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(71) Applicant: **Worlds Apart Limited**

**Trekning, St. Columb Major,
Cornwall, TR9 6SF (GB)**

(72) Inventors:

• **Shinner, Neil**
Cornwall, TR9 6SX (GB)

• **Gray, Neil**
Cornwall, TR9 6SX (GB)

(74) Representative: **Wood, Graham**

Bailey Walsh & Co
5 York Place
Leeds LS1 2SD (GB)

(54) **Combined play and luggage item**

(57) The invention relates to an item(2) which can be provided in a first condition for use as an item of luggage and in a second condition as an item which can be moved along a surface via wheels, rollers or castors((14),(18),

(181),(181')) with a person, such as a child, sat thereon. The item(2) is provided with a steering mechanism(12) to allow the item's direction of movement to be steered and controlled and thereby improve the safety and attractiveness of use of the item(2).

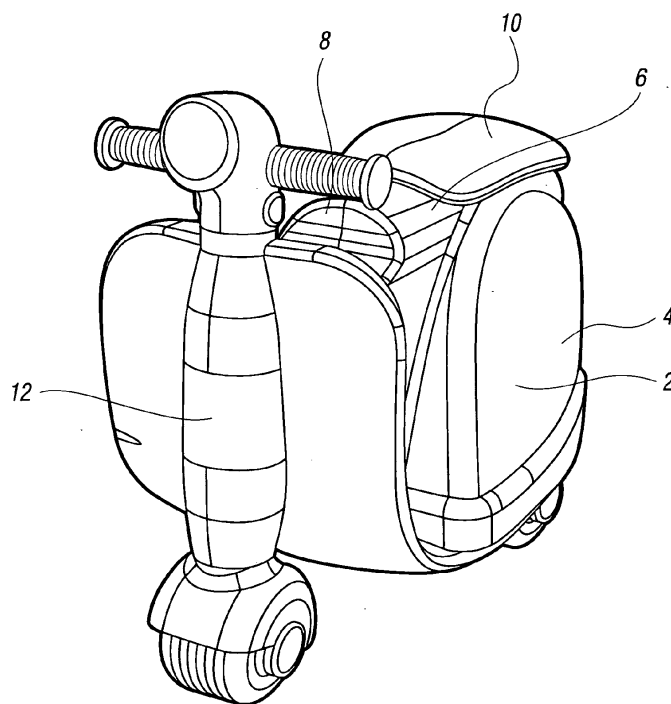


FIG. 1

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Description

[0001] The invention to which this application relates is a play item in the form of a mobile item, hereinafter referred to in a non limiting manner as a scooter, which can be ridden across a surface and which can also be used and, if required, converted into an item of luggage such as that which could be used as carry on luggage for an aircraft journey.

[0002] It is known to provide items of luggage which can be converted from a first form into another, and one of the most common types is that which can be converted from a first form in which the same is provided to be carried and a second form in which a handle or arm can be extended from the body of the luggage and used as a means by which to pull the luggage along via castors located as apart of the luggage body.

[0003] It is found that when travelling, especially with children, the time between arriving at the departure location and actually departing from the location via plane, bus or train can be prolonged and this can lead to boredom and ultimately frustration setting in which can lead to the travelling experience becoming unpleasant for those concerned. The problem is particularly exacerbated when travelling by plane as a large proportion of the luggage is taken from the passenger when entering the departure location. This means that many items and toys which could be useful in entertaining children during the time before departure are not available as they are too large or bulky, or there is simply not enough space due to other items which may need to be carried in the carry on luggage.

[0004] There is therefore a need to provide an item which can be provided to have both utility in terms of being usable as an item of luggage whilst also being usable as a means to provide entertainment and/or an activity to a person, and particularly, although not necessarily exclusively, a child. It is a further aim to provide an item in a form which when it is being moved can be controlled more readily and also avoids or reduces the risk of a person sitting on the same from falling off the same.

[0005] In a first aspect of the invention there is provided an item comprising a body with at least one cavity for the storage of articles therein, a plurality of rollers, wheels or castors located with respect to the body, and wherein the body is connected to a steering mechanism to allow the item to be used as a steerable ride-on item in addition to an item of luggage.

[0006] In one embodiment the item is adaptable between a first condition in which the same can be used as a ride on item, typically for a child, and a second condition in which the same can be used as an item of luggage. In one embodiment the adaptation is achieved by the reconfiguration of the steering mechanism and most typically with respect to the handle provided as part of the mechanism.

[0007] In one embodiment the handle is changed in shape or position or is removed entirely from the steering

mechanism to allow the same to be provided along with the body in the storage condition.

[0008] In one embodiment, the steering mechanism includes a steering column which is attached, at one end, to a handle, and at the other end, to at least one wheel, roller or castor, to allow the same to be rotated and allow steering of the item along a support surface such as the floor of an airport terminal building. Typically further wheels, rollers and/or castors are provided on the body of the item so as to allow the body and steering mechanism to be moved along the surface at a distance therefrom.

[0009] In one embodiment the body of the item is comprised of two parts which are hingeably movable about a hinge assembly between an open position in which articles can be placed into and removed from the at least one cavity, and a second position in which the at least one cavity is closed.

[0010] In one embodiment the axis of the hinge assembly is parallel with the longitudinal axis of the steering mechanism. In one embodiment the said axes are coaxial.

[0011] In one embodiment the cavity includes at least one internal storage wall in order to define a plurality of storage compartments within the cavity.

[0012] In one embodiment a member is provided on, or can be attached to, the body and/or steering mechanism at a position so as to allow the item to be towed or pulled along the support surface. Alternatively, the item can be propelled along the support surface by a person pushing the same or by a person when sitting on the body of the item. In a yet further embodiment the item is provided with a drive mechanism to allow the item to be moved along the surface under power applied to at least one wheel, roller or castor from the drive mechanism.

