparatus **100** may be oriented toward a candle. A user may then blow through the candle blowing apparatus **100** to create the extinguishing gust of air and extinguish the candle in a hygienic manner.

Advantageously, the candle blowing apparatus **100** may filter air blown at candles and remove substantially all germs or pathogens from the resulting gust of air. The candle blowing apparatus **100** features the removable filter **178** to allow for repeated hygienic uses of the apparatus **100**. It is further beneficial that the candle blowing apparatus **100**

allows for customization via an interchangeable ornamental endpiece **114**, as described hereinabove.

While certain representative embodiments and details have been shown for purposes of illustrating the invention, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes may be made without departing from the scope of the disclosure, which is further described in the following appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A candle blowing apparatus for extinguishing a candle, the candle blowing apparatus comprising:

a generally hollow main housing having a first end, a second end, and an interior surface defining an airflow path through the main housing, wherein the second end includes a first opening therethrough, wherein the interior surface near the second end of the main housing includes a shelf extending along the interior surface, the shelf being disposed a distance away from the second end and having a second opening therethrough, and wherein a diameter of the second opening of the shelf is less than a diameter of the first opening of the second end of the main housing;

a mouthpiece coupled to the first end of the main housing;

a filter configured to be removably disposed within the main housing between the shelf and the second end of the main housing, the filter capable of being in fluid communication with the mouthpiece;

a support structure having at least one flange configured to partially obstruct the second opening of the shelf, wherein the at least one flange is configured to extend orthogonally to the airflow path through the main housing, and wherein the at least one flange is configured to support the filter; and

an end cap configured to be removably coupled to the second end of the main housing and entirely cover the first opening of the second end of the main housing, wherein the end cap is configured to contact the filter for securing the filter against the shelf of the main housing or the at least one flange of the support structure, and wherein the end cap can be in fluid communication with the filter and includes an airway aperture defining the airflow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to the candle.

2. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the end cap has a cylindrical shape with a generally flat first surface and an opposing parallel second surface, the first and second surfaces including the airway aperture extending generally centrally therethrough.

3. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the filter has a substantially flat first surface and a parallel and substantially flat second surface, and wherein the at least one flange is configured to be disposed adjacent and substantially parallel to the first or second surface of the filter.

4. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **3**, wherein the support structure includes a plurality of flanges.

5. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **4**, wherein the flanges are connected with one another via a ring.

6. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **5**, wherein the ring includes an aperture therethrough.

7. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **6**, wherein the ring is oriented substantially in parallel to the first and second surfaces of the filter.

8. The candle blowing apparatus of claim **7**, wherein the airflow path runs between each of the plurality of flanges and through the aperture of the ring.

15

9. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the shelf of the main housing is an annular ledge extending along an entire circumference of the interior surface of the main housing.

10. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 9, wherein the shelf and the support structure both support the filter.

11. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the airway aperture of the end cap is disposed substantially inline with the airflow path between the mouthpiece and through the end cap.

12. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 11, wherein the end cap includes a cylindrical tube disposed adjacent to the airway aperture of the end cap, the cylindrical tube having an opening therethrough that is substantially inline with the airway aperture of the end cap.

13. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 12, wherein the cylindrical tube of the end cap includes an inner protrusion configured to extend towards the support structure when the end cap is attached to the second end of the main housing, and wherein the protrusion is configured to retain the filter in the main housing.

14. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 13, wherein the end cap includes an outer protrusion extending towards the support structure when the end cap is attached to the second end of the main housing.

15. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 14, wherein the inner protrusion and the outer protrusion both contact and support the filter.

16. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 14, wherein the inner protrusion includes a plurality of fingers configured to contact and support the filter, the plurality of fingers extending from an interior surface of the end cap.

17. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 16, wherein the outer protrusion is an annular wall extending from the interior surface of the end cap, and wherein the outer protrusion surrounds the cylindrical tube and each of the plurality of fingers.

18. The candle blowing apparatus of claim 17, wherein the cylindrical tube and each of the plurality of fingers are spaced apart from the outer protrusion along the interior surface of the end cap.

19. A kit for a candle blowing apparatus for extinguishing a candle, the kit comprising:

a generally hollow main housing having a first end, a second end, and an interior surface defining an airflow path through the main housing, wherein the second end includes a first opening therethrough, wherein the interior surface near the second end of the main housing includes a shelf extending along the interior surface, the shelf being disposed a distance away from the second end and having a second opening therethrough, and wherein a diameter of the second opening of the shelf is less than a diameter of the first opening of the second end of the main housing;

a mouthpiece coupled to the first end of the main housing;

a filter configured to be removably disposed within the main housing between the shelf and the second end of the main housing so that the filter is in fluid communication with the mouthpiece;

a support structure having at least one flange configured to partially obstruct the second opening of the shelf, wherein the at least one flange is configured to extend orthogonally to the airflow path through the main housing, and wherein the at least one flange is configured to support the filter when the filter is disposed within the main housing; and

16

an end cap configured to be removably coupled to the second end of the main housing so that the end cap is in fluid communication with the filter when the filter is disposed within the main housing, the end cap is configured to entirely cover the first opening of the main housing, wherein the end cap is configured to contact the filter for securing the filter against the shelf of the main housing or the at least one flange of the support structure, and wherein the end cap together with the mouthpiece and the filter define the airflow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to the candle when the end cap is coupled to the second end of the main housing and the filter is disposed within the main housing.

20. A method of extinguishing a candle, the method comprising:

providing a kit for a candle blowing apparatus, the kit including:

a generally hollow main housing having a first end, a second end, and an interior surface defining an airflow path through the main housing, wherein the second end includes a first opening therethrough, wherein the interior surface near the second end of the main housing includes a shelf extending along the interior surface, the shelf being disposed a distance away from the second end and having a second opening therethrough, and wherein a diameter of the second opening of the shelf is less than a diameter of the first opening of the second end of the main housing;

a mouthpiece coupled to the first end of the main housing;

a filter configured to be removably disposed within the main housing between the shelf and the second end of the main housing so that the filter is in fluid communication with the mouthpiece;

a support structure having at least one flange configured to partially obstruct the second opening of the shelf, wherein the at least one flange is configured to extend orthogonally to the airflow path through the main housing, and wherein the at least one flange is configured to support the filter when the filter is disposed within the main housing; and

an end cap configured to be removably coupled to the second end of the main housing so that the end cap is in fluid communication with the filter when the filter is disposed within the main housing, the end cap is configured to entirely cover the first opening of the main housing, wherein the end cap is configured to contact the filter for securing the filter against the shelf of the main housing or the at least one flange of the support structure, and wherein the end cap together with the mouthpiece and the filter define the airflow path for delivery of an extinguishing gust of air to the candle when the end cap is coupled to the second end of the main housing and the filter is disposed within the main housing;

disposing the filter within the main housing between the shelf and the second end of the main housing;

coupling the end cap to the second end of the main housing, whereby the candle blowing apparatus is assembled;

orienting the candle blowing apparatus toward the candle; and

blowing through the mouthpiece to extinguish the candle
in a hygienic manner.

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