



US012389974B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Barney et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 12,389,974 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 19, 2025**

(54) **HEAT PRESS APPARATUSES, SYSTEMS,
AND METHODS**

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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 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **18/357,017**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 21, 2023**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2023/0354946 A1 Nov. 9, 2023

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 17/653,464, filed on
Mar. 3, 2022, now Pat. No. 11,707,104.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A42C 1/08 (2006.01)
B30B 9/00 (2006.01)

(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **A42C 1/08** (2013.01); **B30B 9/00**
(2013.01); **B30B 15/064** (2013.01); **B32B**
37/06 (2013.01);

(Continued)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC **A42C 1/08**; **B30B 9/00**; **B30B 15/064**;
B30B 15/06; **B30B 15/062**; **B32B 31/06**;
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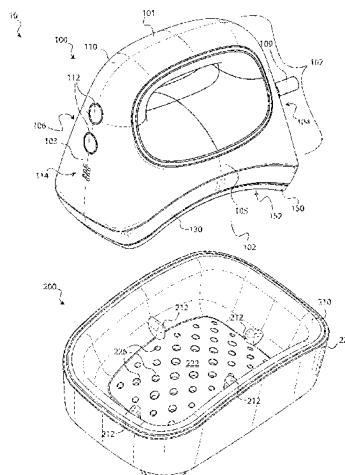
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A heat press includes a handle portion and a curved heat
plate. That handle portion may be configured to be grasped
by a user, and the curved heat (i.e., having a curved
engagement surface) may be configured to engage a heat-
activated design implement to transfer a design of the
heat-activated design implement to a curved surface of a
workpiece. Also disclosed herein, according to various
embodiments, is a heat press stand having a curved floor and
a hat form for supporting a workpiece (e.g., a hat) during a
heat-activated design transfer using the heat press. Associ-
ated methods are also disclosed herein.

14 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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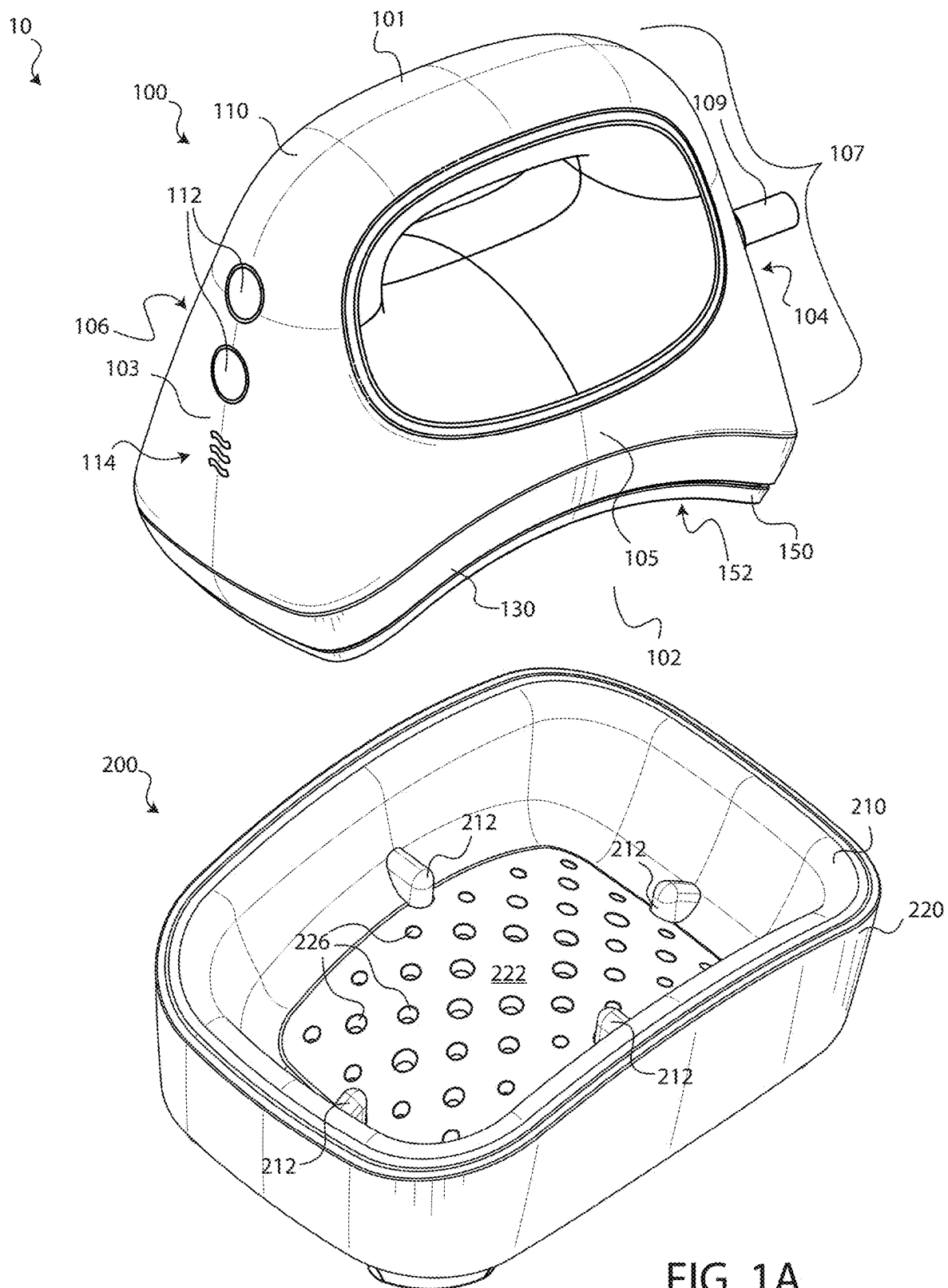
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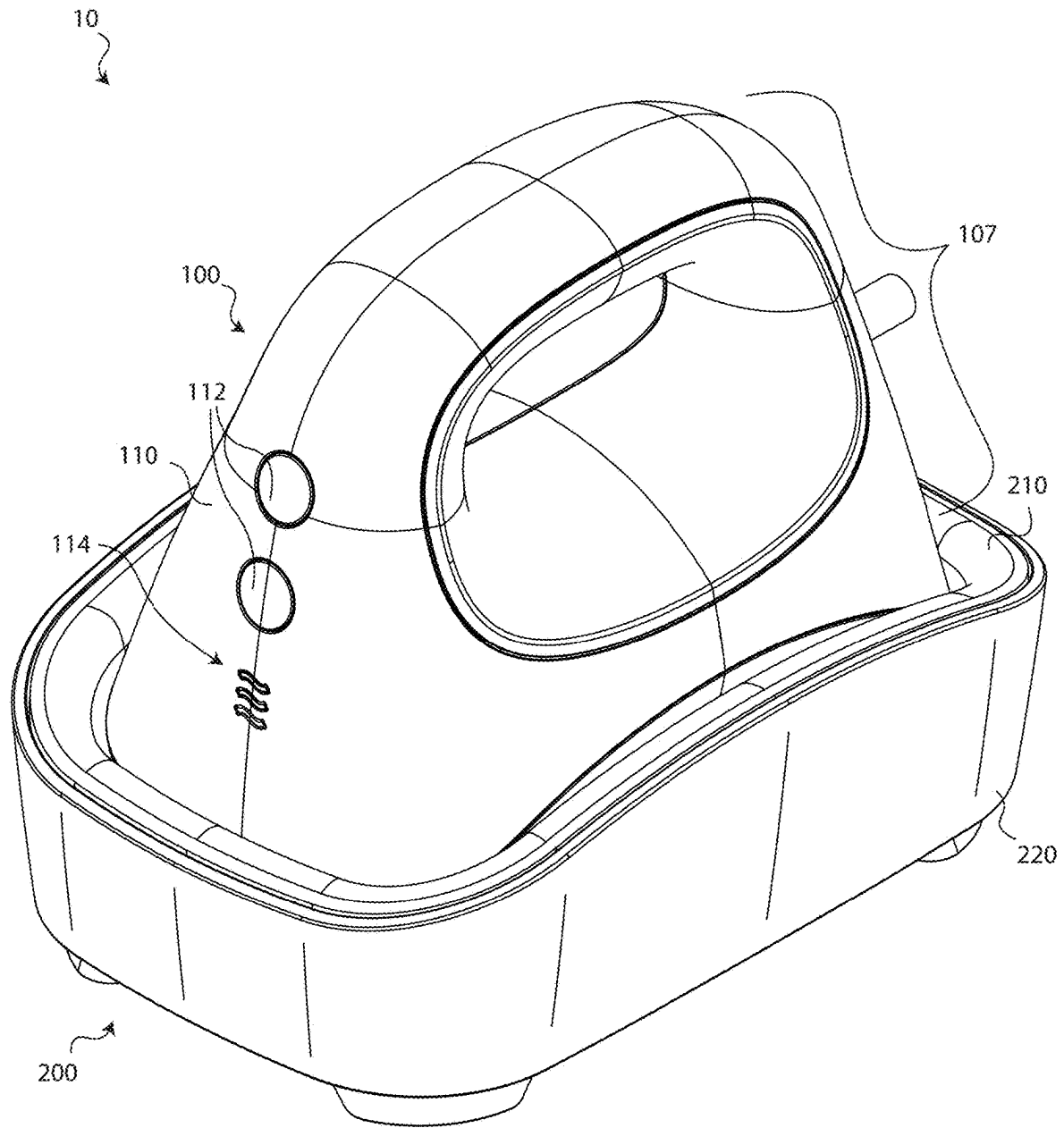


