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Edinger et al.

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(54) **TABLECLOTH COVERING AND METHOD OF COVERING AND SKIRTING A TABLE**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 928 days.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **108/90**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **108/90;**
150/158, 156, 154

See application file for complete search history.

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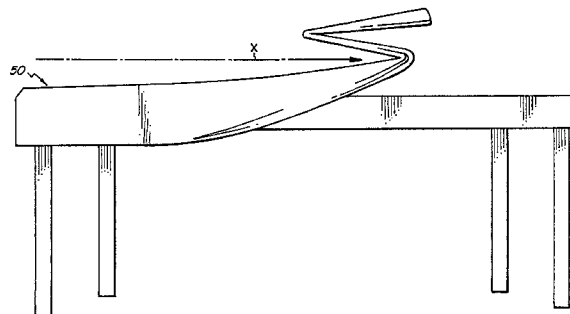
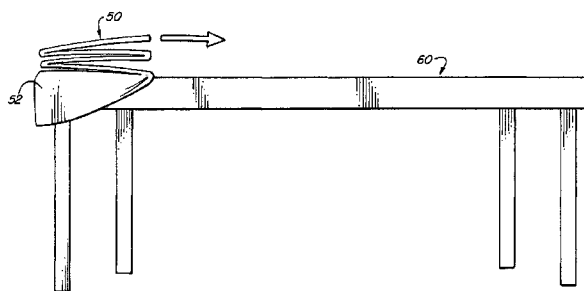
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A fitted tablecloth covering that may be affixed to a table without the use of tools or affixing devices is provided. Such a tablecloth covering may conveniently and quickly be affixed to a table and provide an appealing visual presentation that does not require the use of installation tools and that does not damage the table.

21 Claims, 17 Drawing Sheets



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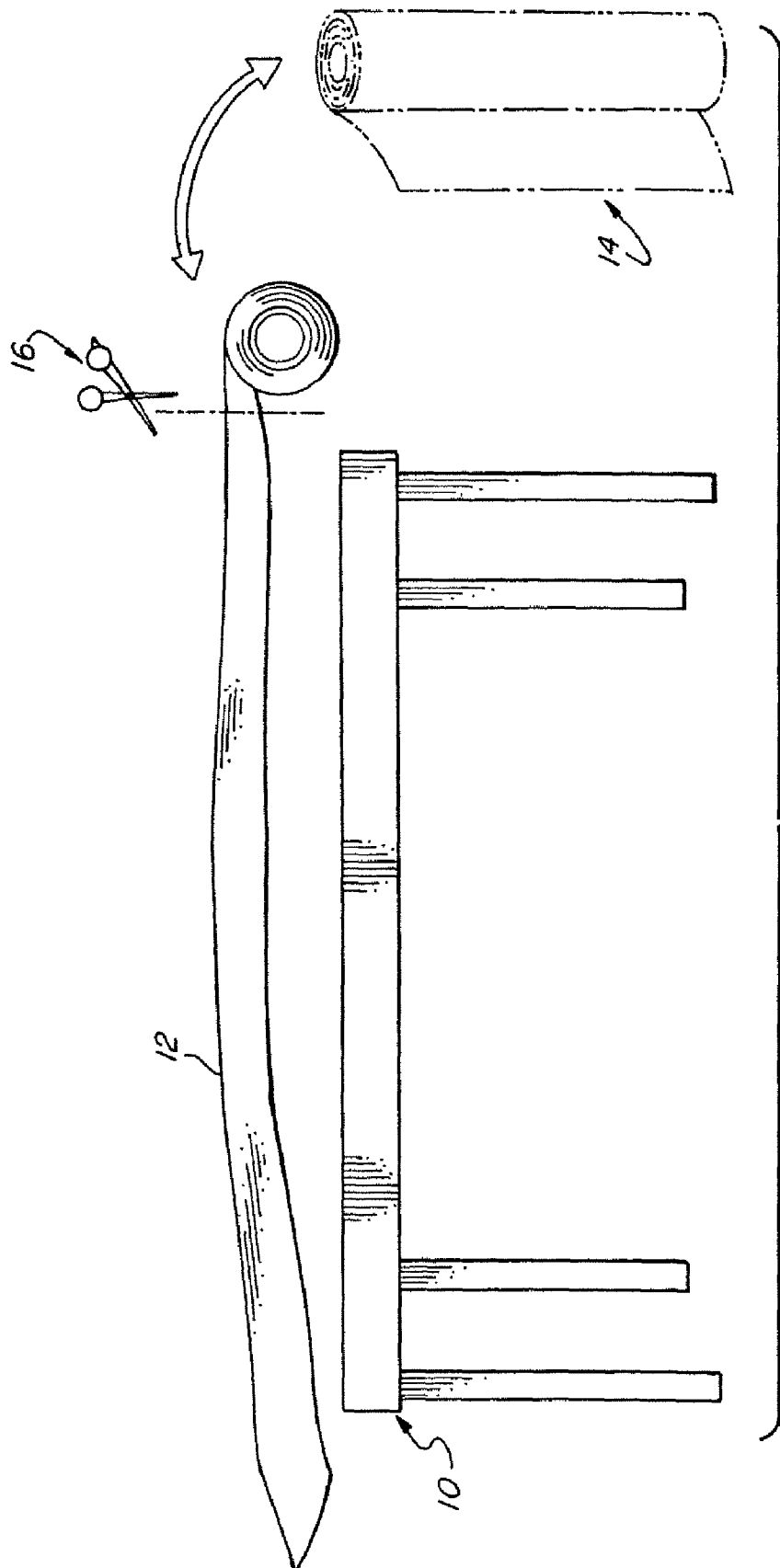
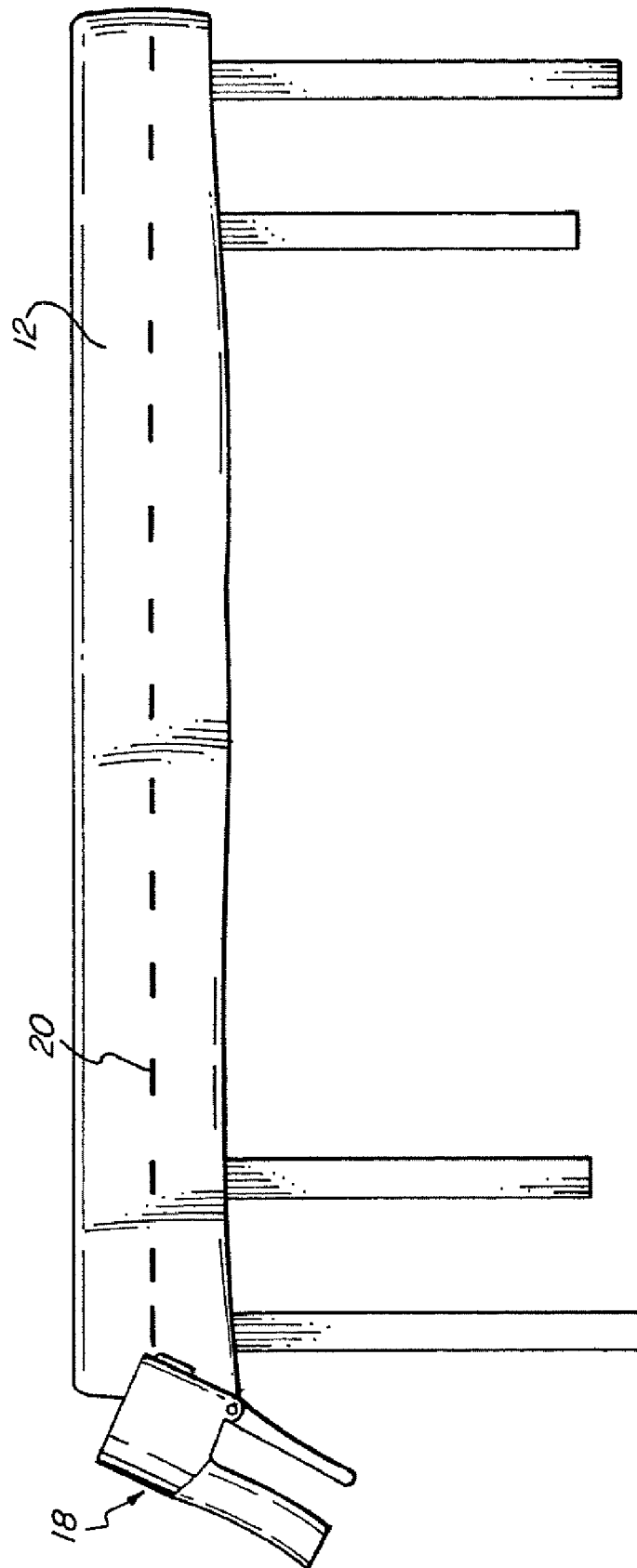
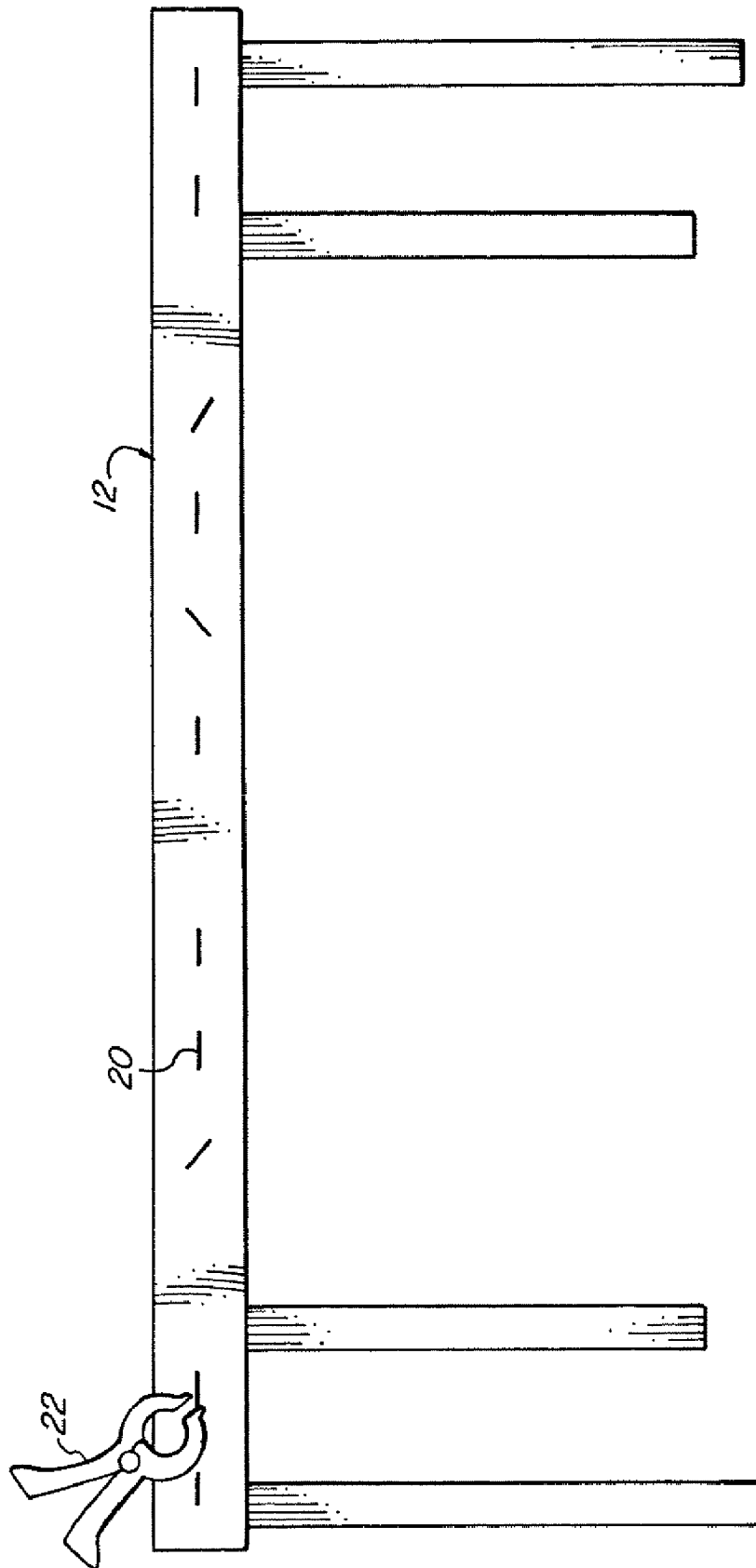
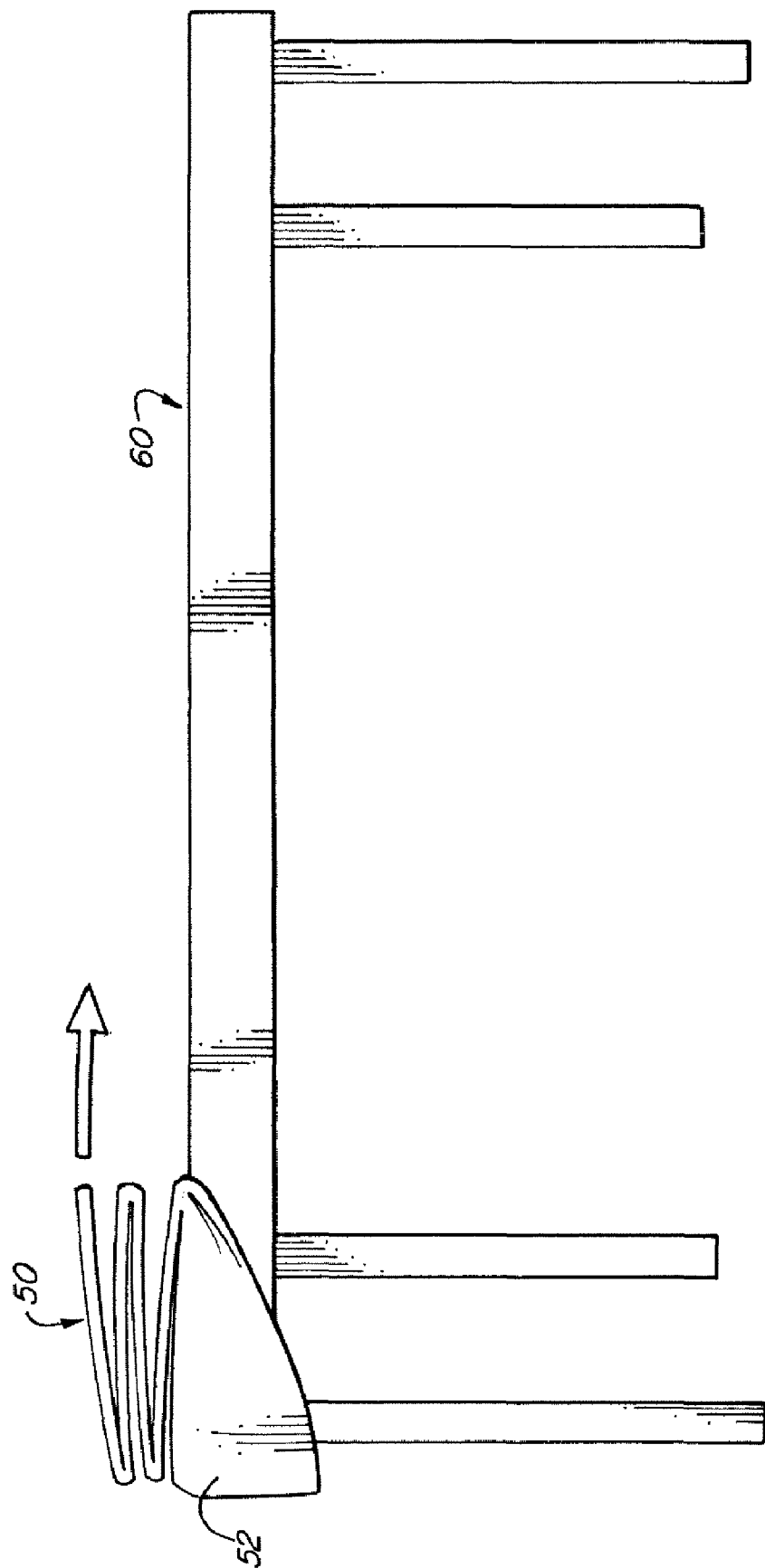
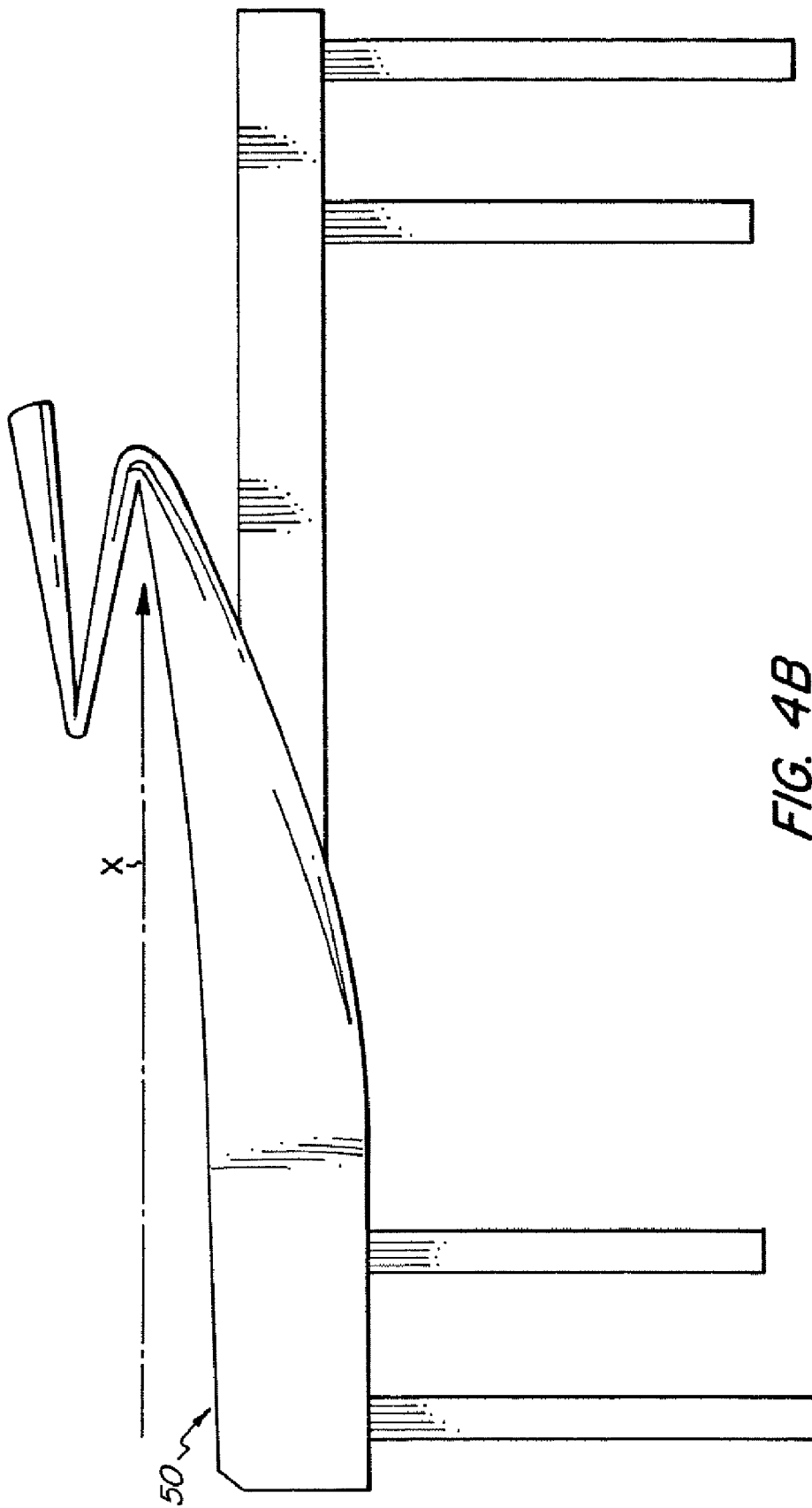


