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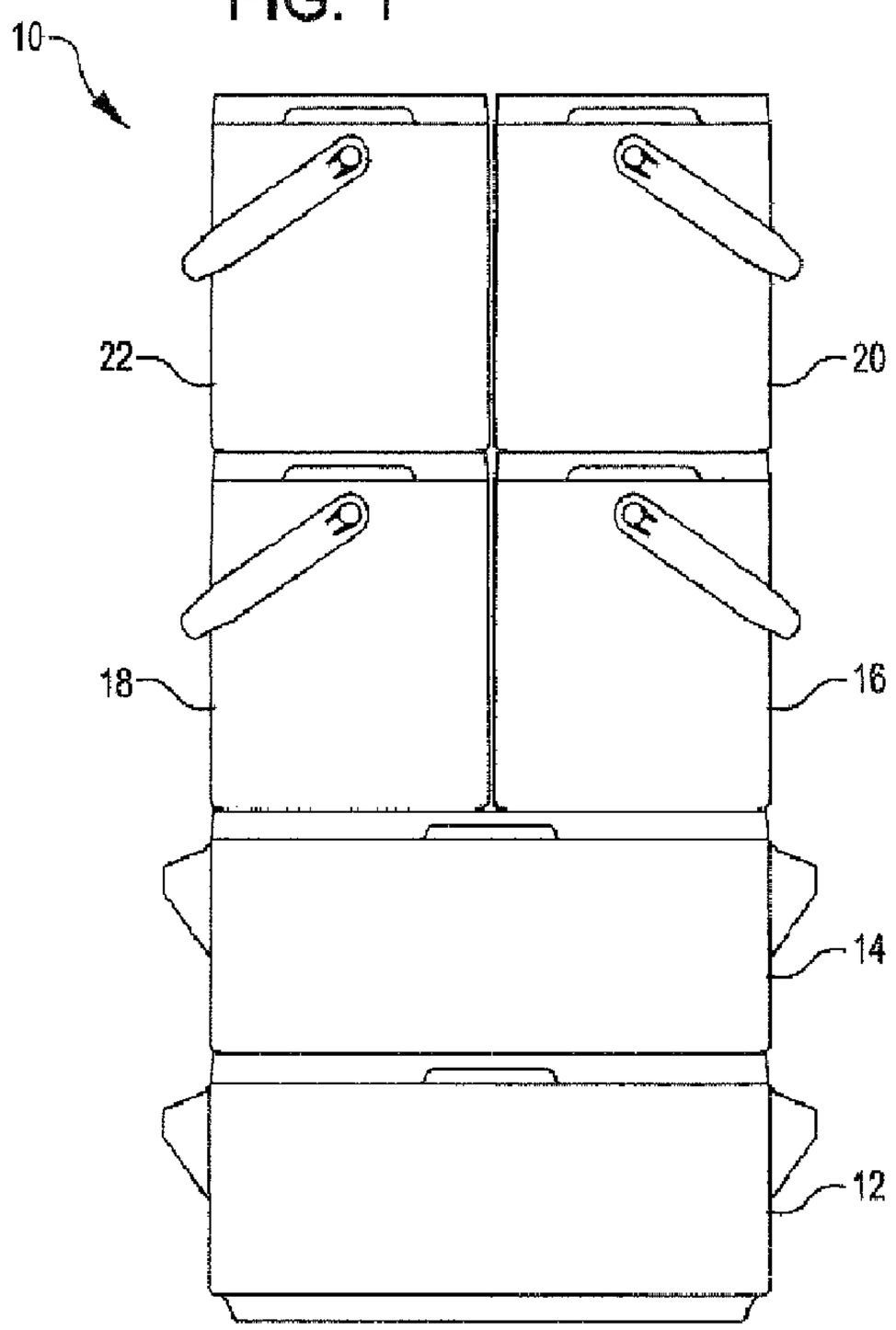
(54) Titre : SYSTEME DE REFROIDISSEUR PORTABLE EMPILABLE
(54) Title: STACKABLE PORTABLE COOLER SYSTEM

FIG. 1



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A portable cooler stacking system is provided, where portable coolers of different shapes and sizes can be optimally and sta-bly stacked. The cooler system can include a first cooler having a first size and a second cooler having a second size, where the first

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and sec-ond sizes are different. A pair of second coolers can be stacked on the first cooler, where the second coolers are positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler. In this manner, an inner length of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler is slightly greater then the width of a lower portion the second coolers and the inner width of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler is greater then two times the width of the lower portion of the second coolers. As such, two second cooler can be positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler. The adjacent position of the second coolers and the inter-locking surfaces substantially limit the horizontal movement of the pair of second coolers on the lid of the first cooler.