FIG. 1B

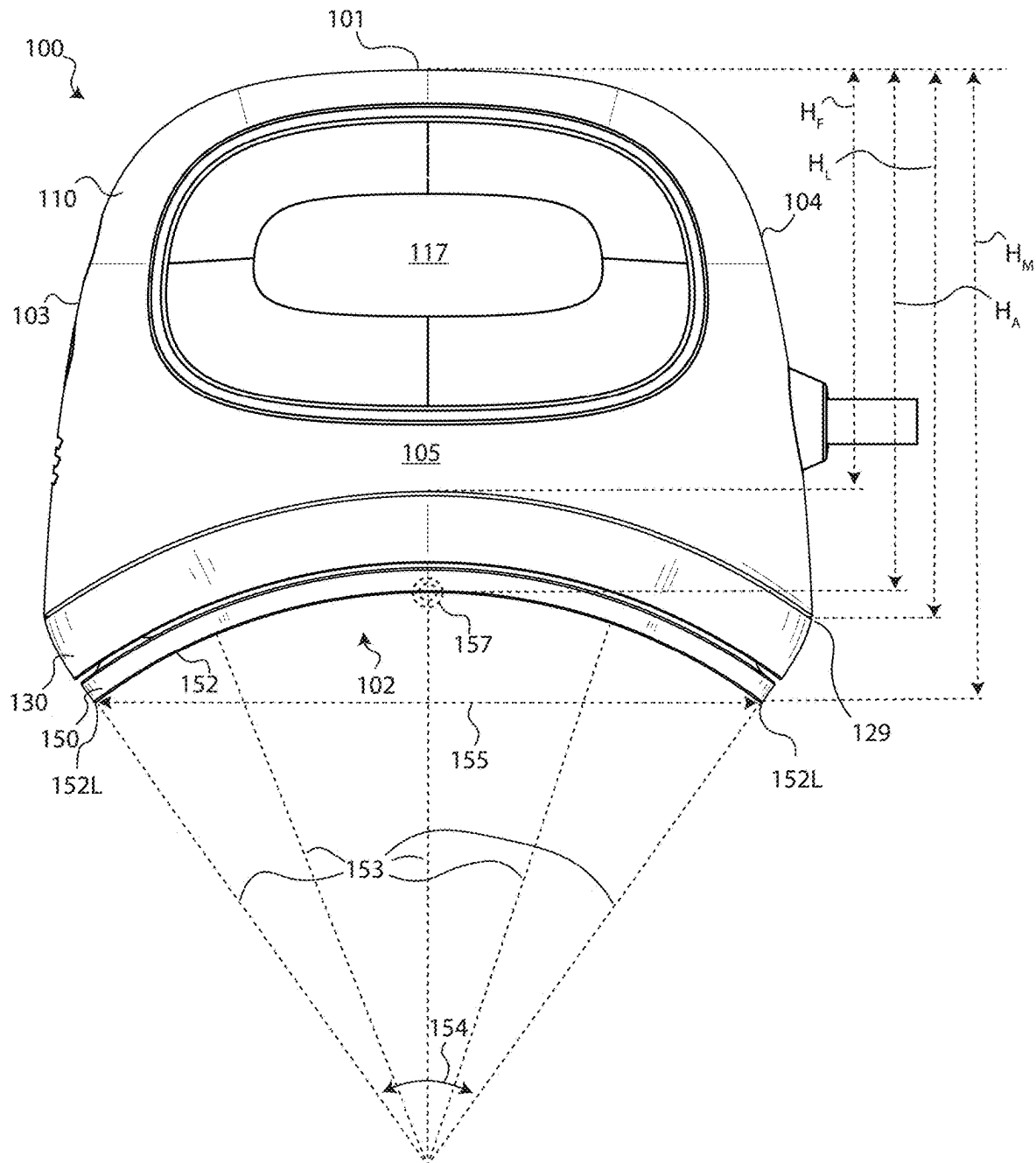


FIG. 2

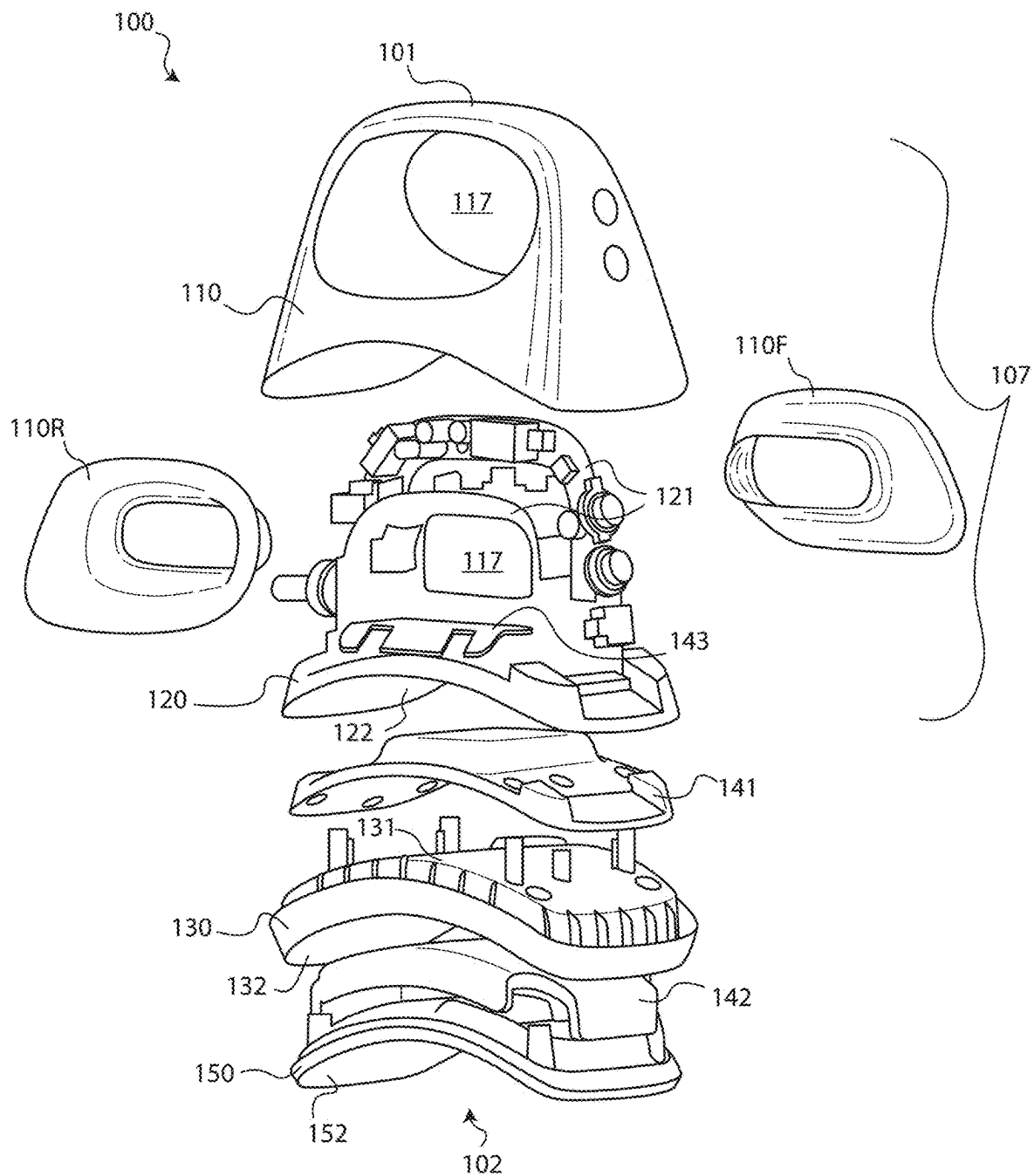
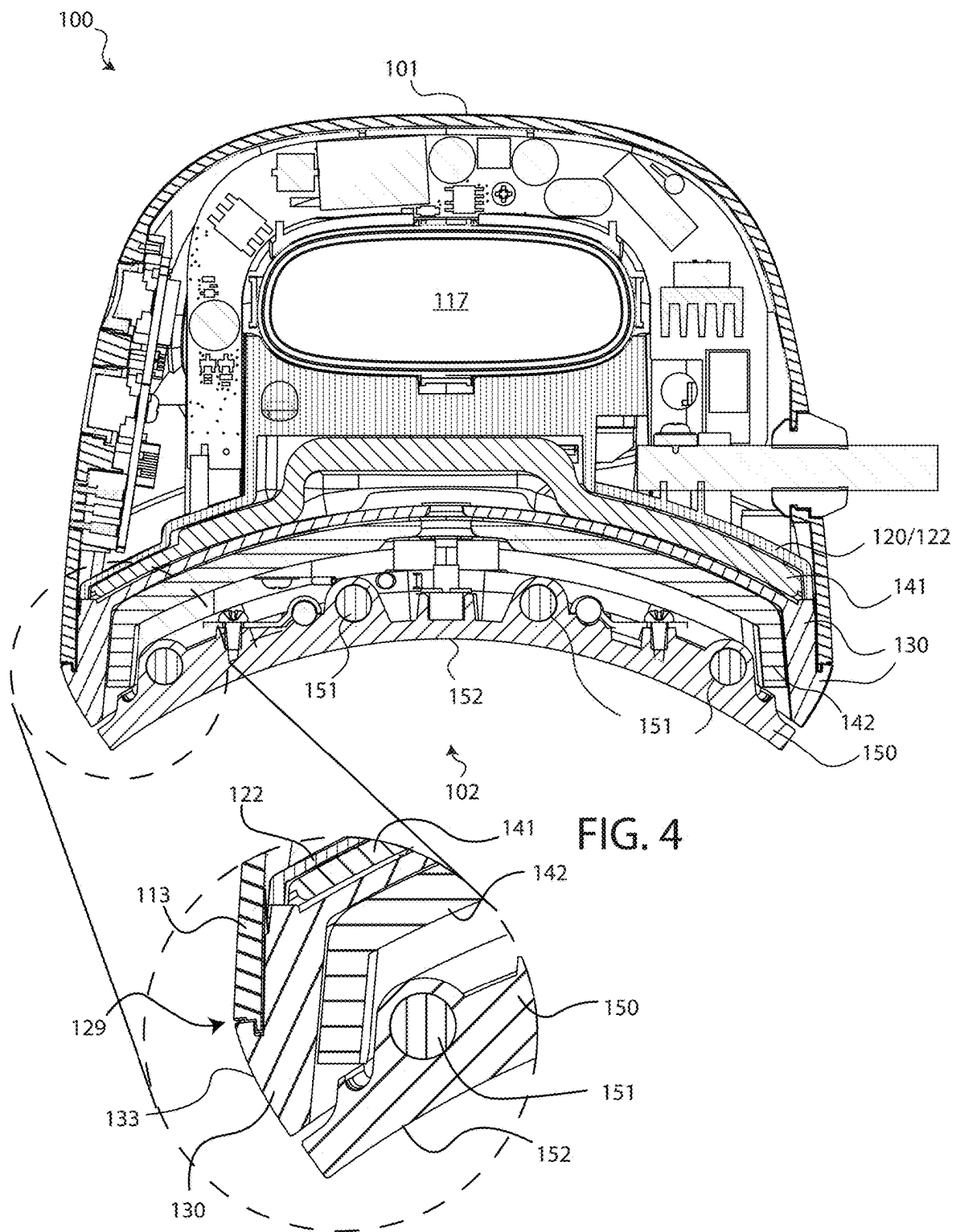


FIG. 3



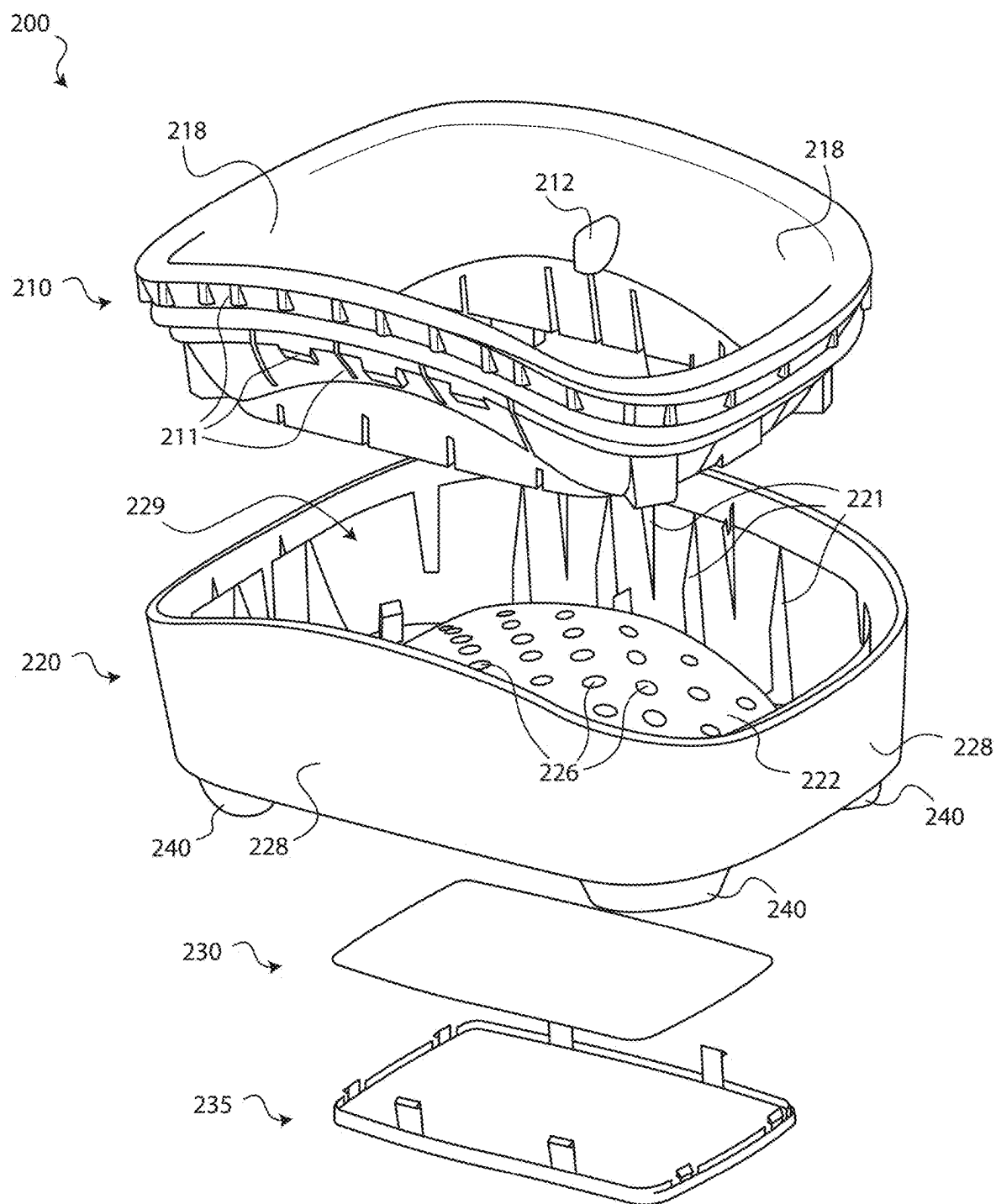


FIG. 5

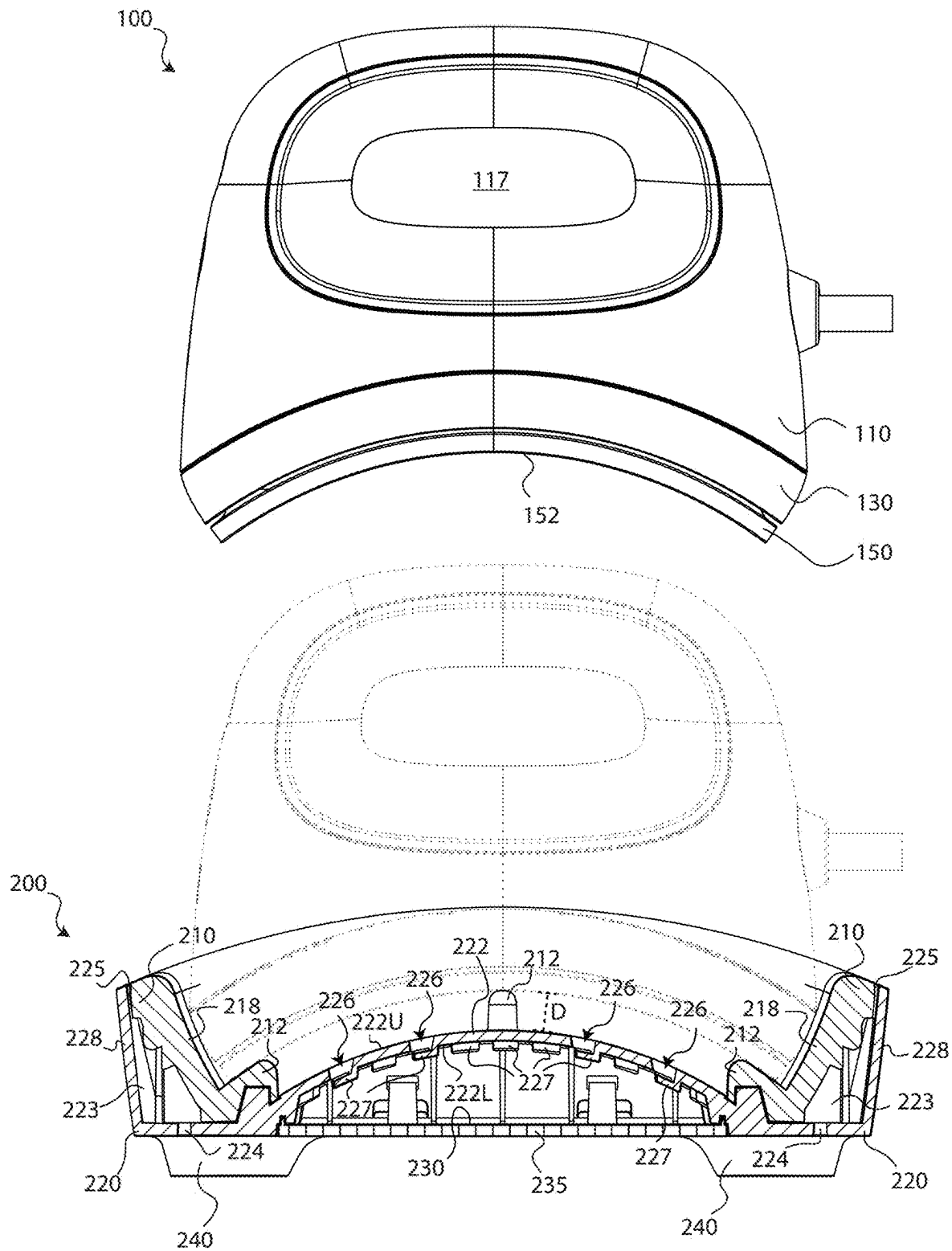


FIG. 6

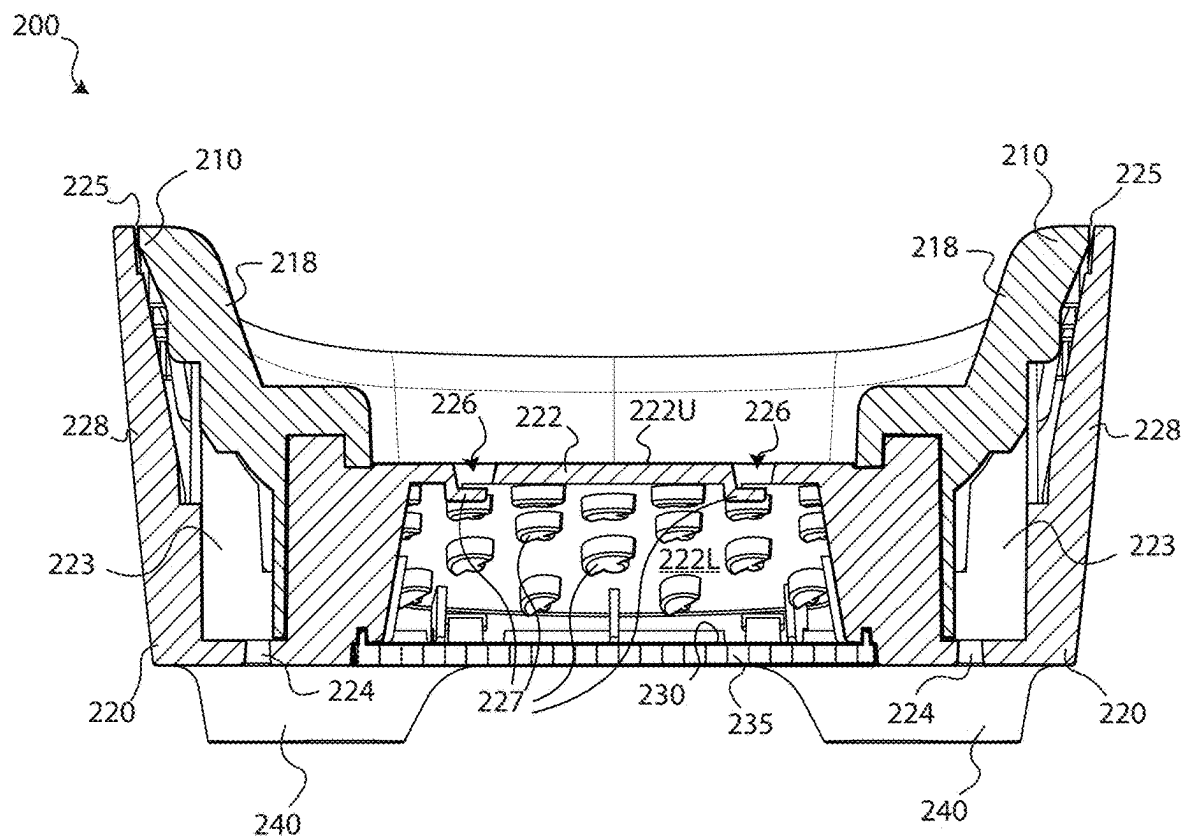
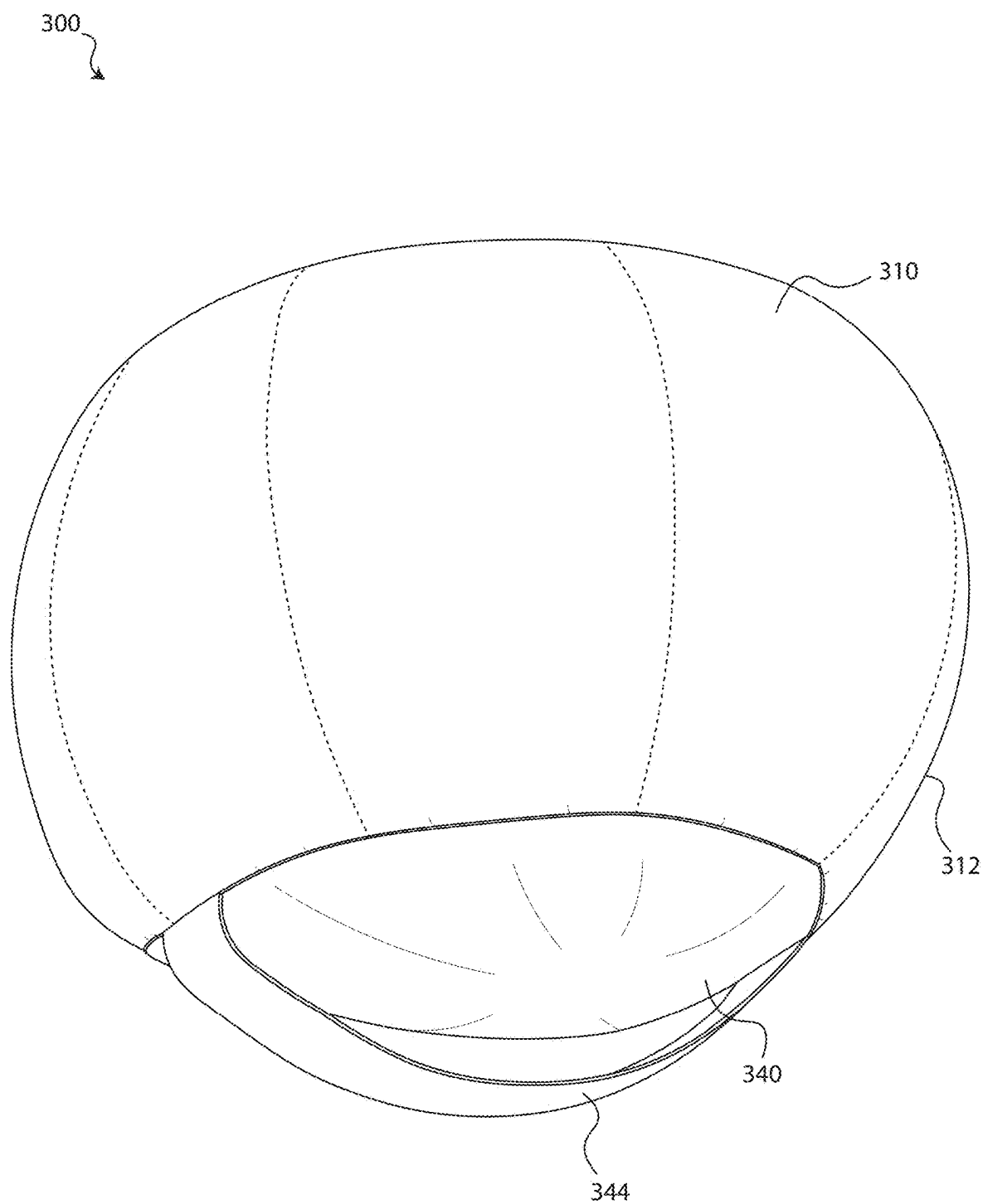


