United States Patent [19]

Moore

[11] **3,797,436**

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[54] **CONVERTIBLE BOAT TOP**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **114/71,** 9/1 R

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B63b 29/02**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 114/71; 9/1 T, 1 R, 4 R, 9/6

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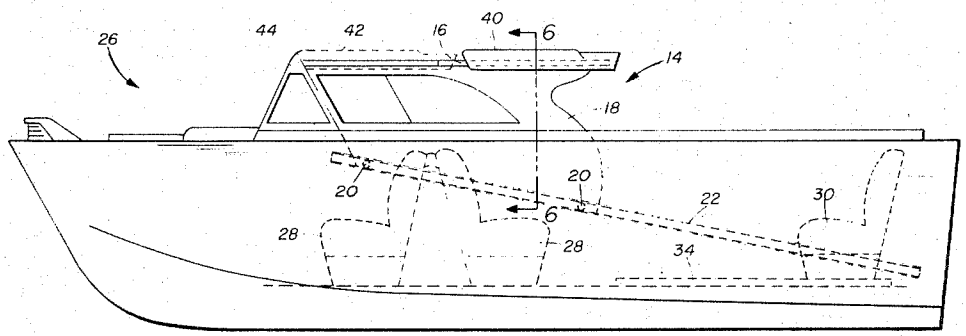
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Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Walter G. Finch, Esq.

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A convertible boat top is composed of a lightweight material and is designed to assume a plurality of positions on an open boat with a windshield assembly. In a forward position against the windshield assembly, the boat becomes a cabin boat. A slidable hatch on the top permits the tops of the cabin to be closed in bad weather and open in sunny weather. The top may be moved to a rear position with the hatch in the forward position thereon to provide a sleek runabout having an aft deck. With the hatch moved rearward on the rearwardly positioned top, seats in the boat are uncovered for use.

