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Shirley et al.

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(54) **SHOW DESK AND SHIPPING PLATFORM**

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A47B 85/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **108/12**; 108/55.1

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 108/147.14, 147.13, 147.12, 147.11, 108/110, 96, 53.1, 54.1, 57.1, 16, 12, 55.1, 108/55.3, 55.5
See application file for complete search history.

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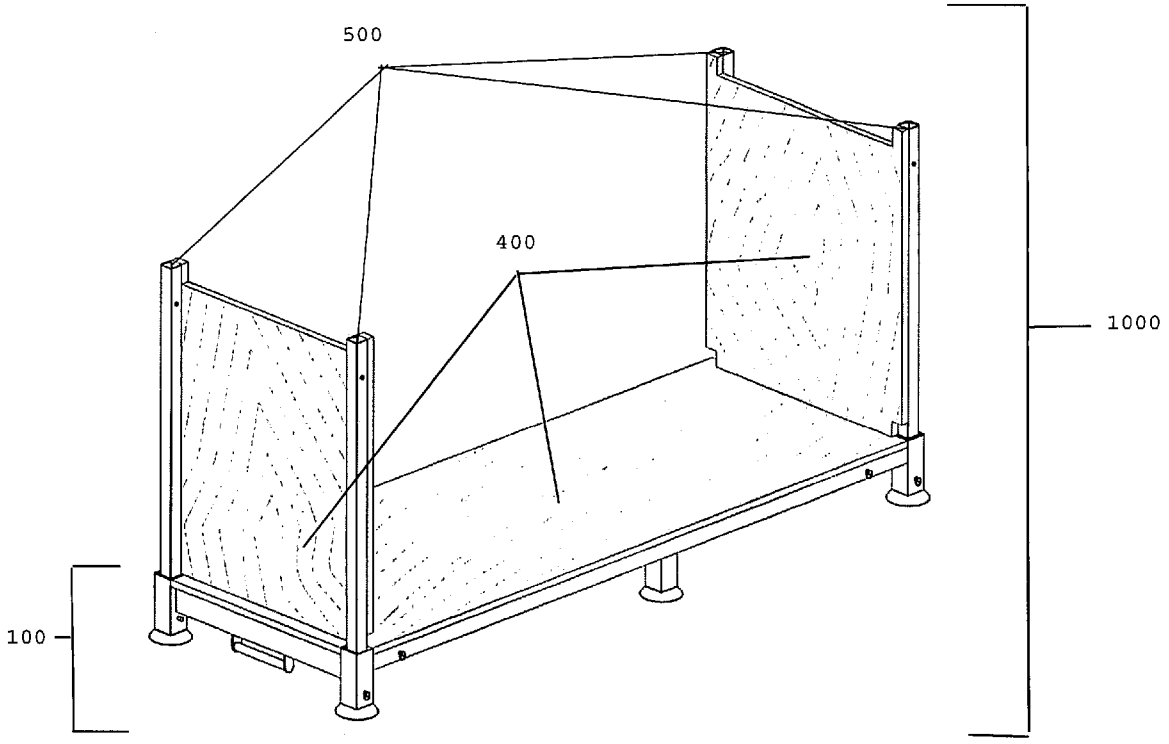
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a shipping platform (e.g., a cart, skid, or pallet) or a display desk, table, or shelf. In one embodiment, the apparatus may convert from a six, eight, or ten foot long shipping platform to a six, eight, or ten foot long table or shelf. The table or shelf surface may be raised or lowered and multiple apparatus can be stacked on top of each other to create larger shelves. Operably, the apparatus may be used for transportation, drayage, and storage (e.g., underneath the platform or shelf when setup as a table) of items to be displayed.

