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(54) **LOCKING BRACKET AND CUPHOLDER FOR SEAT FRAME**

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A47K 1/08 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **248/311.2**; 248/223.41; 297/188.14; 297/188.18

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 248/311.2, 248/313, 220.22, 224.7, 212, 223.41, 223.31; 297/188.18, 188.14, 188.2
See application file for complete search history.

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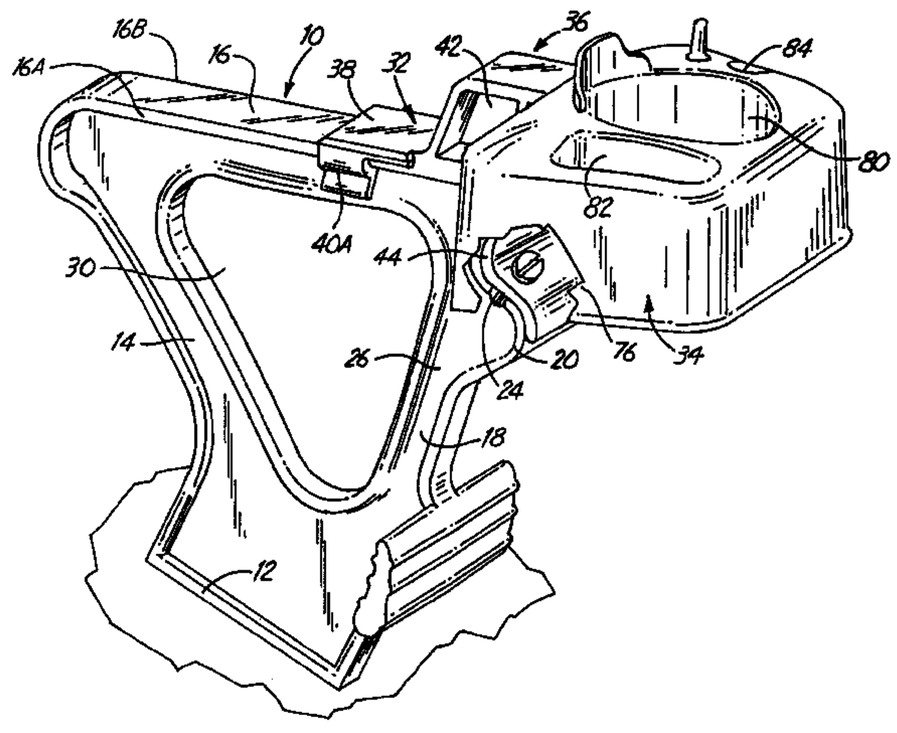
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A bracket is used for mounting onto the standard of a stadium or theater seat. The bracket can be bolted in place at the same time as seat backs are bolted onto the seat standard. The bracket has latches that permit a drink cupholder to be installed by sliding the cupholder along mating guides in one direction. The latches engage complementary latch portions on the drink cupholder to prevent removal of the drink cupholder. The drink cupholder has a wall that mates to the bracket, and includes skirt walls that cover the bolts used for attaching the bracket and the seat backs to the seat standard.

20 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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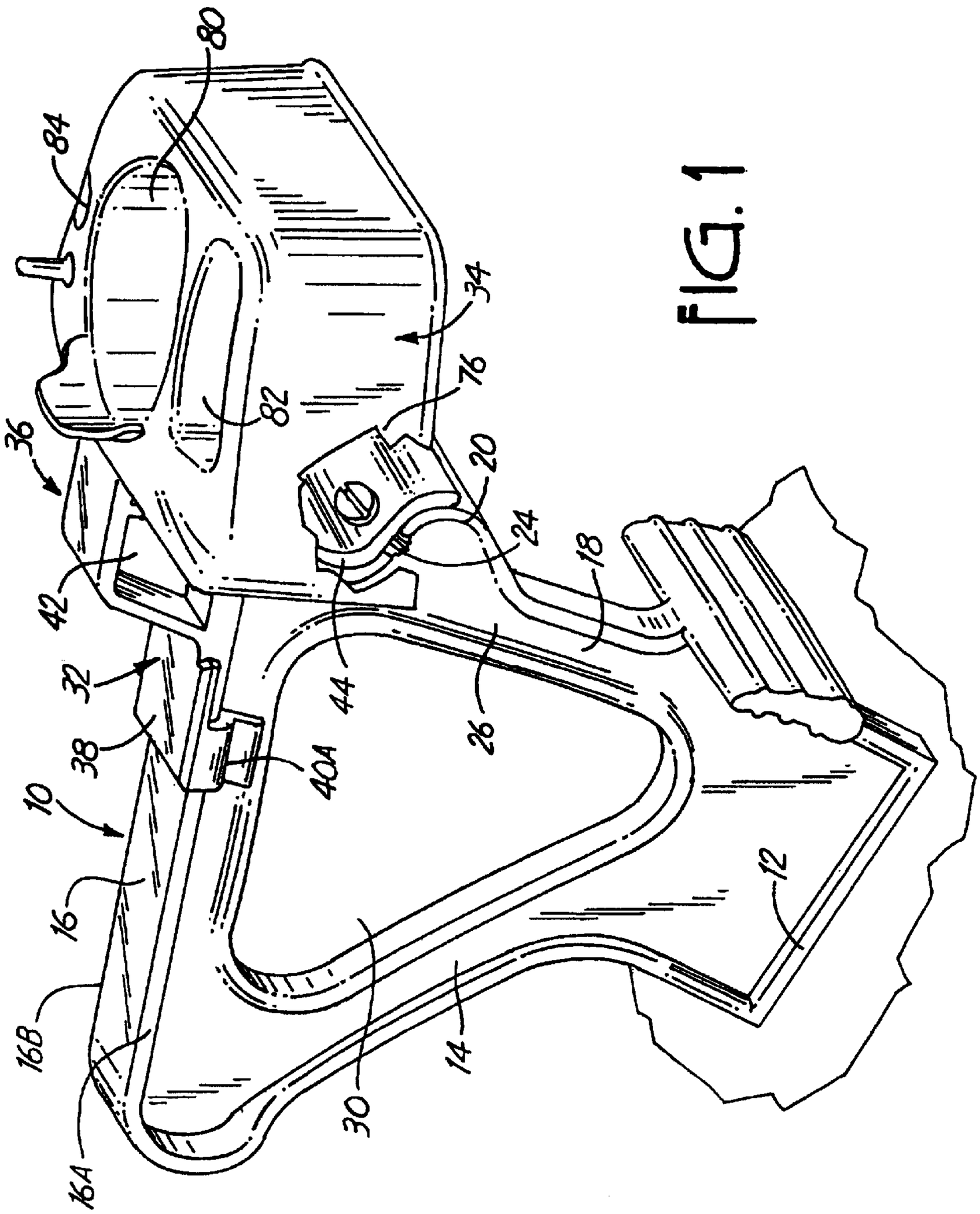


