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Pangborn et al.

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[54] **HOLDER FOR SUPPORTING A COMPONENT BELOW A SUPPORT**

[75] Inventors: **Donald R. Pangborn**, Jamestown; **Richard L. Watt**, Bemus Point; **James R. Caronia**, Jamestown, all of N.Y.

[73] Assignee: **Weber Knapp Company**, Jamestown, N.Y.

[21] Appl. No.: **09/305,542**

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[51] **Int. Cl.**[7] **A47H 1/10**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **248/317**; 248/316.1; 248/499; 248/505

[58] **Field of Search** 248/316.1, 317, 248/320, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 332, 323, 648, 674, 675, 680, 589, 500, 499, 525; 254/294, 310, 376

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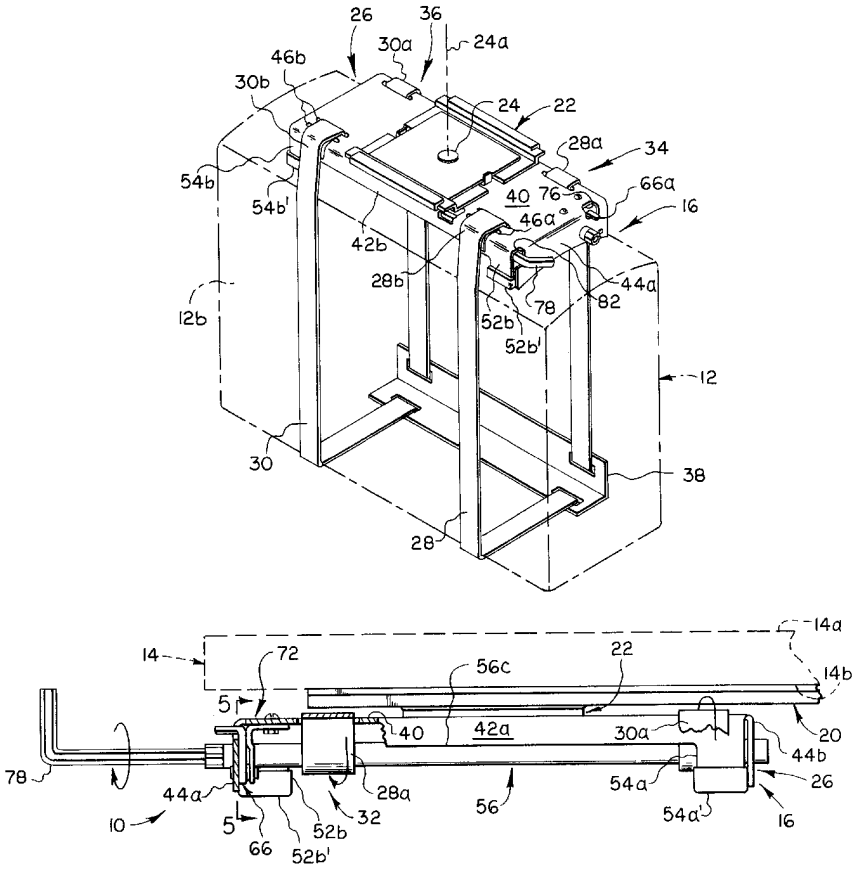
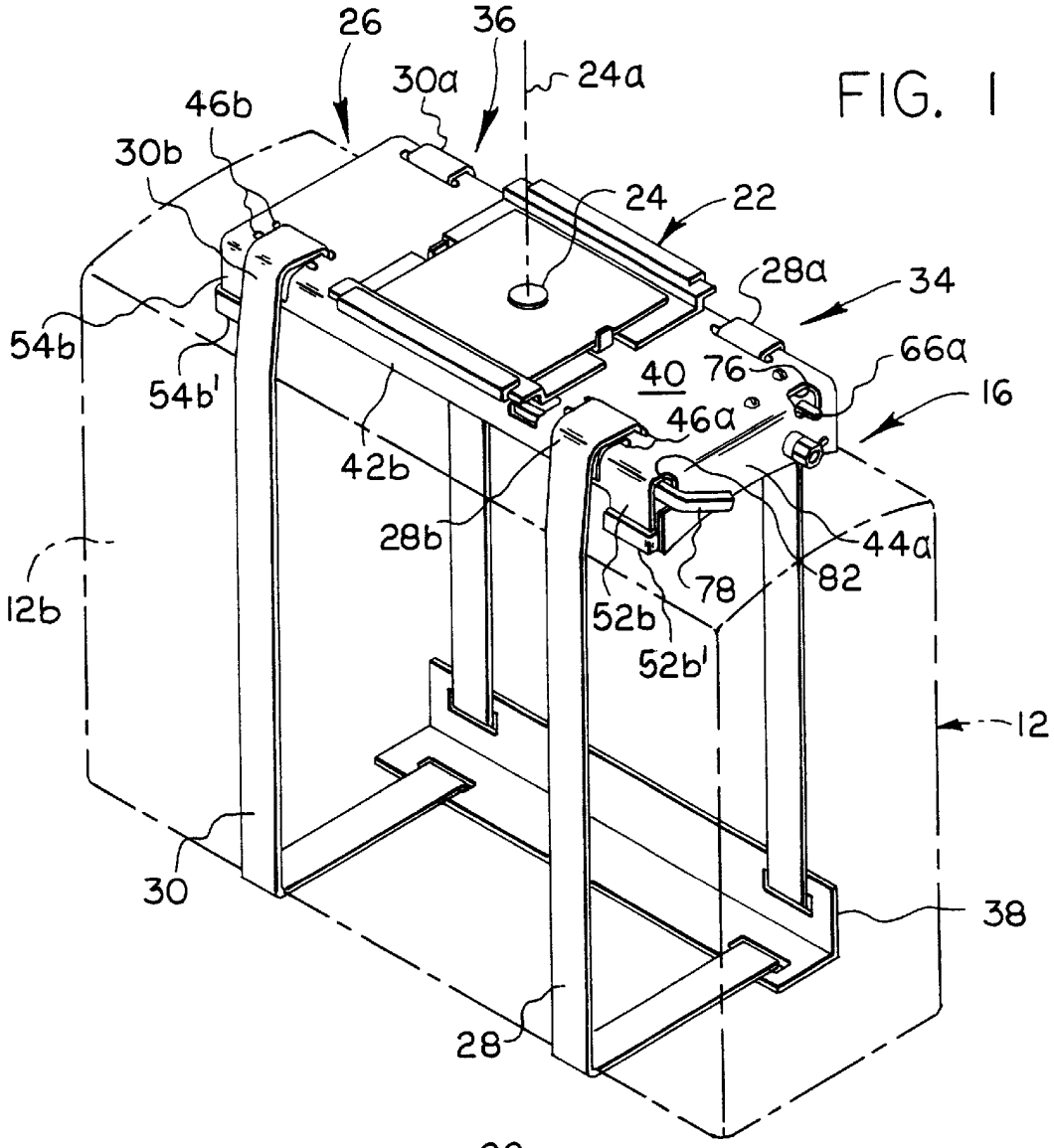
Primary Examiner—Anita M. King
Assistant Examiner—Gwendolyn Baxter
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Simpson, Simpson & Snyder

