Dec. 27, 1966 L. BLODEE ETAL 3,294,465

DESK WITH TAMBOUR

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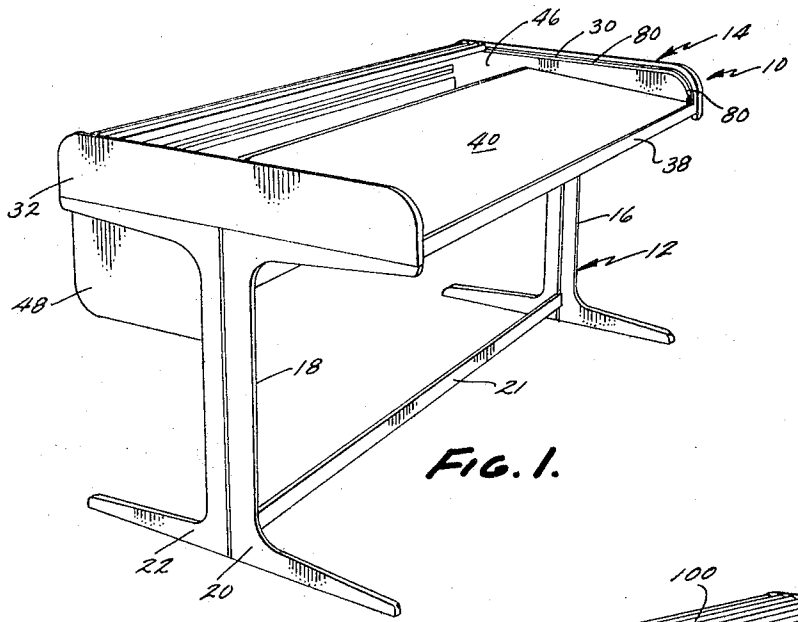

FIG. 1.

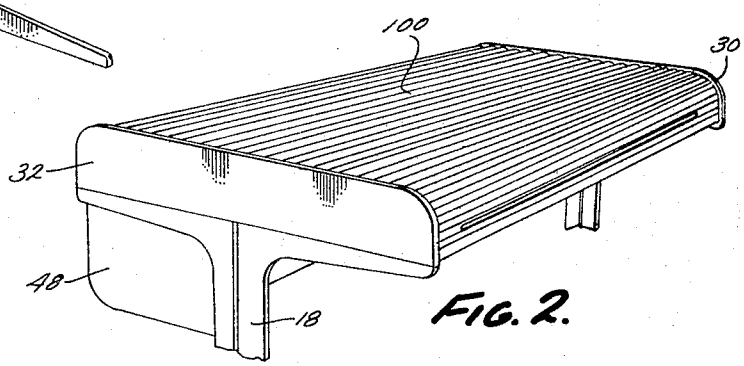

FIG. 2.

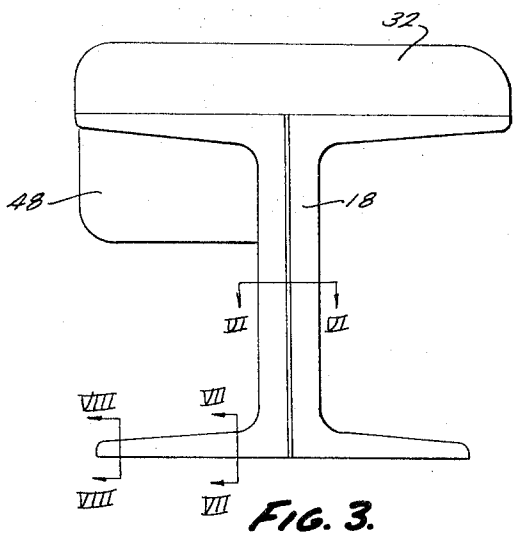

FIG. 3.

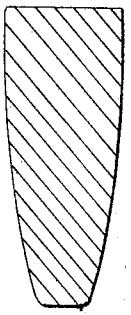

FIG. 7.

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DESK WITH TAMBOUR

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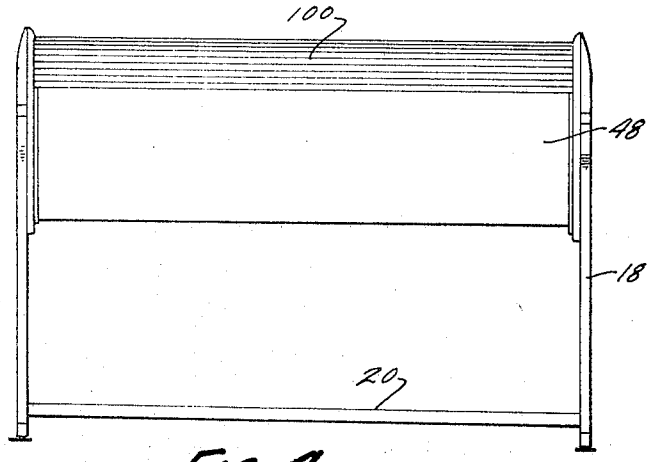

FIG. 4.