FIG. 1

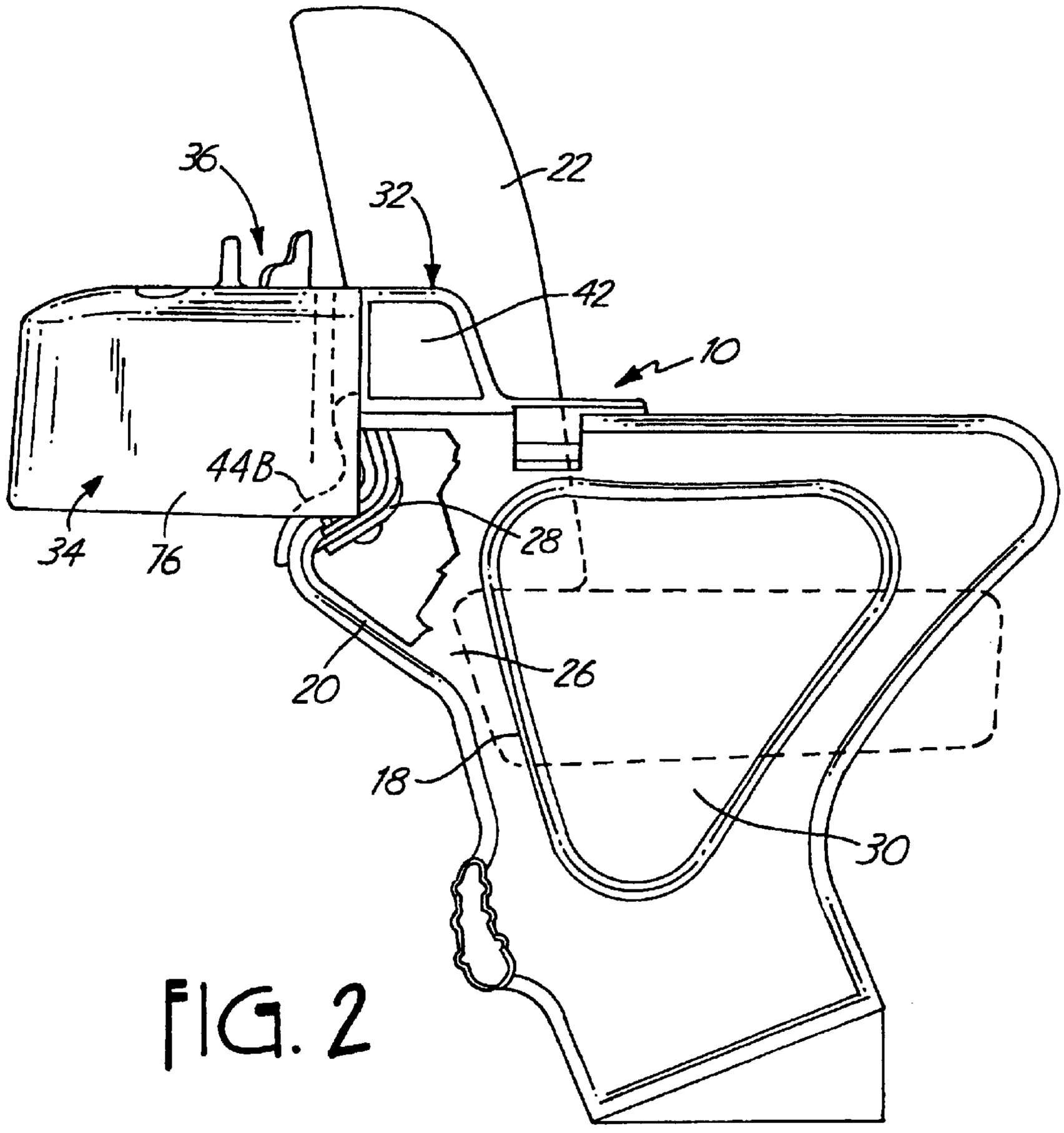
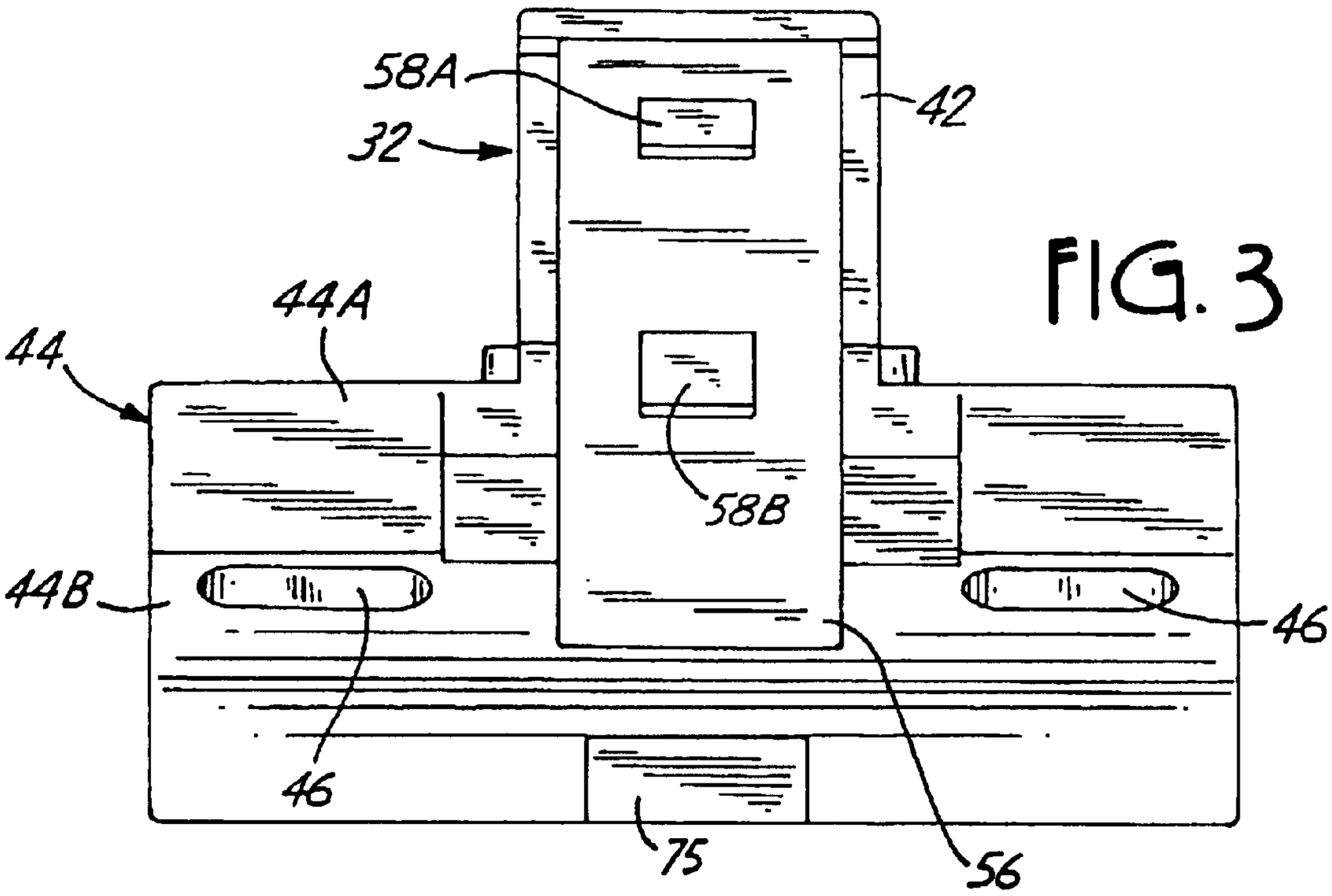