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A mechanism for supporting a component, such as a CPU, below a support, includes a support member mounted to depend from the support and being adapted to undergo both horizontally directed sliding movement and pivotal movement about a vertically disposed pivot axis relative thereto, a pair of straps having first and second ends, and a strap tension adjustment device carried by the support member, wherein second ends of the straps are removably fixed to the support member and first ends of the straps are fixed to the tension adjustment device, such that the straps are suspended below the support member as U-shaped loops sized to receive the component therewithin, and the tension adjustment device is manually operable to releasably shorten the lengths of the loops for clamping the component in position relative the support member. The component may be selectively mounted such that its major side surfaces or panels are arranged either normal or parallel to a lower surface of the support.

16 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

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46b
30b
24
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54b'
40
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66a
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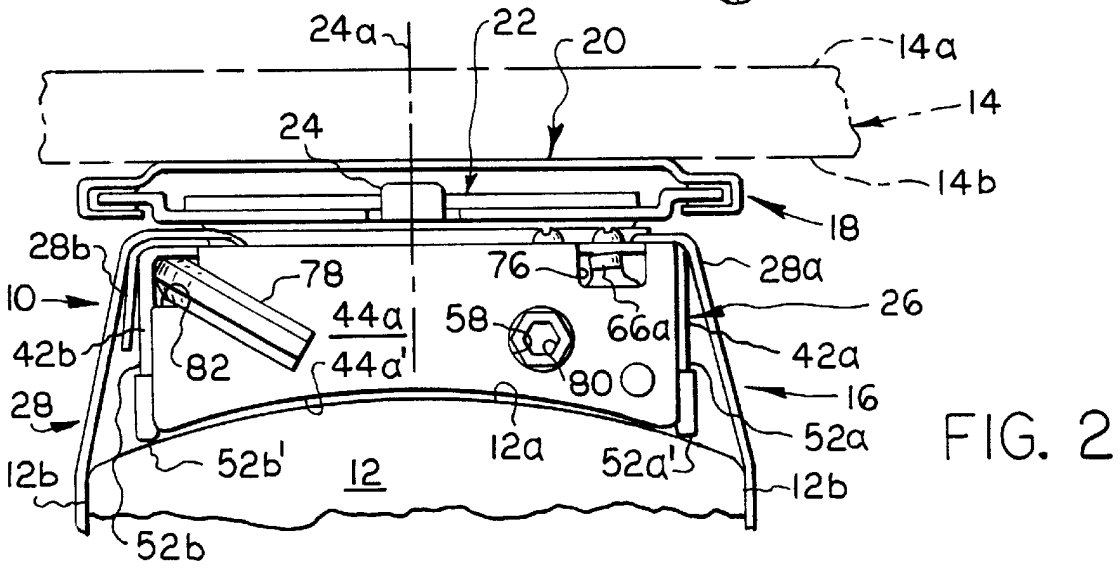
42b
28b
44a
78
82
12b
52b
52b'
12
30
38
28

FIG. 1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22
20
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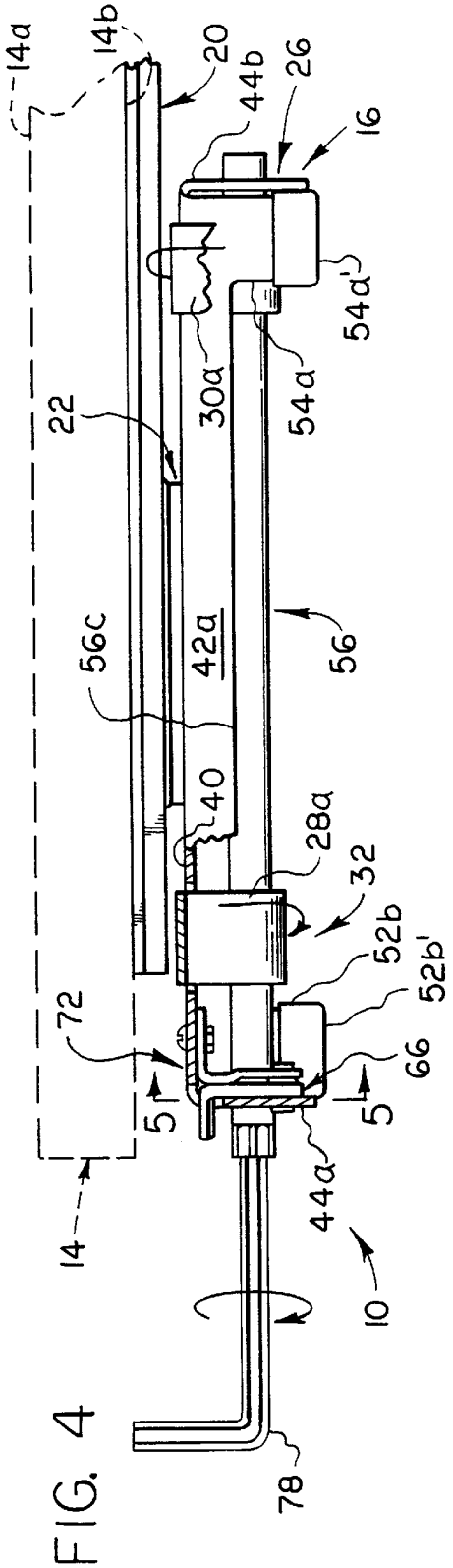
24
14b
18
28b
78
76
28a
10
44a
58
66a
26
42b
82
44a'
80
42a
28
16
52a
12a
52a'
12b
52b'
12
12b
52b

FIG. 2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14b
20
44b
26
16
54a'
54a
30a
22
56c
42a
56
40
28a
32
52b
52b'
72
66
5
5
14
44a
10
78

