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(54) **EASEL BACK STORAGE AND CARRYING CASE**

Publication Classification

(75) Inventors: **Donald E. Godshaw**, Evanston, IL (US); **Andrezj M. Redzisz**, Wheeling, IL (US)

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Correspondence Address:
BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
TEN SOUTH WACKER DRIVE
SUITE 3000
CHICAGO, IL 60606 (US)

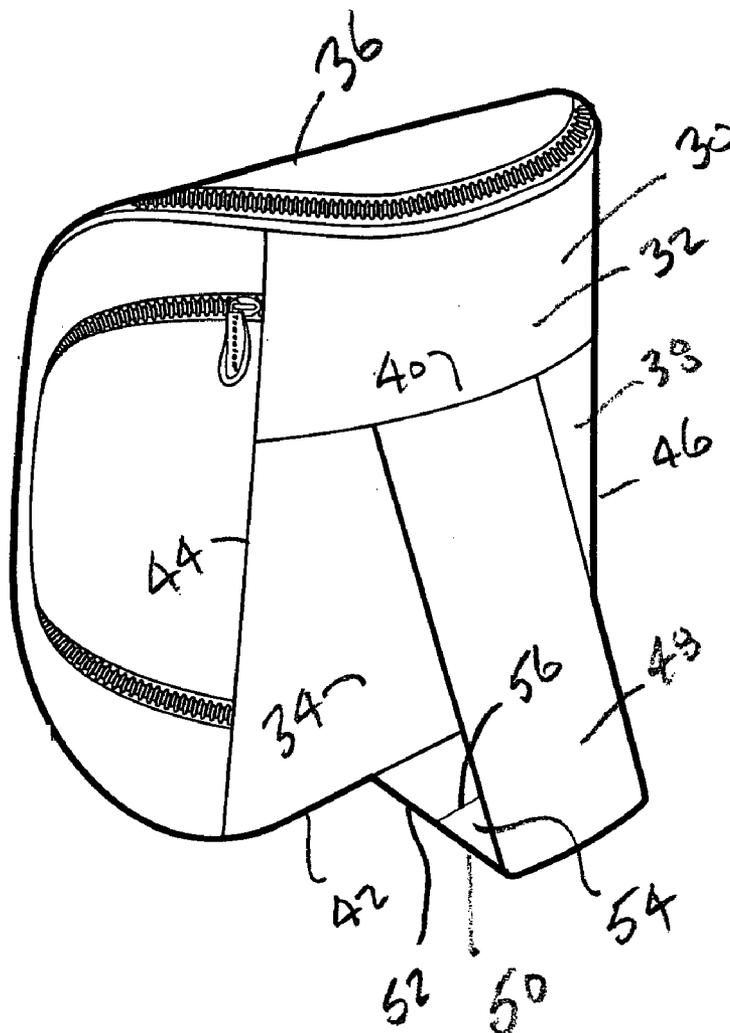
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A self-standing bag construction includes a generally rigid backing panel with a support leg hinged thereto and connected to the backing panel by a gusset. Various types of fasteners, such as magnets, hook and loop mechanisms, buckles and the like are utilized to hold the support leg tightly against the backing panel and upon release enable the support leg to form an angle with the backing panel and support the backing panel and a container affixed to the front side of the backing panel to be supported in a manner which facilitates access to the container.

(73) Assignee: **Travel Caddy, Inc. d/b/a Travelon**, Des Plaines, IL (US)

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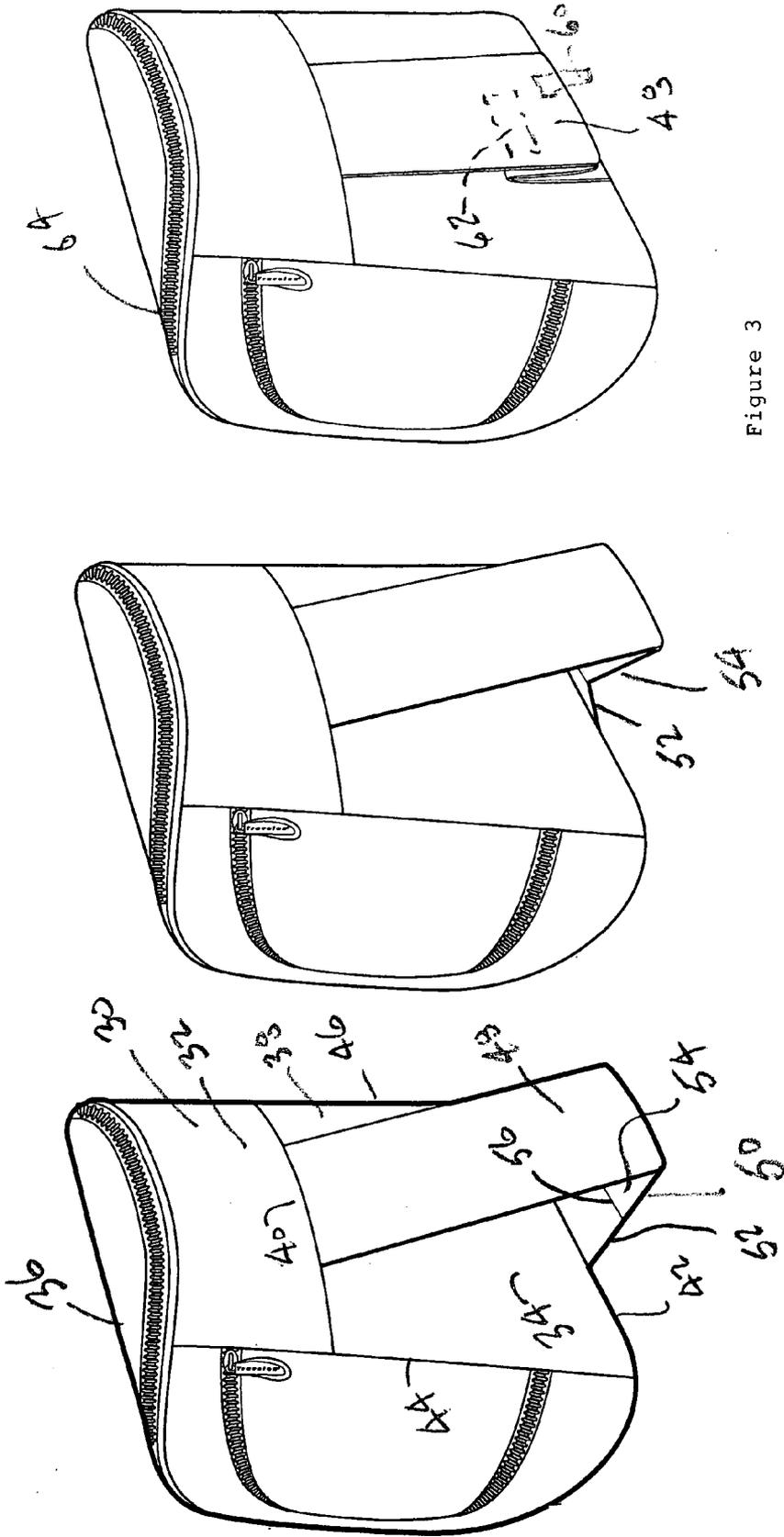


Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

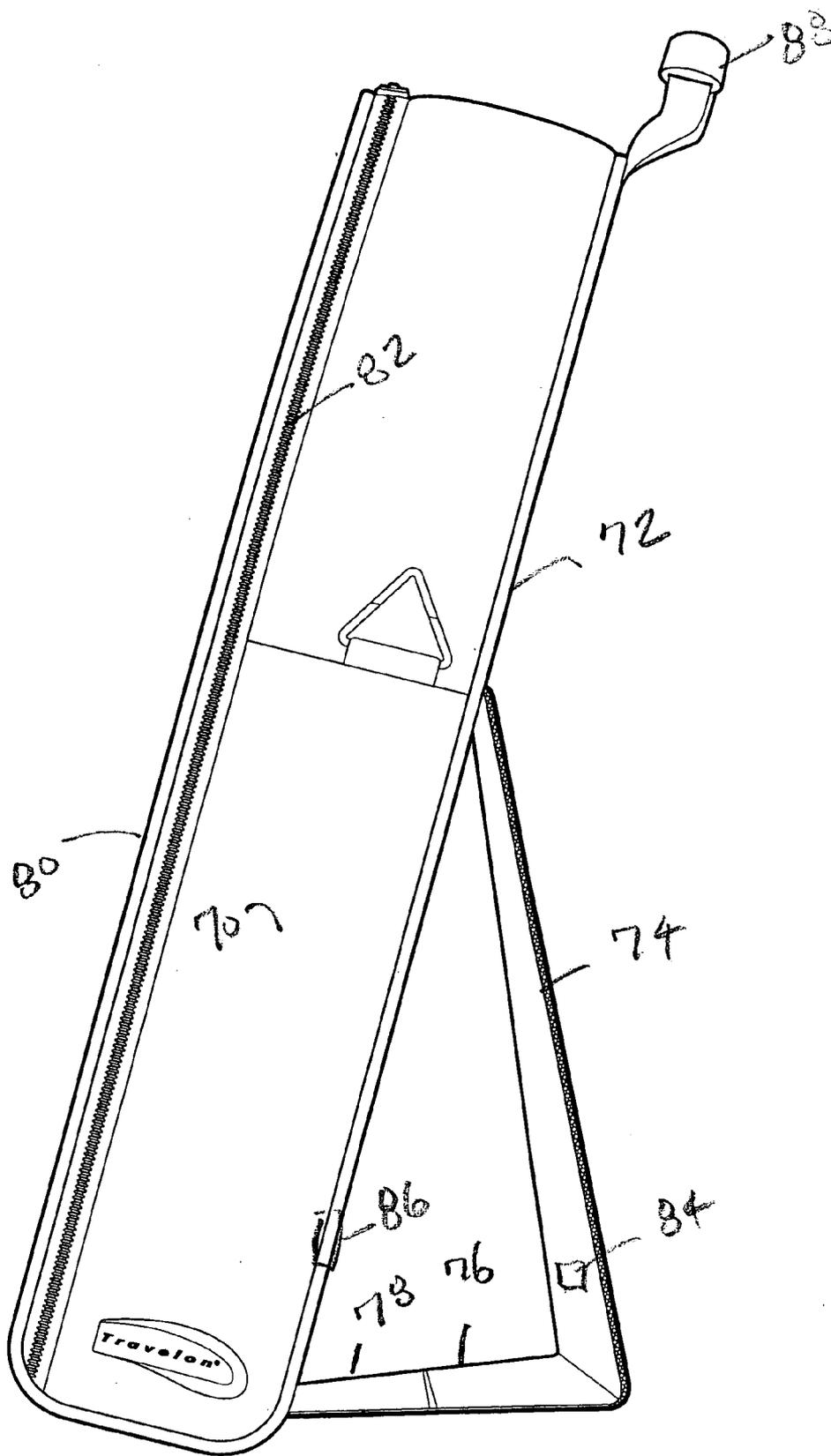


Figure 4

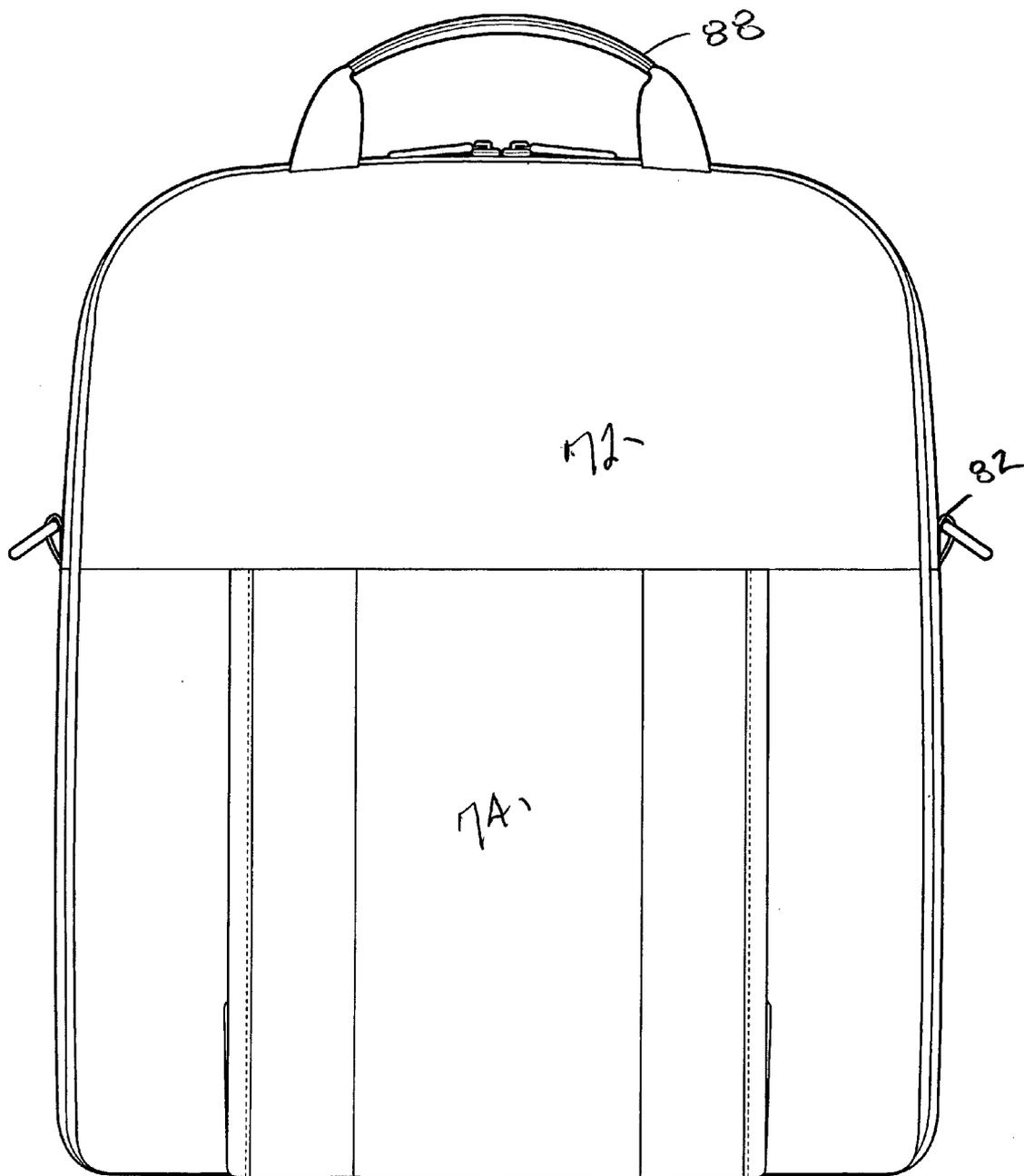


Figure 5

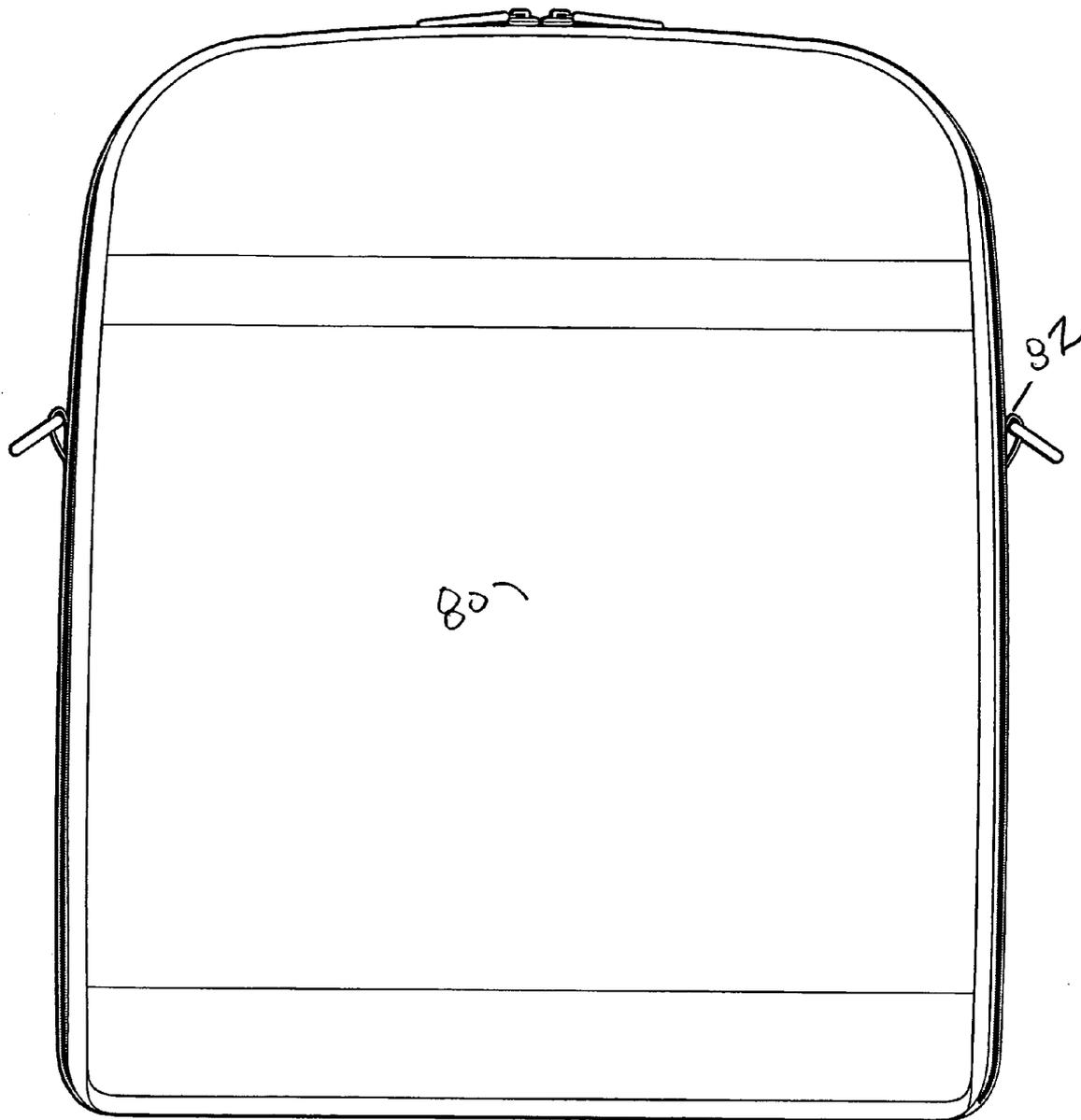


Figure 6

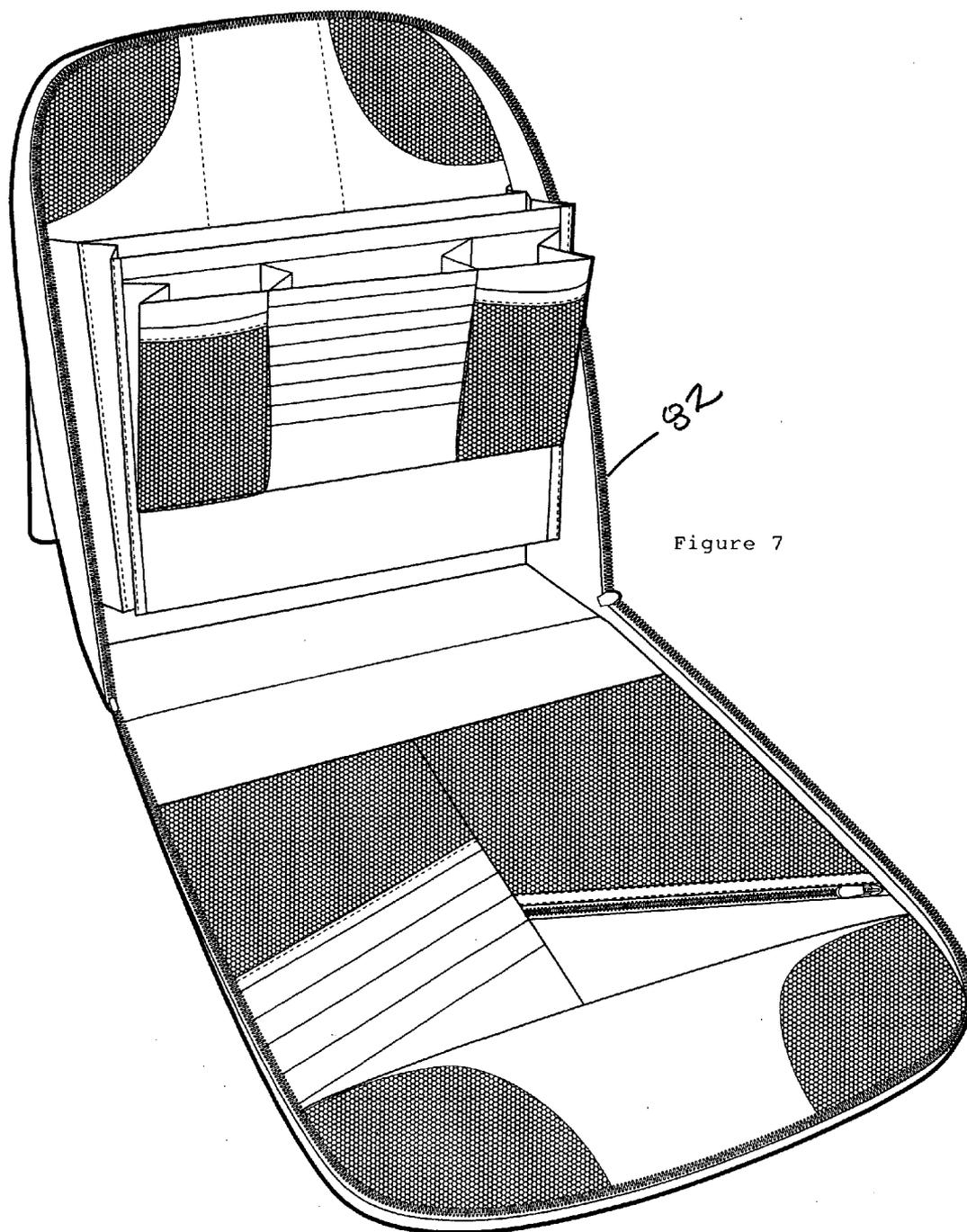


Figure 7



Figure 7A

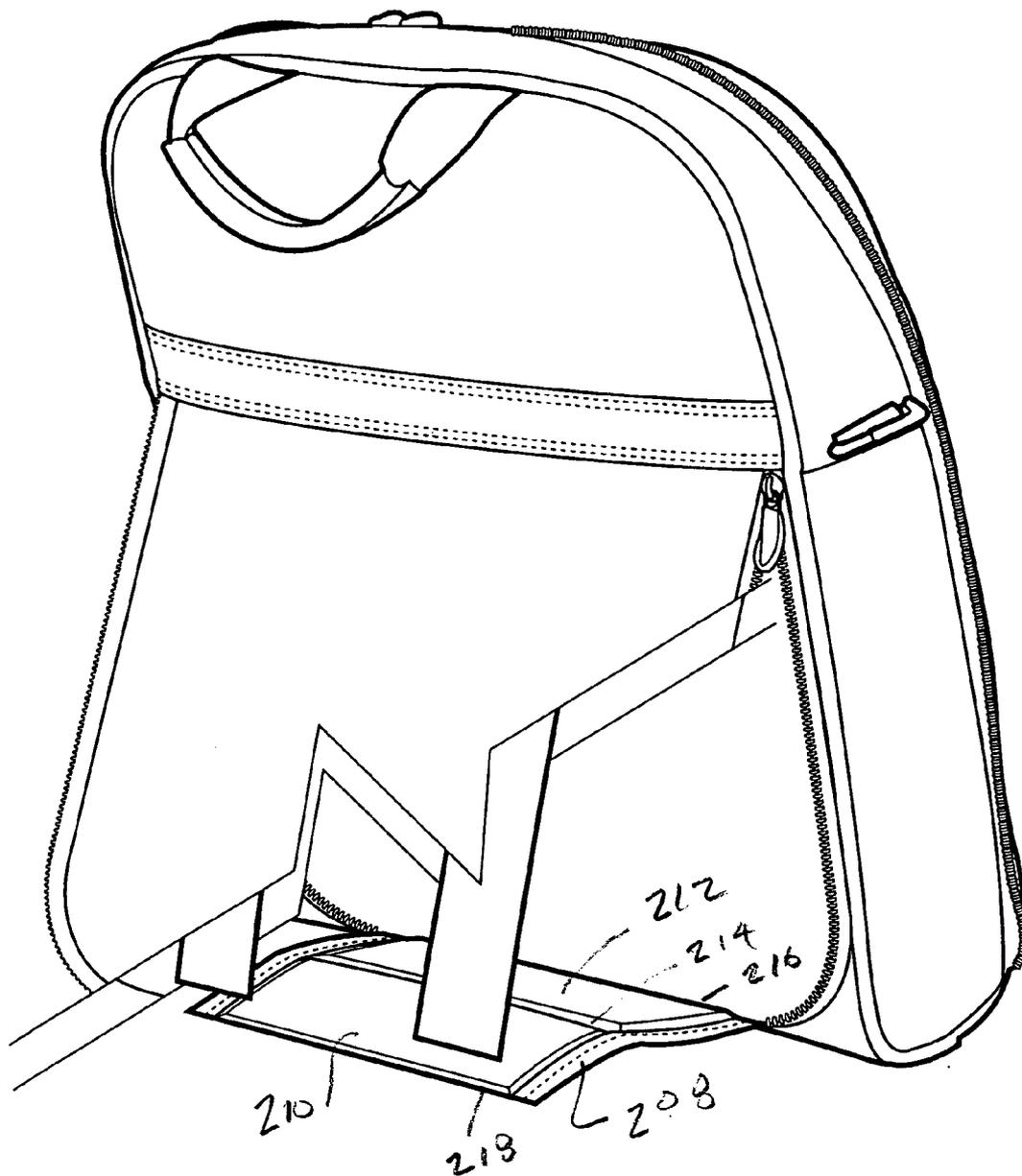


Figure 7B

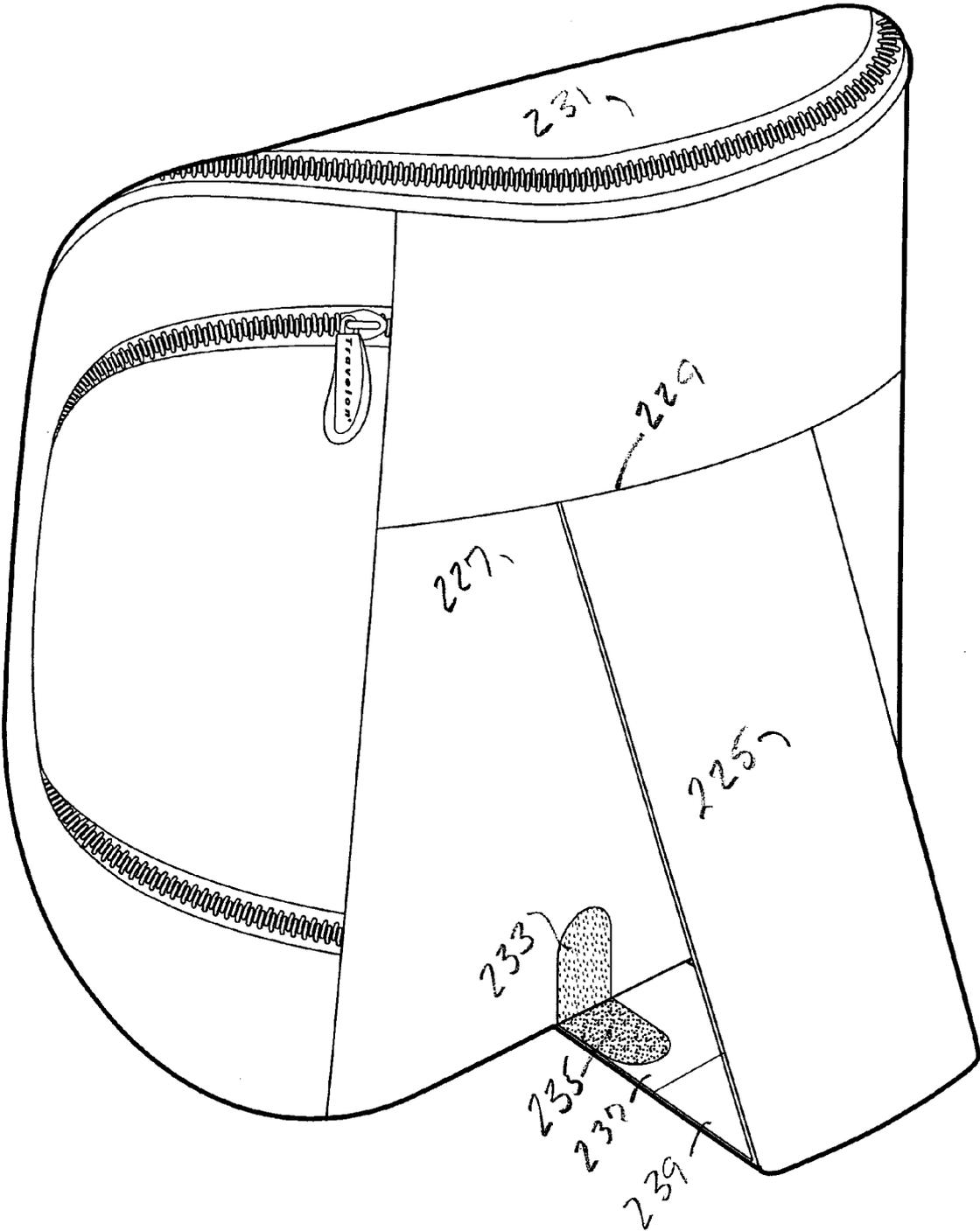


Figure 7C

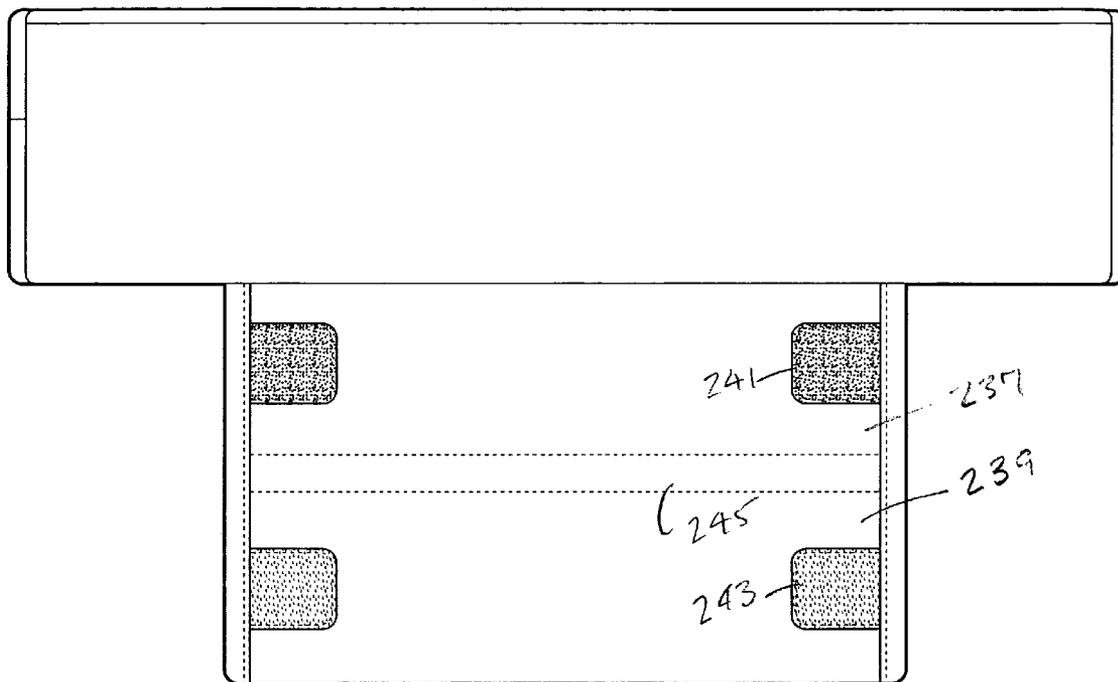


Figure 7D

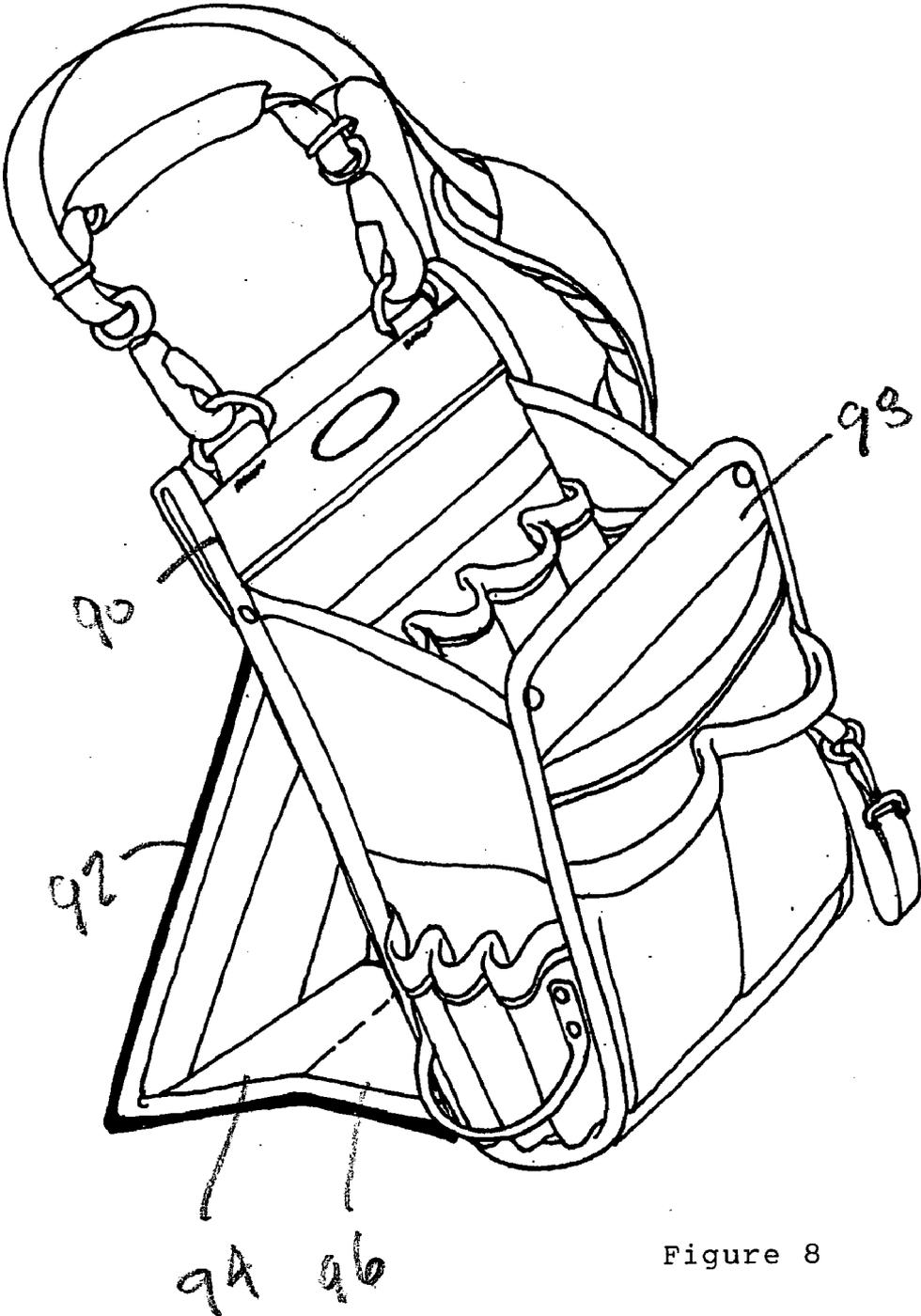


Figure 8

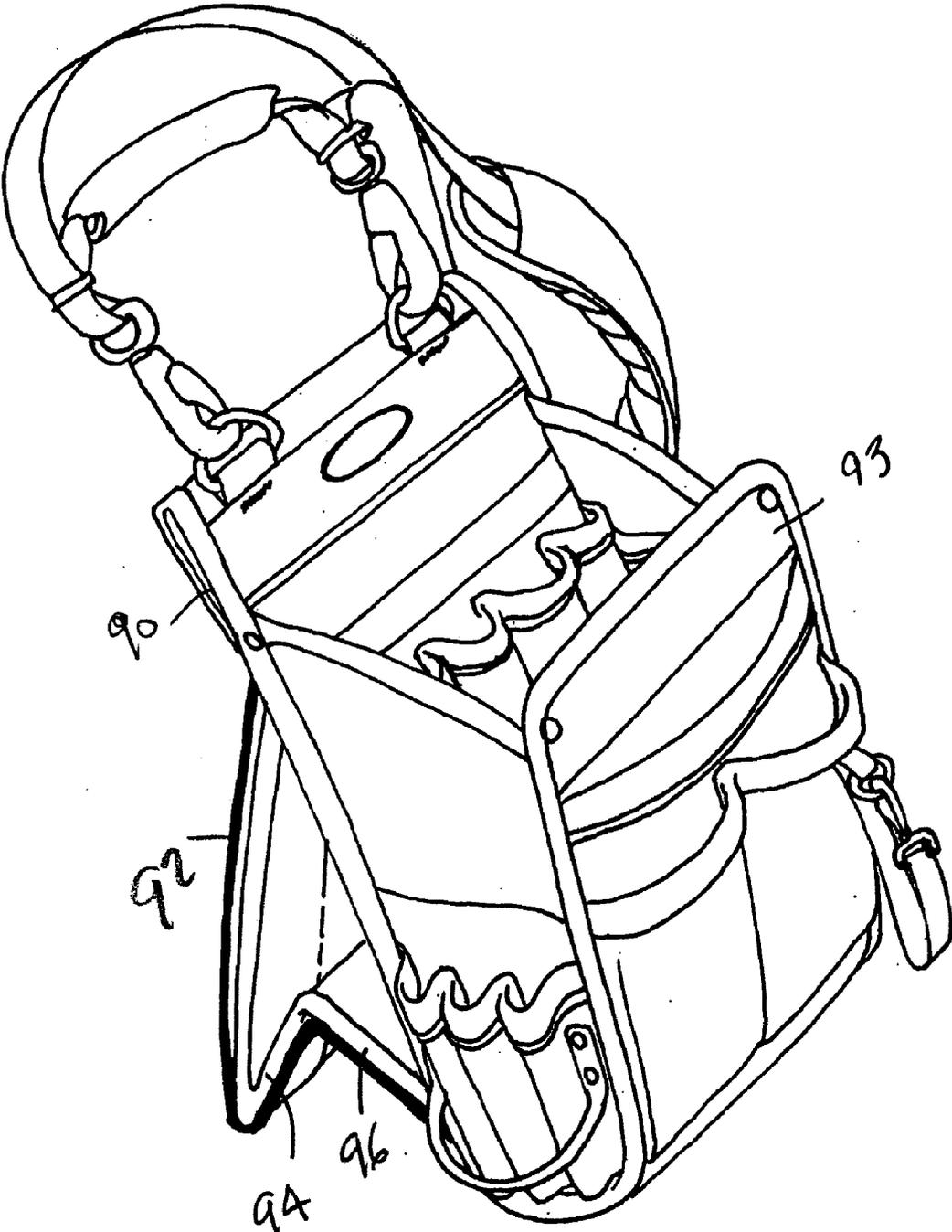


Figure 9

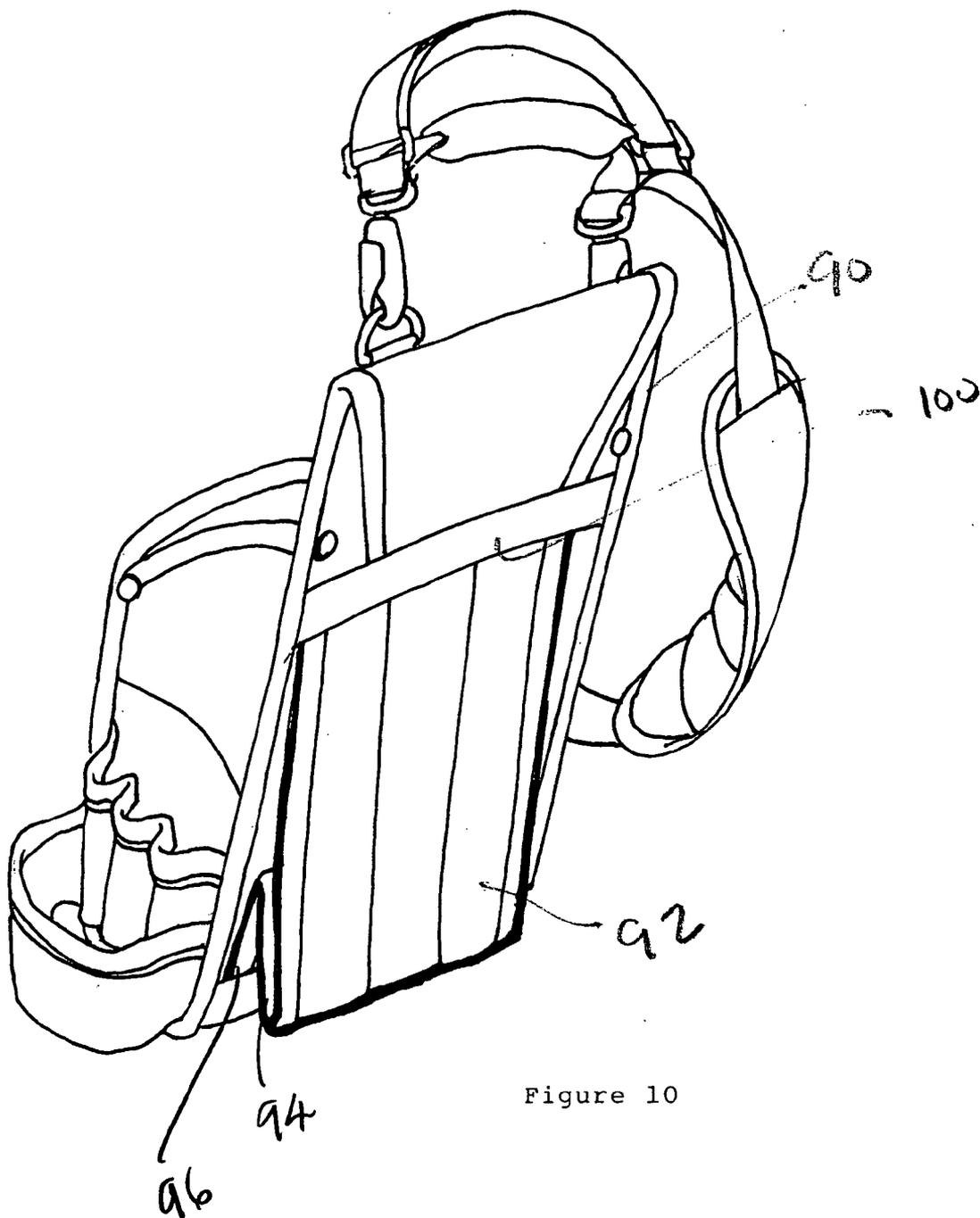


Figure 10

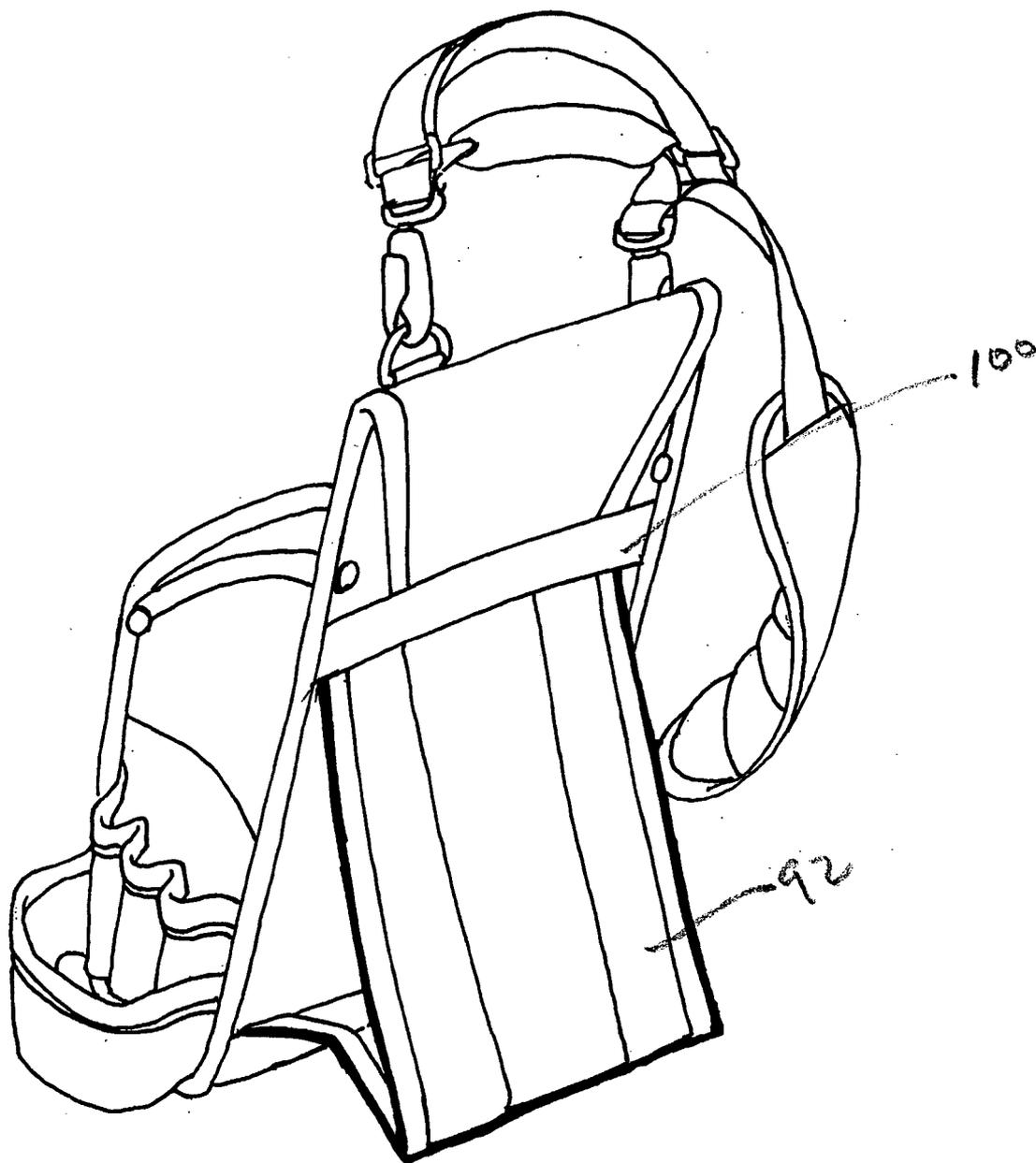


Figure 11

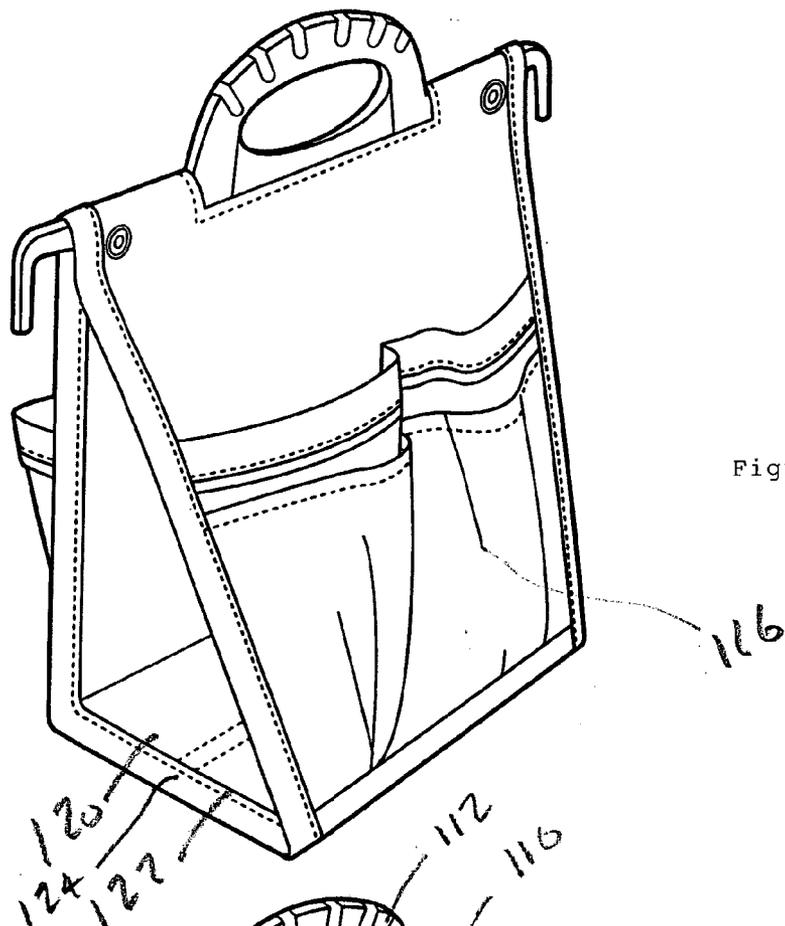


Figure 13

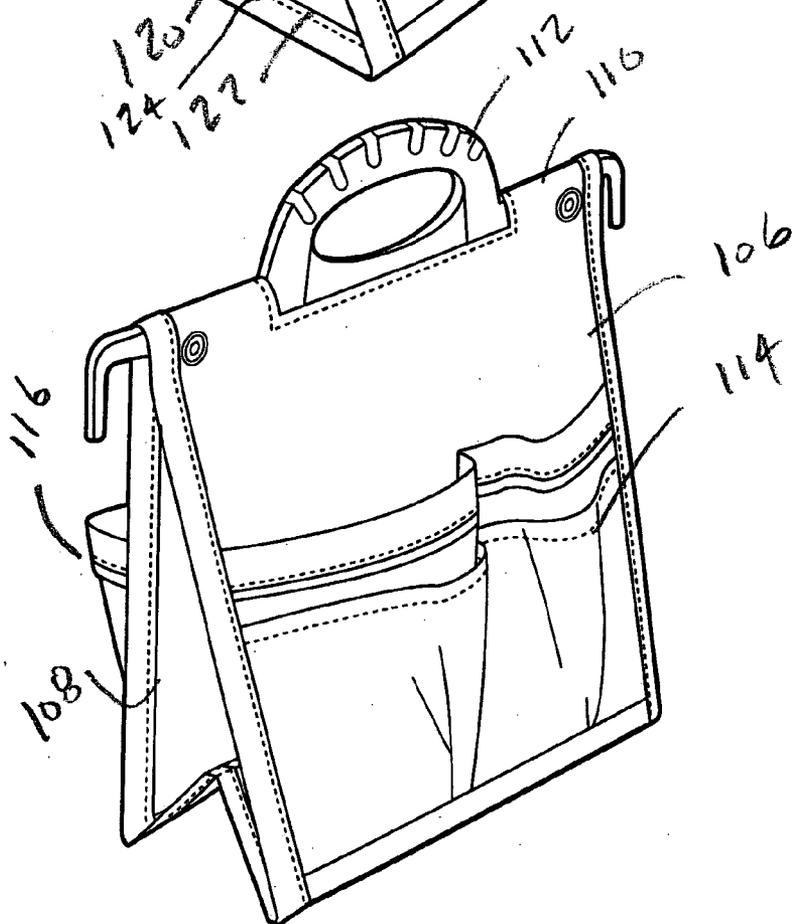


Figure 12

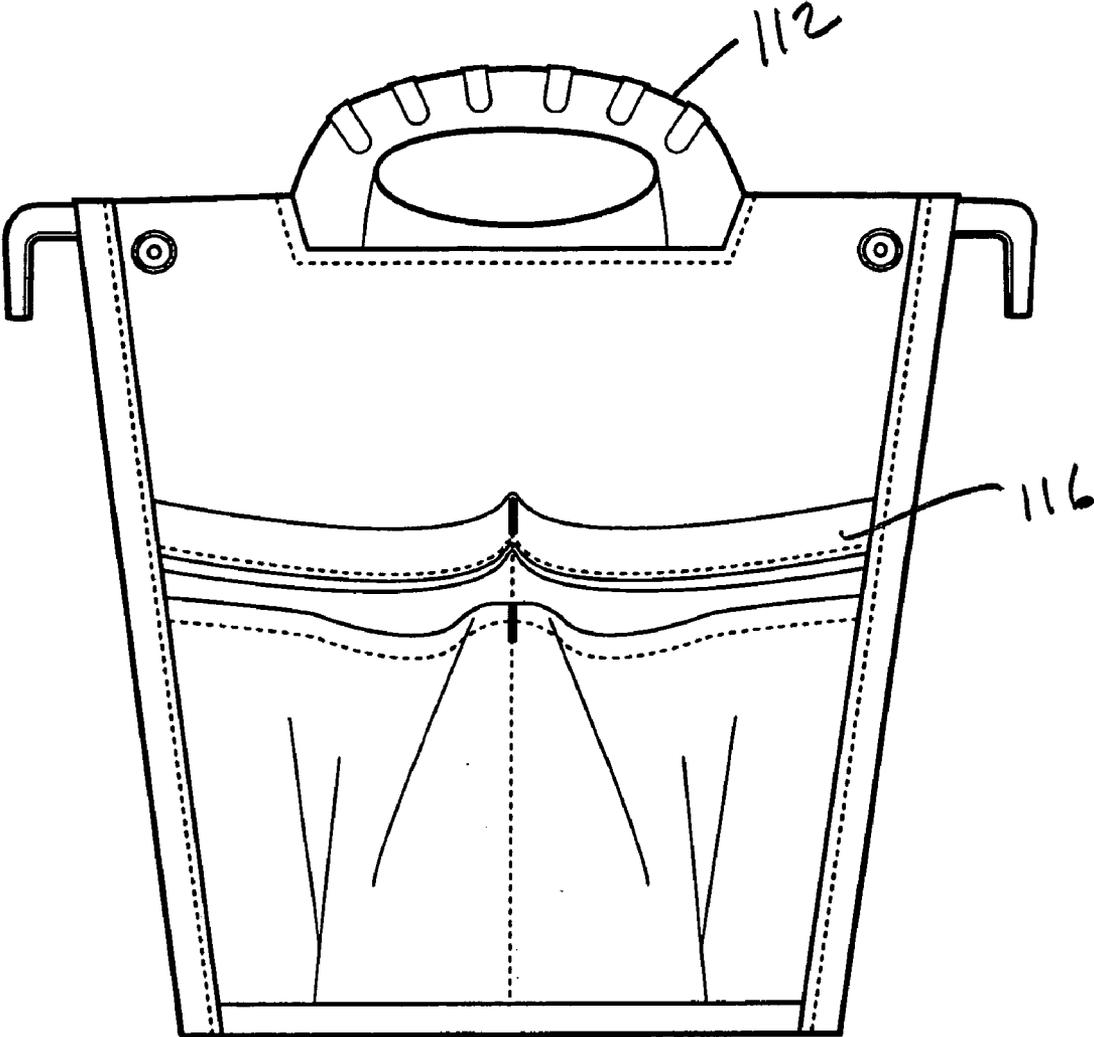


Figure 14

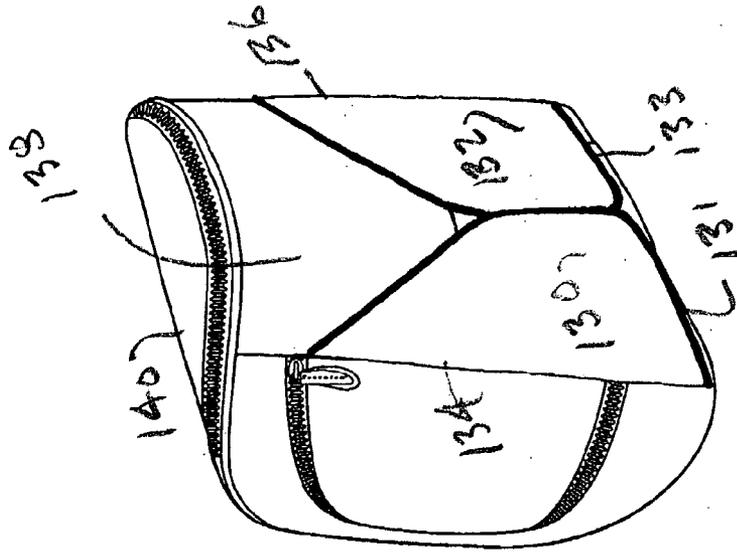


Figure 15

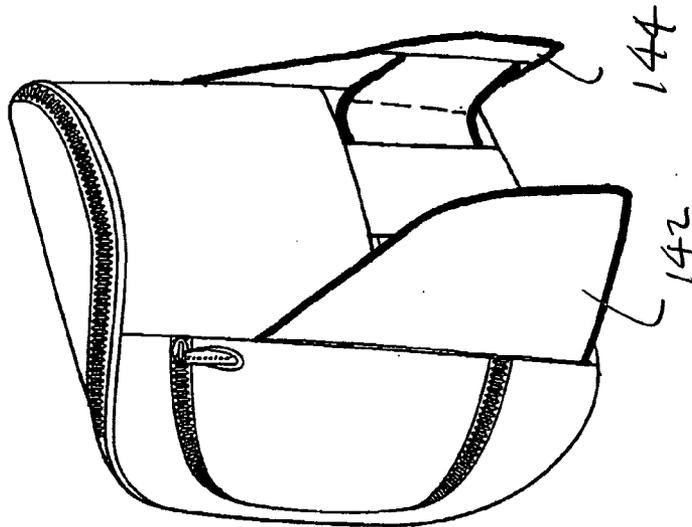


Figure 16

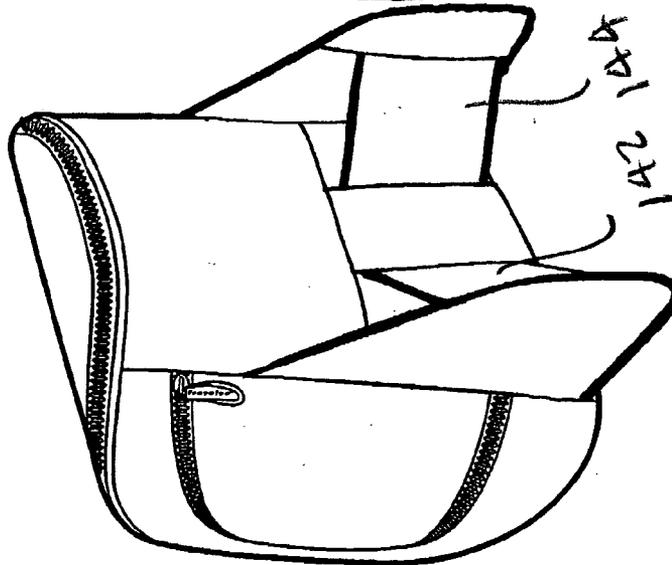


Figure 17

EASEL BACK STORAGE AND CARRYING CASE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] In a principal aspect the present invention relates to a luggage item such as a toiletry kit, a cosmetic kit, a tool storage bag, a tool carrying bag, a computer case, and other types of luggage items wherein the item incorporates a feature for maintaining the item in a standing position for access to the contents of the item.

[0002] There are many types of luggage items which workers, travelers and the like find useful in the conduct of their work and leisure activities. Often it is desirable to position these items on a surface, such as a desk, wardrobe, workbench or floor in an upright manner to facilitate ease of access to the contents of the item. However, many soft-sided items are difficult to maintain in such an orientation and thus their utility is diminished to some extent. It is with this background that the current invention was conceived.