[0013] In one embodiment, an anchor point for a member is located on the mounting of the said at least one steerable wheel, roller or castor to allow the movement of the item to be controlled via said member.

[0014] Typically the member is a rod or strap which can be gripped by a person to allow the item to be moved along the surface. By providing the anchor point on the mounting for the steerable wheel, roller or castor, the member can be used to provide a steering action on the steerable wheel. This can, in turn, allow an adult to prevent the item from falling over and/or a child sitting on the same incorrectly steering the item. In one embodiment a rear anchor point is provided to allow a member to be located to both anchor points and used to carry the item.

[0015] In one embodiment a seat is provided on the top face of the body. In one embodiment the seat portion is pivotally movable with respect to the body to allow the same to be used as a locking catch to maintain the parts of the body together and also allow the same to be released by movement of the seat portion to release the lock.

[0016] In one embodiment the body of the item in-

cludes a plurality of wheels, castors or rollers located at or adjacent to the corners of the underside of the body. In one embodiment these are provided to be movable along a fixed path which is determined by the selective movement of the steering mechanism and the at least one roller, wheel or castor provided therewith.

[0017] In one embodiment one or more lights are provided in the item.

[0018] In one embodiment the body of the item includes at least one handle formation which can be gripped by a person sat on the item and/or an accompanying person walking alongside the article in order to allow the item to be guided as it moves along the surface. In one embodiment the said at least one handle is provided as part of a backrest for a person sitting on the item.

[0019] In one embodiment the item includes an additional storage or tail box which may in one embodiment be of a form linked with the overall appearance of the item.

[0020] In one embodiment the item may include any or any combination of wing mirrors, carry rack, Basket, toy tool kit, backrest, torch that acts in a similar manner and is fitted in a similar position to a headlight and/or is attached to the handlebars, drinks bottle holder, a helmet that can be used as a travel bag, and/or tail light.

[0021] In one embodiment the item is provided with, or means for the attachment of, a trailer and/or sidecar which typically can also be used for storage purposes.

[0022] In one embodiment the item can be provided with any or any combination of, lighting, pannier or additional storage locations, and/or sound generating means.

[0023] In a further aspect to the invention there is provided an item having a body in which a cavity for the storage of articles is provided, said body having a top face on which a person can sit, and an opposing face at or adjacent to which are provided a series of wheels, castors or rollers and wherein at least one of the wheels castors or rollers is steerable to allow steering of the path of the item as it moves across a surface.

[0024] In one embodiment an anchor point for a member is located on the mounting of the said at least one steerable wheel, roller or castor or a steering mechanism therefore to allow the movement of the item to be controlled via said member.

[0025] Specific embodiments of the invention are now described with reference to the accompanying drawings; wherein

Figure 1 illustrates a perspective view of one embodiment of the item in accordance with the invention;

Figures 2a and b illustrate the item in a ride on/ storage mode and an access mode respectively;

Figure 3 illustrates the manner in which the steering mechanism is provided with the body of the item in accordance with one embodiment;

Figures 4a and b illustrate two ways in which the handle portion of the steering mechanism can be stored to allow the item to meet specific dimensions requirements when in use as an item of luggage;

Figures 5a and b illustrate locking mechanisms for the body parts; and

Figures 6a-e illustrate embodiments of additional components which can be provided with the item to allow the same to be propelled across a floor by another person.

Figure 7 illustrates a perspective view of a second embodiment of the item in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 8 illustrates the item being carried by a person when a member is attached to two anchor points.

[0026] Referring firstly to Figures 1 and Figures 4a and b there is illustrated an item 2 in accordance with one embodiment of the invention and in a first condition as a ride-on item as shown in Figure 1 and a second condition for use in storage as an item of luggage as shown in Figures 4a and b. The item includes a body 4 formed of first and second parts 6, 8. The body includes a seat portion 10 and the item also includes a steering mechanism 12. Referring now to Figures 2a and b there is provided, in Figure 2a, a further perspective view of the item 2 in the configuration shown in Figure 1. The body 4 is shown to further include first and second wheels, rollers or castors 14 on the underside thereof. Also, the steering mechanism 12 includes a handle portion 16 at one end and at the other end a further wheel, roller or castor 18. The steering mechanism is provided to be rotatable about axis 20 and thereby allow the path of movement of the item to be determined by the turning of the handle portion 16 and hence the steering mechanism and wheel, roller or castor 18. Figure 2b illustrates the item 2 in a form in order to allow the internal cavity 22 formed within the body 4 by the parts 6 and 8 to be accessed. The opening is achieved by releasing the respective parts so that they can be pivotally moved about the hinge 24 as indicated by arrows 26, 28. As, shown, the axis of rotation 30 about the hinge 24 is co-axial with the axis 20 of the steering mechanism 12. Indeed, as shown in Figure 3 it is preferable that the steering mechanism 12 is at least partially housed within the hinge 24.

[0027] When the item is required to have a certain configuration or dimensions such as, for example, to allow the same to be carried onto a plane in the second condition as an item of hand luggage, it may be necessary to store certain components of the same and Figures 4a and b illustrate two ways in which the handle portion 16 can be stored. In Figure 4a the handle portion is foldable as indicated by arrow 32 back towards the body 4. In Figure 4b the handle portion 16 has been removed and

is stored inside the body cavity 22 as shown underneath the seat portion 10.

[0028] Typically the seat portion 10 is provided to allow a child to sit on the same and be in a position so as to allow the child to use the steering mechanism 12 and also place their feet on the ground to propel the item along the floor while steering the same.

