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(54) **BATHING CHAIR**

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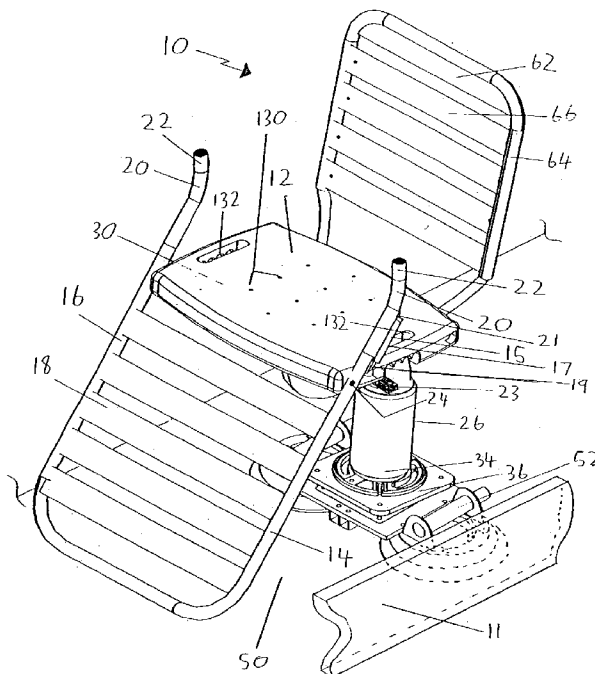
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A bathing chair is provided that swivels on a fixed base and includes a leg support assembly. The combination of the leg support and the swiveling action of the chair allows a disabled or handicapped bather to comfortably enter and/or exit a bathtub or a shower stall without the aid of another person. The leg support also allows the legs of the bather to clear obstacles, such as the ledge of a bathtub or the lip of a shower stall, without the aid of another person. The bathing chair also includes a single support assembly that is capable of supporting the bathing chair and a bather without the need for any additional support structures. The need for only a single support assembly to adequately support the chair provides a bathing chair that is sturdy, lightweight and simple to install.

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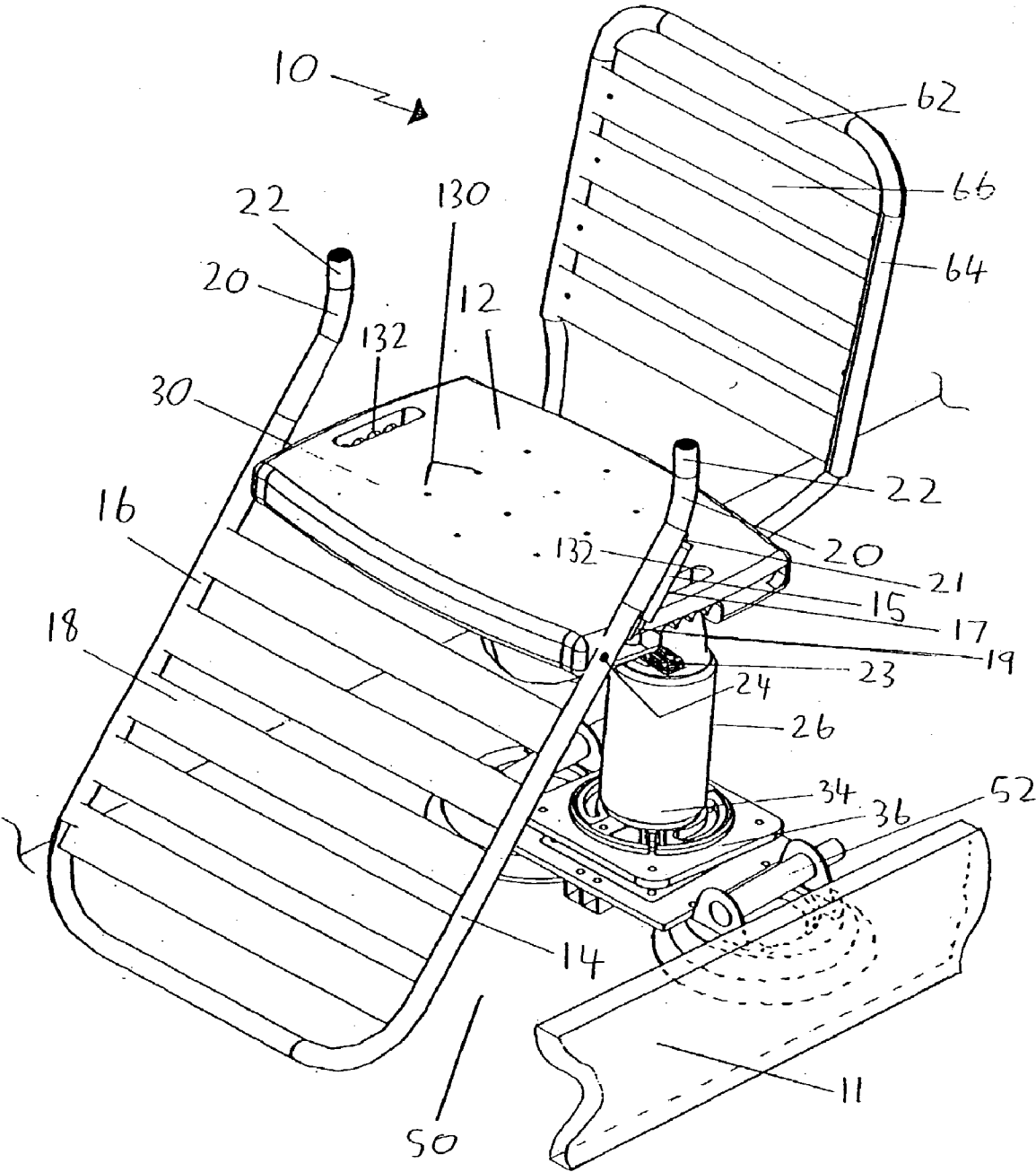


