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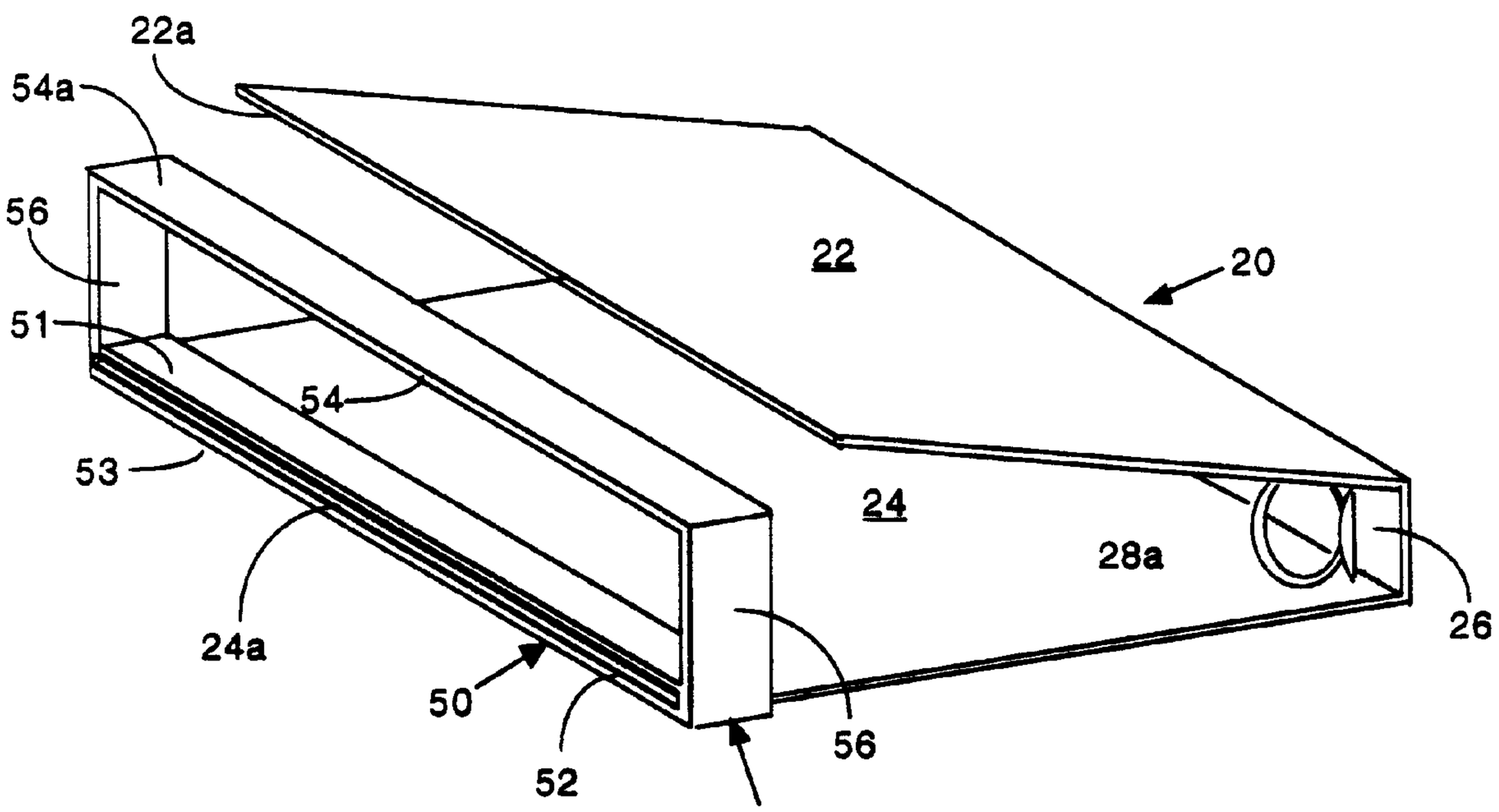
(54) Title: DEVICE FOR SUPPORTING A BINDER COVER



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A device for supporting a binder cover has a securing member and a parallel supporting member spaced from the securing member. The securing member is attached to one cover of the binder and the supporting member supports the other cover of the binder to prevent the binder from closing.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A device for supporting a binder cover has a securing member and a parallel supporting member spaced from the securing member. The securing member is attached to one cover of the binder and the supporting member supports the other cover of the binder to prevent the binder from closing.

