

July 7, 1959

K. PITTS ET AL
JOINTED ARM REST

2,893,473

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4 Sheets-Sheet 1

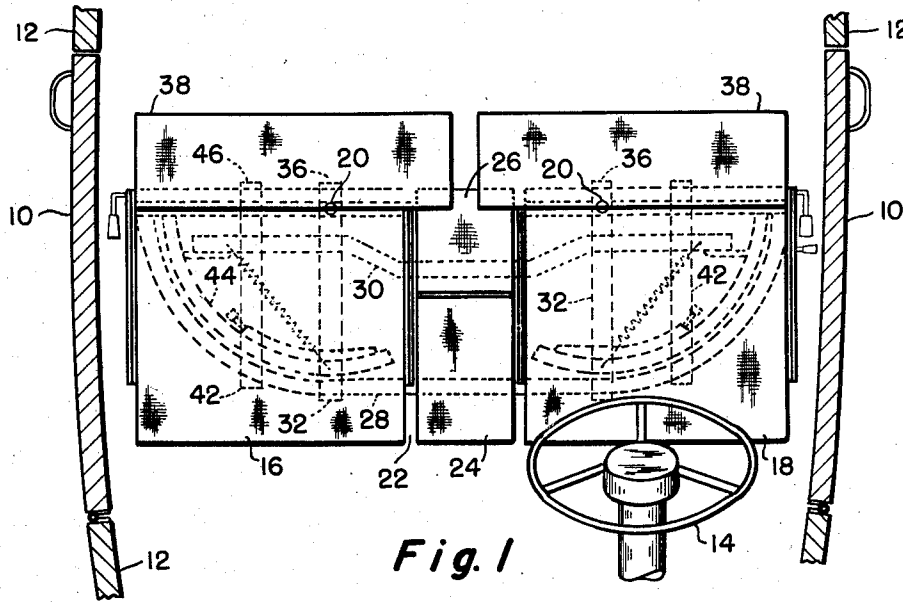


Fig. 1

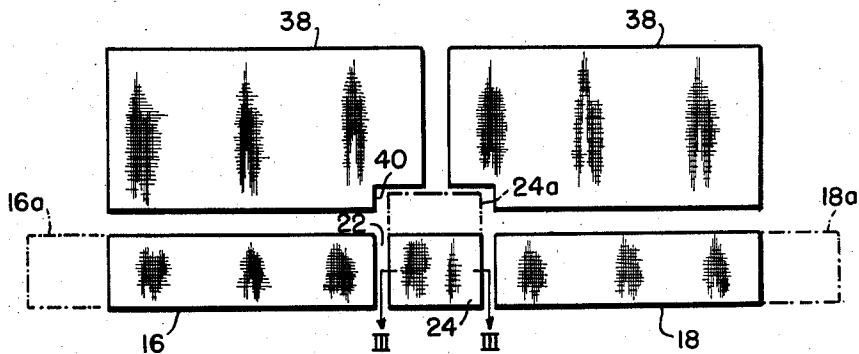
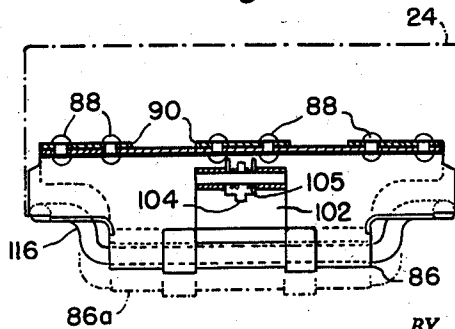


Fig. 2



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Fig. 5
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4 Sheets-Sheet 2