FIG. 4

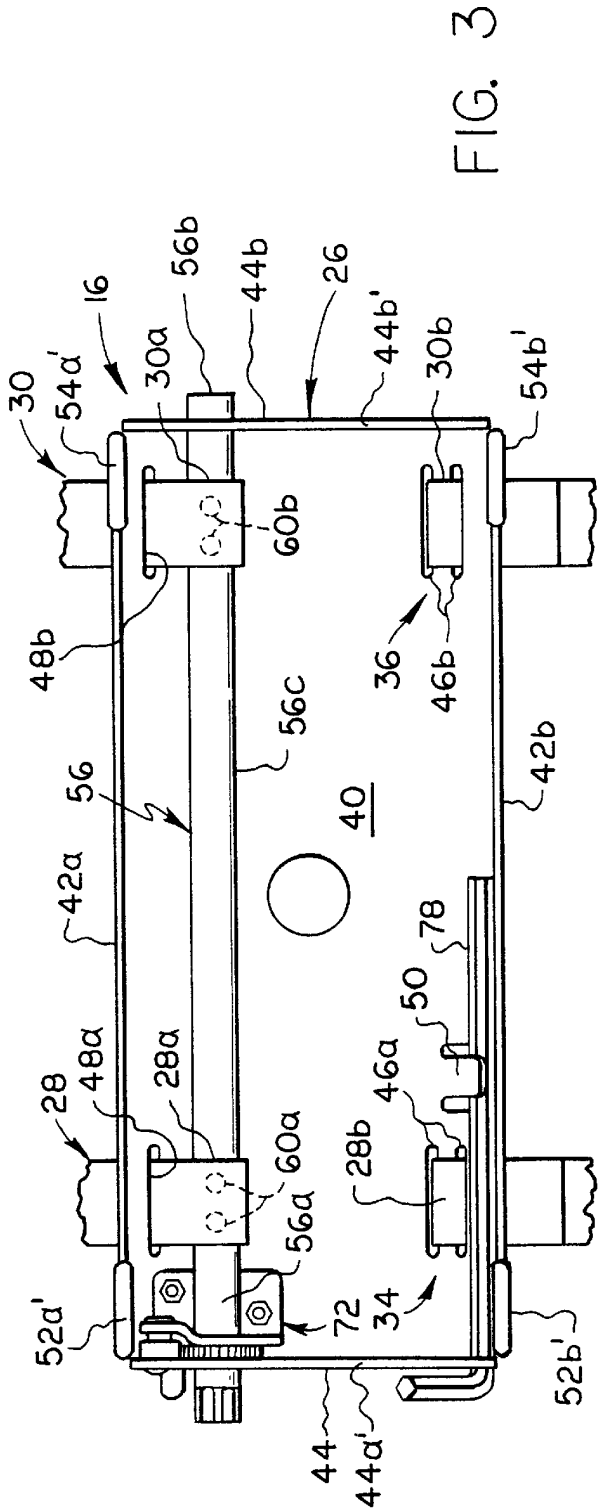

16
56b
44b
26
44b'
30b
54b'
30
54a'
30a
60b
48b
36
46b
56c
42b
56
40
42a
78
50
48a
28a
46a
28
28b
60a
56a
72
34
52a'
52b'
44
44a'

FIG. 3

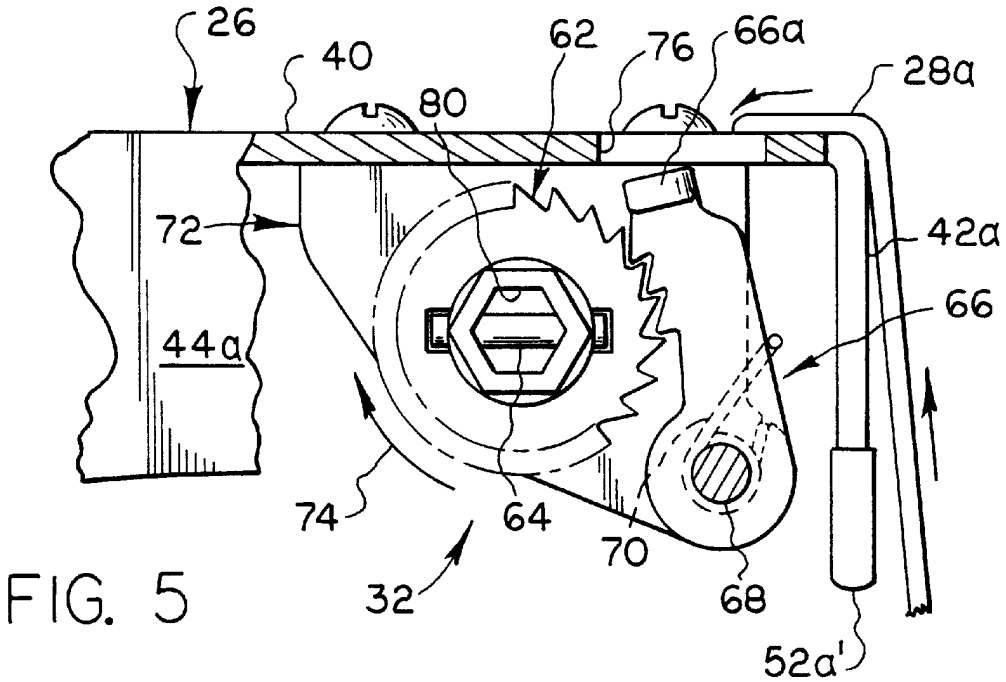
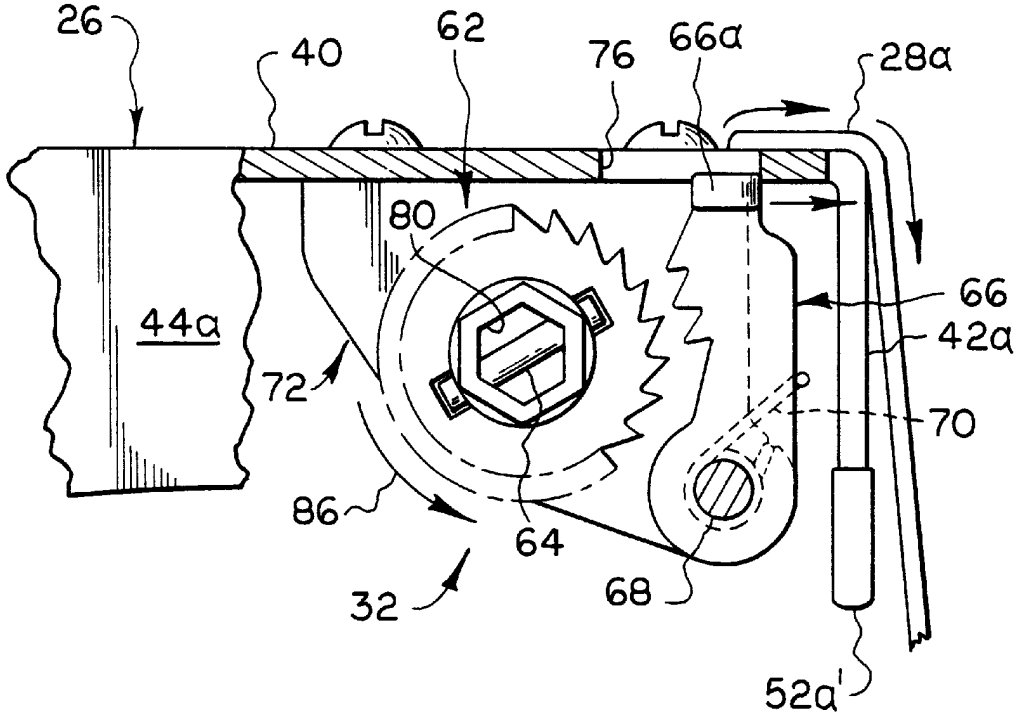