3 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



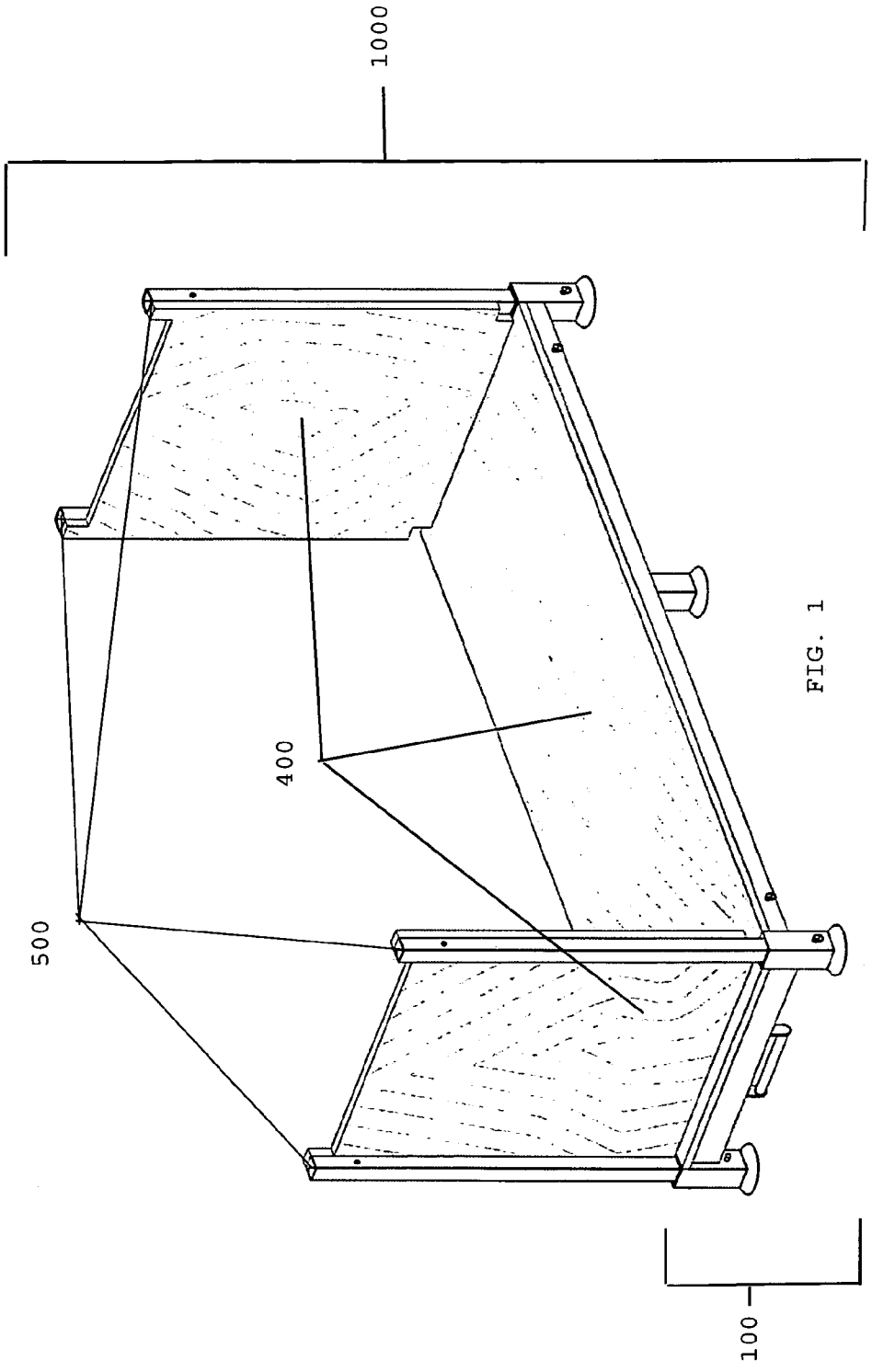
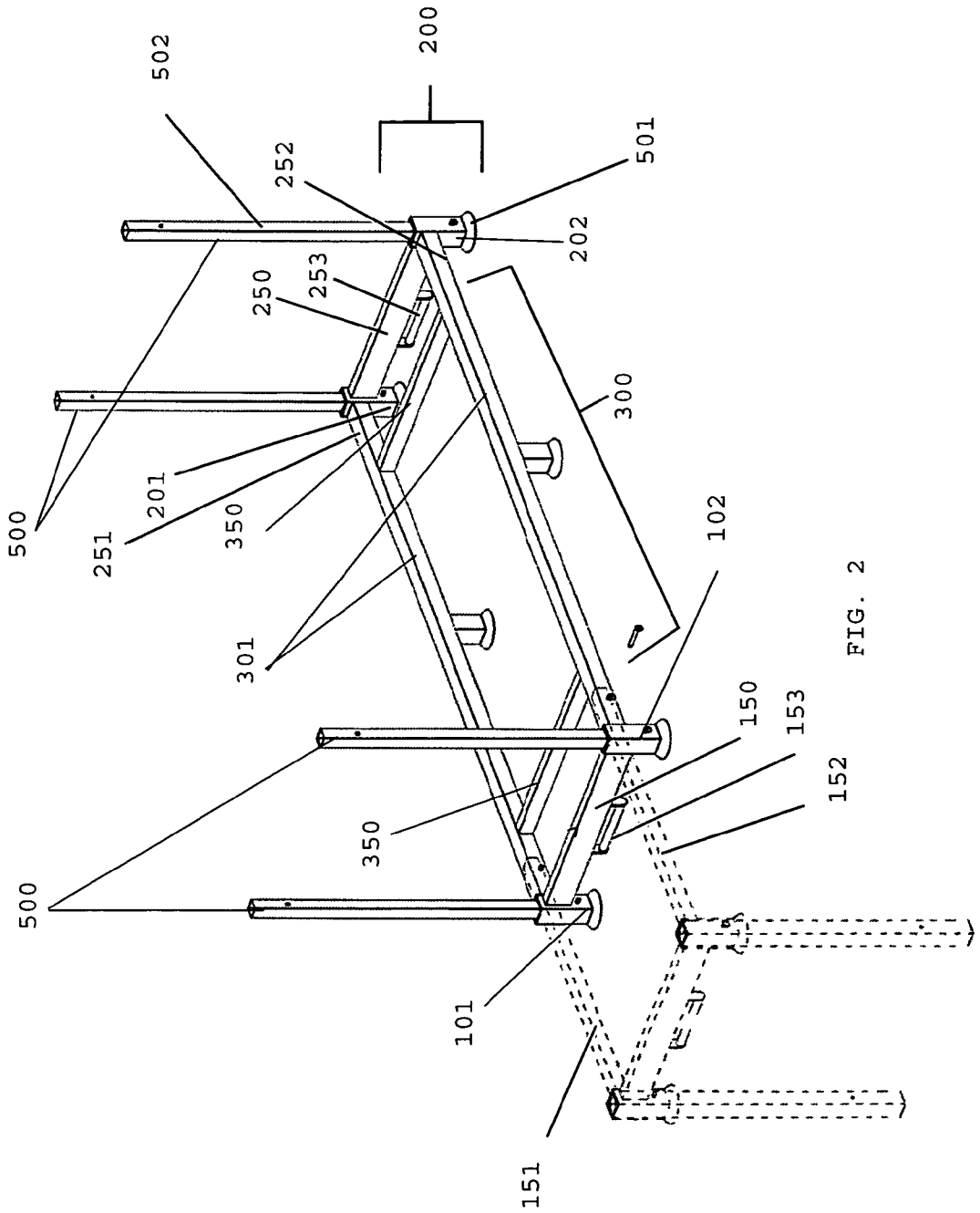