DEVICE FOR SUPPORTING A BINDER COVER

FIELD OF INVENTION

This invention relates to loose leaf binders. In particular, this invention relates to a device which supports a binder cover to prevent the binder from closing completely.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Binders, folders and the like are used to organize and store loose leaf paper, photographs, advertising, technical sheets, and many other types of documents and materials in page form. A typical binder has a front cover and a rear cover hinged to a spine. In a ring binder, such as the popular three-ringed binder, a binding mechanism is attached to the interior surface of the spine providing closable rings to which three-holed loose leaf paper and other documents and materials may be attached.

Binders of this type are designed to hold materials to a certain thickness, and the width of the spine is dimensioned according to the capacity of the binder. As such, unless filled to capacity the binder has an inherent wedge-shape which makes the stacking, storage and filing of binders difficult. The wedge-shape creates a slope which causes stacked binders to slide over one another and renders a stack of binders unstable.

The wedge-shape of an empty or partially filled binder can be eliminated by spacing the binder covers apart so that the binder covers are supported in parallel, which facilitates stacking, storage and filing of binders.

Prior art devices used to prevent binders from closing completely present several problems. Lack of support along the length of the free-end of each binder

cover renders the cover susceptible to deformation caused by non-uniform flexing forces, for example if binders are not stacked in perfect alignment. Some prior art devices interfere with normal use of the binder, and must be removed or detached in order to access the contents of the binder. Many prior art devices are permanently attached to the binder covers and cannot be made to be removable, for example when a binder is filled to capacity so that the contents of the binder support the covers in parallel.

It would accordingly be advantageous to provide a device for supporting a binder cover which supports the binder covers along the length of their free-ends, to resist flexing forces. It would further be advantageous to provide a device which does not have to be removed or repositioned to access the binder's contents, and which may be easily removable if desired for reuse on another binder.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a device for supporting a binder cover which maintains the binder covers in a parallel orientation to facilitate stacking, storing and filing of binders. The device comprises a securing member attached to one binder cover and a parallel supporting member spaced therefrom for supporting the other binder cover.

In the preferred embodiment the securing member and supporting member provide support along substantially the entire free end of each binder cover, to resist deformation due to forces applied to the binder cover. The device can be positioned along the free ends of the binder covers so as not to interfere with normal use of the binder, and may be constructed so as to be easily removable so that it can be reused on other binders.

The present invention thus provides a device for supporting a cover of a binder, comprising a securing member for attachment to a first cover of the binder, and a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced from the securing member in substantially parallel relation, wherein the supporting member supports a

second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

The present invention further provides a binder having a front cover and a back cover attached to a spine, and a device for supporting a cover of the binder, the device comprising a securing member for attachment to a first cover of the binder, and a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced from the securing member in substantially parallel relation, wherein the supporting member supports a second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

The present invention further provides, In combination, a binder having a first cover and a second cover attached to a spine, and a device for supporting a cover of the binder, the device comprising a securing member for attachment to the first cover of the binder, and a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced from the securing member in substantially parallel relation, wherein the supporting member supports the second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention the supporting member extends substantially along a free end of the second cover.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In drawings which illustrate by way of example only a preferred embodiment of the invention,

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a binder using a device of the invention,

Figure 2 is an elevation of the binder of Figure 1,

Figure 3 is a front elevation of a preferred embodiment of the device of the invention, and

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view of the device of Figure 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The invention may be applied to binders, folders, portfolios and the like. The invention will be described in relation to a binder as one illustrative application, but is not intended to be limited in this regard.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate by way of example a conventional ring binder 20 having a front cover 22 and a rear cover 24 hinged to a spine 26. Affixed to the interior surface of the spine 26 is a three-ringed binding mechanism 28 which provides broken rings 28a that can be selectively opened and closed to store three-holed loose leaf paper 10 and other materials in page form. The capacity of the binder 20 is dictated by the width of the spine 26, which determines the maximum diameter of the rings 28a.