26
40
62
76
66a
28a
80
72
42a
66
44a
74
64
70
32
68
52a'

FIG. 5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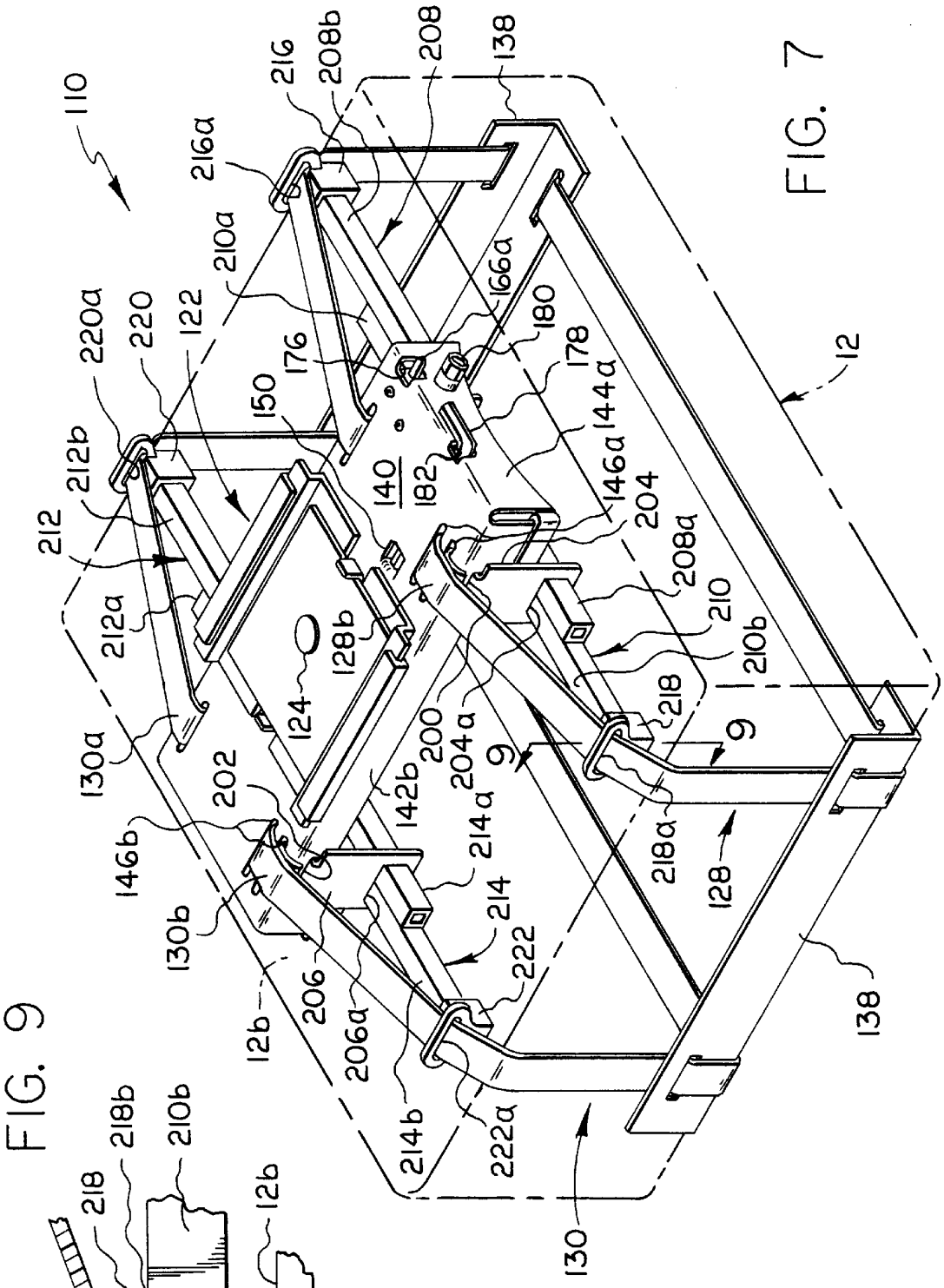
40
62
76
66a
28a
80
66
44a
42a
72
70
86
64
32
68
52a'

FIG. 6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216
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208
138
216a
210a
166a
180
178
220a
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122
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182
146a
204
208a
212a
210
210b
128b
124
218
200
204a
9
130a
202
142b
214a
218a
128
146b
214
130b
222
206
206a
12b
214b
222a
130
138
12
FIG. 7

