United States Patent

Parker et al.

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[54] TOOLBOX FOR PICKUP TRUCK

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[21] Appl. No.: **51,599**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** .....**220/31 R**, 206/16 R, 217/60 G, 220/35, 220/36, 220/55 W

[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**B65d 43/16**

[58] **Field of Search**.....220/36, 31 R, 31 S, 55 W, 32; 217/60 R, 60 G; 206/16 R, 16 E

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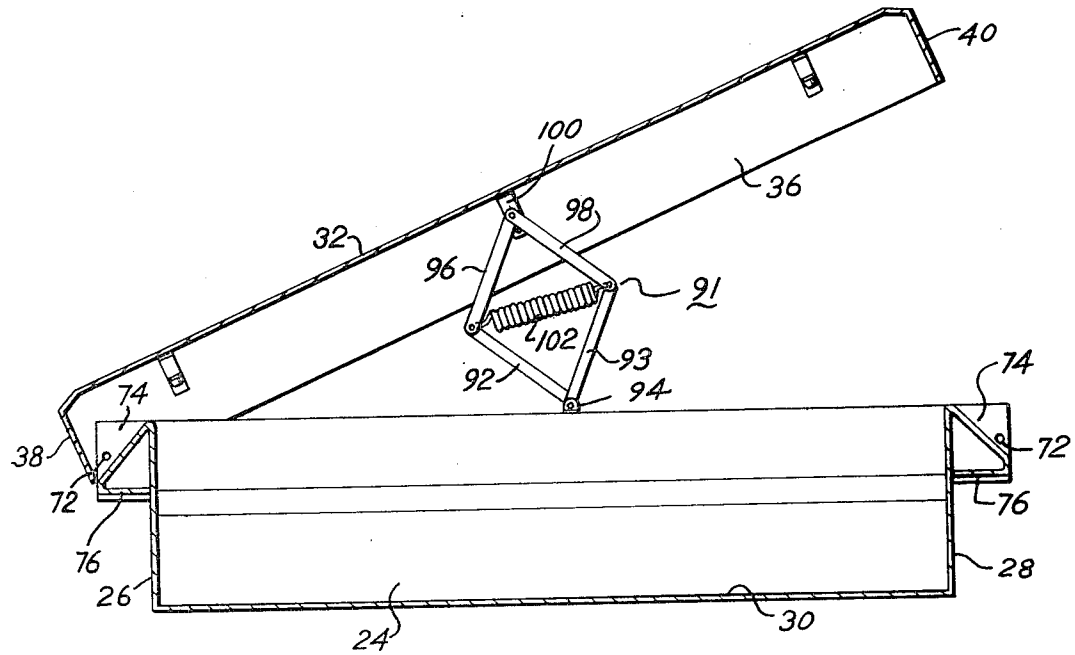
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A toolbox for mounting across the bed of a pickup truck, the box having an elongated rectangular body and a cover, and a latch means at each end of the cover for releasably securing the cover to the body. Either of the two latch means can be released, thereby permitting the respective end to be raised while the other latch means functions as a pivot for the cover. A yieldable support is included near the longitudinal center of the body, to support the cover in an elevated position when the box is open. A single operating means is included at each end of the cover for operating the latch means which automatically locks when the end of the cover is lowered to closed position.

8 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures



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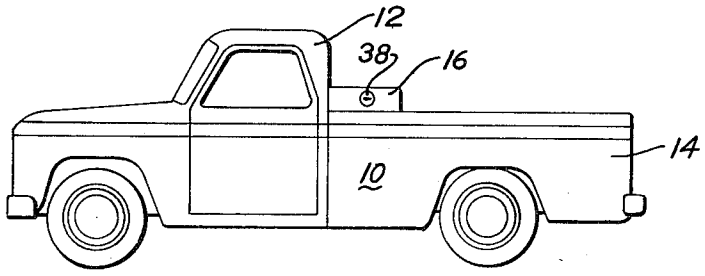
SHEET 1 OF 3

