

in particular detail, in FIGS. 16 and 17. In addition to the clip clamp latch 160, the frame lower portion 106 also includes at least two frame legs 180 (see FIGS. 18 and 19 among others) and a receptacle 190 (FIG. 6).

The sitting portion supports the user who is seated thereupon. Quite similar to the back rest portion of the upper portion 104, discussed above, the sitting portion may be configured as is known in "hard surface" chairs, to be sufficiently comfortable or accommodating on its own. Alternatively, an upholstered sitting portion may preferably be provided, and may include a foundation 132 (particularly shown in the exploded view of FIG. 17) and an upholstered covering 134 that may slip fit over the foundation. The upholstered covering 134 is shown in several of the illustrations, including FIGS. 9-14 and 17. The covered foundation 132 may then be secured to the frame lower portion 106 through various methods as discussed above relative to the back rest, including decorative hardware 136, such as screws as shown in FIG. 17.

The claw 142 (illustrated in FIGS. 9, 10, 13 and 14) extends generally downward from the frame lower portion 106, near the second portion 124 of the frame lower portion 106, and is adapted for cooperating releasable engagement with the base 300. More specifically, and as will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent paragraphs herein, the claw 142 will function so as to releasably engage with a saddle 310 of the base 300. The saddle 310 is illustrated in many of the figures, including FIGS. 4, 5, 9-13 and 18-23. With reference again to the claw 142, it may be configured with a flange-like member 144 that extends toward the first portion 122. Of course, this is a specific configuration of an exemplary preferred embodiment, and one having ordinary skill in the art understands from this disclosure that a broad variety of adaptations of the claw and saddle interaction element of the invention may be made within the concept of the invention. The claw 142 may be considered to define an at least somewhat arcuate member, including smoothly arcuate and broken angular configurations. The claw 142 as shown also extends laterally between the left and the right rails, 108 and 118 respectively. The claw 142 is, thereby, cleverly incorporated in the structure of lower portion as a cross tie 110, in the example shown.

In another aspect of the claw 142, a notch 146 may be provided for nesting accommodation with a leg of the base 300, discussed further below (FIGS. 2, 6 and 7). Thus, the notch 146 may preferably be generally centered along the claw 142, between the rail 108 and 118. So defined, the notched claw 142 may be said to include a first tooth 148 that extends toward the left side from the notch, and a second tooth 148 (with the teeth being shown in FIGS. 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14) that extends toward the right side from the notch. It is further noted that the claw 142 as shown incorporates user safety considerations at least insofar as the cooperating geometry of the claw 142 with the saddle 310 tends to engage the chair portion 100 with the base portion 300, so the chair portion 100 will not tilt or rotate backward apart from the base.

The clip clamp latch 160 is illustrated in a number of the drawings, including FIGS. 3, 6, 8, 9-12 and 15-17. In particular, the latch 160 is shown in a "stand alone" view in FIG. 16. More specifically, the clip clamp latch 160 extends generally downward from the frame lower portion 106, near its first portion 122, and is adapted for cooperating releasable engagement with the base 300 and more specifically with the saddle 310 of the base, discussed further below. While the claw 142 is shown as a fixed member, at least one of the claw 142 and the latch 160 is preferably a movable member so that the chair portion 100 and the base 300 are releasably coupled. Thus, the latch 160 may, for example, be hingedly connected with the first portion of 122. However, it should be empha-

sized that other types of connections may be utilized, without departing from the principal concepts of the invention. As shown particularly in FIG. 16, the latch 160 may be considered as presented with a general configuration of a length of a stylized L-channel or V-channel, having a first leg 162 and a second leg 164, each extending outward from an apex 166.

The apex 166 defines a hinge or pivot point of the latch 160, so the latch 160 hinges between closed and opened positions. In the closed position, the latch 160 extends relatively closer to the frame lower portion second portion 124. Conversely, the latch extends relatively farther from the second portion 124 in the opened position. Further, a bias member 170 preferably biases the latch to the closed position (FIGS. 16 and 17). As particularly shown in FIG. 16, the bias member 170 is shown as a generally U-shaped spring member with a bight portion 172 and a leg 174 extending in the same general direction from each end of the bight portion 172. Each leg 174 may also incorporate a helical coil spring that aligns with the pivot point 166 of the latch 160. When assembled as shown, the bias member legs 174 press against the latch first leg 162 and rotate the latch 160 generally forward toward the second portion 124.

The latch first leg 162 defines a handle or actuator with which a user may actuate or open the latch, rotating the latch about the latch pivot 166 and generally away from the frame lower portion second portion 124, to release the chair and the base portions. The latch second leg 164 defines a clamping portion of the latch that engages and clasps the saddle 310 as discussed further below. As with the claw 142, the latch 160 shown is another specific configuration of an exemplary preferred embodiment and one having ordinary skill in the art understands from this disclosure that a broad variety of adaptations of the claw and saddle interaction element of the invention may be made within the concepts of the invention.

As shown in several views, and as particularly apparent from FIGS. 17, 18 and 19, the legs 180 of the chair portion 100 extend generally downward from the frame lower portion 106 and are adapted to support the frame upon a generally horizontal supporting surface. The legs 180 may have various configurations. Given an inherent relatively shortened geometry of the chair portion 100 when uncoupled from the companion stool base portion 300 and set upon the supporting surface, it is anticipated that a user who is seated in the chair will naturally and commonly tend to tilt the chair portion generally backward. Thus, the legs 180 are desirably configured as rockers, defining the chair portion as a floor rocker. The legs 180 may be described as extending generally arcuately downward from the frame lower portion second portion 124 to the first portion 122, and along each of a left and a right side of the chair. Further, the legs 180 are preferably artfully incorporated into the chair frame 102 and extend to stops 182 at a very back of the frame lower portion 106, near where the upper portion 104 and the lower portion 106 meet (FIGS. 1, 4-7, 11, 12, 16, 18 and 19). The stops 182 may preferably be placed and contoured so as to provide a comfortable and positive stop to backward rocking of the chair, and so that the user may not unsafely rock the chair completely backward. Yet, a limit to backward rocking of the chair is most preferably not abrupt. It is also noted at this point that the latch 160 may be tucked-in or located between the legs 180, which extend beyond the latch 160, so that the legs 180 define protective rails about the latch 160.

The receptacle 190 corresponds with the saddle 310 and is defined between the claw 142 and the latch 160, which may be said to define end boundaries (FIG. 6). The frame lower portion left and right side rails 108 and 118, respectively, may also be said to define side boundaries. With the bounds so