218b
210b
218
12b
128
218c
218a
FIG. 9

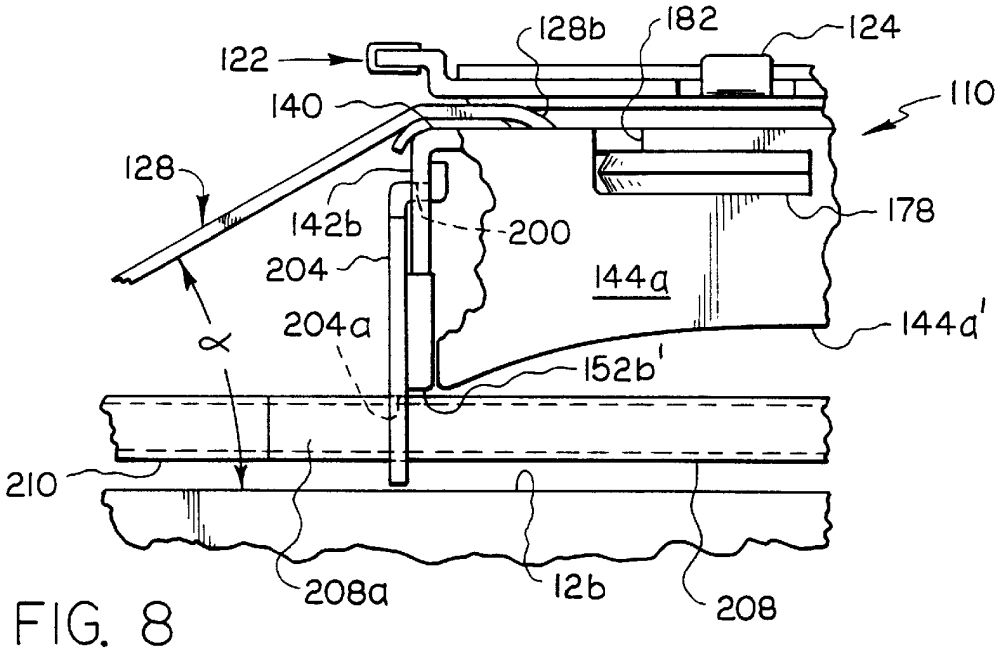
128b
182
124
122
110
140
128
178
142b
200
204
144a
144a'
204a
152b'
210
208a
12b
208

FIG. 8

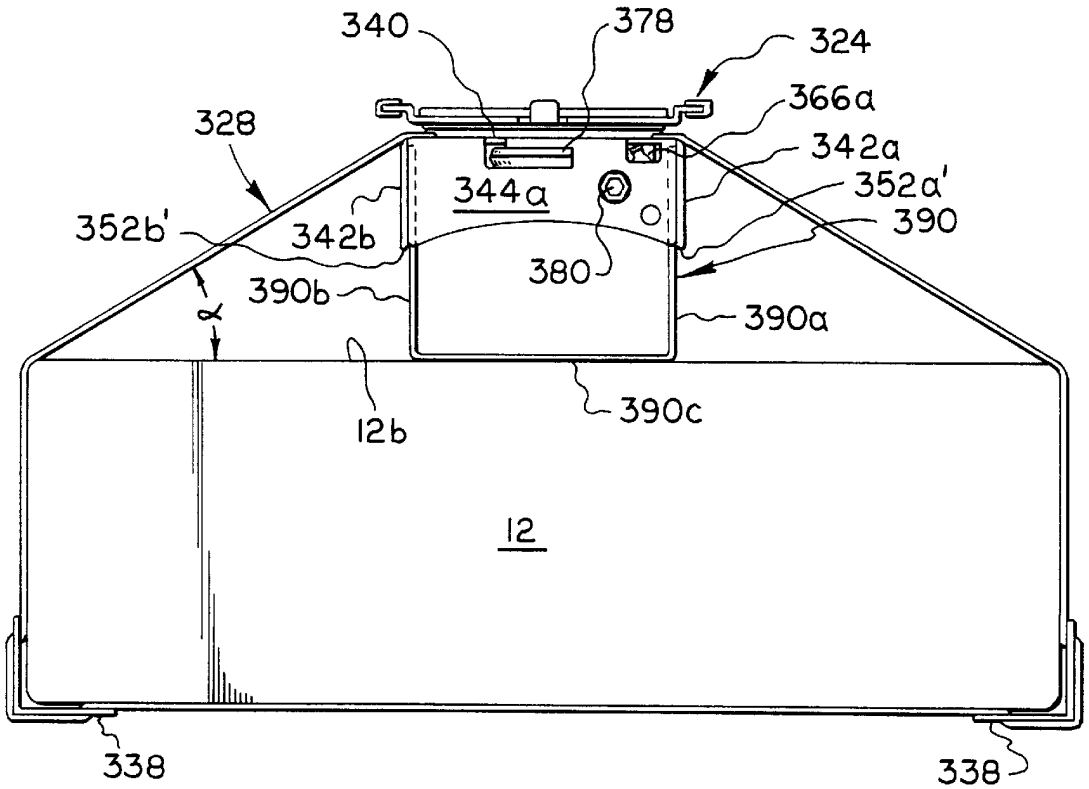
340
378
324
366a
328
342a
344a
352a'
352b'
342b
390
380
390b
390a
12b
390c
12
338
338

FIG. 10

HOLDER FOR SUPPORTING A COMPONENT BELOW A SUPPORT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In prior U.S. Pat. No. 5,131,620, there is disclosed a mechanism for mounting a component, such as a CPU, below a support, such as the work surface of a desk or work station, which employs a support member fixed to depend from the support and a pair of straps for clamping the component upwardly against the support member. The support member is supported by a tradeway for horizontal sliding movement.

A somewhat similar mechanism has been sold commercially for several years by the assignee of the present application. In this prior mechanism, the support member is connected to a carriage for pivot movement about a vertically disposed axis and the carriage is slidably supported for horizontal movement by a trackway.

A drawback of the known mechanisms mentioned above is that they require the use of snap buckles to join ends of the strap, and the threading of the straps through such buckles for adjustment/component clamping purposes. Further, such mechanisms are restricted in design for use in supporting components of rectangular cross-sectional configuration, and more particularly, components of rectangular cross-section configuration with their major side surfaces or panels arranged to extend normal to the support.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a mechanism for use in mounting a component, such as a CPU, to removably depend from a support.

More particularly, the present mechanism generally includes a support member mounted to depend from a support, a pair of straps each having first and second ends, and a tension adjustment device mounted on the support member and engaging with the first ends of the straps, with second ends of the straps being removably attached directly to the support member, whereby the straps are suspended below the support member as U-shaped loops sized to receive the component therewithin, and the tension adjustment device is manually operable to releasably shorten the lengths of the loops for clamping the component upwardly against the support member.