Fig. 1



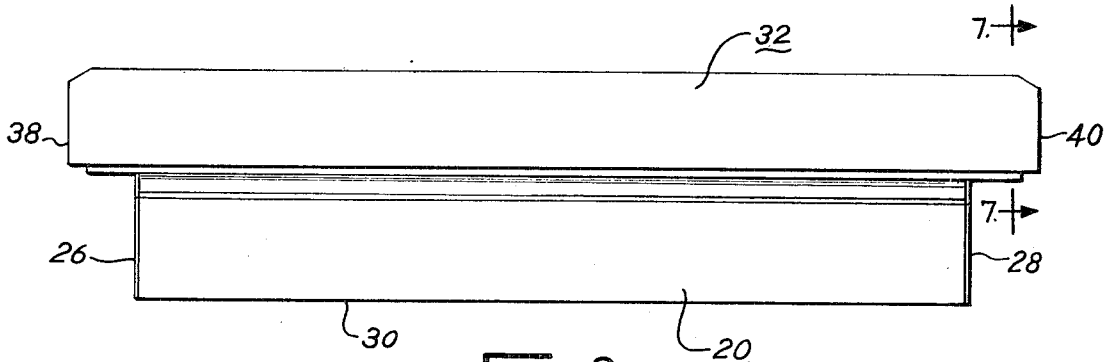


Fig. 2

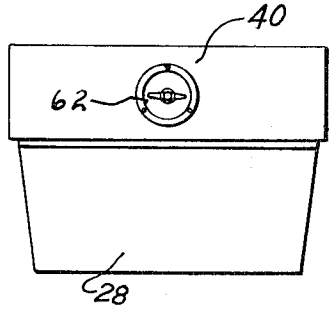


Fig. 3

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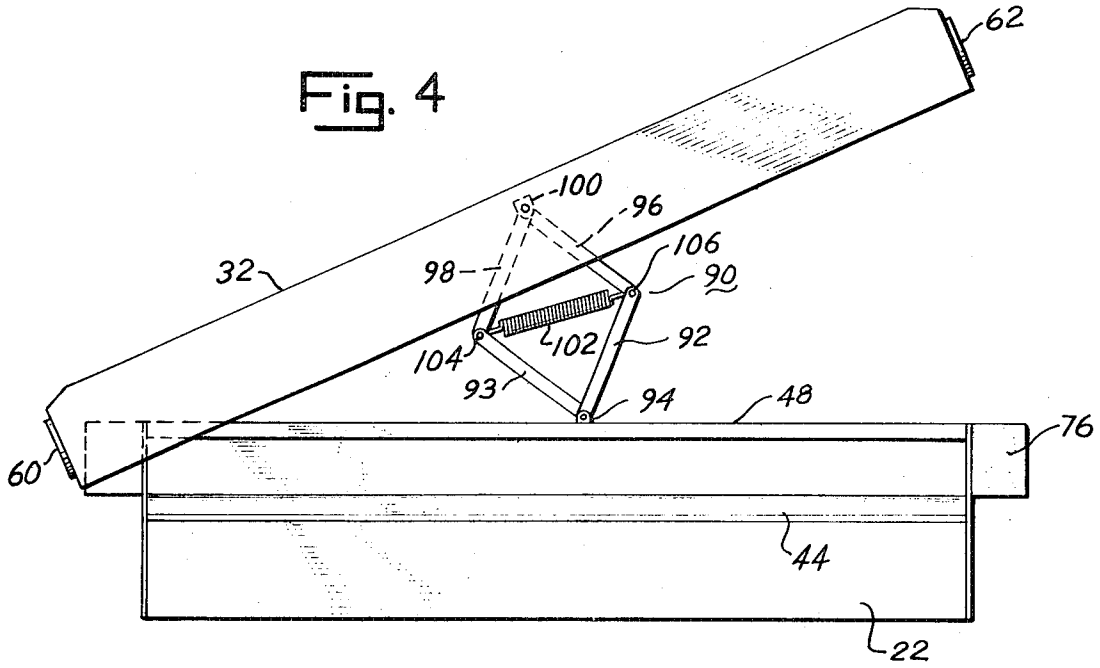
Fig. 4