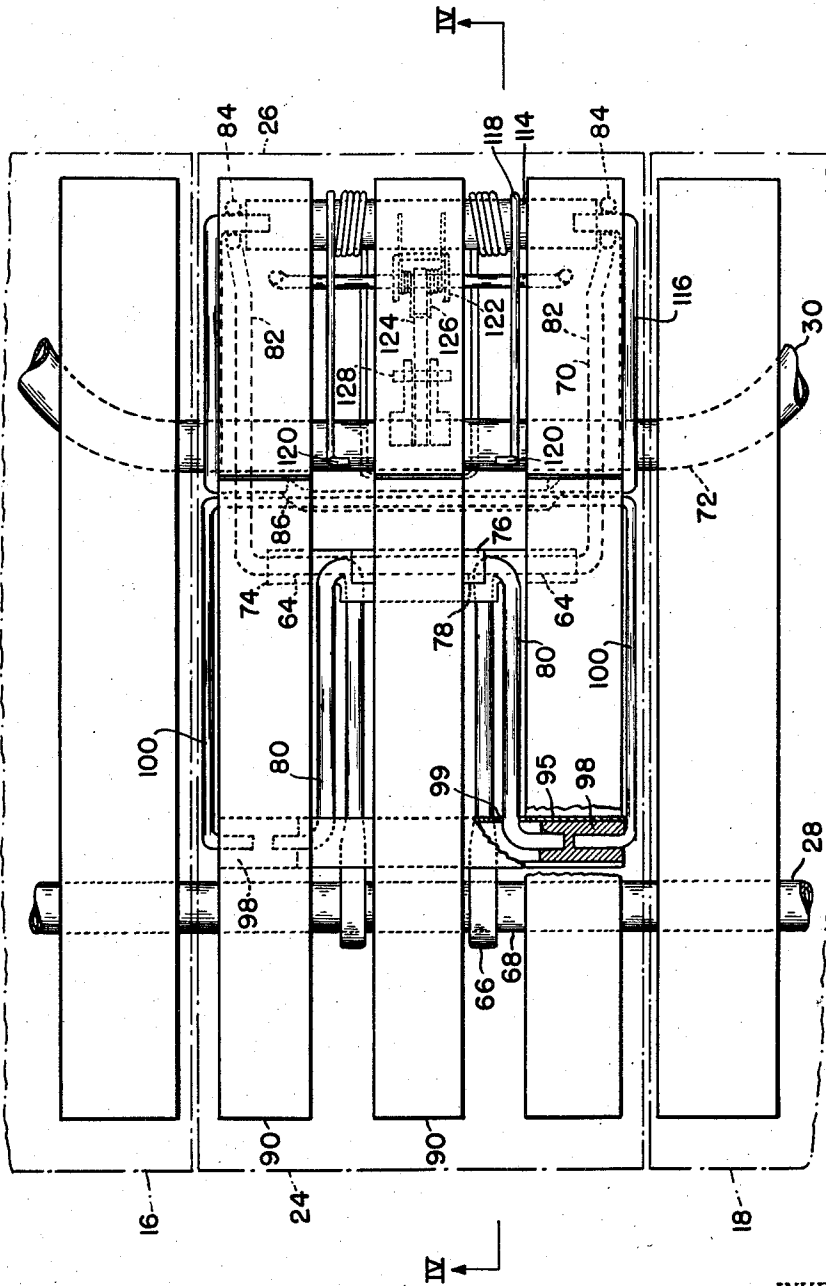


Fig. 3

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4 Sheets-Sheet 3

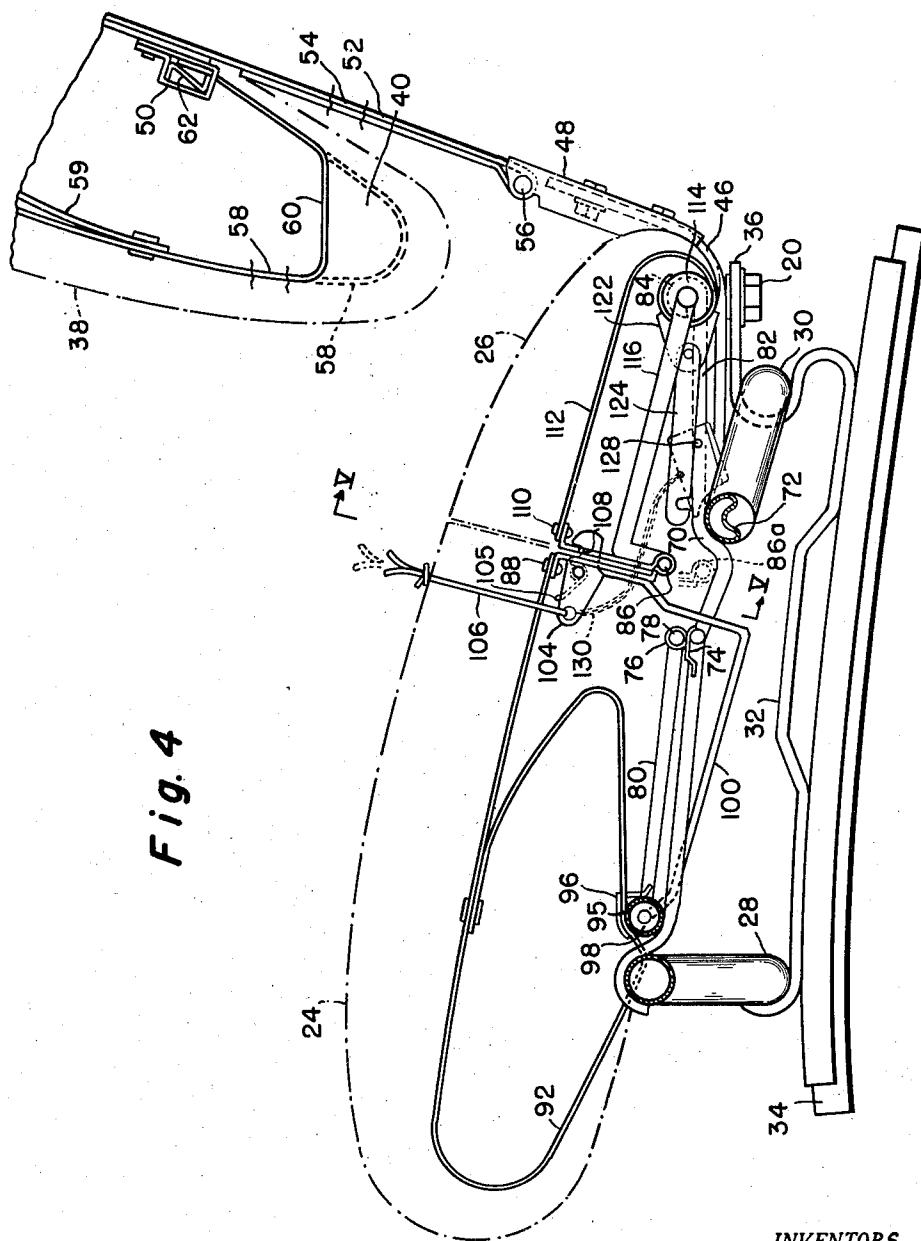


Fig. 4

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4 Sheets-Sheet 4

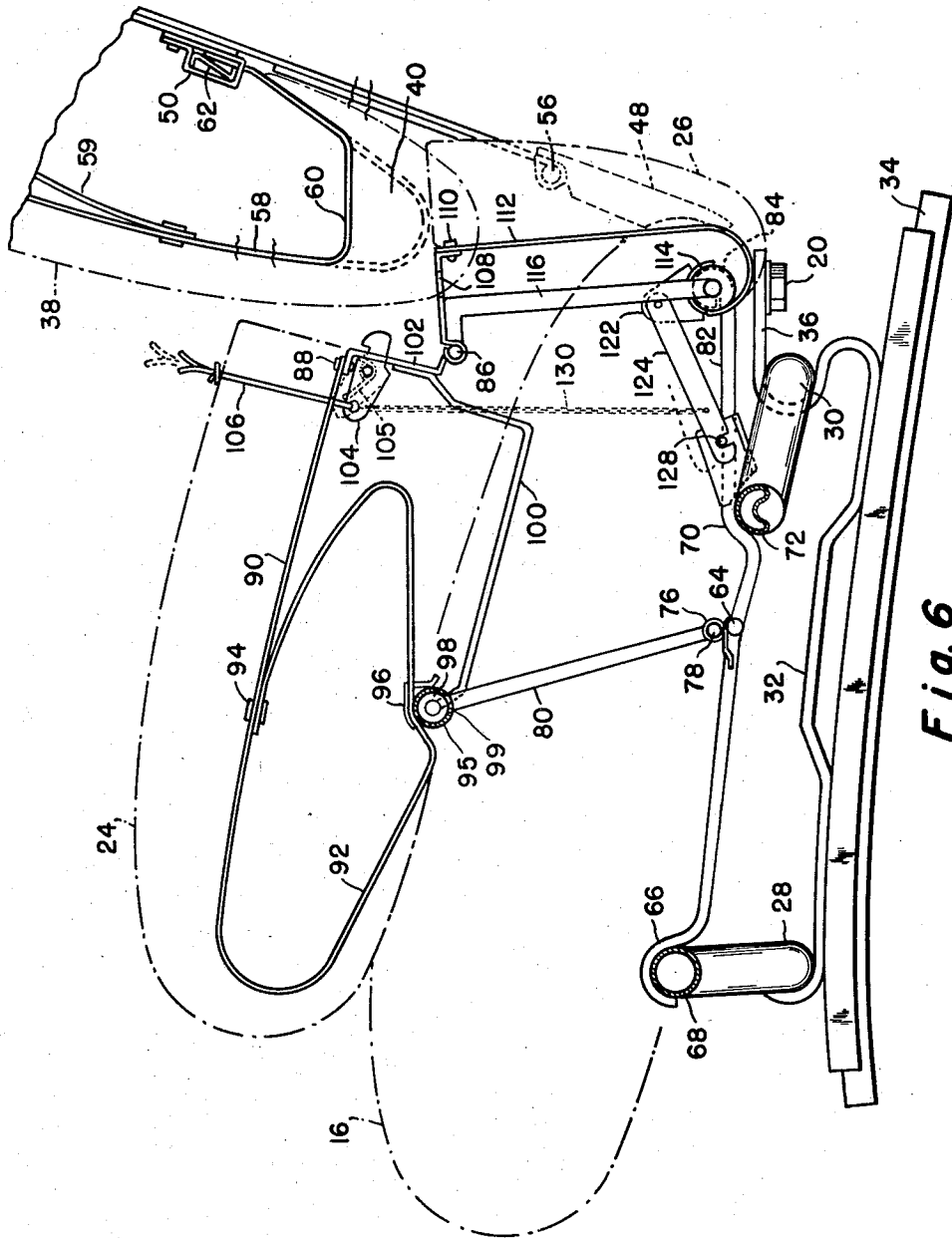


Fig. 6

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2,893,473

JOINTED ARM REST

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Application February 15, 1957, Serial No. 640,432

15 Claims. (Cl. 155—112)

This invention relates to a jointed arm rest for vehicle seats, and more specifically a center arm rest construction therefor comprising a jointed pair of cushions which constitutes a movable midsection of the seating surface and in which the cushions can be relatively rotated where they join, to an erected position offset from the outer cushion sections in the seat so as to present the arm rest.