FIG. 1 (PRIOR ART)









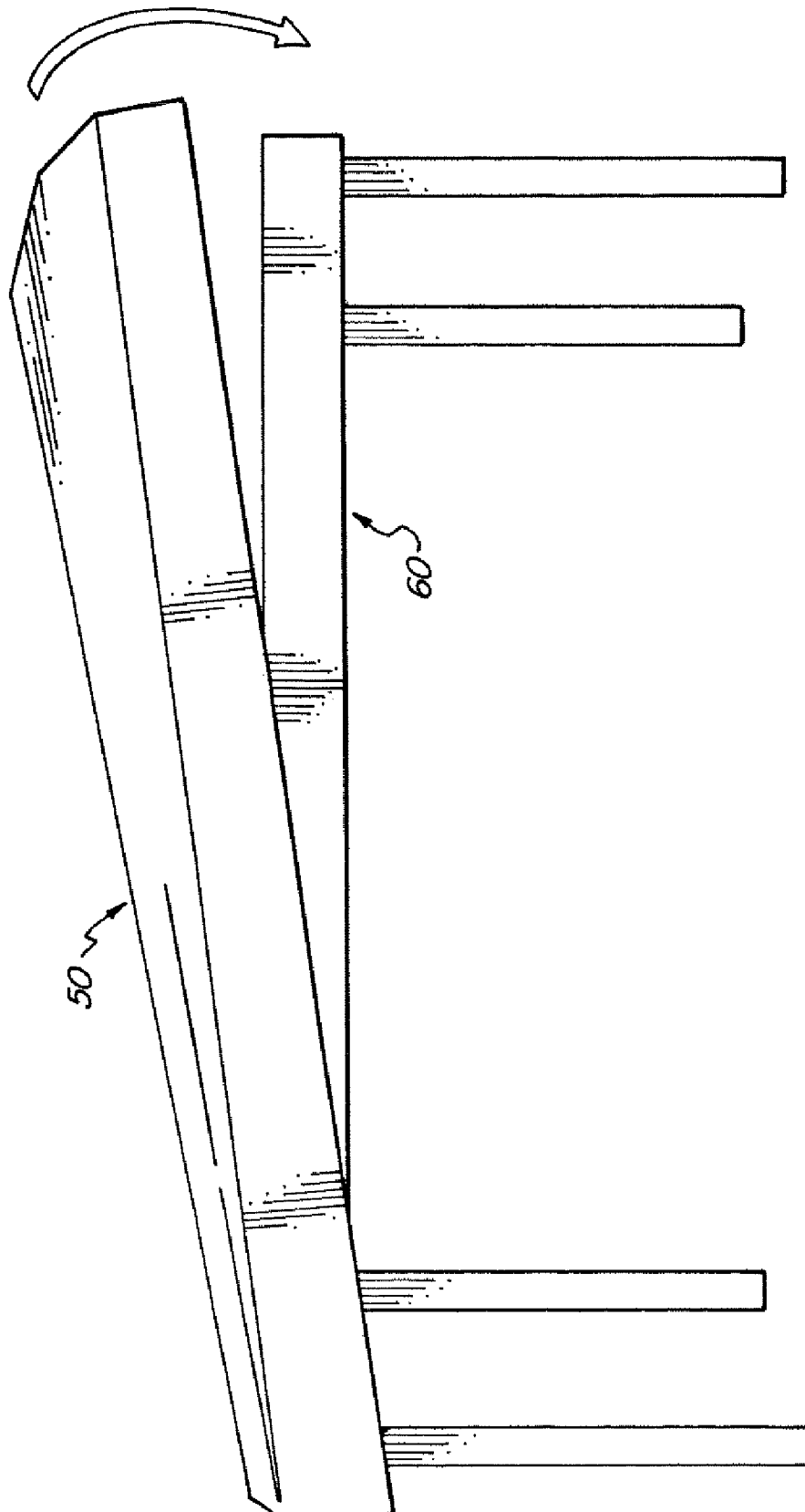


FIG. 4C

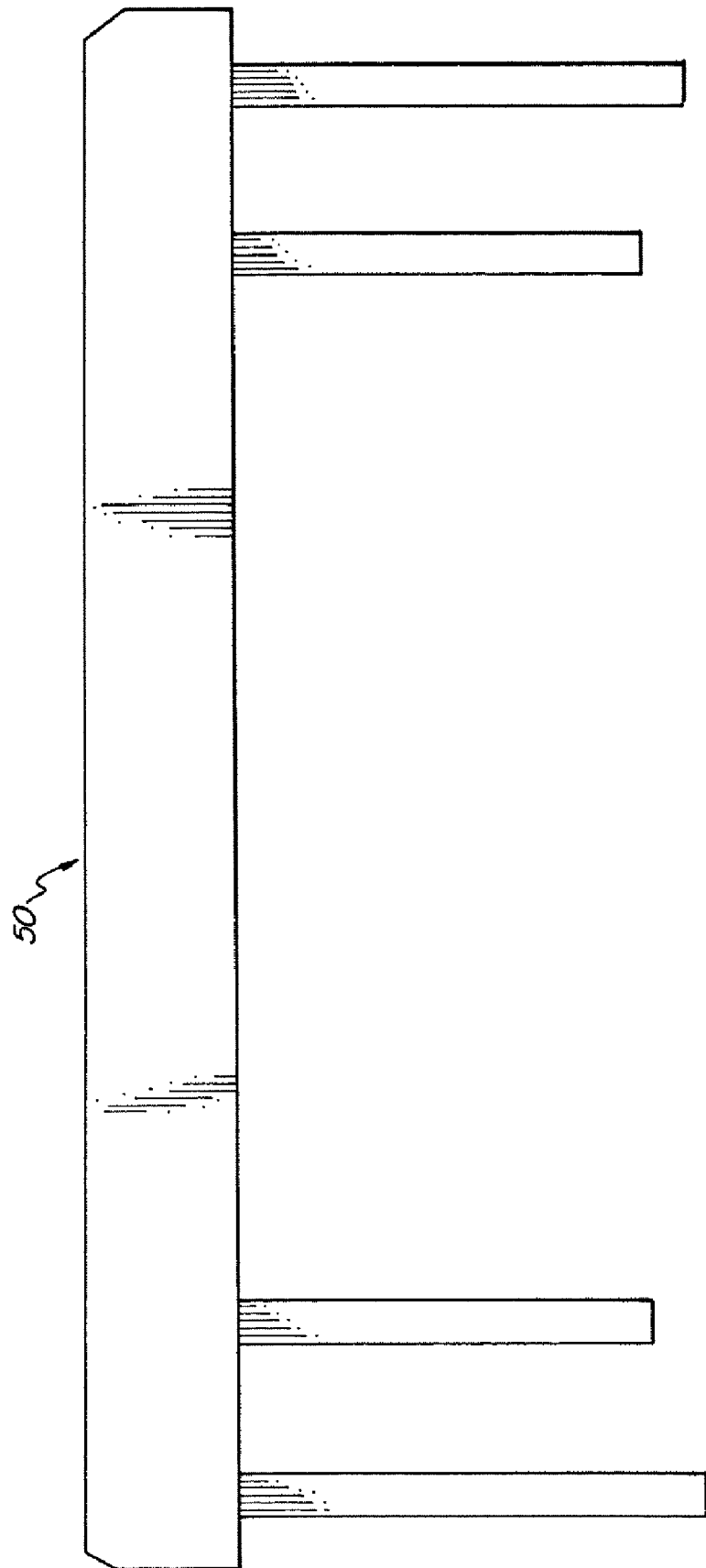


FIG. 4D