FIG. 1


200
502
252
501
202
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301
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153
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101
151

FIG. 2

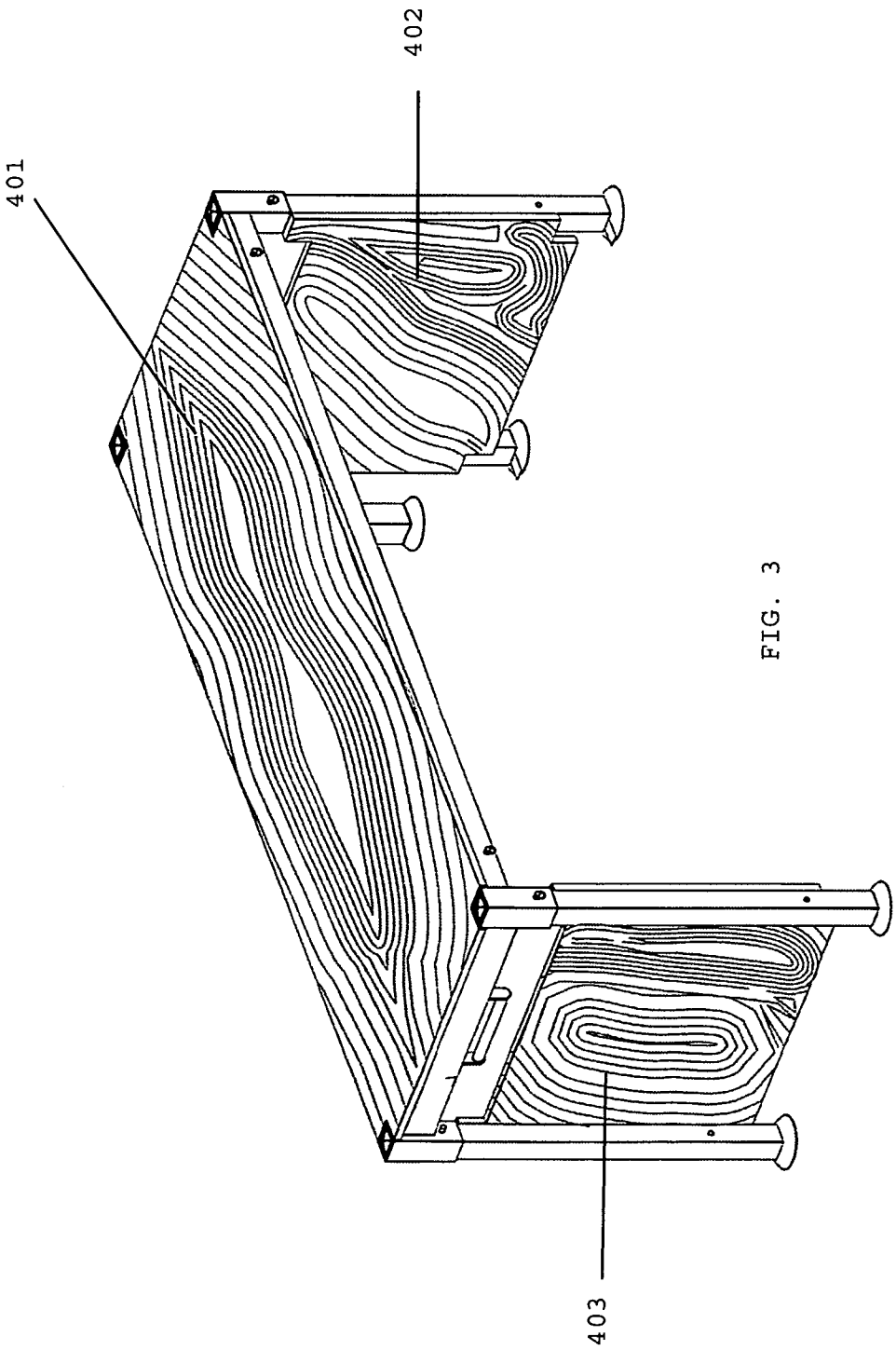

FIG. 3

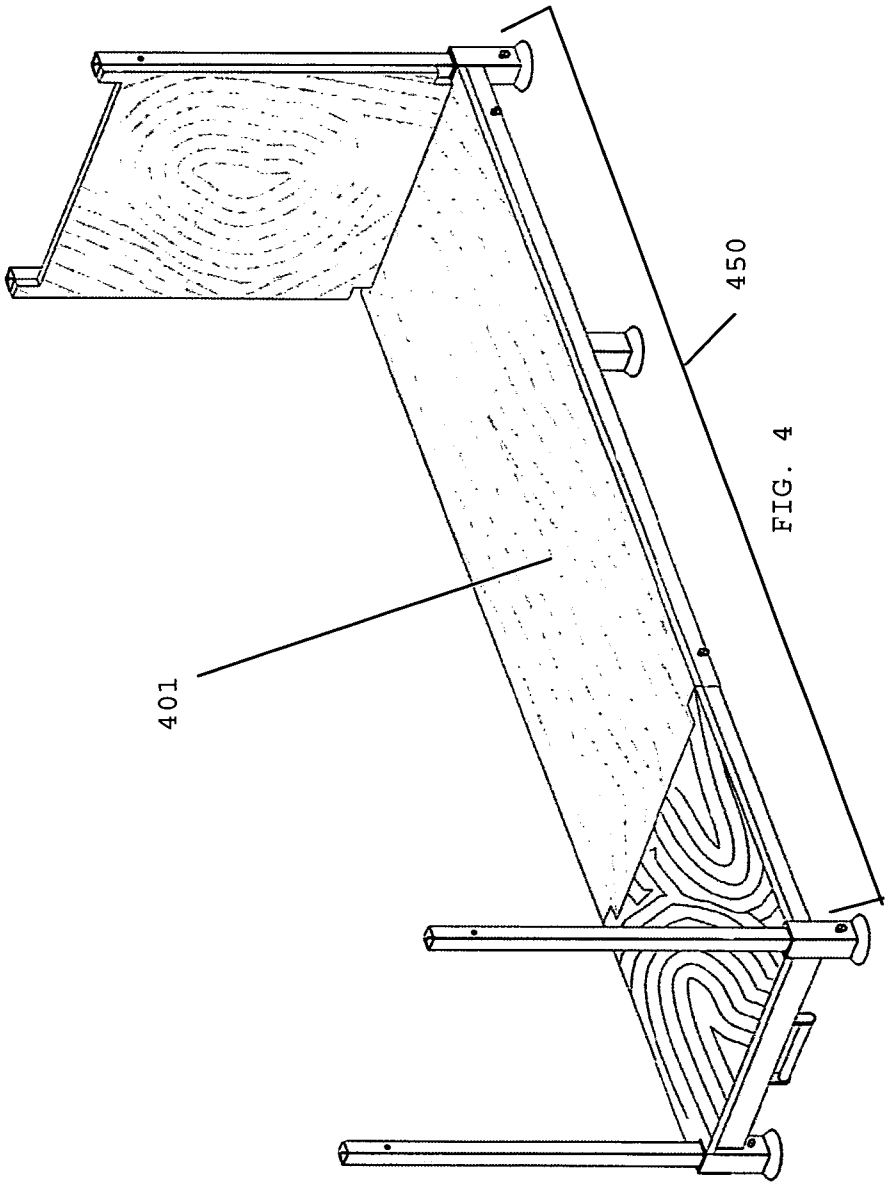

FIG. 4

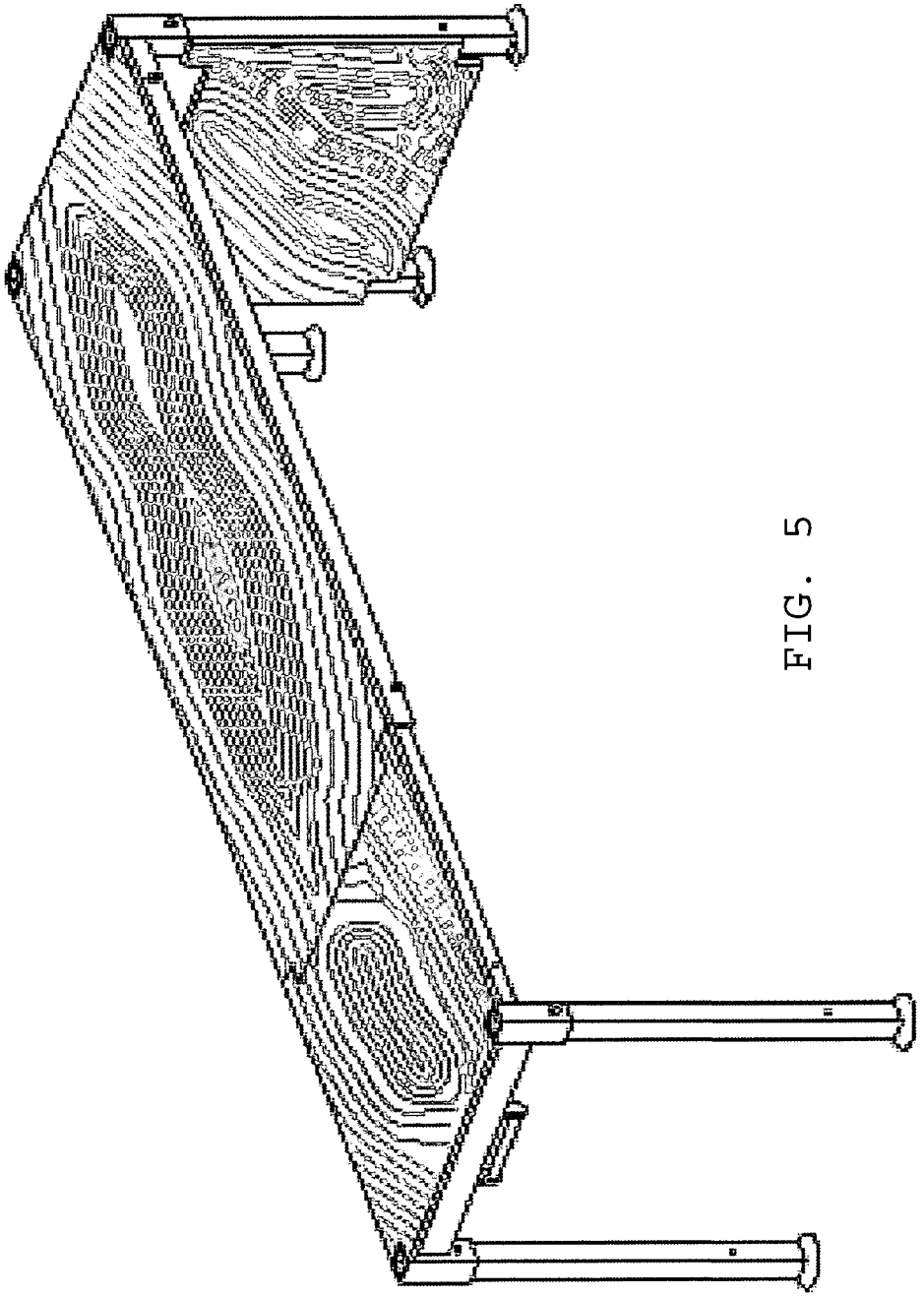

FIG. 5

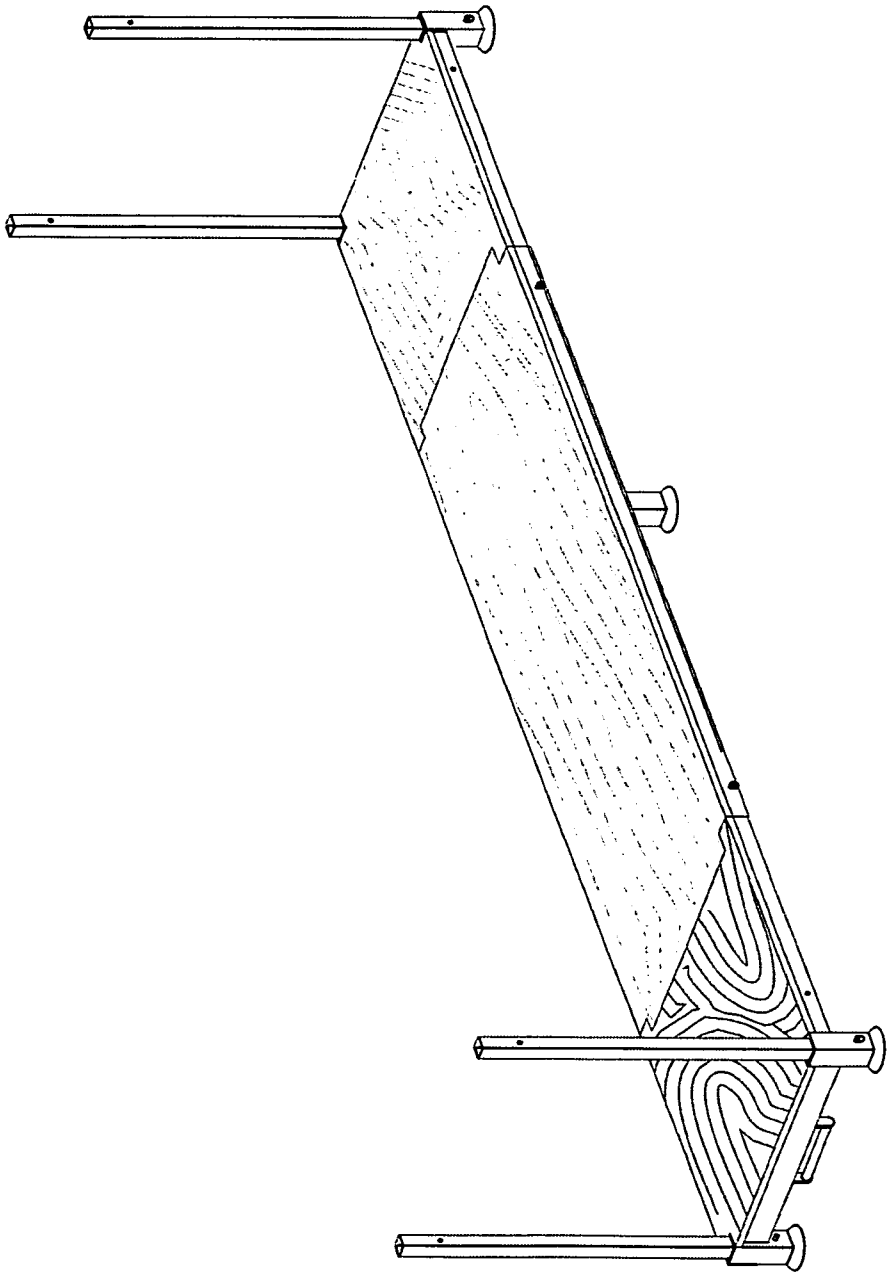

FIG. 6

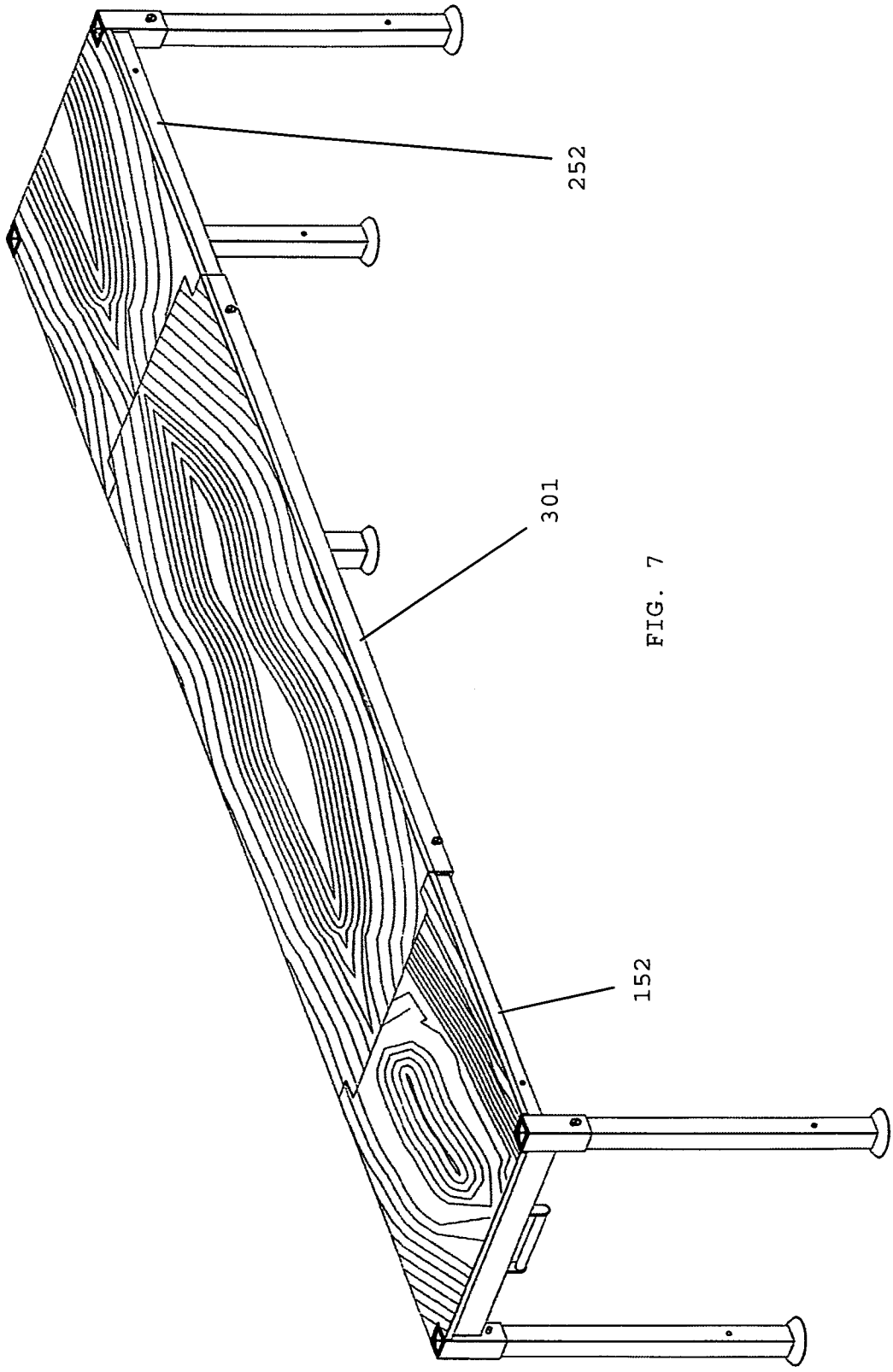

FIG. 7

SHOW DESK AND SHIPPING PLATFORM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

The present invention is in the field of shipping carts, skids or pallets which are convertible to show-tables or desks.

2. Background of the Invention

A trade fair (also known as a trade show, trade exhibition or expo) is a gathering of entities within a particular industry for showcasing and demonstrating products. Usually, products are demonstrated on tables or platforms at booths or showrooms so that drayage of the showcased