FIG. 2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42
32
44A
44
58B
44B
46
46
75
56

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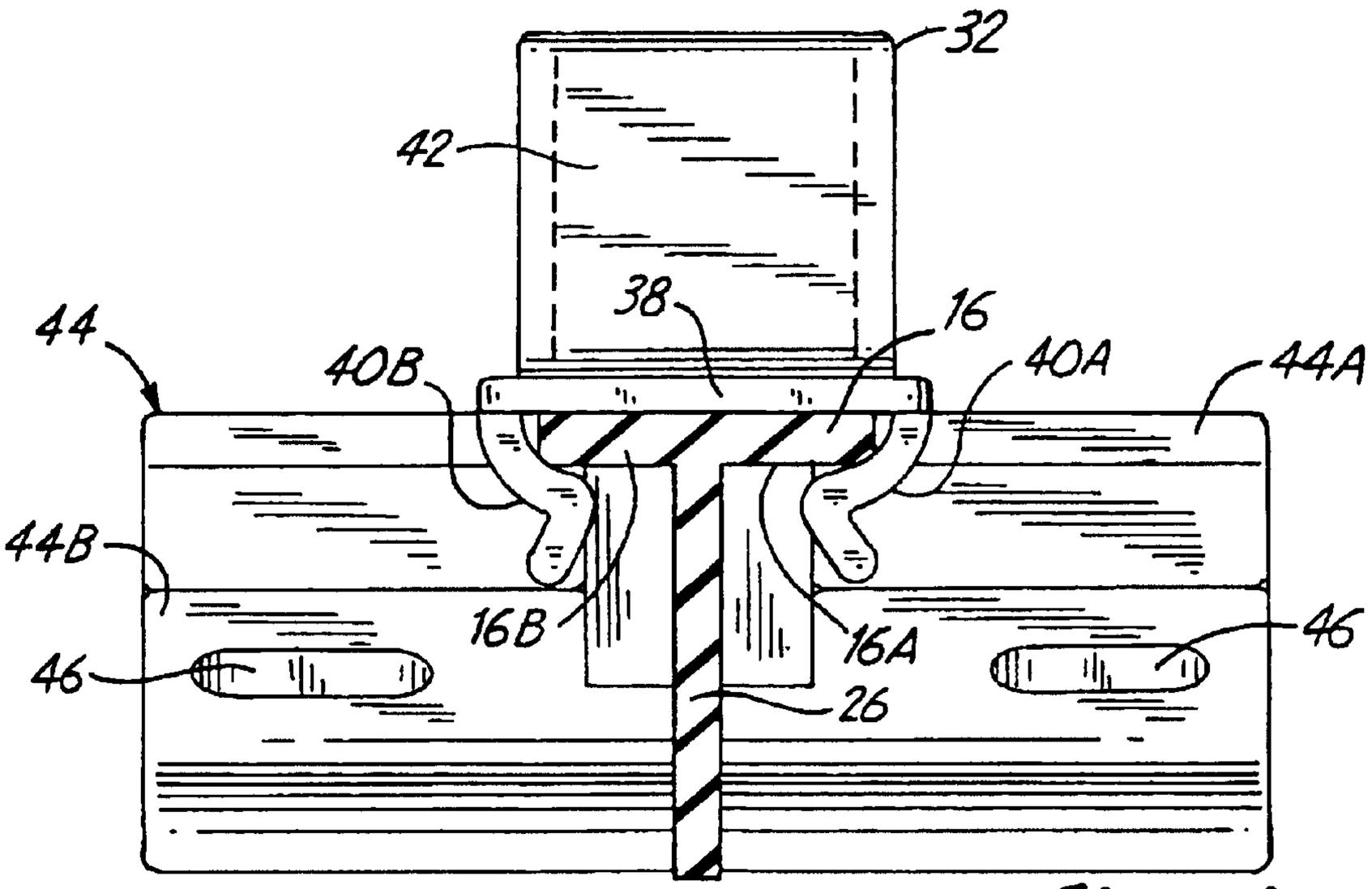
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42
38
16
44
40B
40A
44A
44B
16B
16A
46
46
26