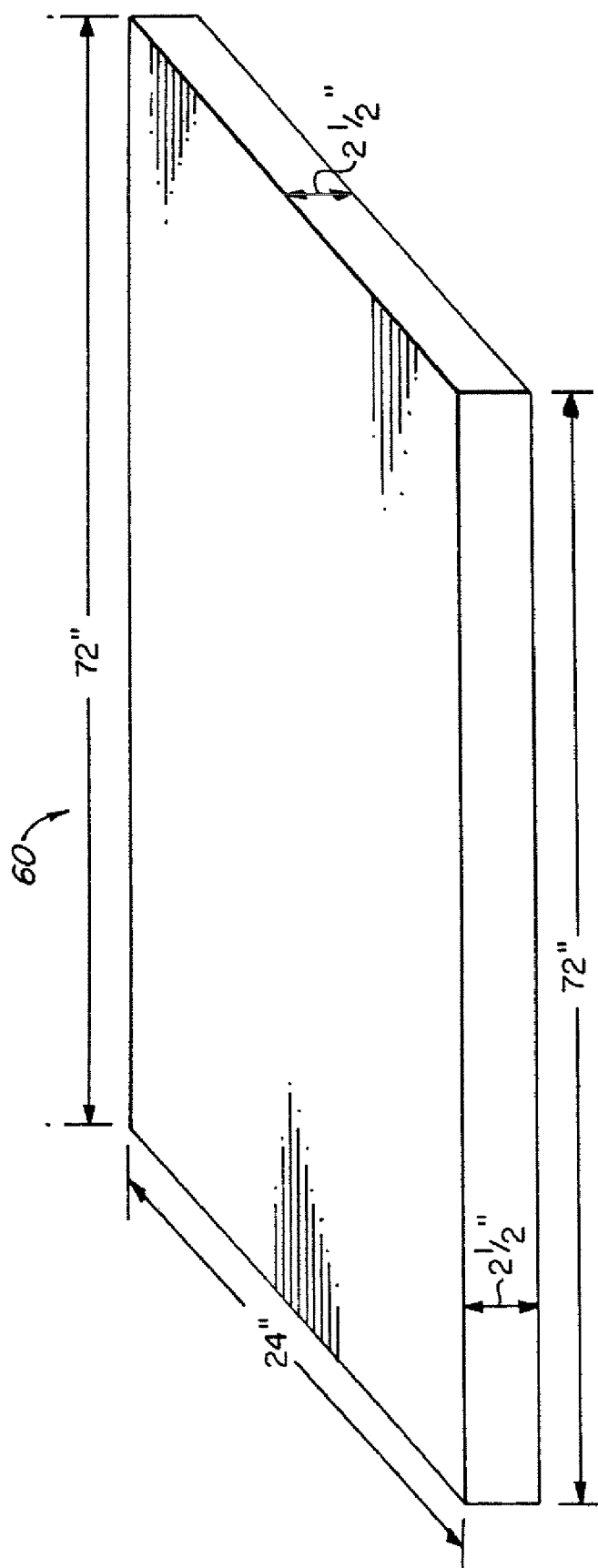
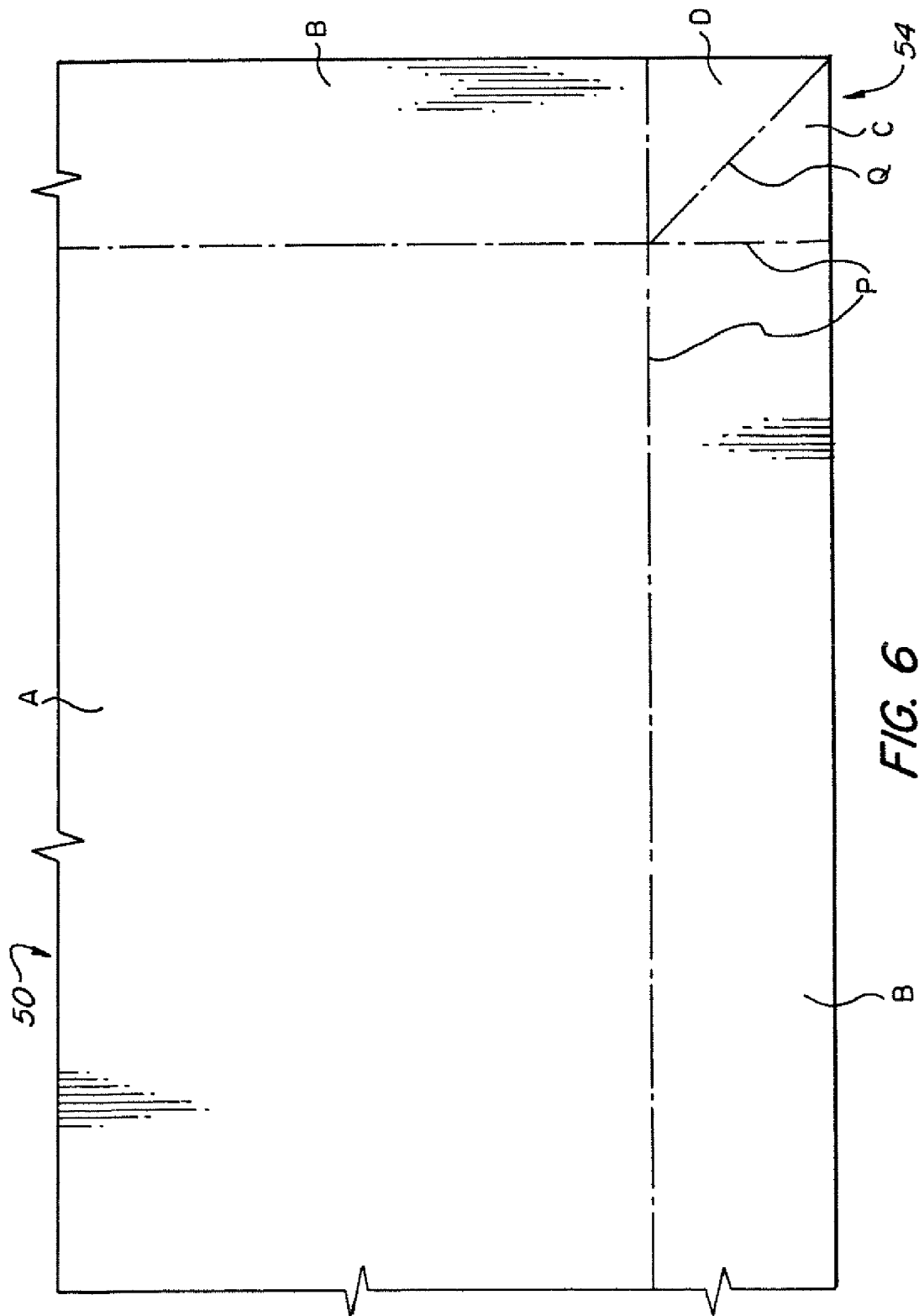
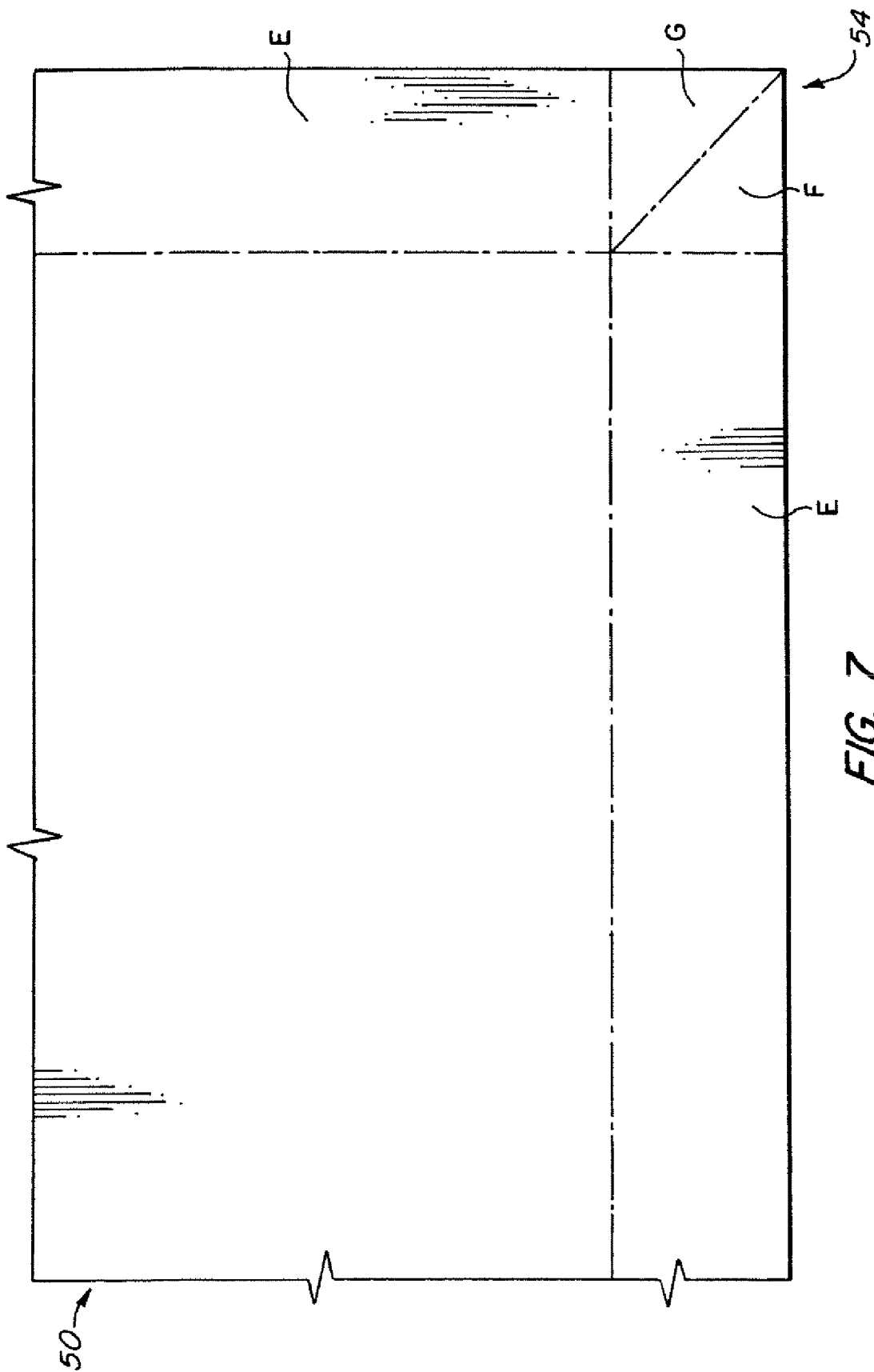
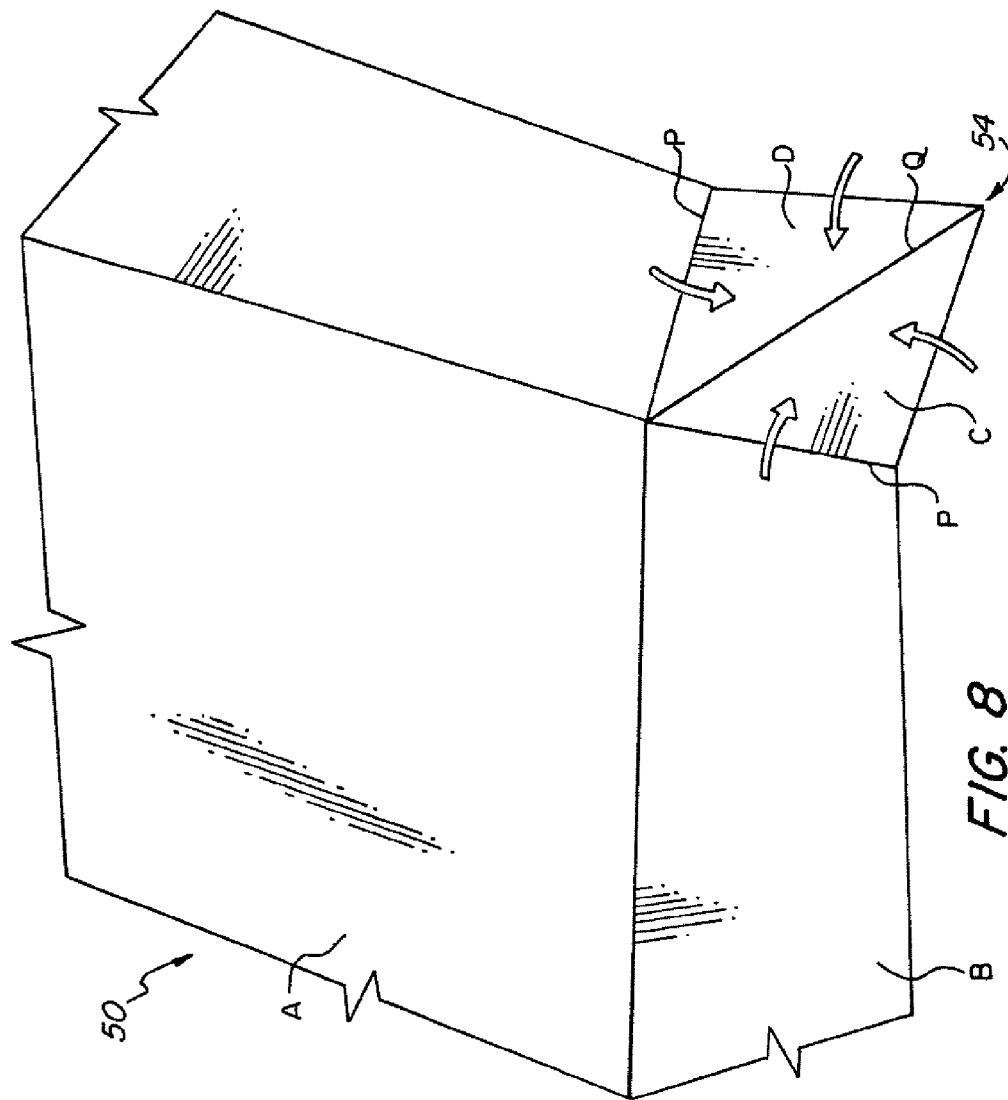