FIG. 7



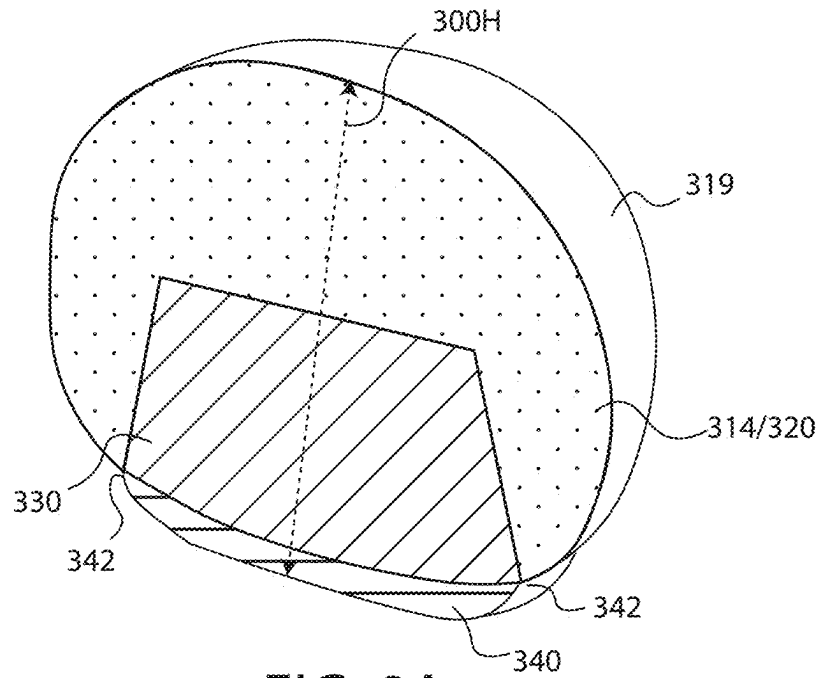


FIG. 9A

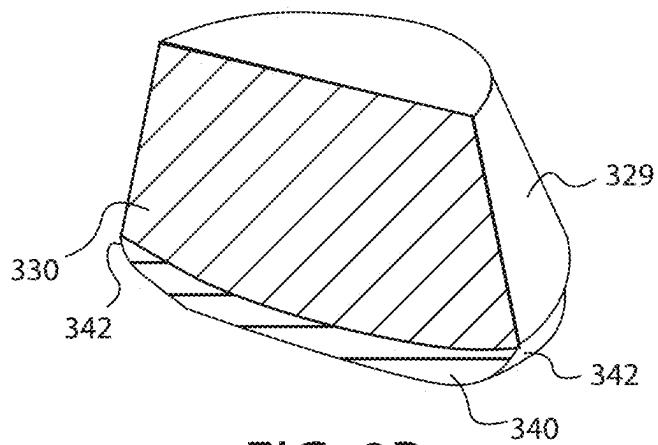


FIG. 9B

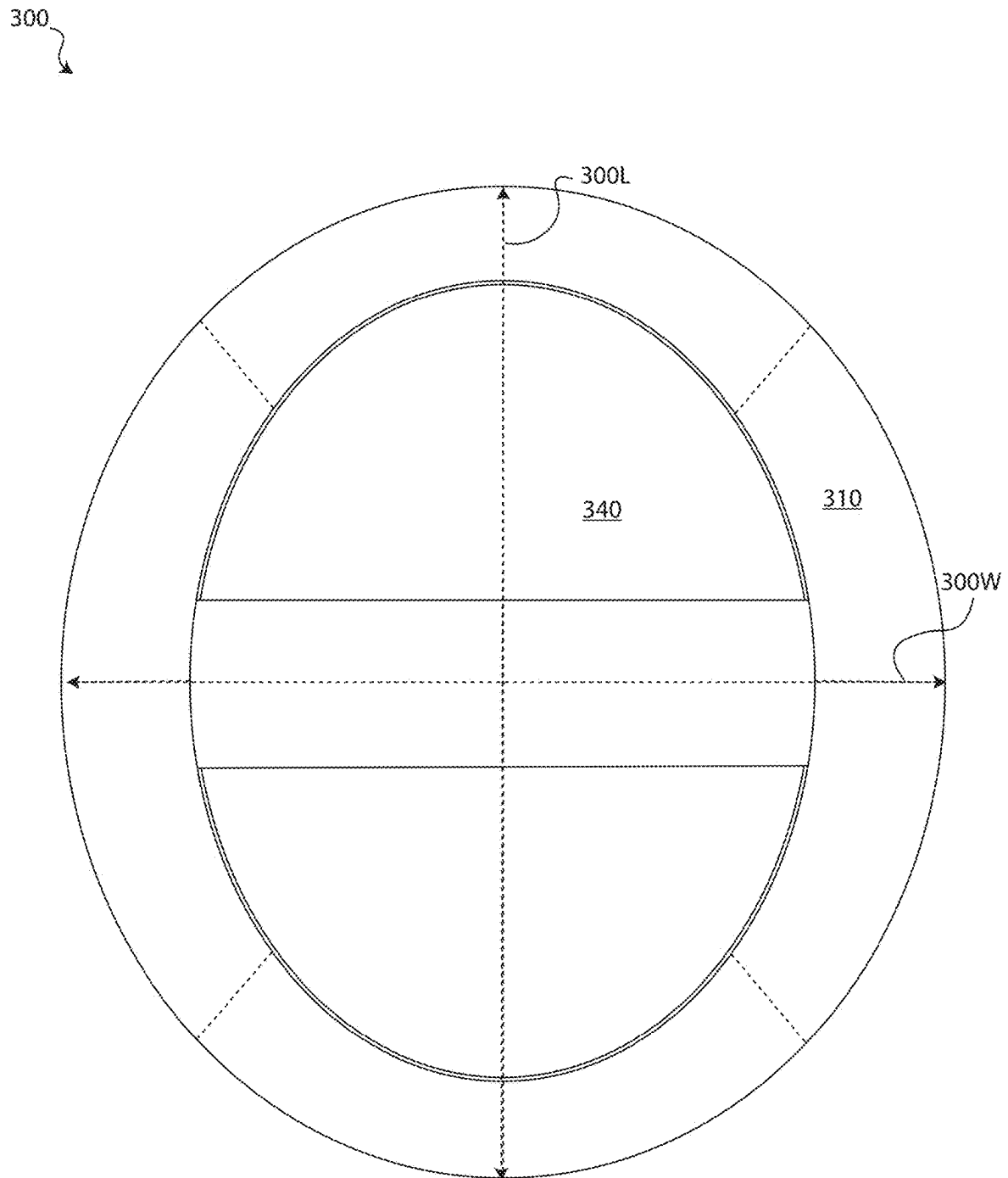


FIG. 9C

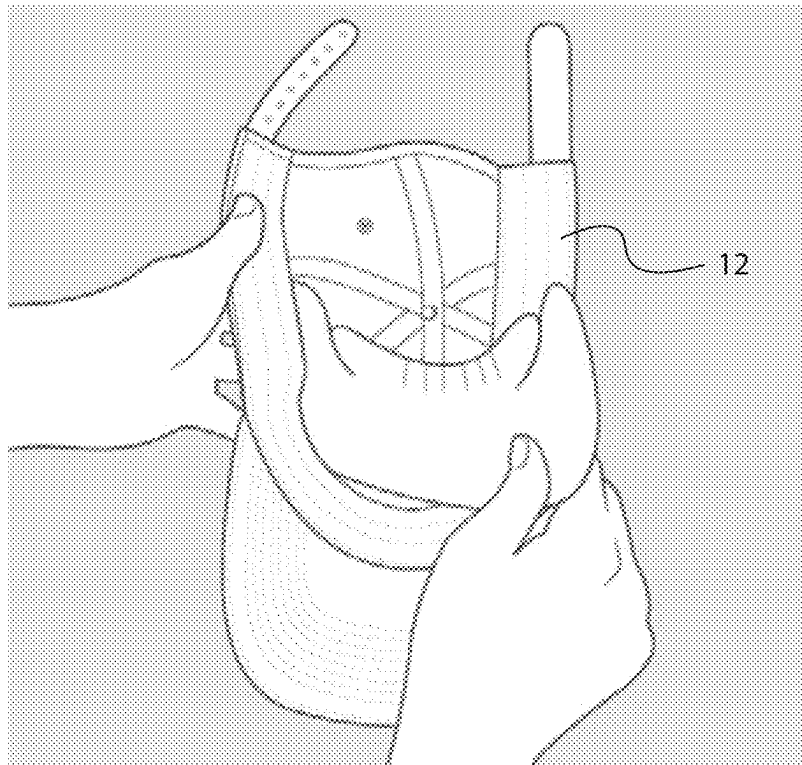


FIG. 10A

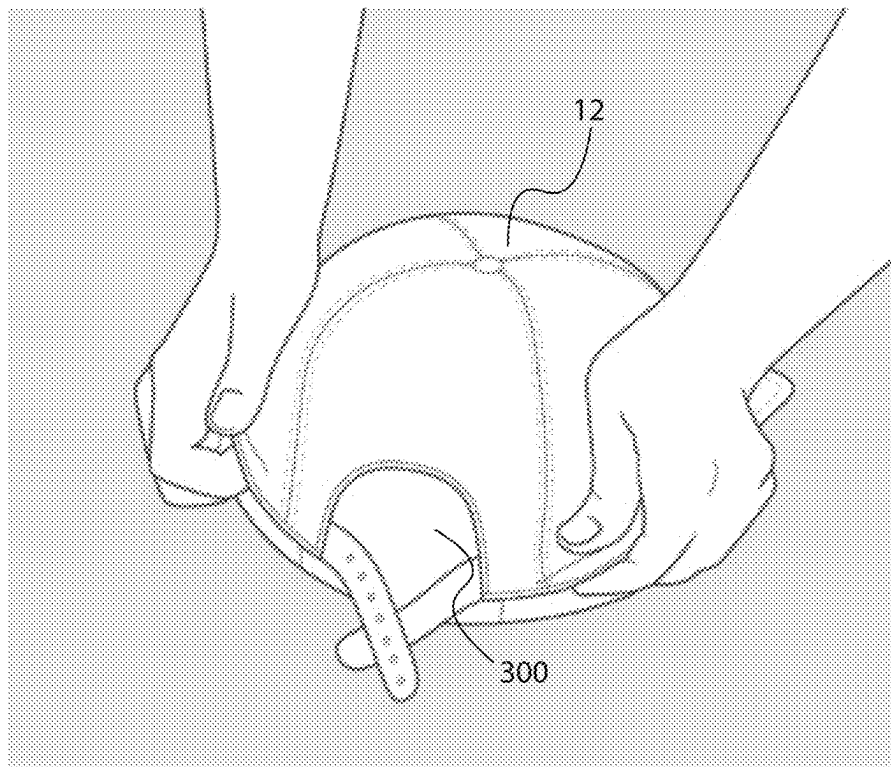


FIG. 10B

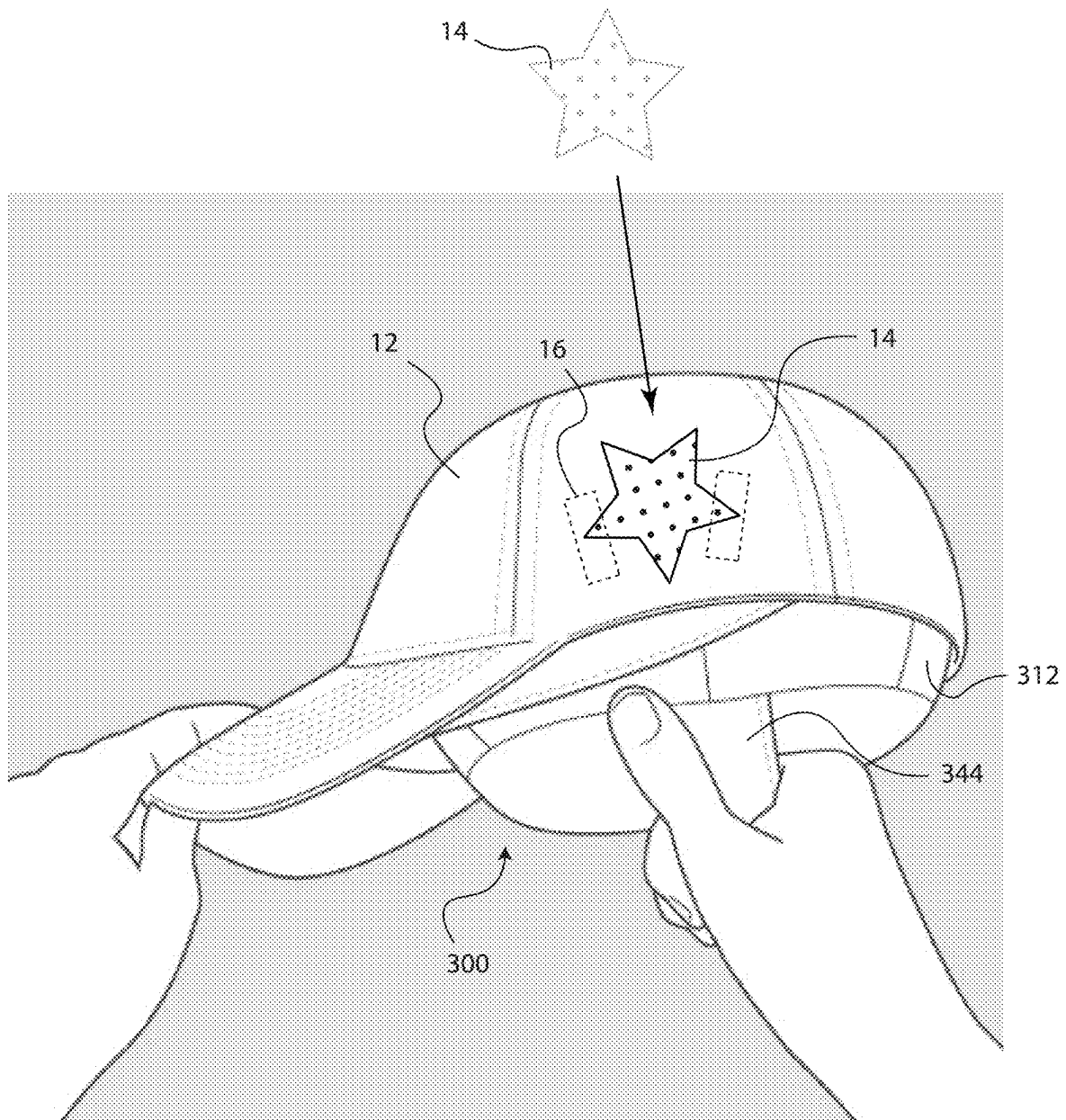


FIG. 10C

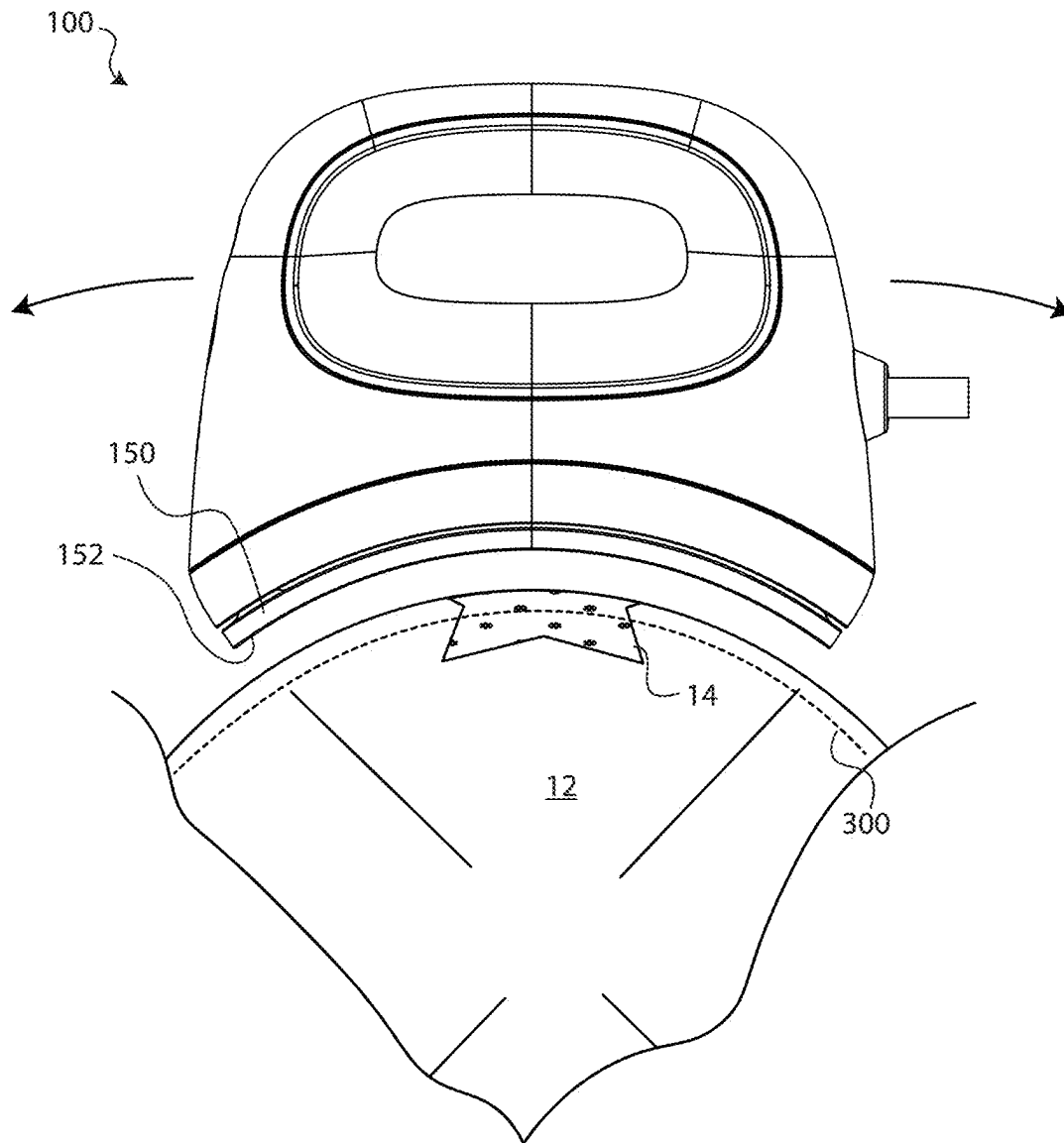


FIG. 10D

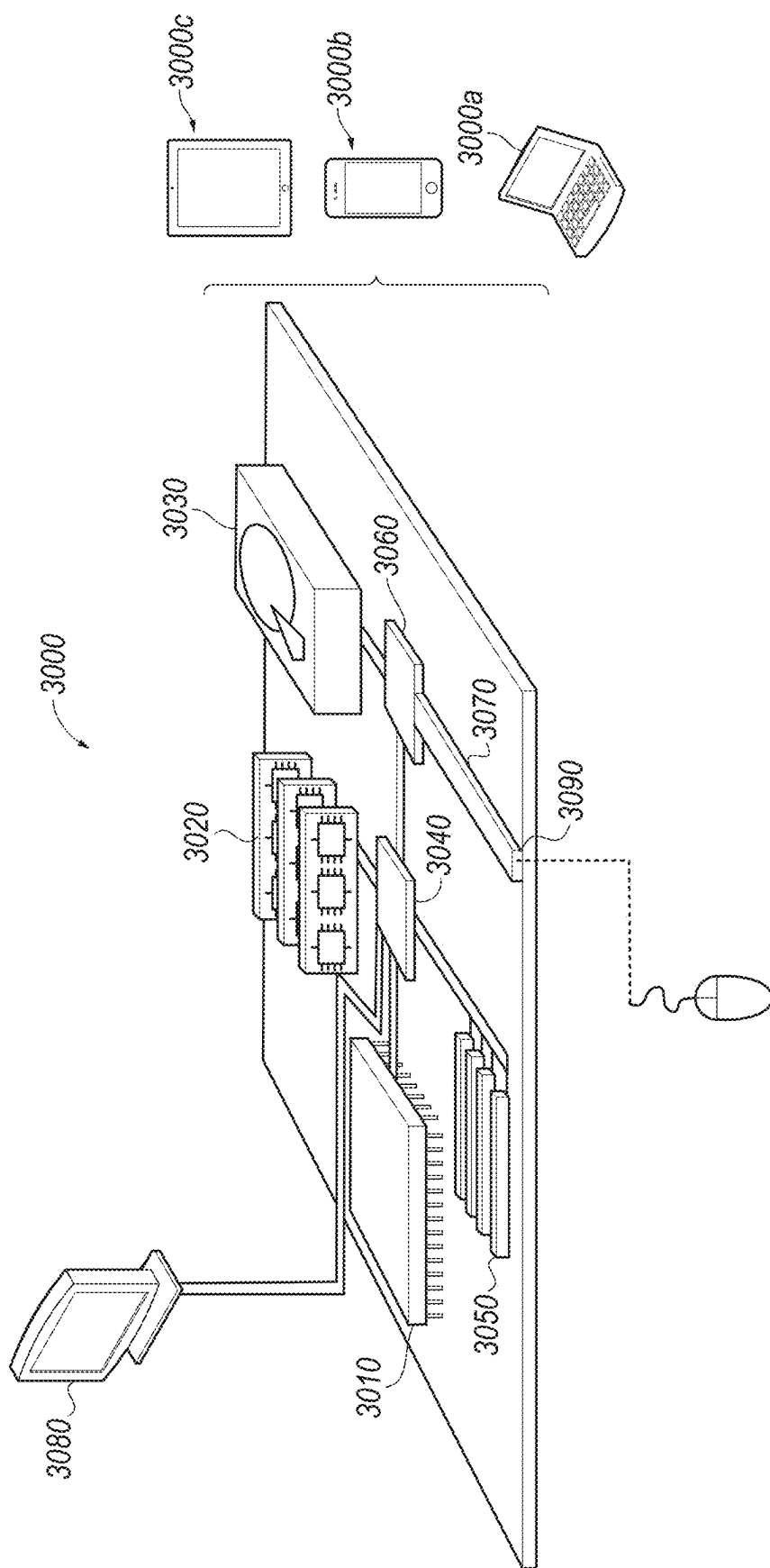


FIG. 11

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**HEAT PRESS APPARATUSES, SYSTEMS,
AND METHODS****CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This is a continuation application of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/653,464 entitled "Heat Press Apparatuses, Systems, and Methods" filed on Mar. 3, 2022, which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD

This disclosure relates generally to heat presses, components, apparatuses, systems, and methods.

BACKGROUND

While known heat presses, components, apparatuses, systems, and methods have proven to be acceptable for various applications, such heat presses, components, apparatuses, systems, and methods are nevertheless susceptible to improvements that may enhance their overall performance and cost. Therefore, a need exists to develop improved heat press components, apparatuses, systems, and methods that advance the art.

SUMMARY

The subject matter of the present disclosure has been developed in response to the present state of the art, and in particular, in response to the problems and needs in the art that have not yet been fully solved by currently available heat presses. Accordingly, the present disclosure has been developed to provide a heat press and related components, apparatuses, systems and methods that overcome many or all of the above-discussed shortcomings in the art, in accordance with various embodiments.

Disclosed herein, according to various embodiments, is a heat press that comprises a handle portion configured to be grasped by a user and a heat plate coupled to the handle portion, with the heat plate having a curved engagement surface. That is, the curved engagement surface may be configured to engage a heat-activated design implement to transfer a design of the heat-activated design implement to a curved surface of a workpiece. In various embodiments, wherein the curved engagement surface is concave. In various embodiments, the curved engagement surface is curved about a single axis of curvature.

According to various embodiments, the curved engagement surface comprises an apex axis and a radius of curvature, with a maximum distance between the apex axis and an outward surface of the handle portion opposite the heat plate being equal to or less than the radius of curvature. In various embodiments, the handle portion comprises an inner support structure and an exterior housing, with the heat plate being coupled to the inner support structure. In various embodiments, the heat press further includes a skirt generally disposed between the inner support structure and the heat plate. The inner support structure may be directly mounted to a first side of the skirt and the heat plate may be directly mounted to a second side of the skirt opposite the first side.

In various embodiments, the heat press further includes a first insulation layer disposed between the inner support structure and the skirt. The heat press may include a second insulation layer disposed between the skirt and the heat plate. In various embodiments, the inner support structure

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defines a lower curved segment and an upper segment. In various embodiments, the upper segment of the inner support structure of the handle portion, together with the exterior housing of the handle portion, define a hand clearance opening for the user. The heat press may further include a third insulation layer disposed between the lower curved segment of the inner support structure and the hand clearance opening. In various embodiments, one or more of the inner support structure, the first insulation layer, the skirt, and the second insulation layer comprises a lower curved surface that generally matches a curvature of the curved engagement surface of the heat plate. In various embodiments, each of the inner support structure, the first insulation layer, the skirt, and the second insulation layer comprises a lower curved surface that generally matches a curvature of the curved engagement surface of the heat plate.

Also disclosed herein, according to various embodiments, is a heat press stand that includes a curved floor. The curved floor may comprise an upper convex surface. The heat press stand may also include a plurality of heat plate support protrusions adjacent the upper convex surface of the curved floor. The plurality of heat plate support protrusions may be configured to contact a curved engagement surface of a heat plate of a heat press to support the heat press in a docked position relative to the heat press stand. In various embodiments, the upper convex surface of the curved floor is curved about a single axis of curvature. In various embodiments, the single axis of curvature is disposed below a lowermost portion of the heat press stand.

In various embodiments, the curved floor comprises a lower concave surface. A thickness of the curved floor between the upper convex surface and the lower concave surface is substantially uniform, according to various embodiments. In various embodiments, the curved floor comprises a plurality of perforations that extend from the upper convex surface to the lower concave surface. In various embodiments, the heat press stand further includes a plurality of louvers that extend from the lower concave surface of the curved floor and at least partially extend across a lower opening of the plurality of perforations.

In various embodiments, the curved floor is a section of a main body of the heat press stand, with the main body also comprising body walls extending upwards around the curved floor. In various embodiments, the body walls define a nest region. In various embodiments, the plurality of heat plate support protrusions may be features of an insert disposed within the nest region. The insert may have insert walls that extend upwards from around the curved floor of the main body.

Also disclosed herein, according to various embodiments, is a hat form of a heat press system. The hat form may include a cover at least partially defining an internal volume of the hat form and a fill material disposed within and at least partially occupying the internal volume. In various embodiments, the cover comprises a heat resistant fabric. In various embodiments, the cover comprises a metallic coating.

The hat form may further include a base, and the cover may be coupled to the base. In various embodiments, the cover and the base together define the internal volume of the hat form. In various embodiments, the base has a perimeter/periphery, and the cover may be coupled to the base along the perimeter. In various embodiments, a radially outward surface of the cover is configured to engage a curved workpiece, wherein the radially outward surface of the cover is convex.

In various embodiments, the base comprises a polyester fabric. The hat form may also include a handle coupled to

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the base. The hat form may also include a support body extending from the base into the internal volume of the hat form. The support body may have a frustoconical shape. In various embodiments, a volume ratio of the fill material to the support body in the internal volume is between about 1:1 and about 4:1. In various embodiments, a volume ratio of the fill material to the support body in the internal volume is between about 1.5:1 and about 3:1. In various embodiments, the fill material occupies more than 50% of the internal volume and the support body occupies less than 50% of the internal volume. In various embodiments, the fill material is a granular material. For example, the granular material may comprise a conglomeration of shells from at least one of nuts, drupes, and/or legumes. In various embodiments, the granular material comprises walnut shells.