[0029] Figure 5a illustrates the manner in which the seat portion 10 can also be used as a locking catch such that when the seat portion is in a "down" position as shown the same acts via latch 34 on the underside thereof to lock the two parts 6, 8 of the body together. A further locking catch 36 can also be provided to ensure that the parts 6, 8 are retained together as shown in Figure 5b.

[0030] Figures 6a-e illustrate the manner in which a further component can be provided to allow the item to be moved along the floor 35 by a further person such as an adult when the child is sitting on seat portion 10 of the item body. In Figures 6a- c the component is provided as a rigid member 38 to be attached to or adjacent to the rear 42 of the body 4 to allow the item to be pushed along the surface. In Figures 6d-e a flexible strap 40 is provided to be attached to the front 44 of the item, in this case at the hinge 24, to allow the same to be grasped and used to pull the item along the floor. In either embodiment it is envisaged that the strap 40 or member 38 is removable to allow the same to be selectively used.

[0031] In a second embodiment of the present invention, first and second anchor points 281, 301 are provided to allow the attachment at both or one of the anchor points of an elongate member 321 which can be a rod or a strap. When attached to both anchor points the member can be used to carry the item as shown in Figure 8 and when attached to one of the anchor points, i.e. the front anchor point as shown in Figure 7 the member 321 can be used to pull or push the item. In addition, when attached to the front anchor point 281 which itself is attached to the rotatable mounting 221, so a steering action can be achieved on the wheels, rollers or castors 181' via the member 321.

[0032] The item can also be provided on the body with rear protrusions 341 to prevent or minimise the risk of the body tipping back when a child is sat on the same. For the same reason of avoiding tipping over the seat position and/or foot rest positions are selected on the body so as to allow the child's position when sitting on the seat to be such as to minimise the risk of the item falling over.

[0033] The present invention therefore provides an item which can be used as an item of luggage in a second condition and also as a sit or ride on item in a first condition and in which the item is provided with a steering function.

Claims

1. An item comprising a body with at least one cavity for the storage of articles therein, at least one roller,

wheel or castor located with respect to the body, and wherein the body is connected to a steering mechanism to allow the item to be used in a first conditions as a steerable ride-on item and in a second condition as an item of luggage.

2. The item according to claim 1, wherein said change in condition is achieved by the reconfiguration of the steering mechanism.

3. The item according to claim 2, wherein a handle of the steering mechanism is changed in shape or position or is removed entirely from the steering mechanism to allow the same to be provided in the storage condition.

4. The item according to claim 1, wherein said steering mechanism includes a steering column which is attached, at one end, to a handle, and at another other end, to at least one wheel, roller or castor.

5. The item according to claim 1, wherein said body of said item comprises two parts, said parts being hingeably movable about a hinge assembly between an open position and a closed position.

6. The item according to claim 5, wherein when in the open position, articles can be placed into and removed from at least one cavity and when in the closed position, said at least one cavity is closed.

7. The item according to claim 5, wherein the axis of said hinge assembly is parallel with the longitudinal axis of the steering mechanism.

8. The item according to claim 6, wherein said at least one cavity includes at least one internal storage wall, defining a plurality of storage compartments within said cavity.

9. The item according to claim 1, wherein a member is attached to said body and/or steering mechanism at a position allowing said item to be towed or pulled along a support surface.

10. The item according to claim 1, wherein a drive mechanism is provided allowing said item to be moved along a support surface.

11. The item according to claim 1, wherein at least one anchor point for a member is located on the mounting of at least one steerable wheel, roller or castor and/or rear of the item allowing the movement of said item to be controlled via said member.

12. The item according to claim 11, wherein said member is a rod or strap that is gripped by a person, allowing said item to be moved along a support sur-

face.

13. The item according to claim 11, wherein attachment of a member to both a rear and front anchor point allows said member to be used to carry said item. 5
14. The item according to claim 1, wherein a seat is provided on the top face of said body.
15. The item according to claim 14, wherein said seat portion is pivotally movable with respect to said body, allowing the same to be used as a locking catch to retain the body parts in a closed position. 10
16. The item according to claim 1, wherein said body of said item includes a plurality of wheels, castors or rollers located at or adjacent to the corners of the underside of said body. 15
17. The item according to claim 1, wherein one or more lights are provided in said item. 20
18. The item according to claim 1, wherein said body of said item includes at least one handle formation that can be gripped by a person sat on said item and/or an accompanying person walking alongside said item, allowing said item to be guided as it moves along a support surface. 25
19. The item according to claim 18, wherein said at least one handle is provided as part of a backrest for a person sitting on said item. 30
20. The item according to claim 1, wherein said item is provided with, or means for the attachment of a trailer and/or sidecar. 35
21. An item having a body in which a cavity for the storage of articles is provided, said body having a top face on which a person can sit, and an opposing face at or adjacent to which are provided a series of wheels, castors or rollers and wherein at least one of the wheels castors or rollers is steerable to allow steering of the path of the item as it moves across a surface. 40
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22. An item according to claim 21 wherein an anchor point for a member is located on the mounting of the said at least one steerable wheel, castor or roller or a steering mechanism therefore, to allow the movement of the item to be controlled via said member. 50