FIG. 4

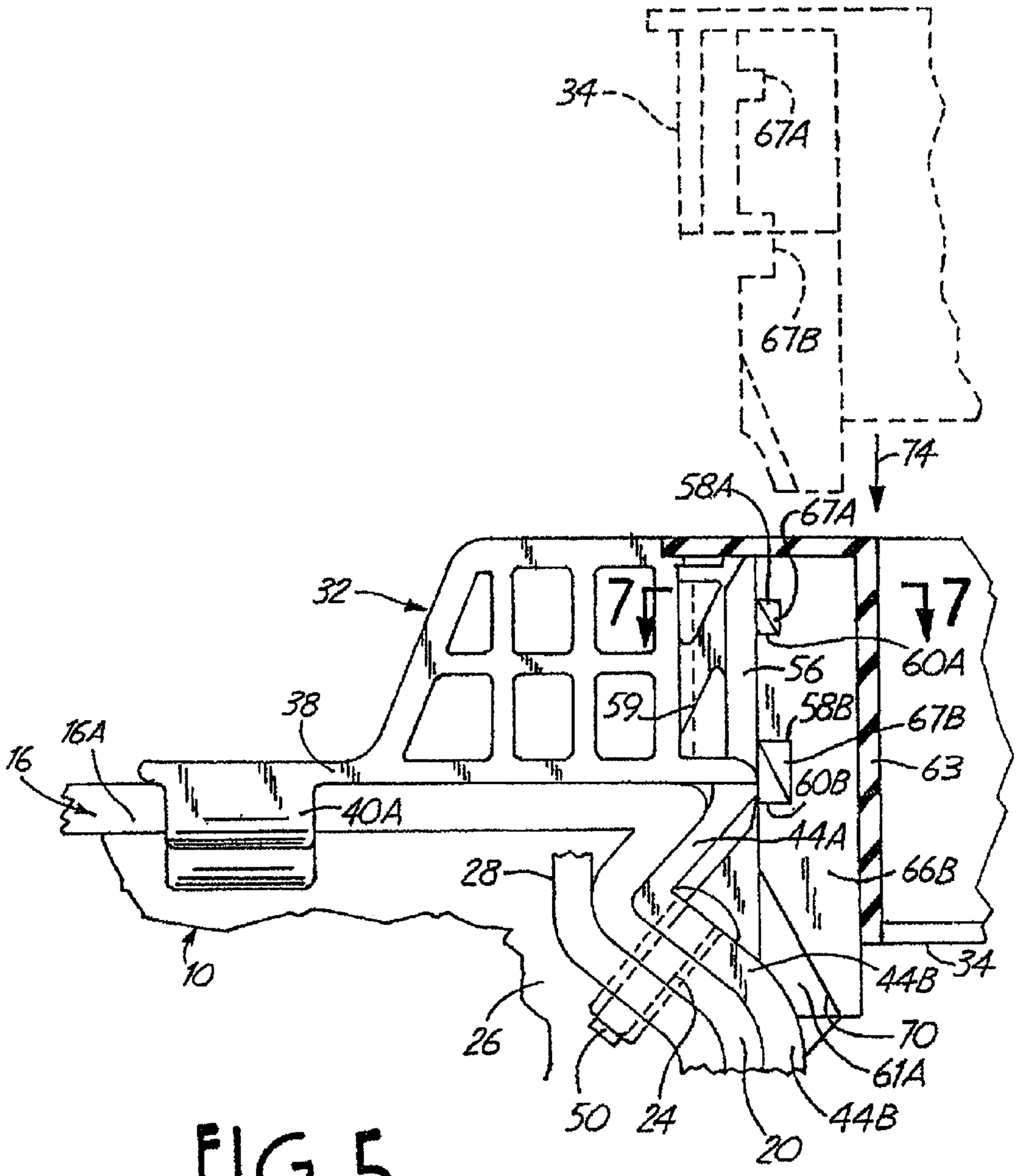

FIG. 5

(AMENDED)

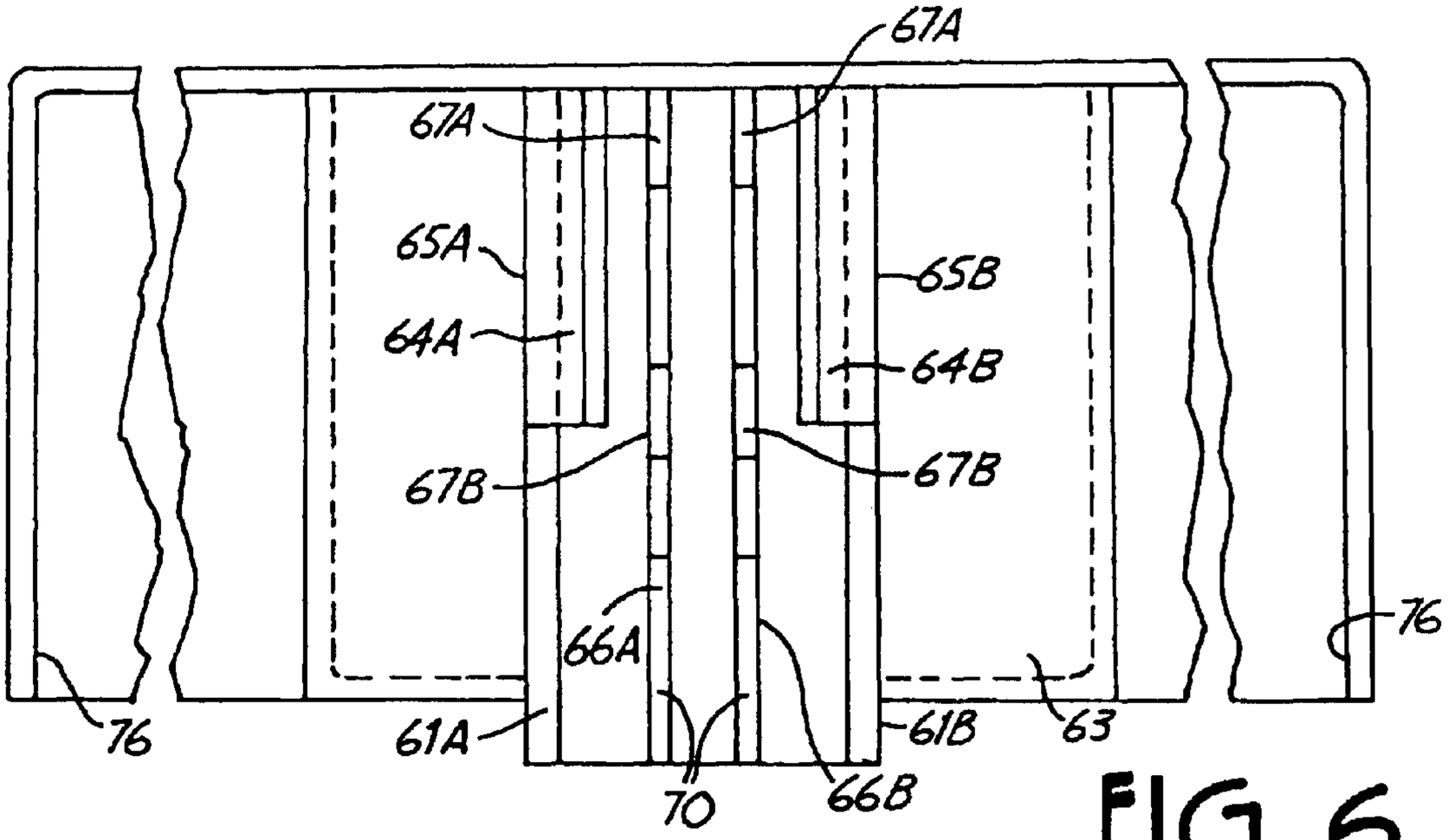
67A
67A
65A
64A
65B
64B
67B
67B
66A
76
76
61A
61B
63
70
66B