FIG. 1

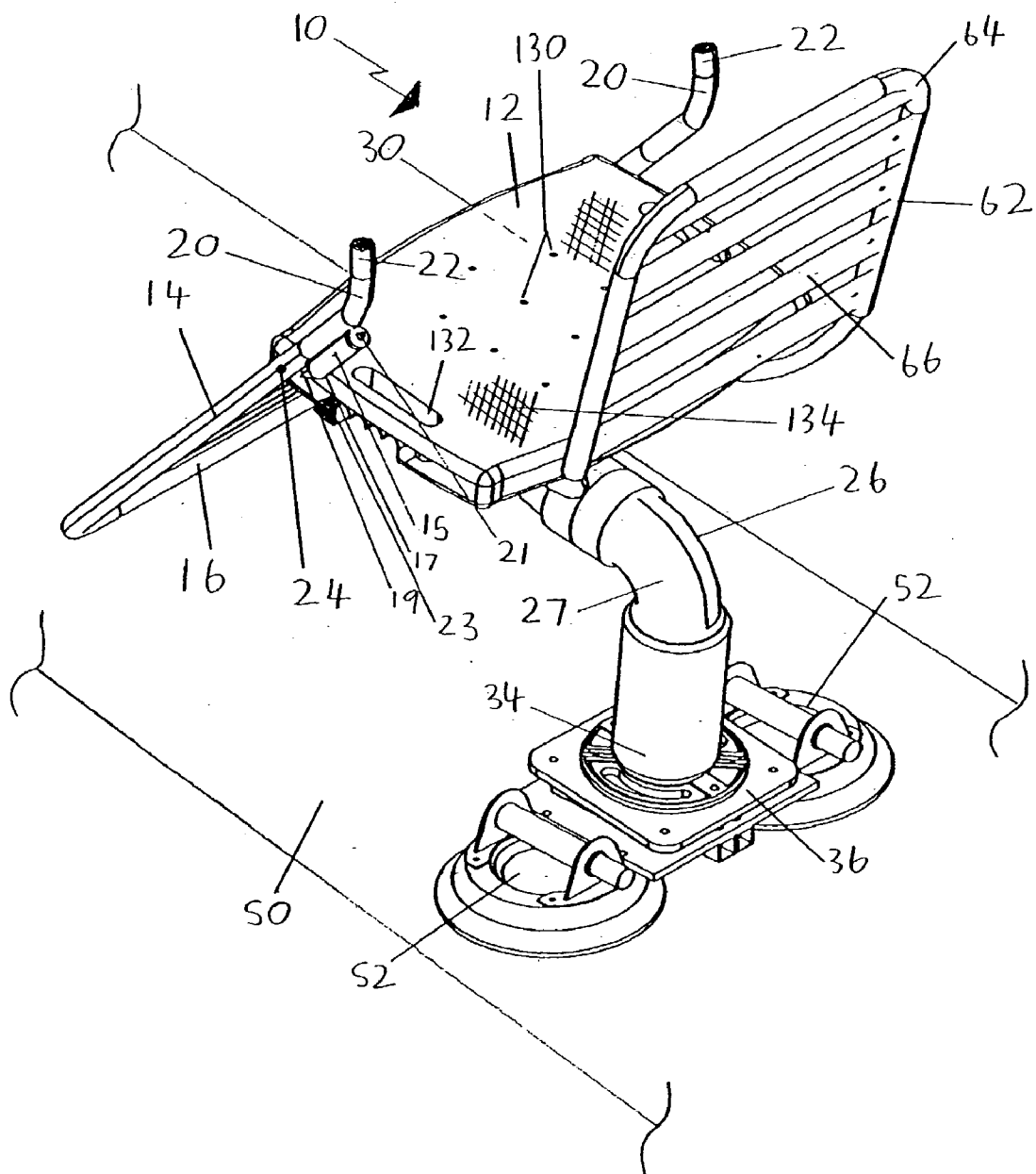


FIG. 2

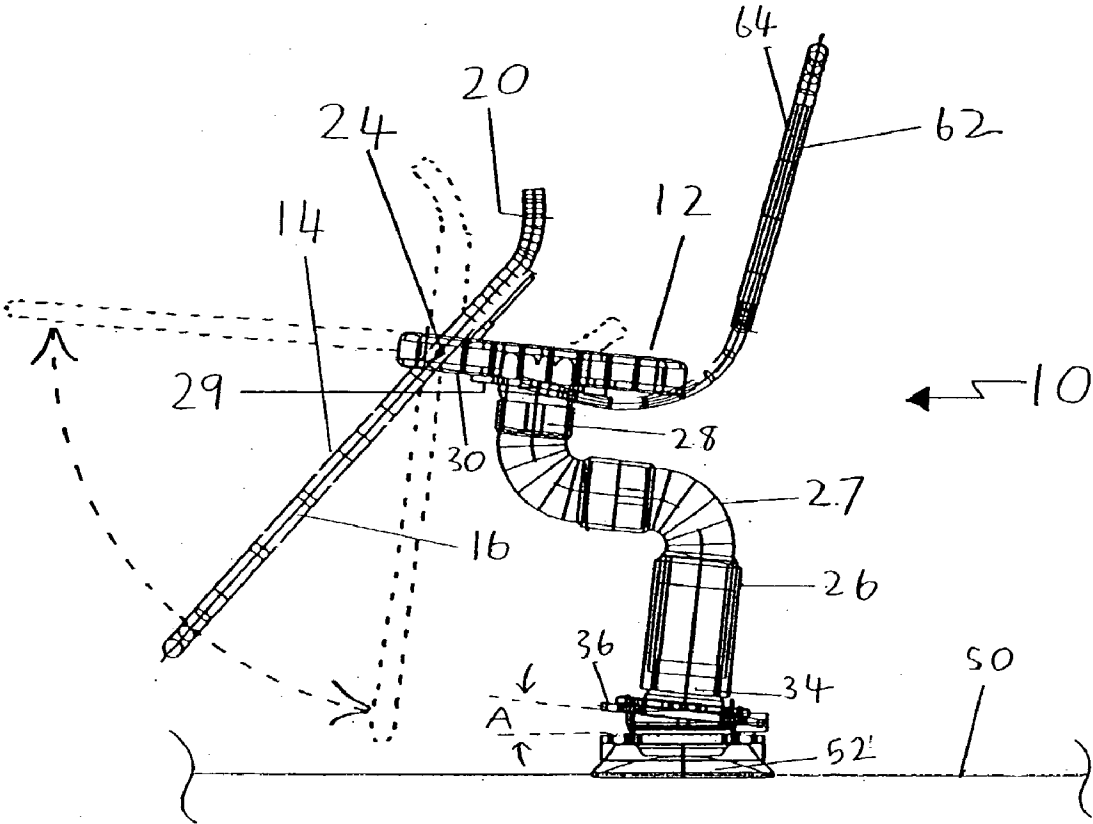


FIG. 3

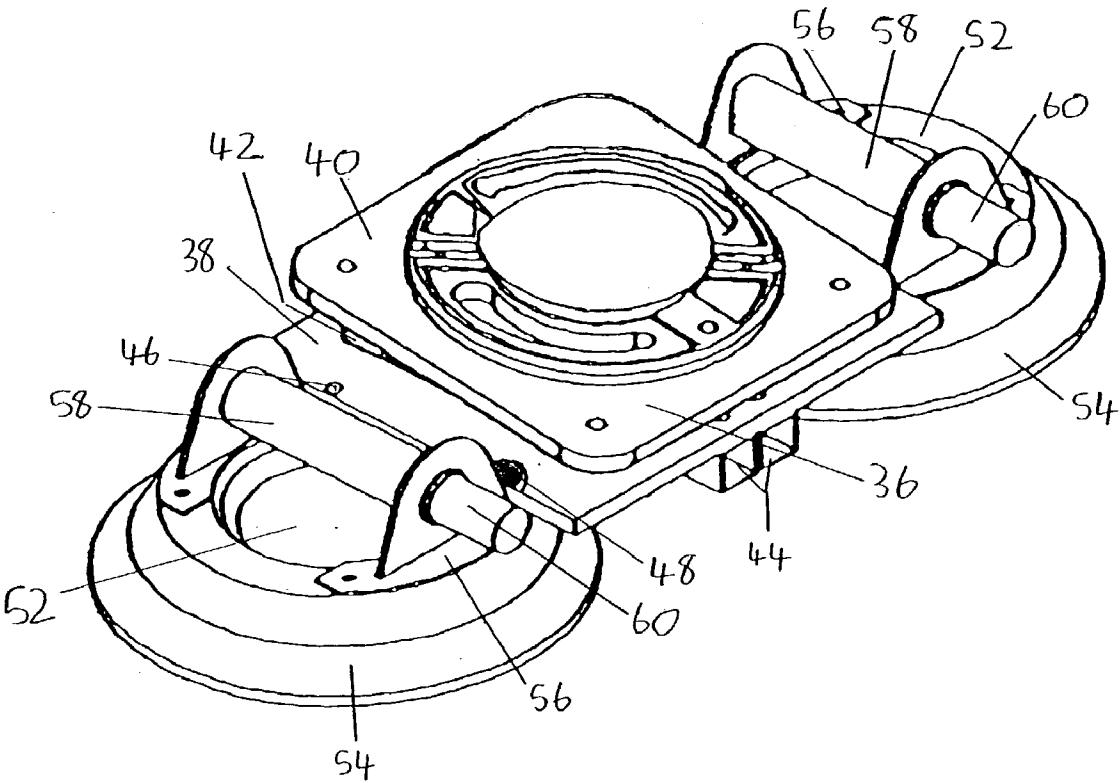


FIG. 4

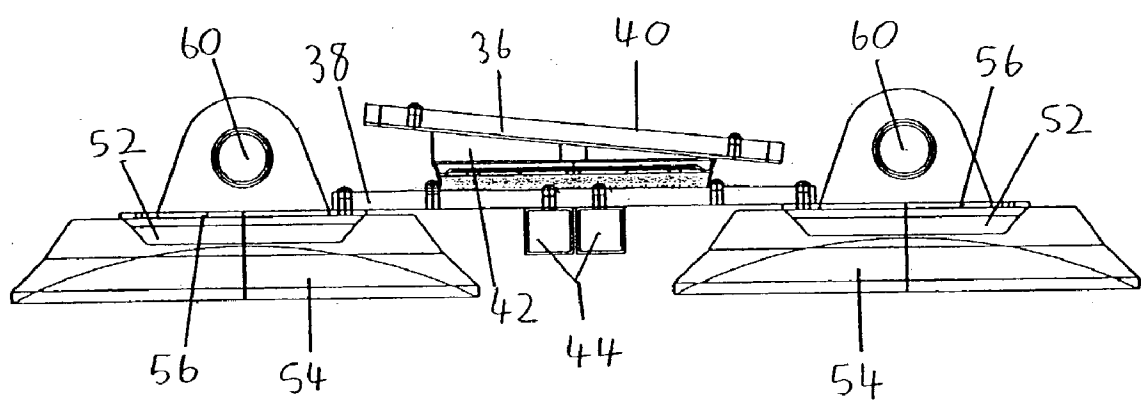


FIG. 5

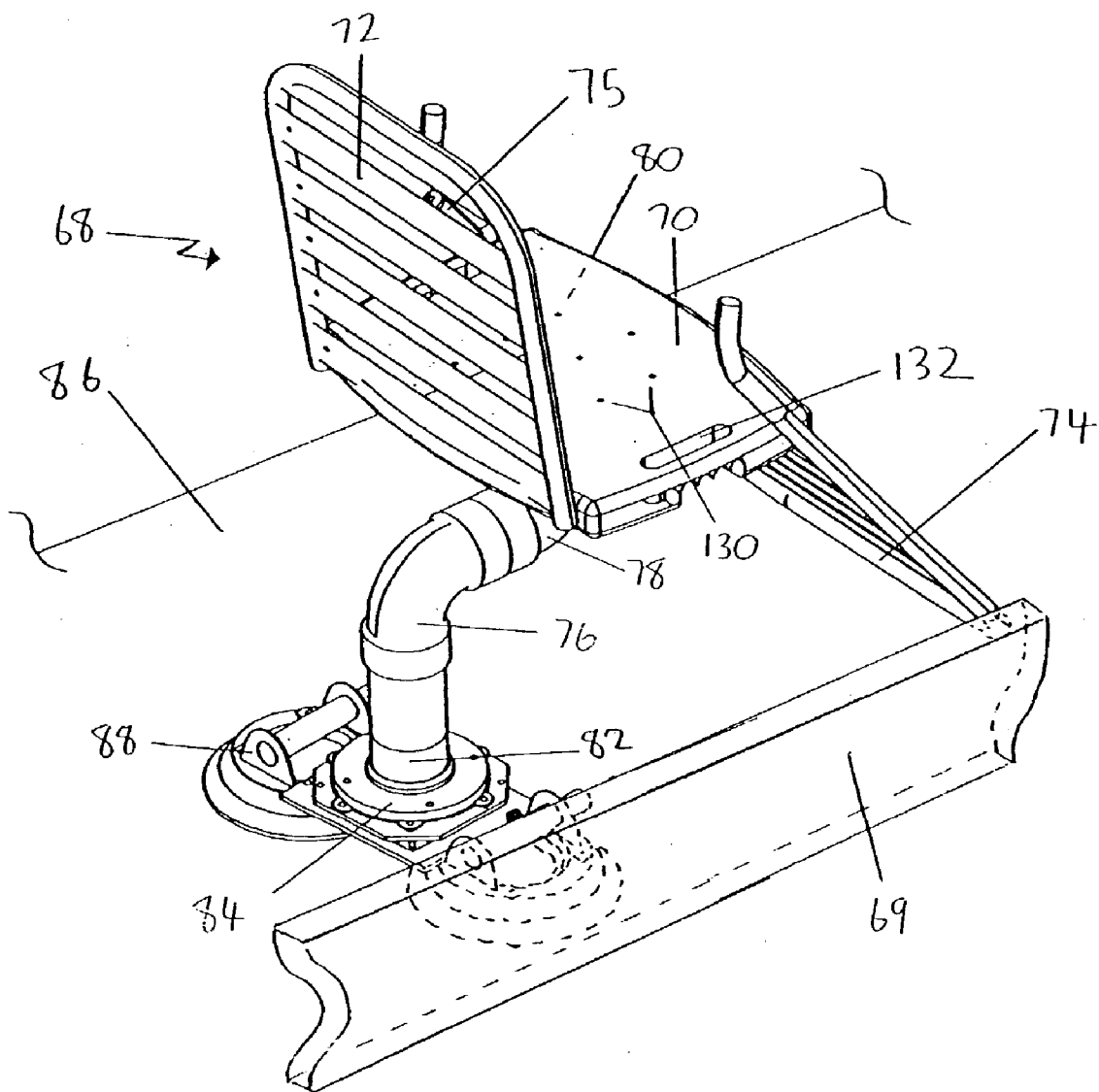


FIG. 6

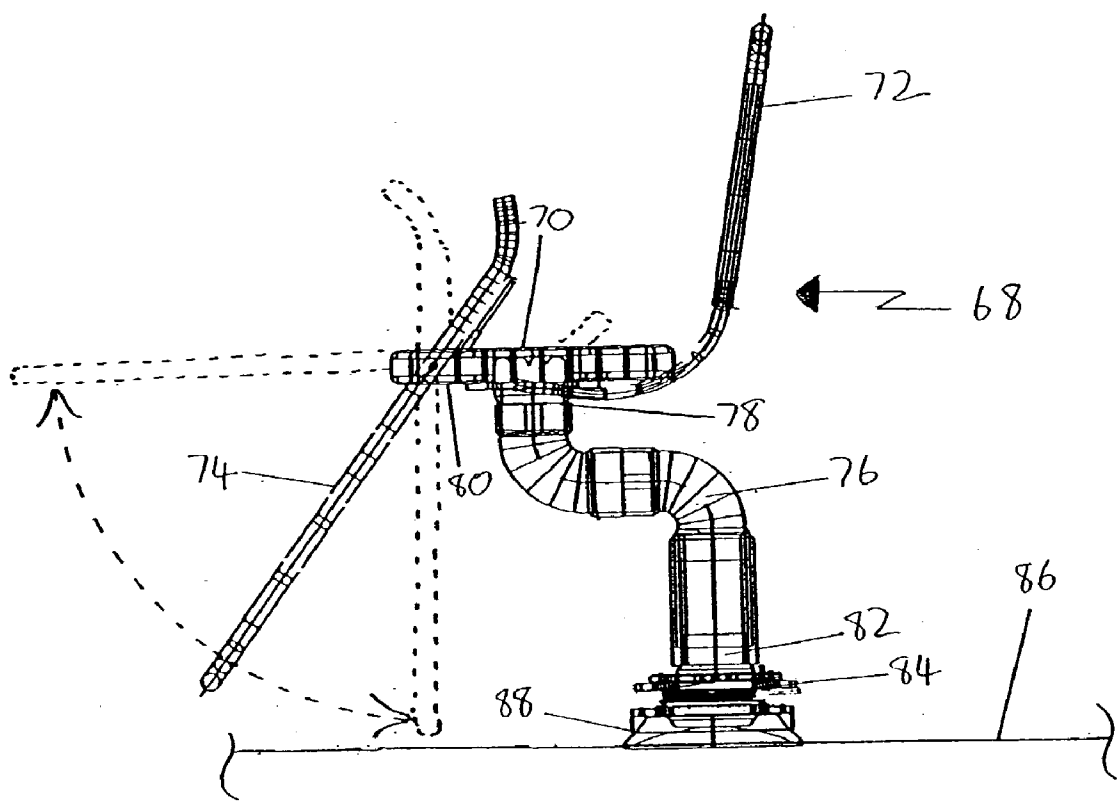


FIG. 7

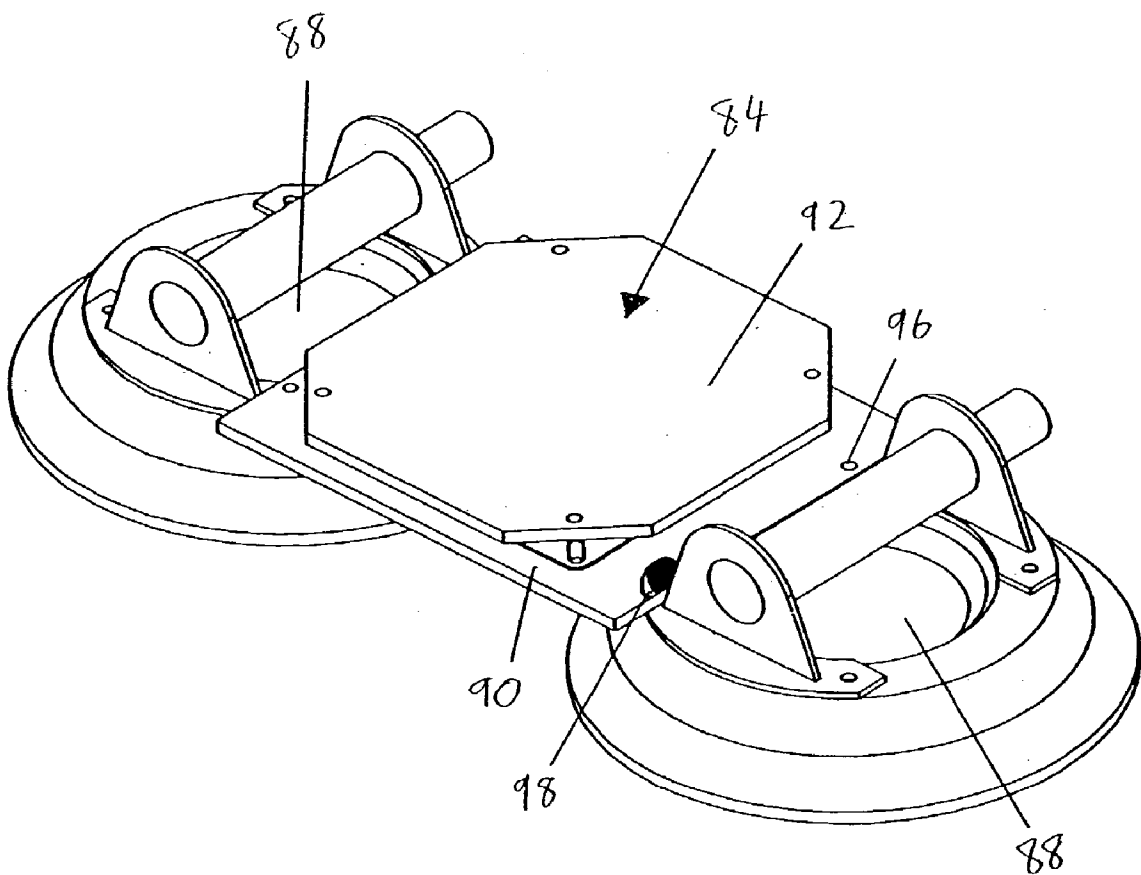


FIG. 8

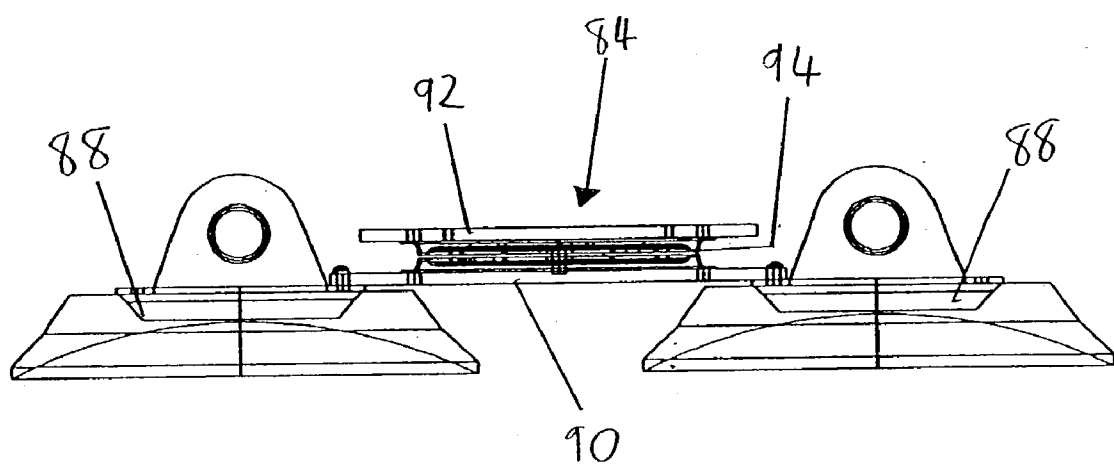


FIG. 9

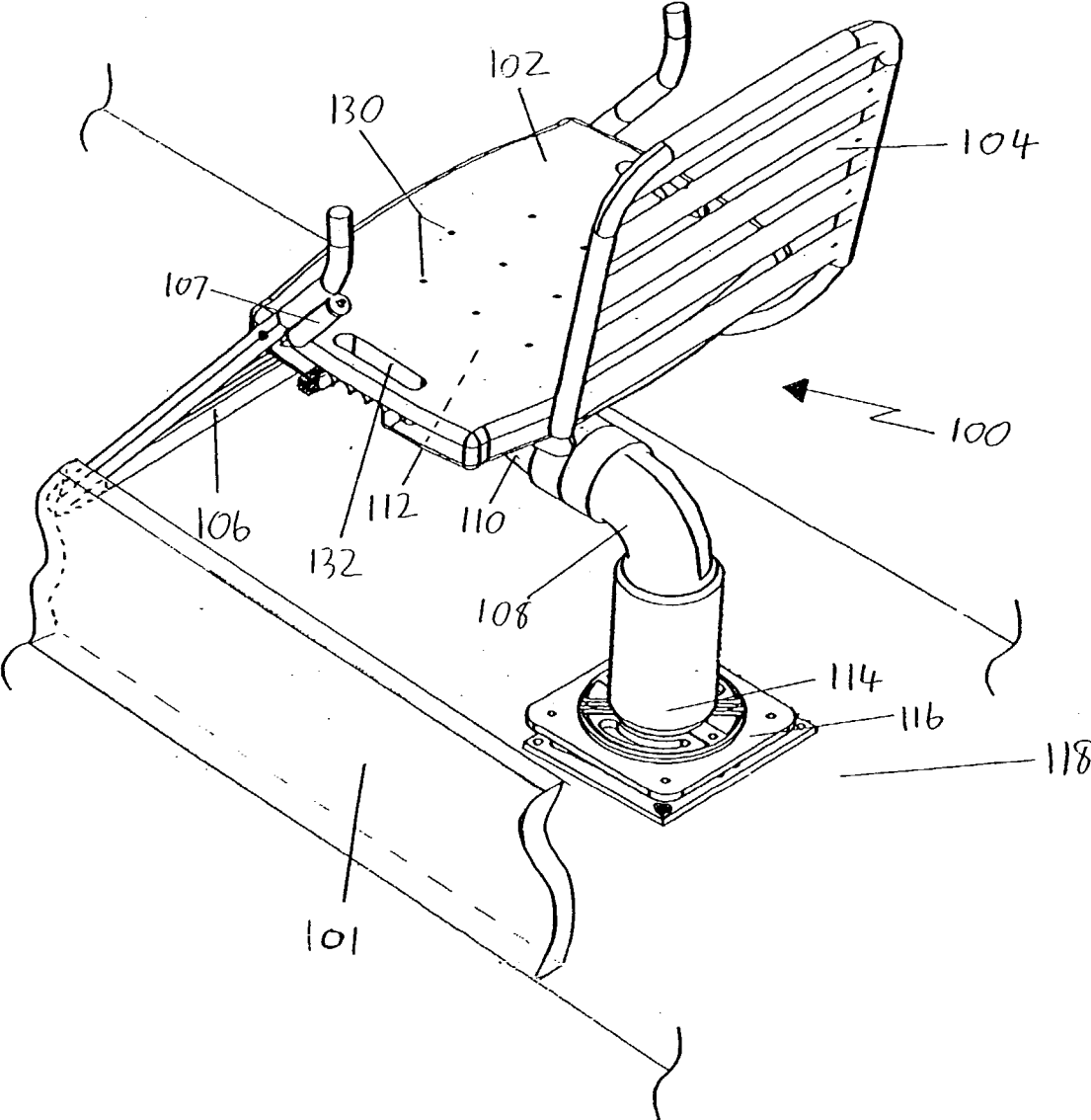


FIG. 10

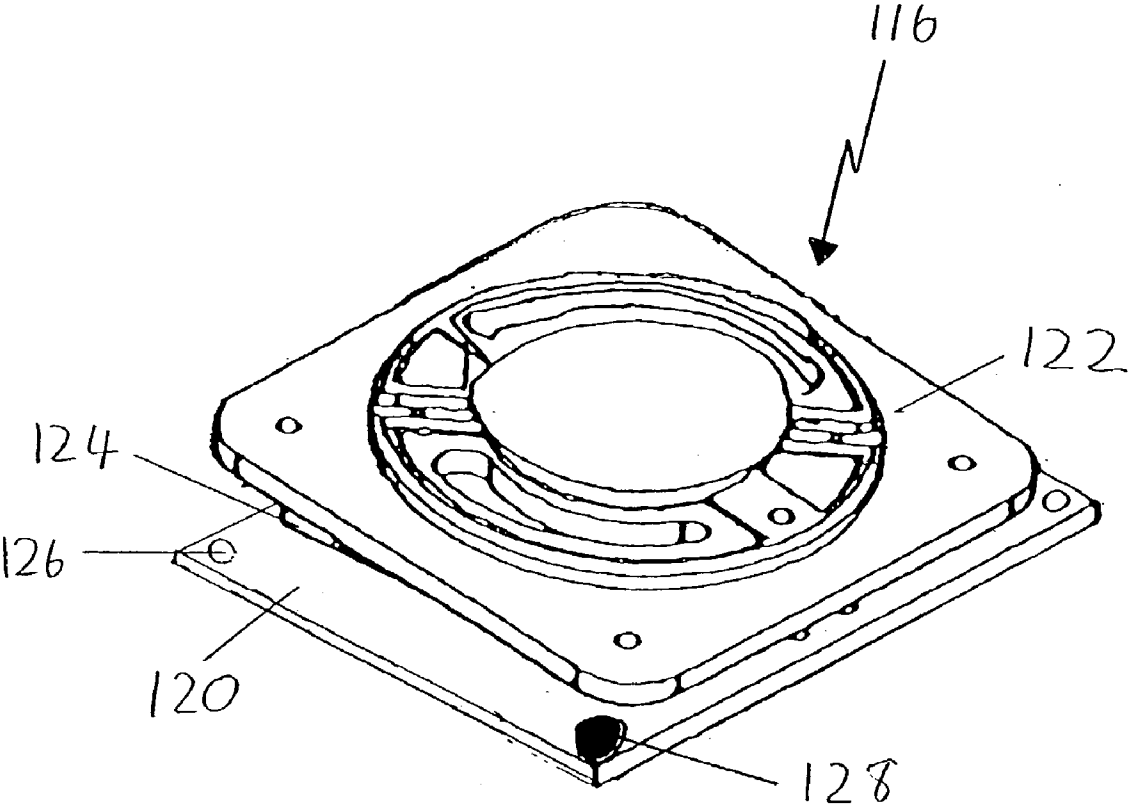


FIG. 11

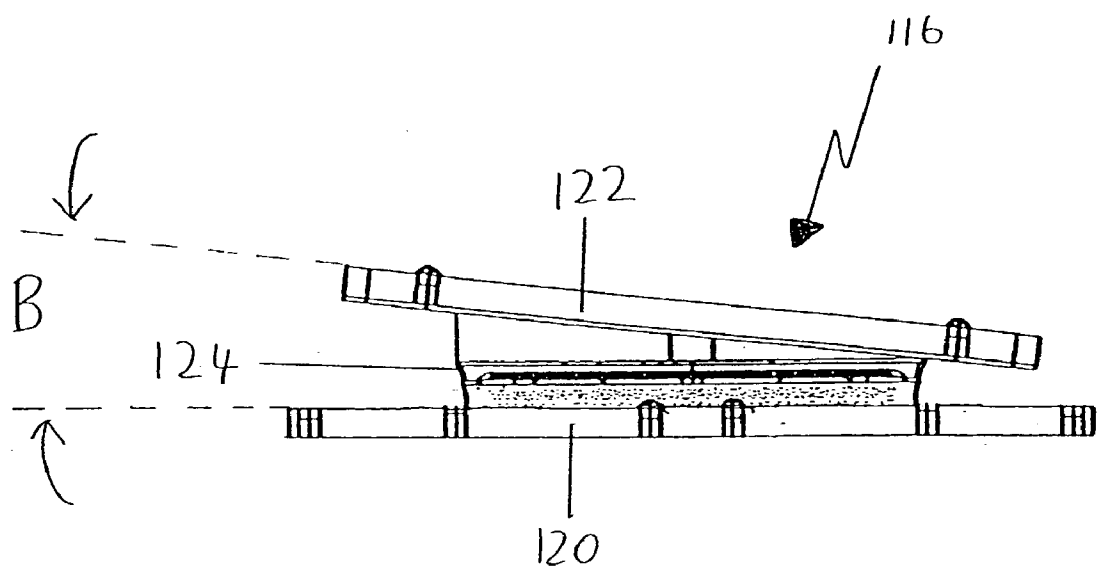


FIG. 12

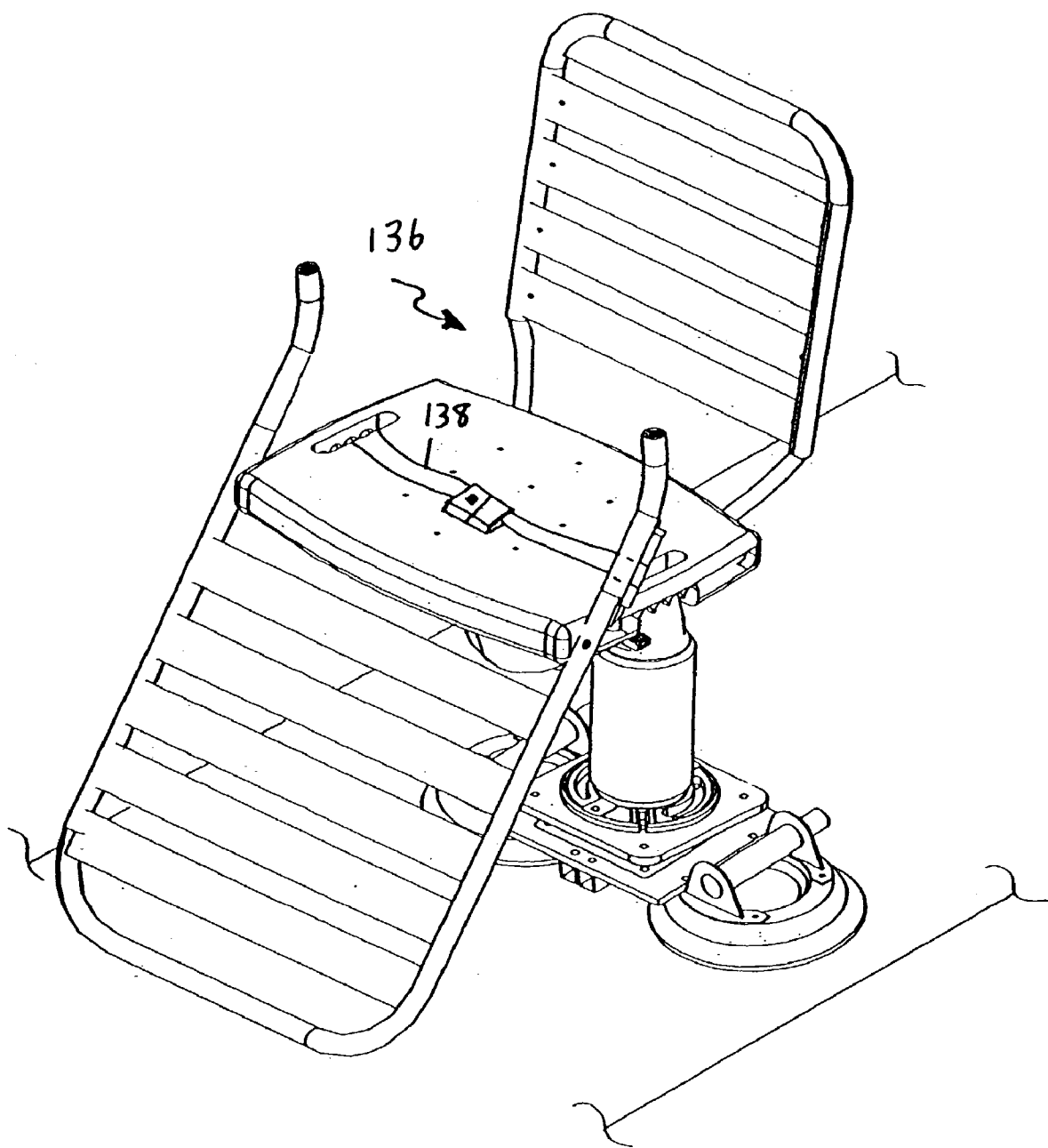


FIG. 13

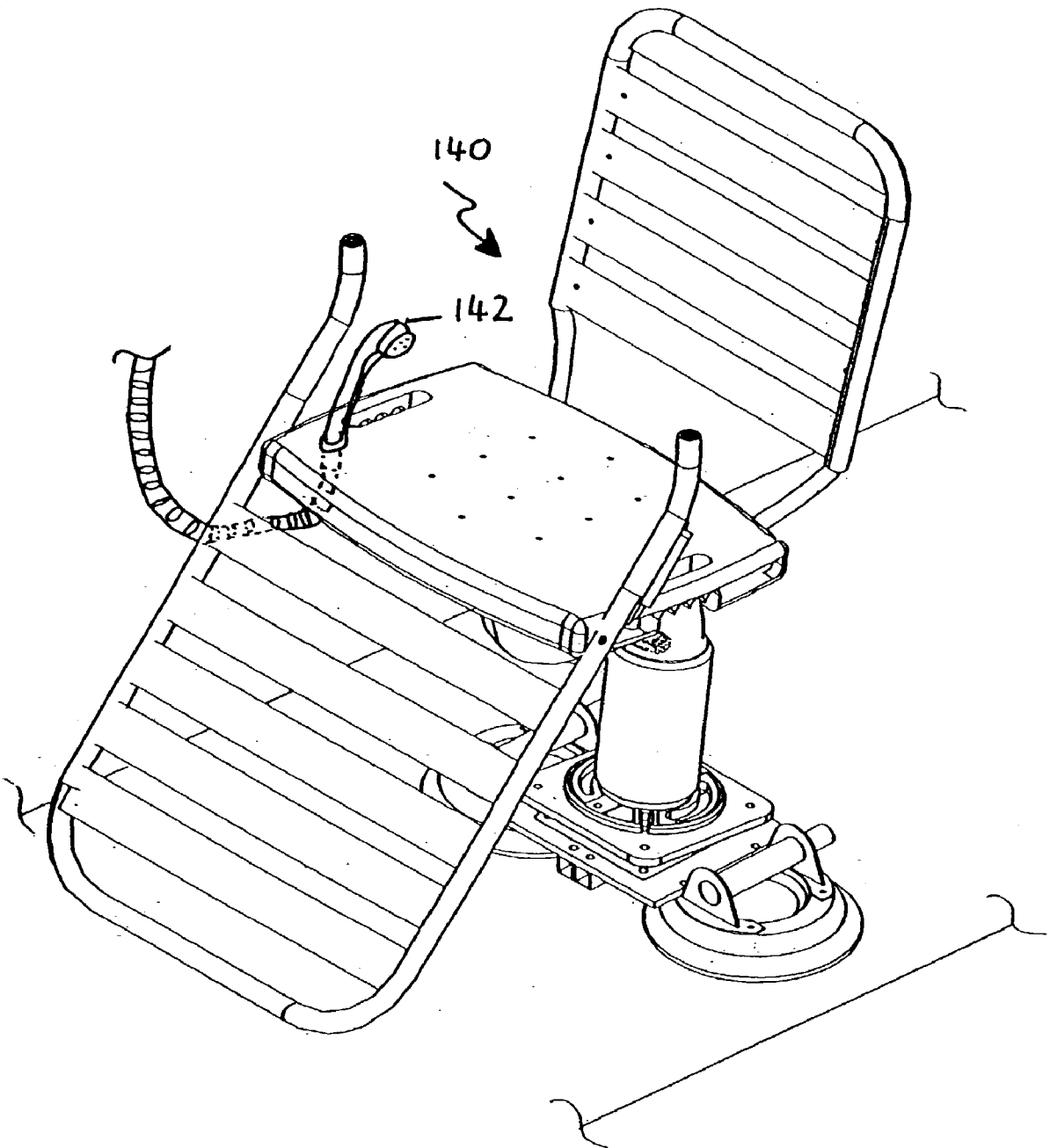


FIG. 14

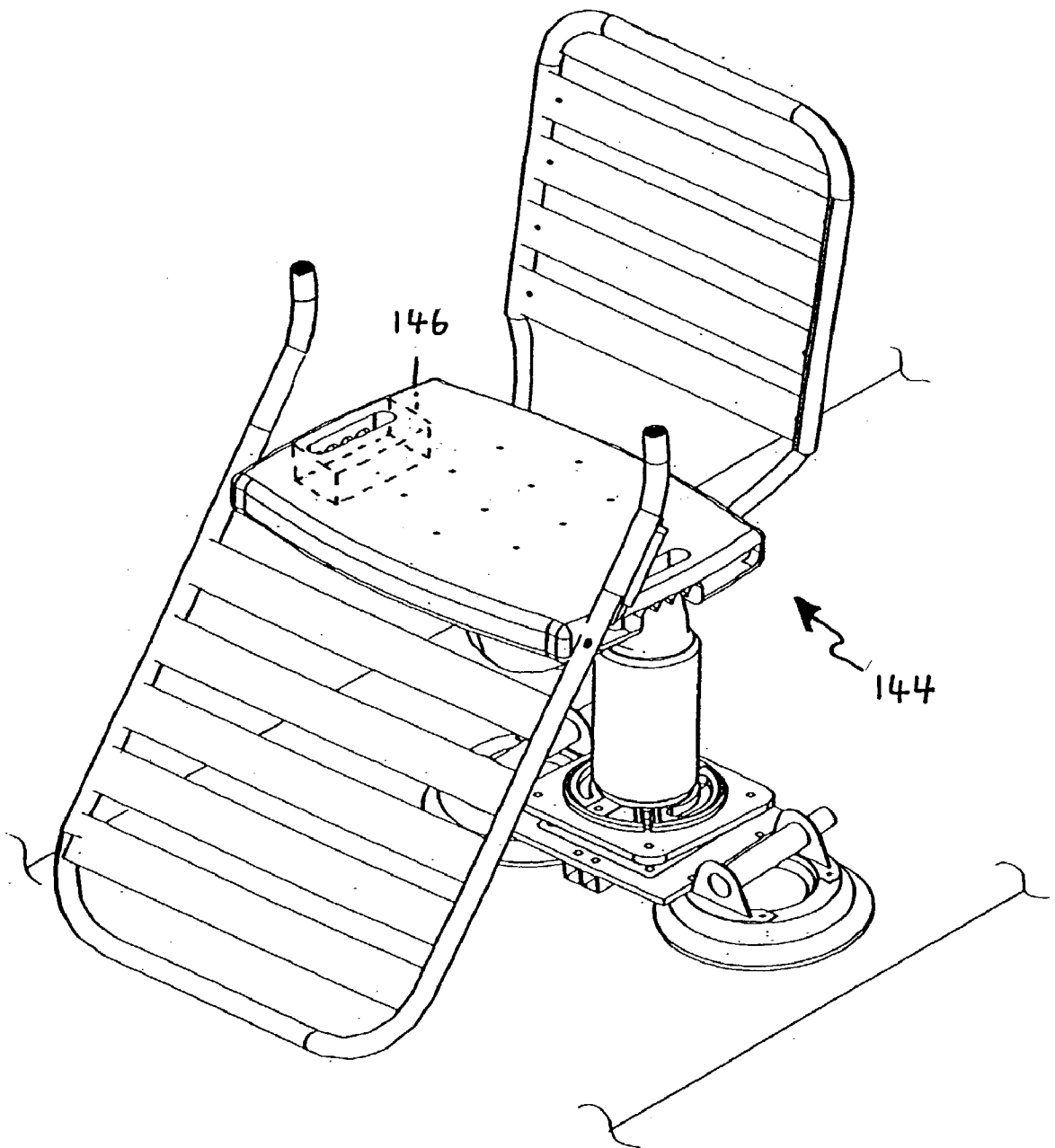


FIG. 15

BATHING CHAIR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/344,189 filed Dec. 28, 2001.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to bathing chairs, and more particularly relates to an improved bathing chair for enabling an individual to easily maneuver into and while in a bathtub, shower or other bathing area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[0003] Often times it can be difficult for an individual to enter and/or exit a bathtub or a shower. It can also sometimes be difficult for an individual to maneuver around once they are positioned inside a bathtub or a shower. For example, an individual suffering from arthritis or other joint problems may have difficulty lifting his or her legs over the side of a bathtub or shower stall while entering and exiting. The arthritis or joint problems may also make it impossible for the individual to stand up in a bathtub or shower, or to maneuver around in the bathtub or shower so as to completely cover the entire body with water. An individual with a handicap of the legs may also find it difficult, if not impossible, to lift his or her legs over the side of a bathtub or shower stall, and he or she may not have the capacity to stand up in a bathtub or shower, or to maneuver around in a bathtub or shower. The elderly and other persons who may be weak or frail are another example group of individuals who may suffer from these aforementioned problems.