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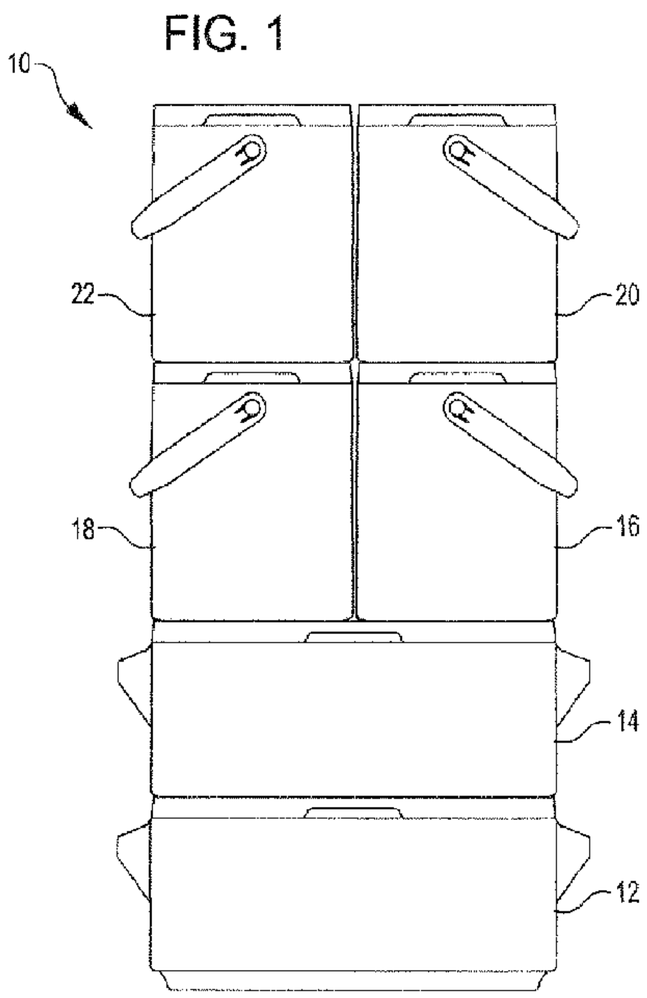
(54) Title: STACKABLE PORTABLE COOLER SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A portable cooler stacking system is provided, where portable coolers of different shapes and sizes can be optimally and stably stacked. The cooler system can include a first cooler having a first size and a second cooler having a second size, where the first and second sizes are different. A pair of second coolers can be stacked on the first cooler, where the second coolers are positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler. In this manner, an inner length of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler is slightly greater then the width of a lower portion the second coolers and the inner width of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler is greater then two times the width of the lower portion of the second coolers. As such, two second cooler can be positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler. The adjacent position of the second coolers and the interlocking surfaces substantially limit the horizontal movement of the pair of second coolers on the lid of the first cooler.

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Stackable Portable Cooler System

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present disclosure relates to a portable insulated container, namely, a portable cooler, and more particularly to a system for stacking a plurality of portable coolers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] A portable cooler typically has an insulated body presenting an open interior space in which ice and one or more articles to be cooled are stored. A lid, which can be hinged, and is also formed of insulative material, is provided on the cooler for closing the interior space in order to maintain the temperature of the articles in the cooler. Handles are usually secured to or formed in the cooler for facilitating transportation thereof, and a drain may be fitted in the body for draining water and other liquids from the cooler without opening the cover. The lid is provided with a flat top surface.

[0003] During transport and storage portable coolers can be stacked on top of one another. However, as these coolers are available is a variety of shapes and sizes, it can be difficult to optimally stack different shape and size coolers in a stable arrangement. The height and physical structure of conventional coolers also makes it difficult to stack such coolers in a stable arrangement.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present disclosure provides a portable cooler stacking system, where portable coolers of different shapes and sizes can be optimally and stably stacked. The cooler system can include a first cooler having a first size and a second cooler having a second size, where the first and second sizes are different.

[0005] Each of the coolers includes an insulated body with a lower portion extending from the bottom thereof. The lower portion has a length less then the length of the insulated body,

and a width less then the width of the insulated body, such that the edge of the lower portion is indented in from the bottom edge of the insulated body. Preferably, at least one of the coolers has a low profile.

[0006] The top surface of the insulated lid includes a raised outer edge having a height and thickness, such that the top surface has an inner length and an inner width less then the length and width of the lid. A curved surface extends between the raised outer edge and the top surface of the lid.

[0007] The raised outer edge of the lid is configured such that the lower portion of the insulated body can be fitted within the raised portion. In this manner, the inner length of the top surface of the lid is slightly greater then the length of the lower portion of the insulated body. Similarly, the inner width of the top surface of the lid is slightly greater then the width of the lower portion of the insulated body.

[0008] In an embodiment a pair of second coolers can be stacked on the first cooler, where the second coolers are positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler. In this manner, an inner length of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler is slightly greater then the width of a lower portion of the insulated body of the second coolers and the inner width of the top surface of the lid of the first cooler greater then two times the width of the lower portion of the insulated body second. As such, two second coolers can be positioned widthwise along the length of the lid of the first cooler.

[0009] The edge of the lower portion of the insulated body of the second cooler can have a curved shape, which is substantially opposite to the curved surface extending between the raised outer edge and the top surface of the lid of the first cooler. When the insulated body of a first second cooler is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid of the first cooler, these surfaces mate, interlock, to substantially limit the widthwise horizontal movement of the

second cooler on the lid of the first cooler. When a second insulated body of a second second cooler is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid of the first cooler, adjacent to the first second cooler, the adjacent position of the second coolers and the interlocking surfaces substantially limit the lengthwise horizontal movement of the pair of second cooler on the lid of the first cooler.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] A more complete understanding of the present invention, and the attendant advantages and features thereof, will be more readily understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0011] FIG. 1 depicts a front view a stacked cooler according to the present disclosure;

[0012] FIG. 2 depicts a perspective view of a first cooler of the present disclosure;

[0013] FIG. 3 depicts a front view of the first cooler of FIG. 2;

[0014] FIG. 4 depicts a side view of the first cooler of FIG. 2;

[0015] FIG. 5 depicts a top view of an insulated lid of the cooler of FIG. 2;

[0016] FIG.6 depicts a front sectional view of the lid of FIG. 5;

[0017] FIG. 7. depicts a partial sectional view of the lid of FIG. 5;

[0018] FIG. 8 depicts a side view of a second cooler of the present disclosure;

[0019] FIG. 9 depicts a front view of the second cooler of FIG. 8;

[0020] FIG. 10 depicts a top view of an insulated lid of the cooler of FIG. 8;

[0021] FIG.11 depicts a front sectional view of the lid of FIG. 8;

[0022] FIG. 11. depicts a partial sectional view of the lid of FIG. 8;

[0023] FIG. 12 depicts a sectional front view a stacked first and second coolers of FIGS. 2 and 8;