FIG. 6

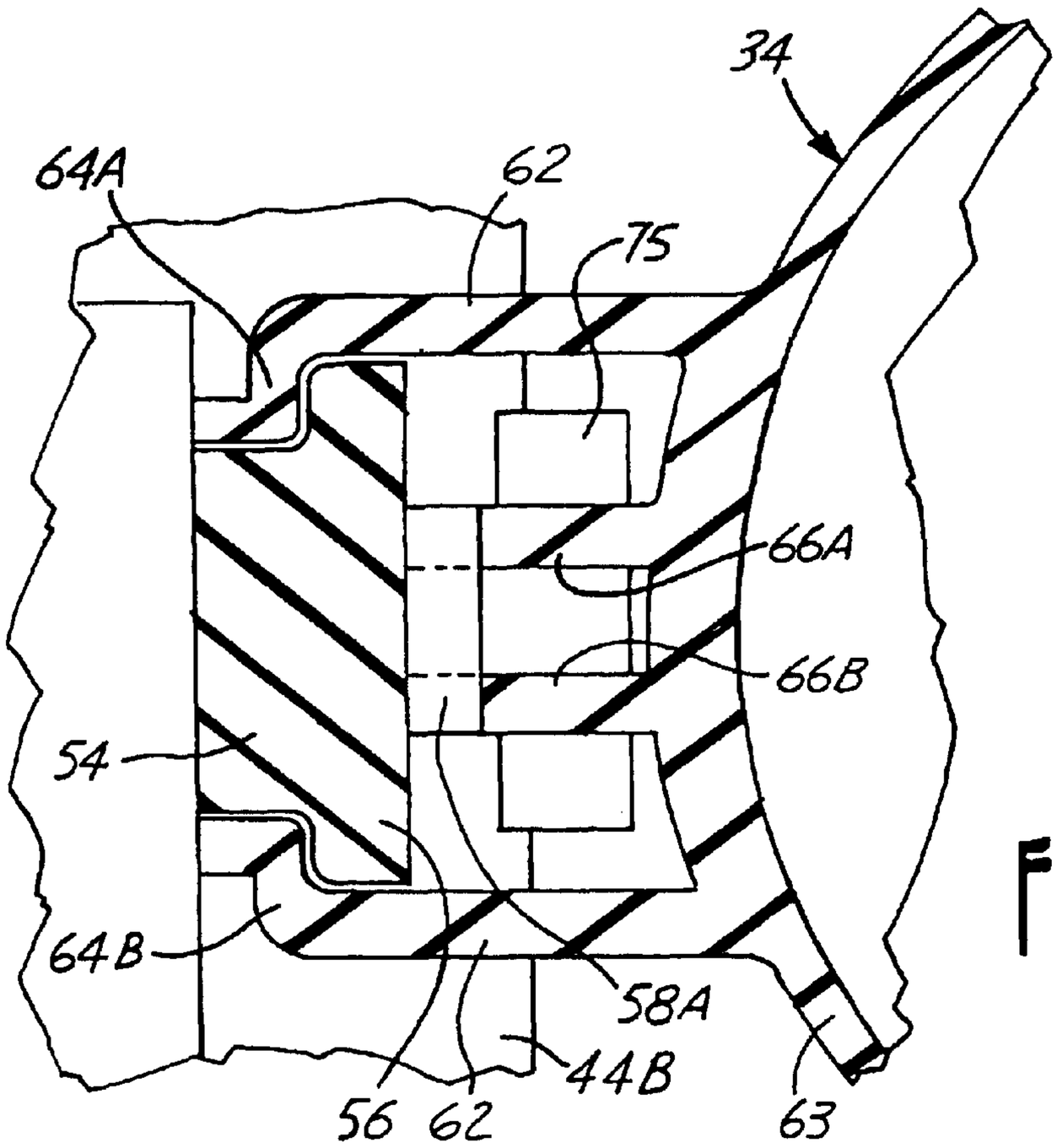
34
64A
62
75
66A
66B
54
64B
58A
44B
56
62
63

FIG. 7

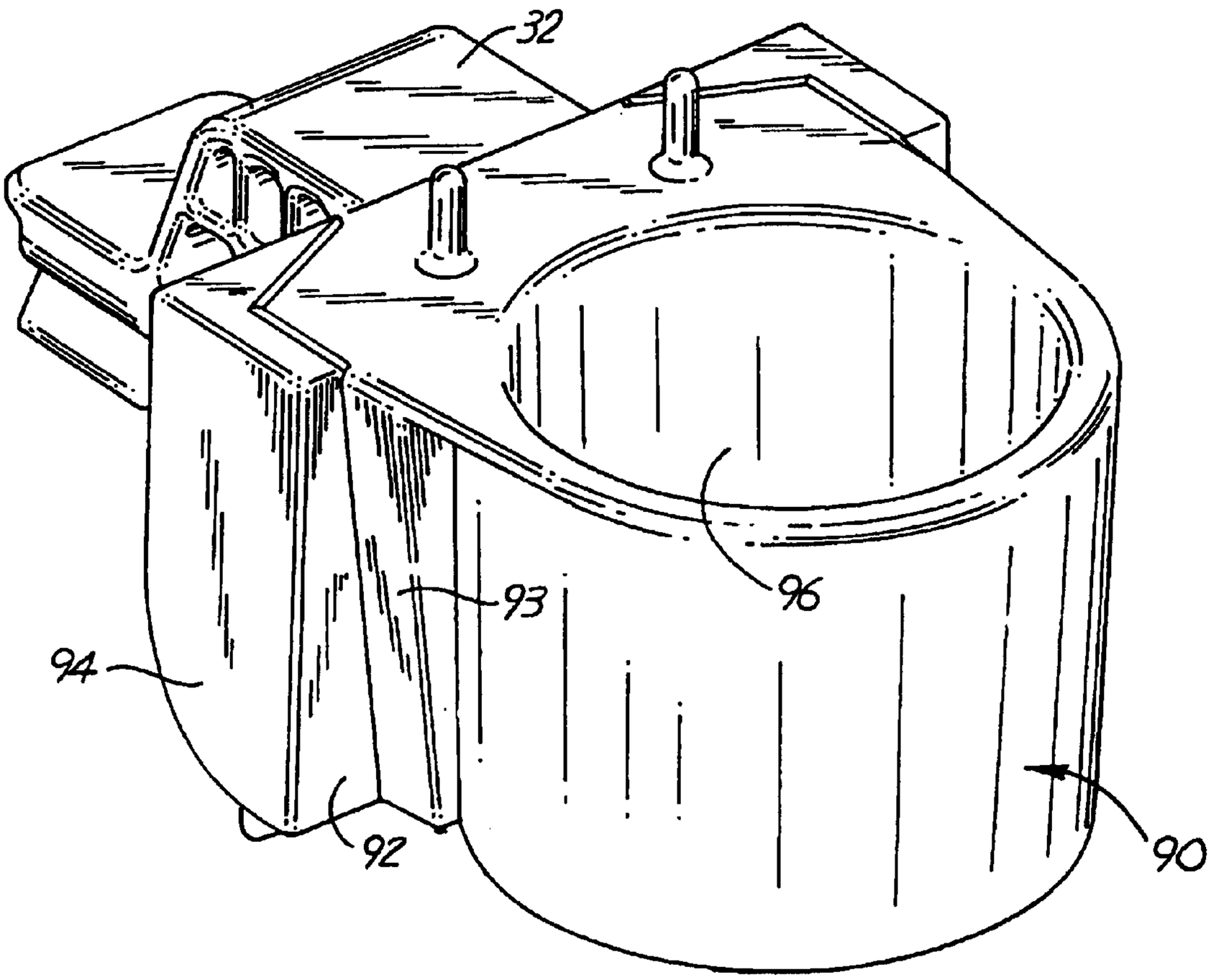

FIG. 8

LOCKING BRACKET AND CUPHOLDER FOR SEAT FRAME

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [ ] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue.