The device 30 of the invention comprises a securing member 50 comprising an elongated frame having spaced apart inner and outer elements 51, 53 affixed to one another at their ends and defining an opening 52 for insertion of the free end 22a or 24a of the binder cover 22 or 24, respectively. Preferably the thickness of the opening 52 approximates the thickness of the binder cover 22 or 24, so that the securing member 50 snugly engages the binder cover 22 or 24 to resist dislodgement when in use.

The length of the opening 52 must be at least equal to the length of the free ends 22a, 24a of the binder covers 22, 24, however the length of the securing member 50 is preferably only slightly greater than the length of the binder covers 22, 24, so as not to interfere with stacking, storage or filing of the binder 20. The securing member

50 may be attached to either the front cover 22 or the rear cover 24, and is attached along the free end 22a or 24a (ie. the end opposite to the spine 26). Figure 1 illustrates the device 30 attached to the rear cover 24 of the binder 20.

The device 30 of the invention is operable from either side, so that a left-handed person wishing to write in the binder 20 would affix the device 30 to the rear cover 24, as in Figure 2. Thus, when the binder 20 is opened the device 30 is positioned along the right and does not interfere with the positioning of the left forearm across the page when the user is writing in the binder 20. A right-handed person would attach the device 30 to front cover 22 (or turn the binder 20 over so that the back cover 24 becomes the front cover), so that the device 30 is attached to the left hand side of the open binder 20 and does not interfere with the positioning of the right forearm across the page for writing purposes. Thus, the device 30 may remain attached to the binder 20 and causes no inconvenience for someone wishing to write in the binder 20. The device therefore need not be removed to use the binder, either for reading or writing purposes.

As best seen in Figures 1 and 3, the device 30 also comprises a supporting member 54 which is spaced from and generally parallel to the securing member 50. In the preferred embodiment the length of the supporting member 54 is approximately equal to the length of the binder cover 22 or 24, and thus supports the binder cover 22 or 24 along substantially its entire length. The securing member 50 and supporting member 54 are fixed in spaced relation by at least one spacer 56, preferably a plurality of spacers 56, having a length selected according to the size of the binder 20.

In the preferred embodiment the spacers 56 are of equal length and maintain the supporting face 54a of the supporting member 54 spaced from the opening 52 by a distance approximating the width of the spine 26, to maintain the binder covers 22, 24 in a generally parallel relation. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 3, the securing member 50 and supporting member 54 are connected at both ends, by spacers 56 attached to or formed integrally with the securing member 50 and the supporting member 54, which provides the advantage that the spacers 56 can also serve to affix the inner and outer elements 51, 53 of the securing member 50. Additional spacers 56 may be added as desired between the securing member 50 and

the supporting member 54, as may be suitable for the intended application and the thickness of the material used to make the device 30.

The device 30 may be injection molded, extruded or otherwise molded or formed integrally from plastic. The device 30 may alternatively be assembled from strips of sheet plastic, metal or any other suitable material. The outer element 53 of the securing member 50, which engages over the outer face of the cover 22 or 24, should be relatively thin (in the direction of the thickness of the binder 20) so as not to interfere with stacking or storage of the binder 20. The outer element 53 is easily visible on the closed binder, and the device 30 may be manufactured in different colours to facilitate organization and sorting of binders by, for example, like subject matter.

Although the drawings show the device 30 as embodied in sheet plastic, the actual construction of the device 30 could be of other materials such as sheet metal, wire framing, or any other material or combination of materials which provides the device 30 with a securing member 50, one or more spacers 56 and a supporting member 54 having sufficient strength to withstand the stresses to which the device 30 would be subject in, for example, a stack of binders 20. The securing member 50 may also be formed as part of the binder cover 22 or 24 itself and does not need to be removable from the binder 20, although removability may be advantageous and is also contemplated according to the present invention.

In the preferred embodiment illustrated in Figures 1 to 4 the width of the securing member 50 (ie. in the direction of the width of the covers 22, 24) is sufficient to resist torsional displacement or rocking of the device 30, which prevents the supporting member 54 from sliding outwardly from the free end 22a under the force of a stack of binders. This can be advantageous since the supporting member 54 does not positively engage the supported binder cover (ie. front cover 22 in the embodiment shown), but merely supports the inside face of the supported cover so that the cover can be opened with the device 30 in position.

