Sept. 5, 1961 D. R. RISNEY 2,998,797

WATER SKI TOW HANDLE

Filed Dec. 14, 1959

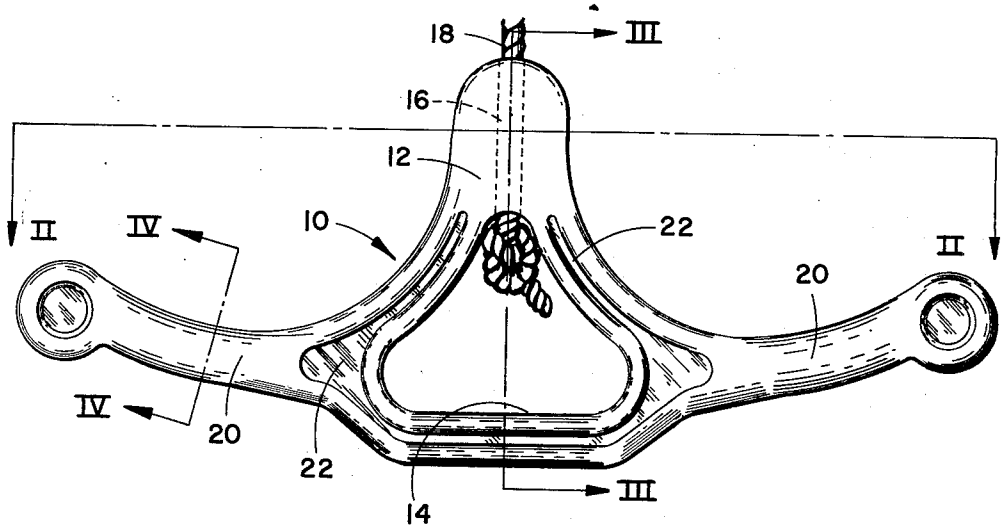


FIG. I

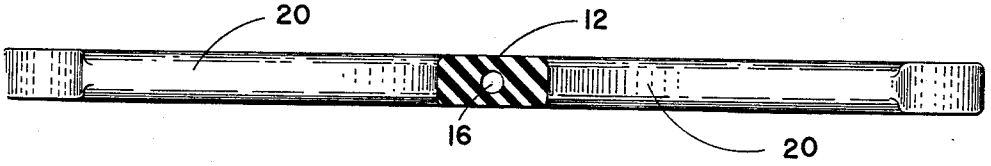


FIG. II

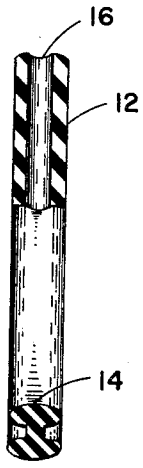


FIG. III

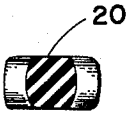


FIG. IV

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WATER SKI TOW HANDLE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 115—6.1)

This invention relates to the field of sports and more especially to the apparatus for towing a person behind a vehicle such as a boat, particularly the so-called tow handle.

In recent years as the sport of water skiing has grown, the demands on the equipment have become increasingly severe and difficult to meet. Originally a simple loop of rope tied to a board with a tow rope fixed to the board to form what is commonly called an aquaplane was considered sufficient. Later, skis were devised with a separate tow rope which was held in the skier's hand. To facilitate this, a simple crossbar or ring was tied at the end of the rope to ease the job of holding on to it for the skier. Gradually, as the sport became more popular, in addition to just simply skiing behind the boat, various trick performances or skills have been developed which require various forms of specialized equipment. In this connection various feats have been accomplished, such as skiing backwards, two skiers on a single tow, one skier riding on another, skiing without holding on with the hands, etc.