FIG. 5







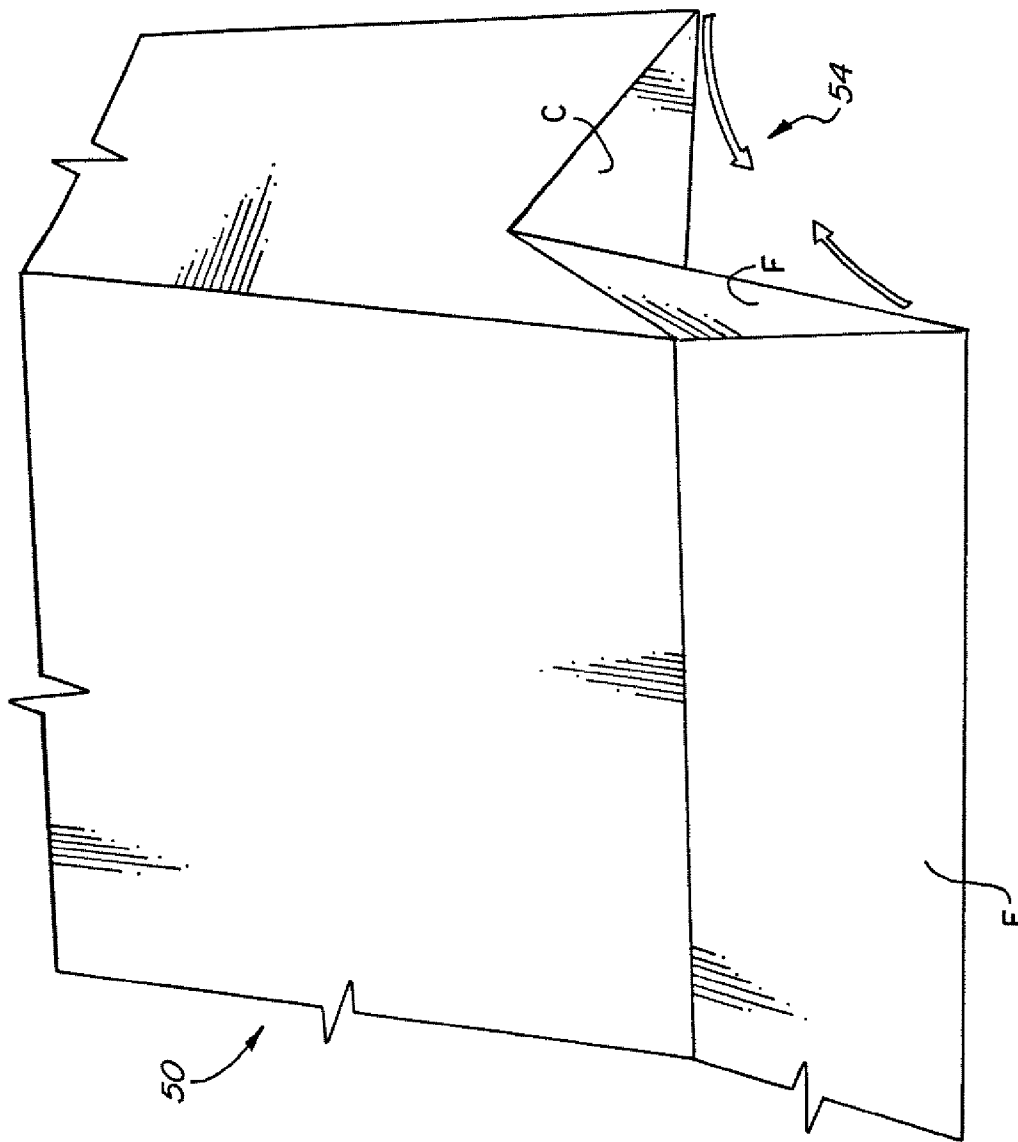
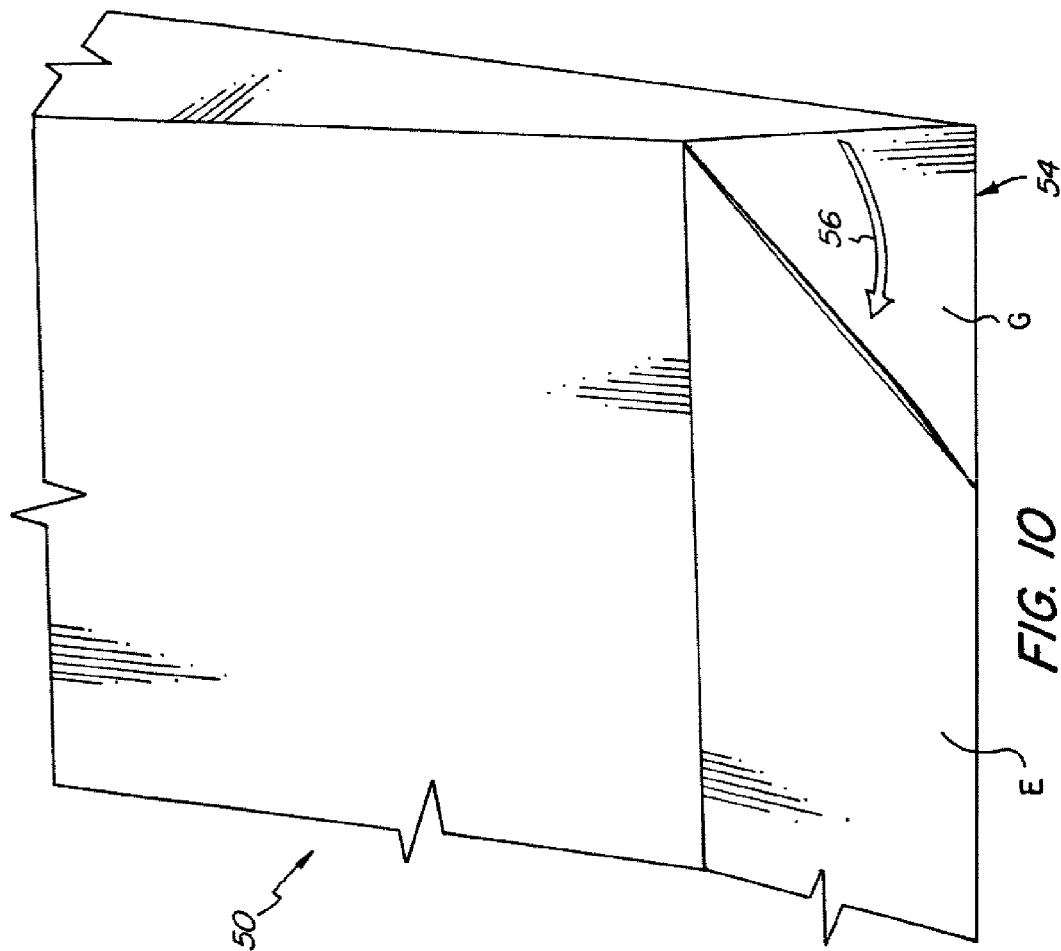