More specifically, the support member is in the form of a generally rectangular, horizontally disposed support plate having elongated, parallel, depending side portions and parallel, depending end portions, wherein the end portions cooperate to support the tension adjustment device and the side portions define pairs of mounting surfaces depending below the end portions and arranged for engagement with the component when clamped upwardly against the support member. The end portions are preferably formed with downwardly facing concave free edges accommodating for free receipt of convex side surfaces or panels of a component when engaged with the mounting surfaces.

Further, it is preferable to fix the first ends of the straps to a rod having opposite ends rotatably supported within bore openings defined by the end portions, a toothed wheel fixed for rotation with the rod, a ratchet arm pivotally supported by the support plate for releasable engagement with a toothed wheel, and a manually operating handle for releasable engagement with the rod for purposes of manual tensioning of the straps and adapted to be releasably stored on the support plate adjacent the tension adjustment device.

The present mechanism may be modified to permit mounting of a component such that its major side surfaces are horizontally disposed. In this arrangement, pairs of mounting clips are adapted to releasably engage with the side portions of the support plate and provided with through slide mounting openings for removable, sliding receiving adjacent end portions of pairs of oppositely extending tubes having strap guiding end caps mounting on their oppositely facing ends. The end caps engage with portions of the loops relatively adjacent their first and second ends and additionally define bearing surfaces of the component engaging when the loop is shortened by the tension adjustment device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The nature and mode of operation of the present invention will now be more fully described in the following detailed description taken with the accompanying drawings wherein.

FIG. **1** is a prospective view of a holder formed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a front end elevational view of the holder of FIG. **1** showing it supported by a guide track to depend from a support, such as the top of a desk or workstation;

FIG. **3** is a bottom plan view of the holder;

FIG. **4** is a side elevational view of the holder, as viewed from the right side of FIG. **2** with parts broken away to show a strap tension adjustment mechanism;

FIG. **5** is an enlarged sectional view taken generally along the line **5**—**5** in FIG. **4**;

FIG. **6** is a view similar to FIG. **5**, but showing the strap tension adjustment mechanism in released condition;

FIG. **7** prospective view of a holder formed in accordance with a first alternative embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **8** is fragmentary front elevational view of the holder of FIG. **7**;

FIG. **9** is a sectional view taken generally along the line **9**—**9** in FIG. **7**; and

FIG. **10** is a front elevational view of a holder formed in accordance with a second alternative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference is first made to FIGS. **1–4**, wherein a holder or support mechanism formed in accordance with a preferred form of the present invention is generally designated as **10** and shown as serving to removably suspend or support a component **12**, such as a CPU, beneath a support **14**, such as a top of a table, desk, or work station having vertically facing and generally horizontally disposed upper and lower surfaces **14***a* and **14***b*, respectively.

Holder **10** generally includes a component clamping means generally designated as **16** and suitable mounting means **18**, which is intended to be attached to support **14** and serves to suspend the component clamping means beneath the support in a position in which the component **12** is accessible to a user thereof.

Mounting means **18** may be variously defined, but preferably includes a guide track **20** fixed, as by fasteners, not shown, to support lower surface **14***b*, and a trolley **22**, which is supported by the track way for horizontal sliding movement and includes a suitable pivot device **24** serving to support clamping means **16** for pivotal movement about a vertically extending pivot axis **24***a* arranged normal to surface **14***b*. Mounting means **18** is shown by way of example as being of the type disclosed in U.S. Design Pat.

No. 306,239 for use in adjustably mounting a keyboard beneath a work surface. Alternatively, if desired, component clamping means **16** may be non-movably fixed to depend from surface **14***b*.

Component clamping means **16** is shown in FIGS. **1–4** as including a support member **26** coupled to trolley **22** by pivot device **24**; a pair of flexible straps 28 and 30 having first and second ends **28***a*, **30***a* and **28***b*, **30***b*, respectively; a strap tension adjustment mechanism **32**; and attaching means **34** and **36** cooperating with the strap tension adjustment mechanism to suspend the straps a s U-shaped loops beneath the support member. If desired, the mid-portions of straps **28** and **30** may be threaded through one or more rigid spacer braces **38** tending to maintain such mid-portion spaced apart through a distance corresponding essentially to the spacing between strap first ends **28***a*, **30***a* and second ends **28***b*, **30***b*.

Support member **26** includes a support plate **40**, which is coupled to trolley **22** and arranged to assume a generally horizontally disposed position beneath support **14** and provided with depending first and second parallel edge portions **42***a* and **42***b* and first and second parallel end portions **44***a* and **44***b* disposed normal to the edge portions. In the illustrated form of the invention, support plate **40** is provided with two pairs of parallel slots **46***a*, **46***a* and **46***b*, **46***b* to define attaching means **34** and **36** for use in releasably threadably receiving strap second ends **28***b* and **30***b*; a pair of slots **48***a*, **48***b* to permit strap first ends **28***a* and **30***a* to be passed upwardly therethrough; and a depending retaining tongue **50** whose purpose will hereinafter be described. It is now contemplated that the original structure of the attaching means may be exchanged by replacing slots **46***a*, **46***a* and **46***b*, **46***b* with a pair of T-shaped slot openings, which are individually sized to removably mount a T-shaped mounting clip having a pair of parallel slot s th rough which a second end of a strap may be threaded.

In the preferred construction, edge portions **42***a* and **42***b* are shaped adjacent their opposite or first and second ends to define downwardly projecting feet **52***a*, **52***b* and **54***a*, **54***b* whose lower edges define pairs of parallel bearing surfaces **52***a'*, **52***b'* and **54***a'*, **54***b'* arranged to engage with an upper or minor side surface **12***a* of component **12**, as best shown in FIG. **2**. Preferably, the lower free edges **44***a'* and **44***b'* of end portions **44***a* and **44***b* are concave and disposed vertically intermediate bearing surfaces **52***a'*, **52***b'* and **54***a'* and **54***b'* and the lower surface of support plate **40** in order to permit component surface **12***a* to be clamped against such bearing surfaces, even when such component surface is of convex configuration as generally indicated in FIG. **2**.