More than one reissue application has been filed for original U.S. Pat. No. 6,641,101 for which reissue is sought. This application is a continuation of Reissue application Ser. No. 10/985,831 filed Nov. 10, 2004, now U.S. Reissue Pat. No. RE 39,392.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a drink cupholder on the seat standard or frame of stadium seats, which includes a separate mounting bracket that can be preinstalled on the standard, before the seat backs are put into place and using bolt holes that are also used for mounting the seat backs in place. The mounting bracket can be installed, and later the seat backs can be installed. A separate drink cupholder is fitted into the place on the mounting bracket as a final step and locks in position covering the bolts used for mounting the mounting bracket and sent back to prevent tampering.

In the prior art, drink container holders or drink cupholders have been advanced, and have become very popular in stadium seating for theaters, sports arenas and the like. The cupholders generally are mounted at the rear of the seat backs, so that they are accessible and useable for persons seated in the row behind the row of seats on which the cupholders are mounted. Also, separable mounting brackets and drink cupholders have been shown in the prior art. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,813,644, illustrates such a cupholder. Improvements in the ease of mounting, and the procedures for enabling one to install a mounting bracket at the time the seat standards are installed into the arena, and then later adding the drink cupholders, while insuring that the drink cupholders are secured in place is important. Tampering with drink cupholders can be a problem, and the cupholder of the present invention covers the bolts that attach the mounting bracket to the seat standard when the drink cupholder is snapped into place. This construction will discourage, and essentially eliminate, removal of the brackets and the drink cupholder.

The bracket and the drink cupholder can be molded out of suitable plastic materials, and provide an attractive, easily installed, and relatively tamper proof assembly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a mounting bracket and a drink cupholder that are separately made, and which are installed on the standards or frames for mounting the bracket stadium seats. The mounting bracket is adapted to snap into place on the arm support between a pair of seats, the mounting bracket extends to the rear of such standard. Molded or formed seat standards can have various curved shapes, and the present mounting bracket can easily be adapted to such curves for fitting into place, particularly along flanges at the rear of the seat standard. The seat backs are installed on provided supports at the rear of the standard with suitable bolts. The same bolts are used for securing the mounting bracket in place, so the mounting brackets can be mounted and secured at the time the seat backs are installed.

The drink cupholder that attaches to the mounting bracket can be installed at a later time by sliding it onto a provided guide wall so it snaps and latches in place. The drink cupholder is then non-removably attached without utilizing special tools. Attaching the mounting bracket to the standard at the time of installing the seat backs, makes the installation process easier.

Since the drink cupholder can be installed at a later time, it is made to shield the mounting bolts that are used for attaching the mounting bracket on the seat standard. Once the drink cup or drink cupholder has been snapped into place, the mounting bolts are not accessible from the rear but the drink cupholder is accessible to a person sitting in a seat row behind the row of seats on which the drink cupholder is installed.

Different versions of drink cupholders can be installed on the same mounting bracket, depending on the use that is desired. Each drink cupholder has a guide or slide that has recesses that mate with the lugs on the mounting bracket.

The mounting bracket is easily molded, and the drink cupholders also are molded so that they can be made rugged, in suitable colors, and with pleasing shapes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of the typical seat standard having a drink cupholder mounting bracket and drink cupholder installed thereon, with the seat backs removed;

FIG. **2** is a side elevational view of the standard of FIG. **1** fragmentarily showing a seat back in dotted lines in position for illustrative purposes;

FIG. **3** is a rear end view of a mounting bracket;

FIG. **4** is a view of the end of the mounting bracket opposite from FIG. **3**, that would be installed on the seat standard;

FIG. **5** is a side elevational view showing the drink cupholder latched into place on a mounting bracket;

FIG. **6** is a back side view of the drink cupholder showing the receptacles that latch onto lugs on the mounting bracket;

FIG. **7** is a fragmentarily enlarged sectional view of the mating parts for mounting the drink cupholder on the mounting bracket taken on line **7**—**7** in FIG. **5**; and

FIG. **8** is a perspective front view of a modified view of the drink cupholder shown installed on a bracket.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

As shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**, in particular, a stadium seat standard indicated generally at **10** is for mounting seats in a conventional manner in a stadium seating arrangement. The seats are not shown in detail, in that they can be of any suitable design. The standard **10** includes a base **12** that mounts onto a suitable support, such as a poured concrete floor of a stadium, and has frame uprights **14** at the front edge that curve upwardly to a top flange **16**. The rear side of the standard has a rear upright **18**, with a mounting flange **20** that is used for mounting a seat back **22**, as shown schematically in FIG. **2**. The seat back **22** has suitable brackets **28** that fit against the inner surface of the flange **20** in alignment with slots **24** on the mounting flange.

The flange **20** extends on opposite sides of a center panel **26**, and there is a slot **24** on each of the extending side portions of the flange **20**. The flange **20** and panel **26** can be curved at the rear side, as desired, and the brackets **28** used for mounting the seat backs fit this curvature.

The top flange **16**, extends on opposite sides of the center panel **26**, as shown, and various openings **30**, can be provided. The side portions **16**A and **16**B of the top flange are used for supporting a mounting bracket **32** for a drink cupholder **34** in a drink cupholder assembly **36**.

The mounting bracket **32** is shown in greater detail in FIGS. **3** and **4**, and includes a horizontal top wall **38** that rests above the flange **16**, and has snap on resilient latch fingers **40**A and **40**B on the two sides of the top wall **38**, respectively, that fit over edges of the side flanges **16**A and **16**B of the top flange **16** on the seat standard.

The top wall **38** joins a support head **42** that is positioned at the rear side of the mounting bracket **32**. The support head **42** in turn is joined to a support wall **44** that is molded in two wall sections, **44**A and **44**B, to conform to the upper portions of the flange **20** at the rear side of the standard **10**. The wall **44** is provided with bolt openings or slots **46** in the lower support wall section **44**B that is resting on a portion of the flange **20** carrying the slots **24** for the bolts **50** which are used for mounting the seat backs **22**, and which also are used for attaching the mounting bracket **32** in position.