or demonstrated products to said tables or platforms is often necessary. In many cases, such drayage is accomplished via the use of carts, skids, or pallets.

Although drayage via carts, skids, or pallets can result in delivery of the products to a booth or showroom, such drayage is not entirely satisfactory for all circumstances which may arise in the context of a trade show. For instance, the presence of a cart, skid, or pallet in the showroom or booth may distract trade fair attendees from the product demonstration (e.g., because of clutter or unsightliness). Furthermore, drayage can be time consuming and the drayage equipment can be expensive. Thus, a need exists for apparatus and related methods for showcasing and demonstrating products without excessive drayage costs and equipment.

Other unsatisfactory circumstances also arise in the context of trade fair product exhibitions. One such circumstance arises whenever showcased products feature varying sizes or dimensions because a different sized display table may be required for each variant of the product. For instance, carpet rolls or bundles frequently have cuts of varying lengths and diameters. Furthermore, the use of multiple tables increases equipment and transportation costs associated with attending the tradeshow. Another unsatisfactory circumstance arises in view of large product inventories at the trade show because usually only one item of product is exhibited on a display table in the show room and the remaining inventory must either be placed in a remote storage or is scattered around the show room in an unsightly manner. This circumstance usually results in either the drayage requirements of remotely stored inventory or a cluttered show room. Thus, a need further exists for product display tables and showroom storage apparatus that are capable of providing concealed storage areas and that are capable of accommodating items of varying sizes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the foregoing it is an object of this disclosure to describe an apparatus capable of being a shipping platform (e.g., cart, a skid, or a pallet) and a show table/desk of varying height, width, and/or length. It is further an object of this application to disclose methods related to said apparatus. In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus may convert from a six, eight, or ten foot long shipping cart to a six, eight, or ten foot long table or shelf. The table or shelf surface may be raised or lowered and multiple apparatus can be stacked on top of each other to create larger shelves. The height and length or width adjustment of the apparatus may suitably be accomplished via a sleeve-and-pin adjustment mechanism. Operably, the apparatus may be used in the trade show or marketing industries for transportation, drayage, and storage (e.g., underneath the platform or shelf when setup as a table) of items to be displayed.