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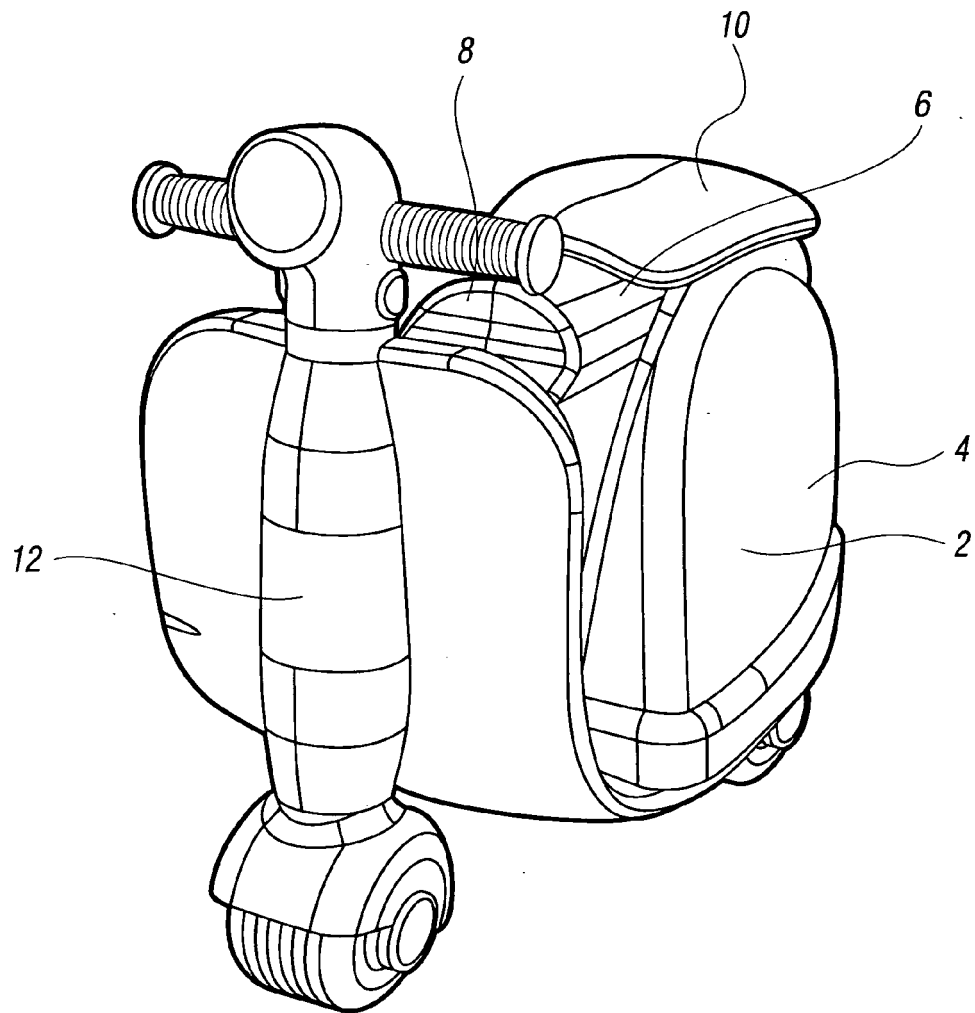