The support head **42** supports a generally planar upright track or wall **56** that is joined to the support head **[40]** *42* with a block or web **54**. The wall **56** has two latch lugs **58**A and **58**B formed thereon. The lugs **58**A and **58**B taper outwardly in downward direction and form downwardly facing shoulder surfaces **60**A and **60**B, respectively. The planar wall **56** mates with latch slide guides **62** at the back of the drink cupholder **34**.

The back of the drink cupholder **34** has a pair of spaced side walls **61**A and **61**B that have upper portions **65**A and **65**B extending laterally from the wall **63** forming the cup receiving cylinder a greater distance than the lower portions of the wall (see FIGS. **5**, **6** and **7** in particular). The upper portions **65**A and **65**B have inwardly turned flanges **64**A and **64**B that fit over the side edges of the upright track or wall **56**. When the cupholder **34** is to be installed on the mounting bracket **32**, the cupholder **34** is raised above the wall **56** as shown in dotted lines in FIG. **5**, so that the flanges **64**A and **64**B are to the front side of the edges of the wall **56**, and then the cupholder **34** is slid downwardly and guided along wall **56**.

The wall **33** of the cupholder **34** also has a pair of latch walls **66**A and **66**B between the side walls **61**A and **61**B. The latch walls **66**A and **66**B have latch recesses **67**A and **67**B which have upwardly facing shoulder surfaces that lock under shoulders **60**A and **60**B of the lugs **58**A and **58**B for locking the cupholder **34** in place. The latch walls **66**A and **66**B have edges that will slide along the tapered surfaces of the lugs **58**A and **58**B respectively, when the cupholder is moved downwardly in the direction indicated by the arrows **74**. The lower ends of latch walls **66**A and **66**B are tapered as shown at **70** in FIG. **5** to aid in assembly as the cupholder is slid into place. The flanges **64**A and **64**B will flex so that the latch walls will ramp or slip over the lugs **58**A and **58**B on wall **56** upon the application of a reasonable amount of force in the direction of arrow **74**. The lugs **58**A and **58**B will snap into the latch recesses and the cupholder **34** is locked on the mounting bracket. The latch is a one-way latch. The lower end of wall **44**B has a center stop lug **75** that will prevent the cupholder **34** from being slid too far downwardly.

The cupholder **34** has side skirts **76** that are spaced apart enough and have vertical length sufficient go over the ends of wall **44** and to cover the bolts **50** on both sides of the bracket **32**. The side skirts **76** shield the bolts **50** from removal at the rear of the standard **10** unless the cupholder is forced off. Generally, the removal of the cupholder **34** will cause destruction of the mounting bracket or the cupholder, unless a special tool is used for resiliently bending the walls **56** and **62** to permit the lugs **58**A and **58**B to be released from recesses **67**A and **67**B.

The cupholder **34**, as shown, can be in different forms. As shown in FIG. **1**, the cupholder has a cup or container receptacle **80** formed by cylindrical wall **63** and also side pockets or receptacles **82** for holding various items such as a small program, or other written materials, and can have a receptacle **84** for a pen or pencil.

In FIG. **8**, a modified version of the cupholder is shown at **90**, installed on a mounting bracket **32**. The cupholder **90** has side flanges or walls **92** that extend laterally from the main body **93** of the attachment block. The flanges **92** support rearwardly extending skirts **94** that cover the ends of the flange **20** on the standard, and the ends of the wall **44** of the mounting bracket **32**, to completely shield the bolts **50**, and the mounting slots or openings. The cupholder or drink container holder **90** has a receptacle **96** that receives a cup. A top wall **98** is also provided. The mounting block **93** has guides, as shown in FIG. **7**. The mounting block also includes latch receptacles to receive the lugs **58**A and **58**B.

The mounting bracket **32** can be used for various styles of cupholders, as shown. This makes the final design of the cupholder adaptable to the particular installation that is desired. The cupholders do not have to be installed until the end of construction of the stadium. The mounting brackets themselves can be mounted at the time the standards are put in or when the seat backs are put into place.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to preferred embodiments, workers skilled in the art will recognize that changes may be made in form and detail without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A mounting bracket for *supporting* a drink cupholder to fit onto a seat standard, said seat standard having **[**an upper armrest wall and**]** a rear facing wall, **[**a**]** *the* bracket for supporting said drink cupholder **[**having a mounting wall supportable on the upper armrest wall of the standard, and the bracket**]** having a support wall extending on **[**the**]** *a* rear side of the standard, said support wall having openings for receiving bolts used for connection with the standard, a guide wall for slidably receiving said drink cupholder when the drink cupholder is moved in a first direction to a first portion of the guide wall having at least one latch lug that mates with the drink cupholder to prevent removal of the drink cupholder in a second direction opposite from the first direction.

[2. The bracket of claim **1**, wherein said at least one latch lug has tapered ramp surfaces sloping outwardly from the support wall in the first direction, and the at least one latch lug forming a shoulder generally perpendicular to the support wall facing in the first direction.**]**

[3. The bracket of claim **1**, wherein said support wall has a central plane extending along a central plane of the seat standard, and said support wall has laterally extending portions extending laterally of the central plane of the seat standard, the support wall having said openings for bolts on the laterally extending portions of the support wall.**]**

[4. The bracket of claim **1**, wherein said standard upper armrest wall has lateral flanges on the sides thereof, and flexible retainer clips on the mounting bracket for snapping onto the lateral flanges and retaining the mounting wall of the bracket on the upper armrest wall of the standard.**]**

[5. The bracket of claim **1**, in combination with a drink cupholder having a receptacle for holding a drink cup, the drink cupholder having a holder wall mating with the support wall of the bracket, and a complementary surface on the mating wall for engaging the latch lug on the support wall.**]**

[6. The combination of claim **5**, wherein said drink cupholder wall extends laterally to overlie the support wall.**]**

[7. The combination of claim 5, wherein said holder wall of said drink cupholder conforms in a complementary shape to at least one portion of the support wall of the bracket.]

[8. The bracket of claim 1, wherein the support wall has a lower part comprising a first wall section extending downwardly and rearwardly and a second wall section extending downwardly and forwardly from the first wall section.]

[9. The bracket of claim 8, wherein the mounting bracket has an upright track wall with lateral edges defining a track, the first and second support wall sections being wider laterally than the track wall, the latch lugs being on the track wall.]

[10. The bracket of claim 9, wherein the drink cupholder is used in combination with the bracket, the drink cupholder having attachment walls mating with the track wall, said drink cupholder wall having guides along opposite sides thereof for engaging the track defined by the lateral edges of the track wall, and a recess on the drink cupholder which aligns with and receives the latch lug on the track wall of the mounting bracket when the drink cupholder is moved to receive the track.]