The heat form may further include a liner disposed between the cover and the fill material. In various embodiments, the hat form further includes a liner disposed between the fill material and the support body. In various embodiments, the hat form further includes a liner disposed between the support body and the base.

The forgoing features and elements may be combined in various combinations without exclusivity, unless expressly indicated herein otherwise. These features and elements as well as the operation of the disclosed embodiments will become more apparent in light of the following description and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the advantages of the disclosure will be readily understood, a more particular description of the disclosure briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments that are illustrated in the appended drawings. Thus, although the subject matter of the present disclosure is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the concluding portion of the specification, a more complete understanding of the present disclosure, may best be obtained by referring to the detailed description and claims when considered in connection with the drawing figures. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the disclosure and are not therefore to be considered to be limiting of its scope, the subject matter of the present application will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1A is a perspective view of various components of a heat press system, showing a heat press removed a distance from a heat press stand, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 1B is a perspective view of the heat press system of FIG. 1A, showing the heat press engaged on the heat press stand, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 2 is a front view a heat press, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 3 is an exploded view of a heat press, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional front view of a heat press, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 5 is an exploded view of a heat press stand, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional front view of a heat press stand and a front view of a heat press removed a distance from the heat press stand, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional side view of heat press stand, in accordance with various embodiments;

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FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a hat form of a heat press system, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 9A is a schematic cross-sectional view of a hat form of a heat press system, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 9B is a schematic cross-sectional view of various components of the hat form of FIG. 9A, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIG. 9C is a lower/bottom view of the hat form of FIG. 8, in accordance with various embodiments;

FIGS. 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10D show various views of a method of using a heat press system, in accordance with various embodiments; and

FIG. 11 is a schematic depiction of a computing device for controlling the heat press system (e.g., the heat press), according to various embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The detailed description of exemplary embodiments herein refers to the accompanying drawings, which show exemplary embodiments by way of illustration. While these exemplary embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the disclosure, other embodiments may be realized and logical changes and adaptations in design and construction may be made in accordance with this disclosure without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure. Thus, the detailed description herein is presented for purposes of illustration only and not of limitation.

The present disclosure relates generally to heat presses, heat press systems, heat press stands (also known as heat press bases or heat press holders), forms for facilitating a heat press procedure, and other components, and the related methods of using and/or operating the foregoing. While numerous details, components, features, functionality, and examples are included herein pertaining to heat presses and their related systems and methods, the present disclosure is not necessarily so limited, and thus aspects of the disclosed embodiments may be adapted for performance in a variety of other industries. As such, numerous applications of the present disclosure may be realized.

Generally, the heat press disclosed herein includes a heat plate having a curved engagement surface that is configured to engage a curved surface of a workpiece, according to various embodiments. The curved engagement surface of the heat plate may be configured to engage a heat-activated design implement (e.g., against the curved surface of the workpiece) to transfer a design of the heat-activated design implement to the curved surface of the workpiece. The curved nature of the heat plate may be especially beneficial for performing heat press design transfers to workpieces having curved surfaces, such as hats, visors, bags, balls, containers, etc.

The heat press also generally includes a handle portion, configured to be grasped by a user, with the heat plate being coupled to the handle portion, as described in greater detail below. Thus, the heat press disclosed herein generally includes an integrated handle on one end of the heat press with the heat plate being disposed on the opposing end of the heat press, according to various embodiments. Accordingly, the heat press may have a 'small' (e.g., handheld) form-factor and may be portable, as described in greater detail below.

The present disclosure also generally provides a heat press stand having a curved floor that generally complements and/or matches the curved engagement surface of the

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heat plate of the heat press. The heat press stand may be generally configured to safely support and/or hold the heat press in a docked/docking/stowed position when not in use. As described in greater detail below, the heat press stand may be configured with features to enable the heat press to be safely supported even when the heat plate is active and at temperature. That is, the heat press stand may be configured to mitigate heat transfer from the heat plate to a table or other supporting surface upon which the heat press stand is disposed, and may facilitate maintaining the temperature of the handle portion of the heat press at a sufficiently low temperature such that the handle portion is safe to be grasped by a user.

Also disclosed herein, according to various embodiments, is a form (referred to herein as a “hat form”) that is configured to support and/or retain the workpiece in a desired orientation during a heat press procedure. Generally, the hat form comprises one or more curved surfaces upon and/or around which a workpiece may be positioned, and the workpiece and a heat-activated design implement may be compressed between the curved engagement surface of the heat plate of the heat press and the curved surface of the hat form to facilitate transfer of a design from the heat-activated design implement to the workpiece, according to various embodiments. As described in greater detail below, the hat form may be a separate component from the heat press, and thus the hat form and the heat press may be independently manipulated during a heat press procedure to provide functional flexibility during the process of transferring a design from a heat-activated design implement to a workpiece.

The heat press, the heat press stand, and the hat form may be combined in various groupings to form a heat press system. For example, in various embodiments of the disclosure the heat press system includes a heat press and a heat press stand. However, in various other embodiments of the disclosure the heat press system includes a heat press and a hat form. Further, a heat press system may include a heat press stand and a hat form. Still further, a heat press system may include all three of the heat press, the heat press stand, and the hat form.