FIG. 1

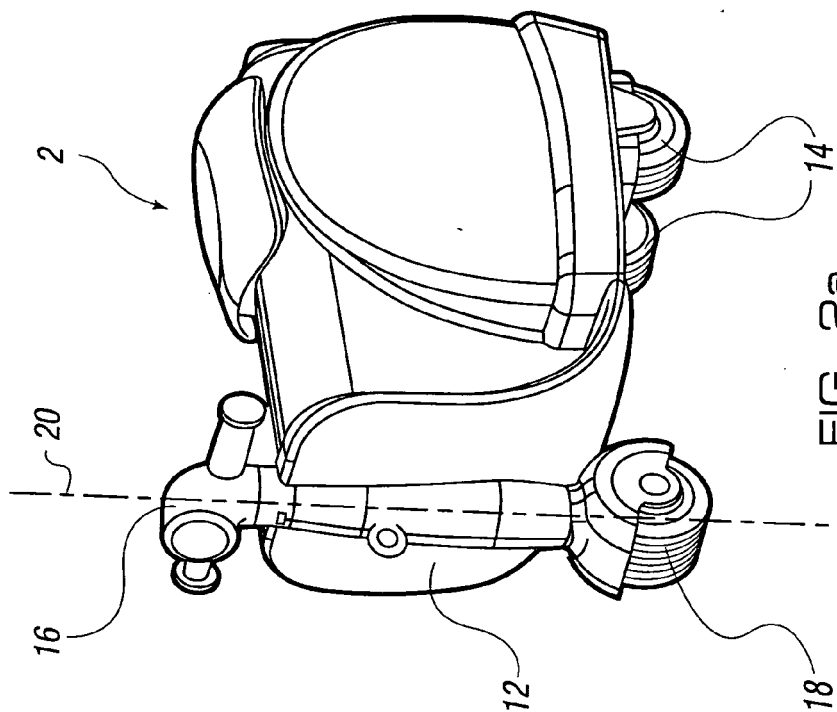


FIG. 2a

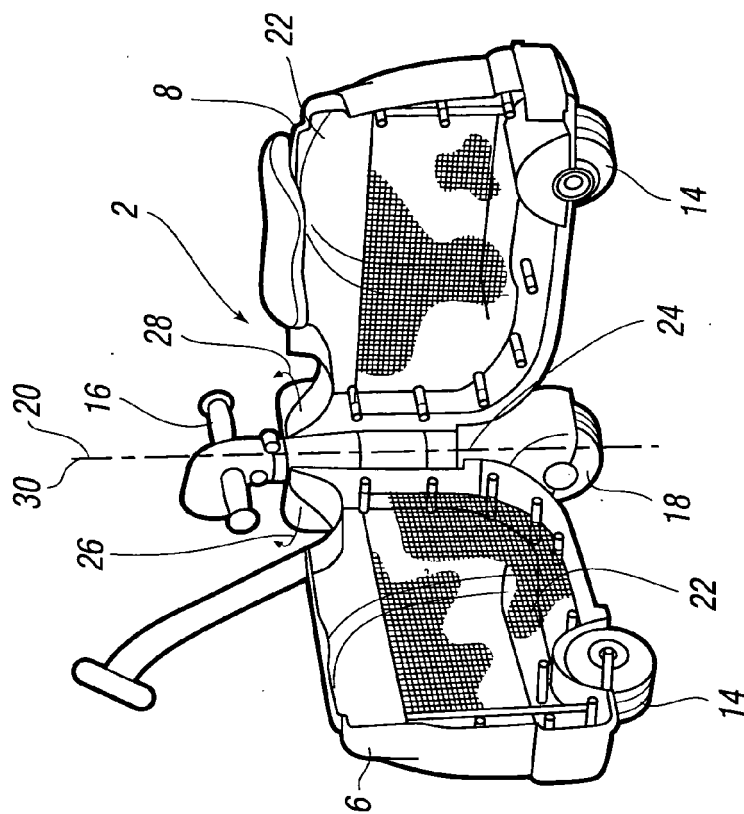


FIG. 2b

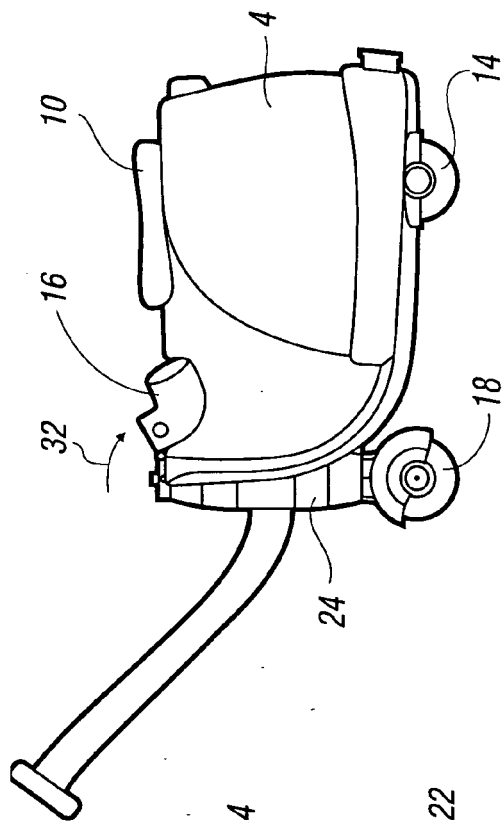


FIG. 4a

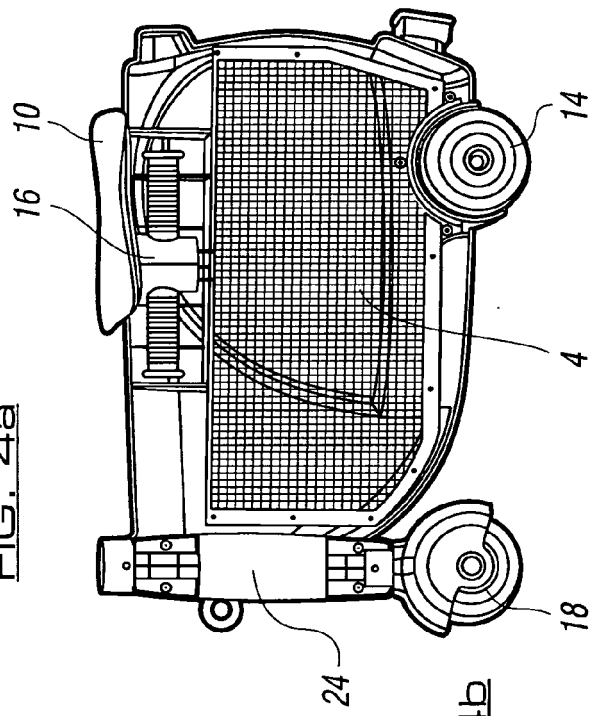