[0004] Bathing chairs have been proposed which consist of chairs mounted inside bathtubs or shower stalls with various mounting mechanisms. These proposed bathing chairs have disadvantages. Up until now, a bathing chair has not been designed that has a mounting means that is sturdy, versatile, easily attached, and does not require any supplemental support structures to adequately support a bather. Additionally, a bathing chair with a leg lift for allowing a bather to easily lift his or her legs in order to clear the ledge of a bathtub or the lip of a shower stall has not been disclosed. Finally, a bathing chair is needed which utilizes a combined leg lift and swivel seat for allowing a bather to lift his or her legs and move safely into the confines of a bathtub or shower, without the aid or help of another individual.

[0005] The present invention has been developed in view of the foregoing, and to address other deficiencies of the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] An aspect of the present invention is to provide a bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area including a seat and a seat support assembly extending from the seat and adapted and configured for securing the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

[0007] Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area including a seat and means for securing the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

[0008] A further aspect of the present invention is to provide a bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area including a seat and a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

[0009] Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area including a seat and means for adjustably supporting the legs of a bather.

[0010] A further aspect of the present invention is to provide a bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area, the bathing area including at least one ledge, including a seat and a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

[0011] These and other aspects of the present invention will be more apparent from the following description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 shows a front isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. 2 shows a back isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 3 shows a side view of a bathing chair in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 shows an isometric view of a swivel assembly and two suction cup assemblies in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 5 shows a front view of a swivel assembly and two suction cup assemblies in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 6 shows a back isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 7 shows a side view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 8 shows an