With all of the components and aspects of the present disclosure generally introduced above, attention is now drawn to the accompanying figures and the following paragraphs, which provide additional and specific details pertaining to various embodiments of one or more heat press systems, one or more heat presses, one or more heat press stands, and one or more hat forms. That is, the heat press is generally described below with reference to FIGS. 1A, 1B, 2, 3, and 4, the heat press stand is generally described below with reference to FIGS. 5, 6, and 7, and the hat form is generally described below with reference to FIGS. 8, 9A, 9B, and 9C. FIGS. 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10D generally provide examples of various stages/steps of a method of using the heat press system(s) disclosed herein, and FIG. 11 generally provides a schematic depiction of a computing device for operating and/or controlling the heat press.

In various embodiments, and with reference to FIGS. 1A and 1B, a heat press system 10 is provided that comprises a heat press stand 200 and a heat press 100 having a curved heat plate 150. As seen in FIG. 1B, the heat press 100 may be selectively supported by the heat press stand 200 (also referred to herein as a heat press docking station or simply a docking base). Some aspects described herein may be directed to a method of utilizing the heat press 100 for the purpose of heat-activating a heat-activated design implement 14 (e.g., see FIGS. 10C and 10D) for transferring a design of the heat-activated design implement 14 to a

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workpiece 12 (e.g., see FIGS. 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10D). For example, the heat-activated design implement 14 may include a heat-activated adhesive for attaching a design element to the workpiece, and/or the heat-activated design implement 14 may include one or more sublimation ink compositions that are configured to undergo sublimation transfer from a working substrate to the workpiece 12.

In some configurations, the heat press 100 disclosed herein may be sized to be relatively small, compact, and portable to enable users to manipulate and apply heat to the heat-activated design implement 14 in the course of preparing arts-and-craft projects. The terms “compact,” “miniaturized,” “small,” “portable,” or other similar terms used herein to describe the heat press 100 are not meant as limiting; rather, these terms are used in reference to other commercially available heat presses. As such, the heat press 100 may not be intended for use in large industrial applications that may otherwise have to be operated by specially trained individuals and manufacturers. Accordingly, the heat press 100 may be referred to as a compact, home-use consumer device that is light weight, portable, and easy to operate for by an untrained person. For example, the heat press 100 may have a handle portion 107, to which the heat plate 150 is coupled, and the handle portion 107 may be graspable by a user to allow the user to easily move, position, and/or orient the heat press 100 relative to the workpiece.

In various embodiments, the heat press 100 is configured to be used with workpieces having curved exterior surfaces, such as hats, visors, bags, balls, containers, shoes, toys such as stuffed animals, pillows, and the like. Accordingly, the specific shape and geometry of the curved heat plate 150 may be well-suited and adapted for corresponding geometries, shapes, and contours of various portions of a workpiece, thereby enabling the application of precise heat to curved areas and curved contours of heat-activated design implements 14 and/or workpieces 12.

In various embodiments, the heat press 100 may include electronics (e.g., power supply components, user interface components, temperature control components, and the like). In some configurations, the heat press 100 may include one or more materials, such as insulative layers, that protect such electronic components from heat produced by the heat press 100. Additional details pertaining to the internal components of the heat press 100 are included below with reference to FIGS. 3 and 4.

In various embodiments, the heat press 100 provides substantially even heat distribution across the heat plate 150 to enable use thereof with, for example, arts-and-craft projects. In some instances, an aspect of the present disclosure provides even heat distribution to across the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150. In some implementations, the heat press 100 is configured to provide temperature control of the heat plate 150 in order to maintain the temperature of the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150. Accordingly, control over the temperature of the heat plate 150 may provide for sufficient heating of diverse materials forming the heat-activated design implement 14 and/or the workpiece 12 in order to ensure a consistent and desirable bonding/transfer of the heat-activated design implement 14 to the workpiece 12.

The heat press 100 may include an exterior housing 110. The exterior housing 110 generally defines the outer surfaces of the heat press 100, and portions of the exterior housing 110 may generally define the aforementioned handle portion 107. The exterior housing 110 may have define a first or proximal end 101 of the heat press 100, with the heat plate 150 generally situated at, and at least partially defining, a

second or distal end **102** of the heat press **100**. The exterior housing **110** may also define a third lateral end **103** and a fourth lateral end **104** of the heat press **100** that generally form opposing edges of the exterior housing **110** that extend between the proximal end **101** and the distal end **102**. The exterior housing **110** further defines a front side **105** and a back side **106** of the heat press **100** that generally form opposing front and back surfaces of the heat press **100**, in accordance with various embodiments.

The exterior housing **110** may be made of plastic materials, such as, for example, polycarbonate (PC), acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), a blend of PC and ABS, or the like. Such plastic materials may result in the exterior housing **110** not melting when exposed to high temperatures, such as a temperature as high as, for example, 205° C. created by the heat plate **150**. The material of the exterior housing **110** may also have sufficient structural strength and/or rigidity to prevent deformation in response to external forces or pressures are applied by a user during use of heat press **100**.

As seen at FIGS. **1** and **2**, the exterior housing **110** may generally define a handle portion **107**. The handle portion **107** of the exterior housing **110** may define a hand clearance opening **117** which provides a user with a secure grasping surface for holding and manipulating the heat press **100**. Thus, the hand clearance opening **117** of the handle portion **107** may be configured/sized for permitting insertion of a user's fingers such that the user's fingers may wrap around and grasp the handle portion **107** (e.g., the portion of the exterior housing **110** between the hand clearance opening **117** and the proximal end **101** of the heat press **100**) and subsequently impart a force for applying pressure to one or both of the heat-activated design implement **14** and the workpiece **12** during use of the heat press **100**. The configuration of the handle portion **107** and the hand clearance opening **117** results in the user's fingers being sufficiently spaced away from the second or distal end **102** of the heat press **100**. In various embodiments, the hand clearance opening may comprise one or more opposing recesses/indentations, or the hand clearance opening **117** may be a pass-through aperture that extends entirely through the heat press **100** from the front side **105** to the back side **106**.

One or both of the exterior housing **110** and the hand clearance opening **117** may be shaped to define other forms or shapes without departing from the advantages provided thereby. In addition, the size, shape, and specific configuration of exterior housing **110** and the handle portion **107** may vary in one or more other configurations without departing from the intended use of the heat press **100**. For example, in some implementations, the upper portion of the exterior housing **110** that forms the handle portion **107** may include finger contours or other gripping features that aids the user in ergonomically grasping the heat press **100**.

In various embodiments, the heat press **100** further includes a power cord **109** (only partially shown in the figures) that provides power to electrical components of the heat press **100**. In some implementations, the power cord **109** provides power to temperature control components, user interface components, and/or other electronic components of the heat press **100**. The heat press **100** may also include a user interface, and the user interface may comprise one or more buttons **112** and/or one or more temperature indicators **114** that are powered by power supplied from the power cord **109**. The one or more buttons **112** and the one or more temperature indicators **114** may be disposed on the third lateral end **103** of the heat press **100**. In various embodiments, the various user interface components may be aligned along the third lateral end **103** of the heat press **100**.

Said differently, a substantially straight line extending across and along the surface of the third lateral end **103** of the heat press **100** may intersect each of the one or more buttons **112** and each of the one or more temperature indicators **114**. In various embodiments, the number of buttons **112** is two (2) and the number of temperature indicators is three (3).

The one or more buttons **112** may be actuated (e.g., pressed) by a user for powering on or powering off the heat press **100**. In various embodiments, a visual indicator, such as, for example, a light source, may inform a user when the heat press **100** is activated or deactivated. The one or more temperature indicators **114** may include one or more light sources that may, for example, communicate the temperature level and/or heat setting of the heat plate **150**. In at least one embodiment, the one or more buttons **112** serve as both an on/off power button as well as a temperature setting button. In some instances, the one or more buttons **112** may be actuated in order to turn the heat press **100** on and then pressed again to set the temperature of heat plate **150**. By actuating the one or more buttons **112**, a low temperature setting, a medium temperature setting, or a high temperature setting may be selected by the user and, as explained above, the one or more light source indicators may be illuminated in order to communicate to a user a selected setting of the heat press **100**. Subsequently, the one or more buttons **112** can then be actuated again in order to turn the heat press **100** off. As described in greater detail below, in various embodiments the heat press **100** may be wirelessly controlled via a remote computing device (e.g., a laptop, smart phone, etc.), and thus the user interface buttons may be omitted.

Turning now to FIG. **2**, details pertaining to the shape, size, geometry, and general configuration of the heat plate **150** of the heat press **100** are provided. In various embodiments, the heat plate **150** comprises a curved engagement surface **152**. The curved engagement surface **152** may generally define at least a portion of the distal end **102** of the heat press **100**. In various embodiments, the curved engagement surface **152** is concave. The curved engagement surface **152** may be curved about a single axis of curvature. Said differently, lines extending across and along the curved engagement surface **152** from the third lateral end **103** toward the fourth lateral end **104** may have the curvature depicted in FIG. **2** while lines extending across and along the curved engagement surface **152** from the front side **105** toward the back side **106** of the heat press **100** may be substantially straight, having no curvature, according to various embodiments.

In various embodiments, the curved engagement surface **152** has an apex **157**, also referred to herein as an apex axis. The apex **157** of the concave, curved engagement surface **152** is defined as the point/axis closest to the proximal end **101** of the heat press **100**. Said differently, the apex **157** of the curved engagement surface **152** bisects the curved engagement surface **152**, according to various embodiments. In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate **150** (e.g., the dimension of the apex axis **157** . . . that spans across the heat plate **150** into the page in FIG. **2**) is between about 2.0 inches (51 millimeters) and about 6.0 inches (152 millimeters). In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate **150** is between about 2.5 inches (63 millimeters) and about 4.0 inches (102 millimeters). In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate **150** is about 3.0 inches (76 millimeters). As used in this context only, the term "about" means plus or minus 0.1 inches. In various embodiments, the curved length of the heat plate **150** (e.g., the maximum dimension that spans across the curved engagement surface **152** of the heat plate **150**, perpendicular to the apex axis

157), is between about 3.0 inches (76 millimeters) and about 7.0 inches (178 millimeters). In various embodiments, the curved length of the heat plate 150 is between about 3.5 inches (89 millimeters) and about 6.0 inches (152 millimeters). In various embodiments, the curved length of the heat plate 150 is about 5.0 inches (127 millimeters). As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 0.1 inches. In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate 150 is between about 40% and about 75% of the curved length of the heat plate 150. In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate 150 is between about 50% and about 60% of the curved length of the heat plate 150. In various embodiments, the width of the heat plate 150 is about 60% of the curved length of the heat plate 150. As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 2%.

In various embodiments, the curved engagement surface 152 has a geometry characterized by: a radius (or radii) of curvature 153, defined as the radius of the circular arc which approximates the curvature of the curved engagement surface 152; a degree of curvature 154, defined as the central angle of the arc that lies on the curved engagement surface 152; and a chord length of curvature 155, defined as the length of the line segment extending between opposing lateral edges 152L of the arc that lies on the curved engagement surface 152.

In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is between about 3.0 inches (76 millimeters) and about 6.0 inches (127 millimeters). In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is between about inches and about 3.5 inches (89 millimeters) and about 4.5 inches (114 millimeters). In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is between about inches and about 3.75 inches (95 millimeters) and about 4.25 inches (108 millimeters). In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is 4.0 inches (102 millimeters). In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is about 4.04 inches (102.6 millimeters). As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 0.1 inches (2.54 millimeters).

In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is between about 30 degrees and about 180 degrees. In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is between about 40 degrees and about 115 degrees. In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is between about 60 degrees and about 90 degrees. In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is between about 65 degrees and about 80 degrees. In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is about 73 degrees. In various embodiments, the degree of curvature 154 is 73.3 degrees. As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 2 degrees.

In various embodiments, the chord length of curvature 155 is between about 2.0 inches (51 millimeters) and about 8.0 inches (203 millimeters). In various embodiments, the chord length of curvature 155 is between about 2.75 inches (70 millimeters) and about 6.25 inches (159 millimeters). In various embodiments, the chord length of curvature 155 is between about 4.0 inches (102 millimeters) and about 5.5 inches (140 millimeters). In various embodiments, the chord length of curvature 155 is about 4.8 inches (122 millimeters). In various embodiments, the chord length of curvature 155 is 4.83 inches. As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 0.1 inches (2.54 millimeters).

The size and/or dimension of various sections, portions, and features of the heat press 100, relative to each other, may provide various portability, manipulability, and usability benefits, especially when considering the curved heat plate 150 and the various curvatures of possible workpieces that can be worked upon. Said differently, balancing the relative

lengths and geometries of various features of the heat press 100 may promote and/or enhance the ability of a user to operate the heat press 100 to effectively work on different/ varying workpieces. For example, if the curvature specifications of the heat plate 150 are not balanced with the overall size and/or shape of the entire heat press 100, the heat press 100 may prove to be unwieldy for various purposes and/or may inhibit usability and/or manipulability of the heat press 100 during the process of transferring a heat-activated design to a workpiece.

For purposes of comparing the curvature specifications of the heat plate 150 to the size of the heat press 100 generally, various heights of the heat press 100 are shown and defined with reference to FIG. 2. As used in this context, the term “height” refers to a distance defined in a vertical direction as characterized with the heat press 100 oriented in the stowed engagement relative to the heat press stand 200 shown in FIG. 1B, with the distal end 102 (i.e., the heat plate 150) facing downward and the proximal end 101 facing upward. That is, the term “height” refers to a distance parallel with a vertical longitudinal axis of the heat press 100 that extends centrally and vertically through the heat plate 150 and centrally and vertically through the handle portion 107.

As shown in FIG. 2, a front height H_F of the exterior housing 110 is defined between the top/upward surface (i.e., the proximal end 101) of the heat press 100 and the lower end of the exterior housing 110 on the front side 105 of the heat press 100 (adjacent the apex axis 157 of the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150). Correspondingly, a lateral height H_L of the exterior housing 110 is defined between the top/upward surface (i.e., the proximal end 101) of the heat press 100 and the lower end of the exterior housing 110 on the third/fourth lateral end 103, 104 of the heat press 100 (adjacent the lateral edges 152L of the heat plate 150). The lower edge of the exterior housing 110 may generally match the curvature of the heat plate 150, and thus the front height H_F is less than the lateral height H_L , according to various embodiments. A maximum height H_M of the heat press 100 is defined between the top/upward surface (i.e., the proximal end 101) of the heat press 100 and the lowest point of the distal end 102 of the heat press 100 (i.e., the lateral edges 152L of the heat plate 150). Finally, an apex height H_A of the heat press 100 is defined between the top/upward surface (i.e., the proximal end 101) of the heat press 100 and the apex axis 157 of the heat curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150. Said differently, the apex height H_A is the maximum distance between the apex axis 157 and an outward/upper surface of proximal end 101 of the handle portion 107 of the heat press 100 opposite the heat plate 150. As may be readily apparent, the maximum height H_M of the heat press 100 is greater than the apex height H_A of the heat press 100.

In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is less than the chord length of curvature 155. For example, the radius of curvature 153 may be between 70% and 100% of the chord length of curvature 155, or more specifically between 80% and 90% of the chord length of curvature 155, or about 85% of the chord length of curvature 155. In various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 is less than the maximum height H_M of the heat press 100. In various embodiments, the maximum height H_M of the heat press 100 is less than the chord length of curvature 155. For example: the radius of curvature 153 < maximum height H_M < the chord length of curvature 155. However, in various embodiments, the radius of curvature 153 may be equal to or greater than the apex height H_A of the heat press 100. For example: H_A < radius of curvature 153 < H_M . By so sizing the

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radius of curvature **153** relative to the indicated heights of the heat press **100**, the portability, manipulability, and usability of the heat press **100** may be improved over conventional heat presses that may have larger form factor housings/handles.

In various embodiments, the lateral height H_L of the heat press **100** is greater than the apex height H_A of the heat press **100**. Said differently, the junction/interface **129** between the exterior housing **110** and the skirt **130** (e.g., the point at which the heat press transitions from a diverging to a converging shape . . . see below) is lower than the apex axis **157** of the curved engagement surface **152** of the heat plate **150**. The technical effect of having this relative relationship between lateral height H_L and apex height H_A is that the heat plate **150** may be enabled to seat comfortably against the workpiece such that the workpiece is received within the curvature of the heat plate **150**, thereby enabling the user to easily move the heat press relative to the workpiece during use, according to various embodiments.

Now turning to FIGS. 3 and 4, details pertaining to the internal structure and configuration of the heat press **100** are provided. The various internal features, layers, and components of the heat press **100** may each individually, collectively, or in any combination, be incorporated into or with the various embodiments of the heat press **100** described herein. The handle portion **107** of the heat press **100** may be generally comprised of the exterior housing **110** and an inner support structure **120**. The exterior housing **110** may include front and rear sections **110R**, **110L** that define the surfaces that face the hand clearance opening **117**. The exterior housing **110** may be coupled to the inner support structure **120**. The inner support structure **120**, as described in greater detail below, may comprise an upper segment **121** and a lower curved segment **122**, and a plurality of electric and electronic components (such as circuit boards and other circuitry) may be coupled to the upper segment **121** and/or the lower curved segment **122** of the inner support structure. The upper segment **121** may extend around the hand clearance opening **117** while still being housed within the exterior housing **110**.