FIG. 4b

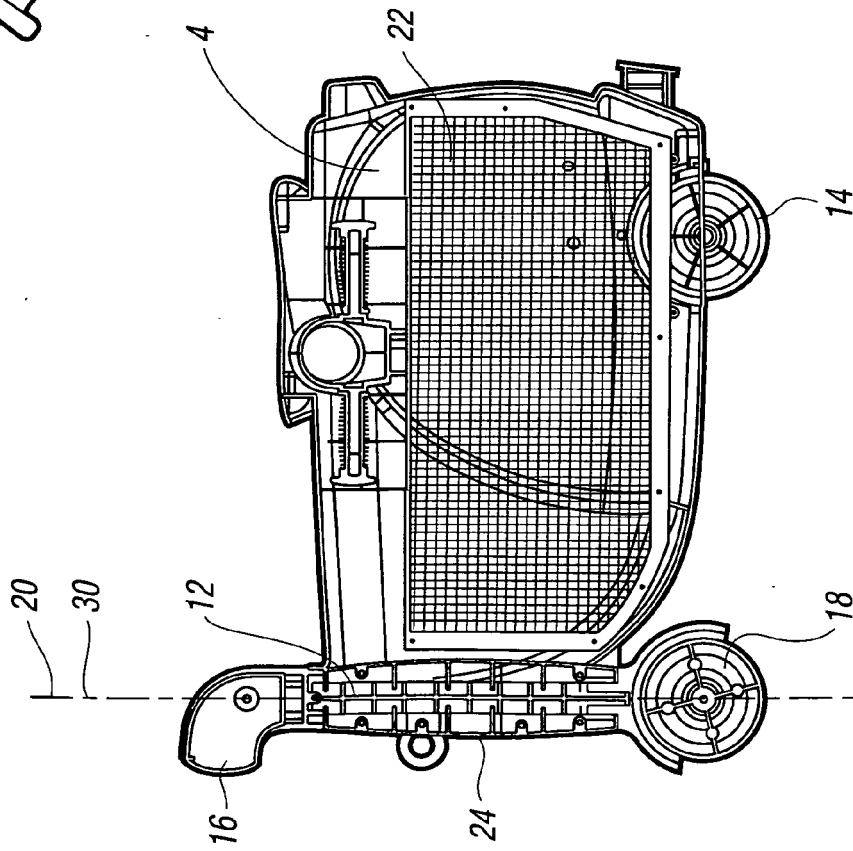


FIG. 3

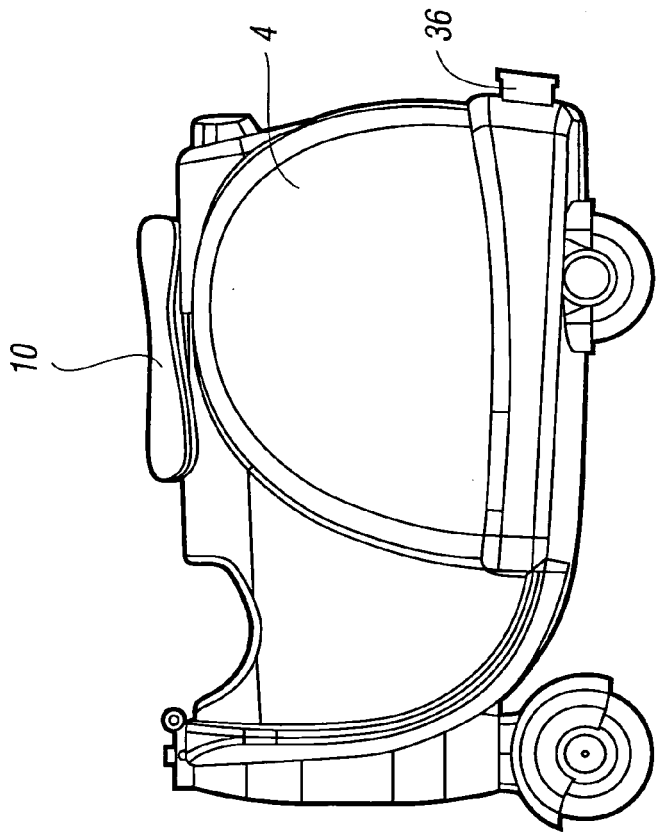


FIG. 5b

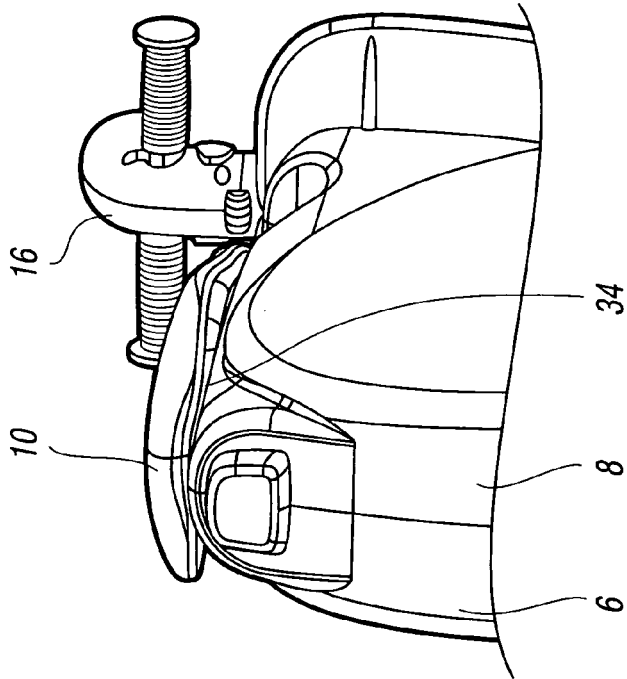


FIG. 5a

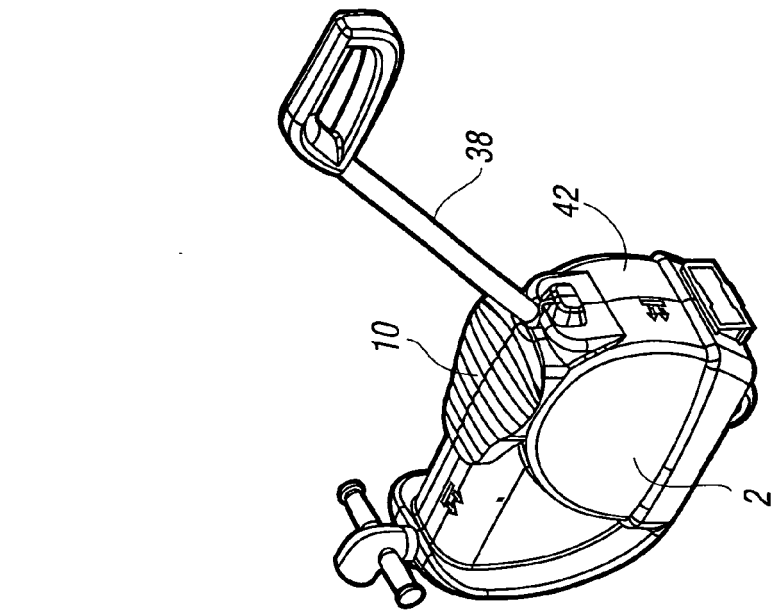