In vehicles such as automobiles having a three-passenger seat, it is desirable when there are fewer occupants in the seat to provide a center arm rest for their added comfort. The referred to jointed pair of cushions which form the movable midsection of the present seat readily perform that additional function. More specifically, the jointed cushions extend longitudinally forwardly from a back rest provided on the seat and the rear one of these cushions rotates about one end at a point below the bottom of the back rest such that when folded downwardly to straighten the joint therebetween it brings the front surface of the front cushion into transverse alignment with the front edge of the seat. A supporting link pivoted to the underside of the front one of the cushions completes a parallelogram linkage therewith for erecting the cushions, enabling the unused rear cushion to disappear as the joint starts to fold, but at the same time cooperating in the partially folded position to support the front cushion levelly in its role as the arm rest. The disappearance of the rear cushion upon rotating upwardly to unstraighten the joint results from the cushion moving into a rectangular recess provided at the center of the back rest for the seat. In split type back rests as specifically disclosed herein, this recess is provided by relieving the inner lower corners of the back rest halves. Removal of the arm rest and the restoration of the continuous seating surface occurs when the cushions are collapsed into the seat, a movement controlled by downward pressure of the operator in unfolding the cushions at the joint, causing them to align with one another as joint straightens and they settle in this fashion into the contour of the seating surface.

Further features, objects, and advantages will either be specifically pointed out or become apparent when for a better understanding of the invention reference is made to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which show a preferred embodiment thereof and in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a vehicle front seat embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 is a front elevational view thereof;

Figure 3 is a sectional view in plan taken along the lines III—III of Figure 2, but to enlarged scale;

Figure 4 is a side elevational view taken along the lines IV—IV of Figure 3 and showing the cushions in a normal position;

Figure 5 shows a detail taken along the section lines V—V of Figure 4; and

Figure 6 shows the seat cushions of Figure 4 in the erected position.

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More particularly in the drawings, the present invention is embodied in a vehicle front seat shown disposed between two hinged doors 10 on opposite sides of the passenger compartment of a vehicle 12. A steering wheel 14 adjacent the front seat structure is mounted in the usual way at the forward end of the passenger compartment.

A pair of outer cushion sections 16 and 18 forms the opposite end portions of the seat structure and, for purposes of turning from their midposition shown in solid lines, they each have eccentric mounting pivots 20 on which they shift with a combined outwardly turning and rearwardly shifting movement into the dotted line positions 16a and 18a (Figure 2) for ready access of passengers with respect to the door openings on which the doors 10 are hinged. The outer cushion sections 16 and 18 mutually define a gap or recess 22 receiving a center cushion section having a joint in the middle dividing it into a front cushion 24 convertible into an arm rest and a secondary cushion 26 at the rear hinged to the front cushion. The center section and the outer sections 16 and 18 have a common longitudinally extending supporting frame formed of a front frame member 28 made of metal tubing having bow-shaped ends, and a rear frame member 30 made of similar tubing but having straight end portions. The supporting frame has identical opposite end portions which individually carry a foot bracket 32 formed of metal strap bridging between the front and rear members 28 and 30, each foot bracket being secured to a conventional seat slide 34 (Figure 4) providing for forward and rearward adjustment of the seat structure in the usual way. Both brackets 32 have a rearward strap extension 36, each carrying one of the eccentric seat cushion pivots 20.

The present seating assembly incorporates a split type folding back rest construction of which the cushions 38, constituting the two halves thereof, closely confront one another at their inner ends which bridge across the rear of the secondary seat cushion 26 and which are relieved at their lower inner corners to define an included gap or recess 40. The split back rest cushions 38 are identically carried by the respective outer cushion sections 16 and 18 at opposite ends of the frame and in the interests of brevity only the cushion section 16 and the associated cushion 38 and its construction will be described. The cushion section 16 has frame members including spaced cross straps 42 forming the cushion frame and the cross straps 42 in that frame carry a curved channel rail 44 which guides on the adjacent bow-shaped end of the front member 28 of the supporting frame as the section 16 pivots about the eccentric pivot 20. The cross straps 42 have rear strap extensions 46 forming back rest standards carrying a mounting bracket 48 (Figure 4). A back rest frame of inverted U-shape carries a pair of hollow cross members one of which is indicated at 50 and has spaced depending legs 52 and 54 which are turned to form loops at their lower ends to pivot on a fixed hinge pin 56 carried by the mounting bracket 48.