isometric view of a swivel assembly and two suction cup assemblies in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 9 shows a front view of a swivel assembly and two suction cup assemblies in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 10 shows a back isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 11 shows an isometric view of a swivel assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 12 shows a front view of a swivel assembly in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 13 shows a front isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0025] FIG. 14 shows a front isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0026] FIG. 15 shows a front isometric view of a bathing chair in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] FIG. 1 is a front isometric view of a bathing chair 10 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The bathing chair 10 may be used in a bathing area. As used herein, the term "bathing area" means a shower stall, bathtub, jacuzzi, whirlpool, or any other suitable structure or environment for allowing an individual to bathe. In one embodiment, the bathing area may include a floor 50 and at least one ledge. Such a ledge may vary in height and width, and is commonly used to contain water and other liquids in the confines of the bathing area, as is well known in the art.

[0028] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the bathing chair 10 includes a seat 12 and means for adjustably supporting a bather's legs, such as a leg support assembly 14 movably attached to the seat 12. However, it will be appreciated that other means for adjustably supporting a bather's legs may be used in conjunction with the invention, as claimed and disclosed herein. More specifically, the leg support assembly 14 may include a frame 16, support straps 18 spanning laterally across the frame 16, and one or more handles 20 for raising and lowering the leg support assembly 14. The handles 20 may optionally include handle caps 22, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. The leg support straps 18 may be made of any suitable material, such as but not limited to, plastic, vinyl, or fabric. Alternatively, a solid piece of material may be attached to the frame 16 for supporting the legs of a bather, such as a solid sheet of vinyl, plastic, fabric, or netting. As most clearly shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the leg support assembly 14 may be pivotally attached to the seat 12 with two pins 24 (only one of which is shown). Alternatively, the leg support assembly 14 may be attached to the seat 12 with any suitable fastening means that would allow the leg support assembly 14 to move in relation to the seat 12.