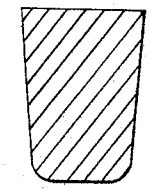

FIG. 8.

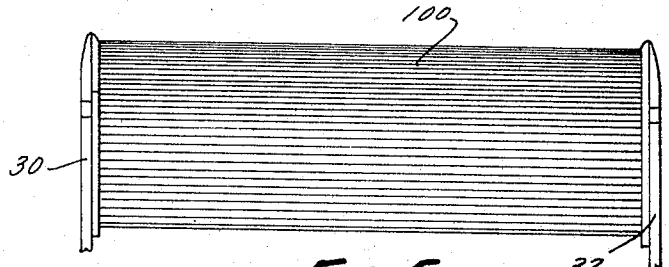

FIG. 5.

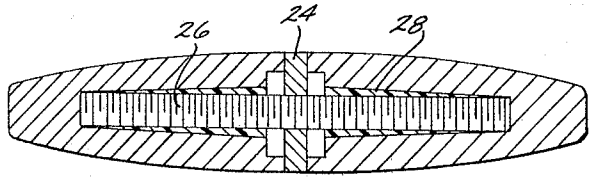

FIG. 6.

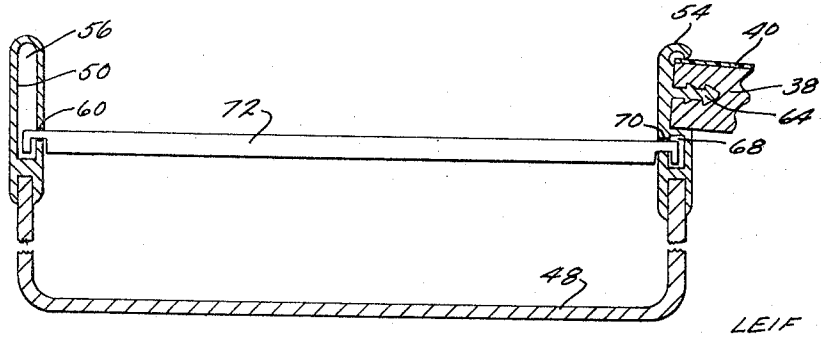

FIG. 9.

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DESK WITH TAMBOUR

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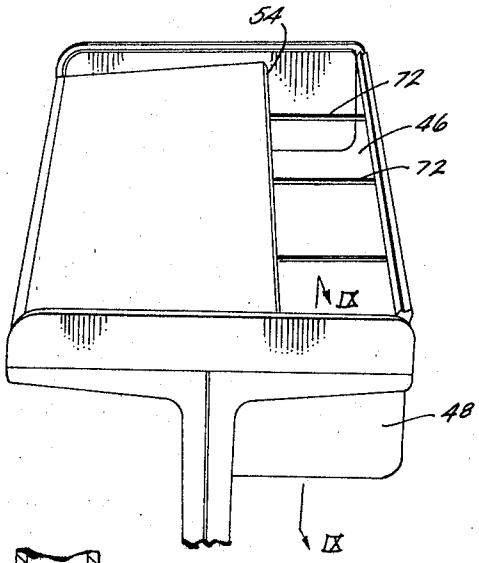

FIG. 10

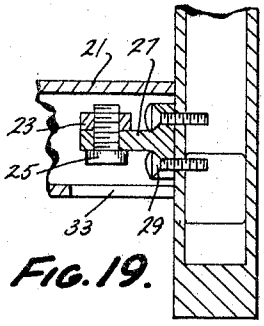

FIG. 19.

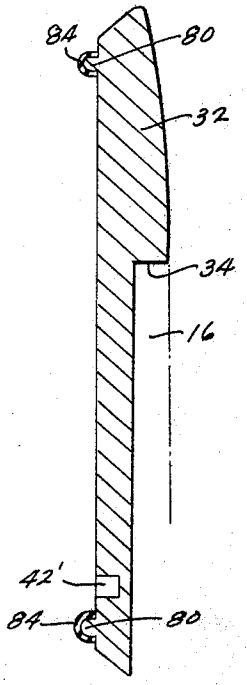

FIG. 12.