5 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures



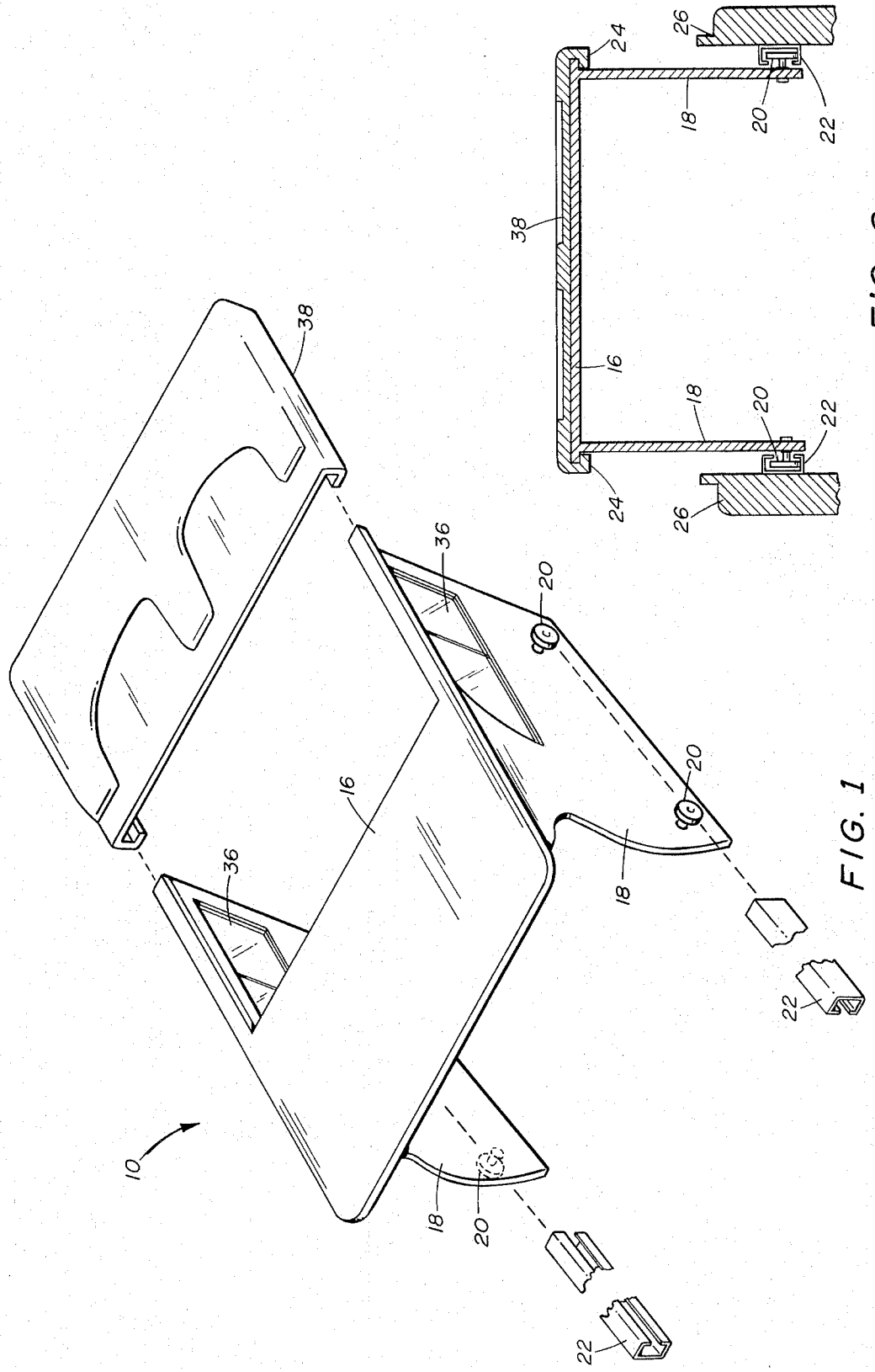


FIG. 1

FIG. 6

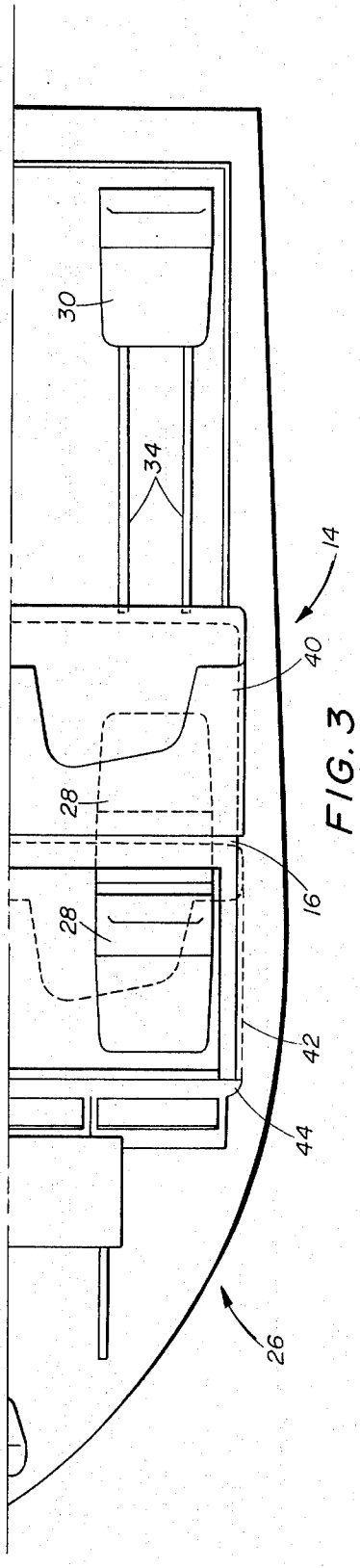

30
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40
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16
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42
44
26

