

at least one lower cover plate connecting means comprises snap connecting means adapted to retain a cover plate means extending vertically downward therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to slidably engage the bulbous plug connector of the upper cover plate connecting means and to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means of the lower cover plate connecting means.

4. The system of claim 2 for providing a decorative end covering, wherein:

each of the lower cover plate connecting means and one of the upper cover plate connecting means comprise snap connecting means to retain a cover plate means extending vertically therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means. ~~of the lower cover plate connecting means,~~

5. The system of claim 1 for providing a decorative end covering, wherein said partition has a rectangular frame comprising two vertical end posts and a plurality of horizontal beams arranged in pairs, each beam extending between and connected to the two end posts and having hollow, open ends proximate the end posts, the beams of each pair being connected to opposite sides of the end posts, the partition having at least two pairs of beams, one pair proximate its bottom and one pair proximate its top; and

wherein each cover plate support has end plug means inserted into the open ends of one pair of beams.

6. The system of claim 5 for providing a decorative end covering, wherein each cover plate support comprises:

end plug means, each comprising a U-shaped end plug

one of the upper cover plate connecting means comprise snap connecting means to retain a cover plate means extending vertically therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means. ~~of the lower cover plate connecting means.~~

14. The system of claim 10 for providing a decorative covering, wherein said partitions each have a rectangular frame comprising two vertical end posts and a plurality of horizontal beams arranged in pairs, each beam extending between and connected to the two end posts and having hollow, open ends proximate the end posts, the beams of each pair being connected to opposite sides of the end posts, each partition having at least two pairs of beams, one pair proximate its bottom and one pair proximate its top;

a first partition of the two partitions having two pairs of beams in vertical alignment with respective pairs of beams of a second partition; and

wherein each triangular cover plate support has first end plug means inserted into the open ends of a pair of beams of the first partition and extending horizontally outwardly therefrom, and having second end plug means inserted into the open ends of a vertically aligned pair of beams of the second partition and extending horizontally outwardly therefrom.

15. The system of claim 14 for providing a decorative covering, wherein each triangular cover plate support comprises:

two end plug means, each comprising a U-shaped end plug provided in the ends of a vertically aligned pair of beams, said end plugs having two parallel legs and a central bight, each leg received in a friction fit in the open end of one beam of a pair of beams, the bight extending horizontally between the pair of beams and forwardly of an end post, a

around corners adapted to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means. ~~of the lower cover plate connecting means.~~

18. A system for providing a decorative end covering on converging ends of three free-standing portable partitions each having a frame with opposite faces and a top, bottom and two ends;

each partition having one end converging at a preselected angle of 90 degrees with an end of an adjacent partition;

said system comprising:

at least two rectangular cover plate supports, each extending horizontally between, and secured to, said converging end of each partition, each cover plate support having upper and lower surfaces provided with upper and lower cover plate connecting means, respectively; and

at least one cover plate means providing a decorative appearance to the converging ends of the three partitions, each cover plate means extending vertically between two rectangular cover plate supports, the cover plate means having an upper end secured to the lower cover plate connecting means of a first rectangular cover plate support and a lower end secured to the upper cover plate connecting means of a second rectangular cover plate support.

19. The system of claim 18 for providing a decorative covering, wherein each rectangular cover plate support comprises:

three attachment means, each attachment means secured to and extending outwardly from an end of one of said partitions, said attachment means being shaped to provide a vertical slot proximate said end of one of said partitions, said attachment means being in vertical alignment with each other; and

cover plate retainer means comprising rectangular horizontal plate means and leg means extending vertically in

the same direction from three sides of the plate means, the leg means each being adapted to be securely received in said vertical slot proximate said end of each partition.

20. The system of claim 19 for providing a decorative covering, wherein:

the upper cover plate connecting means of at least one rectangular cover plate support comprises bulbous plug connector means on the upper surface thereof adapted to retain a cover plate means extending vertically upwardly therefrom; and

at least one lower cover plate connecting means comprises snap connecting means adapted to retain a cover plate means extending vertically downwardly therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to slidably engage the bulbous plug connector means and to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means.

21. The system of claim 19 for providing a decorative covering, wherein:

each of the lower cover plate connecting means and one of the upper cover plate connecting means comprise snap connecting means to retain a cover plate means extending vertically therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means. ~~of the lower cover plate connecting means.~~

22. The system of claim 18 for providing a decorative covering, wherein each of said partitions has a rectangular frame comprising two vertical end posts and a plurality of horizontal beams arranged in pairs, each beam extending between and connected to the two end posts and having hollow, open ends

comprises snap connecting means adapted to retain a cover plate means extending vertically downwardly therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to slidably engage the bulbous plug connector means and to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means.