FIG. 9



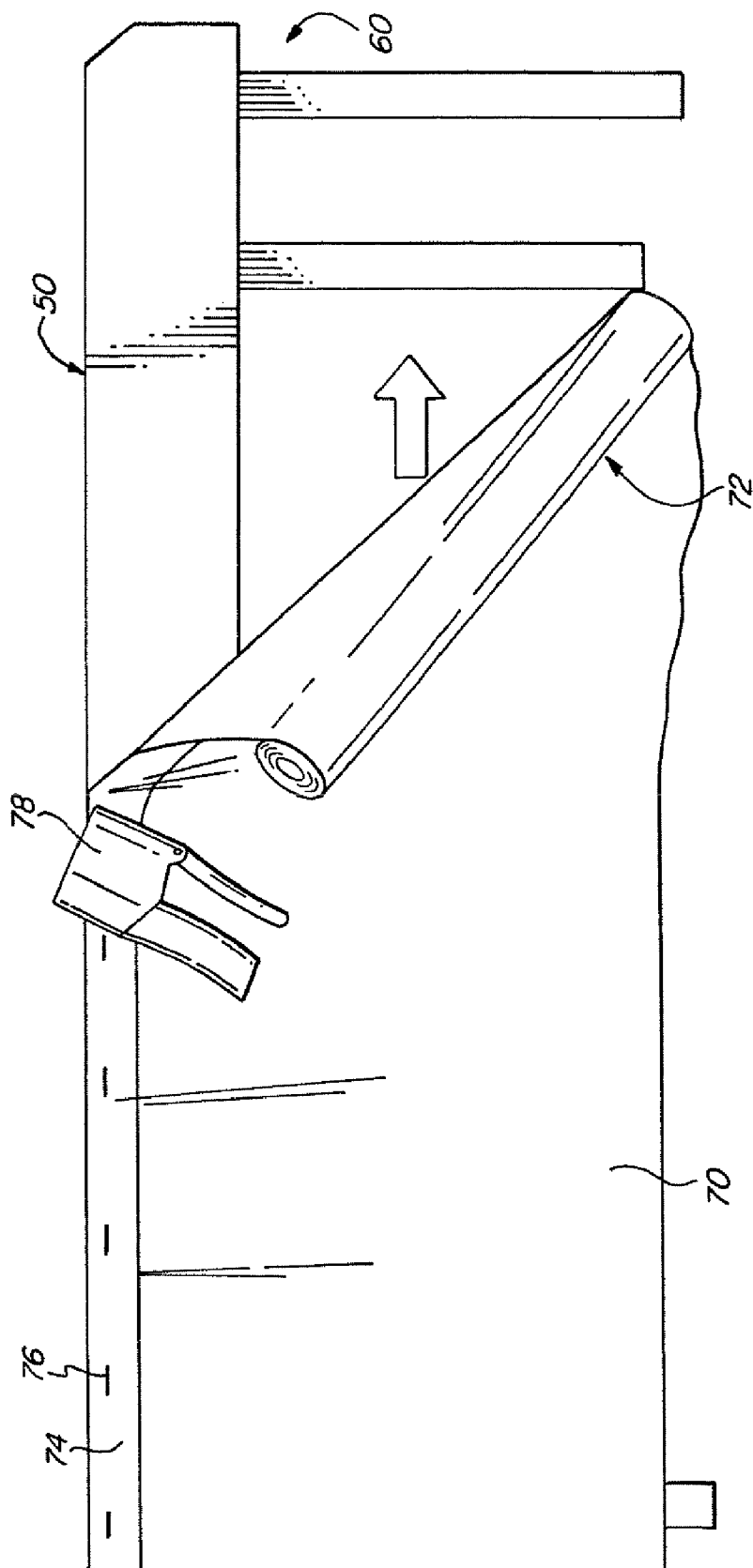


FIG. 11

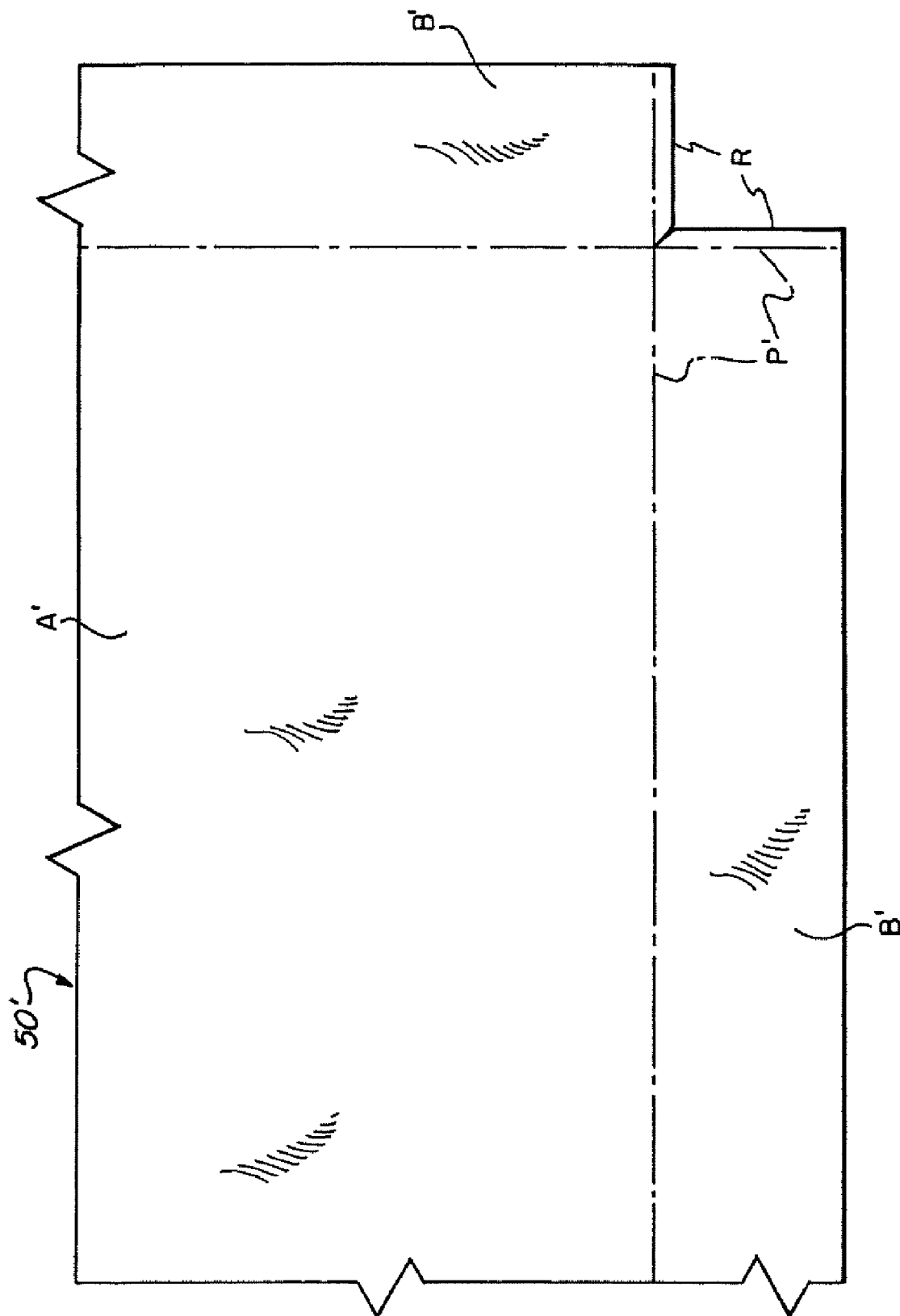
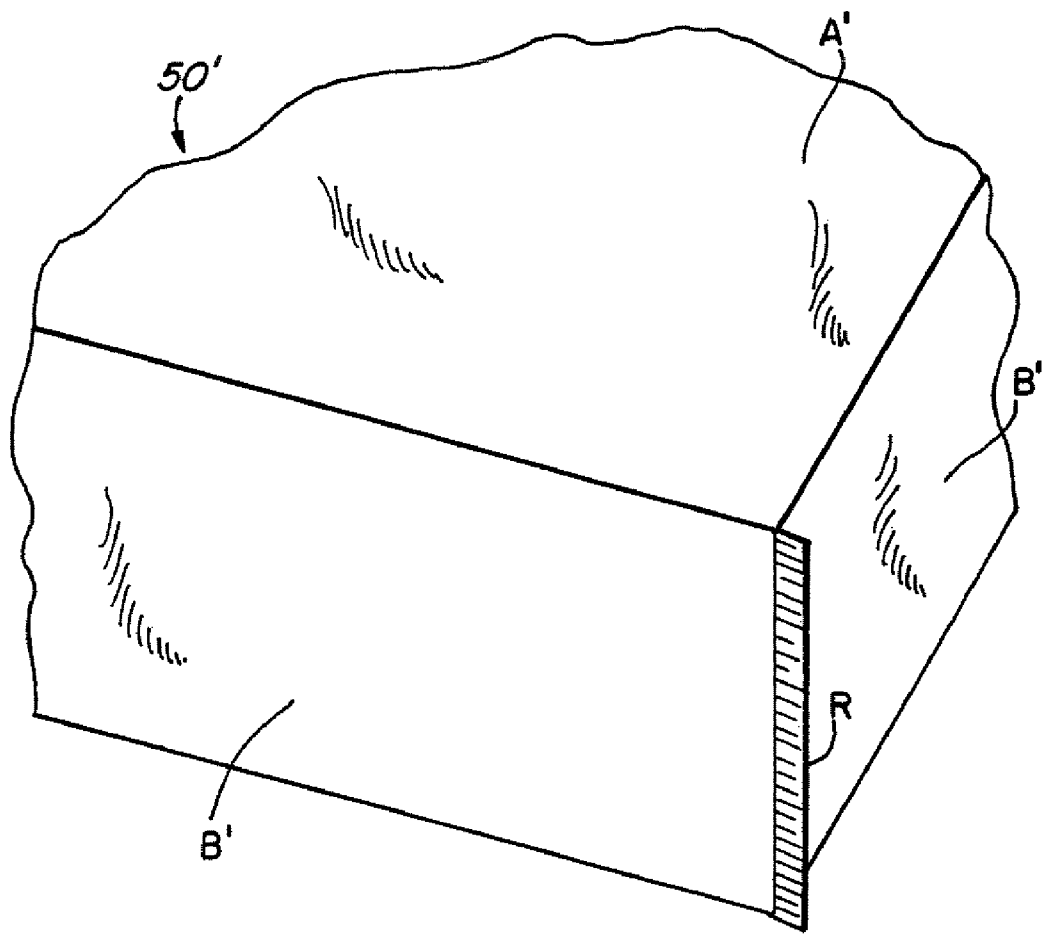
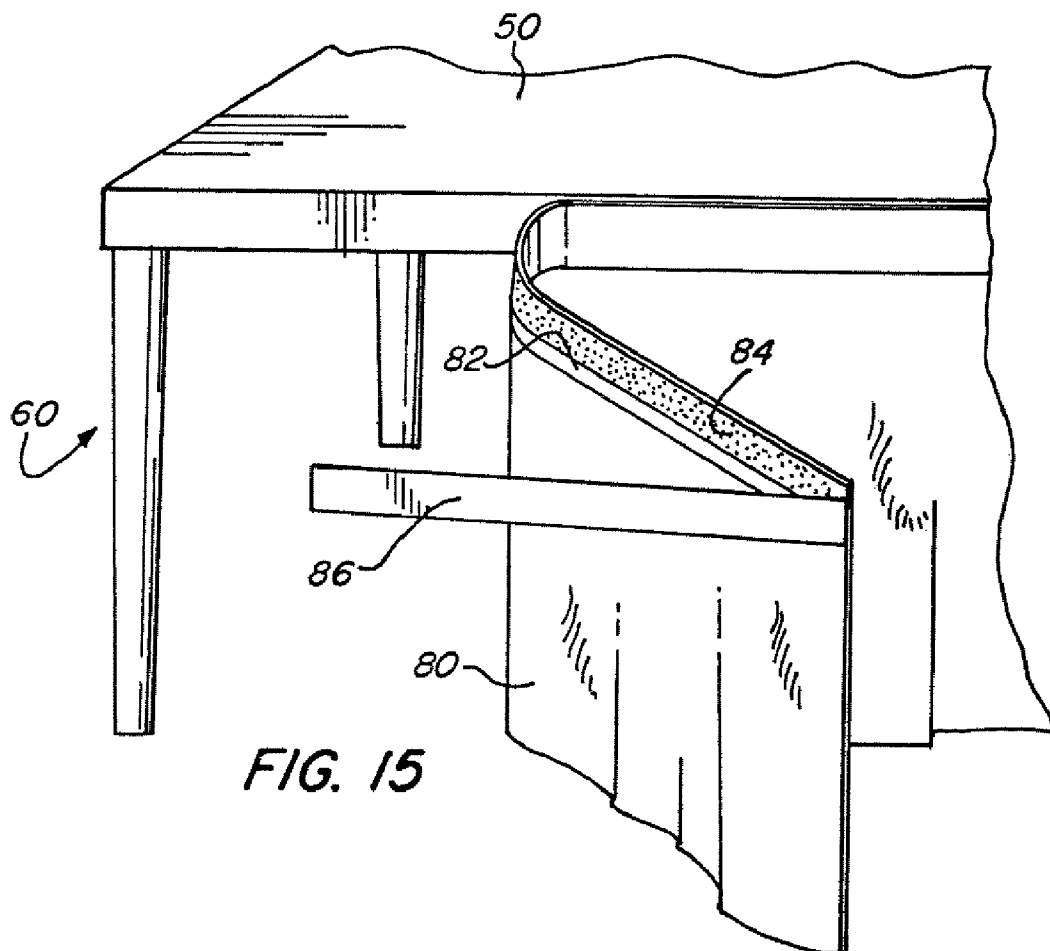
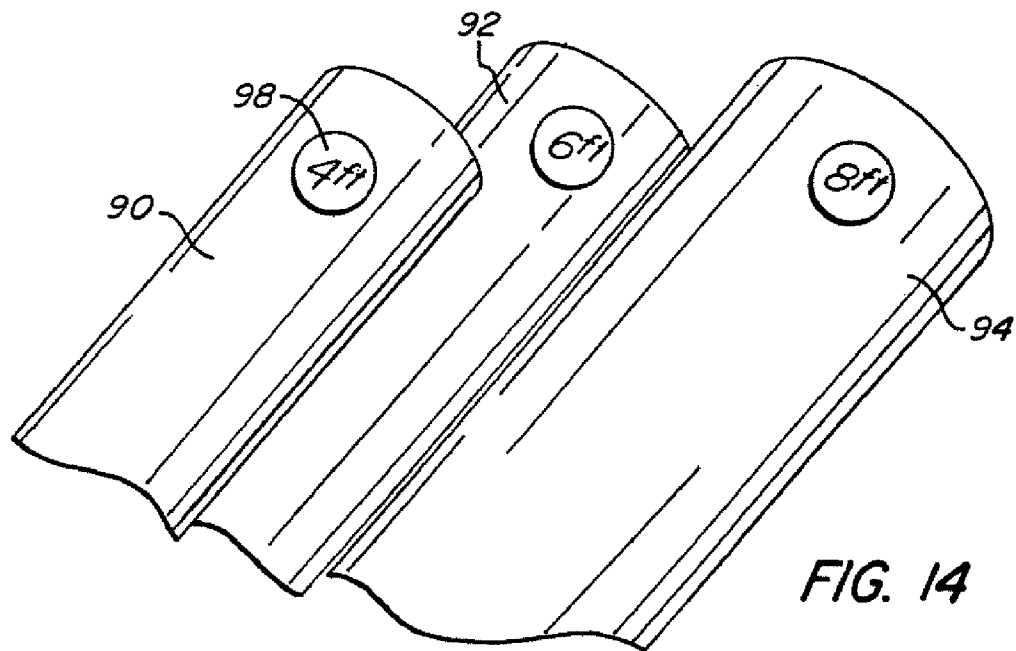


FIG. 12

*FIG. 13*



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TABLECLOTH COVERING AND METHOD OF COVERING AND SKIRTING A TABLE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application is a continuation of currently pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/609,369, filed Dec. 12, 2006, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/074,091, filed Mar. 7, 2005, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,178,470, which is a continuation-in-part of currently pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/767,131, filed Jan. 29, 2004, which in turn claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/532,121, filed Dec. 23, 2003.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to the field of tablecloth coverings and more particularly, to fitted tablecloth coverings that may be affixed to a table, and a method of covering and skirting a table.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Tables used in, for instance, trade shows have been utilized for many years. The tables typically have several standard sizes. The visual appeal of the presentation is closely related to the success of the product being advertised.

However, these tables are typically used many times over leading to wear and tear. Therefore, these tables used for trade shows generally require a covering to be placed over the top surface and partially down the side of the table in order to dress up the table and to better present the product being advertised.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, the current industry way of topping trade show tables 10 is utilizing a white vinyl material 12 that comes on, for instance, rolls 14, that is then cut by hand using scissors 16 to fit the approximate size of the table and then is stapled to the side of the table 10 using an industrial staple gun 18. A fabric skirt is then attached to the edge of the table, also by stapling. This approach has many drawbacks.

For instance, because the material 12 comes on a roll 14 and is manually cut to size, it is generally cut much larger than needed and sometimes under cut, therefore creating wasted material.

Another problem is that current installation of the vinyl to the tabletop is to staple the material 12 directly to the sides of the table 10. The staples 20 damage the wood upon insertion and when the vinyl 12 is removed after the show; it is torn off leaving the staples 20 in the table. This greatly reduces the life span of the table as well as many wasted man hours removing the staples 20 by hand using a staple removal tool 22 (see FIG. 3).

Still another problem is that as the staples 20 accumulate on the side of the table 10, it becomes increasing difficult to install the vinyl top and skirting. Also, as the tables 10 are removed as well as brought to the events they are placed on table dollies (not shown). During this procedure it is very common for equipment handlers to become injured from protruding staples. In addition, during such events, exhibitors themselves and attendees can become injured as well as clothing and trade show materials can become damaged from protruding un-removed staples.

Finally, the current installation procedure is time consuming with the vinyl material 12 coming on a roll 14 making it cumbersome to handle. For example, the roll 14 is heavy,

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typically weighing from 25 to 100 pounds, and thus, is hard to carry and manage in order to cut in sizes and thereafter to apply on the tables.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

What is desired then is an apparatus and method that will address the aforementioned problems.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a tablecloth that may conveniently and quickly be affixed to a table and to provide an appealing visual presentation.

This and other objects of the invention are achieved by providing a tablecloth that is pre-sized according to standard table dimensions.

Some of the benefits to use of the present invention include for instance, there is no wasted material because the tablecloth is pre-cut to the correct size.

In addition, the installation and removal of the tablecloth take very little time and pre-made tablecloths allow for a more exact piece count when, for instance, shipping to a show site.