FIG. 3

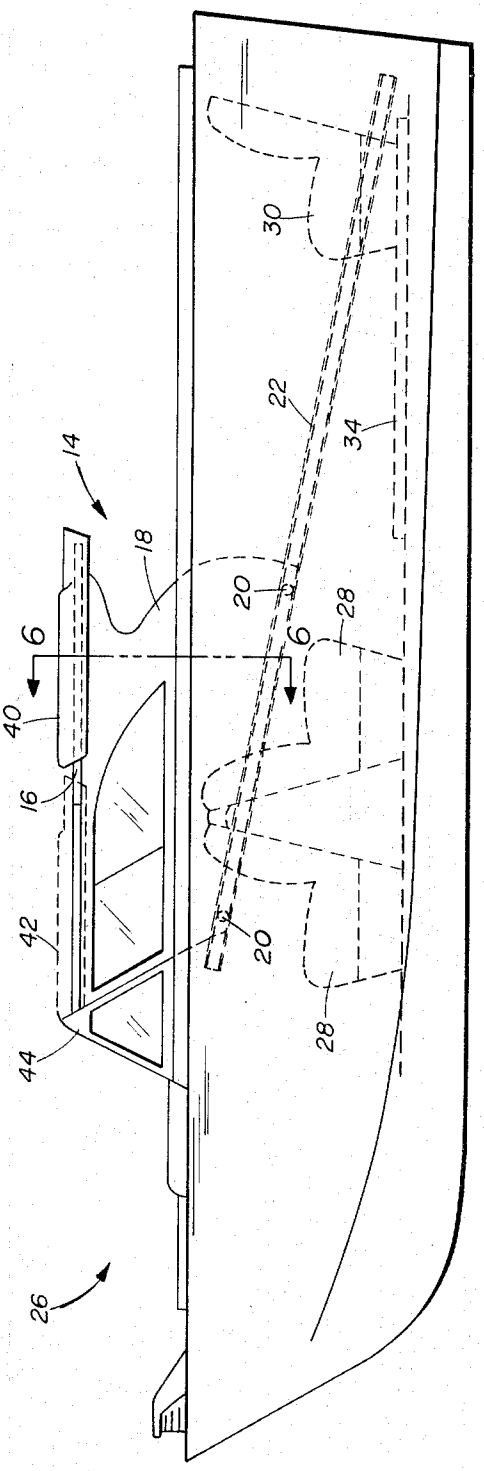

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FIG. 2

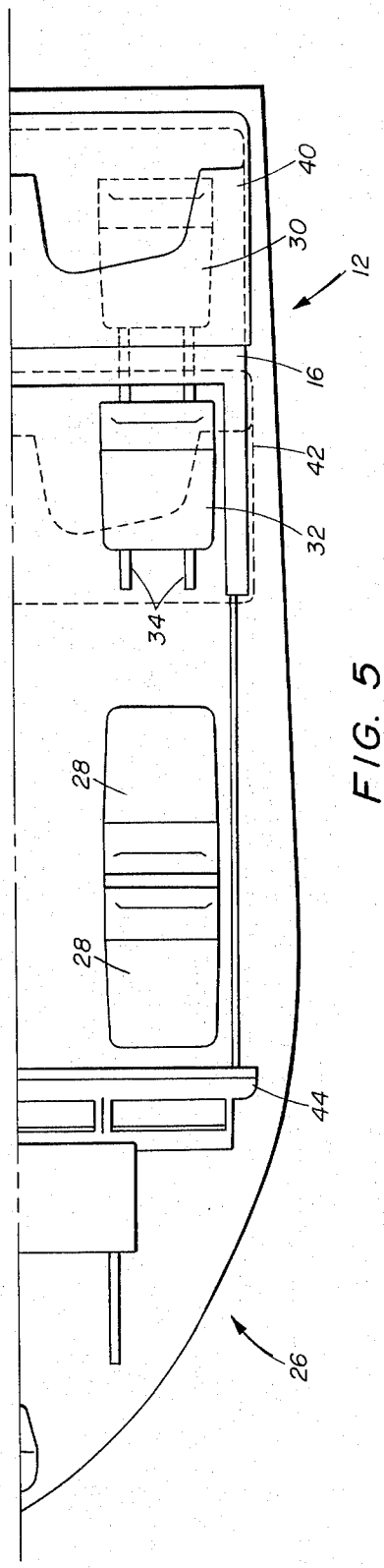

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FIG. 5

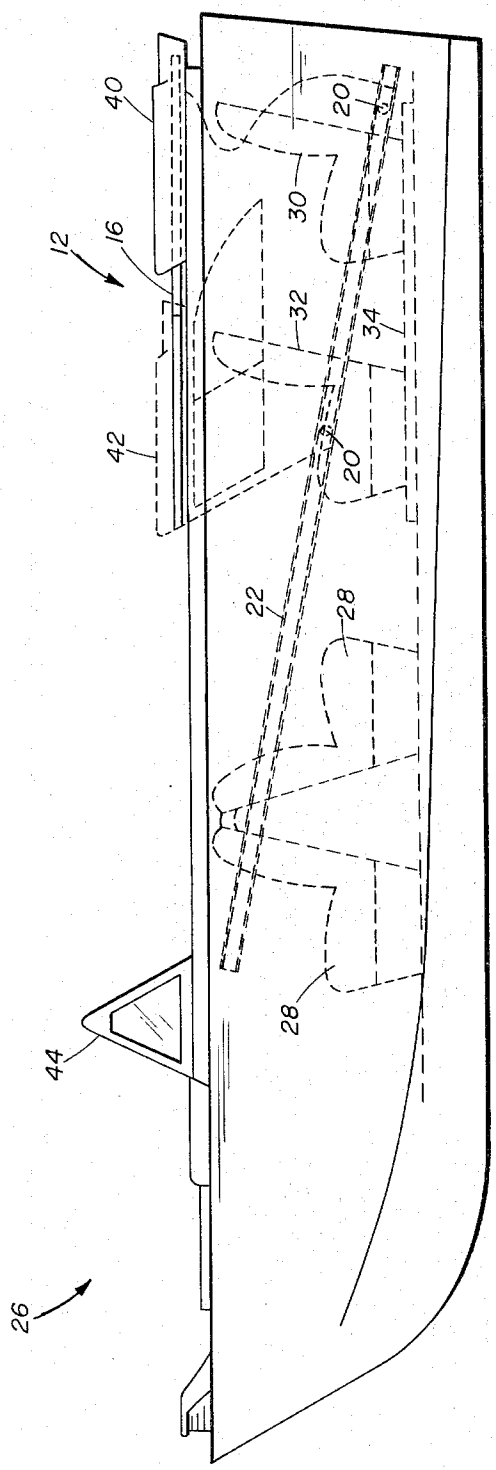

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FIG. 4

CONVERTIBLE BOAT TOP

This invention relates to convertible boat tops, and more particularly it pertains to boat tops slidably mounted on an open boat to convert the boat for various pleasure uses.

The cost of a cabin boat or a sleek looking runabout is frequently so costly that many would-be boat owners find such cost to be prohibitive. In some instances, people in this category purchase an open boat which has a windshield section.

Some people can afford one type of boat but not the ownership of both types of boats. In this case, they purchase one type and lose the benefit of ownership and enjoyment of the other type of boat.

It would be most desirable if there was some way in which one could by a conventional type of boat and be able to convert it to particular, selectable types to fit the enjoyable and utility needs of the user.

It is, therefore, an object of this invention to provide a convertible boat top which is selectively positionable on a conventional boat to permit various uses of the boat.

Another object of this invention is to provide a convertible boat top which is inexpensive to manufacture and easy to assemble with an open boat to provide various uses of the boat.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a convertible boat top having at least two movable sections positionable in at least four different arrangements to permit a variety of utility and enjoyable uses.