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Briefly, the present invention relates to a self-standing bag or luggage item construction wherein one of the panels forming the bag, and more particularly a backing panel, is generally rigid or semi-rigid. Affixed to this rigid or semi-rigid panel is a supporting leg which is hinged to the backing panel and is also attached thereto by a gusset or connecting leg which limits the angle that can be formed between the support leg and the backing panel. The gusset or connecting leg is typically foldable and a retention mechanism or device is utilized to maintain the support leg in a folded condition, flat against the backing panel. Various types of retention mechanisms such as magnets, hook and loop fasteners, buckles, zippers and the like may be utilized. In one embodiment the support leg folds outwardly from a generally transverse seam extending generally horizontally on the backing panel. In another embodiment the support leg folds inwardly and outwardly along a generally vertical seam or hinge connection from or adjacent the lateral side of the backing panel and in this embodiment, two support legs are preferred.

[0004] Thus, it is an object of the invention to provide a self-standing bag construction.

[0005] It is a further object of the invention to provide a self-standing bag construction wherein a support leg is hinged to the back side of a generally rigid backing panel for the bag and wherein the hinge construction and support leg enable positioning of the support leg in a folded condition flush with the backing panel and an unfolded condition projecting outwardly from the backing panel as a support.

[0006] Yet another object of the invention is to provide a support leg for a self-standing bag construction which includes various means or mechanisms for maintaining the support leg in a flush condition tightly against the backing panel when not being utilized as a support.

[0007] Another object of the invention is to provide a support leg for a bag construction which enables the bag to be self-standing and wherein the support leg that provides the self-standing feature is rugged and easy to use.

[0008] These and other objects, advantages and features of the invention will be set forth in the detailed description which follows.

[0009] In the detailed description which follows, reference will be made to the drawing comprised of the following figures:

[0010] **FIG. 1** is an isometric view illustrating a toiletry kit which incorporates the self-standing feature of the invention wherein the toiletry kit is depicted having the support leg in its operative position for supporting the kit;

[0011] **FIG. 2** is an isometric view of the kit of **FIG. 1** wherein the support leg is in an intermediate position of extension relative to a backing panel;

[0012] **FIG. 3** is an isometric view of the kit of **FIG. 1** with the support leg in its inwardly folded condition or position;

[0013] **FIG. 4** is a side view of a computer case incorporating a support leg positioned in the support position;