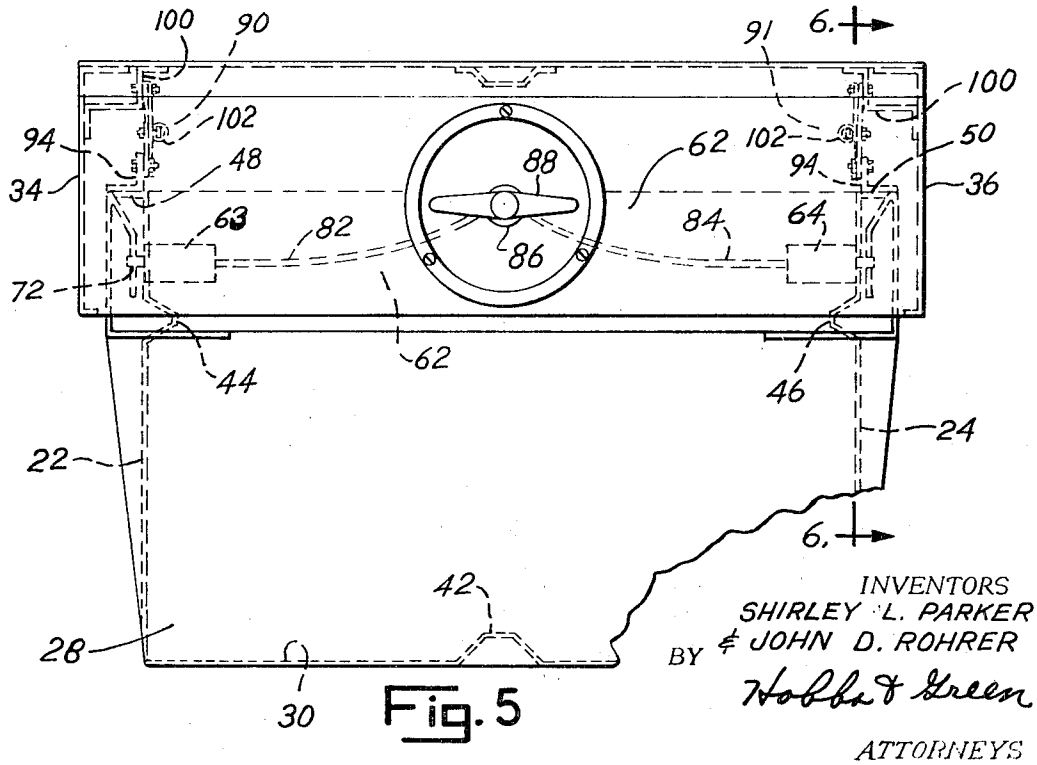


Fig. 5

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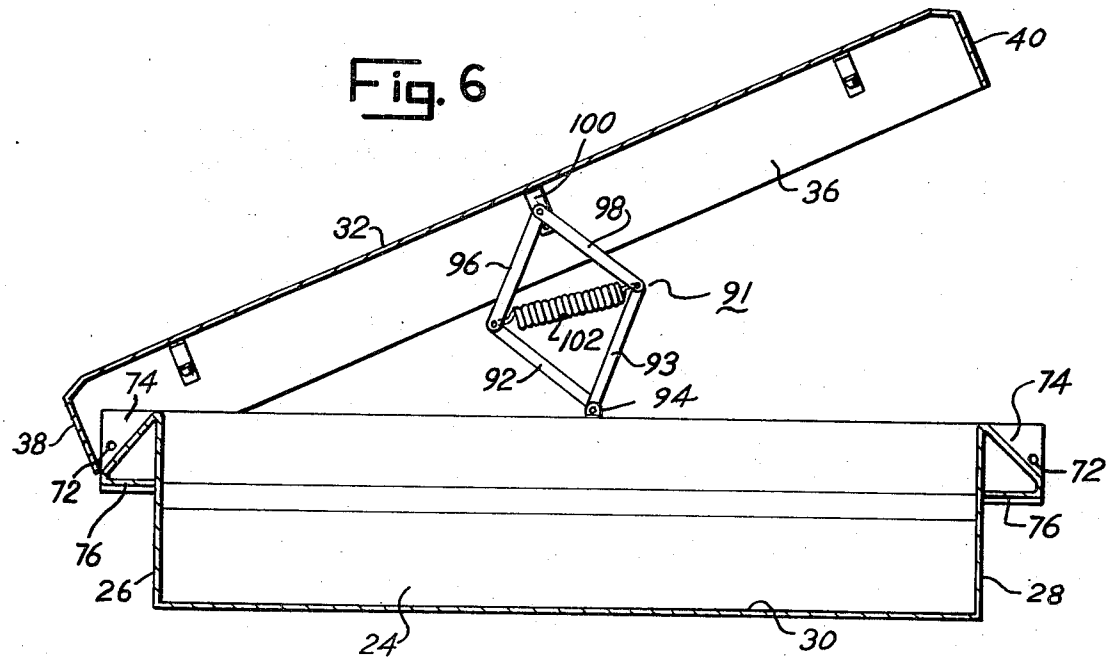
Fig. 6



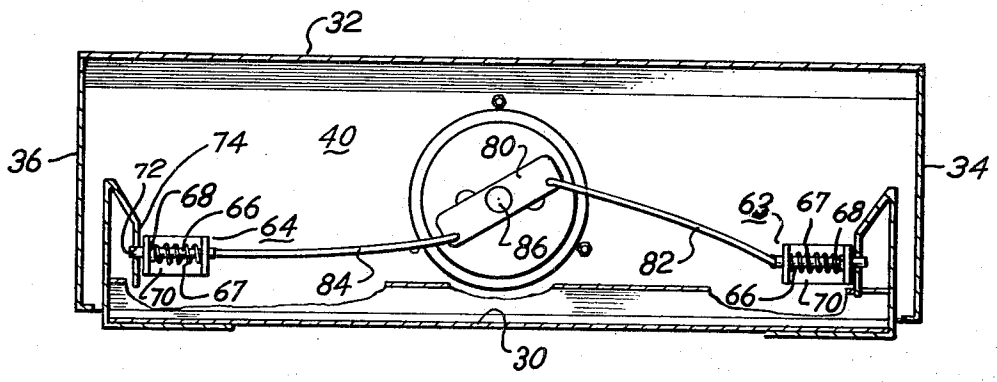


Fig. 7

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TOOLBOX FOR PICKUP TRUCK

Pickup trucks often have a toolbox mounted on the truck bed immediately behind the cab for carrying a variety of different types of tools and equipment, which are frequently removed and returned by the user while standing along one side or the other of the truck. The conventional toolbox has a lid either hinged along the length of the box with the lid extending across the truck bed, or a pair of lids hinged in the middle of the box longitudinally with respect to the truck bed to permit the user to lift the lids from the sides of the truck. Both of these two conventional types of lids or covers have certain inherent disadvantages which render removal and replacement of the tools difficult, and which afford little protection to the contents of the box while the lids are raised. Further, the conventional lids or covers either require space beyond the edges of the box to open fully, or the hinges are not sufficiently watertight to prevent inflow of water from rain, snow and road slush when the box is closed. It is, therefore, one of the principal objects of the invention to provide a tool or utility box for pickup trucks, which can be fully opened from either side of the truck and the lid held out of the way while tools, equipment and supplies are placed in and removed from the box, and in which the lid supports are fully enclosed when the box is closed, thus protecting the contents of the box as well as the lid supports from water, dirt and other corrosive material.