Tension adjustment mechanism **32** is best shown in FIGS. **3–6** as being mounted on support member **26** and as including an elongated tubular rod **56** having opposite ends **56***a* and **56***b* rotatably supported within aligned bore openings formed in end portions **44***a* and **44***b*, wherein only one of such bore openings is shown at **58** in FIG. **2**, and a mid-portion **56***c* connected to strap first ends **28***a* and **30***a* by suitable fasteners **60***a* and **60***b* shown only in FIG. **3**. Mechanism **32** also includes a toothed wheel **62**, which is fixed for rotation with rod **56** by a pin **64** extending radially through the rod a ratchet pawl **66**, which is pivotally supported by a bearing pin **68** and arranged to releasably engage with the teeth of toothed wheel **62**; and suitable resilient means, such as a coil spring **70**, which is mounted on bearing pin **68** with its opposite ends arranged to bear on ratchet pawl **66** and a generally L-shaped bracket **72** fixed to support plate **40**. As will be apparent, spring **70** serves to normally retain ratchet pawl **66** in engagement with toothed wheel **62**, whereby to permit strap loop shortening rotations of rod **56** in the direction indicated by arrow **74** in FIG. **5**, while preventing oppositely directed or strap loop lengthening rotation thereof. Bracket **72** cooperates with first end portion **44***a* to axially locate rod **56**, toothed wheel **62** and ratchet pawl **66** and to support opposite ends of bearing pin **68**.

A free end **66***a* of ratchet pawl **66** is arranged to extend forwardly through an access opening **76** formed adjacent the juncture of support plate **40** and first end portion **44***a* in order to permit manually induced movement of ratchet pawl **66** against the bias of spring **70** between its engaged position of FIG. **5** and its released position of FIG. **6**.

As will be apparent from viewing FIG. **4**, rod **56** may be provided with a suitable operating handle, such as an alien wrench **78** removably received within a suitably shaped drive opening **80** defined by deforming rod end **56***a*. When wrench **78** is not in use, it may be removably stored by inserting same through an access opening **82** formed in first end portion **44***a* into a storage chamber defined by retaining tongue **50** and the lower surface of support plate **40**.

In operation, component **12** may be stored beneath support **14** with its major side surfaces **12***b*,**12***b* arranged to extend essentially normal to support lower surface **14***b*, by the following procedure. First ratchet pawl **66** is manually released from latching engagement with toothed wheel **62** to free rod **56** for rotation in an unwinding direction, shown by arrow **86** in FIG. **6**, in order to allow straps **28** and **30** to be finally unwound from the rod. Strap second ends **28***b* and **30***b* are then threaded through slots **46** and **48**, respectively, to define U-shaped loops sized to loosely receive component **12**.

Thereafter, the loops are shortened by employing wrench **78** to rotate rod **56** in its strap winding or take-up direction shown by arrow **74** in FIG. **5**, until component **12** is lifted sufficiently to place its upper surface **12***a* in clamping engagement with bearing surfaces **52***a'*, **52***b'* and **54***a'*, **54***b'*. Finally, wrench 78 is stored by inserting same through access opening **82**.

Whenever it is desired to remove component **12** from its supported position beneath support **14**, it is necessary to manually move ratchet pawl **66** into its release position shown in FIG. **6** and then unwind or loosen straps **28** and **30** sufficiently to permit withdrawal of the component from within the loops.

A first alternative embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to FIGS. **7–9**, wherein its holder and the parts thereof similar to those described above with reference to holder **10** are identified by like one hundred series numerals.

More specifically, holder **110** is intended for use in mounting component **12** such that its major surfaces **12***b* are horizontally disposed, as best shown in FIGS. **7** and **8**. Holder **110** differs from holder **10** in that its clamping means additionally includes a pair of mounting openings formed in each of the depending edge portions of support plate **140**, which are shown in part only in FIG. **7** for the case of mounting openings **200** and **202** formed in edge portion **142***b*; mounting clips removably inserted one in each of the mounting openings, as also shown in part only in FIG. **7** for the case of mounting clips **204** and **206** to depend parallel to the edge portions on which same are mounted; two pairs of tubes **208**, **210** and **212**, **214**; and two pairs of strap guiding end caps **216**, **218** and **220**, **222**. Each of the mounting clips is formed with a slide mounting opening, shown only for the case of slide mounting openings **204***a* and **206***a* of clips **204**

and **206**, which are adapted to removably, slidably support relatively adjacent end portions **208***a,* **210***a* and **212***a,* **214***a* of the tubes **208**, **210** and **212**, **214** with the relatively remote end portions **208***b,* **210***b* and **212***b,* **214***b* of such tubes serving to mount end caps **216**, **218** and **220**, **222**, respectively. End caps **216** and **218** each define guide slots **216***a* and **218***a* for slidably receiving strap **128**; and end caps **220** and **222** define guide slots **220***a* and **222***a* for slidably receiving strap **130**. Further, the end caps are each formed with a mounting recess for receiving an associated remote end portion of a tube on which same is mounted and a downwardly facing bearing surface for engaging component upper major side surface **12***b;* only one of such mounting recesses and such bearing surfaces being shown at **218***b* and **218***c,* respectively, for the case of end cap **218** in FIG. **9**.

By viewing FIG. **8**, it will be understood that the clamping means of the first alternative form of the invention, in which the bearing surfaces of the guide clips engage with the upper major surface **12***b* of component, serves to space the upper surface of support plate **140** through a greater distance from such major surface than would be the case, if such major surface were engaged by the bearing surfaces of the preferred form of the invention including surface **152***b'*. This increase in distance serves to increase the angle a defined by the straps and surface **12***b,* so as to maximize the component of the tension force acting on the straps, which is available for clamping component **12** relative to holder **110**, while minimizing the component of the tension force tending to crush component **12**, in a direction extending parallel to major surface **12***b*. The valve of angle a may, for example, be increased by increasing the vertical dimension of the mounting clips, as measured between the upper mounting ends of such clips and their slide mounting openings, as viewed in FIG. **8**.

In operation of the first alternative form of the invention, a user is required to insert the mounting clips into their associated mounting openings; insert the tubes into their associated slide mounting openings of the mounting clips; insert the remote end portions of the tubes into their associated end clips; thread straps **128** and **130** through guide slots **216***a* and **220***a,* spacer braces **138** and **138**, guide slots **218***a* and **222***a,* and slots **146***a,* **146***a* and **146***b,* **146***b,* whereby to form loops of a size sufficient to receive component **12**. Wrench **178** is then inserted into drive opening **180** and operated as required to shorten the loops and draw component **12** upwardly to clamp same in a mounted position relative to holder **110**.

A second alternative embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to FIG. **10**, wherein its holder and the parts thereof similar to those described above with reference to holder **10** are identified by like three hundred series numerals.