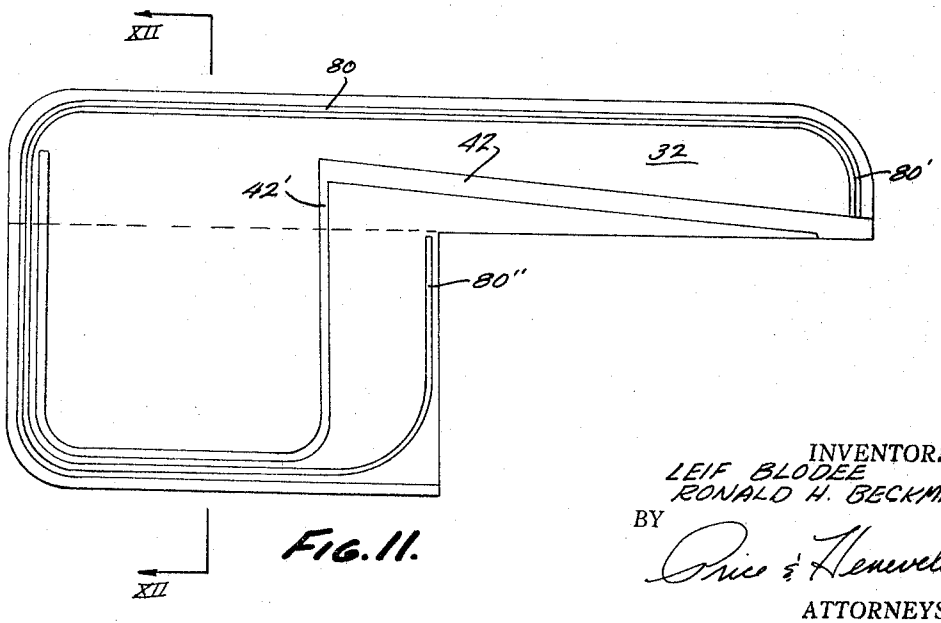

FIG. 11.

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DESK WITH TAMBOUR

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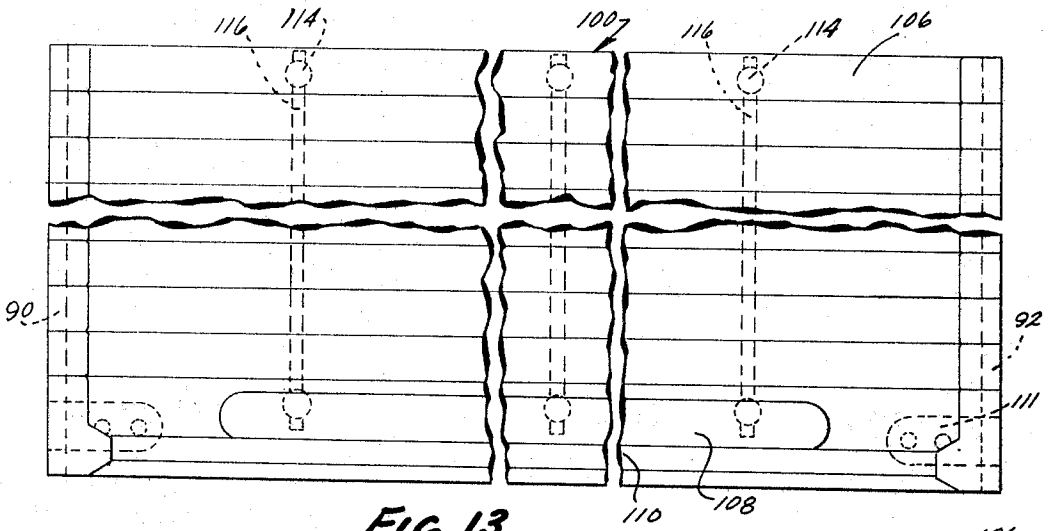

FIG. 13.

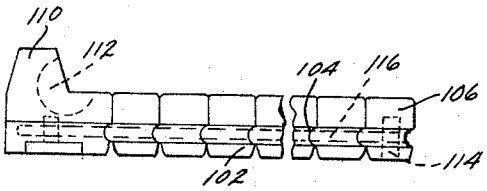

FIG. 14.

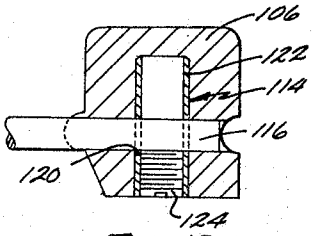

FIG. 20.

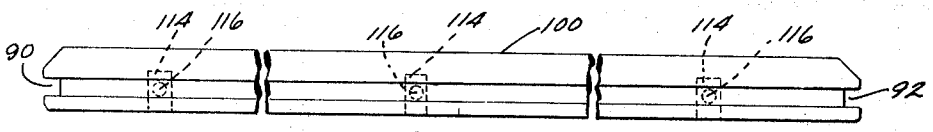

FIG. 15.

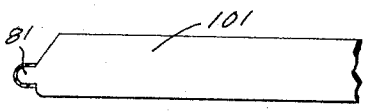

FIG. 17.