[0014] **FIG. 5** is a back side view of the case of **FIG. 4** wherein the support leg is in the folded or flush condition;

[0015] **FIG. 6** is a front side view of the case of **FIG. 4**;

[0016] **FIG. 7** is an isometric view of the case of **FIG. 4** wherein the front panel of the case has been opened and the case is supported by the support leg and thus maintained in the supported configuration of **FIG. 4**;

[0017] **FIG. 7A** is an isometric view of a case which employs a zipper to maintain the support leg folded against the back side panel of a case;

[0018] **FIG. 7B** is an isometric cut away view of the embodiment of **FIG. 7A**;

[0019] **FIG. 7C** is a further embodiment wherein hook and loop fasteners are depicted in an isometric view for use to maintain a support panel on a backing panel;

[0020] **FIG. 7D** is a bottom plan view of the embodiment of **FIG. 7C**;

[0021] **FIG. 8** is an isometric view of another embodiment of the invention wherein a support leg is incorporated in a tool carrying case in the extended or support position;

[0022] **FIG. 9** is the tool bag of **FIG. 8** wherein the support leg is partially folded to its flush position;

[0023] **FIG. 10** is an isometric back side view of the tool carrying case of **FIG. 8** with the support leg in the folded position;

[0024] **FIG. 11** is an isometric back side view of the tool bag of **FIG. 8** in a back side view illustrating the support leg in its support position;

[0025] **FIG. 12** is an isometric view of a bag comprised of first and second planar members supported by a handle wherein each of the planar members includes ancillary pockets on the outside face thereof and one of the planar members comprises a support leg;