[0029] When the bathing chair 10 is used in a bathing area including at least one ledge, the bathing chair may be placed in a docking position, and/or a bathing position. As used herein, the term "docking position" describes a bathing chair positioned in a bathing area such that at least a portion of the leg support assembly crosses over a docking ledge of the bathing area and extends outside of the bathing area, for allowing a bather to conveniently enter and exit the bathing chair. As used herein, the term "docking ledge" defines a ledge of a bathing area that a bather would use to enter and/or exit the bathing area when the bathing chair is in the docking position. In a bathing area having more than one ledge, it is to be understood that the bathing chair may be oriented so that any one of the ledges may be used as the docking ledge. Such a docking ledge 11 is shown in FIG. 1. As used herein, the term "bathing position" describes a bathing chair positioned in a bathing area such that the leg support assembly is substantially within the confines of the bathing area, allowing the bather to be fully and conveniently cleansed. FIG. 1 illustrates a bathing chair 10 in the bathing position.

[0030] In one embodiment, when the bathing chair 10 is in a bathing position, the leg support assembly 14 may adjustably pivot around a horizontal axis that is substantially perpendicular with a docking ledge of the bathing area, such as the docking ledge 11. When the bathing chair 10 is in a docking position, the leg support assembly 14 may adjustably pivot around a horizontal axis that is substantially parallel with a docking ledge of the bathing area, such as the docking ledge 11. In this embodiment, as shown in FIG. 3, the leg support assembly 14 may pivot throughout an angle of rotation of at least about 40 degrees, preferably throughout an angle of rotation of at least about 60 degrees. In a particular embodiment, the leg support assembly 14 may pivot throughout an angle of rotation of at least about 90 degrees. In another embodiment, the leg support assembly 14 may be moveable from a first position to a second position that is vertically higher than the first position, as also shown in FIG. 3. By allowing the leg support assembly 14 to be