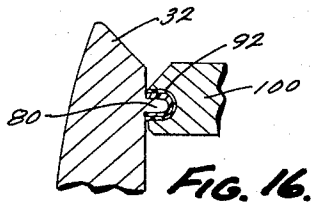

FIG. 16.

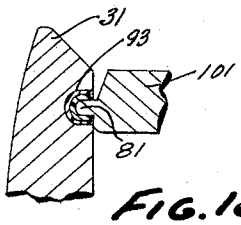

FIG. 18

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United States Patent Office

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Patented Dec. 27, 1966

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DESK WITH TAMBOUR

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Filed Dec. 2, 1964, Ser. No. 415,388

9 Claims. (Cl. 312—297)

This invention relates to furniture, and more particularly relates to a tambour style office desk.

An efficient office desk arrangement requires storage area for files. This storage space, if at the desk, is normally in the form of drawers in the desk. Desk drawers have very limited space. Further, the very construction and suspension of drawers renders data in the files quite difficult to find and use. Since the drawers must also normally be kept closed for purposes of safety and appearance, the contents are neither readily nor conveniently accessible.

Then too, if a conventional desk is to be left in a neat condition after office hours, with important papers and files under lock, all papers must be carefully removed from the desk top, arranged, and then placed in the drawers or placed in a file cabinet. The following day, these same papers must be removed, carefully sorted out, and rearranged on the desk top for further work. There is needed a desk with an easily accessible, fairly spacious storage chamber.

Yet, such a feature has not been combined with a tambour cover assembly in a desk. The tambour assembly normally requires spacious storage facilities itself when retracted to open position. Tambour style desks, therefore, have a large unused and covered tambour-receiving space at the back and bottom thereof to receive and hide the tambour cover. This creates a bulky construction and appearance, incompatible with modern office furniture styling. Conventional tambour covers frequently must employ operating or biasing mechanisms to help the user overcome the weight of the tambour when shifting it out of its lowered stored position. Also, the covered tambour storage chamber prevents any access to the desk top from the rear or ends of the desk. Then too, to manufacture conventional tambour style desks requires the production of a large number of special desk components to be carefully interfitted.

It is an object of this invention to provide a novel, modern style, office desk having unique and substantial storage space, as for files, that retains the files in a readily visualized and accessible position at the desk for convenient use, and having a tambour cover in unique relation and combination with the storage unit for complete coverage and security of the files and top when the desk is not in use, and yet having an appearance of lightweight and open characteristics. The tambour cover not only does not interfere with a special suspended pod forming the storage space, but cooperates with it to provide convenient storage of the open tambour with full access to the storage space. The tambour counterweights itself in its stored position for easy closing thereof, due to its relation to the storage pod and desk. The tambour even protects the storage pod when open, and renders it attractive. The assembly, whether the tambour cover is open or closed, has an open, lightweight appearance with full access to the desk top from positions around its periphery.

Another object of this invention is to provide a novel desk having unique storage space conveniently located in a particular manner to be accessible from the top of the desk, and not having the disadvantages of drawers.

Another object of this invention is to provide a modern style office desk having a unique storage pod, and a flexible tambour closure means which will cover the entire work area and storage pod, or will retract uniquely with respect to the work surface and pod to uncover both. The retractable tambour cover blends with the features of the modern style desk, and when retracted, retracts to a unique attractive position with respect to the desk.

Another object of this invention is to provide a modern style desk having special file storage facilities and desk cover means uniquely interrelated so that the cover means simultaneously covers or uncovers both the special storage area and the desk top work surface, without interfering with completely open leg space around the desk. Thus, both can be exposed for optimum cooperation or can be concealed and protected from tampering. This change can moreover be made in minimal time, with one easy movement of the cover means.

A further object of the invention is to provide a compact storage facility for the tambour which neither wastes storage or working space nor requires a bulky structure which would give the desk a clumsy or unbalanced visual impression.

Another object of this invention is to provide a novel modern style desk with unique storage chamber means, and pedestal structure supporting the desk and related to the special storage chamber means and contents to support the assembly with complete stability. The components of the desk, though relatively simple and adaptable to mass production formation, interfit in a special manner to effect rigid, sturdy support for the desk and suspended storage pod, yet with a completely open, under-desk structure for perimetral access with feet or leg-receiving capacity.