It is yet still a further objective to meet the above identified needs in an efficient and inexpensive manner.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The manner in which these objectives and other desirable characteristics can be obtained is better explained in the following description and attached figures in which:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a show desk and shipping platform apparatus;

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of a frame for the apparatus of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in raised configuration;

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a single-extended configuration;

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a single extended and raised configuration;

FIG. **6** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in double extended configuration; and,

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a double extended and raised configuration.

It is to be noted, however, that the appended figures illustrate only typical embodiments of the apparatus disclosed in this application, and therefore, are not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the invention may admit to other equally effective embodiments that will be appreciated by those reasonably skilled in the relevant arts. Also, figures are not necessarily made to scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In general the apparatus disclosed is a shipping platform (e.g., a cart, skid, or pallet) or a display desk, table, or shelf. In one embodiment, the apparatus may convert from a six, eight, or ten foot long shipping platform to a six, eight, or ten foot long table or shelf. The table or shelf surface may be raised or lowered and multiple apparatus can be stacked on top of each other to create larger shelves. Operably, the apparatus may be used for transportation, drayage, and storage (e.g., underneath the platform or shelf when setup as a table) of items to be displayed. The more specific aspects of the invention are disclosed below in connection with the appended figures.

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a show desk and shipping platform apparatus **1000**. As shown in the figure, the apparatus **1000** is generally defined by: a first end frame **100**; a second end frame **200**; a center frame **300**; surface panels **400**; and legs **500**. Still referring to FIG. **1**, the first and second end frames **100**, **200** are preferably assembled to opposite sides of the center frame **300** with a central surface panel **401** positioned thereover to form a rectangular support surface **450** for supporting items. The first and second end frames **100**, **200** both preferably feature two corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202** separated by a width-member **150**, **250**. Suitably, the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202** are defined by tubiform sleeves which feature axes that is are transverse to the support surface **450**. In one embodiment, the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, and **202**

are separated by width members **150**, **250** and skewered with legs **500**, wherein each leg **500** is suitably (a) defined by a foot **501** and elongated midsection **502** and (b) positioned so that the leg **500** is upstanding within one of the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, and **202**. The tubiform corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202** and legs **500** are shown with square cross sections, but those of skill in the art will appreciate that any cooperatingly shaped cross-section will work for the leg and corner assemblies. Finally, first and second end panels **402**, **403** may be provided between two legs for partially enclosing the support surface **450**.

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** with the panels **400** disassembled therefrom. Referring to FIG. **2**, the first and second end frames **100**, **200** may suitably comprise: the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202**; the width members **150**, **250**; and two arms **151**, **152**, **251**, **252**. Structurally, the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202** may be affixed to both ends of the width members **150**, **250**. In one embodiment, the width members and arms define structural support beams. Preferably, one end of each arm **151**, **152**, **251**, **252** may be provided to the corners so that each end frame **100**, **200** generally defines a "U" (e.g., with the arms extending from the corners (i) in the same direction and (ii) transverse to both (a) the corners' axes and (b) the width members. The center frame **300** may be defined by parallel situated elongated sleeves **301** that are fastened together by two width members **350** that are transverse to the sleeves **301**. In a preferred embodiment, the arms **151**, **152**, **251**, **252** of the first and second end frames **100**, **200** may be coaxially provided to the sleeves for assembly of the first, second, and central frames **100**, **200**, **300**.

As alluded to above, the support surface **450** of the apparatus **1000**. may be raised or lengthened. FIG. **2** illustrates the preferred mechanisms for accomplishing said raising and lowering of the surface **450**. In the preferred embodiment: (1) extension of the surface **450** is accomplished via manipulation of a sleeve-and-pin mechanism (e.g., aligned apertures of a coaxial assembly that are fitted with a pin) assembled between the sleeves **301** and the arms **151**, **152**, **251**, **252** of the first and second ends **100**,**200**; and (2) raising of the surface **450** is accomplished via manipulation of a sleeve-and-pin mechanism assembled between the corners **101**, **102**, **201**, **202** and the elongated midsection **501** of the legs **500**.

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a raised configuration. When taken in view of FIGS. **1** and **2**, the support surface of the apparatus **1000** is positioned at the top of the legs **500** rather than at the foot **501** of the legs. In one embodiment, the surface **450** may be positioned at any point along the elongated midsection **502** of the leg **500**, whereby varying heights of the table or shelf may be achieved. In one embodiment, the width members **150**, **250** may be provided with handles **153**, **253** for facilitating the raising and lowering of the surface **450**. Once the surface is positioned at an appropriate height, the end panels **402**, **403** may optionally be installed at the sides of the apparatus **1000** for partially enclosing the space underneath the support surface **450**.