moveably and/or pivotally attached to the seat 12 of the bathing chair 10, a bather may use the handles 20 to raise the leg support assembly 14 and his or her legs above the docking ledge 11 of a bathing area 10 when the bathing chair is in the docking position, and to lower the leg support assembly 14 and his or her legs into the bathing area for bathing when the chair is in the bathing position. In this embodiment, a bather may enter and/or exit the bathing area and clear the docking ledge of the bathing area without the aid of another individual.

[0031] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the leg support assembly 14 may include a locking assembly 15 to secure the leg support assembly in a substantially raised position. The locking assembly includes a lock housing 17, a locking pin 19, and a lock release actuator, such as a lever or button 21, for releasing the locking pin 19. Optionally, a string or rope may be attached to the lock release actuator 21 to aid in releasing the locking pin 19. The seat 12 includes a keeper 23 with a recess or a cavity for receiving the locking pin 19 when the leg support assembly 14 is in a substantially raised position.

[0032] As most clearly shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, the bathing chair 10 includes means for securing the bathing chair within the bathing area, such as a seat support assembly 26 having a first end 28 extending from substantially the middle of the underside 30 of the seat 12 to the floor 50 of the bathing area. However, it will be appreciated that other means for securing the bathing chair within the bathing area may be used in conjunction with the invention, as claimed and disclosed herein. More specifically, the seat support assembly 26 may be a single support member such as a substantially thick support tube 27 attached to substantially the middle of an underside 30 of the seat 12 with any suitable attachment means such as welding or mechanical fasteners. The support tube 27 is preferably thick enough to secure the bathing chair within the bathing area, i.e., to provide a bathing chair that is strong and sturdy and capable of adequately supporting a bather without the need for any additional or supplemental support members or structures. In one embodiment, the support tube 27 may have a thickness of at least about 2 inches, preferably a thickness of at least about 3 inches. In a particular embodiment, the support tube 27 may have a thickness of at least about 4 inches.