At the same time, the width of the device 30 may be selected so as not to impinge into the region of the binder 20 occupied by the contents 10 of the binder 20,

so as to allow unimpeded access to the contents 10 during use of the binder 20. However, in the preferred embodiment the device is provided with one spacer 56 at each end of the device 30 so that the securing member 50, the spacers 56 and the supporting member 54 form an open rectangle; thus, should the contents 10 of the binder 20 be wide enough to require it, the binder contents 10 can slide into the rectangle so formed as the binder 20 is closing. Therefore, although it may in some cases be preferable to position the device 30 on a portion of the binder cover 22 or 24 beyond the area occupied by the binder contents 10, this is not necessary in the preferred embodiment as the binder contents 10 will occupy the rectangular opening defined within the device 30 if necessary.

In use, the device 30 is attached to a binder cover 22 or 24 by inserting the free end 22a or 24a. In the example shown the device 30 is attached to the free end 24a of the back cover 24, which is inserted into the opening 52 until the securing member 50 is snugly in position along the free end 24a with the supporting member 54 directed toward the front cover 22 so that the supporting surface 54a supports the free end 22a of the front cover 22 to maintain the covers 22, 24 in generally parallel relation, as shown in Figure 2. In this position the binder 20 can be readily stacked, stored or filed with other binders 20. Since the device is attached to only one binder cover 24, the other binder cover 22 remains free to be opened for normal use of the binder 20, and the binder 20 can thus be opened and its contents 10 can be accessed without removing the device 30.

To remove the device 30, for example when the binder 20 has been filled to capacity, the binder cover 24 is simply extracted from the opening 52 by the application of manual force, and the device 30 is then ready for reuse on another binder 20.

In embodiments in which the securing member 50 forms part of the binder cover 22 or 24 itself, for example where the securing member 50 is formed as a thickened plastic portion (not shown) along the free end 22a or 24a of the binder 20, the device 30 would not be removable but would still serve the of supporting the binder covers 22, 24 in substantially parallel relation. The device 30 may therefore be either fixed or removable, depending on the embodiment desired.

Preferred embodiments of the invention having been thus described by way of example, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that certain modifications and adaptations may be made without departing from the scope of the invention, as set out in the appended claims.

I CLAIM:

1. A device for supporting a cover of a binder, comprising
a securing member for attachment to a first cover of the binder, the securing member having a through opening for receiving a free end of the first cover, and
a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced form the securing member in substantially parallel relation,
wherein, the supporting member supports a second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

2. The device of claim 1 in which the supporting member extends substantially along a free end of the second cover.

3. The device of claim 1 in which the securing member is spaced from the supporting member by at least one spacer.

4. The device of claim 3 in which a plurality of spacers are affixed to or formed integrally with ends of the securing member and the supporting member.

5. The device of claim 1 in which the securing member is removably attached to the first binder cover.

6. The device of claim 1 in which the device is formed integrally from plastic.

7. A binder having a front cover and a back cover attached to a spine, and a device for supporting a cover of the binder, the device comprising
a securing member for attachment to a first cover of the binder, the securing member having a through opening for receiving a free end of the first cover, and
a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced form the

securing member in substantially parallel relation,
wherein, the supporting member supports a second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

8. The binder of claim 7 in which the supporting member extends substantially along a free end of the second cover.

9. The binder of claim 7 in which the securing member is spaced from the supporting member by at least one spacer.

10. The binder of claim 9 in which a plurality of spacers are affixed to or formed integrally with ends of the securing member and the supporting member.

11. The binder of claim 7 in which the securing member is removably attached to the first binder cover.

12. The binder of claim 7 in which the device is formed integrally from plastic.

13. In combination,
a binder having a first cover and a second cover attached to a spine, and a device for supporting a cover of the binder, the device comprising
a securing member for attachment to the first cover of the binder, the securing member having a through opening for receiving a free end of the first cover, and
a supporting member fixed to the securing member and spaced form the securing member in substantially parallel relation,
wherein, the supporting member supports the second cover of the binder spaced from the first cover but does not engage the second cover such that the second cover can be opened with the device in a supporting position.

14. The combination of claim 13 in which the supporting member extends substantially along a free end of the second cover.

15. The combination of claim 13 in which the securing member is spaced from the supporting member by at least one spacer.

16. The combination of claim 15 in which a plurality of spacers are affixed to or formed integrally with ends of the securing member and the supporting member.

