

RECENT PATENTS^a

Adjustable Wheel Chair: Gilbert E. Haury, assignor to Invacare Corp., Elyria, Ohio. An adjustable wheelchair which facilitates independent seat height and width adjustments to accommodate varying wheelchair height needs. (Patent No. 4,082,348, Apr. 4, 1978; filed Mar. 1, 1976, Appl. No. 662,892; 13 claims.)

Cushioning Effect: Charles W. Morgan, assignor to The Dow Chemical Co. A cushioning element is provided which is prepared from a synthetic resinous cellular resilient body. A plurality of intersecting grooves are formed in the surface of the cushioning element which provides a body-supporting surface of a plurality of spaced-apart bosses generally independently deflectable and recoverable. (Patent No. 4,070,719, Jan. 31, 1978; filed Sept. 1, 1976, Appl. No. 719,498; 5 claims.)

Differential-Pressure Flotation Cushion: Richard S. Carlisle. A flotation-type, low-pressure-gas (or fluid) cushion for the prevention of pressure sores has been designed. The device has a plurality of longitudinal compartments, the outer compartments are of much greater size than the inner and communicate with the inner compartments by restrictive passageways. The sum of the pressures generally is less than half the pressure ordinarily exerted against the ischial tuberosities by a folding wheelchair, flexible sling-type seat. (Patent No. 4,073,021, Feb. 14, 1978; filed Mar. 3, 1976, Appl. No. 663,544; 9 claims.)

Dynamic Column Support for Feeder Pan: Leland D. Miller. This apparatus is designed to support a patient's arm in a feeder pan or tray to enable the user to perform manipulative tasks with his hand and fingers without relying on the arm or shoulder muscles. The tray easily moves in any horizontal direction to a desired position within the limits of the apparatus without tipping or tilting. (Patent No. 4,069,995, Jan. 24, 1978; filed Nov. 16, 1976, Appl. No. 742,514; 9 claims.)

Lifting Device: Lars A. Nilsson. A lifting device for lifting patients which has a horizontal carrier bar with one free end, the other end connected by means of a lever to a shaft rotatably mounted in a support, and a shaft parallel to the carrier bar. (Patent No. 4,086,672, May 2, 1978; filed July 26, 1976, Appl. No. 708,772; 24 claims.)

Method and Apparatus for Communicating with People: Charles J. Laenger, Sr., Sam R. McFarland, and Harry H. Peel, assignor to Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas. A method and apparatus for communicating with people who are both deaf and blind has been developed. The apparatus has a keyboard controlling an electromechanical hand. The hand is programmed to form the letters of a one-hand manual alphabet through the use of an electronic buffer between the electric typewriter and the hand. Deaf and/or deaf and blind people feel the configurations of the electromechanical hand and are able to identify the letters. This provides an effective means of communication by people who do not know the one-hand manual alphabet

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with people who are deaf and blind. (Patent No. 4,074,444, Feb. 21, 1978; filed Sept. 30, 1978, Appl. No. 728,404; 12 claims.)

Seating Unit for a Bath Tub, Shower Stall or the Like: Russell P. Lotta. A seating unit is adapted to support a person in a sitting position in a bath tub or shower stall and may be folded and stored compactly when not in use. (Patent No. 4,087,127, May 2, 1978; filed Apr. 25, 1977, Appl. No. 790-401; 1 claim.)

Vehicle Wheelchair Ramp: Donald L. Rohrs, Harold A. Downing, and Donald L. Collins, assignor to Collins Industries, Inc., Hutchinson, Kansas. A vehicle wheelchair ramp for loading and unloading an occupant confined to a wheelchair. The ramp is hingably mounted on the floor of the vehicle and unfolds outwardly from the vehicle for contacting the ground surface, curb, or the like. (Patent No. 4,084,713, Apr. 18, 1978; filed May 3, 1976, Appl. No. 682,387; 4 claims.)

Wheelchair: Earl E. McMunn and Ronald N. McMunn. A wheelchair which includes a main frame supported in the front and rear by pairs of wheels. The main frame interconnects the back rest, seat, and leg rest frame segments in such a manner to allow the segments to be adjusted between positions supporting a patient in the upright sitting position and in the fully reclining position. (Patent No. 4,079,990, Mar. 21, 1978; filed Apr. 16, 1976, Appl. No. 677,558; 5 claims.)

Wheelchair Controls: Robert E. Brown and Raymond Hatfield, assignor to Biddle Engineering Co., Ltd., England. A control unit for a motorized wheelchair which has a part engageable with the occupant's chin. The patient can control the wheelchair in a forward direction and in a second and third direction to steer the chair either to the left or to the right; an on/off and reverse/forward switch is provided operable by the occupant's head. (Patent No. 4,078,627, Mar. 14, 1978, filed May 11, 1976, Appl. No. 685,479; 5 claims.)