[0024] FIG. 13 depicts a perspective view of a first cooler of the present invention;

[0025] FIG. 14 depicts an exploded view of the cooler of FIG. 13;

[0026] FIG. 15 depicts a cut away view of the lid attachment of the cooler of FIG. 13;

[0027] FIG. 16 depicts a perspective view of a first cooler of the present invention residing on a cart of the present invention;

[0028] FIG. 17 depicts a front section view of the cart and cooler of FIG. 16;

[0029] FIG. 18 depicts a perspective view of the cart of FIG. 16, wherein the latch is locked;

[0030] FIG. 19 depicts a perspective view of the cart of FIG. 16, wherein the latch is unlocked;

[0031] FIG. 20 depicts a perspective view of the cart of FIG. 16, in its folded configuration;

[0032] FIG. 21 depicts a perspective view of the cart of FIG. 16, in its folded configuration and residing within a first cooler;

[0033] FIG. 22 depicts a top plan view of the cart and cooler of FIG. 21; and

[0034] FIG. 23 depicts a stacked cooler system and cart of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0035] The present disclosure provides a system for stacking a plurality of insulated coolers, where the coolers can be the same size, or different sizes. Referring now to the drawing figures in which like reference designators refer to like elements, there is shown in FIG. 1 an exemplary stacking 10 of coolers of the present disclosure. The stacking 10 includes two different sized coolers vertically stacked. The base of the stack includes a first cooler 12 having a first size. A second cooler 14, equal in size to the first cooler 12 is positioned thereon. A third and forth cooler 16 and 18 are adjacently positioned on the second cooler 14, where the third and forth coolers 16 and 18 are sized to adjacently fit on top of the second cooler 14. A fifth and sixth cooler 20 and 22 are one each positioned on top of the third and forth coolers 16 and 18, where the fifth and sixth coolers 20 and 22 have a size equal to the third and forth coolers 16 and 18.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. 2-4 a first cooler 12 of the present invention is provided. The first cooler 12 has an insulated body 30 with a removable insulated lid 32. The insulated body 30 and removable insulated lid 32 each have a length l_L and a width w_L, and combine to give the first cooler 12 a body height of h_L. The insulated body 30 can be rectangular in shape having front, back, bottom, and opposite side surfaces defining an interior cavity. A top of the insulating body 30 is open, providing access to the interior cavity.

[0037] The insulated body 30 further includes a lower portion 34 extending from a bottom 36 of the insulated body 30 a distance h_b. The lower portion 34 has a length l_l, which is less than the length l_L of the insulated body30, and a width w_l, which is less then the width w_L of the insulated body 30, such that the edge 36 of the lower portion 34 is indented in from the bottom edge 40 of the insulated body 30.

[0038] The insulated lid 32 is removably positionable on an open top end 42 of the insulated body 30 to seal an interior cavity of the insulating body 30. Referring to FIGS. 5-7

and 15 and as noted above, the insulated lid 32 has length l_L, width w_L, and height h_L. The insulated lid 32 further includes a lower portion 44 extending from a bottom surface 46 of the insulated lid 32. The lower portion 44 is sized to fit within the open end 42 of the insulated body 30.

[0039] The top surface 48 of the insulated lid 32 includes a raised outer edge 50 having a height h_e, and a thickness t, such that the top surface 48 has an inner length l_2 and an inner width w_2. A curved surface 52 extends between the raised outer edge 50 and the top surface 48 of the lid 32.

[0040] The raised outer edge 50 of the lid 32 is configured such that the lower portion 34 of the insulated body 30 can be fitted within the raised outer edge 50. In this manner, the inner length l_2 of the top surface 48 of the lid 32 is slightly greater then the length l_1 of the lower portion 34 of the insulated body 30. Similarly, the inner width w_2 of the top surface 48 of the lid 32 is slightly greater then the width w_1 of the lower portion 34 of the insulated body 30.

[0041] The edge 38 of the lower portion 34 of the insulated body 30 can have a curved shape, which is substantially opposite to the curved surface 52 extending between the raised outer edge 50 and the top surface 48 of the lid 32. When the insulated body 30 is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid 32, these surfaces mate, interlock, to substantially limit horizontal movement between the stacked insulated body 30 and insulated lid 32. While the curved shape of the edge 38 of the lower portion 34 of the insulated body 30 and the curved surface 52 extending between the raised outer edge 50 and the top surface 48 of the lid 32 are depicted and described as being curved, any shape and configuration can be utilized which would interlock the surfaces to resist horizontal movement there between.

[0042] The lower portion 34 of the insulated body can further include a plurality of feet 54. The feet 54 can be spaced on opposite sides of the lower portion 34, extending along the length l_l of the lower portion 34. The feet can be used to provide an increased stability to the cooler 14. While only two feet are depicted, it is envision that the cooler 14 can include two or more feet positioned about the lower portion 34, to provide and increase stability. For example, the cooler 14 can include: three feet evenly spaced on the lower portion 34, and extending along either the length l_l or width w_l of the lower portion 34; four feet, one each positioned at each corner of the lower portion 34; five feet, one each positioned at each corner and the center of the lower portion 34; etc.

[0043] The first cooler 14 is shown having a height h_L, which can be selected depending on the proposed use of the first cooler 14. For example, the cooler 14 can be a low profile cooler, where the height h_L is selected to fit a beverage can or two conventional-sized baking dishes horizontally positioned on top of each other within the interior cavity. Alternatively, the height h_L can be selected such that a 2-liter beverage bottle, a wine bottle, or a bottled beverage can be vertically positioned within the interior cavity of the cooler 14. The examples are only exemplary in nature and are not intended to limit the height h_L.