Another object of the invention is to provide a utility box for pickup trucks, which includes a lid or cover that pivots upwardly from either end of the box when opened and, which, while providing adequate space for inserting and removing materials, maintains the cover in a position over the container portion of the box to give protection to the contents of the box from rain, dust and snow while the box is open.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a lid or cover for a toolbox or the like which covers the entire box as a single rigid piece having flanges extending downwardly over the sides of the container portion of the box to provide effective protection to the contents, and which can be opened from either end with the opposite end being releasably pivoted to the container portion.

A further object is to provide a toolbox or utility box of the aforesaid type which is relatively simple in construction and design, and which can be easily operated to open and close, and which will remain open with the cover positioned safely above the container portion, without any extraneous or exterior supporting structures.

Additional objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description and accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a conventional pickup truck showing the toolbox mounted on the bed of the truck behind the cab;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the present toolbox showing it in its closed position;

FIG. 3 is an end elevational view of the toolbox shown in the preceding figures, the two ends being identical in construction and operation;

FIG. 4 is a side elevational view of the toolbox showing the lid or cover in one of its raised positions;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged end elevational view and fragmentary cross-sectional view of one end of the present toolbox;

FIG. 6 is a vertical longitudinal cross-sectional view taken on line 6—6 of FIG. 5, showing the position of the lid or cover when the toolbox is in one of its open positions; and

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary, cross-sectional view of a portion of the latch operating mechanism of the box, the section being taken on line 7—7 of FIG. 2.

Referring more specifically to the drawings, numeral **10** indicates generally a conventional pickup truck having a cab or driver compartment **12** and a bed **14**. The present toolbox **16** is shown mounted crosswise of the bed with the ends of the box resting on the two sides of the bed. The present toolbox is readily adaptable to various makes of pickup trucks and various types of beds used on such trucks.

Toolbox **16** consists generally of a body **20** formed by sidewalls **22** and **24** and end walls **26** and **28**, the four walls being connected to a bottom **30**, preferably joined integrally to the lower edges of the sidewalls. A cover or lid **32** is mounted on body **20** and includes sidewalls **34** and **36** and end walls **38** and **40**, which are joined to one another and which extend downwardly over the sidewalls of body **20** to form an effective enclosure for the space in or compartment of body **20**. The body and cover are preferably constructed of sheet metal, and either one or both may have reinforcing ribs such as the rib shown at numeral **42** in the bottom of body **20** and the ribs **44** and **46** in sidewalls **22** and **24**, respectively. The latter ribs, while serving as reinforcing members, also may be used to support a sliding tray or other type of toolbox accessory. Outwardly extending flanges **48** and **50** are preferably provided at the upper edge of the two sidewalls to strengthen the sidewalls as well as provide a finished surface thereon.

Cover **32** is pivoted at each end by a latch mechanism, indicated generally by numerals **60** and **62**, which permits one end to be raised while the other end serves as the hinge or pivot means. The two latch mechanisms are the same in construction and operation and hence only one will be described in detail herein. The latch mechanism **60** includes two plunger assemblies **63** and **64** mounted on the rear side of the two cover ends, each consisting of a bolt **66** and a spring **67** urging the bolt outwardly toward the side of the cover. The spring reacts between a collar **68** and the end of bracket **70** which is rigidly secured to the inside surface of the respective cover end.

The outer end of bolt **66** locks into a fixture consisting of a hole **72** in an inner wall **74** joined to an extension **76** of the two sidewalls **22** and **24**. The curvature of extension **76** forms a guiding surface for the end of bolt **66** and depresses the bolt inwardly, permitting it to snap into hole **72** when the end of the lid is fully lowered. The bolt is retracted by an operating mechanism consisting of a crossmember **80** to which cables **82** and **84** are connected, the other end of the cable being connected to the respective bolt. A lever **80** is rotatably mounted on a shaft **86** which is operated by a handle **88** externally of wall **60**. The rotation of handle **88** causes lever **80** to rotate and thereby move cables **82** and **84** inwardly, withdrawing bolts **66** from their respective holes **72**, thus unlatching the respective end of the cover. Either end can be raised, and when the end is raised, the other end normally remains latched, thus permitting the cover to pivot from the horizontal position shown in FIG. 2 to the angular position shown in FIG. 4. The open end of the cover is held in an elevated position sufficiently high to permit tools to be easily placed in and removed from body **20** of the box. Both ends can be unlatched at the same time if desired.