Each of the two back rest cushions 38 includes a row of internal spring elements 58 and although the back rest surface is shown in outline only, these elements 58 are padded with the usual foam rubber and covered in conventional way with upholstery cloth. The spring elements 58 which are of a two-piece construction having an arched helper spring 59 therewithin riveted thereto, extend in a row to the outer end of each cushion 38 and are identical with one another except for a foreshortened portion 60 formed on the innermost one or two of the elements to relieve the lower corner of that cushion so as to cooperate with the other cushion in defining the recess 40. The attaching terminals of the individual

spring elements 58 protrude through lower side openings into the interior of the cross member 50 and they are anchored therein by means of a Z bar retainer 62 which slides to final position into the hollow cross member 50.

The front and rear cushions 24 and 26 forming the jointed center section overlie a subframe formed of side rods having transversely aligned offsets 64 at their mid-portion; further having downturned front claws 66 which grip and are welded to an upwardly offset portion 68 in the frame front cross member 28, and also having rear claws 70 which grip and are welded to a forward offset portion 72 in the rear frame cross member 30. A bracket 74 which rigidly interconnects the offsets 64 in the side rods carries a bearing loop 76. A rod bent into a general U-shape has the base portion 78 thereof rotatably received in the bearing loop 76 and the spaced parallel legs of the bent rod form the front supporting links 80 of a parallelogram linkage swingably mounting the front cushion 24 to the subframe. The subframe has a rear extension constituted by the spaced parallel legs 82 of the side rods which form fixed cantilever supports for the rear cushion 26. The terminals of the legs 82 are offset upwardly and are turned into loops 84.

The front and rear cushions 24 and 26 mutually carry a depending set of front and rear leaves forming a hinge 86; the front leaf of which has rivet openings and a row of rivets 88 therein securing the rear ends of a set of front cushion spring elements 90 thereto. The readily apparent downward offset of the hinge 86 provides for concealment thereof when the joint straightens out so as to flatten the cushions 24 and 26 in end to end alignment with one another. The cushion elements 90 are steel bands made from strip spring stock which is turned at the front end so as to form a loop 92 closed by a rivet 94, being of the type generally as shown and described in the Pitts and copending Herider application, Serial No. 637,456, filed January 31, 1957, now U.S. Patent No. 2,834,403, issued May 13, 1958, and assigned to the assignee of the present invention. A spring element retainer tube 95 carries a retaining strip 96 along its length to which the loops 92 are directly secured at their underside. At the opposite ends the tube 95 carries a pair of bearing inserts 98, Figure 3, arranged with coaxial sockets receiving the short inturned terminal portions of a generally U-shaped trim wire 100 having the base thereof rigid with the front leaf of the hinge 86. In operation, the retainer tube 95 settles onto the side rods of the subframe adjacent the front claws 66 thereof to limit unfolding of the joint 86 so that it stops the cushions 24, 26 in a straight position. Adjacent the links 80 the walls of the retainer tube 95 are slotted at points to provide a short circumferentially extending portion 99 in which the adjacent link 80 relatively rotates and also an intersecting longitudinally extending slot portion, not shown, by means of which the outturned ends of the links 80 are introduced to within the interior of the tube 95 and socketed to turn in the inserts 98.

A latch pivot bracket (not shown) secured to the front leaf 102 of the hinge 86 carries a spring latch 104 which pivots on a fixed axis therein for locking the hinge leaves in abutting relationship. A coil spring 105 adjacent the bracket pivot has an anchored portion pressing rearwardly on the front leaf (Figure 5) and a front portion constantly biasing the forward part of the spring latch 104 downwardly as seen in Figure 4. A flexible latch pull 106 passing downwardly through a passage in the cushion 24 has its lower end connected to an eye formed in the latch 104 and has its upper end accessible to be manually lifted either by a direct tug exerted thereon or through a pivoted lever, not shown, but located substantially flush with the top surface of the cushion 24. The spring latch 104 passes through a slot 108 in the other hinge leaf when the leaves confront so as to engage the edge thereof and latch them together under the bias of the latch spring 105. The rear leaf of the hinge 86 carries a row of rivets

110 securing thereto the front ends of a row of cushion spring elements 112 and these elements 112 are made of steel strip spring stock and support the secondary cushion 26 which is shown in outline only, but which includes the usual foam rubber padding with upholstery cloth covering the same. The rear ends of the elements 112 are secured to a retainer tube 114 and a U-shaped, cushion frame rod 116 has short inturned portions on its legs which pass through the eyes of the loops 84 and thus carry the retainer tube 114 for rocking motion. The base of the frame rod 116 which actually is an inverted U in shape, has an offset near the top and forms the permanent hinge pin of the hinge 86.