According to various embodiments, the heat plate **150** is coupled to the inner support structure **120**, for example, via the lower curved segment **122**. In various embodiments, a skirt **130** may be disposed generally between the inner support structure **120** and the heat plate **150**. Said differently, and as described in greater detail below, the inner support structure **120** may be directly mounted to the skirt **130** adjacent a first side **131** of the skirt **130** and the heat plate **150** may be directly mounted to the skirt **130** adjacent a second side **132** of the skirt **130** opposite the first side **131**.

In various embodiments, one or more insulation layers may be disposed between the various components forming the internal stack-up of the heat press **100**. For example, a first insulation layer **141** may be disposed between the inner support structure **120** (e.g., the lower curved segment **122** of the inner support structure **120**) and the skirt **130** (e.g., the first side **131** of the skirt **130**). In various embodiments, a second insulation layer **142** is disposed between the skirt **130** (e.g., the second side **132** of the skirt **130**) and the heat plate **150**. In various embodiments, the heat press **100** includes a third insulation layer **143** disposed between the lower curved segment **122** of the inner support structure **120** and the hand clearance opening **117**. One or more of these insulation layers **141**, **142**, **143** may be included in the heat press **100** in various combinations. For example, the heat press **100** may only include the first layer **141**, may only include the second insulation layer **142**, may only include

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the third insulation layer **143**, or may include various combinations of the insulation various layers. In various embodiments the heat press **100** includes all three insulation layers **141**, **142**, **143**.

With reference to FIG. 3, various components of the heat press **100** have been omitted from this exploded view to avoid obscuring the clarity of the depiction of the aforementioned structural and insulative layers. For example, the heat press **100** may include a plurality of fasteners for securing the inner support structure **120** to the skirt **130** and for securing the skirt **130** to the heat plate **150**. In various embodiments, various components forming the internal stack-up of layers of the heat press **100** may have lower surfaces that have curved surfaces or other geometries that generally match and/or conform to the curved nature of the heat plate **150**. For example, one or more (or all) of the following components may at least have a portion of at least a lower surface section that substantially matches the curvature of the curved engagement surface **152** of the heat plate **150**: the lower curved segment **122** of the inner support structure **120**, a lower surface of the first insulation layer **141**, the second side **132** of the skirt **130**, a lower surface of the second insulation layer **142**. Structural integrity and/or heat insulation of the heat press **100** may be improved by having various components of the internal components with conforming/similar geometries.

In various embodiments, force from a user grasping the handle portion **107** is transferred to the heat plate **150** (and thus to the workpiece **12**) via the skirt **130**. Said differently, the skirt **130** may be a structural intermediary between the heat plate **150** and one or both of the exterior housing **110** and the inner support structure **120**. For example, as mentioned above, fasteners, studs, bosses, or other attachment mechanisms for structurally coupling the heat plate **150** to the handle portion **107** may be directly affixed and/or engaged with the skirt **130**. In various embodiments, and with specific reference to the magnified view of FIG. 4, peripheral edges of various structural components are disposed in direct abutting engagement with each other, or are at least disposed in close proximity with each other (e.g., directly adjacent) in order to facilitate secure retention of the various interposed layers (e.g., first and second insulation layers **141**, **142**). For example, a lower peripheral edge **113** of the exterior housing **110** may be engaged (e.g., directly) with a corresponding peripheral shoulder of the skirt **130** (i.e., at junction **129**). This adjoining engagement between the skirt **130** and the exterior housing **110** may comprise an interference fit and/or may include other configurations for complementary engagement. This adjoining engagement at junction **129** may also provide various other benefits, such as facilitating retention of the internal components above the skirt **130**, facilitating force transfer from the handle portion **107** to the heat plate **150** via the skirt **130**, and/or providing parallel coupling structures for the heat press **100**. Said differently, the exterior housing **110** may be affixed to the inner support structure **120** via one or more fasteners, the inner support structure **120** may be coupled to the skirt **130** via one or more fasteners, and the skirt **130** may also be coupled to the exterior housing **110** via the adjoining engagement at junction **129**.

In various embodiments, and with continued reference to FIGS. 3 and 4, junction **129** may be the widest portion of the heat press **100**. Said differently, the peripheral perimeter/footprint of the heat press **100** may have its largest dimension at junction **129**. Accordingly, the lower peripheral edge **113** (FIG. 4) of the exterior housing **110** may have a diverging geometry, from the proximal end **101** to the distal

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end **102**, up until the junction **129**, at which location the exterior of the heat press **100** switches to have a converging geometry, from the proximal end **101** to the distal end **102**. In such a configuration, the skirt **130** may comprise the converging geometry, and thus an outward perimeter surface **133** of the skirt **130** may form a converging band of the exterior body of the heat press **100**. Said differently, although the skirt **130** may be primarily an internal structural component, the skirt **130** may include a section, such as the outward perimeter surface **133**, that forms an outer surface section of the heat press **100** that is exposed to ambient air and/or the surrounding environment. This converging geometry may also continue to the lateral edges **152L** of the heat plate **150**.

In various embodiments, the heat press **100** includes a plurality of circuitry components, such as one or more printed circuit boards and related electric and electronic components. In some configurations, the circuitry and/or printed circuit board(s) are separated from the heat plate **150** by one or more of the insulation layers **141**, **142**, **143**, thereby protecting electronic components situated on the printed circuit boards from heat during use of the heat press **100**. The one or more printed circuit boards and other electric and/or electronic components may be situated within the exterior housing **110** and may be coupled and/or mounted to the exterior housing **110** and/or the inner support structure **120**. In various instances, a first printed circuit board may include many of the power electronic components, such as, for example: power converters; amplifiers; rectifiers; and the like while a second printed circuit board may include electronic components configured to, for example, operate a controller in view of one or more user inputs resulting from actuating the one or more buttons **112** that may, in turn, change an on state or an off state of the one or more indicators **114**, which may be, for example, a temperature indicator. The printed circuit board(s) may also include electronic components including, but not limited to: electrical switches; light emitting diode (LED) lights; and the like.

As described below, the heat press **100** may include processors, memory, one or more buttons, switches, and/or user interface components for actuating and controlling the heat press **100**. However, in various embodiments the heat press **100** is configured to be controlled, at least partially (and potentially completely) via a remote computing device connected in control communication with the heat press **100** (via a wired or wireless connection).

In various embodiments, the structural components of the heat press **100** (e.g., the exterior housing **110**, the inner support structure **120**, and the skirt **130**) may be made from plastic materials, such as a polyphenylene sulfide (PPS) material. In other instances, the structural components of the heat press **100** may include one or more other durable, insulating materials, such as, for example, a polypropylene carbonate (PPC) and/or a glass fiber insulation material, or a combination thereof.

With continued reference to FIGS. 3 and 4, an upper portion of the heat plate **150** may be disposed adjacent and contained by the second insulation layer **142**, with an upper portion of the second insulation layer **142** being contained by the skirt **130**. In some configurations, the second insulation layer **142** includes a heat insulating material configured to mitigate heat transfer from the heat plate **150** toward the handle portion **107** of the heat press **100**. In various embodiments, the insulative layers of the heat press **100**, such as the first and second insulation layer **141**, **142**, **143** include fibrous insulative materials, including but not lim-

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ited to: nylon with glass fibers, a microporous fiber insulation material, an aerogel, or the like, or combinations thereof. At least one aspect of the separate insulation layers defined by, for example, the first insulation layer **141** and the second insulation layer **142** provide softer materials that may have more effective insulating properties than the other rigid/structural components described herein. In various embodiments, the heat press **100** includes an alternating layout of structural and insulative material layers. Said differently, softer insulation layers **141**, **142**, **143** can insulate the electronic components and the handle portion **107** from heat without needing to absorb any forces from the user that are translated/propagated from the handle portion **107** to the heat plate **150** and thus to the workpiece. In various embodiments, the third insulation layer **143** is a metallic component, and is specifically configured to reflect heat radiation away from the hand clearance opening **117**.

In various embodiments, the insulation layers maintain the exterior housing **110** and components therein at less than or equal to about 50° C. when a temperature of the heat plate **150** is equal to or greater than about 200° C. In various configurations, the insulation layers **141**, **142**, **143** maintain the exterior housing **110** and components therein equal to about 50° C. when a temperature of the heat plate **150** is equal to about 205° C.

In various embodiments, the heat plate **150** may include any desirable base material (e.g., a metallic material), and, optionally, a ceramic coating that may prevent material (e.g., one or a combination of the heat-activated design implement and the workpiece) from sticking to heat plate **150** during use. Additionally, in some embodiments, the heat plate **150** may further optionally include a clear protective coating that mitigates failure of and/or prevents the ceramic coating from structurally degrading and separating from the heat plate **150**.

In various embodiments, and with specific reference to FIG. 4, the heat plate **150** may include one or more heating coils **151** electrically coupled to, and/or communicatively coupled to a controller comprising temperature control electronics. As mentioned above and below, the controller may be a component of printed circuit boards of the heat press **100** and/or may be a component of a computing device that is coupled in control communication with the heat press **100**.

FIGS. 5-7 illustrate various details, components, and features of a heat press stand **200**, according to various embodiments. More specifically, FIG. 5 illustrates an exploded view of the various components of the heat press stand **200**, FIG. 6 illustrates a front cross-sectional view of the heat press stand **200**, showing a solid line depiction of the heat press **100** removed a distance from heat press stand **200** and also showing an opaque dashed line depiction of the heat press **100** in a docked position. FIG. 7 illustrates a side cross-sectional view of the heat press stand **200**. The heat press stand **200**, which also may be referred to as a docking station or a base, is generally configured to support the heat press **100** when not being actively used to perform a heat-activated process on a workpiece. Said differently, a user may use the heat press stand **200** to periodically set the heat press **100** down without turning the power off or without needing to wait for the heat plate **150** to cool. Accordingly, the heat press stand **200** may provide a barrier between the curved engagement surface **152** of the heat plate **150** and a support surface or working surface, such as a counter, a table, a desktop surface, or the like. Accordingly, the heat press stand **200** may comprise one or more insulating materials, such as, for example: a rubber material, a silicone material, a plastic material, etc., which can with-

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stand hot temperatures of the heat plate 150 while keeping the heat press 100 arranged at a distance away from the working surface that supports the heat press stand 200. In some configurations, the heat press stand 200 may include a polyphenylene sulfide (PPS) material, a silicone material, a plastic materials, a rubber material, or any combination thereof.

In some examples, the heat press stand 200 can withstand instances of the heat plate 150 being heated to a temperature as high as, for example, 180° C. or more while maintaining the temperature of the working surface at or below 90° C. In some configurations, the heat press stand 200 can withstand instances of the heat plate 150 being heated to a temperature as high as, for example, 200° C. or more while maintaining the temperature of the working surface at or below 70° C.

With continued reference to FIGS. 5, 6, and 7, the heat press stand 200 may include a curved floor 222 that is configured to be disposed below the heat plate 150 when the heat press 100 is stowed on the heat press stand 200. Accordingly, the curved floor 222 may comprise an upper convex surface 222U and a lower concave surface 222L. In various embodiments, at least a portion of the curved floor 222 has a uniform/constant thickness. For example, the portion of the curved floor 222 that underlies the curved heat plate 150 may have a substantially uniform/constant cross-sectional thickness, where ‘thickness’ is defined as the dimension between the upper convex surface and the opposing/lower concave surface of the curved floor 222. As used in this context, term “substantially uniform” refers to a thickness that changes less than 5% over the indicated portion of the curved floor 222.

In various embodiments, the curved floor 222 (e.g., the upper convex surface 222U) is curved about a single axis of curvature. That is, similar to the various embodiments mentioned above pertaining to the curvature of the heat plate 150 of the heat press 100, lines extending across and along the curved floor 222 from one lateral side to the other lateral side of the heat press stand 200 (e.g., from left to right in the depiction of FIG. 6) may be curved whereas lines extending across and along the curved floor 222 from the front side toward the back side of the heat press stand 200 (e.g., from left to right in the depiction of FIG. 7) may be substantially straight, having no curvature, according to various embodiments. In various embodiments, the center/axis of curvature of the curved floor 222 is below a lower most portion of the heat press stand 200 (i.e., lies within or below the support surface upon which the heat press stand 200 rests). The curved floor 222 may generally have curvature specifications that substantially match the curvature specifications of the heat plate 150 (i.e., the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150). Said differently, at least a portion of the curved floor 222 may have a radius of curvature that is the same as the radius of curvature 153 of the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150 of the heat press 100.

In various embodiments, the curved floor 222 of the heat press stand 200 defines one or more perforations 226 extending through the curved floor 222 (i.e., from the upper convex surface to the lower concave surface). The perforations 226 may promote ambient air flow through the heat press stand 200 such that ambient air may dissipate heat from the heat plate 150. In various embodiments, the curved floor 222 includes a plurality of louvres 227, and each louvre may extend from the lower concave surface 222L of the curved floor 222 and at least partially across a lower opening of a respective perforation of the plurality of perforations 226. For example, one, multiple, or all of the perforations 226

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that extend through the curved floor 222 may have a slat, flange, extension, tab, or other protrusion that extends from adjacent a lower opening of the perforations and partially covers the lower opening of the perforations, and this slat, flange, extension, or tab is referred to herein as a louvre 227. The one or more louvres 227 may reflect heat radiation, may direct the convective (passive) airflow, and/or may provide various other benefits, such as blocking direct line of sight to the components, features, and/or layers below the curved floor 222 (such as the heat shield 230, as discussed below).

In various embodiments, the heat press stand 200 includes one or more heat plate support protrusions 212 that are configured to directly abut/support the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150 when the heat press 100 is seated/stowed within/on the heat press stand 200 (i.e., when the heat press 100 is in the docked position). The plurality of heat plate support protrusions 212 may be disposed adjacent the upper convex surface of the curved floor 222 and may be configured to support the heat plate 150 away from the curved floor 222 at a distance D (FIG. 6). Although the illustrated embodiments of the heat press stand 200 includes four heat plate support protrusions 212 (e.g., see FIG. 1A), other implementations of the heat press stand may include more or less than four heat plate support protrusions 212 (e.g., three, five, six, seven, or 8+).

In various embodiments, the heat plate support protrusions 212 are formed from one or more heat insulating materials that can withstand high temperatures from the heat plate 150. In addition, the heat plate support protrusions 212 may include a smooth and/or flexible material that mitigates impairment of the structural integrity of the curved engagement surface 152 of the heat plate 150 when the heat plate 150 is placed thereon. In some examples, one or more heat plate support protrusions 212 may include a silicon material. In some configurations, the one or more heat plate support protrusions 212 are configured to extend at least partially over an adjacent section of the curved floor 222. In various embodiments, the heat plate support protrusions 212 may be disposed at a midpoint of respective edges of the perimeter/footprint of the curved floor 222. That is, curved floor 222 may generally have a perimeter/footprint having four sides (a front side, a back/rear side, and two lateral sides), and a single heat plate support protrusion 212 may be disposed at a midpoint on each of the four sides of the perimeter of the curved floor 222 (see, for example, FIG. 1A). By disposing the heat plate support protrusions 212 at the midpoint of the respective edges, heat dissipation from the heat plate 150 may be facilitated, as convective heat would not be trapped in the corners of the footprint of the curved floor (as may be the case if the support protrusions were placed in the respective corners of the footprint).

In various embodiments, the heat press stand 200 includes a main body 220, and the main body 220 may include the curved floor 222 as well as body walls 228 that extend generally upwards around the curved floor 222 (i.e., from the footprint/perimeter of the curved floor 222). These body walls 228 may define a nest region 229 (FIG. 5). The heat press stand 200 may also include an insert 210, and the insert 210 may be matingly-received within the nest region 229 defined by the body walls 228 of the main body 220. In various embodiments, the plurality of heat plate support protrusions 212 are features of the insert 210. That is, the plurality of heat plate support protrusions 212 may not be integrally formed with the curved floor 222, but instead may be features of a separate/distinct layer/component of the heat press stand 200. The insert 210 may be made from materials that are able to withstand direct contact with the heat plate

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150 (e.g., a silicone material), whereas the main body 220 may not necessarily be configured for intentional and/or prolonged direct contact with the heat plate 150. For example, the main body 220 may be made from a glass-filled nylon material, a PPS material, or the like.

In various embodiments, the insert 210 includes walls 218 extending upwards around the curved floor 222 of the main body 220. Accordingly, the walls 218 of the insert 210 may be at least partially contained within the nest region 229 defined by the body walls 228 of the main body 220. In various embodiments, outer surfaces of the walls 218 of the insert 210 may have first alignment features 211 (FIG. 5) that are configured to engage/couple with corresponding second alignment features 221 (FIG. 5) disposed on the inner surfaces of the body walls 228 of the main body 220. Said differently, corresponding sets of alignment/coupling features on facing surfaces of the insert 210 and the main body 220 may facilitate secure coupling of the insert 210 to the main body 220.