[0044] Referring to FIGS. 8-9, a second cooler 16 of the present invention is provided. The second cooler 16 has an insulated body 60 with a removable insulated lid 62. The insulated body 60 and removable insulated lid 62 each have length l_s and width w_s, and combine to give the second cooler 16 a body height of h_s. The insulating body 60 can be rectangular in shape having front, back, bottom, and opposite side surfaces defining an interior cavity. A top of the insulating body 60 is open, providing access to the interior cavity.

[0045] The insulated body 60 further includes a lower portion 64 extending from a bottom 66 of the insulated body 60 a distance h_b. The lower portion 64 has a length l_3, which is less

then the length l_s of the insulated body 60, and a width w_3, which is less then the width w_s of the insulated body 60, such that the edge 66 of the lower portion 64 is indented in from the bottom edge 70 of the insulated body 60. The insulated body 60 can further include a rotatable handle 71, which can be used to carry the second cooler 16.

[0046] The insulated lid 62 is removably positionable on an open top end 42 of the insulating body 60 to seal the interior cavity of the insulating body 60. Referring to FIGS. 10-11 and as noted above, the insulated lid 62 has length l_s, width w_s, and height h_O. The insulated lid 62 further includes a lower portion 74 extending from a bottom surface 76 of the insulated lid 62. The lower portion 74 is sized to fit within the open end 72 of the insulated body 60.

[0047] The top surface 78 of the insulated lid 62 includes a raised outer edge 80 having a height h_e, and a thickness t, such that the top surface 78 has an inner length l_4 and an inner width w_4. A curved surface 82 extends between the raised outer edge 80 and the top surface 78 of the lid 62.

[0048] The raised outer edge 80 of the lid 62 is configured such that the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60 can be fitted within the raised outer edge 80. In this manner, the inner length l_4 of the top surface 78 of the lid 62 is slightly greater then the length l_3 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60. Similarly, the inner width w_4 of the top surface 78 of the lid 62 is slightly greater then the width w_3 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60.

[0049] The edge 68 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body can have a curved shape, which substantially opposite to the curved surface 82 extending between the raised outer edge 80 and the top surface 78 of the lid 72. When an insulated body 60 is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid 62, these surfaces mate, interlock, to substantially limit the horizontal

movement between the stacked insulated body 60 and insulated lid 62. While the curved shape of the edge 68 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60 and the curved surface 82 extending between the raised outer edge 80 and the top surface 78 of the lid 62 are depicted and described as being curved, any shape and configuration can be utilized which would interlock the surfaces to resist horizontal movement there between.

[0050] The lower portion 64 of the insulated body can further include a plurality of feet 64. The feet 84 can be spaced on opposite sided of the lower portion 64, extending along the length l_3 of the lower portion 64. The feet can be used to provide an increased stability to the cooler 16. While only two feet are depicted, it is envisioned that the cooler 16 can include two or more feet positioned about the lower portion, to provide an increased stability. For example, the cooler can include: three feet evenly spaced on the lower portion 64, and extending along either the length l_3 or width w_3 of the lower portion 64; four feet, one each positioned at each corner of the lower portion 64; five feet, one each positioned at each corner and the center of the lower portion 64; etc.

[0051] The second cooler 16 is shown having a height h_s, which can be selected depending on the proposed use of the second cooler 16. For example, the cooler 16 can be a low profile cooler, where the height h_s is selected to fit a beverage can or two conventional-sized baking dishes horizontally positioned on top of each other within the interior cavity. Alternatively, the height h_s can be selected such that a 2-liter beverage bottle, a wine bottle, or a bottled beverage can be vertically positioned within the interior cavity of the cooler 16. The examples are only exemplary in nature and are not intended to limit the height h_s.

[0052] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 12, a pair of second coolers 16, 18 can be stacked on a first cooler 14. In the stacking of the second coolers 16, 18 on the first cooler 14, the second coolers 16, 18 are positioned widthwise along the length of the lid 32 of the first cooler 14. In this manner, the inner length l_2 of the top surface 38 of the lid 32 of the first cooler 14 is

slightly greater then the width w_3 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60 of the second coolers 16, 18. The inner width l_2 of the top surface 38 of the lid 32 is greater then two times the width w_3 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60. As such, two second coolers 16, 18 can be adjacently positioned widthwise along the length of the lid 32 of the first cooler 14.

[0053] The edge 68 of the lower portion 64 of the insulated body 60 of the second cooler 16 or 18 can have a curved shape, which is substantially opposite to the curved surface 52 extending between the raised outer edge 50 and the top surface 48 of the lid 32 of the first cooler 14. When insulated body 60 of a first second cooler 16 is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid 32 of the first cooler 14, these surfaces mate, interlock, to substantially limit the widthwise horizontal movement of the second cooler 16 on the lid 32 of the first cooler14. When a second insulated body 60 of a second second cooler 18 is stacked, positioned, on top of the insulated lid 32 of the first cooler 14, adjacent to the first second cooler 16, the adjacent position of the second coolers 16 and 28 and the interlocking surfaces substantially limit the lengthwise horizontal movement of the pair of second cooler 16, 18 on the lid 32 of the first cooler 14.

[0054] In the alternative, the lids of any of the coolers could be hingedly attached to the body of the cooler, provided that such hinges are positioned in a manner so as not to interfere with the stacking aspect of the coolers. Coolers having different handle configurations other than those shown, for example molded-in handles having a different shape or side, sliding or folding handles tubular handles, as well as pivotable over-the-cooler handles and other conventionally-known handles, to fall within the scope of the present invention. It is similarly within the scope of the present invention for any of the coolers to comprise additional aspects and features such as wheels or additional storage compartments. It should also be understood that coolers of the present invention may be of different shapes and sizes

than shown herein, but having a similar stacking lid structure to enable stacking of more than one cooler in a stable position.

[0055] In the stacking of the second coolers 16 and 18 on the first cooler 14, it is noted that the outside facing side surfaces and the front and back surfaces of the second coolers 16, 18 and the side surfaces, front, and back surfaces of the first cooler are substantially aligned.