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a single-extended configuration. When taken in view of FIGS. **1** and **2**, the support surface of the apparatus is elongated toward the first end frame **100**. In one embodiment, the surface **450** may be electively elongated via pulling the handle **153** so that the arms **151**, **152** of the first end frame **100** withdraw from the sleeves **301**. Once the first end **100** is positioned at an appropriate extension, one end panels **402** may be installed onto the extended arms **151**, **152** for forming a support surface **450** with the center panel **401**.

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a single extended and raised configuration; FIG. **6** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in double extended configuration; and, FIG. **7** is a perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. **1** in a double extended and raised configuration. It should be appreciated by those of skill in the art that the raising or lowering of the surface **450** of the apparatus **1000** may preferably be accomplished as substantially recited above. It should also be appreciated by those of skill in the art that the extension or collapse of the surface **450** of the apparatus **1000** at either end frame **100**, **200** may preferably be accomplished as substantially recited above.

In one mode of operation, a plurality of apparatus **1000** may be stacked to produce shelving. In a preferred mode of operation, the feet **501** of a first apparatus **1000** may be positioned atop the legs **500** of a second apparatus **1000**. When stacked, the surfaces **450** of each apparatus may be raised or lowered without obstruction. This said, It should be noted, that the surfaces of the stacked apparatus cannot be independently elongated as described above.

The apparatus may be used as a skid or display desk for carpet rolls or bundles. Preferably, for such operations, the collapsed apparatus may be six feet in length; the apparatus may be eight feet in length when extended on one side; and the apparatus may be ten feet in length when extended on both sides. In one mode of operation, a plurality of carpet rolls or bundles may be transported to a show room via the apparatus while the surface is in a down position, the rolls/bundles removed from the surface, the surface raised, one roll or bundles positioned thereon the surface for display, and the remaining rolls/bundles positioned underneath the surface for storage. In another mode of operation, a roll/bundle of six feet in length may be removed from the surface **450**, the surface extended on one side, and a roll/bundle of eight feet in length may be positioned thereon the surface for display. In yet another mode of operation, a roll/bundle of six feet in length may be removed from the surface **450** of the apparatus, the surface **450** extended on two sides, and a roll/bundle of ten feet in length may be positioned thereon the surface for display

In summary, disclosed are apparatus capable of being a shipping platform (e.g., cart, a skid, or a pallet) and a show table/desk of varying height, width, and/or length. In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus may convert from a six, eight, or ten foot long shipping cart to a six, eight, or ten foot long table or shelf. The table or shelf surface may be raised or lowered and multiple apparatus can be stacked on top of each other to create larger shelves. The height and length or width adjustment of the apparatus may suitably be accomplished via a sleeve-and-pin adjustment mechanism. Operably, the apparatus may be used in the trade show or marketing industries for transportation, drayage, and storage (e.g., underneath the platform or shelf when setup as a table) of items to be displayed. It should be noted that FIGS. **1** through **7** and the associated descriptions are of illustrative importance only. In other words, the depiction and descriptions of the present invention should not be construed as limiting of the subject matter in this application. Additional modifications may become apparent to one skilled in the art after reading this disclosure.

We claim:

1. A shipping platform and show desk comprising:

(A) at least four legs defined by a foot and an elongated midsection;

(B) a center frame defined by

a first elongated sleeve with an open first end and an open second end,

a second elongated sleeve with an open first end and an open second end and

a first width member beam spanning between and fastening the first and second elongated sleeves

(C) a first end frame defined by

a second width member beam defined by a first tubiform corner piece at one end and a second tubiform corner piece at another end,

a first arm beam extending from the first corner piece so that the first arm beam is transverse to the second width member beam, and

a second arm beam extending from the second corner piece so that the second arm beam is transverse to the second width member beam wherein the second arm beam is parallel to the first arm beam;

(D) a second end frame defined by

a third width member beam extending between a third tubiform corner piece and a fourth tubiform corner piece,

defined by a third tubiform corner piece at one end and a fourth tubiform corner piece at another end,

a third arm beam extending from the third corner piece so that the third arm beam is transverse to the third width member beam, and

a fourth arm beam extending from the fourth corner piece so that the fourth arm beam is transverse to the third width member beam wherein the third arm beam is parallel to the fourth arm beam;

(E) a surface panel disposed over said elongated sleeves and first width member;

(F) wherein the first and second arm member beams are slidably and coaxially positioned inside said first open ends of the first and second elongated sleeves respectively, wherein a sleeve-and-pin length adjustment mechanism is defined by pins that are inserted into respectively aligned apertures through the first and second arm members and elongated sleeves;

(G) wherein the third and fourth arm member beams are slidably and coaxially positioned inside said second open ends of the first and second sleeve beams wherein a sleeve-and-pin length adjustment mechanism is defined by pins that are inserted into respectively aligned apertures through the third and fourth arm members and elongated sleeves; and,

(H) wherein each midsection of said legs is through one of said first, second, third, or fourth tubiform corner pieces wherein a sleeve-and-pin length adjustment mechanism is defined by pins that are inserted into respectively aligned apertures through the midsections and tubiform corner pieces.

2. The transport and display apparatus of claim **1** wherein the first and second arm beams of the first end frame withdraw from the sleeves, and are lockable via manipulation of the sleeve-and-pin mechanism of the first and second arms coaxially positioned inside the central frame.

3. The transport and display apparatus of claim **2** employing at least one other support leg there that is fastened to the first elongated sleeve, wherein the leg is defined by a foot.

* * * * *