An arm rest erecting spring 118 (Figure 3) arranged with coils coaxial to the tube 114 has an anchoring portion pressing downwardly on the offset 72 in the rear frame member 30 and has a forward portion 120 which makes engagement at two points and exerts an upward bias directly on the rear leaf of the hinge 86. The hinge 86 in the position of Figures 4 and 5 is therefore suspended elastically for up and down movement mutually guided by the trim wire 100 and the rod 116 between the dotted line lower position 86a (Figures 4 and 5) and the upper solid line position 86 to which it is biased by the biasing portions 120 of the erecting spring 118. A mounting bracket 122 for pivotally carrying a spring latch 124 is rigidly secured to the retainer tube 114 for rocking movement therewith so as to swing the pivot point of the latch in an outwardly offset arc of swing. A latch spring having a forward portion 126 engages the spring latch 124 so as to bias the forward end thereof downwardly and keep it in continual wiping contact with a fixed latch pin 128 which is bracket mounted in an offset position to the offset 72 in the rear frame cross member 30. The resulting automatic spring engagement between the spring latch 124 and the latch pin 128 limits the folding movement of the cushions 24 and 26 as they rotate upwardly from the position of Figure 4 so that the joint 86 never passes the partially folded position of Figure 6. A flexible pull chain 130 interconnects an eye in the spring latch 124 and the previously noted eye in the spring latch 104 so as to transmit movement from the latter to the former when the cushions are in the erected position of Figure 6.

In use, the cushion 24 is moved to the erect position shown by the dotted lines 24a in Figure 2 at the will of a seat occupant who causes the latch pull 106 to lift so as to rotate the spring latch 104 clockwise as viewed in Figure 4. The biasing portions 120 of the erecting spring 118 partially unwind from the position of Figure 3 so as to unstraighten the hinge joint 86 and rotate the arm rest cushion 24 upwardly to the position of Figure 6. The secondary cushion 26 is unused at this time, occupying the disappearing position within recess 40 but at the same time cooperating with the front links 80 of the parallelogram linkage to hold the arm rest cushion 24 substantially level. The spring latch 124 automatically engages to assist the erecting spring 118 in holding the arm rest erect for the period desired. Thereafter, operation of the same latch pull 106 by the operator enables him to release and move the arm rest cushion from the dotted line position 24a into the solid line position of Figure 2. Such operation of the latch pull 106 causes clockwise rotating movement of the spring latch 104 as viewed in Figure 6 which is transmitted through the depending chain 130 to the spring latch 124 therebelow so as to release it and thereafter manual pressure exerted forwardly and downwardly on the cushion 24 causes both cushions 24 and 26 to settle into the contour of the seating surface.

The spring latch 104 automatically reengages to hold the joint 86 straight with its hinge leaves folded together and with the cushions 24, 26 abutting end to end in alignment. These cushions are not stiff at the joint 86 which is suspended for the limited movement noted, nor

do their spring elements 90 and 112 tend to buckle by reason of this suspended type of hinge joint 86 as it deflects into the dotted line position 86a of Figure 4 where it bottoms on the side rods of the arm cushion subframe. It is appreciated that the inverted U-frame rod 116 for the secondary cushion 26 forms the rear link of the parallelogram supporting linkage with the first or upper joint thereof at 86 arranged to swing on an arc about a fixed axis whereas the second or lower joint defines such a fixed axis passing through the eyes of the loops 84.

Variations within the spirit and scope of the invention described are equally comprehended by the foregoing description.

We claim:

1. Seating structure which includes a frame, a hinged pair of cushion pads thereon rotatable from a settled position to a partially folded position forming an erected arm rest, one cushion pad providing a first operative joint at its outer end to the frame to produce a control link action, a link operatively joined at one end to the frame and at the other end to the outer end of the other cushion pad, said link being of a length approximating the effective length of said one cushion pad to form therewith the front and rear members respectively of at least approximately a parallelogram arm rest control linkage, said cushion pads mutually unfolding the said hinged joint due to movement of said parallelogram arm rest control linkage so as to move through a normal path of motion and settle in the contour of the seating surface of said structure, there being means on said frame in engagement with said settled linkage defining spaced points of support located on opposite sides of said hinged joint, and means to latch said pair of cushion pads solidly in said settled position subject to limited overtravel movement of said hinged joint below the spaced points of support aforesaid.