[0056] Referring to FIGS. 13 and 14, insulated cooler 30 is preferably comprised of outer shell 30a and insulated liner 30b which fits inside of outer shell 30a. Insulated cooler 30 also preferably comprises handle 30c which forms an integral part of outer shell 30a.

[0057] Another embodiment of the present invention comprises a folding card for use with one or more stackable coolers. As shown in FIGS. 16 and 17, a cooler 12 may be placed on a cart 100 for easy transport. Cart 100 is preferably generally "H" shaped to facilitate stability of the cart while using a minimum amount of material and to enable the cart 100 to fold on top of itself in half. The corners of the cooler 100 are supported and held in place on top of the cart by lips 104. Preferably, four lips 104 are provided on cart 100 – one at each corner. It is also within the scope of the present invention, however, for cart 100 to comprise lips extending the length of each end. Preferably, cart 100 comprises a pair of rugged wheels 106 located at the rear of the cart as well as a pair of pivotable wheels 108 located at the front of the cart to enable the cart 100 to be easily turned. As shown in FIG. 23, a telescoping handle 110 may be inserted into handle mount 112 located at the front of the cart for pulling the cart 100 and cooler 30 and facilitating transport. As shown in FIGS. 18-20, the cart 100 is preferably made in at least two pieces 114, 116 which are connected near the center bar 118 by a lockable latch 120. The cart 100 is preferably made of plastic for durability and weight considerations.

[0058] When in use, cart pieces 114, 116 are unfolded and placed in a linear relationship and the latch 120 is locked to stabilize cart 100. When not in use, as shown in FIGS. 21-22, the latch 120 is unlocked and the cart 100 is folded onto itself for storage. The "H" shape of the cart 100 facilitates the folding by allowing the center bar 118 to fit between the front wheels 108 such that the two pieces 114, 116 lay adjacent each other in an abutted relationship. Although as depicted, cart pieces 114, 116 are separate pieces which are connected by latch 120 which is pivotally connect to front piece 114 and lockably connected to rear piece 116, it is also within the scope of the present invention for the front and rear pieces 114, 116 to be connected by a hinge (not shown) or thin amount of material such that unlocking the latch 120 does not allow the two pieces 114, 116 to be separated entirely, but merely separated on one side so that the pieces may be folded on top of each other. As shown in FIGS. 21-22, when in its folded configuration, the cart 100 fits inside the cooler 30 for transport or storage. The cart 100 can be used with one or a plurality of cooler for transport, as shown in FIG. 23.

[0059] All references cited herein are expressly incorporated by reference in their entirety.

[0060] It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited to what has been particularly shown and described herein above. In addition, unless mention was made above to the contrary, it should be noted that all of the accompanying drawings are not to scale. A variety of modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention, which is limited only by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A stackable portable cooler system, comprising:

a first cooler including a lid having a raised peripheral edge; and

a second cooler including an indented lower bottom portion,

wherein the second cooler is positionable on the first cooler such that the indented lower bottom portion of the second cooler is positioned within the raised peripheral edge of the lid of the first cooler, the raised peripheral edge of the lid of the first cooler resisting a horizontal movement of the second cooler.

2. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the indented lower bottom portion of the second cooler includes a plurality of stabilizing feet.

3. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the first and second coolers are the same size.

4. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the first and second coolers are different sizes.

5. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 4, further comprising third cooler including an indented lower bottom portion,

wherein the third cooler is positionable on the first cooler, adjacent to the second cooler, such that the indented lower bottom portion of the third cooler is positioned within the raised peripheral edge of the lid of the first cooler, the raided peripheral of the lid of the first cooler resisting a horizontal movement of the second cooler.

6. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 5, wherein the second and third coolers are different sizes.

7. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 5, wherein the second and third coolers are the same size.

8. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the lid of said first cooler is hingedly connected to a cooler body of said first cooler.

9. A stackable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said first cooler further comprises at least one pair of wheels.

10. A stackable portable cooler system as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a foldable cart on which said cooler system may be stacked and wherein said foldable cart fits within the interior of at a first cooler of the cooler system when not in use.