More specifically, holder **310** is intended for use in mounting a component **12** such that its major surfaces **12***b* are horizontally disposed, as shown in FIG. **10**. Holder **310** differs from holder **10** in that its clamping means additionally includes a single U-shaped spacer unit **390**, which includes a pair of side panels **390***a* and **390***b,* which have lower edges joined to parallel side edges of a bottom panel **390***c* and upper edges, not shown, arranged to removably bear or abut against the lower surface of support plate **340**. If desired, one or both open ends of spacer unit **390** may be bridged by suitable end panels, not shown, if required for aesthetic and/or unit rigidifying purposes. Spacer unit **390** performs the same function as the clamping means described with reference to FIGS. **7–9**, namely, that of serving to maximize the angle a formed by the straps and the upper major surface **12***b* of the component to be supported by the holder.

In operation, a user would first insert spacer unit **390** into the support member intermediate side edge portions **342***a* and **342***b* to position same in abutting engagement with the lower surface of support plate 340. Thereafter, the user will follow the procedure described with reference to holder **10**.

What is claimed is:

1. A mechanism for suspending a component below a support, said mechanism comprising:

a mounting means adapted to be attached to said support; and

component clamping means, said mounting means suspending said clamping means below said support, said clamping means including a support member coupled to said mounting means, a pair of straps each having first and second ends, tension adjustment means mounted on said support member and connected to said first ends of said straps, and attaching means for attaching said second ends to said support member and cooperating with said tension adjustment means to suspend said straps by said first and second ends thereof to form U-shaped loops arranged beneath said support member for receiving said component therewithin, and said tension adjustment means being manually operable to releasably shorten the lengths of said loops for clamping said component relative to said support member.

2. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member defines two pairs of bearing surfaces arranged to be releasably clamped against by said component.

3. The mechanism according to claim **2**, wherein said bearing surfaces extend transversely of said loops with first bearing surfaces of each said pair being aligned and disposed relatively adjacent said attaching means and second bearing surfaces of each said pair being aligned and disposed relatively adjacent said tension adjustment means.

4. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member includes support plate coupled to said mounting means to assume a horizontally disposed position when said mounting means is attached to said support, said support plate having depending first and second parallel edge positions each defining adjacent first and second ends thereof a pair of aligned bearing surfaces extending transversely of said loops and arranged for clamping engagement with said component.

5. The mechanism according to claim **4**, wherein said support plate has depending end portions extending normal to said edge portions, said end portions cooperating to mount said tension adjustment means and having concave free edges arranged intermediate said bearing surfaces and said support plate.

6. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member includes a support plate having depending first and second edge portions and depending first and second parallel end portions disposed normal to said edge portions, said bearing surfaces extending below said end portions, and said tension adjustment means is carried by said end portions.

7. The mechanism according to claim **6**, wherein said tension adjustment means includes an elongated rod having opposite ends rotatably supported by said end portions and a mid-portion connected to said first ends of said straps, a toothed wheel fixed for rotation with said rod, a ratchet pawl pivotally mounted on said support member and arranged to releasably engage said toothed wheel, resilient means tending to releasably bias said ratchet pawl into engagement with said toothed wheel for normally permitting manual rotation

of said rod in a first direction to shorten said loops, said pawl being manually movable against said bias to release said pawl from engagement with said toothed wheel for allowing manually induced lengthening of said loops.

8. The mechanism according to claim **7**, wherein said attaching means is carried by said support plate.

9. The mechanism according to claim **8**, wherein said attachment means is defined by pairs of parallel slots formed in said support plate for releasably, threadably receiving said second ends of said straps.

10. The mechanism according to claim **9**, wherein said support plate has a pair of through openings for freely receiving said straps extending from said mid-portion of said rod.

11. The mechanism according to claim **10**, wherein said end portions have concave free edges arranged intermediate said bearing surfaces and said support plate.

12. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member includes a support plate having a pair of depending first and second end portions; and said tension adjustment means includes an elongated rod having opposite ends rotatably supported by said end portions and a mid-portion connected to said first ends of said straps, a toothed wheel fixed for rotation with said rod, a ratchet pawl pivotally mounted on said support member and arranged to releasably engage said toothed wheel, resilient means for providing a bias tending to releasably maintain said ratchet pawl in engagement with said toothed wheel for normally permitting manual rotation of said rod in a first direction to shorten said loops, said pawl being manually movable against said bias to release said pawl from engagement with said toothed wheel for allowing manually induced lengthening of said loops.

13. The mechanism according to claim **12**, wherein said support plate has depending side edge portions disposed normal to said end portions, and said clamping means includes mounting openings defined by each of said side edge portions and mounting clips removably supported one within each of said mounting openings to depend normal to said support plate and parallel to said side edge portions, each of said mounting clips being formed with a slide mounting opening two pairs of extension tubes having remote end portions and adjacent end portions, said adjacent end portions of said extension tubes being removably slidably mounted within an aligned pair of slide mounting openings to position said remote end portions in an outwardly spaced relationship relative to said side edge portions of said support plate, and end guides mounted one on each of said remote end portions for sliding engagement with said straps.

14. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member has depending side edge portions, and said clamping means includes mounting openings defined by each of said side edge portions and mounting clips removably supported one within each of said mounting openings to depend normal to said support plate and parallel to said side edge portions, each of said mounting clips being formed with a slide mounting opening, two pairs of extension tubes having remote end portions and adjacent end portions, said adjacent end portions of said extension tubes being removably slidably mounted within an aligned pair of slide mounting openings to position said remote end portions in an outwardly spaced relationship relative to said side edge portions of said support plate, and end guides mounted one on each of said remote end portions for sliding engagement with said straps.

15. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member defines bearing surface arranged to face downwardly relative thereto for engagement by said component upon said clamping thereof relative to said support member, and said clamping means additionally includes a spacer unit removably mounted on said support member and defining a further bearing surface, said further bearing surface being arranged to face downwardly and be disposed relatively below said bearing surface when said spacer unit is mounted on said support member, whereby said component may be clamped against said further bearing surface when said spacer unit is mounted on said support member and the lengths of said loops are shortened.

16. The mechanism according to claim **1**, wherein said support member includes a generally horizontally disposed support plate having downwardly extending parallel edge portions, and said clamping means additionally includes a spacer unit of U-shaped configuration defined by a pair of side panels upstanding from a lower panel defining a bearing surface, said side panels being removably insertable between said edge portions for underengagement with said support plate.

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