FIG. 6a

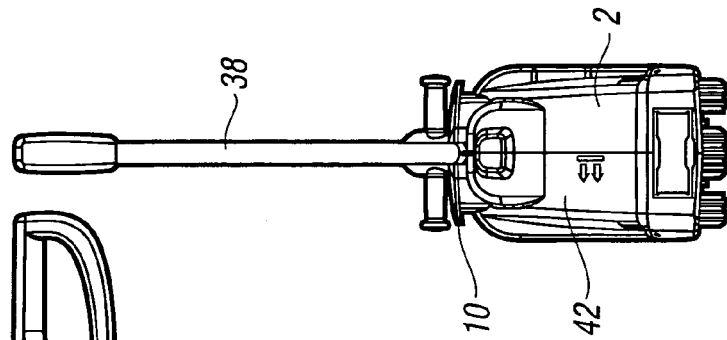


FIG. 6b

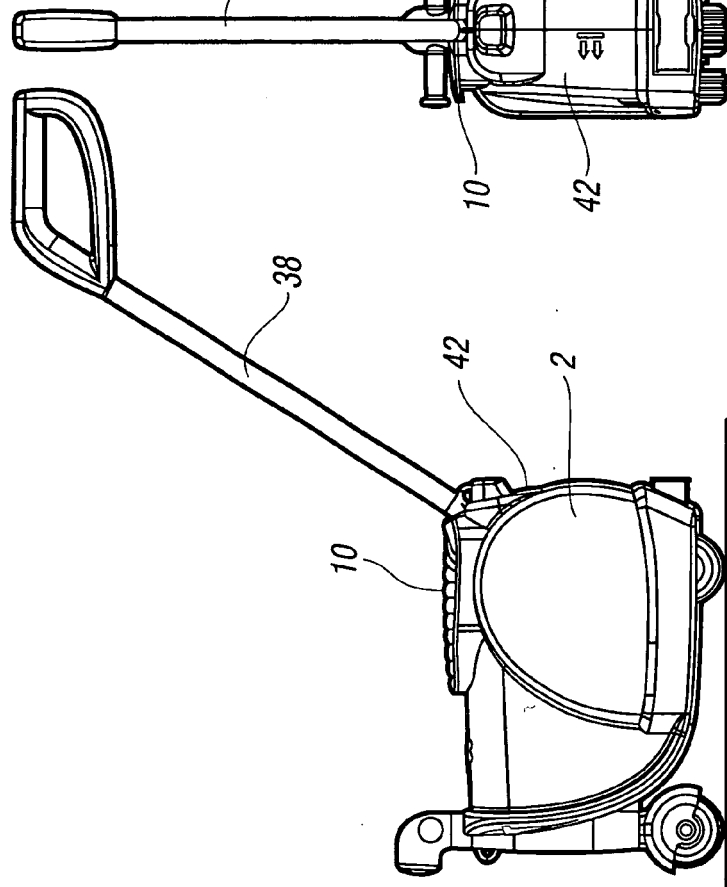
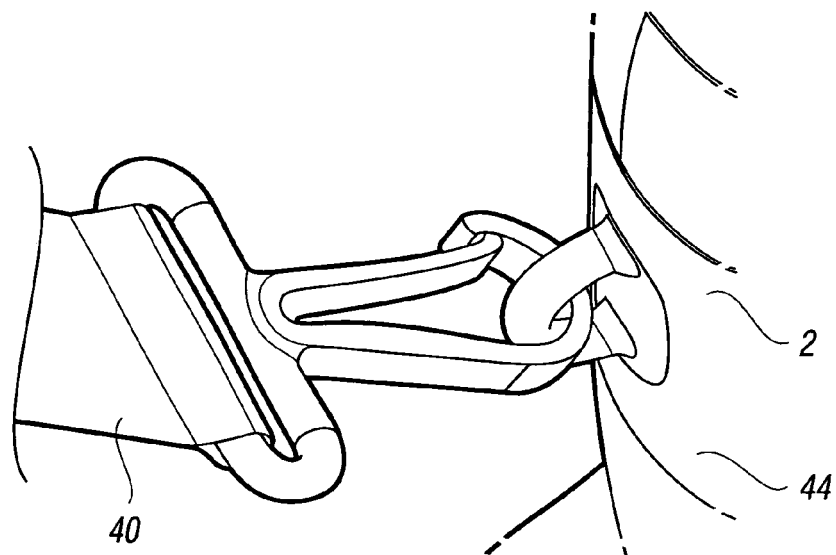
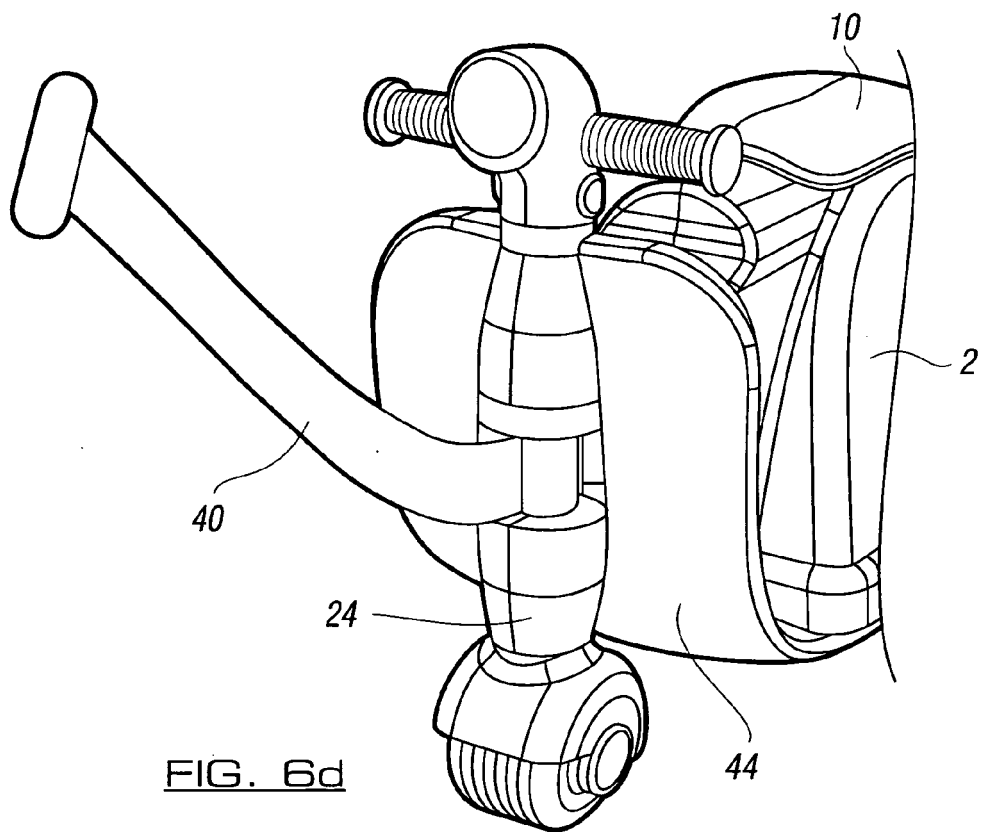