FIG. 1

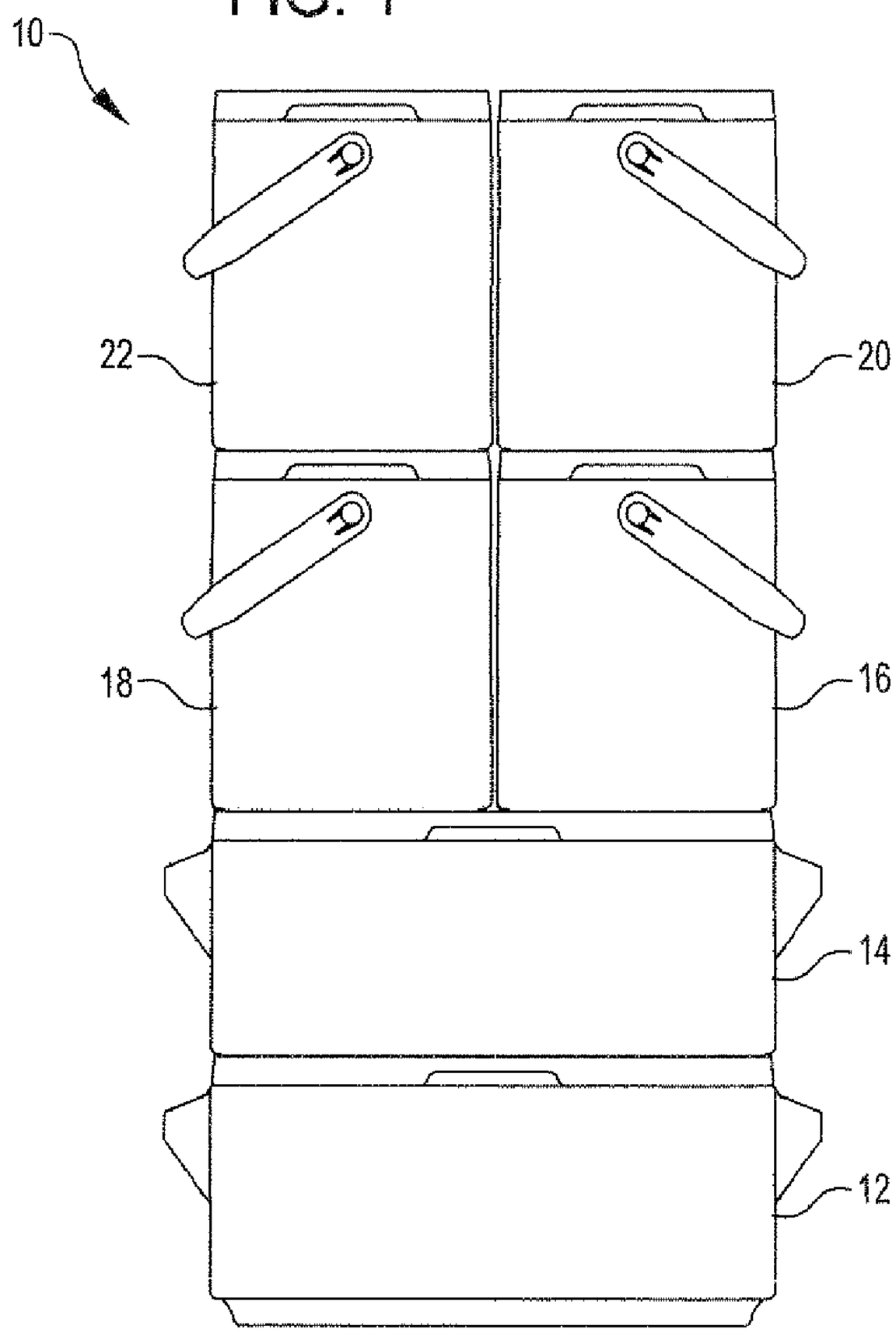


FIG. 2

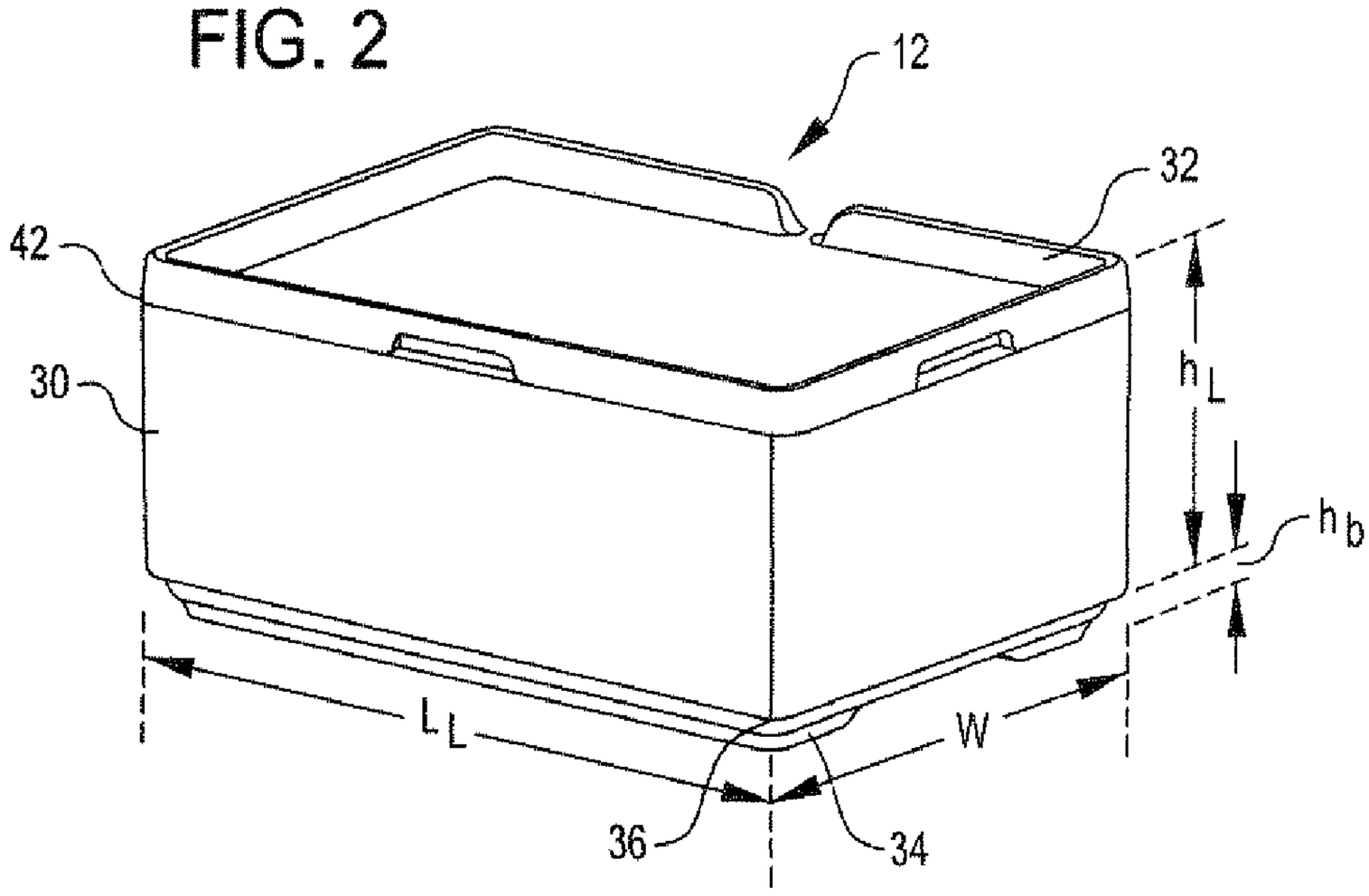