17. The combination of claim 13 in which the securing member is removably attached to the first binder cover.

18. The combination of claim 13 in which the device is formed integrally from plastic.

19. The device of claim 1, 7 or 13, in which the through opening completely encircles the first cover when the securing member is attached to the first cover.

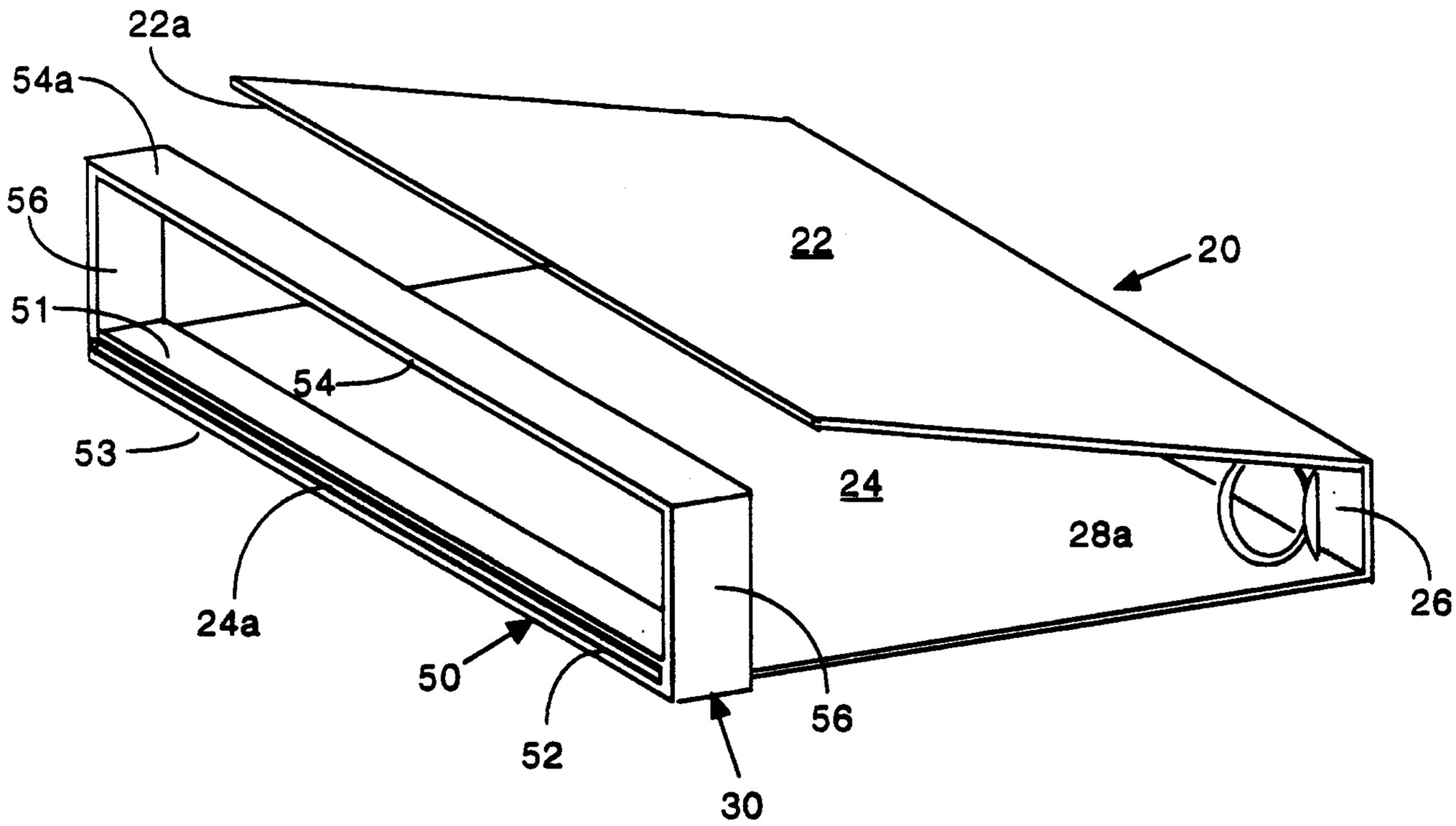

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Fig. 1

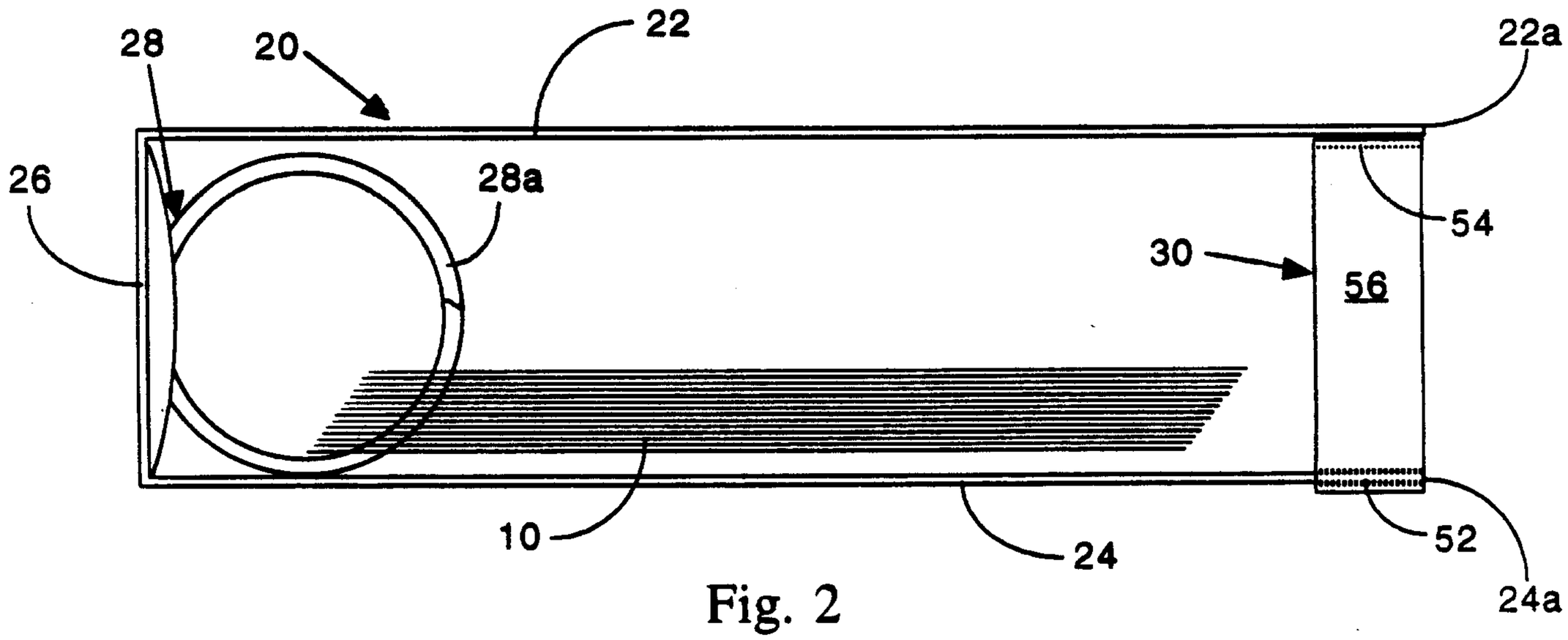
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Fig. 2