According to one aspect of the present invention, a method of covering a table having a tabletop of predetermined dimensions and having a top surface and a plurality of side surfaces, includes the steps of: (i) providing a plurality of table covers, each of the plurality of table covers including a top cover having a generally polygonal contour with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof, and a plurality of side drops for covering the side surfaces of the tabletop, each side drop extending generally orthogonally downwardly from a respective one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge, and a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof, wherein the top cover of each of the plurality of table covers has different dimensions than the top surface of each other of the plurality of table covers; (ii) selecting one of the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions suitable for covering the tabletop of the table; (iii) fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the selected table cover onto a corner of the tabletop of the table; (iv) pulling and extending the selected table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the table; and (v) fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the selected table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the table such that the table is covered and ready for use.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a method of covering a plurality of tables, each having a tabletop of predetermined dimensions, includes the steps of: (i) providing a plurality of table covers, each of the plurality of table covers having a top cover with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof and a plurality of side drops, each side drop extending generally downwardly from one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge, and a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof; (ii) selecting a first table cover from the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions generally corresponding to the dimensions of the tabletop of a first table; (iii) fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the first table cover onto a corresponding corner of the tabletop of the first table; (iv) pulling and extending the first table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the first table; (v) fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the first table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the first table such that the first table is covered and ready for use; (vi) selecting a second table cover from the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions generally corresponding to the

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dimensions of the tabletop of a second table, the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the first table being different than the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the second table, and the dimensions of the top surface of the first table cover being different than the dimensions of the top surface of the second table cover; (vii) fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the second table cover onto a corresponding corner of the tabletop of the second table; (viii) pulling and extending the second table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the second table; and (ix) fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the second table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the second table such that the second table is covered and ready for use

According to a further aspect of the present invention, a table cover for covering a generally rectangular table of predetermined size having a length and a width is provided. The table cover includes a top surface having a generally rectangular configuration with a length and a width and four edges, as well as four sides. Each side extends downwardly from a respective one of the edges of the top surface, and each side has a free edge opposite to a respective edge of the top surface and two end edges generally orthogonal to the top surface. The adjacent end edges of each of two respective sides abut one another and are permanently attached to one another to define four corners to hold the table cover on the table. The free edges of each of the four sides together define a length and a width that are substantially equal to the length and the width of the top surface, and the length and the width of the top surface is smaller than the length and width of the table such that the table cover must be stretched in order to be fitted on the table.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a table cover for covering a tabletop of pre-determined size and having a top surface with an outer periphery and a plurality of sides is provided. The table cover includes a top cover having a generally polygonal contour with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof, a plurality of side drops, each extending generally orthogonally downwardly from a respective one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge, and a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof. The free edges of the plurality of side drops define a periphery substantially identical in size and shape to the outer periphery of the top cover, and the outer periphery of the top cover is smaller than the outer periphery of the tabletop such that the table cover must be stretched in order to be fitted on the tabletop.

