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3,290,108

CONFERENCE-DESK WITH CONCEALED STORAGE

Filed Nov. 27, 1964

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

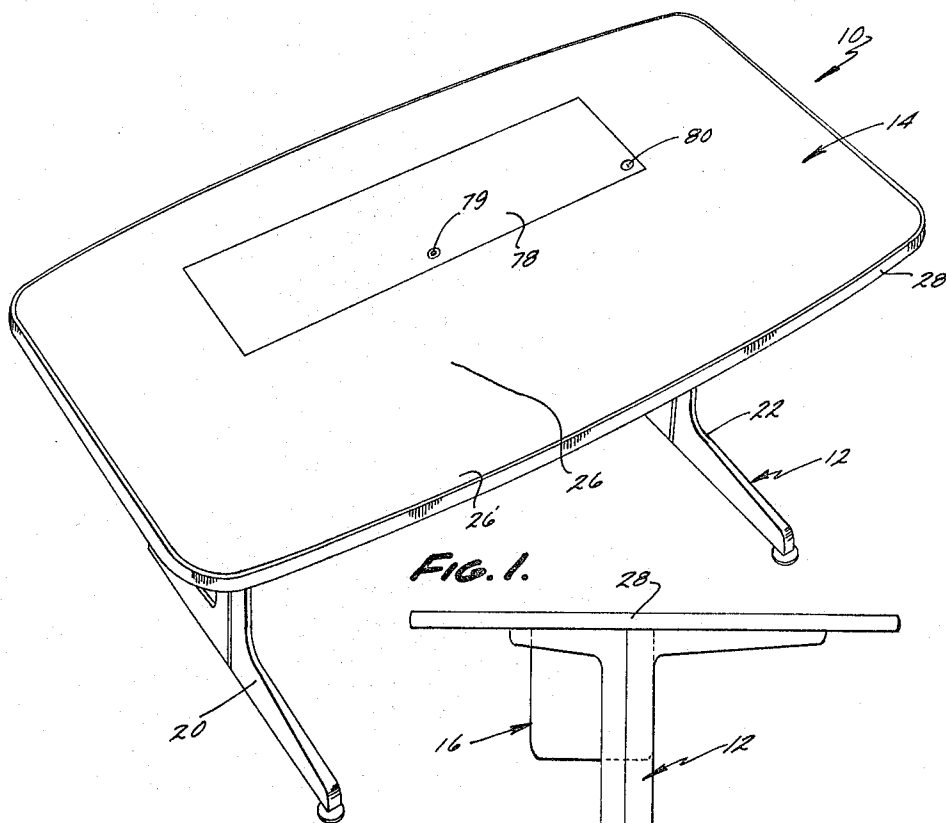


FIG. 1.

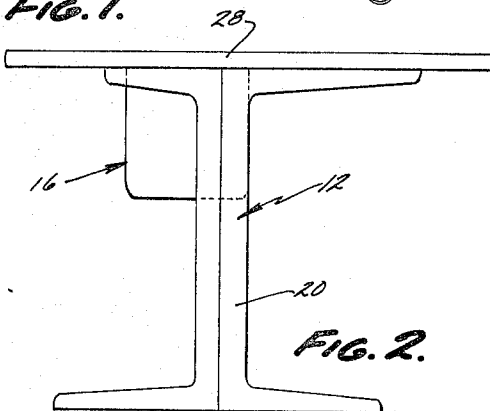


FIG. 2.

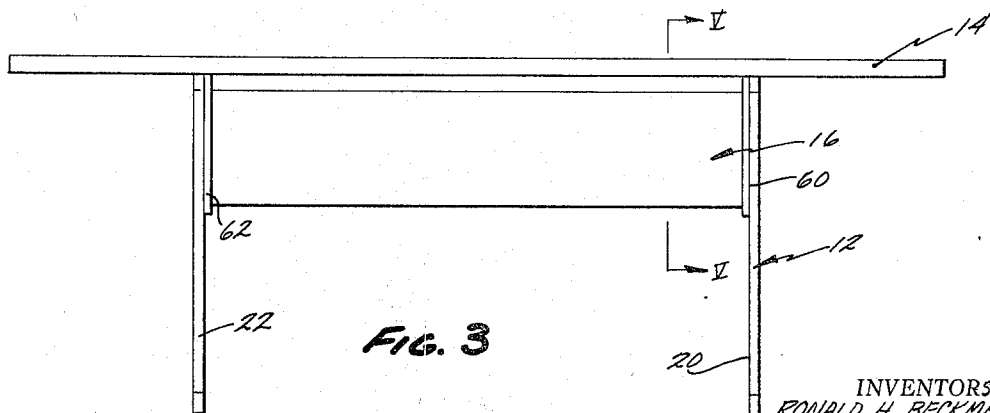


FIG. 3

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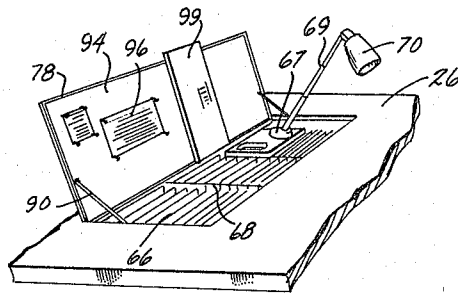


FIG. 4.