[0026] **FIG. 13** is an isometric view of the bag of **FIG. 12** wherein the planar members are in the support position;

[0027] **FIG. 14** is a front plan view of the bag of **FIG. 12**;

[0028] **FIG. 15** is an isometric view of a toiletry kit utilizing support legs attached to a back side panel thereof in an alternative arrangement and in the folded or flush condition;

[0029] **FIG. 16** is the kit of **FIG. 15** in an isometric view wherein the support legs are in a partially folded condition; and

[0030] **FIG. 17** is the kit of **FIG. 16** an isometric view wherein the support legs are in the fully outwardly folded condition for support of the kit on a table or planar surface.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0031] Referring to the embodiment of **FIGS. 1-3**, there is depicted a toiletry kit comprised of a generally rigid or semi-rigid backing panel **30** which has generally flat planar configuration, but may have an arcuate configuration in an upper section **32**. Thus, a lower section **34** is a generally flat planar shape, but may be slightly arcuate. The lower section **34** of the backing panel **30** is a generally rigid panel member. It may comprise a polyethylene board encapsulated or sewn to or into fabric material, for example. Numerous types of constructions may be utilized to form the backing panel **30**. The backing panel **30** includes a front side upon which a storage container, and in this embodiment a toiletry kit **36**, is affixed or incorporated. The backing panel **30** includes a back side **38** and further includes a generally transverse seam or horizontal line **40**, a