25. The system of claim 22 for providing a decorative covering, wherein:

each of the lower cover plate connecting means and one of the upper cover plate connecting means comprise snap connecting means to retain a cover plate means extending vertically therefrom; and

each cover plate means has inwardly extending wrap around corners proximate its upper and lower ends, said wrap around corners adapted to snap into secured engagement with the snap connecting means. ~~of the lower cover plate connecting means.~~

26. A system for providing a decorative covering over a gap between converging ends of four free-standing portable partitions each having a frame with opposite faces and a top, a bottom and two ends;

each partition having one end converging with ends of two adjacent partitions at a preselected angle of 90 degrees;

said system comprising:

a rectangular horizontal cover plate extending between, and secured to, said converging end of each partition, the cover plate having an upper decorative surface, *which is horizontal cover plate.*

27. The system of claim 26 for providing a decorative covering, wherein the rectangular horizontal cover plate comprises:

four attachment means, each attachment means secured to and extending outwardly from the end of one of said

- 72 -

and two end surfaces, a plurality of said partitions converging at a junction with vertically extending gaps between end ^{surfaces} ~~faces~~ of converging partitions, each converging partition converging at a preselected angle with either one or two other converging partitions, the top and bottom of each converging partition defining a horizontal plane;

a system for providing a decorative covering at said junction, comprising:

cover plate supports located in said horizontal planes at said junction, each cover plate support comprising horizontal plate means releasably connected to an end surface of at least one ^{partition} ~~panel~~ and having upper and lower surfaces, one of said surfaces having a decorative appearance and at least one of said surfaces adapted to releasably couple to one or more vertical cover plates, said cover plates extending vertically between adjacent cover plate supports and being selected from end face cover plates adapted to provide a decorative covering over an end surface of a partition, and vertical gap cover plates adapted to provide a decorative covering over said vertical gap between end surfaces of two converging partitions, said cover plate supports and cover plates together providing a decorative covering over the junction formed by the converging partitions, wherein:

(a) in a horizontal plane ~~in which no converging partition is oriented relative to any other~~ ^{which is defined} ~~converging partition at the preselected angle~~ ^{of only one}, a cover plate support is provided connected to and ^{said} extending horizontally outwardly from the end surface of ~~each partition, having its top or bottom in said horizontal plane~~, each said cover plate support having one facet substantially abutting the end surface of a partition, and having upper and lower surfaces both adapted to releasably couple to a vertical end face cover plate, one of said upper and lower surfaces having a decorative appearance; and

~~(b) in a horizontal plane in which two partitions each converge at the preselected angle with only one other~~ ^{Replaced with new paragraph (b)}

- 73 -

~~partition, one cover plate support is provided comprising horizontal plate means having a plurality of facets, each facet substantially abutting an end surface of a partition converging in said horizontal plane, and an outward side which horizontally spans a first vertical gap between said two partitions which converge with only one other partition at the preselected angle, one of the upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate support being adapted to releasably couple to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to provide a decorative covering over said first vertical gap, the other of said surfaces further having a decorative appearance and being adapted to releasably couple to one or more vertical cover plates selected from end face cover plates and vertical gap cover plates adapted to cover a vertical gap between the end surfaces of any two partitions; or~~

(c) in a horizontal plane in which each converging partition converges with two other partitions at the preselected angle, the cover plate support in said horizontal plane comprises horizontal plate means connected to and extending between the end surfaces of the partitions converging in said horizontal plane, said cover plate support having a plurality of facets, each facet abutting the end surface of a partition, one of said upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate retainer having a decorative appearance and adapted to releasably couple to one or more vertical cover plates selected from vertical gap cover plates and end face cover plates.

33. A system for providing a decorative covering according to claim 32, wherein two partitions converge in a ^{of (b)} ~~said~~ horizontal plane, at said preselected angle, and

~~said cover plate support comprises a horizontal plate means having two facets, each facet substantially abutting an end surface of one of said two partitions, said cover plate support further having an~~ ^{has one} ~~outward side~~ ^{said} extending across a vertically extending gap between the end surfaces

of said two partitions/

~~one of the upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate support having coupling means adapted to releasably couple said cover plate support to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said one surface and provide a decorative covering over the vertical gap between said two partitions;~~

~~the other of said surfaces having a decorative appearance and having coupling means adapted to either releasably couple said cover plate support to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said other surface and provide a decorative covering over the vertical gap between said two partitions, and adapted to releasably couple to two end face cover plates adapted to extend vertically from said other surface and provide a decorative covering over the end surfaces of said two partitions.~~

→ insert new claims 34, 35

³⁶
34. A system for providing a decorative covering according to claim ⁵⁰32, wherein three partitions converge in said horizontal plane ^{of C} with first and second partitions each converging at said preselected angle with a third partitions, the first and second partitions converging with each other at an angle other than said preselected angle, a first vertical gap being formed between the end surfaces of said first and second partitions,

said cover plate support comprises a horizontal plate means having three facets, each facet substantially abutting an end surface of one of said three partitions, said cover plate support further having an outward side extending ^{across} the first vertical gap between the end surfaces of said first and second partitions,

one of the upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate support having coupling means adapted to releasably couple said cover plate support to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said one surface and provide a decorative covering over the first vertical gap between said first and second partitions;

- 75 -

the other of the upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate support having a decorative appearance and having coupling means adapted to:

(a) releasably couple said cover plate support to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said other surface and provide a decorative covering over the first vertical gap between said first and second partitions;

(b) releasably couple said cover plate support to a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said other surface and provide a decorative covering over a ^{second} vertical gap between said third partition and said first partition; and

(c) releasably couple said cover plate support to three end face cover plates providing decorative coverings over each of the three converging partition.