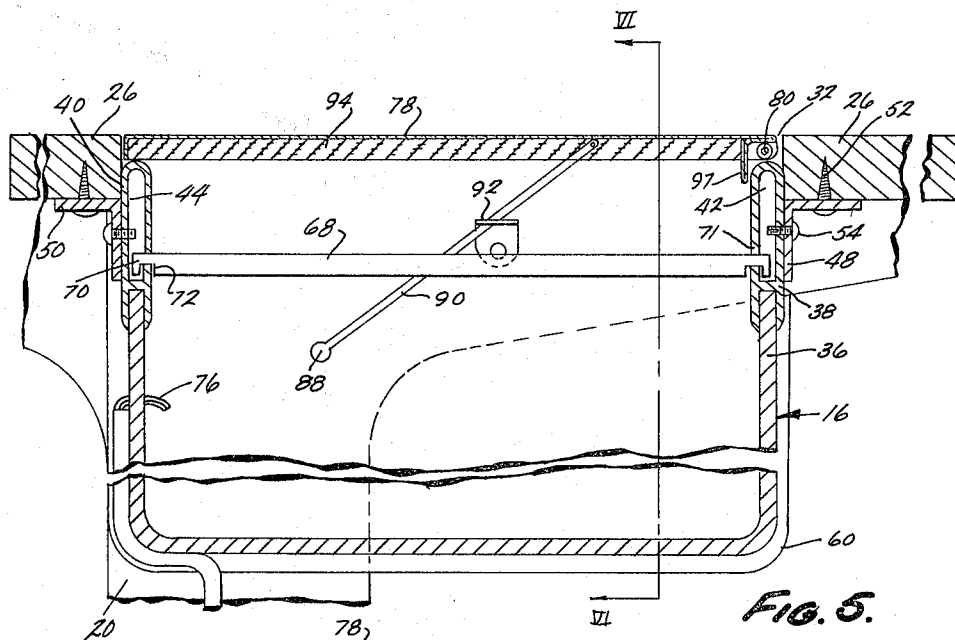


FIG. 5.

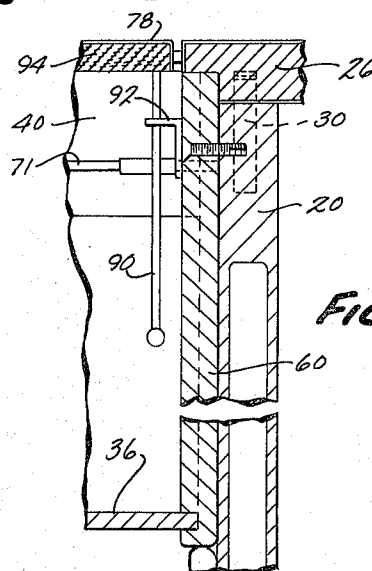


FIG. 6.

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3,290,108 CONFERENCE-DESK WITH CONCEALED STORAGE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 312—281)

This invention relates to office furniture, and more particularly to an office table with unique storage facilities for files or other articles.

A complete office includes a work table having a substantially large working surface. Papers or other items to be used in normal work on an office table are usually kept in a conventional file cabinet, retrieved when needed, and subsequently replaced. Alternatively, some desk-type tables have drawers to receive a few files needing frequent attention. The use of the conventional file cabinet system involves inconvenience and time loss. Drawer files in the table or desk are very limited in volume, are often difficult to use due to their arrangement with respect to the seated table user, cause considerable weight on the drawer, and normally must be kept closed for safety purposes. In fact, neither type of drawer, i.e., in a file cabinet or desk, can safely be left open for continued use.

Some desks have elevated backs for storage, or alternatively have shelves mounted thereon to receive files or other articles, depending upon the use of the desk. Such devices are frequently bothersome. They prevent prints or other large articles to be neatly spread on the desk or table. They also constitute obstructions preventing the desk being used as a conference desk.

In fact, conventional desks are not suitable as a conference desk or table because no feet or leg room is provided. Only the main desk user therefore can be comfortable, and in good working relation to the desk. Yet if they are modified to provide leg room therearound, the storage space in the form of drawers or top mounted facilities must be removed. The result is the typical conference table.

The conference table presents a flat clean surface upon which to spread papers and the like and around which persons can readily gather, but presents no storage capacity for items to be used during a conference. Someone must dash back and forth to other files such as a conventional filing cabinet to retrieve and replace needed articles.