These and several other objects of this invention will become apparent upon studying the following specification in conjunction with the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the novel desk, with the tambour cover retracted to open position;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary, perspective, slightly enlarged view of the desk in FIG. 1, with the tambour cover extended to closed position;

FIG. 3 is an end elevational view of the novel desk;

FIG. 4 is a rear elevational view of the novel desk with the tambour cover extended to closed position as in FIG. 2;

FIG. 5 is a rear fragmentary elevational view of the novel desk when the tambour cover retracted as illusrated in FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the support pedestal, taken on plane VI—VI of FIG. 3;

FIG. 7 is a sectional view of one foot of the pedestal, taken on plane VII—VII of FIG. 3;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view of another section of the pedestal foot taken on plane VIII—VIII of FIG. 3;

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary, sectional, enlarged view of the desk storage pod, taken on plane IX—IX of FIG. 10;

FIG. 10 is a fragmentary perspective view of the top of the novel desk, showing the interior of the storage bin;

FIG. 11 is an elevational view of the inside face of one end panel of the novel desk;

FIG. 12 is a sectional view of the end panel in FIG. 11, taken on plane XII—XII;

FIG. 13 is a plan fragmentary view of the novel tambour cover;

FIG. 14 is a fragmentary, enlarged, side elevational view of the tambour cover in FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 is a fragmentary, front, elevational view of the tambour cover in FIGS. 13 and 14;

FIG. 16 is a fragmentary, sectional view of the interfit

between an edge of the tambour cover and the guide track of the desk end panel;

FIG. 17 is a fragmentary, end elevational view of a slightly modified tambour cover edge construction to that illustrated in FIG. 15;

FIG. 18 is a fragmentary, sectional view of the interfit of the slightly modified tambour cover edge with a slightly modified desk end panel;

FIG. 19 is a sectional view of the connection between the cross tie connector and one pedestal; and

FIG. 20 is an enlarged sectional view of the tension element securing means in the tambour.

Referring now speciffically to the drawings, the novel desk assembly **10** includes a pedestal subassembly **12** and dask top subassembly **14**.

The pedestal subassembly **12** has a pair of like, spaced pedestal ends **16** and **18**, interconnected at their upper ends by the desk top, and at their lower ends by a tie or bracing rail **21**.

Each of the pedestal ends **16** and **18** includes a pair of C-shaped die-cast elements, e.g. **20** and **22** forming pedestal end **18**. These are placed back-to-back, and interconnected to form a pair of H-shaped pedestals with the H positioned on its side. The lower legs of the C-shaped elements form forwardly and rearwardly tapered floor contacting feet. The upper free ends of the C-shaped elements comprise forwardly and rearwardly extending support beams.

Positioned between the flat backs of each pair of C-shaped elements is an elongated binding plate or strip **24** (FIG. 6), rectangular in cross-sectional configuration. It includes a plurality of vertically spaced openings allowing stud-type serrated binding elements **26** to be inserted therethrough, with both ends received in resin filled recesses or pockets **28**. These resin pockets in the upright portions of the pedestals anchor the binding studs to bind the C-shaped elements into an integral unit. Any suitable resin such as a poly-epoxy may be employed.

The C-shaped half-pedestals are all alike, thereby being adaptable to mass production techniques by casting. The individual units are then capable of interconnection in pairs into a rigid, sturdy, yet open, assembly. The bottom of the paired elements are interconnected by tie bar and foot rest **21** (FIG. 19). That is, a flush connection is obtained by using a housed connector assembly. A nut **23** is welded to the inside of the hollow bar **21**. A screw **25** attaches connector **27** to nut **23**. A pair of screws **29** secures connector **27** to pedestal leg **16** by passing through drilled and tapped holes into the hollow pedestal. A tool-receiving opening **33** in the bottom of the bar **21** enables final assembly by insertion of screw **25** after the other components are attached.

The desk top subassembly **14** is supported on the end pedestal assemblies by being supported on a pair of vertical, front-to-rear end panels **30** and **32**, which interfit with the pedestal elements. Each end panel (FIG. 12) has a vertically, elongated cross section, with an outwardly projecting shoulder portion, e.g. **34** on panel **32**, overlying, resting upon, and mounted to the upper free ends of the pedestal elements.

The desk platform **38**, having upper working surface **40** thereon, is suspended between these end panels by having its ends recessed into cutout slots **42** (FIG. 11). Each slot extends along the length of the narrower projecting portion of the panel, and also partially into the broader pod-supporting portion at the rear of the desk. Preferably the slots, and thus the platform, are at a slight angle downwardly toward the front of the desk for optimum working orientation.

At the back of the working surface is a storage space or bin **46** formed by a suspended pod **48** having a U-shaped cross-sectional configuration. This pod is supported by having its U-shaped ends inserted into U-shaped slots **42'** in the broader rear portions of the end panels. The upper front and back edges of the bin are preferably at about the level of the work surface and retained in a pair of elongated, extrusion type metal ribs **52** and **54**.

Rib **52** has a hollow upper portion to form cavity **56**, and has a bottom slot in its lower portion to receive the upper edge of the bin (FIG. 9). A slotted lateral opening **60** on the inside face extends into cavity **56**. Rib **54** has a curled upper edge that extends over work surface **40** of platform **38** to form a smooth cover fit therewith. It also includes a spline **64** which is forced into platform **38** to form a connection. A lower cavity **68** is contained in this second extruded rib. An opening slot **70** in the inside face of the rib extends into cavity **68**. The lower end of this rib is slotted to receive the second upper edge of bin **48**.