A further object of this invention is to provide a convertible boat top which is attachable to and positionable over a portion of an open boat to protect the occupants from the elements and movable to a position to provide a sleek appearing aft deck on the boat.

Other objects and attendant advantages of this invention will become more readily apparent and understood from the following detailed specification and accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is an exploded pictorial view of a convertible boat top in accordance with certain principles of the invention;

FIG. **2** is a side elevation view of the convertible boat top of FIG. **1** mounted onto a boat in a forward position;

FIG. **3** is a partial plan view of the convertible boat top and boat as shown assembled in FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** is a side elevation view of the convertible boat top of FIG. **1** mounted onto the boat in a rearward or aft position;

FIG. **5** is a partial plan view of the convertible boat top and boat as shown assembled in FIG. **4**; and

FIG. **6** is a cross sectional view taken along line **6—6** of FIG. **2** showing the convertible boat top assembled in tracks secured to the inner walls of the boat.

Referring to FIG. **1**, a convertible boat top **10** is composed of a lightweight material such as wood, metal or glass fibers such as those available under the trademark Fiberglas. The convertible top **10** includes an upper fixed panel **16** which is secured to downwardly extending, spaced sidewalls **18**. The side edges of the panel **16** extend over the sidewalls **18** to form a longitudinal lip. Two pairs of bracket-type rollers **20** are mounted to outer, lower spaced portions of the sidewalls **18** and are aligned with for movement with longitudinal tracks **22**. The sidewalls **18** are provided with windows **36**. A hatch **38** is formed with inwardly turned edges **24** (FIG.**6**) which are slidably positionable over the side-edge lips of the panel **16** to permit the hatch to be selectively positioned on the panel.

Referring to FIG. **2** and **3**, there is shown a conventional, open boat **26** having fixed forward and middle seats **28** and adjustably positionable aft seats **30**. The aft seats **30** are mounted for sliding movement on tracks **34** which are fixed to the deck of the boat **26**. The tracks **22** are fixed to the inner side walls of the boat, as shown in FIG. **6**, and are angled downwardly in the aft direction. The bracket-type rollers **20** are located within the track **22** and movable therein to permit selective positioning of the convertible boat top **10** as noted previously. The boat **26** could be for example, 18 to 24 feet in length. However, the inventive top **10** can be used on boats of any size without departing from the scope of the invention.

The convertible boat top **10** is shown in a forward position **14** and is positioned in engagement with a soft rubber seal on a windshield assembly **44** to make a watertight assembly therewith. When the top **10** is in the forward position **14**, the rollers **20** may be locked to prevent the top from undesirably moving aft. This can be accomplished in any of several ways. For example, a locking pin (not shown) may be inserted through openings (not shown) formed in the track adjacent the location of the rollers **20** in the forward position **14**. Also, the tracks could have notches formed therein at the precise point where the rollers **20** would be located when the top **10** is in the forward position **14** so that the rollers will drop into the notches to prevent the top from moving aft. Further, cam type latching means (not shown) could be mounted on the windshield assembly **44** and the top **10** for latching the top in the forward position **14**.

With the top **10** located in the forward position **14**, the boat **26** becomes an attractive looking cabin boat with the windows **36** (FIG.**1**) providing side view openings. The hatch **38** (FIG.**1**) is shown in FIGS **2** and **3** in an aft position **40** whereby the upper opening of the top **10**, formed by a forward cutout in the panel **16** (FIG.**1**), is exposed. This permits sunlight to enter the cabin on clear days while the sidewalls **18** continue to shield the cabin occupants from spray which results from forward movement of the boat **10** in choppy water. Also the fixed seats **28** are located within the cabin formed by the top **10**. This forward, open-hatch position of the top **10** is ideal for cruising in warm, sunny weather and in choppy water.