2. In combination, a seat frame, a cushion section thereon having a front swinging link connecting the front portion thereof to the frame for movement from a position settled in the contour of the seat so as to swing upwardly on a fixed horizontal axis with respect thereto, said cushion section including first cushion pad means pivoting the section at the rear on a fixed axis in said frame and further including means hinging said first cushion pad means to another cushion pad means at the front to accommodate movement of the cushion section about its fixed axis upon said front swinging link connection to said frame, thereby moving to a partially folded position presenting an elevated arm supporting surface, and means to automatically latch said cushion section in both positions comprising first and second spring catches, said first catch connected for revolving movement with one of said cushion pad means at a fixed point thereon and pivoted at that point and engageable with means on the other cushion pad means to lock said cushion section in said settled position, said second catch being connected between pin means mounted to said first cushion pad means and to said frame and pivoted on one pin and engageable with the other to lock said cushion section in the elevated partially folded position aforesaid.

3. Means forming a swing joint in a seat cushion structure comprising a cushion-connected tube, inserts in the ends thereof, slots in the walls of the tube adjacent the inserts, and a pair of frame-connected links protruding into said slots and formed with coaxially bent ends socketed in the inserts to enable the links to swing in the slots.

4. In a movable section in a seating assembly, in combination with a subframe on said assembly, a cushion including a plurality of spring elements having a common retainer tube at one end of said elements, a support member with legs rotatably mounted on the subframe and having short bent terminals received in and extending in opposite directions in the ends of the tube, a trim

member with legs arranged along the bottom of the cushion and having short bent terminals received in and extending in opposite directions in the ends of the tube, and inserts in which the leg terminals of said members are socketed in the ends of said tube, at least one of said members having the legs thereof introduced into said tube through slots in the walls thereof.

5. A movable midsection for a seating assembly comprising in combination with a subframe on said assembly, a pair of front and rear cushions having a common hinge joint at their adjacent inner end portions, and having other portions engaging the subframe at spaced points of support, a bent frame member included in the cushion frame of each cushion and extending from a point of connection to the common hinge outwardly to a point where each frame member has a pair of inturned ends connecting the same adjacent the one point of cushion support aforesaid for relative swinging movement on the subframe, and means biasing one of said frame members upwardly about its swing connection so as to yieldably suspend the hinge joint whereby the mid-section bridges between its opposite ends enabling the cushions to float at their inner end portions with limited elastic movement up and down together.

6. Seating structure which includes cushion mounting means, a pair of cushions thereon adapted to be rotated to a partially folded attitude presenting an elevated arm supporting surface, and adapted to be unfolded to settle into a position forming a continuous seating surface with said seating structure, a hinge joint interconnecting the cushions for the aforesaid movement, spring means effective to bias the cushions upwardly from the last said position to the aforesaid attitude through a normal range of travel, means incorporated in said hinge joint abutable together to initially limit the unfolding travel of the joint in settling into the position aforesaid, means in said cushion pads connected to the abutting means and flexing to accommodate limited overtravel past the initially settled position, and means in said cushion mounting means effective to guide said hinge in the described limited overtravel when the load on said cushions exceeds the upward bias of said spring means.

7. In a seat structure, a frame, an erectable arm rest thereon, front and rear members rotatably mounted at one end to the frame and operatively connected to the opposite ends of the arm rest to form at least approximately a parallelogram linkage therewith, the operative connection at one end of said arm rest including hinge leaves defining a joint which is inwardly offset for concealment, a spring latch which when the hinge leaves are folded together extends through the planes of the leaves and which has an operative position effective to hold the leaves folded together with the joint concealed, means to pivot said latch into an inoperative position including a flexible pull element, the axis through such pivot being spaced apart from the axis through the hinge joint aforesaid.

8. A seating structure having outer seat cushions spaced to define a first gap and upright back rest cushions relieved at a point to define a second gap, a supporting frame, a front cushion member normally arranged in the first gap and having a link permanently connecting the cushion member to the seat frame to pivot upwardly to form an arm rest thereon, and a second member forming a rear cushion structure hinged to the front cushion member and pivoted to swing from a point aligned with the front member within the first gap to a position occupying said second gap and carrying a cushion unusable in that position, and spring catch means connected between pin means mounted to said rear cushion structure and to said supporting frame and pivoted on one pin and engageable with the other to arrest motion of and latch said rear cushion structure in its final movement in the direction of the last said position, the effec-

tive length of said link and said rear cushion structure being substantially equal to the height of said second gap so that the rear cushion structure in its unused position cooperates to support the front cushion levelly in the arm rest position at a point extending frontwardly from the top of the second gap.

9. In a seat structure, the combination of a frame, an erectable arm rest thereon, and front and rear members operatively joined at one end to the frame and joined at their other end to different ends of the arm rest to form at least approximately a parallelogram linkage therewith, said second named joint for one of said members including confronting hinge leaves and the first named joint for said one member including a preloaded torsion spring to bias the arm rest erect, and locking means for the first and second joints on said one member comprising one latch effective between said hinge leaves to hold them folded together and another latch operatively interconnected to the one latch and cooperating with the torsion spring to hold the arm rest erected, and a manual actuator common to the interconnected latches and alternately effective to lift and release said one latch alone or lift said one latch so as to cause tandem movement of both latches for releasing said other latch when the arm rest is erected.