[0033] As shown most clearly in FIG. 3, in one embodiment the support tube 27 may be formed as a generally

S-shaped member, in order to give the bathing chair more balance and stability. In this embodiment, the S-shaped support tube 27 may be capable of supporting a bather of up to approximately 300 pounds in the seat 12 without requiring any additional support structures. The support tube 27 may be made out of a material such as PVC plastic, metal, resin, or any other suitable synthetic or naturally occurring material that would provide the needed support strength. In this embodiment, when the bathing chair is in the bathing position, the seat support assembly 26 may extend from the seat 12 and mount to the floor 50 of the bathing area at an offset measured in a direction substantially parallel to the docking ledge 11 of the bathing area. When the bathing chair is in the docking position, the seat support assembly 26 may extend from the seat 12 and mount to the floor 50 of the bathing area at an offset measured in a direction substantially perpendicular to the docking ledge 11 of the bathing area.

[0034] As shown in FIG. 3, the support tube 27 may be attached to the middle of the underside 30 of the seat 12 by a flange 29. FIG. 3 shows that the flange 29 may have a diameter greater than the thickness of the support tube 27. In one embodiment, the flange 29 may have a diameter of at least about 4 inches, preferably a diameter of at least about 5 inches. In a particular embodiment, the flange 29 may have a diameter of at least about 6 inches. By using such a flange 29 to attach the support tube 27 to the middle of the underside 30 of the seat 12, the weight of a bather sitting in the seat may be more evenly distributed, giving the bathing chair 10 more strength and stability.

[0035] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, a second end 34 of the seat support assembly 26 may be attached to a swivel assembly 36. The swivel assembly 36 allows the bathing chair 10 to rotate around a substantial vertical axis of rotation, so that a bather may easily enter and exit the bathing chair, and may comfortably maneuver around while bathing. In one embodiment, the chair may be rotated from the docking position to the bathing position, and vice versa.

[0036] The details of the swivel assembly 36 are shown most clearly in FIGS. 4 and 5. The swivel assembly 36 includes a base plate 38, an upper plate 40 and a spacer 42 disposed between the base plate 38 and the upper plate 40. As most clearly shown in FIGS. 3 and 5, the spacer 42 may be angled upward, which in turn causes the upper plate 40 to be positioned at an angle A in relation to the base plate 38. Mounting the bathing chair 10 on such an angled swivel assembly 36 may provide the bathing chair with optimum balance and stability. In one embodiment, the angle A ranges from about 2 degrees to about 30 degrees, preferably from about 5 degrees to about 15 degrees. In a particular embodiment, angle A may be chosen to be about 8 degrees.

[0037] The base plate 38 of the swivel assembly 36 may include reinforcing bars 44 as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5. The base plate 38 of the swivel assembly 36 also may include holes 46 and bolts 48 or other suitable fasteners (only one of which is shown) for securing the base plate 38 of the swivel assembly 36 to various mounting means for mounting the bathing chair 10 to the floor 50 of a bathing area. The upper plate 40 may rotate with respect to the base plate 38 around a substantial vertical axis of rotation. In one embodiment, the upper plate 40 may rotate approximately 360 degrees, which allows a bather to have the maximum amount of maneuverability while in the bathing chair 10. The upper

plate 40 may rotate with respect to the base plate 38 by any means well known in the art, for example, by a ball bearing or roller bearing race.

[0038] FIGS. 1-3 show that the swivel assembly 36 of the bathing chair 10 may be secured to a floor 50 of a bathing area with one or more floor mount supports, such as suction cup assemblies 52. However, it is to be understood that other suitable floor mount supports may be used and are within the scope of the present invention, such as plates or bars that could be secured directly to the floor 50 of the bathing area. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the suction cup assemblies 52 may be offset from the seat support assembly 26 in a direction substantially perpendicular to the docking ledge 11 of the bathing area in order to give the bathing chair 10 substantial lateral, i.e., side to side, support.

[0039] FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate the details of the suction cup assembly 52. The suction cup assembly 52 includes a suction cup 54 and a frame 56 secured to the suction cup 54 by any suitable fastening means such as welding or mechanical fasteners. The suction cup 54 may be any suitable type of suction cup known in the art. Suction cup 54 may have an appropriate diameter to give the bathing chair added support in all directions. In one embodiment, the suction cup 54 may have a diameter of at least about 4 inches, preferably a diameter of at least about 6 inches. In a particular embodiment, the suction cup 54 may have a diameter of at least about 8 inches. The frame 56 of the suction cup assembly 52 may be secured to the base plate 38 of the swivel assembly 36 via the holes 46 and the bolts 48 or other suitable fasteners (only one of which is shown), as most clearly shown in FIG. 4. The frame 56 of the suction cup 54 also may include a handle 58 to aid in placing and removing the suction cup assembly 52. As shown most clearly in FIG. 4, the suction cup assembly 52 also may include an evacuation lever 60. When the evacuation lever 60 is pressed or pumped, the suction cup 54 is evacuated, and becomes securely attached to the support surface 50. The suction cup 54 may also be evacuated by any other means known in the art, and these means are within the scope of the present invention. In one embodiment, the suction cup 54 may withstand a force of up to approximately 175 pounds while still remaining securely attached to the support surface 50.

[0040] As shown in FIGS. 1-3, the bathing chair 10 may also include a backrest 62. The backrest 62 may include a frame 64 and back support straps 66 spanning laterally across the backrest frame 64. The back support straps 66 may be made of any suitable material, such as but not limited to, plastic, vinyl, or fabric. Alternatively, a solid piece of material may be attached to the frame 64 for supporting the back of a bather, such as a solid sheet of vinyl, plastic, fabric, or netting. As shown most clearly in FIG. 3, the backrest 62 may be attached to the underside 30 of the seat 12 with any appropriate securing means, such as welding or mechanical fasteners.

[0041] FIGS. 6 and 7 illustrate a bathing chair 68 in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention. The bathing chair may be used in a bathing area having a floor 86 and a docking ledge 69. The bathing chair 68 includes a seat 70 with a backrest 72 and a leg support assembly 74 both attached to the seat 70. In this embodiment, the leg support assembly 74 is similar in structure and

operation to the leg support assembly 14 previously described herein. The leg support assembly 74 may optionally include a locking assembly 75 to secure the leg support assembly in a substantially raised position. The bathing chair 68 further includes a seat support assembly 76, similar in structure and operation to the seat support assembly 26 previously described herein, having a first end 78 attached to an underside 80 of the seat 70. As shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, a second end 82 of the seat support assembly 76 may be attached to a swivel assembly 84. The swivel assembly 84 of the bathing chair 68 may be secured to the floor 86 of the bathing area with one or more floor mount supports, such as suction cup assemblies 88, which are similar in structure and operation to the suction cup assemblies 52 previously described herein. As most clearly shown in FIGS. 7 and 9, the swivel assembly 84 does not include an angled upper plate in this embodiment of the invention.

[0042] FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate the details of the swivel assembly 84. The swivel assembly 84 includes a base plate 90, an upper plate 92 and a spacer 94 disposed between the base plate 90 and the upper plate 92. The base plate 90 of the swivel assembly 84 may also include holes 96 and bolts 98 or other suitable fasteners (only one of which is shown) for securing the base plate 90 of the swivel assembly 84 to various mounting means for mounting the bathing chair 68 on a support surface 86, such as one or more suction cup assemblies 88. The upper plate 92 may rotate with respect to the base plate 90 around a substantial vertical axis of rotation. In one embodiment, the upper plate 92 may rotate approximately 360 degrees, which allows a bather to have the maximum amount of maneuverability while in the bathing chair 68. The upper plate 92 may rotate with respect to the base plate 90 by any means well known in the art, for example, by a ball bearing or roller bearing race.

[0043] FIG. 10 illustrates a bathing chair 100 in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention. The bathing chair may be used in a bathing area having a floor 118 and a docking ledge 101. The bathing chair 100 includes a seat 102 with a backrest 104 and a leg support assembly 106 both attached to the seat 102. In this embodiment, the leg support assembly 106 is similar in structure and operation to the leg support assembly 14 previously described herein. The leg support assembly 106 may optionally include a locking assembly 107 to secure the leg support assembly in a substantially raised position. The bathing chair 100 further includes a seat support assembly 108, similar in structure and operation to the seat support assembly 26 previously described herein, having a first end 110 attached to an under side 112 of the seat 102. As shown in FIG. 10, a second end 114 of the seat support assembly 108 is attached to a swivel assembly 116. In this embodiment, the swivel assembly 116 may be directly secured to the floor 118 of the bathing area with any suitable securing means.

[0044] FIGS. 11 and 12 illustrate the details of the swivel assembly 116. The swivel assembly 116 includes a base plate 120, an upper plate 122 and a spacer 124 disposed between the base plate 120 and the upper plate 122. As most clearly shown in FIG. 12, the spacer 124 may be angled upward, which in turn causes the upper plate 122 to be positioned at an angle B in relation to the base plate 120. Mounting the bathing chair 100 on such an angled swivel assembly 116 provides the bathing chair with optimum balance and stability. In one embodiment, the angle B may

range from about 2 degrees to about 30 degrees, preferably from about 5 degrees to about 15 degrees. In a particular embodiment, angle B may be chosen to be about 8 degrees. However, it is to be understood that the spacer 124 of the swivel assembly 116 is not required to be angled, and a spacer that is not angled, such as the non-angled spacer 94 shown in FIGS. 7 and 9, may be used and is within the scope of the present invention.

