

## CHAIR WITH COUPLING COMPANION STOOL BASE

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority of United States Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/853,669, filed October 23, 2006.

### 5 STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not applicable.

### REFERENCE TO MICROFICHE APPENDIX

Not applicable.

## 10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### Field of the Invention

The invention relates to seating units and more specifically, to multi-functional or reconfigurable chairs and the like. Known multi-functional or multi-tasking seating tends toward  
15 two general groups, namely, relatively complicated arrangements and relatively less complicated arrangements.

The more complicated designs typically attempt to address many common functional needs; all things to all users. Therefore, they tend to sacrifice a characteristic of being “user friendly” and require notable user involvement. The user may be required to accommodate a  
20 variety of components, which may be bulky. The multi-functional seating may also require an uncommon level of mechanical aptitude to adapt the seating between functional configurations.

Alternatively, the less complicated designs tend to be targeted to fairly narrowly defined functions. Thus, they are novelty or specialty seating units that are undesirable to

any user who does not have a need for the particular function to which the seating was designed.

Thus, a need for easily used and versatile seating that fills a reasonable combination of common lifestyle uses may be readily understood.

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, a chair with a coupling companion stool base of the invention is directed to the contemporary lifestyle needs of active users, including a range of functions from task seating at a work surface to casual relaxation. While suitable in any environment, a multi-tasking seating unit of the invention is particularly appreciated in smaller room settings, where space may be at a premium, where dedicated use furnishing may be considered undesirable, or where flexibility is appreciated.

The chair portion has a frame that may be supported above a generally horizontal surface by the base, which base releasably couples with the frame. More specifically, the frame has a lower portion that may support a sitting portion, which sitting portion is adapted to support a user who is seated upon the chair, and has an upper portion that may support a back rest, which back rest is adapted to support at least a portion of a back of the user. The frame lower portion extends from the upper portion and may further include a first portion that is near the frame upper portion, a second portion that is spaced away from the first portion, a claw that extends generally downward from the second portion, a latch that extends generally downward from the first portion, and at least two frame legs that extend generally downward from the frame lower portion. The frame legs are adapted to support the frame upon a generally horizontal supporting surface. In other aspects of the invention, the latch is connected with the frame first portion and moves between closed and opened positions.

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The base has a saddle and extends generally upward from the supporting surface to the saddle. The saddle may be configured with opposite back and front edges. The saddle front edge may be configured to cooperate with the frame lower portion claw, so that the front edge may be releasably captured in the claw, while the saddle back edge may be configured to cooperate with the frame lower portion latch whereby the back edge may be releasably captured by the latch. When the frame is decoupled from the base, the frame forming the chair portion is adapted for use as casual floor rocker seating, and the base is adapted to provide a companion stool upon which a user may sit or, alternatively, a side table which may be positioned adjacent to the chair portion.

The saddle can further include a top surface that faces away from the supporting surface, as it defines at least one of a work surface, a writing surface and a sitting surface. The frame can also include a receptacle defined between the claw and the latch. The saddle of the base includes a perimeter edge incorporating the back and front edges, and circumscribing the top surface. The edge defines the top surface with a rotationally asymmetric geometry. The frame lower portion receptacle and the saddle perimeter edge correspond with one another so that the base couples with the frame only in one specific rotational orientation.

The chair can further include a bias member, which biases the latch to the closed position. The frame can include opposite left and right sides, with a first one of the two frame legs extending generally arcuately downward from the frame lower portion left side and second portion, and to the frame lower portion left side and first portion. A second one of the two frame legs extends generally arcuately downward from the frame lower portion right side and second portion, and to the frame lower portion right side and first portion. The frame legs define rockers. Further, the rockers can define protective rails about the latch. In addition, the latch can be located between the two frame legs, so that the legs define protective rails about the latch.

With the frame having opposite left and right sides, the claw can include a claw notch, a first tooth extending toward the left side from the notch, and a second tooth extending toward the right side from the notch. The saddle front edge can include a pair of cooperating claw notches. With the asymmetric configuration, the first tooth and the second tooth can be engaged with the saddle only through an engagement of the first tooth with a first one of the cooperating claw notches, and the second tooth with a second one of the cooperating claw notches. Further, the claw notch can be centered along the claw. With the frame decoupled from the base, the saddle top surface can be adapted to be oriented in front of the frame, with a first base leg of the plurality of base legs initially positionable under the claw, so that with the claw straddling the first base leg, the first base leg is adapted to nest into the claw notch.

The base can further include a pedestal extending generally upwardly from the supporting surface to the saddle. The pedestal can include a connector that operably connects the saddle with the pedestal, with the connector including at least one of a tilt mechanism, whereby the saddle tilts relative to the pedestal, and a swivel mechanism whereby the saddle swivels relative to the pedestal.

In accordance with a further aspect of the invention, the relative cooperation between the spaced apart teeth and the cooperating claw notches, and the sizing and configuration thereof, causes forces to be generated along the engagement points of the spaced apart teeth and the cooperating claw notches which tend to resist disengagement of the spaced apart teeth from the cooperating claw notches. This occurs when a user of the chair may exert backwardly directed or other leaning forces on the chair frame. Further, the base can include a set of triangular shaped ribs extending downwardly behind the back edge of the saddle. The positioning and configuration of the ribs behind the saddle back edge tend to generate forces resistive to

accidental engagement of the chair to the frame, which may otherwise result in the latch not fully engaging with the cooperating latch notch, or from horizontal forces being exerted on the frame relative to the base which could tend to accidentally disengage the notch. Still further, a latch ramping surface can be positioned at the saddle back edge.

5           In addition to the foregoing, the chair includes means for insuring that a sound audible to a chair user is generated when the latch is moved from a disengaged position to a completely engaged position with the saddle back edge. In this manner, the user is provided with positive feedback that correct engagement of the latch with the saddle back edge has been achieved. These and other features, objects, and benefits of the invention will be  
10 recognized by one having ordinary skill in the art and by those who practice the invention, from this disclosure, including the specification, the claims, and the drawing figures.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

15           FIG. 1 is an upper front right perspective view of a chair with a coupling companion stool base of the invention, showing the chair portion and the companion stool base portion coupled in a task chair configuration;

          FIG. 2 is a front elevation view thereof;

20           FIG. 3 is a back elevation view thereof;

          FIG. 4 is a left side elevation view thereof;

25           FIG. 5 is a right side elevation view thereof;

          FIG. 6 is a bottom plan view thereof;

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