FIG. 3

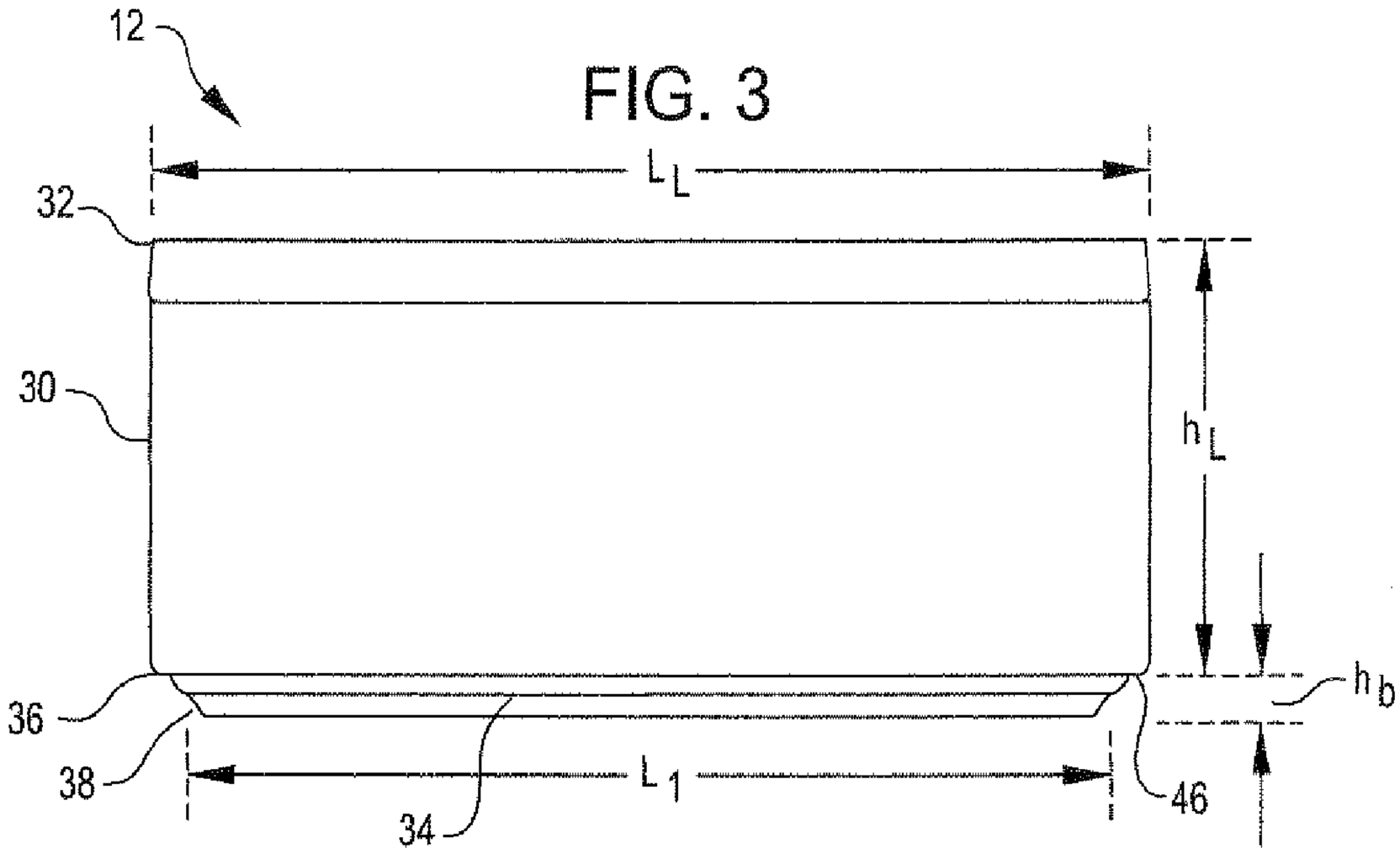


FIG. 4