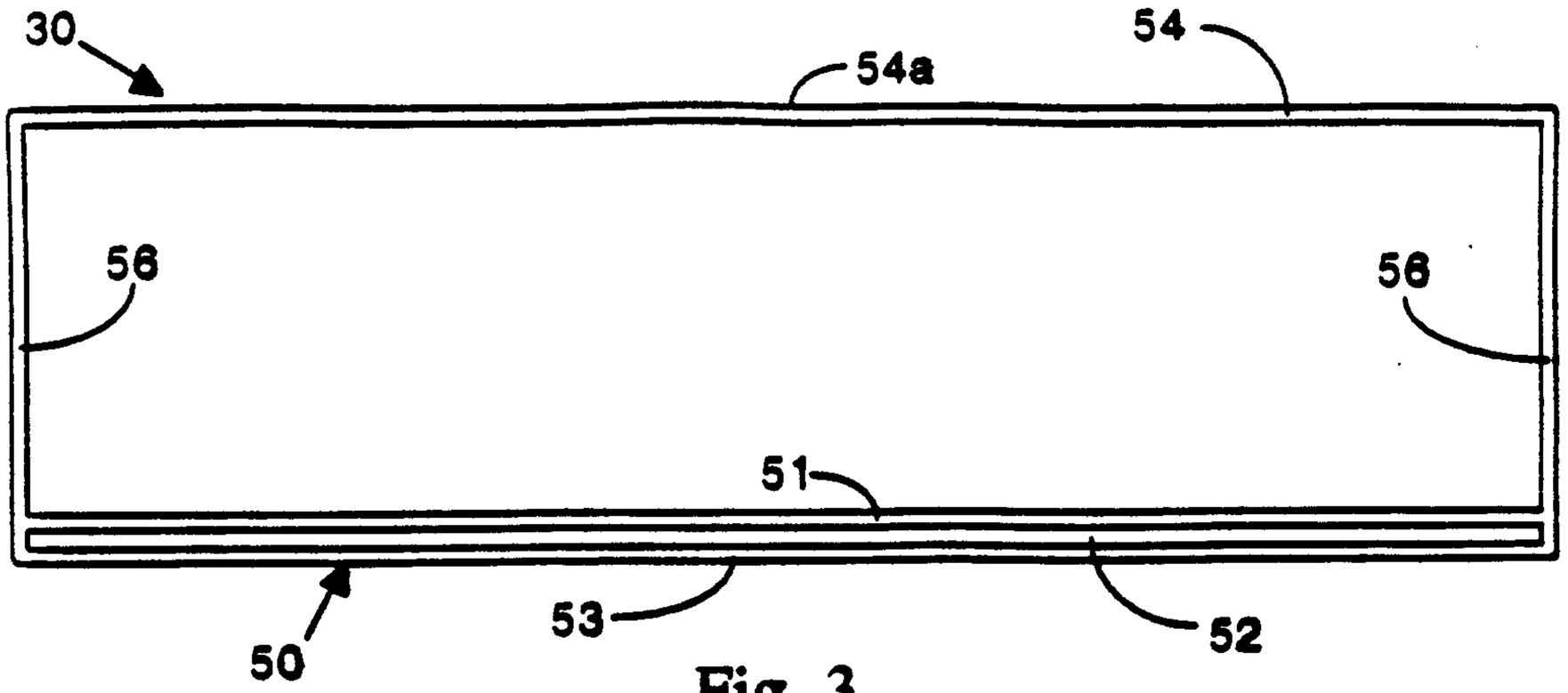


Fig. 3

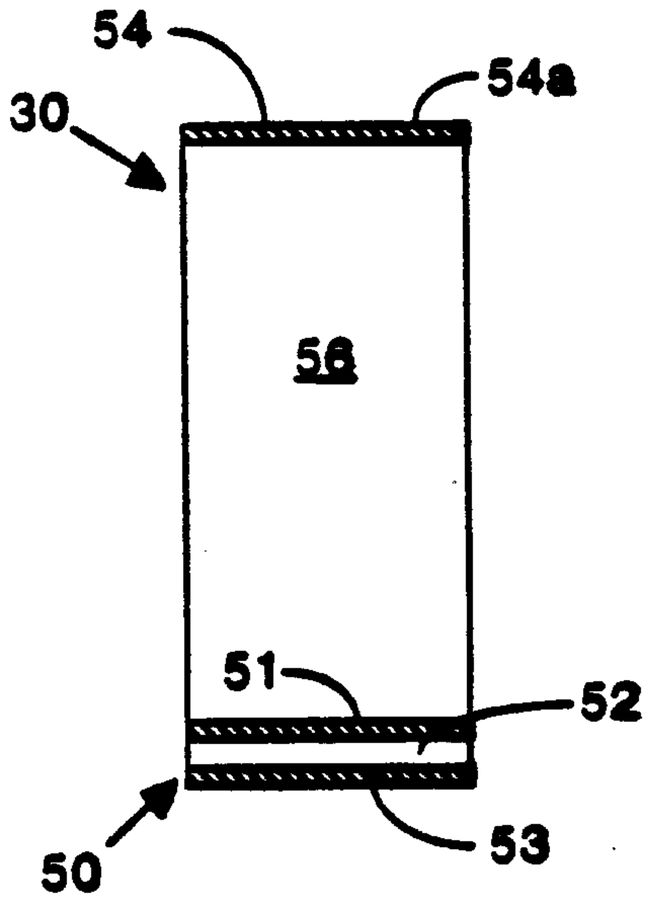