It is an object of this invention to provide a dual purpose office table that will serve effectively as a work table, and will also serve effectively as a conference table. Moreover, the novel table has substantial storage facilities whether used as a work or conference table, but these do not interfere from either use, but rather add to the convenience of both.

Another object of this invention is to provide a novel conference table that has substantial storage space that does not project above the flat conference surface, and also has leg room and foot room around its entire periphery for access to the table top from any location. Further, the storage space is also conveniently accessible from the entire periphery of the table, causing its conference use to be extremely convenient. No obstructions prevent it.

Another object of this invention is to provide a work table having facilities to prop articles such as books, photos, drawings etc. at a convenient angle to the work surface for cooperative use of both, and yet having a completely flat surface, when desired, to allow display of large drawings or the like.

Another object of this invention is to provide a novel

office table having uniquely located storage facilities allowing quick, convenient access from the top of the desk to a relatively large number of active files, or other articles, yet without the need of any drawers or any protruding top-mounted facilities. The novel storage facility provides constant, convenient access to files from the normal sitting position at the table or any other position, and within optimum viewing relation to the user. It allows the files or books or catalogs, or whatever is stored therein, to be continuously exposed and handy to see and use when working at the table. The table is completely stable, even though the storage chamber has capacity for substantial weight and volume. The files can also be covered and secured when the table is not being used. The assembly is aesthetically appealing when either in use or not in use, with files exposed or concealed.

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 storage table;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the table;

FIG. 3 is a rear elevational view of the table;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary perspective view of the top of the table showing the file open, as during normal usage;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged, fragmentary, sectional, elevational view of the assembly taken on plane V—V of FIG. 3; and

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary enlarged sectional view of the assembly taken on plane VI—VI of FIG. 5.

Since the novel article of furniture more nearly simulates a table than any other unit of furniture, it will largely be designated as an office work "table" in this specification. It will be realized upon studying this disclosure, that the unit could readily be used as a "desk" or a conference table, so that these are intended to be encompassed within the terminology.

Referring now specifically to the drawings, the novel assembly 10 includes a base subassembly 12, and a top subassembly 14 incorporating a storage subassembly 16.

Base subassembly 12 includes pedestal means having a pair of spaced end pedestals 20 and 22. Each pedestal has a horizontally extending front to rear foot portion, an upwardly extending center support column, and a horizontally extending support beam on the top of the column. Each pedestal portion basically has a general shape or configuration of an H lying on its side. The pedestals may be formed of several different materials, but are preferably die cast metal components.

Mounted on the upper support beams of these pedestals is top subassembly 14. The top subassembly includes a flat rigid panel 26 forming an upper unobstructed work surface of considerable area, preferably encompassed by a strip 28 around the periphery. The top panel may be any of several known materials such as solid wood, pressed wood, plastic, etc. It is mounted to the pedestal as by pins 30 (FIG. 6) anchored in both elements. Strip 28 is a bumper strip.

In the desk top panel 26 is provided an elongated, generally rectangularly shaped, cut out or opening 32 (FIG. 5). It is remote from all edge portions of the table. In the preferred form of the table shown, it is spaced further from the front working edge 26' of the table than the rear edge, to leave a normal work area between it and the front edge of the table. The opening is within arm reach of the front edge.

Suspended beneath this entire opening is the storage subassembly 16. It includes an elongated pod 36, as of wood, generally U-shaped in cross sectional configuration, and forming a storage bin. The elongated upper edges of the pod are mounted in elongated, extruded metal

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strips or ribs 38 and 40. These strips have hollow upper portions forming elongated cavities 42 and 44, and have slotted lower portions to receive the upper edges of the U-shaped pod. Strips 38 and 40 are attached by screws 54 to parallel right angle mounts 48 and 50, which are in turn mounted by screws 52 to the underside of desk top 26 on the front and back edges of the opening. The pod is thus partially suspended from the table or desk top. The ends of the pod are also supported in a pair of vertical end panels 60 and 62 secured to the inside faces of the pedestals. The U-shaped ends of the pod are recessed into correspondingly shaped slots in the end panels, as shown in FIG. 6. This bin acts as a primary sway-brace for the entire unit.

The storage bin or pod is normally utilized as file storage space for conventional files 66 (FIG. 4) by the use of a plurality of spaced file hanger supports 68. Each support is of elongated rigid construction, having a pair of downwardly depending end tabs 70 adjacent cut out notches 72. These fit across the pod into slots 71 formed in ribs 38 and 40, and extending from the inside face thereof into cavities 42 and 44. These supports are spaced at file length intervals so that conventional files of various different sizes can be suspended therebetween, employing the upper support edges as bearing surfaces.