According to the present invention I have discovered a universal ski tow handle that greatly facilitates not only conventional water skiing but all of the various types of specialized skills in the various types of towing activities. Accordingly it is an object of the present invention to provide a universal water skiing tow handle. It is another object of the present invention to provide a simple, lightweight floating tow handle that may be simply and easily manufactured in an economical fashion. It is another object of the present invention to provide a tow handle that may be gripped in a variety of fashions with equal ease. It is another object of the present invention to provide a water skiing tow handle that may be readily positioned between the legs of the skier in a comfortable and secure fashion. It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a tow handle that may be simply and easily attached and detached from the tow rope. These and other and further objects will be in part apparent and in part pointed out as the specification proceeds.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a top plan view of a tow handle according to the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a sectional view on line II—II of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is a sectional view on line III—III of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 4 is a sectional view on line IV—IV of FIGURE 1.

Referring now to FIGURE 1, the tow handle **10** according to the present invention is in a generally T-shaped configuration. A central barrel portion **12** is provided at the stem of the T and a central handle or grip portion **14** is provided at one end of the barrel. The barrel **12** has cut therein a hole **16** of a sufficient diameter to receive therein a normal tow rope **18**.

A pair of lateral grip members **20** form a sort of yoke portion about either side of the central grip and barrel portions **14** and **12**. The yoke portions **20** are formed in a smoothly curving concave configuration as shown in FIGURES 1 and 4 to form an easy gripping portion that can be gripped by the two hands of the skier and which will tend to center the hands therein and prevent accidential slipping from the tow handle. Also this smooth concave configuration facilitates engaging of the back of the legs, for instance, when the skier wishes to continue skiing but to have his hands free for other purposes. Each lateral grip member is provided with an enlarged outer terminal portion **21** to prevent the skier's hand from slipping from the end of the grip should only one hand be momentarily engaged there with the handle. The rope **18** is simply and easily secured to the handle by inserting it through the hole **16** in the barrel and then putting a simple knot in the end thereof. The rope cannot then be withdrawn without removing the knot and yet it can be simply and easily detached when desired.

The handle **10** is advantageously made of a light material such as plastic or wood which will float so that when it is accidentally dropped it will not sink. In one preferred form of the embodiment the handle is molded from a plastic to the shape shown. Web portion **22** lightens the handle without sacrificing strength and the edges thereof are formed over in a semicircular fashion to form a smooth, rounded gripping surface, as may be seen in FIGURES 2–4. As may be readily seen, the web portion **22** is omitted from behind the barrel to the central handle portion so that the fingers of the hand may be simply and easily placed therethrough. With this configuration, I have found representative dimensions of a width of about sixteen inches from one end of the lateral gripping members **20** to the other, a depth or width of about six inches from the barrel to the back of the central handle portion, and a thickness of about three quarters of an inch entirely satisfactory. It is thus believed readily apparent that I have provided a simple, universal tow handle that can be simply and economically manufactured and which can be quickly and easily attached and detached to the tow rope and which will permit comfortable and easy use of the handle for all types of towing skills.

While there is given above a certain specific example of this invention and its application in practical use, it should be understood that it is not intended to be exhaustive or to be limiting of the invention. On the contrary, this illustration and explanation herein are given in order to acquaint others skilled in the art with this invention and the principles thereof and a suitable manner of its application in practical use, so that others skilled in the art may be enabled to modify the invention and to adapt and apply it in numerous forms each as may be best suited to the requirement of a particular use.

I claim:

1. A tow handle for use in the sport of water skiing adapted to be secured to the end of a tow rope comprising a barrel portion having an axially extending hole for securing the end of the tow rope therein, a central hand grip member spaced from but joined to the rearward end of said barrel, said hand grip member being symmetrically disposed on either side of the axis extended of said hole, and a pair of laterally extending hand and leg grip members symmetrically fixed on either side of said barrel and central grip portions and curving forwardly from either side of said central grip portion, said barrel and grip portions lying generally in the same plane and forming a generally T-shaped configuration whereby the skier may readily hold the tow rope with one hand, two hands, or the legs.

2. The tow handle of claim 1, having an enlarged terminal portion at the outer end of each laterally extending grip portion.

3. The tow handle of claim 1 made of a light material which floats in water.

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