[11. A mounting bracket for a drink cupholder to fit onto a seat standard, the seat standard having an upper armrest wall and a rear wall on a rear side of the standard, the mounting bracket including a mounting wall supportable on the upper armrest wall of the standard, and on the rear wall on the rear side of the standard, at least one wedge lug on the rear wall, said rear wall having a portion that is defined by generally vertical side edges, in combination with a cupholder having a cupholder wall with guides engaging the vertical side edges of the rear wall to retain the cupholder on the rear wall, and the cupholder wall having a surface formed to face and mate with the lug on the rear wall as the cupholder is slid along the rear wall vertical side edges to prevent removal of the cupholder.]

[12. The mounting bracket of claim 11, wherein there is a stop lug on the rear wall to prevent the cupholder from moving more than a selected amount when the cupholder is slid along the rear wall vertical side edges.]

[13. The mounting bracket of claim 11, wherein the bracket has a support wall with laterally extending portions at a lower end of the support wall that extend outwardly from the rear wall, said laterally extending portions having openings for receiving fasteners for securing the mounting bracket to the seat standard.]

[14. The mounting bracket of claim 13, wherein said cupholder has skirt portions that extend laterally outwardly beyond the support wall laterally extending portions to shield the fasteners.]

[15. A molded cupholder having a cupholder wall and a mounting portion, said mounting portion including a planar base wall having at least one wedge shaped latch having an inclined planar surface protruding outwardly from a plane surface of the planar base wall, and an outer end of the inclined planar surface forming a latch surface extending substantially perpendicularly from and joining the planar base surface, the wedge shaped latch positioned to engage a mating wedge shaped latch on a bracket on a seat standard, the cupholder mounting portion including a pair of spaced side shield walls that are on opposite sides of the base wall and extend outwardly from the plane surface, the spaced shield walls having inturned flanges at outer end thereof for slidably receiving edges of a support wall on the bracket on the seat standard, the latch surface of the wedge shaped latch on the base wall and a similar latch surface on a mating wedge shaped latch engaging as the side shield walls are slid along the support wall, and the side shield walls, the support wall and base wall enclosing the wedge shaped latch on the base wall and the mating wedge shaped latch.]

16. A cupholder assembly comprising:

a mounting bracket mountable relative to a seat, standard;

a cupholder portion having a holder receptacle and the cupholder portion slidable along a generally upright mounting surface of the mounting bracket; and

a latching mechanism comprising at least one wedged shaped latch lug having an inclined planar surface protruding outwardly from the upright mounting surface in a downward direction to a tapered edge to form a latch surface extending from the tapered edge generally traverse to the upright mounting surface and the cupholder portion being slidable along the upright mounting surface in the downward direction to snap the at least wedged shaped latch lug into a latch recess so that the latch surface of the at least one wedged shaped latch lug abuts a latch surface of the cupholder portion.

17. The cupholder assembly of claim 16 wherein the latch mechanism comprises a plurality of wedge shaped latch lugs forming a plurality of inclined planar surfaces protruding outwardly from the upright mounting surface in a downward direction to tapered edges to form a plurality of latch surfaces extending from the tapered edges generally traverse to the upright mounting surface and the plurality of wedged shaped latch lugs configured to snap into a plurality of latch recesses so that the plurality of latch surfaces of the plurality of wedged shaped latch lugs abut a plurality of latch surfaces of the cupholder portion.

18. The cupholder assembly of claim 16 and comprising guide walls on the cupholder portion spaced to slide along edge surfaces of an upright mounting portion of the mounting bracket.

19. The cupholder assembly of claim 18 wherein the guide walls includes inwardly turned end portions.

20. The cupholder assembly of claim 16 wherein the mounting bracket includes a plurality of spaced fastener openings to attach the mounting bracket to the seat standard.

21. The cupholder assembly of claim 18 wherein the mounting bracket includes at least one fastener opening.

22. A cupholder assembly comprising:

a mounting bracket mountable relative to a seat standard;

a cupholder portion having a holder receptacle; and

a latch assembly comprising at least one latch lug having a latch surface generally traverse to an upright mounting surface of the mounting bracket and the cupholder portion being slidable in a first direction to latch the cupholder portion to the mounting bracket and in a latched position, the latch surface of the at least one latch lug is adjacent to an opposing surface of the latch assembly so that the latch surface of the at least one latch lug contacts the opposing surface when the cupholder portion is moved in a second direction opposite to the first direction.

23. The cupholder assembly of claim 22 wherein the latch assembly comprises a plurality of latch lugs forming a plurality of latch surfaces generally traverse to the upright mounting surface and in the latched position, the plurality of latch surfaces of the plurality of latch lugs are adjacent to a plurality of opposing surfaces so the plurality of latch surfaces contact the plurality of opposing surfaces when the cupholder portion is moved in the second direction.

24. The cupholder assembly of claim 22 and comprising guide walls on the cupholder portion spaced to slide along edge surfaces of an upright mounting portion of the mounting bracket.

25. The cupholder assembly of claim 24 wherein the guide walls includes inwardly turned end portions.

26. The cupholder assembly of claim 22 wherein the mounting bracket includes at least one fastener opening.

27. The cupholder assembly of claim 22 wherein the mounting bracket includes a plurality of spaced fastener openings to attach the mounting bracket to the seat standard.

28. The cupholder assembly of claim 22 wherein the at least one latch lug is wedged shaped.

29. A cupholder assembly comprising:

a mounting bracket mountable relative to the seat assembly;

a cupholder portion having a cupholder receptacle; and

a latch assembly configured to latch the cupholder portion to the mounting bracket comprising a first latch portion including a wedged shaped latch forming a latch surface and the cupholder portion being slideable along a guiding surface of the mounting bracket in a first direction generally traverse to an orientation of the latch surface to engage the latch assembly so that the latch surface of the first latch portion contacts an opposing latch surface of a second latch portion when the cupholder is moved in a second direction opposite to the first direction.

30. The cupholder of claim 29 wherein the wedged shaped latch is generally enclosed between the mounting bracket and the cupholder portion when the latch assembly is engaged.

31. The cupholder assembly of claim 29 wherein the mounting bracket is mounted to the seat assembly via a fastener insertable into at least one fastener opening in the mounting bracket.

32. The cupholder assembly of claim 29 in combination with the seat assembly comprising a seat standard and seat back and wherein the mounting bracket is fastened to the seat standard.

33. The cupholder assembly of claim 29 wherein the latch assembly includes inturned flange portions slideable along side edges of a track or rail to engage the latch assembly.

34. The cupholder assembly of claim 29 wherein the latch assembly is a one-way latch and is releasable using a separate device or tool.

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