37.
25. A system for providing a decorative covering according to claim ⁵¹ 22, ~~wherein one of said horizontal planes~~ ^{converge in said horizontal plane of (d)} ~~has four partitions converging therein, each of said four partitions converging with two other of said partitions such that the preselected angle is 90°,~~

said cover plate support comprising a rectangular horizontal plate means having four facets, each facet substantially abutting an end surface of one of said four partitions,

one of the upper and lower surfaces of said cover plate support having a decorative appearance and having coupling means adapted to releasably couple said cover plate support to:

(a) a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said one surface and provide a decorative covering over a vertical gap between two opposing end surfaces;

(b) a vertical gap cover plate adapted to extend vertically from said one surface and provide a decorative covering over a vertical gap between two end surfaces

- 76 -

oriented at 90° to one another; and

(c) ~~releasably couple said cover plate support to end face cover plates adapted to extend vertically from said one surface and provide decorative coverings over the end surfaces of said four converging partitions.~~

→ insert new claims 38 to 57

⁵¹
36. A portable wall partition having a frame comprising vertical posts and a plurality of horizontal beams arranged in pairs, said beams having inward faces, upwardly directed faces and downwardly directed faces said beam extending between and connected to the posts in spaced, side-by-side parallel relation with said inward faces in opposition with each other; and

a plurality of modular retaining clips for securing components of said partition to said frame, each retaining clip secured between a pair of beams and having engagement surfaces engaging the inward faces, upwardly directed faces and downwardly directed faces of a pair of beams such that said clip is retained to permit horizontal sliding of the clip longitudinally along the pair of beams and to prevent movement of the clip vertically or horizontally transverse to the longitudinal;

each retaining clip having at least one securing means to which one of said modular components is releasably secured.

⁵³
37. The portable wall partition according to claim 36, wherein each said retaining clip comprises releasably connected upper and lower segments.

⁵⁴
38. The portable wall partition according to claim 37 wherein:

two of said retaining clips have a panel securing means comprising a slot for retaining a vertical panel of light transmitting material between and parallel to a pair of beams, said panel of light transmitting material providing a window through the partition;

- 77 -

a first of the two modular retaining clips being secured between a first, upper pair of beams and having a downwardly directed slot in its lower segment for retaining an upper edge of the panel of light transmitting material; and

a second of the two modular retaining clips being secured between a second, lower pair of beams and having an upwardly directed slot in its upper segment for retaining a lower edge of the panel of light transmitting material;

the lower segment of said first retaining clip and the upper segment of said second retaining clip being interchangeable.

39. The portable wall partition according to claim 37, wherein:

a retaining clip is secured between an uppermost pair of beams of the partition proximate an upper end of the partition, the retaining clip having upper securing means on said upper segment extending upwardly of the uppermost pair of beams, said upper securing means adapted to snap into secured engagement with a horizontal top cover plate providing a decorative covering on top of the partition.

40. The portable wall partition according to claim 37, wherein said components comprise a plurality of cladding panels extending vertically and outwardly of said pairs of horizontal beams and forming a decorative covering of the partition, each of said panels being releasably secured to the frame by panel securing means of said retaining clips.

41. The portable wall partition according to claim 40, wherein a plurality of retaining clips are provided to secure said cladding panels to the frame, said retaining clips having at least one of:

an upper segment having upper securing means extending upwardly and outwardly of a pair of beams and securing a lower end of a first cladding panel outwardly of

- 78 -

one beam of said pair of beams, and

a lower segment having lower securing means extending downwardly and outwardly of a pair of beams and securing an upper end of a second cladding panel outwardly of one beam of said pair of beams.

58

42. The portable wall partition according to claim 37, wherein each of said retaining clips has side engagement surfaces engaging the inward faces of a pair of beams, said side surfaces having a depth longitudinal to the beams such that a horizontal distance measured diagonally through the clip from one of said side surfaces to another of said side surfaces is sufficiently greater than a horizontal distance measured perpendicularly between the side surfaces, to thereby permit said side surfaces to be engaged or disengaged with said beams by rotating said retaining clip about a vertical axis therethrough, while substantially preventing horizontal movement of said clip except said horizontal sliding of said clip longitudinally along said beams.

59

43. The portable wall partition according to claim 42, wherein each said clip has upper engagement surfaces on its upper segment engaging said upwardly directed faces of a pair of beams, and lower engagement surfaces on its lower segment engaging said downwardly directed faces of a pair of beams, said upper and lower engagement surfaces being contiguous to said side engagement surfaces and substantially preventing vertical movement of said clip.