[0045] The base plate 120 of the swivel assembly 116 also includes holes 126 and bolts 128 or other suitable fasteners (only one of which is shown) for securing the base plate 120 of the swivel assembly 116 directly to a floor 118 of a bathing area. The upper plate 122 may rotate with respect to the base plate 120 around a substantial vertical axis of rotation. In one embodiment, the upper plate 122 may rotate approximately 360 degrees, which allows a bather to have the maximum amount of maneuverability while in the bathing chair 100. The upper plate 122 may rotate with respect to the base plate 120 by any means well known in the art, for example, by a ball bearing or roller bearing race.

[0046] The bathing chair 10 shown in FIGS. 1-3 operates as follows. When a bather wishes to enter a bathtub or a shower, the bather grasps the bathing chair 10 and rotates the chair on the swivel assembly 36 until the chair is in the docking position, making it convenient for the bather to sit in the chair. At this point the leg support assembly 14 may be in a substantially lowered position as shown with broken lines in FIG. 3. Once the bather is securely positioned in the bathing chair, the bather may then pull on the handles 20 of the leg support assembly 14 and raise his or her legs until the locking assembly 15 locks into place and the leg support assembly 14 is in a substantially raised position above the docking ledge 11 of the bathing area. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the leg support assembly 14 may be continuously pivoted and adjusted from a position that is substantially perpendicular to the plane of the seat 12 to a position that is substantially parallel to the plane of the seat 12.

[0047] The leg support assembly 14 operates through the use of a lever principle, which is well known in the art. Because the length of the leg support assembly handles 20 is much shorter in proportion to the length of the leg support assembly frame 16, the bather may easily lift his or her own legs by exerting only a small fraction of the full force required to lift the legs. As a result, the bather may move the leg support assembly from a substantially lowered position to a substantially raised position, and vice-versa, while only having to move his or her legs a short distance.

[0048] Once the leg support assembly 14 is locked into a substantially raised position, the bather's legs will be high enough so that they may clear any obstacles, such as the docking ledge of a bathtub or a shower stall. With the aid of a handle, knob, or other gripping means (not shown) attached to a convenient location, such as the wall of a bathtub or a shower stall, the bather may then grasp the gripping means and rotate the bathing chair 10 into the bathing position. The combination operation of the leg support assembly 14 and the swivel assembly 36 allows a bather to enter and/or exit a bathing area and to clear any obstacles in the way without the aid of an additional person. Once situated within the bathing area in the bathing position, the bather may then release the locking assembly 15 on the leg support assembly 14, causing the leg support assembly

to assume a substantially lowered position, thereby allowing a bather to lower his or her legs comfortably into the bathing area.

[0049] These steps may be reversed to allow the bather to exit the bathtub or shower stall. It will be appreciated that the bathing chair 68 shown in FIG. 6 and the bathing chair 100 shown in FIG. 10 both may operate in substantially the same manner as described above.

[0050] As shown in FIGS. 1, 2, 6 and 10, the seat 12, 70, and/or 102 may include a plurality of small apertures 130 for allowing excess liquids to drain from the seat of the bathing chair. As also shown in FIGS. 1, 2, 6 and 10, the seat 12, 70, and/or 102 may include seat handles 132 for allowing a bather to grab and hold onto the seat. The seat 12, 70, and/or 102 of the bathing chair 10, 68 or 100 may also include a textured seating surface 134 as shown in FIG. 2.

[0051] In one embodiment, a bathing chair 136 may include a seatbelt 138 for restraining the bather in the bathing chair 136, as shown in FIG. 13.

[0052] In another embodiment, a bathing chair 140 may include a shower sprayer 142 as shown in FIG. 14 for allowing the bather to be more thoroughly and conveniently cleansed.

[0053] In another embodiment, a bathing chair 144 may include a product holder 146 for holding various products, for example, shampoo and/or soap. This is illustrated in FIG. 15.

[0054] Although the invention has been primarily described as being used in a bathtub or a shower, it is to be understood that the present invention can be used in other locations where a handicapped or disabled person may require assistance to maneuver around, and such uses are within the scope of the present invention. Example locations may be, but are not limited to, a car or a van.

[0055] Whereas particular embodiments of this invention have been described above for purposes of illustration, it will be evident to those skilled in the art that numerous variations of the details of the present invention may be made without departing from the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area comprising:

a seat; and

a seat support assembly extending from the seat and adapted and configured for securing the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

2. A bathing chair according to claim 1, wherein the seat support assembly comprises a single support member.

3. A bathing chair according to claim 1, wherein a first end of the seat support assembly is attached to an underside of the seat.

4. A bathing chair according to claim 3, wherein the first end of the seat support assembly is attached to substantially the middle of the underside of the seat.

5. A bathing chair according to claim 4, wherein the seat support assembly is a support tube having a thickness of at least 2 inches, the support tube attached by a flange to substantially the middle of the underside of the seat.

6. A bathing chair according to claim 5, wherein the support tube is generally S-shaped.

7. A bathing chair according to claim 1, wherein the seat support assembly extends from the seat and mounts to the floor of the bathing area at an offset measured in a direction substantially parallel to a docking ledge of the bathing area when the bathing chair is in a bathing position.

8. A bathing chair according to claim 1, wherein the seat support assembly extends from the seat and mounts to the floor of the bathing area at an offset measured in a direction substantially perpendicular to a docking ledge of the bathing area when the bathing chair is in a docking position.

9. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

10. A bathing chair according to claim 1, wherein the seat is rotatable around a substantially vertical axis.

11. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a swivel assembly for rotating the seat around a substantially vertical axis.

12. A bathing chair according to claim 11, further comprising a swivel assembly including a substantially horizontal base plate and an upper plate pivotally mounted on the base plate at an angle of up to 30 degrees in relation to the base plate.

13. A bathing chair according to claim 12, wherein the angle ranges from about 2 degrees to about 15 degrees.

14. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising at least one floor mount support for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

15. A bathing chair according to claim 14, further comprising a plurality of floor mount supports for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

16. A bathing chair according to claim 14, wherein the floor mount supports are offset from the seat support assembly in a direction substantially perpendicular to a docking ledge of the bathing area.

17. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising at least one suction cup assembly for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

18. A bathing chair according to claim 17, further comprising a plurality of suction cup assemblies for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

19. A bathing chair according to claim 17, wherein the suction cup assemblies are offset from the seat support assembly in a direction substantially perpendicular to a docking ledge of the bathing area.

20. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a backrest attached to the seat.

21. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a seatbelt attached to the seat.

22. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a product holder supported on the bathing chair.

23. A bathing chair according to claim 1, further comprising a shower sprayer supported on the bathing chair.

24. A bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area comprising:

a seat; and

means for securing the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

25. A bathing chair according to claim 24, wherein the means for securing the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area is a seat support assembly extending from an underside of the seat to the floor of the bathing area.

26. A bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area comprising:

a seat; and

a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

27. A bathing chair according to claim 26, wherein the leg support assembly is pivotally attached to the seat.

28. A bathing chair according to claim 27, wherein the leg support assembly pivots around a substantially horizontal axis.

29. A bathing chair according to claim 28, wherein the leg support assembly pivots throughout an angle of rotation of at least 40 degrees.

30. A bathing chair according to claim 26, wherein the leg support assembly is moveable from a first position to a second position that is vertically higher than the first position.

31. A bathing chair according to claim 26, wherein the leg support assembly is moveable to a raised position when the bathing chair is in a docking position, and is moveable to a lowered position when the bathing chair is in a bathing position.

32. A bathing chair according to claim 26, wherein the leg support assembly includes one or more handles for raising and lowering the leg support assembly.

33. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a seat support assembly having a first end attached to an underside of the seat.

34. A bathing chair according to claim 26, wherein the seat is rotatable around a substantially vertical axis.

35. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a swivel assembly for rotating the seat around a substantially vertical axis.

36. A bathing chair according to claim 35, further comprising a swivel assembly including a substantially horizontal base plate and an upper plate pivotally mounted on the base plate at an angle of up to 30 degrees in relation to the base plate.

37. A bathing chair according to claim 36, wherein the angle ranges from about 2 degrees to about 15 degrees.

38. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising at least one floor mount support for attaching the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

39. A bathing chair according to claim 38, further comprising a plurality of floor mount supports for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

40. A bathing chair according to claim 38, wherein the floor mount supports are offset from the seat support assembly in a direction substantially perpendicular to a docking ledge of the bathing area.

41. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising at least one suction cup assembly for attaching the bathing chair to a floor of the bathing area.

42. A bathing chair according to claim 41, further comprising a plurality of suction cup assemblies for attaching the bathing chair to the floor of the bathing area.

43. A bathing chair according to claim 41, wherein the suction cup assemblies are offset from the seat support assembly in a direction substantially perpendicular to a docking ledge of the bathing area.

44. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a backrest attached to the seat.

45. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a seatbelt attached to the seat.

46. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a product holder supported on the bathing chair.

47. A bathing chair according to claim 26, further comprising a shower sprayer supported on the bathing chair.

48. A bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area comprising:

a seat; and

means for adjustably supporting the legs of a bather.

49. A bathing chair according to claim 48, wherein the means for adjustably supporting the legs of the bather is a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

50. A bathing chair for bathing in a bathing area, the bathing area including at least one ledge, comprising:

a seat; and

a leg support assembly moveably attached to the seat.

51. A bathing chair according to claim 50, wherein the leg support assembly is moveable to a substantially raised position above the at least one ledge of the bathing area.

52. A bathing chair according to claim 50, wherein the bathing chair is rotatable around a substantially vertical axis of rotation.

53. A bathing chair according to claim 52, wherein the leg support assembly is moveable to a raised position when the bathing chair is rotated to a docking position, and the leg support assembly is moveable to a lowered position when the bathing chair is rotated to a bathing position.

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