10. The combination of seat structure according to claim 9 wherein said arm rest comprises one cushion and said one member carries a complementary cushion cooperatively arranged to lie flush with the arm rest cushion when collapsed from their erected positions, said one latch being effective to lock said second joint when the cushions are flush so as to overcome the bias of said torsion spring.

11. A seat assembly having outer seat sections arranged with a main seating frame therebelow and with a back rest structure supported therebehind, said back rest structure having a relieved intermediate portion therein, said assembly further including a subframe mounted on an intermediate portion of the main seating frame between the outer seat sections, an arm rest member carrying an arm rest cushion and forming the upper link in at least approximately a parallelogram linkage swingable on the subframe, a forwardly disposed bent rod member forming the front links of the parallelogram linkage and passing through side slots in the walls of a cushion element retaining tube which is secured to the arm rest member, means forming a joint between said front links and said retainer tube enabling the former to turn in said slots, a rearwardly disposed bent rod member forming the rear links of said parallelogram linkage for lifting and supporting the arm rest in a level position, said rear member carrying a secondary cushion adapted to protrude into a concealed position in said relieved back rest portion when the arm rest is lifted, a first joint between the rear member and said arm rest member comprising hinge leaves having a downwardly offset hinge axis for normally concealing the hinge, a second joint between the rear member and said subframe including biasing means effective to lift the arm rest, and means for locking said linkage at its first and second joints comprising a latch between said hinge leaves effective to hold said arm rest cushion and said secondary cushion flush with said outer seat sections and a separate latch for the second joint cooperating with said biasing means to support the arm rest in its lifted position, and means effective to lift said latches in tandem and having a common actuator therefor connected to one of said latches.

12. A seat assembly having outer seat sections arranged with a main seating frame therebelow and with a back rest structure supported therebehind, said back rest structure having a relieved intermediate portion therein, said seat assembly further including intermediate cushion mounting means comprising a subframe having a cantilever extension at the rear formed by spaced parallel

rod legs, a rod rotatably mounted on the subframe and bent to provide spaced parallel rod legs forming the front links of at least approximately a parallelogram linkage on the subframe, and front and rear cushions having a first joint common thereto for interconnecting same at the middle and having a second joint between the rear cushion and the spaced parallel rod legs forming the cantilever extension on said subframe, a pivot joint connecting the front cushion and the spaced parallel rod legs forming the front links on the subframe and cooperating with the first and second joints so as to complete the parallelogram linkage, means included at said second joint to bias the linkage and erect the cushions, and means for locking the linkage comprising a latch at the first joint to hold the cushions collapsed against the resistance of the bias means, and another latch at the second joint to hold the cushions erected, said latches being interconnected and having a common latch pull.

13. In a seating means, a plural cushion structure having seat cushions located one at each outer side of a center section, said structure comprising a frame having means to pivot the outer seat cushions from individual laterally offset positions to a midposition mutually defining a first gap, a split type folding back rest construction formed of upright cushion elements pivoted to different ones of said outer cushions and movable therewith, said upright cushion elements being relatively relieved at a point in their adjacent edges for mutually defining a second gap when said outer cushions reach the midposition, and a movably mounted center cushion section on said frame formed of mutually interconnected parts with parallelogram linkage mechanism having a settled position in said first gap forming a portion of the seating surface and rotatable into an elevated attitude in which said section presents an elevated arm supporting surface and in which a part thereof disappears into said second gap.

14. In a seating means, a plural cushion structure having pivoted seat cushions located one at each outer side of a center section, said structure comprising a frame carrying the pivoted outer seat cushions in a manner so that in the least lengthwise expanded condition of the seating means they mutually define a minimal first gap across the center section, a split type folding back rest construction formed of upright cushion elements pivoted to different ones of said outer cushions, and being relatively relieved at a point in their adjacent edges to define a second gap when unfolded by movement into an upright position, and a movably mounted center cushion section on said frame formed of mutually interconnected parts with parallelogram linkage mechanism having a settled position accommodated in said minimal first gap forming a portion of the seating surface and rotatable into an elevated attitude in which to present an elevated arm supporting surface and in which a part thereof disappears into said second gap.

15. In a seating means, a plural cushion construction having a seat cushion located one at each outer side of a center section, said structure comprising a frame carrying the outer seat cushions so as to mutually define a first gap across the center section, a split type folding back rest construction formed of a plurality of upright elements each mounted to said structure whereby it is operable thereon to fold on a generally horizontal axis in all positions and is movable from an individual laterally offset position to a midposition so as to mutually define with another upright element a second gap, and a movably mounted center cushion section on said structure formed of mutually interconnected parts with parallelogram linkage mechanism having a settled position in said first gap forming a portion of the seating surface and rotatable into an elevated attitude in which said section presents an elevated arm supporting surface and in which a part of said section disappears into said second gap.

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