In various embodiments, one or more legs 240 may extend from a lower surface of the heat press stand 200 (e.g., from the main body 220). Functionally, the one or more legs 240 may separate the lower surface of the main body 220 from the underlying surface (e.g., the tabletop or desktop). The separation distance provided by the one or more legs 240 may promote ambient airflow through any perforations 226 in the curved floor 222. In some configurations, the one or more legs 240 are purposefully not axially aligned with the heat plate support protrusions 212 so that the heat plate support protrusions 212 are not disposed directly above the one or more legs 240. In such embodiments, heat that is transferred from the heat plate 150 into the heat plate support protrusions 212 does not transfer directly and axially through a respective leg of the plurality of legs 240 and into the supporting surface. Rather, in such a non-axially-aligned configuration, any heat transferred from the heat plate 150 into the heat plate support protrusions 212 is more likely to be radially transferred across and/or into the curved floor 222 before being axially exposed to the one or more legs 58, thus further dissipating heat before it can be thermally transferred toward the working surface via the one or more legs 240.

In addition, the various components of heat press stand 200 described herein, including, for example, the insert 210 and/or the main body 220 may be formed separately and joined together during manufacturing, or, alternatively, they may be integrally formed, such as by molding or by another process. For example, in some configurations, the heat plate support protrusions may be integrally formed with the curved floor and then joined with separate components such as, for example, peripheral body shell portions. Also, for example, the heat plate support protrusions and one or more legs may be formed separately from the rest of heat press stand 200 and subsequently joined together during manufacturing.

In various embodiments, the heat press stand 200 includes a heat shield 230 disposed below the curved floor 222. The heat shield 230 may be spaced away from the lower concave surface 222L of the curved floor 222, and thus an air gap may be defined between the lower concave surface 222L of the curved floor 222 and the heat shield 230. The heat shield 230, according to various embodiments, comprises a planar body disposed against a floor of the main body 220. In various embodiments, at least a portion of the floor of the main body 220 below the curved floor 222 comprises a shelf 235 for supporting the heat shield 230. The shelf 235 may be detachably coupled to the main body 220 of the heat press

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stand 200. The heat shield 230 may be adhesively attached to the shelf 235. The heat shield 230 may comprise a foil material configured to reflect heat radiation. For example, the heat shield 230 may comprise a metallic foil material, such as aluminum foil. In various embodiments, the heat shield 230 comprises an insulative layer/material configured to prevent or at least inhibit heat transfer to the support surface upon which the heat press stand 200 is positioned.

In various embodiments, the heat press stand 200 comprises spaces and/or air gaps defined between various sections of the heat press stand 200. For example, inwardly facing surfaces of the body walls 228 of the main body 220 and outwardly facing surfaces of the walls 218 of the insert 210 may collectively define one or more interwall cavities 223. The one or more interwall cavities 223 may insulate heat radiating radially outwardly from the heat plate 150. For example, the one or more interwall cavities 223 may be filled with a gas, such as, for example, air, or may comprise a vacuum for enhanced insulation capabilities. In various embodiments, the heat press stand 200 includes/defines a single interwall cavity that continuously extends around the periphery of the insert 210 (e.g., with alignment features 211, 221 variously dispersed throughout the interwall cavity 223). In other implementations, the heat press stand 200 defines a plurality of separate interwall cavities.

In various embodiments, the one or more interwall cavities 223 may facilitate the passive convective dissipation of heat away from the heat press stand 200. For example, one or more inlets 224 may be defined in the bottom/lower surface of the main body 220 through which ambient air may be drawn in response to heat transferring from the heat plate 150 to the insert 210 (and thus walls 218). Correspondingly, one or more outlets may be defined by at least one of the insert 210 and the main body 220 through which air in the interwall cavity can exit the one or more interwall cavities 223. For example, one or more channels or slits 225 may be defined between upper portions of the walls 218 of the insert 210 and respective upper portions of the body walls 228 of the main body 220, and the one or more channels or slits 225 may be configured to allow air within the one or more interwall cavities 223 to exit the heat press stand 200. Thus, a passive, cooling, convective air circulation may be facilitated via the one or more inlets 224, the one or more interwall cavities 223, and the one or more slits 225.

In various embodiments, channel(s) or slit(s) 225 may be configured to direct the air in the one or more interwall cavities 223 outward and away from the heat press 100 in the docking position relative to the heat press stand 200. Said differently, the angle of the walls 218 and the body walls 228 (or at least the respective upper portions thereof that directly form/define the slit(s) 225) may be outwardly angled to direct the convective air away from the heat press 100 docked in the heat press stand 200. For example, in various embodiments the body walls 228 of the main body 220 are angled outward, relative to a vertical direction. The walls 218 of the insert 210 may also be angled outward, relative to a vertical direction. In various embodiments, the general incline angle of the walls 218 of the insert 210, relative to vertical, is greater than the general incline angle of the body walls 228 of the main body 220. In such configurations, the respective upper portions of the walls 218 and the body walls 228 may form a pinch point at the slit(s) 225 that may generally produce a nozzle/venturi effect. Accordingly, the slit(s) 225 may be configured to produce a passive jet of air exiting the heat press stand 200.

In various embodiments, and with reference to FIGS. 8, 9A, 9B, and 9C, details and descriptions for a hat form 300

are provided. The hat form **300**, as mentioned above, is configured to generally provide structure against which a workpiece **12** can be supported during a heat-activated design transfer process, according to various embodiments. For example, the hat form **300** may be generally sized and shaped such that a user may temporarily position a hat or a visor around the hat form **300**, and the hat form **300** may provide the backing support necessary for the user to manually press the heat press **100** against an outer surface of the hat or visor (compressing the hat or visor between the heat press **100** and the hat form **300**) in order to accomplish a heat-activated design transfer from a heat-activated design implement **14** to the hat or visor. As mentioned above, while numerous details are included herein pertaining to a form specifically designed for hat-type workpieces, the scope of the present disclosure is not necessarily limited to hats, and thus details and embodiments of the hat form **300** may be utilized for shoe forms, ball forms, or other non-planar forms for processing non-planar workpieces. Said differently, the following details described in relation to the hat form **300** may be applied to other forms, and thus other types of forms fall within the scope of the present disclosure.

Generally, the hat form **300**, which may be a standalone component and/or which may be a component of a hat press system, comprises a cover **310** that at least partially defines an internal volume **314** of the hat form **300**, according to various embodiments. The hat form **300** may also include a fill material **320** disposed within and at least partially occupying the internal volume **314**. The hat form **300** may generally have a spherical shape or an elongated spherical shape. Said differently, the radially outward surface(s) of the hat form **300** are convex, according to various embodiments. The hat form **300** may have an oblong spherical shape (not a symmetrical spherical shape) in order to provide different contours of curvature, thereby enabling the hat form **300** to be used with different sizes and shapes of workpieces. For example, and with reference to FIG. 9C, the hat form may have a length **300L** (larger dimension) by width (smaller dimension) **300W** that is about 7.5 inches (190 millimeters) by 6.5 inches (165 inches). As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 2.0 inches. The width **300W** may be between about 75% and about 95% of the length **300L**. In various embodiments, the width **300W** of the hat form **300** is between about 80% and about 90% of the length **300L**. In various embodiments, the width **300W** is about 86% of the length **300L**. As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 2%. In various embodiments, height **300H** (FIG. 9A) of the hat form **300** is less than each of the width **300W** and the length **300L**. For example, the height **300H** of the hat form **300** may be about 5.1 inches (130 millimeters). As used in this context only, the term “about” means plus or minus 1.0 inch.

The cover **310** may be a fabric or other textile material, and the fill material **320** may be a granular material, and thus the hat form **300** may be configured to be resiliently flexible and/or to be resiliently moldable. Said differently, the hat form **300** may have sufficient structure to provide backing support during a heat press operation but may also have a degree of resilient pliability to allow the user to slightly deform and/or slightly alter the shape of the hat form **300** in order to conform the outer surface of the hat form **300** to work with multiple different types and shapes of headwear.

In various embodiments, the fill material **320** comprises a granular material. That is, the fill material may be a conglomeration of discrete, solid, macroscopic particles. For example, the fill material **320** may include synthetic and/or organic particles. For example, the fill material **320** may

include a conglomeration of foam fragments, felt fragments, padding, beads (e.g., silica beads, polystyrene beads), sand, wood-shavings, buckwheat holes, silica powder, and/or organic matter shells (e.g., shells from at least one of nuts, drupes, and/or legumes), among other materials. In various embodiments, the fill material **320** may be a conglomeration of walnut shells, which provide a sufficient degree of structure to enable an effective heat-activated design transfer while also providing sufficient conformability/pliability and heat insulation.

In various embodiments, the cover **310** comprises a heat resistant fabric material. For example, the cover **310** may be a cotton material. In various embodiments, the cover **310** may include infused layers of metal material and/or a metallic coating (e.g., aluminum coating), and this metal material may facilitate heat transfer across the surface of the cover **310**, thereby improving heat distribution and enabling even heating across the selected area of the workpiece. The metallic material (e.g., the metallic coating) may also facilitate heat reflectance, thereby helping heat that has passed through the heat-activated design implement and through the workpiece to be reflected back toward the heat press. In various embodiments, the cover **310** may be configured to wick moisture away from the workpiece, and thus a fabric or textile material may be well-suited for the material of the cover **310**, as opposed to silicone or other materials for the cover. In various embodiments, the cover **310** may include a multi-layered structure, and thus the cover **310** may include a liner layer **319** disposed inward of the outer cover material. The liner layer **319** may facilitate retention of the fill material (e.g., the granular fill material) and/or the liner layer **319** may be specifically configured to wick away moisture from the outer cover material. For example, the liner layer **319** may be a felt material. In various embodiments, the cover **310** includes a plurality of sections of fabric material that are sewn together.

In various embodiments, the hat form **300** includes a base **340**. The base **340** may be made of a material that is different than the cover **310** and may be specifically configured to provide a lower support for the hat form **300**. For example, the base **340** may be made from a polyester fabric other similar material and may be configured to be directly handled by a user, whereas the cover **310** may be configured as the working surface of the hat form **310**. Stated differently, the cover **310** may be optimized for directly engaging and contacting the workpiece and for handling the heat and/or moisture that are generated during use, while the base **340** may be configured and optimized for user handling comfort. For example, the base **340** may comprise a handle **344** that a user may grasp during a heat-activated design transfer process, thus enabling the hat form **300** to be easily manipulated independent and separate from the heat press **100** (thus allowing both the heat press **100** and the workpiece/hat form **300** to be independently, separately, and/or simultaneously moved during use).

The base **340** may also include an outer periphery/perimeter **342**, and the cover **310** may be coupled to the base **340** at/along the perimeter **342**. Thus, the cover **310** and the base **340** may collectively define the internal volume **314** of the hat form **300**. Said differently, the fill material **320** may be held within the internal volume **314** between the cover **310** and the base **340**. As shown in the figures, the base **340** may comprise a comparatively small portion of the outer surface area of the hat form **300**. That is, the base **340** may comprise less than 50% of the outer surface area of the hat form **300**. In various embodiments, the base **340** comprises less than 30% of the outer surface area of the hat form **300**.

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Regarding the radially outward surface of the hat form **300**, the radially outward surface of the base **340** may be less curved than the radially outward surface of the cover **310**. Said differently, the radially outward surface of the base **340** may only be slightly convex or may be nearly planar, whereas the radially outward surface of the cover **310** has spherical curvature. The radially inward surface of the base **340** (i.e., the surface facing the fill material **320**) may have a liner configured to facilitate retention of the fill material within the internal volume **314**.

In various embodiments, the hat form **300** includes a support body **330** extending from the base **340** (e.g., from the radially inward surface of the base **340**) into the internal volume **314** of the hat form **300**. The support body **330** may provide an added degree of structure to the hat form **300**. The support body **330** may have a higher density than the fill material **320** and may thus disproportionately add weight to the lower portion of the hat form **300** adjacent the base **340**, thereby facilitating proper orientation/use of the hat form **300**. For example, while the hat form **300** may be manipulated and moved during use of the heat press **100** against the hat form **300** (via the workpiece), the hat form **300** may also rest on a table or other support surface during use, and the added weight and/or structure of the support body **330** may facilitate stability of the hat form **300** during use. In various embodiments, the support body **330** may comprise a felt material. In various embodiments, a liner layer **329** may be disposed around the support body **330** to separate the support body **330** from the fill material **320**. The liner layer **329**, according to various embodiments, may be a heat resistant material (similar to the material of the cover **310**), and may be configured to prevent excess heat from reaching the support body **330**.

In various embodiments, the support body **330** has a frustoconical shape. For example, a base of the conical shape may be coupled to the base **340** of the hat form **300** while the tapering/converging portion of the conical shape may extend into the internal volume **314** of the hat form **300**. In various embodiments, the base of the conical shape of the support body **330** has a perimeter that substantially matches the perimeter of the base **340** of the hat form **300**. In various embodiments, the support body **330** occupies less volume within the hat form **300** than the fill material **320**. For example, the fill material **320** may occupy more than 50% of the internal volume and the support body **330** may occupy less than 50% of the internal volume of the hat form **300**. In various embodiments, a volume ratio of the fill material **320** to the support body **330** in the internal volume **314** is between 1:1 and 4:1. In various embodiments, the volume ratio of the fill material **320** to the support body **330** is between 1.5:1 and 3:1.

In various embodiments, and with reference to FIGS. **10A**, **10B**, **10C**, and **10D**, a method of using a heat press system is provided. As mentioned above, a heat press system may include combinations of a heat press, a heat press stand, and a form (e.g., a hat form). While specific examples of the various method steps are shown in FIGS. **10A**, **10B**, **10C**, and **10D** with reference to the embodiments depicted in earlier figures, it is expected that the disclosed method steps may be achieved using components that are similar to the aforementioned components but are not the same. That is, for example, by using reference numbers **100** and **300** for a heat press and a hat form, the aforementioned embodiments of those structures are utilized as examples of what may be employed in the method, but the method is NOT limited for use with only those structures.

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In various embodiments, a method of using a heat press system includes positioning a workpiece **12** around a form, such as hat form **300**. If the workpiece **12** is a hat, the step of positioning the workpiece **12** around the form may include pulling back and/or removing any protective inserts or other layers that may be disposed within the head cavity of the hat. By so doing, the hat form may be configured to be directly opposite the layer of material onto which a heat-activated design implement **14** is to be transferred.

The method of using a heat press system may further include grasping handle **344** or other feature of a hat form **300** to enable the user to adjust the position of the workpiece **12** relative to the hat form **300**. The method may also include positioning a heat-activated design implement **14** to a surface of the workpiece **12** (e.g., a convex surface of the workpiece). This step may include utilizing a temporary adhesive, such as tape **16** or other temporary attachment means, to secure the heat-activated design implement **14** to the surface of the workpiece **12**. The method may include manipulating a heat press **100** to position a curved engagement surface **152** of a heat plate **150** of the heat press **100** adjacent the heat-activated design implement **14** and adjacent the workpiece **12**. The method may then include pressing the curved engagement surface **152** into contact/engagement with the heat-activated design implement **14** in order to apply a compressive force to the heat-activated design implement **14** and the section of the workpiece **12** that are disposed between the curved engagement surface **152** of the heat plate **150** and the hat form **300**. In various embodiments, a protective layer may optionally be disposed between the heat plate **150** and the heat-activated design implement **14** and/or the workpiece **12** to prevent the heat plate from making direct contact with said components. The method may include moving the heat press back and forth in a side to side-type movement, as shown in FIG. **10D**.

In various embodiments, before performing pressing the heat press **100** toward the workpiece **12**, the method may include activating (i.e., turning on) the heating coils in the heat plate **150** and/or allowing the heat plate **150** to reach a desired temperature. The heat press **100** may include one or more buttons for actuating/controlling the heat press **100**, or the heat press **100** may be coupled in control communication with a controller or computing device that remotely (e.g., via wired or wireless connection) controls the heat press **100**.

FIG. **11** is schematic view of an example computing device **3000** that may be used to implement the systems and methods described in this document. The computing device **3000** is intended to represent various forms of digital computers, such as laptops, desktops, smartphones, workstations, personal digital assistants, servers, blade servers, mainframes, and/or other appropriate computers. The components of the computing device **3000**, such as **3010**, **3020**, **3030**, **3040**, **3050**, and **3060**, their connections and relationships, and their functions, are meant to be exemplary only, and are not meant to limit implementations of the inventions described and/or claimed in this document. Further, the various features and functionality of the computing device **3000** may be implemented in one or more standalone computer and/or one or more controllers, may be integrated within the disclosed heat press **100** itself, and/or may be implemented with various other computing devices, as described below.

The computing device **3000** may include a processor **3010**, memory **3020**, a storage device **3030**, a high-speed interface/controller **3040** connecting to the memory **3020** and high-speed expansion ports **3050**, and a low-speed interface/controller **3060** connecting to a low speed bus

3070 and a storage device **3030**, according to various embodiments. Each of the components **3010**, **3020**, **3030**, **3040**, **3050**, and **3060**, may be interconnected using various busses, and may be mounted on a common motherboard or in other manners as appropriate.