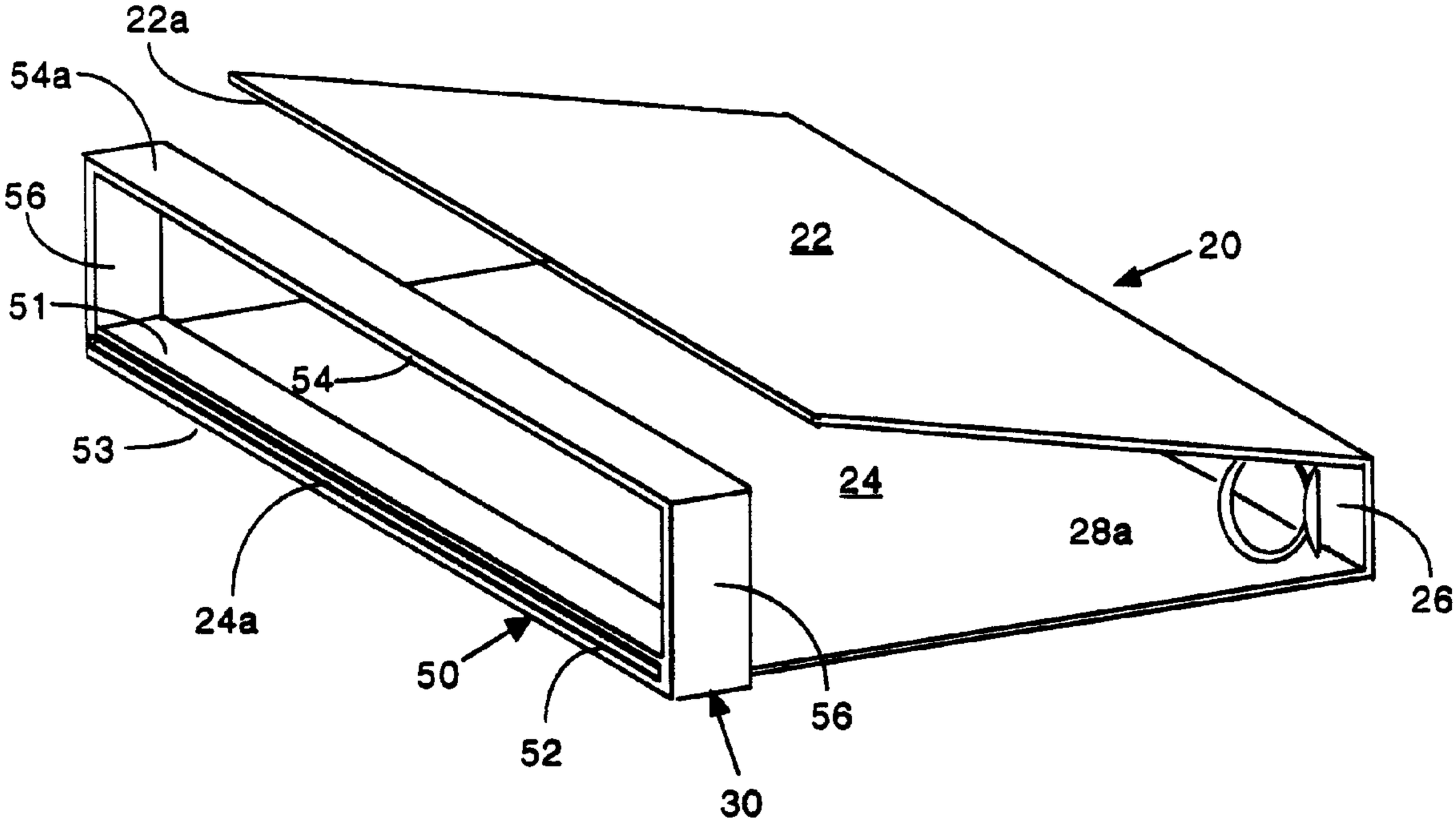


Fig. 4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