The invention and its particular features and advantages will become more apparent from the following detailed description considered with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates installation of a tablecloth covering according to a method known in the prior art;

FIG. 2 illustrates installation of the tablecloth covering of FIG. 1, showing the tablecloth being stapled to the side of the table;

FIG. 3 illustrates removal of the staples according to the prior art;

FIG. 4A is an illustration of one preferred embodiment of the present invention showing the tablecloth being initially applied to one end of the table;

FIG. 4B is an illustration of one preferred embodiment of the present invention according to FIG. 4A, showing the tablecloth being drawn across to the table;

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FIG. 4C is an illustration of one preferred embodiment of the present invention according to FIG. 4A, showing the tablecloth being applied over an opposite end of the table;

FIG. 4D is an illustration of one preferred embodiment of the present invention according to FIG. 4A, showing the tablecloth applied to the table;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a typical table top showing dimensions of surfaces to be covered by the tablecloth;

FIG. 6 is a partial top view of the tablecloth according to one preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 is a partial bottom view of one preferred embodiment of the present invention according to FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a partial top view of the tablecloth according to FIG. 6 showing a folding of a corner;

FIG. 9 is a partial bottom view of the tablecloth according to FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 is a partial bottom view of the tablecloth according to FIG. 9 illustrating a further fold of the corner for binding onto an inside drop of the tablecloth;

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of one preferred embodiment of the present invention, illustrating application of a skirt along the sides of the tabletop on top of the covered tablecloth;

FIG. 12 is a partial bottom view of the tablecloth according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 13 is a partial bottom view of the tablecloth according to FIG. 9 illustrating a bound state of one corner of the tablecloth;

FIG. 14 is a partial perspective view illustrating the tablecloths of the invention provided in rolls of several different sizes; and

FIG. 15 is a partial perspective view illustrating a skirt according to another preferred embodiment of the invention and application of the skirt along the sides of the tabletop on top of the covered tablecloth.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In one preferred embodiment of the present invention, a custom fitted, slip over tablecloth is provided that installs onto, for example, trade show tables with a non-intrusive application. With reference to FIG. 6, a tablecloth 50 includes a top cover "A" for covering the top surface of a tabletop 60 (FIGS. 4-5), and a plurality of (e.g., four) side drop portions "B" extending outwards from the top cover "A". The tablecloth material is precut to size to accommodate the existing size tables that are offered, or any other size tables for applying thereon. In a trade show, for example, the site may accommodate many tables of different dimensions. For applying the tablecloths of the invention to these tables, the exact number of the tablecloths 50 can be cut to the corresponding sizes and shipped to the show site. As such, many tablecloths 50 can be cut in advance to cover the existing tables of one or many different dimensions.

Existing standard size tables are typically 24" wide, for instance, with the dimension of 24"×48" (4 foot table), 24"×72" (6 foot table) and 24"×96" (8 foot table) and having a 2½" drop (i.e., thickness) on all sides, respectively. Other table sizes are also available including, but without limiting thereto, 18" wide tables and 30" wide tables with several different lengths. FIG. 5 illustrates a typical dimension of standard six foot table, for example. If such standard size tables are accommodated in a trade shows as is very common, the number of the tablecloths for each standard size can be counted before the show, and appropriate purchase orders for the tablecloths can be made in advance. Thus, covering of the trade show tables can be done quickly and conveniently uti-

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lizing the pre-cut and fitted tablecloths of the invention (which will be described herein below in details).

The present invention, however, is not intended to be limited to any particular sizes and configurations of such table-tops. For example, the tablecloth of the invention is also applicable to any custom made tables with a wide variety of different sizes or to tables for home or office use. It is also applicable to a tabletop having a rectangular, hexagonal, other polygonal configuration, or round or elliptical configuration.

Tablecloths **50** are preferably formed of a thin resilient material such as a thin vinyl. For example, a thin and flexible PVC (polyvinyl chloride) film of flame retardant property with a thickness of preferably about 0.3 mm to about 0.8 mm, more preferably about 0.4 mm to about 0.6 mm, can be used for the material. Various other polymers or synthetic resins, or resilient fabric materials may also be used. However, tablecloth **50** can be formed of a substantially non-resilient material. Tablecloth **50** may be transparent, white, colored, or include suitable decorations or pictures thereon.

The top cover "A" of the tablecloth **50** is sized a little shorter than the actual dimension of the tabletop **60** so the resilient material may be stretched to fit tightly onto the tabletop **60**. The side drops "B" of the tablecloth **50** is preferably a little wider than the drop size of the table **60** to sufficiently cover there over. For example, in order to apply onto the conventional size tabletops with two and a half inch drops (see FIG. **5**), thin vinyl material is cut into a rectangular shaped table cover **50** with the central top-cover portion "A" dimensioned about 1% to about 5% shorter than the size of the tabletop and the side drops **52** dimensioned to be about three inch wide. Typical dimensions of the top-cover portion "A" are as follows (when using flexible PVC film or other synthetic resins of similar flexibility with a thickness of about 0.4 mm to about 0.6 mm):

Tabletop Size	Top Cover "A" Width	Top Cover "A" Length
18" x 48"	About 17.5"	About 46" to about 47.5"
18" x 72"	About 17.5"	About 69" to about 71"
18" x 96"	About 17.5"	About 92" to about 95"
24" x 48"	About 23.5"	About 46 to about 47.5"
24" x 72"	About 23.5"	About 69" to about 71"
24" x 96"	About 23.5"	About 92" to about 95"
30" x 48"	About 29"	About 46" to about 47.5"
30" x 72"	About 29"	About 69" to about 71"
30" x 96"	About 29"	About 92" to about 95"

According to one preferred embodiment of the present invention as described herein below, four corners of the tablecloth **50** are now suitably folded and then bound with respective adjacent side drops **52** of the tablecloth **50** in order to provide a custom "fitted" cover applicable over the tabletop **60**.

With reference to FIG. **6** which shows the tablecloth from outside of the tablecloth, the side drops "B" of the tablecloth **50** are first folded backwards along lines "P". Then, each corner area **54** defined by the folding is now inversely folded along line "Q" as shown in FIG. **8**. This forms a first drop fold area "C" and a second drop fold area "D" at the corner area **54**, each in a triangular shape facing one another. Then, the first and second drop fold areas C and D are bound to each other by a conventional binding method. Typically, binding agents are applied on the areas C and D for the connection thereof. However, other binding methods can also be applied, for example, such as vinyl welding, riveting, sewing, gluing, elastic or hot knifed or sonic welding, heat formed connec-

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tion, and Velcro-type connection, etc. After binding of the areas C and D, binding agents are similarly applied to an opposite side of the corner area **54**, i.e., on the left inside drop fold area F (shown FIGS. **7** and **8**). Then, the combined corner **54** is folded toward a direction **56**, and the drop fold area F is bound to the inside drop E as shown in FIG. **10**. Alternately, the corner **54** can be folded in an opposite direction (i.e., inversely to the direction **56**) and bound onto the other side of drop E, with binding agents previously applied there-about.

The above-described folding and binding is repeated on all four sides. To facilitate the folding of the corners, boundary identification lines "P" and "Q" can be printed in advance on the tablecloth **50**, preferably with ink or in pressed or embedded lines. Finished exterior corners illustrate only the areas A and B as finished corners when seen from the outside. This finished process creates a monolithic table covering for fitting over a tabletop.

The following are letter keys for use in reference with FIGS. **6-10**:

For 3" Drop fold -

- A: Top cover = 24" x 48"/72"/96" (when applied on tabletop)
- B: Outside drop
- C: Outside drop fold (left)
- D: Outside drop fold (right)
- E: Inside drop
- F: Inside drop fold (left)
- G: Inside drop fold (right)

Where, C is combined or fused to D; and F is combined or fused to E.

With reference to FIGS. **12-13**, another preferred embodiment of the tablecloth or table cover is described herein. Tablecloth **50'** is basically the same or similar to the tablecloth **50** above described except that specified herein below. Thus, detail descriptions of such similar features are not repeated herein for simplicity purposes.

Tablecloth **50'** includes top cover A' and plural (e.g., four) side drops B' extending outwardly from the top cover A'. The top cover A' and side drops B' are similarly configured as that of top cover A and side drops B of the tablecloth **50** as in FIGS. **6-10**. However, in this embodiment, corner area **54** are precut, and side drops B' each have narrow strip area R extending laterally from the side end of each side drop B'. These strip areas R are for folding along the fold lines P', and each of the neighboring strips R are bound according to known connection methods applicable to polymer materials of the tablecloth **50'**, such as PVC film. For example, after facing the neighboring strips R in close contact with each other, the strips R are fused and combined together by applying heat energy such as radio frequency energy onto the strips. FIG. **13** shows the binding state at each corner of the tablecloth **50'**.

In accordance with one preferred embodiment of the invention, application of the tablecloth or table cover **50** is described herein, with reference to FIGS. **4A-4C**. Two formed corners **52** of the tablecloth **50** (or **50'**) are first locked onto two corresponding corners on one lateral side of the tabletop **60**, as shown in FIG. **4A**. Then, the tablecloth **50** is drawn across the corners on the opposite sides of the table, as indicated by arrow "X" in FIG. **4B**. Now, the resilient material **50** is pulled and stretched a little, and the rest two formed corners of the tablecloth **50** are locked onto two corresponding corners of the table as shown in FIG. **4C**, thus allowing for a custom "fitted" top. Here, in order to prevent development of wrinkles on the fitted tablecloth **50**, the resilient tablecloth

50 can be adequately pulled and smoothed by the hands or with the aid of a ruler or a straight bar. The tablecloth **50** covers the top of the table as well as the lip around the four sides as shown in FIG. 4D.

With reference to FIG. 14, each of the table covers **50** (and **50'**) is provide, for example, to trade show sites preferably in a separately rolled form for easiness of its supply and handling. For that, an elongate tube of about 1/4 inch diameter can be used as a rolling tool in order to roll each tablecloth **50** in orderly form without wrinkling, which is removed from the tablecloth roll after the rolling. Plural tablecloth rolls, such as rolls **90** for 4 foot long tables, rolls **92** for 6 foot long tables, and rolls **94** for 8 foot long tables, can be boxed in a suitable container or carton box for shipping to desired locations such as trade show sites. In order to facilitate quick identification of their sizes (particularly, when the sites have a lot of tables of different size), it is preferable that each roll contains a size identification at a suitable location of the roll, such as stickers **98** indicating the size of the table on which the tablecloth is intended to be applied.

Such tables with their tabletops **60** covered by the resilient tablecloth **50** can be used, for example, as trade show tables. However, in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the invention as described herein below, the tables can be preferably covered by additional skirts around the side areas of the table.