The processor **3010** can process instructions for execution within the computing device **3000**, including instructions stored in the memory **3020** or on the storage device **3030**. The instructions may include operations to display graphical information for a graphical user interface (GUI) on an external input/output device, such as display **3080** coupled to high-speed interface **3040**. In various implementations, multiple processors and/or multiple buses may be used, as appropriate, along with multiple memories and types of memory. Also, multiple computing devices **3000** may be connected (e.g., as a server bank, a group of blade servers, or a multi-processor system), with each device providing portions of the operation/functionality.

The memory **3020** stores information non-transitorily within the computing device **3000**. The memory **3020** may comprise a computer-readable medium, a volatile memory unit(s), and/or non-volatile memory unit(s). The non-transitory memory **3020** may be physical devices used to store programs (e.g., sequences of instructions) or data (e.g., program state information) on a temporary or permanent basis for use by the computing device **3000**. Examples of non-volatile memory include, but are not limited to, flash memory and read-only memory (ROM)/programmable read-only memory (PROM)/erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM)/electronically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM) (e.g., typically used for firmware, such as boot programs). Examples of volatile memory include, but are not limited to, random access memory (RAM), dynamic random-access memory (DRAM), static random access memory (SRAM), phase change memory (PCM) as well as disks or tapes.

The storage device **3030** may be capable of providing mass storage for the computing device **3000**. In some implementations, the storage device **3030** is a computer-readable medium. In various implementations, the storage device **3030** may be a floppy disk device, a hard disk device, an optical disk device, a tape device, a flash memory or other similar solid state memory device, and/or an array of devices, including devices in a storage area network or other configurations. In various implementations, a computer program product is tangibly embodied in an information carrier. The computer program product may contain instructions that, when executed, perform one or more methods, such as those described herein. The information carrier may be a computer- or machine-readable medium, such as the memory **3020**, the storage device **3030**, and/or memory on processor **3010**.

The high-speed controller **3040** may manage bandwidth-intensive operations for the computing device **3000**, while the low-speed controller **3060** may manage lower bandwidth-intensive operations. Such allocation of duties is exemplary only. In some implementations, the high-speed controller **3040** is coupled to the memory **3020**, the display **3080** (e.g., through a graphics processor or accelerator), and to the high-speed expansion ports **3050**, which may accept various expansion cards (not shown). In some implementations, the low-speed controller **3060** is coupled to the storage device **3030** and a low-speed expansion port **3090**. The low-speed expansion port **3090**, which may include various communication ports (e.g., USB, Bluetooth, Ethernet, wireless Ethernet), may be coupled to one or more input/output

devices, such as a keyboard, a pointing device, a scanner, and/or a networking device such as a switch or router, e.g., through a network adapter.

The computing device **3000** may be implemented in various forms. For example, the computing device **3000** may be implemented in one or a combination of the heat press **100**, a laptop computer **3000a**, a mobile device **3000b**, a tablet device **3000c**, and/or the following components. In various implementations of the systems, operations, functionality, and techniques described herein can be realized in digital electronic and/or optical circuitry, integrated circuitry, FPGA (field programmable gate array), specially designed ASICs (application specific integrated circuits), programmable logic device, discrete gate or transistor logic, discrete hardware components, computer hardware, firmware, software, and/or combinations thereof.

The processes, functions, operations, and/or logic flows described in this specification can be performed by one or more programmable processors, also referred to as data processing hardware, executing one or more computer programs to perform functions by operating on input data and generating output. The processor and the memory can be supplemented by, or incorporated in, special purpose logic circuitry. Processors suitable for the execution of a computer program include, by way of example, both general and special purpose microprocessors, and any one or more processors of any kind of digital computer. Generally, a processor will receive instructions and data from a read only memory or a random-access memory or both. The essential elements of a computer are a processor for performing instructions and one or more memory devices for storing instructions and data.

Generally, a computer will also include, or be operatively coupled to receive data from or transfer data to, or both, one or more mass storage devices for storing data, e.g., magnetic, magneto optical disks, or optical disks. However, a computer need not have such devices. Computer readable media suitable for storing computer program instructions and data include all forms of non-volatile memory, media and memory devices, including by way of example semiconductor memory devices, e.g., EPROM, EEPROM, and flash memory devices; magnetic disks, e.g., internal hard disks or removable disks; magneto optical disks; and CD ROM and DVD-ROM disks.

These computer programs (also known as programs, software, software applications, and/or code) include machine instructions for a processor and can be implemented in a high-level procedural and/or object-oriented programming language, and/or in assembly/machine language. As used herein, the terms “machine-readable medium” and “computer-readable medium” refer to any computer program product, non-transitory computer readable medium, apparatus and/or device (e.g., magnetic discs, optical disks, memory, Programmable Logic Devices (PLDs)) used to provide machine instructions and/or data to a programmable processor, including a machine-readable medium that receives machine instructions as a machine-readable signal. The term “machine-readable signal” refers to any signal used to provide machine instructions and/or data to a programmable processor.

The term “non-transitory” is to be understood to remove only propagating transitory signals per se from the claim scope and does not relinquish rights to all standard computer-readable media that are not only propagating transitory signals per se. Stated another way, the meaning of the term “non-transitory computer-readable medium” and “non-transitory computer-readable storage medium” should be con-

strued to exclude only those types of transitory computer-readable media which were found in *In Re Nuijten* to fall outside the scope of patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

A software application (i.e., a software resource) may refer to computer software that causes a computing device to perform a task. In some examples, a software application may be referred to as an “application,” an “app,” or a “program.” Example applications include, but are not limited to, system diagnostic applications, system management applications, system maintenance applications, word processing applications, spreadsheet applications, messaging applications, media streaming applications, social networking applications, and gaming applications.

To provide for interaction with a user, one or more aspects of the disclosure can be implemented on a computer having a display device, e.g., a CRT (cathode ray tube), LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor, or touch screen (e.g., a display of a user device) for displaying information to the user and optionally a keyboard and a pointing device, e.g., a mouse or a trackball, by which the user can provide input to the computer. Other kinds of devices can be used to provide interaction with a user as well; for example, feedback provided to the user can be any form of sensory feedback, e.g., visual feedback, auditory feedback, or tactile feedback; and input from the user can be received in any form, including acoustic, speech, or tactile input. In addition, a computer can interact with a user by sending documents to and receiving documents from a device that is used by the user; for example, by sending web pages to a web browser on a user’s client device in response to requests received from the web browser.

Benefits, other advantages, and solutions to problems have been described herein with regard to specific embodiments. However, the benefits, advantages, solutions to problems, and any elements that may cause any benefit, advantage, or solution to occur or become more pronounced are not to be construed as critical, required, or essential features or elements of the disclosure.

Reference throughout this specification to features, advantages, or similar language does not imply that all the features and advantages that may be realized with the present disclosure should be or are in any single embodiment of the invention. Rather, language referring to the features and advantages is understood to mean that a specific feature, advantage, or characteristic described in connection with an embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the subject matter disclosed herein. Thus, discussion of the features and advantages, and similar language, throughout this specification may, but do not necessarily, refer to the same embodiment.

Furthermore, the described features, advantages, and characteristics of the disclosure may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments. One skilled in the relevant art will recognize that the subject matter of the present application may be practiced without one or more of the specific features or advantages of a particular embodiment. In other instances, additional features and advantages may be recognized in certain embodiments that may not be present in all embodiments of the disclosure. Further, in some instances, well-known structures, materials, or operations are not shown or described in detail to avoid obscuring aspects of the subject matter of the present disclosure. No claim element is intended to invoke 35 U.S.C. 112(f) unless the element is expressly recited using the phrase “means for.”

As used herein, the terms “including,” “comprising,” “having,” and variations thereof mean “including but not limited to” unless expressly specified otherwise. Accordingly, the terms “including,” “comprising,” “having,” and variations thereof are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include only those elements but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus. An enumerated listing of items does not imply that any or all of the items are mutually exclusive and/or mutually inclusive, unless expressly specified otherwise.

Further, in the detailed description herein, references to “one embodiment,” “an embodiment,” “some embodiments,” “various embodiments,” “one example,” “an example,” “some examples,” “various examples,” “one implementation,” “an implementation,” “some implementations,” “various implementations,” “one aspect,” “an aspect,” “some aspects,” “various aspects,” etc., indicate that the embodiment, example, implementation, and/or aspect described may include a particular feature, structure, or characteristic, but every embodiment, example, implementation, and/or aspect may not necessarily include the particular feature, structure, or characteristic. Moreover, such phrases are not necessarily referring to the same embodiment, example, implementation, or aspect. Thus, when a particular feature, structure, or characteristic is described in connection with an embodiment, example, implementation, and/or aspect, it is submitted that it is within the knowledge of one skilled in the art to affect such feature, structure, or characteristic in connection with other embodiments, examples, implementations, and/or aspects, whether or not explicitly described. Absent an express correlation to indicate otherwise, features, structure, components, characteristics, and/or functionality may be associated with one or more embodiments, examples, implementations, and/or aspects of the present disclosure. After reading the description, it will be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art how to implement the disclosure in alternative configurations.

The scope of the disclosure is to be limited by nothing other than the appended claims, in which reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean “one and only one” unless explicitly so stated, but rather “one or more.” It is to be understood that unless specifically stated otherwise, references to “a,” “an,” and/or “the” may include one or more than one and that reference to an item in the singular may also include the item in the plural. Further, the term “plurality” can be defined as “at least two.” As used herein, the phrase “at least one of,” when used with a list of items, means different combinations of one or more of the listed items may be used and only one of the items in the list may be needed. The item may be a particular object, thing, or category. Moreover, where a phrase similar to “at least one of A, B, and C” is used in the claims, it is intended that the phrase be interpreted to mean that A alone may be present in an embodiment, B alone may be present in an embodiment, C alone may be present in an embodiment, or that any combination of the elements A, B and C may be present in a single embodiment; for example, A and B, A and C, B and C, or A, B, and C. In some cases, “at least one of item A, item B, and item C” may mean, for example, without limitation, two of item A, one of item B, and ten of item C; four of item B and seven of item C; or some other suitable combination.

Unless otherwise indicated, the terms “first,” “second,” etc. are used herein merely as labels, and are not intended to

impose ordinal, positional, or hierarchical requirements on the items to which these terms refer. Moreover, reference to, e.g., a “second” item does not require or preclude the existence of, e.g., a “first” or lower-numbered item, and/or, e.g., a “third” or higher-numbered item.

All ranges and ratio limits disclosed herein may be combined. Numbers, percentages, ratios, or other values stated herein are intended to include that value, and also other values that are “about” or “approximately” the stated value, as would be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art encompassed by embodiments of the present disclosure, unless otherwise defined herein. A stated value should therefore be interpreted broadly enough to encompass values that are at least close enough to the stated value to perform a desired function or achieve a desired result. The stated values include at least the variation to be expected in a suitable manufacturing or production process, and may include values that are within 5%, within 1%, within 0.1%, or within 0.01% of a stated value.

Different cross-hatching may be used throughout the figures to denote different parts but not necessarily to denote the same or different materials. Surface shading lines may be used throughout the figures to denote different parts or areas but not necessarily to denote the same or different materials. In some cases, reference coordinates may be specific to each figure. Furthermore, the connecting lines shown in the various figures contained herein are intended to represent exemplary functional relationships and/or physical couplings between the various elements. It should be noted that many alternative or additional functional relationships or physical connections may be present in a practical system.

Any reference to attached, fixed, connected or the like may include permanent, removable, temporary, partial, full and/or any other possible attachment option. Additionally, any reference to without contact (or similar phrases) may also include reduced contact or minimal contact. In the above description, certain terms may be used such as “up,” “down,” “upper,” “lower,” “horizontal,” “vertical,” “left,” “right,” and the like. These terms are used, where applicable, to provide some clarity of description when dealing with relative relationships. But, these terms are not intended to imply absolute relationships, positions, and/or orientations. For example, with respect to an object, an “upper” surface can become a “lower” surface simply by turning the object over. Nevertheless, it is still the same object.

Additionally, instances in this specification where one element is “coupled” to another element can include direct and indirect coupling. Direct coupling can be defined as one element coupled to and in some contact with another element. Indirect coupling can be defined as coupling between two elements not in direct contact with each other, but having one or more additional elements between the coupled elements. Further, as used herein, securing one element to another element can include direct securing and indirect securing. Additionally, as used herein, “adjacent” does not necessarily denote contact. For example, one element can be adjacent another element without being in contact with that element.

The schematic flow chart diagrams included herein are generally set forth as logical flow chart diagrams. As such, the depicted order and labeled steps are indicative of one or more embodiments of the presented method. The steps recited in any of the method or process descriptions may be executed in any order and are not necessarily limited to the order presented. Furthermore, any reference to singular includes plural embodiments, and any reference to more than one component or step may include a singular embodi-

ment or step. Elements and steps in the figures are illustrated for simplicity and clarity and have not necessarily been rendered according to any particular sequence. Other steps and methods may be conceived that are equivalent in function, logic, or effect to one or more steps, or portions thereof, of the illustrated method.

Additionally, the format and symbols employed are provided to explain the logical steps of the method and are understood not to limit the scope of the method. Although various arrow types and line types may be employed in the flow chart diagrams, they are understood not to limit the scope of the corresponding method. Indeed, some arrows or other connectors may be used to indicate only the logical flow of the method. For instance, an arrow may indicate a waiting or monitoring period of unspecified duration between enumerated steps of the depicted method. Additionally, the order in which a particular method occurs may or may not strictly adhere to the order of the corresponding steps shown. Furthermore, no element, component, or method step in the present disclosure is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether the element, component, or method step is explicitly recited in the claims.

The subject matter of the present disclosure may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the disclosure is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed is:

1. A heat press comprising:

a handle portion configured to be grasped by a user;
a heat plate coupled to the handle portion, wherein the heat plate comprises a curved engagement surface and wherein the handle portion is fixed relative to the heat plate; and

a skirt generally disposed between the handle portion and the heat plate;

wherein the heat press has a portable, integrated, handheld form-factor comprising a proximal end and a distal end opposite the proximal end, wherein the handle portion is situated at and at least partially defines the proximal end and the heat plate is situated at and at least partially defines the distal end;

wherein an exterior housing forms an outer surface of the handle portion, wherein the outer surface of the handle portion extends continuously to a lower peripheral edge of the exterior housing, wherein the lower peripheral edge of the exterior housing is adjacent an outward perimeter surface of the skirt.

2. The heat press of claim 1, wherein the curved engagement surface is concave.

3. The heat press of claim 2, wherein the curved engagement surface is curved about a single axis of curvature.

4. The heat press of claim 1, wherein:

the curved engagement surface comprises an apex;
the curved engagement surface comprises a radius of curvature; and

a maximum distance between the apex and an outward surface of the handle portion opposite the heat plate is equal to or less than the radius of curvature.

5. The heat press of claim 1, wherein a junction is defined where the lower peripheral edge of the exterior housing interfaces with the outward perimeter surface of the skirt, wherein, moving from the proximal end to the distal end, the

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heat press transitions from a diverging geometry to a converging geometry at the junction.

6. The heat press of claim 5, wherein the outward perimeter surface of the skirt is a converging band that forms a section of an exterior surface of the heat press.

7. The heat press of claim 1, further comprising:

a first insulation layer disposed between the handle portion and the skirt; and

a second insulation layer disposed between the skirt and the heat plate.

8. The heat press of claim 7, wherein the first insulation layer and the second insulation layer are internal insulation layers that are generally not visible to the user during use of the heat press.

9. The heat press of claim 1, further comprising an inner support structure, wherein the inner support structure comprises a lower curved surface that substantially matches the curvature of the curved engagement surface of the heat plate.

10. A heat press stand comprising:

a curved floor, wherein the curved floor comprises an upper convex surface and the curved floor defines a plurality of perforations extending at least partially through the curved floor; and

one or more heat plate support protrusions adjacent the upper convex surface of the curved floor, wherein the one or more heat plate support protrusions is configured

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to contact a curved engagement surface of a heat plate of a heat press to support the heat press in a docked position relative to the heat press stand.

11. The heat press stand of claim 10, wherein the one or more heat plate support protrusions is positioned around the periphery of the upper convex surface of the curved floor.

12. The heat press stand of claim 10, wherein the one or more heat plate support protrusions is a feature of an insert that extends around the periphery of the upper convex surface of the curved floor.

13. The heat press stand of claim 10, further comprising an insert disposed adjacent the curved floor, wherein the insert forms a wall that extends upwards from the periphery of the curved floor.

14. A heat press stand comprising:

a curved floor, wherein the curved floor comprises an upper convex surface and the curved floor defines a plurality of perforations extending at least partially through the curved floor; and

an insert disposed adjacent the upper convex surface of the curved floor, wherein the insert forms a wall that extends upwards from the periphery of the curved floor, wherein the insert is configured to facilitate secure retention and support of a heat press having a heat plate with a curved engagement surface.

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