If the weather is cloudy and rainy, the hatch **38** (FIG. **1**) can be moved to a forward position **42**, which is illustrated in dashed line in FIGS. **2** and **3**, to cover the cutout opening of the panel **16**. This completely encloses the cabin from the top, front and sides and protects the occupants from the rain, wind and spray. The forward, closed-hatch position of the top **10** is ideal for fishing or rough and bad weather cruising.

Thus with the top **10** in the forward position **14**, the boat **26** assumes an attractive cabin boat appearance with additional facilities, such as the positionable hatch **38**, for utility and enjoyment of the cabin and the boat.

Referring to FIGS. **4** and **5**, the convertible boat top **10** can be moved to the aft section of the boat as shown in position **12**. In position **12**, the top **10** provides a sleek appearing runabout which is stylish and racy and has an aft deck. The hatch **38** (FIG. **1**) can be placed in the aft position **40** and the aft seats **30** moved for-

ward to position **32.** This provides the continuous appearance and utility of a rear deck while permitting full utilization of all six seats on the boat **26.** The hatch **38** can also be moved to the forward position **42** to provide an enlarged deck area which is most useful for water skiing with seating for four passengers.

Thus, the conventional boat **26** can be converted into either a cabin type or a sleek runabout with the simple and uncomplicated addition of the top **10.** This will permit owners of open boats, such as the boat **26,** to more fully utilize their boats to the fullest enjoyable extent for a relatively small expense.

In another embodiment which is not illustrated, each of the tracks **22** is U-shaped in cross section with a longitudinal, upwardly directed opening. The rollers **20,** which extend downwardly from a roller-support ledge extending laterally from the outer surface of the sidewall **18,** are inserted into the longitudinal opening of the track **22** to facilitate movement of the top **10.** Any water, by rain or spray, which should happen to enter the boat **26** in the area of the sidewalls **18,** will be directed into the upwardly directed openings of the tracks **22** and flow, by gravity down the tracks to the aft section of the boat where it is conveniently disposed of with the least inconvenience to the occupants.

Obviously many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

What is claimed is:

1. A convertible boat top adapted to a plurality of positions on assembly over the top opening of an open boat, comprising:

covering means including a top panel and a pair of sidewall members formed integrally with said top panel, said top panel having longitudinally extending lip elements disposed along the side edges thereof and extending beyond the juncture of said panel and said sidewalls, said members being spaced apart and each extending substantially from the forward portion of the panel to the rear portion of the panel on opposite sides thereof;

roller means attached to the sidewall members at opposite ends thereof;

track means fixed to interior side walls of the boat and engageable by said roller means to movably mount the covering means to the boat;

a hatch means having inwardly turned edges on either side thereof defining longitudinal channels which mate with said lip elements on the top panel and mounted for sliding movement relative to said top panel to permit adjustment of the volume defined by the covering means when mounted to said boat; and,

means for selectively positioning said covering means in at least two positions on the boat.

2. The convertible boat top of claim **1** wherein the top panel has a cutaway portion in the rear thereof, the hatch means being movable to variably cover said cut away portion to allow a desired communication of the interior of the volume defined by said covering means with the ambient elements.

3. The convertible boat top of claim **2** wherein said track means are angled downwardly in a straight line from a forward position to an aft position to permit positioning of the covering means in a forward position with said covering means extending above the forward portion of the top opening of the boat to form a cabin arrangement, and to permit positioning of the covering means in an aft position with said covering means having the top panel substantially coincident with the plane of the top opening of the boat to form an aft deck thereover.

4. The convertible boat top of claim **3** wherein the roller means on each of the sidewall members are positioned at different distances from the top panel of the covering means, whereby the covering means may be moved along the track means rapidly and efficiently with the top panel maintaining a substantially horizontal disposition relative to the boat.

5. The convertible boat top of claim **4** and further comprising:

seating means in the rear portion of the boat; and,

track means engageable with said seating means to move said seating means from forward to aft positions in the boat.

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