lower edge **42**, a first lateral side **44** and a second lateral side **46**. A support leg **48** is hinged to the backing panel **30** along the margin or seam **40** and is attached thereto by a connecting leg **50** which is comprised of a first section or linking member **52** and a second section or linking member **54**. Leg **48** may be positioned to form an acute angle with backing panel **30** to support the panel **30** and kit **36** upright on a table, etc. The linking members **52** and **54** define a gusset or connector which is foldable about a center hinge seam **56** and edges **42** and **51**. The sections or parts **52** and **54** are generally of equal size and configuration so that they may be folded as depicted in **FIG. 2** to the condition ultimately depicted in **FIG. 3** wherein the support leg **48** is flush with the backing panel **30**.

[0032] To maintain the support leg **48** in its flush condition, various types of fasteners may be used. For example, a strap having hook and loop elements; namely, a strap **60** with velcro fasteners may be utilized. Alternatively, snaps, buckles and the like may be utilized. Another embodiment comprises placement of magnetic material such as a magnetic pad **62** for cooperation with a metal plate **63** in the backing panel or member **30** or vice versa to retain the support leg **48** in its flush or flat folded condition.

[0033] The toiletry kit **36** includes a zipper opening **64** for access to the interior contents of the kit. Typically, the zipper opening **64** is adjacent top edge or top side of the backing panel **30**. Other flaps and openings may also be provided.