Extending into the two slots **60** and **70** is a plurality of spaced transverse file supports that also form divider elements **72**. Each has downwardly depending end tabs adjacent cutout notches to interfit with the ribs. Each divider is inserted with the tabs in a horizontal position to fit into the slots, and then rotated so the tabs extend downwardly into the cavities. They provide compressive support against inward collapse, and tensile support against spreading for retaining constant the front-to-back width dimension of the bin, even when loaded. These spreaders, therefore, serve the multiple functions of supporting the files, dividing the space into sections, and maintaining a constant dimensional relationship between the front and back walls of the U-shaped bin. They are slidably adjustable to form various size sections.

Each end panel (FIGS. 11 and 12) also includes a tambour guide track **80** that has its front terminus **80'** at the front edge of the desk adjacent the working surface (FIG. 1). The track extends upwardly and then rearwardly along the upper edge of the panel, completely across the top of the working surface, but spaced therefrom, rearwardly across the top of storage space **46**, downwardly behind the back of the storage bin, forwardly underneath the storage bin, then upwardly in front of the storage bin, underneath platform **38**, to have its opposite terminal end **80''** between the platform and the front wall of the storage bin.

In one form of the invention, this track is a continuous projection (FIG. 12), either integral with or attached to the end panel. It preferably has a surface coating **84** of a lubricous plastic material such as Teflon or nylon. The two tracks on the two end panels interfit into continuous grooves **90** and **92** along the opposite edges of the tambour cover (FIGS. 13 through 16). The grooves are also preferably lined with a lubricous plastic coating.

The tambour cover **100** is formed of a plurality of individual slats abutted with each other along their longitudinal edges. Each has an elongated projecting rib **102** on one edge and a corresponding recess **104** along the opposite elongated edge (FIG. 14). The rib and recess are smaller in height than the edge faces, being about ¼ thereof. These are spaced from the top and bottom surfaces of the tambour toward the center, but slightly below center. When interfitted, they provide pivotal projection and socket connections therebetween for flexibility in the plane of the tambour. The slats are alike, except for the rear-most slat **106** and foremost slat **108**. Slat **108** includes a pull handle projection **110** with a finger receiving recess **112** immediately therebehind. The slats are held together by a plurality, preferably three (FIG.15) flexible polymeric rods **116** such as nylon, which extend through all of the slats. These are spaced and parallel, being along the opposite side edges and in the center of the tambour. These flexible tie rod tension elements extend directly through the swivel connections, i.e. through the ribs and recesses in the slats. This allows tambour flexing while simultaneously retaining the slats in tight interengagement at all positions of the tambour.

The flexible nylon rods are secured at their opposite ends in the front and rear slats **108** and **106** by connections **114**. Each free rod end fits through a transverse

opening **120** in a hollow sleeve **122**. The sleeve itself has its axis normal to the rod axis (FIG. 20). A set screw **124** threaded into the end of sleeve **122** engages and binds rod **116** in the sleeve. The set screw is accessible through the bottom of the tambour slat. The rods are completely enclosed and hidden from view, even when the tambour is flexed. Yet is securely retains the tambour together as a unit. Assembly and disassembly of the tambour, for any reason, are simple.

The novel tambour cover construction works effectively and smoothly, without binding, on its guide tracks. It is readily removed from its retracted condition (FIG. 1) to its extended covering or closed condition (FIG. 2). It forms a continuous, covering, dirt-excluding surface capable of rounding fairly sharp corners without the slats spreading apart. The slats themselves follow the tracks, with smooth coaction therewith for easy handling. The tambour, by retracting around and up in front of the pod, serves as its own counterweight. Thus, force necessary to elevate the portion of the tambour cover in the track portion behind the pod, when closing the cover, is partially supplied by the end of the tambour in the track portion in front of the pod. Even when passing around the sharp corners, the cover presents an attractive surface due to the interfit of the slats.

When extended to the covering position, the tambour covers both the storage area and the desk work area to enable papers to be securely locked and covered for tamper-proof storage until used again. When retracted, the tambour is simply pushed up and back to uncover simultaneously both the work surface and storage, with the tambour retracting around and partially under and in front of the storage pod beneath the work platform of the desk, to be conveniently out of the way. The rear of the desk is attractive with the tambour retracted, as well as extended. As illustrated in FIG. 5 in retracted position, it forms a decorative cover for the back of the storage pod.

The front slat **108** preferably is reinforced on the ends by recessed plates **111** attached thereto.