With reference now to FIG. 11, application of side skirts onto the covered table is described herein in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Skirt **70** is preferably formed of fabric or a similar material which is generally tougher than the resilient tablecloth material. The skirt **70** has a width for suitably covering the sides of the table, and can be provided in a roll **72** for use after cut to a desired size to surround at least the front side, and more preferably at least the front and two lateral sides of the table. However, the skirt **70** may be provided in a predetermined standard length. For example, the skirt **70** can have a precut length of about 13 feet. When using this 13 foot long skirt, a standard eight-foot table (2 feetx8 feet) can be covered by the front (8 feet) and two lateral sides (2+2, i.e., 4 feet), and a little of the rear side, that is, about 0.5 foot on each lateral side of the rear side. Likewise, a standard six-foot table (2 feetx6 feet) can be covered by the front (6 feet) and two lateral sides (4 feet) and about 1.5 feet on each lateral side of the rear side, and a standard four-foot table (2 feetx4 feet) can be covered by the entire sides of the table that is 12 foot long (i.e., 4+4+2+2). Supply of table skirts of a fixed size (e.g., 13 feet) may have some advantages since the skirts of a uniform length can be used to cover any kind of standard size tables often used in ordinary trade shows, realizing saving of substantial labor time and cost for preparing and installing such table skirts onto a large numbers of tables as in a big trade show. It is particularly noted that covering of at least three sides (i.e., front and two lateral sides) has also a practical usage for trade show tables since the covered sides can be exposed towards the customers and the uncovered side (if any) can be used by the host of the trade tables, or vice versa if it is more desirable.

The skirt **70** may include a reinforced band **74** around the top area of the skirt. The band **74** is similarly formed of a fabric-like material and can provide a tougher foundation for applying staples or tacks, as will be described herein below.

A free end of the rolled skirt **70** is first affixed onto a side of the tabletop **60** with staples **76** applied along the side of the tabletop **60** by using a suitable staple applicator **78**. Instead of applying staples **76**, other known fasteners such as pins, tacks, or the like can be applied either by hands or using an applicator known in the art. The remaining portion of the skirt **70**

is now adequately placed onto the sides of the tabletop **60** and affixed there-around in a similar way. During installation of the skirt **70**, the tablecloth may be further pulled tight to remove wrinkles. Also, it is advantageous to apply the fasteners (such as staples, tacks, or pins) onto the reinforced band **74** because it can more securely hold the staples or the like. Accordingly, covered tables of appealing appearance can be provided for using, for example, in a trade show.

One preferred method for disassembly of the coverings (i.e., the skirt **70** and the tablecloth **50**) is now described. First, one end side of the fabric skirt **70**, which is affixed onto the tabletop **60** by staples **76**, is pulled for disassembly. Since the skirt is formed of a fabric material and preferably reinforced with the band **74**, this pulling action causes the corresponding portions of the fabric skirt **70** and the staples **76** to be detached from the tabletop **60** without damaging the skirt **70** and the tablecloth **50**. The remaining portion of the skirt **70** is then pulled to complete the disassembly of the skirt and the staples (or tacks).

Now, the tablecloth **50** is peeled off from the tabletop **60** in a reverse order to that of the application of the tablecloth as described above, and this completes the disassembly process. The tablecloth **50** removed from the tabletop **60** is typically discarded. However, since the removed tablecloth **50** may not be damaged, it can be reused for a later trade show.

With reference now to FIG. 15, alternate embodiment of the skirts of the invention and application of the skirts onto the covered table is described herein. Similar to the skirt **70** described above in connection with FIG. 11, skirt **80** of this embodiment is preferably formed of fabric to provide soft and amicable feelings to the site. Various colors and decorations can also be provided on the skirts or tablecloths of the invention. Skirt **80** can be made of other suitable materials known in the art such as polymer materials or the like. The skirt **80** includes a polymer or vinyl band **82** which is attached to the skirt along its upper inside area preferably by sewing or by other suitable means. The band **82** forms a base structure for applying adhesive **84** thereon in order to attach the skirt **80** on the side of the tabletop, preferably on top of the tablecloth **50** previously covered thereon.

According to one preferred embodiment of the invention, the adhesive **84** is in the form of a double sided adhesive tape which is covered by a protective strip **86** attached thereon. The protective layer **86** may be formed of waxed paper, vinyl material, or the like. When fixing the skirt **80** onto the tables, the protective layer **85** is peeled off from the polymer band **82** and the adhesive **84** of the skirt **80** is suitably pressed onto the side of the tabletops.

As described above in connection with the description of the skirts **70**, the skirts **80** can also be provided in a uniform size, for example, 13 foot long for covering at least the front and two lateral sides of the standard size tables of trade shows. Alternatively, the skirts can be provided in a roll of extended length for use after cut to a desired length for each use.

Utilizing the skirt **80** of this embodiment, the skirts can be more easily attached to the covered tables without damaging the tables by applying staples or tacks or other fasteners as used by the conventional methods discussed above. Disassembly of the skirts **80** can also be performed simply by peeling off the skirts, and no staples or fasteners are to be remained at the tables because such fasteners are not needed at all when fixing the skirts **80** to the tables. Disassembled skirts and tablecloths can be simply discarded after the particular trade show. This may save excessive storage and handling costs for the used table coverings.

As discussed above, the present invention provides new and convenient tablecloths and skirts, along with new meth-

ods of applying such tablecloths and skirts of the invention. The invention can simplify the cumbersome and labor consuming process of applying table covers on the tables, particularly for display tables of a trade show. In particular, when a trade show site has a great number of tables of standard sizes, the invention can save a substantial amount of labor and installation costs for applying the coverings before the show. The tables covered with the coverings of the invention may provide an appealing outlook for successful presentation in the trade shows. The tables covered by the inventive coverings will not be damaged by staples or other fasteners. Safety and other values are also enhanced substantially.

Although the invention has been described with reference to several embodiments with certain constructions, structures, ingredients and formulations and the like, these are not intended to exhaust all possible arrangements or features, and indeed many other modifications and variations will be ascertainable to those of skill in the art. For example, the tablecloth of the invention may have a hexagonal (or other polygonal) shape, as described above, for accommodating with a similarly shaped tabletop. Then, its drop fold areas may have a different shape other than that described above to adequately fold and bind to an adjacent side drop.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of covering a table, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a table having tabletop of predetermined dimensions and having a top surface and a plurality of side surfaces;

providing a plurality of table covers, each of the plurality of table covers including a top cover having a generally polygonal contour with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof, and a plurality of side drops for covering the side surfaces of the tabletop, each side drop extending generally orthogonally downwardly from a respective one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge, and a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof, wherein the top cover of each of the plurality of table covers has different dimensions than the top surface of each other of the plurality of table covers;

selecting one of the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions suitable for covering the tabletop of the table;

fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the selected table cover onto a corner of the tabletop of the table;

pulling and extending the selected table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the table; and

fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the selected table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the table such that the table is covered and ready for use.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of: selecting a second one of the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions suitable for covering a tabletop of a second table, the second table having a top surface and a plurality of side surfaces

fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the selected second table cover onto a corner of the tabletop of the second table;

pulling and extending the selected second table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the second table; and

fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the selected second table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the second table such that the second table is covered and ready for use.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the table are different than the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the second table and wherein the dimensions of the top surface of the selected table cover are different than the dimensions of the top surface of the selected second table cover.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the table are larger than the dimensions of the top surface of the selected table cover, such that the selected table cover is stretched during installation on the table.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of: providing a skirt formed of a fabric material and dimensioned to cover at least one side area of the table; and attaching the skirt around at least one of the side surfaces of the tabletop of the table on top of the table cover.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the attaching of the skirt step is performed by applying a plurality of staples, tacks, or pins along the side surfaces of the tabletop.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the steps of: detaching the fabric skirt and the plurality of staples, tacks, or pins attached to the fabric skirt;

removing the table cover from the tabletop of the table; and disposing of the table cover.

8. A method of covering a plurality of tables, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of tables, each having a tabletop of predetermined dimensions;

providing a plurality of table covers, each of the plurality of table covers having a top cover with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof and a plurality of side drops, each side drop extending generally downwardly from one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge, and a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof;

selecting a first table cover from the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions generally corresponding to the dimensions of the tabletop of a first table;

fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the first table cover onto a corresponding corner of the tabletop of the first table;

pulling and extending the first table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the first table;

fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the first table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the first table such that the first table is covered and ready for use;

selecting a second table cover from the plurality of table covers having a top surface with dimensions generally corresponding to the dimensions of the tabletop of a second table, the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the first table being different than the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the second table, and the dimensions of the top surface of the first table cover being different than the dimensions of the top surface of the second table cover;

fitting at least one of the pre-fitted corners of the second table cover onto a corresponding corner of the tabletop of the second table;

pulling and extending the second table cover across over other corners of the tabletop of the second table; and

fitting all remaining pre-fitted corners of the second table cover onto corresponding corners of the tabletop of the second table such that the second table is covered and ready for use.

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9. The method of claim 8 wherein the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the first table are larger than the dimensions of the top surface of the first table cover, such that the first table cover is stretched during installation on the first table, and wherein the predetermined dimensions of the tabletop of the second table are larger than the dimensions of the top surface of the second table cover, such that the second table cover is stretched during installation on the second table.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of: providing a first skirt formed of a fabric material and dimensioned to cover at least one side area of the first table;

attaching the first skirt around at least one of the side surfaces of the tabletop of the first table on top of the first table cover;

providing a second skirt formed of a fabric material and dimensioned to cover at least one side area of the second table; and

attaching the second skirt around at least one of the side surfaces of the tabletop of the second table on top of the second table cover.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the first skirt and the second skirt are of the same standard size.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the attaching of the first skirt step and the attaching of the second skirt step are performed by applying a plurality of staples, tacks, or pins along the side surfaces of the tabletops.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of: detaching the first fabric skirt and the plurality of staples, tacks, or pins attached to the first fabric skirt; removing the first table cover from the tabletop of the first table;

disposing of the first table cover;

detaching the second fabric skirt and the plurality of staples, tacks, or pins attached to the second fabric skirt; removing the second table cover from the tabletop of the second table; and

disposing of the second table cover.

14. A combination of a table and a table cover, the combination comprising:

a generally rectangular table of pre-determined size having a length and a width; and

a table cover comprising a top surface having a generally rectangular configuration with a length and a width and four edges, and four sides, each extending downwardly from a respective one of the edges of the top surface,

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each of the four sides having a free edge opposite to a respective edge of the top surface and two end edges generally orthogonal to the top surface;

wherein the adjacent end edges of each of two respective sides abut one another and are permanently attached to one another to define four corners to hold the table cover on the table;

wherein the free edges of each of the four sides together define a length and a width that are substantially equal to the length and the width of the top surface; and

wherein the length and the width of the top surface is smaller than the length and width of the table such that the table cover must be stretched in order to be fitted on the table.

15. The combination of claim 14, wherein the top surface and the four sides are formed from a polymeric film.

16. The combination of claim 15, wherein the polymeric film is flame retardant PVC film.

17. The combination of claim 14, wherein the adjacent end edges are heat sealed.

18. A combination of a table and a table cover, the combination comprising:

a tabletop of pre-determined size and having a top surface with an outer periphery and a plurality of sides; and

a table cover comprising:

a top cover having a generally polygonal contour with a plurality of sides at an outer periphery thereof;

a plurality of side drops, each extending generally orthogonally downwardly from a respective one of the sides of the top cover to a free edge;

a plurality of pre-fitted corners, each corner defined by two adjacent side drops permanently attached to one another along abutting ends thereof, wherein the free edges of the plurality of side drops define a periphery substantially identical in size and shape to the outer periphery of the top cover; and

wherein the outer periphery of the top cover is smaller than the outer periphery of the tabletop such that the table cover must be stretched in order to be fitted on the tabletop.

19. The combination of claim 18, wherein the top cover and the side drops are formed from a polymeric film.

20. The combination of claim 19, wherein the polymeric film is flame retardant PVC film.

21. The combination of claim 18, wherein the abutting ends of adjacent side drops are heat sealed.

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