In order to hold one end of the cover in an elevated position while material, tools, or other articles are being placed in or removed from the toolbox, yieldable supports **90** and **91** hold the cover in the position such as that shown in FIG. 4. The yieldable supports are mounted on opposite sides within the box, each support consisting of a frame formed by lower members **92** and **93** pivoted to a bracket **94** on the respective side of the body, and upper members **96** and **98** pivoted to a bracket **100** on the inner side of the cover. A spring **102** reacting between the pivot points **104** and **106** urges the four members inwardly in the direction to assist in lifting and supporting the cover. When the cover is to be lowered, the open end is pressed downwardly, thus causing the four members to move longitudinally in respect to the cover and body, thereby extending spring **102** and permitting the raised end to seat and latch.

In the operation of the present toolbox with the box mounted on a pickup truck, such as that shown in FIG. 1, the cover is locked in place by bolts **66** at the four corners of the cover and body seating in the respective hole **72** of inner walls **74**. When one end is to be opened, the handle **88** is rotated, thus rotating lever **80** and retracting cables **82** and **84** and the respective bolts **66**, thereby withdrawing the end of the bolts

from the respective hole **72** in wall **74** at opposite sides at each end. With the bolts at one end of the cover disengaged from the holes **72**, the respective end of the cover can be easily raised with the assistance of spring **102** urging the four members **92**, **93**, **96**, and **98** from the lowered position to the extended position illustrated in FIG. **4**. If the other end is to be opened, the toolbox is closed and the other end is then operated in the same manner as described above to disengage the two bolts from the respective holes **72**, thereby permitting the end to be raised.

The cover can be easily removed from the box by unlatching both ends and removing the bolts or pivot pins securing members **92** and **93** to the respective fixtures **94**; however, normally the cover is merely opened at one or the other end with the supports **90** and **91** remaining connected to the body and cover.

While only one embodiment of the present toolbox for pickup trucks has been described in detail herein, various changes and modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention.

We claim:

1. A toolbox for a pickup truck, comprising an elongated hollow body having extensions at each end for seating on the sides of the truck bed an elongated cover for said body, a latch mechanism disposed at each end of said cover and having a fixture at each side of said body, a releasable means in each fixture forming a pivot point on said body for the respective end of said cover, a means for unlatching the two releasable means at the same end of the cover to permit the respective end of the cover to be raised while the other end of the cover pivots on said releasable means, and a means supporting said cover in its raised position.

2. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **1** in which said releasable means includes a longitudinally movable bolt and said body includes a tapered inclined surface with the hole at the lower part thereof for receiving the end of said bolt.

3. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **2** in which said releasable means includes a spring for urging the respective bolt in the direction to seat the bolt in the hole.

4. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **3** in which the means for unlatching the two releasable means includes a means located in the respective end of said cover and having the means connected to the bolts for simultaneously unlatching the two releasable means.

5. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **1** in which said means supporting said cover in its raised position includes a spring for yieldably supporting either end of the cover in its raised position and is yieldable to permit the cover to be closed by downward pressure thereon.

6. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **4** in which said means supporting said cover includes a spring for yieldably supporting either end of the cover in its raised position.

7. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **6** in which said support means includes four pivotally connected members forming a support connected to the body and to the cover and said spring interconnects the members to urge them in the direction to retain the cover in its elevated position.

8. A toolbox for a pickup truck as defined in claim **7** in which a means supporting said cover is located on both sides of said body and cover and in the longitudinal center thereof.

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