The tambour interfit modification includes edge projections **81** on the individual tambour slats on tambour **101** (FIG. 16). The tambour cover, in all other respects, is exactly like that previously described. The guide tracks **31** (FIG. 18) on the end panels, comprise plastic lined slots **93** receiving the plastic covered projections **81** on the individaul tambour slats.

The novel tambour is extremely flexible in its dimension of flex due to its construction. The ribs on one edge of each slat are semicylindrical, as are the receiving grooves on the opposite edge of each slat. The tambour thus flexes in a plane near its center, rather than on an underlying plane. It thus curves readily and smoothly. The edge portions beneath each rib and groove are cut back or formed at an angle to be divergent and provide a V-shaped undercut clearance beneath each rib and groove interfit. The tension elements maintain a substantially constant binding tension on the slats whether they are co-planar or curvilinear, since the tension cords pass through the centers of the ribs and grooves. The cords are adjacent opposite ends of the slats to maintain a tight engagement between the slats over their length. The result is an attractive, effective cover in both the open and closed positions, with slats that do not separate at any operative position.

The complete desk assembly is sturdy, reliable, extremely convenient to use, and aesthetically attractive. If it is desired to leave papers on the work surface, the tambour cover is merely drawn over the storage area and the work surface for retaining these in tamper-proof condition.

The storage pod provides substantial and convenient storage for files, drawing instruments, artist tools, models and other articles, depending upon the use to which the desk is put. Its appearance is compatible with various surroundings, making it an attribute to most any type of office or work area. The desk, in spite of its substantial integral storage and its tambour cover, presents an open structure. It is readily accessible from all sides for cooperative project activities. There are no panels closing off areas, so that a person's feet and/or legs will be received under the desk at practically any position around it. The tambour, when retracted, is not a hindrance to this either. The desk allows maximum air circulation for the user. It is attractive from all directions.

An important feature of the novel desk assembly is the sturdiness resulting from a minimum of components, in an open structure that even supports a substantial storage facility. The interfit of the pod and desk with the end panels, the special relation of the end panels to the pedestals, and the tied relation of the bottoms of the pedestals produces this result. More specifically, firstly, the shoulders of the end panels resting on top of the pedestals (FIGS. 2 and 12) cause the load on the panels to be carried largely in the vertical plane of the pedestals. Secondly, the end panels extend down a substantial distance along the inner face of the pedestals, and receive the storage pod ends in a recessed interfit to lessen the suspension forces that would otherwise be concentrated at the top of the binds, panels, and pedestals. These features also help prevent bowing, spreading and tipping of the pedestals, or flexing that might cause release of the pod. Any tendency for the bottoms of the pedestals to spread apart under the storage load is overcome by the foot bar tie in brace **20** interconnected between the pedestal bottoms.

It is conceivable that various details of the construction as described and shown could be modified within the concept presented. Also, it is conceivable that certain of these features could be used independently of other features in lesser prferred constructions, within the broadest aspects of the inventive concept. Therefore, the invention is intended to be limited only by the scope of the appended claims and the reasonably equivalent structures to those defined therein.

We claim:

1. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; a pair of vertical end panels attached to said pedestals, a platform having its ends recessed into said panels, having front and rear edges, and having an upper work surface; a suspended storage pod having its ends embedded in said panels, adjacent said platform, with its upper edges substantially at the level of said work surface, thereby forming a storage chamber generally below the level of said work surface; said panels having a pair of like tracks extending from said front edge, over said work surface, over said pod and down in back of, below, and up in front of said pod; and a flexible tambour closure having its edges retained and guided by said tracks for movement between one position covering said work surface and pod, and another open position behind, below and in front of said storage pod, but with its top uncovered.

2. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; said desk top comprising a platform suspended between said pedestals, having an upper work surface, and having front and rear edges; a storage pod suspended between said pedestals adjacent said rear edge of said platform; said pod having an open top, forming a storage chamber; a closure cover means mounted on said desk and movable from a first retracted position exposing said work surface and storage chamber, to a second extended position covering said work surface and storage chamber, and vice versa.

3. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; a platform suspended between said pedestals, having an upper work

surface, and having front and rear edges; a storage pod suspended between said pedestals adjacent said rear edge of said platform; said pod having an open top, forming a storage chamber; a closure cover, flexible in a direction fore and aft with respect to said desk; a track mounting said cover and extending from the front of said desk above said upper work surface and being spiraled to wrap substantially around said storage pod; said cover being movable from a retracted position wrapped around the back, bottom, and front of said pod to an extended position overlying both the top of said pod and said upper work surface.

4. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly including a pair of spaced end pedestals; each pedestal having a pair of C-shaped supports having flat backs, and connected in back-to-back relation; an abutment plate between said backs; said backs and plate having coincident recesses and openings respectively; serrated pin means extending through said plate and into said recesses; and a resin binder in said recesses around said pin means to anchor them.

5. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals connected by a brace element; each pedestal formed by a pair of C-shaped elements having flat backs, and connected in back-to-back relation; an abutment plate between said backs; said backs having coincident recesses; serrated pin means extending through said plate and into said recesses, and a resin binder in said recesses around said pin means; a pair of end panels attached to the inside of said pedestals; a platform having its ends recessed into said end panels, having an upper work surface, and having front and back edges; a suspended storage pod having its ends embedded in said panels, adjacent the back edge of said platform, with its upper edges substantially at the height of said work surface, forming an open-top storage chamber generally below the level of said work surface; said panels having a pair of like tambour guide and retention tracks extending above said work surface, over said pod, and down in back of, below and up in front of said pod; a tambour closure having its edges retained in sliding relation to said tracks for movement from one position covering said work surface storage chamber, to another position behind and below said storage pod and uncovering said work surface and storage chamber.

6. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; a pair of vertical end panels attached to said pedestals; a generally horizontal platform having its ends recessed into said panels, having front and rear edges, and having an upper work surface; a suspended storage pod having its ends embedded in said panels, adjacent said platform rear edge, and having an open top generally at the level of said work surface, forming a storage chamber generally below the level of said work surface; said panels having a pair of like guide tracks extending over said work surface, over said pod and down in back of, below and up in front of said pod; a tambour closure having its edges retained in interfitting sliding relation to said tracks for movement from one position covering said work surface and storage chamber to another position behind and below said storage pod and uncovering said work surface and storage chamber; said storage pod having front and back elongated walls with upper edge ribs; said ribs having facing horizontal slots therein; a plurality of spaced elements extending between said walls, each having tongues on the ends thereof received by said slots, and being in bearing relation to said walls to retain them in proper spaced relation; and said spaced elements having upper, file-supporting bearing surfaces.

7. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; each pedestal formed by a pair of C-shaped elements having flat backs, and connected in back-to-back relation; an abutment plate between said backs; said backs having coincident recesses; serrated pin means extending through said plate and into said recesses, and a resin binder in said recesses around said pin means; a pair of vertical end panels attached to said pedestals; a generally horizontal platform having its ends recessed into said panels, having front and rear edges, and having an upper work surface; a suspended storage pod having its ends embedded in said panels, adjacent said platform rear edge, and having an open top generally at the level of said work surface, forming a storage chamber generally below the level of said work surface; said panels having a pair of like guide tracks extending over and spaced from said work surface, over said pod and down in back of, below, and up in front of said pod; a tambour closure having its edges retained in interfitting sliding relation to said tracks for movement from one position covering said work surface and storage chamber to another position behind and below said storage pod and uncovering said work surface and storage chamber; said tambour comprising a plurality of elongated slats, each having one edge with an elongated convexity and an opposite edge with a corresponding concavity; the edges of said slats being interfitted; a plurality of flexible rod elements extending through said slats and retaining them in interfitted relation; said storage pod having front and back elongated walls with upper edge ribs; said ribs having facing horizontal slots therein; a plurality of spaced elements extending between said walls, each having tongues on the ends thereof received by said slots, and being in bearing relation to said walls to retain them in proper spaced relation; and said spaced elements having upper file supporting bearing surfaces.

8. A desk comprising: a support pedestal assembly and a desk top mounted thereon; said pedestal assembly comprising a pair of spaced end pedestals; a platform suspended between said pedestals, having an upper work surface, and having front and rear edges; a storage pod suspended between said pedestals adjacent said rear edge of said platform; said pod having an open top, forming a storage chamber; track means adjacent said pedestals, extending over said work surface, over said pod, and down behind and under said pod; a tambour style cover means having its side edges in sliding interfitting contact with said track means, and movable from a closed position over said work surface and storage chamber to an open position behind and under said pod; said tambour comprising a plurality of elongated slats, each having one edge with an elongated convexity and an opposite edge with a corresponding concavity; the edges of said slats being interfitted; and a plurality of flexible tension elements extending through said slats, and specifically, through said elongated convexities and concavities to constantly retain the slats in interfitted relation, while being in the plane of flexure of said tambour.

9. A desk comprising: a pair of spaced pedestals, a pair of end panels, a storage pod, a desk top, and a cover means; said pedestals each having the configuration of an H lying on its side, and forming an upper bearing edge; said end panels extending vertically on the inside face of said pedestals, and each having a shoulder portion extending over and fitting on said bearing edge of the adjacent pedestal; the ends of said storage pod and desk top being recessed into and supported by said end panels; said cover means extensible from a first stored position uncovering said pod and top, to a second position covering said pod and top; connecting bar means between the bottoms of said pedestals; and the space under said pod and top being open and through with only the cross members of the H pedestals extending through said space, for perimetral access to said desk top and storage pod

with complete leg and foot receiving capacity beneath said desk top and pod.

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