The articles most frequently to be contained in the storage pod are files containing paper items. However, other articles can also be readily stored therein. If the table is employed as a conference table, the items to be used in the conference can be placed in order in the space and kept covered until the appropriate moment. If the table is used by an engineer, catalogs, prints and models can be retained in it. If used as a receptionist desk, address records, record books, and telephone items will be stored in it. The uses of the table include many more too numerous to mention.

A closing flipped cover 78 is mounted over the pod on pivotal mounting means 80 (FIG. 5) at the rear of the cut out opening in the desk. This cover 78 may be moved from a closed position flush with the desk top, (FIG. 5) to an open position (FIG. 4) by using a finger pull 79. A suitable locking means 89 may be supplied to assure safe storage. The angle of the opened cover is obtuse with respect to the front of the desk. The opening action is limited and is determined by abutment of the enlarged ends 88 of rods 90 mounted on one end to the cover, with fixed stops 92 attached to the pod side wall. The rods extend through the stops.

The bottomside of cover 78 includes a layer 94 of puncturable material such as cork. Items 96 may be tacked to it for most convenient viewing. It also has a retention ledge 97 formed into the underside of the cover adjacent the hinge, and generally normal to the cover to be at an acute angle to the desk work surface when the cover is opened. The cover serves a multiple purpose function since, when opened it is a display surface and prop support. That is articles 99 (FIG. 4) such as books, photographs, charts etc. may be rested on ledge 97 to be within optimum viewing and working relation to the work surface, and the storage files for the desk user. By using the work surface and these support features together, maximum usage of the unit as a work table is achieved. When the cover is closed, it maintains the files clean and secure from tampering. Further, its back surface then comprises a flat upper support surface for articles such as large drawings. It does not constitute an obstruction. This also facilitates optimum conference relationships across the table.

In fact, during a conference, items can be periodically removed from the storage bin or pod by lifting the cover, then used in conference while the cover is down and the surface flat.

Conference use is convenient, whether the conferees are stand or sitting, since there is ample foot or leg receiving area all around the table perimeter. The

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underside of the table is open all around, with only the small columns extending into the knee area. By extension of the table top well out over the pedestals, even these do not present any problem. Further, the storage pod is not an obstacle above or below the desk, while yet being extremely conveniently located.

With use of the table, convenient access is had to the storage space from the working position at the table, and even from all sides of the table. The storage bin, being suspended from the table top and remote from the edges thereof, is relatively large in volume, to accommodate pre-selected files positioned transverse to its elongated dimension lengthwise of the desk. Yet, the assembly presents excellent stability for these files.

Frequently, concentrated light is needed on a desk surface from a closely positioned light. A normal desk light is either mounted to or rests on the desk top, if supported by the desk. This presents a real obstacle interfering with many uses of the desk, particularly, conference usage, spreading drawings, etc. The novel conference desk is capable of supplying the lighting requirements without causing a constant obstacle due to the unique arrangement in FIG. 4. That is, a lamp 70 with a telescopic boom 69 is supported on a mount 67 inside the storage pod. It is supplied with power through electrical leads 76 extending up along one pedestal and into the pod. Thus, by opening the cover and extending the light boom, it is conveniently usable. Alternatively, it is depressed back into the pod and covered when the table top is to be flat and without obstacles.

The particular shape of the table top can be varied to suit room decor, conference capacity, and usage intended. The shape shown is illustrative.

Further, the size can be varied as needed. Large conferences may require a larger storage pod and cover. In fact, several such pods and covers could be incorporated into one table if necessary, to provide necessary concealed storage space.

Since it is conceivable that certain other details of structure may be changed in the apparatus taught, within the concept presented herein, this 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 conference table with concealed and conveniently accessible storage comprising: pedestal means including spaced pedestals having upper support beams, support columns to said beams, and floor contacting feet at the base of said columns; a table top mounted to and extending out beyond said pedestals, providing open space beneath said top around the perimeter of said table top, allowing perimetral access to said table top by conferees; an elongated opening in said top, between said pedestals, spaced from the edge portions of said table top within arm's length reach thereof; a storage pod suspended beneath said top and specifically beneath said opening, away from said edge portions to present no obstacle to conferees around said table; and cover means over said opening shiftable from a closed protective position with its upper surface flush with said table top, and an open position allowing access to said storage pod from perimetral edge portions of said table.

2. The conference table in claim 1 including said cover being hinged to said top along its rear edge to open away from said front edge; support means between said cover means and said top allowing and limiting opening of said cover means to an obtuse angle to said working surface, and retaining said cover means at said angle until manually closed; and a tack-receiving mounting surface on the bottom side of said cover means to be visible to a user of said table when said cover means is open.

3. The conference table in claim 1 including a pair of end panels mounted beneath said top to the inside

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of said pedestals; and said storage pod suspended between said end panels, beneath said opening and cover means to provide a file storage bin within convenient access to said front edge.

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