FIG. 6c



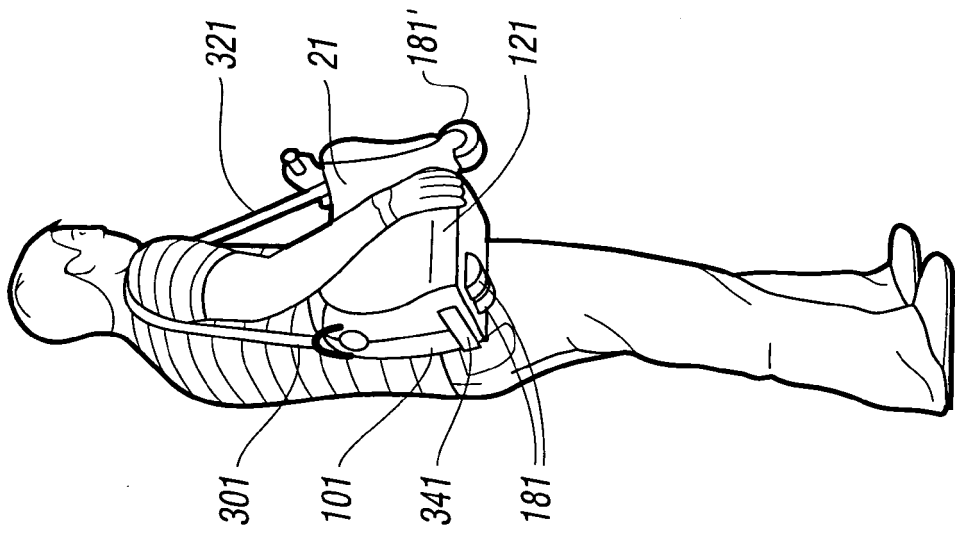


FIG. 8

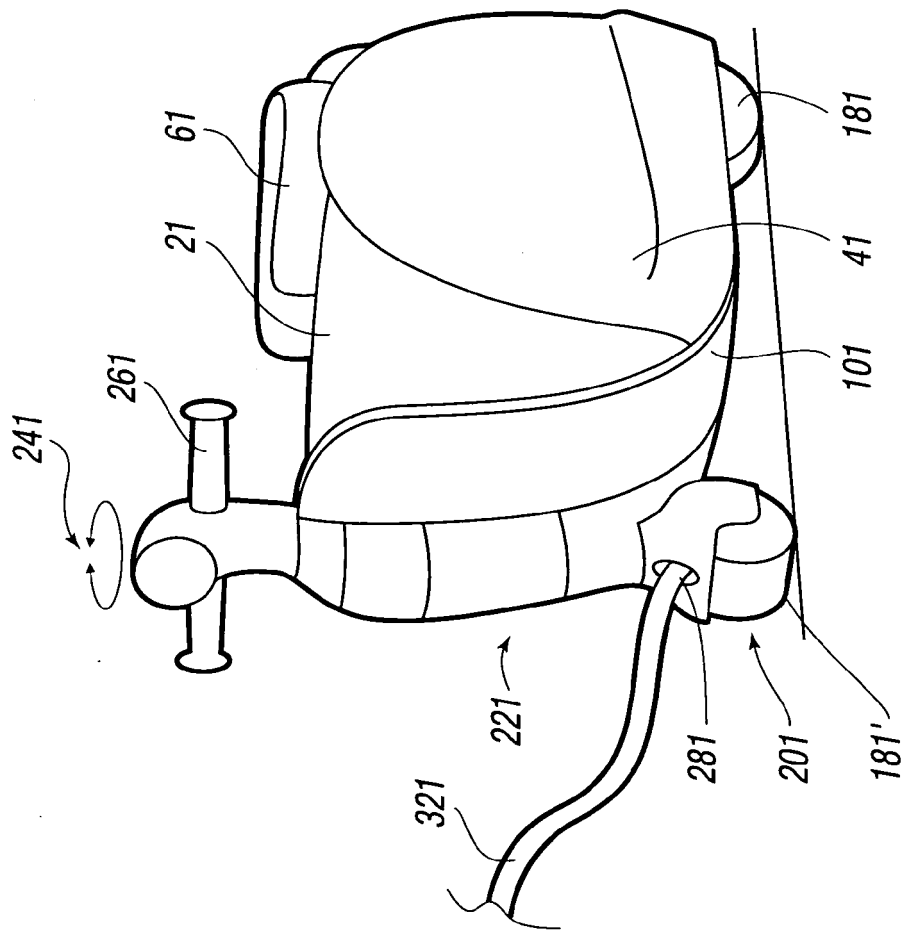


FIG. 7