[0034] **FIGS. 4-7** illustrate a second embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, a computer case **70** includes a backing panel **72**. A support leg **74** with connecting gusset sections **76** and **78** is provided on the back side of the backing panel **72**. The computer case **70** includes a front cover **80** which may be attached by a zipper **82** as a fastener

and may be opened to the position shown in **FIG. 7** as the support leg **74** is maintained as depicted, for example, in **FIG. 4**. Again, a magnet **84** may be provided to interact with a metal plate, for example, a plate **86** to maintain the support leg **74** in the closed or flush position. Hook and loop fasteners may be substituted for the magnetic material **84** and plate **86** by way of example. Other fastener mechanisms may also be utilized. Typically, the backing panel **72** may include a handle **88** attached at its upper end for carrying of the case.

[0035] Referring to **FIGS. 7A and 7B** there is depicted a bag **200** including a back side panel **202** with a transverse or horizontal hinge **204** for attachment of a pivoting support leg **206**. The support leg **206** is connected to the back panel **202** by a leg **208** which may be a flexible fabric material or may be a connecting leg of the type depicted for previously described embodiments. Leg **208** in the embodiment of **FIG. 7B** is comprised of a first section **210** and a second section **212** which are each flexible or alternatively reinforced so that they may pivot about hinge seems **214**, **216** and **218**. The support leg **206** may thus be moved to the position illustrated in **FIG. 7A** where it provides support for the bag **200**. Alternatively, leg **206** may be folded flush or flat against the back panel **202** and retained thereon by a zipper **220** which extends are the periphery of the support leg panel **206**. In the embodiment of **FIGS. 7A and 7B**, the back side panel **206** extends transversely across the entire back side panel **202**. This enhances the ability of the support leg **206** to support the bag **200**. The zipper **220** extends around the entire periphery of the support leg **206**. Alternatively, multiple zippers may extend only partially about the periphery of the support leg **206**.

[0036] **FIGS. 7C and 7D** illustrate another alternative arrangement of a support leg. In **FIGS. 7C and 7D** a support leg **225** is attached to a back side panel **227** along a hinge connection **229**. The back side panel **227** forms a part of the bag **231**. The support leg **225** is also connected to the back side panel **227** by connecting leg segments **237** and **239** which are hinged together and which connect respectively to the back side panel **227** and the support leg **225**. Hook and loop fastener sections **233** and **235** are provided respectively on the back side panel **227** and the connecting leg sector **237** so that when the support leg **225** is folded against the back side panel **227**, the hook and loop fastener sections **233** and **235** will cooperate to maintain the folded support leg **225** in position on the back side panel **227**. To further facilitate the maintenance of the support leg **225** in a position flat against the back side panel **227** reference is directed to **FIG. 7D** wherein the connecting leg sections **237** and **239** include additional sectors of hook and loop fasteners. For example, sectors **241** on connecting leg section **237** and sectors **243** on connecting leg section **239**. Thus, when the sectors **237** and **239** are folded about hinge connection **245**, the hook and loop fastener elements or sectors **241** and **243** will be connected and facilitate retention of the support leg **225** in a folded condition. In this manner, the support leg **225** will be maintained flat against the backing panel or back panel **227**, but may be easily pivoted outwardly therefrom by disengagement of the hook and loop fasteners. The support leg **225** may extend to the bottom of the back side panel **227** or may extend beyond the bottom edge of the back side panel. However, in a preferred embodiment leg **225** is maintained within the profile of the back side panel **227**. This will result in the tilting of the bag at an angle relative

to vertical when the bag is supported by the support leg 225. Thus, if the container or bag is on a flat surface, it will be tilted slightly away from the user thereby facilitating access to the contents of the container or bag when opened.

[0037] FIGS. 8-11 illustrate another embodiment of the invention. Here a backing panel 90 cooperates with a support leg 92 which folds against the back side of the backing panel 90 and which is attached to the back panel 90 by means of a gusset construction comprised of a first section 94 and a second section 96 which are of equal width to the support leg 92. In this embodiment, it is to be noted that the support leg 92 extends substantially across the entire width of the backing panel 90. The width of the support leg may be varied depending upon the item which defines the container or storage container involved in the bag construction. The storage container 98 in the embodiment of FIGS. 8-11 comprises a tool case which includes side pockets and the like wherein tools may be stored. Thus, in order to improve the balance of the bag construction of FIGS. 8-11, the support leg 92 extends across substantially the entire width of the backing panel 90. Variations in width may be utilized to accommodate the particular bag construction involved. The support leg 92 may be folded against the back side of the backing 90 about the connection seam or junction 100 as depicted in FIG. 10. In the preferred embodiments, the backing panel 90 is a generally rigid or semi-rigid item, again, as described with respect to the previous embodiments, to thereby provide a means for support of the bag construction upon a generally planar surface.

[0038] FIGS. 12-14 illustrate another embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, a first generally rectangular panel 106 is hinged to a second generally rectangular panel 108 about a hinge connection 110. A handle 112 is provided and pockets, such as pockets 114 and 116, are provided on opposite sides of the panels. The panels 106 and 108 are connected by a two-part gusset 120 and 122 which folds about a seam or hinge connection 124 as depicted in FIG. 12 so that the bag construction may be easily transported by means of a handle 112. Again, one of the panels 106 and/or 108 serves as a support leg and in this embodiment, each of the panels 106 and 108 are utilized to include storage pockets 114 and 116 on the outside surfaces thereof.

[0039] FIGS. 15-17 disclose an alternative embodiment as incorporated with a toiletry kit or cosmetic kit. Referring to these figures, a first flap or support leg 130 and a second flap or support leg 132 are connected by a flexible hinge respectively to a first lateral side 134 and a second lateral side 136 of back panel 138. The support legs 130 and 132 each include a bottom edge 131 and 133, respectively, which serve to support the kit 140. Thus, the support legs 130 and 132 are preferably rigid or semi-rigid and the lower edges or sides 131 and 133 are shaped so that the kit 140 will be adequately supported. Flexible gussets 142 and 144 connect respectively the support legs 130 and 132 to the backing panel 138 as depicted in FIG. 17. Again, various types of fasteners may be utilized to maintain the support legs 130 and 132 in the flush condition of FIG. 15. For example, hook and loop fasteners, magnetic fasteners, buckles and the like may be utilized.

[0040] The concepts represented by the various embodiments may be incorporated with bag constructions of multiple types. The types of bag constructions thus described are

merely exemplary and are not considered a limiting feature of the invention. The size, shape and arrangement of the support leg and the connecting gusset from the leg are also exemplary. Most of the support legs are attached at their lower ends to the lower edge or lower side of the backing panel. However, the support legs may be attached at an intermediate section to the backing panel. Gussets may be formed from flexible or rigid materials. The means for maintaining the support legs attached to their backing panel may be varied as discussed herein above. Thus, while there has been set forth a preferred embodiment of the invention, it is to be understood that the invention is limited only by the following claims and equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A self-standing bag construction comprising, in combination:

a generally flat planar, generally rigid backing panel having a front side and a back side, a bottom edge and a transverse seam generally parallel to the bottom edge;

a storage container attached to the front side;

a generally rigid support leg having an upper end and a lower end, said leg upper end hinged to the backing panel seam;

a connecting leg between the backing panel and the support leg to limit pivotal movement of the support leg about the seam between a first position generally flush with the backing panel and a second position forming an acute angle with the backing panel to support the backing panel in an upright position resting on the bottom edge thereof; and

a latching mechanism incorporated in the support leg and backing panel for retaining the support leg in the first position flush with the backing panel.

2. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the connecting leg is comprised of first and second generally rigid bridging elements hinged together to form a linkage between the backing panel and support leg, said first and second bridging elements each having a dimension which enables folding of the bridging elements over one another in layers generally flush with the backing panel in the first position.

3. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the bridging elements have generally equal width dimensions.

4. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the bridging elements extend between the backing panel bottom edge and the support leg lower end.

5. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the latching mechanism comprises at least one magnetic material selected from the group consisting of magnetic elements positioned in the backing panel, the support leg and the connecting leg.

6. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the latching mechanism comprises at least one magnetic material element positioned in the backing panel and the support leg on the connecting leg.

7. The bag construction of claim 1 further including an auxiliary fastening mechanism for holding the support leg in the first position.

8. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the latching mechanism comprises a fastener selected from the group consisting of hook and loop fasteners, snap fasteners, buckle fasteners, magnetic fasteners and combinations thereof.

9. The bag construction of claim 1 further including at least one cover flap attached to the backing panel and foldable over the support leg and backing panel in the first position.

10. The bag construction of claim 1 wherein the storage container comprises an assembly selected from the group consisting of a duffle bag, a clothing bag, a tool bag, a toiletry kit, and a computer case, each of said assemblies having an access opening generally adjacent the upper end of the backing panel.

11. A self-standing bag construction comprising, in combination:

a generally rigid backing panel having a front side, a back side, a bottom edge, and first and second spaced lateral side edges;

a storage container attached to the front side;

a first generally rigid flap member with a hinged connection to the first lateral side edge of the backing panel and foldable between a first position flush with the backing panel and a second position forming an angle with the backing panel, said flap member having a lower edge for upright support of the backing member when the flap member is in the second position, and a

gusset linking the backing member and flap member to limit folding movement of the flap member about the hinged connection.

12. The bag construction of claim 11 including a second rigid flap member attached to the second lateral side edge by a second hinged connection and foldable between a position flush with the backing panel and a second position forming an angle therewith.

13. The bag construction of claim 12 wherein the first and second flap members are generally symmetrical about a center line axis of the backing member.

14. The bag construction of claim 12 including a gusset linking the second flap member and backing member.

15. The bag construction of claim 11 including a flap retention device for retaining the flap in the first position selected from the group consisting of a hook and top loop, a buckle, a magnetic material, a snap fastener and combinations thereof.

16. The bag construction of claim 13 including fastener retention devices for retaining the flaps in the first position flush with the backing panel.

* * * * *