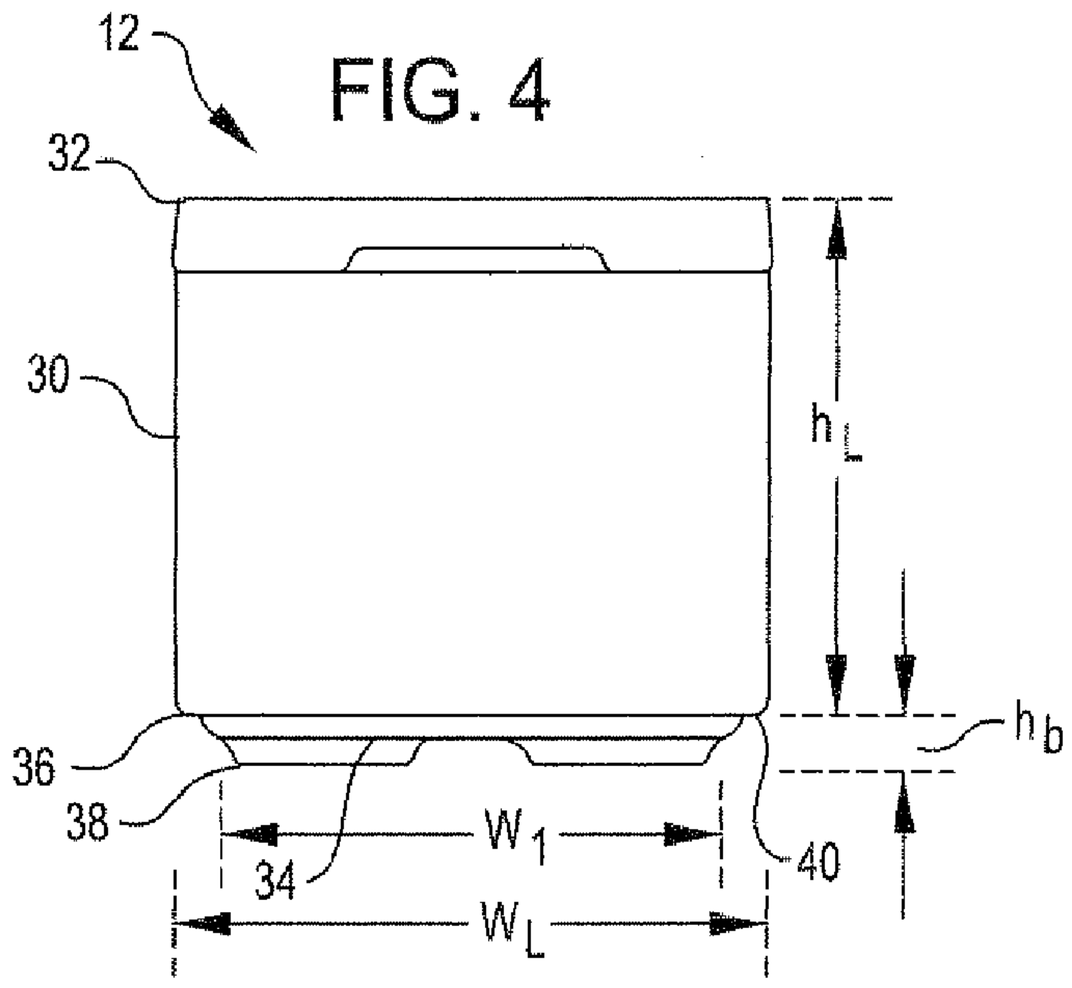


FIG. 5

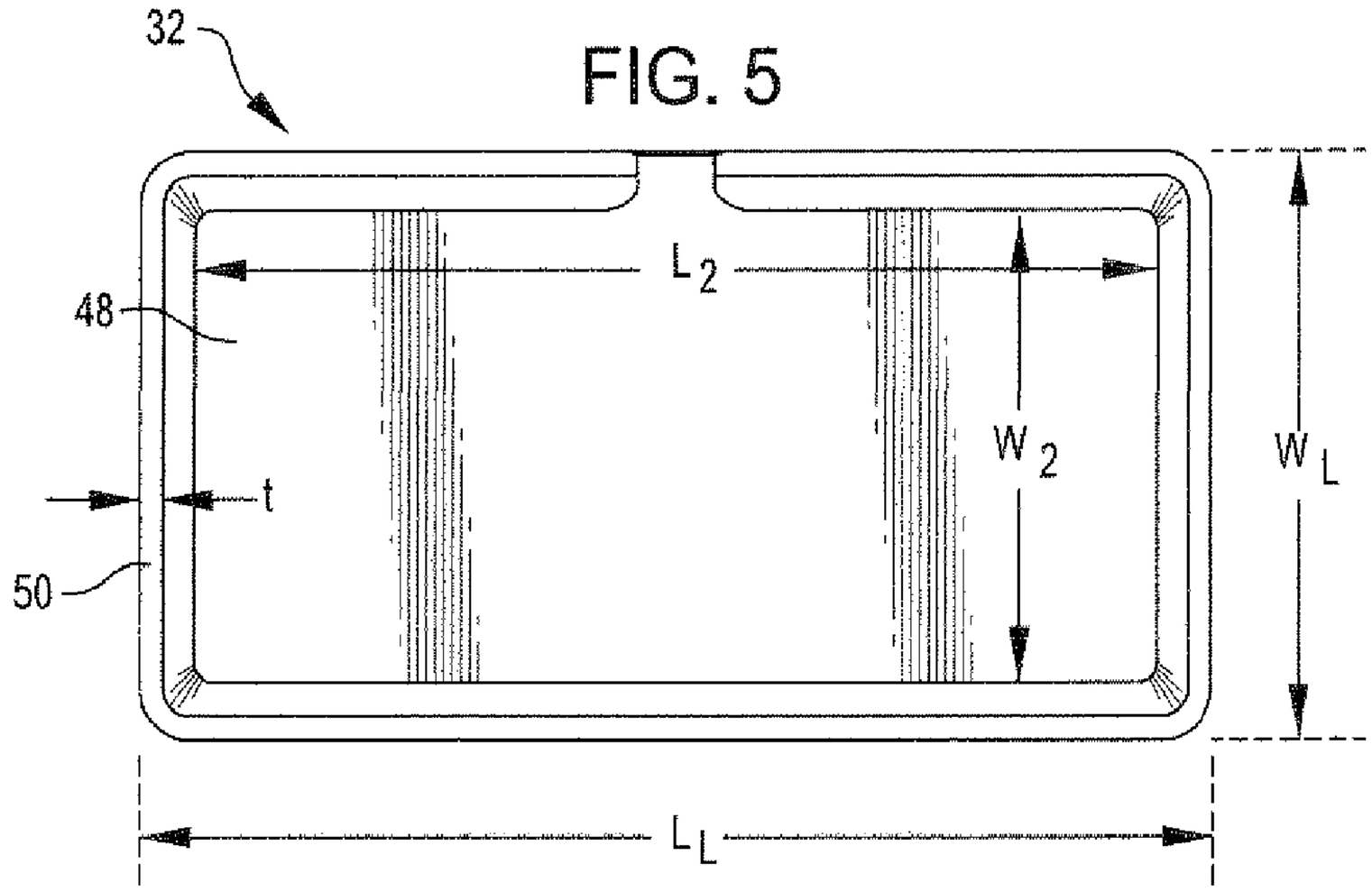


FIG. 6

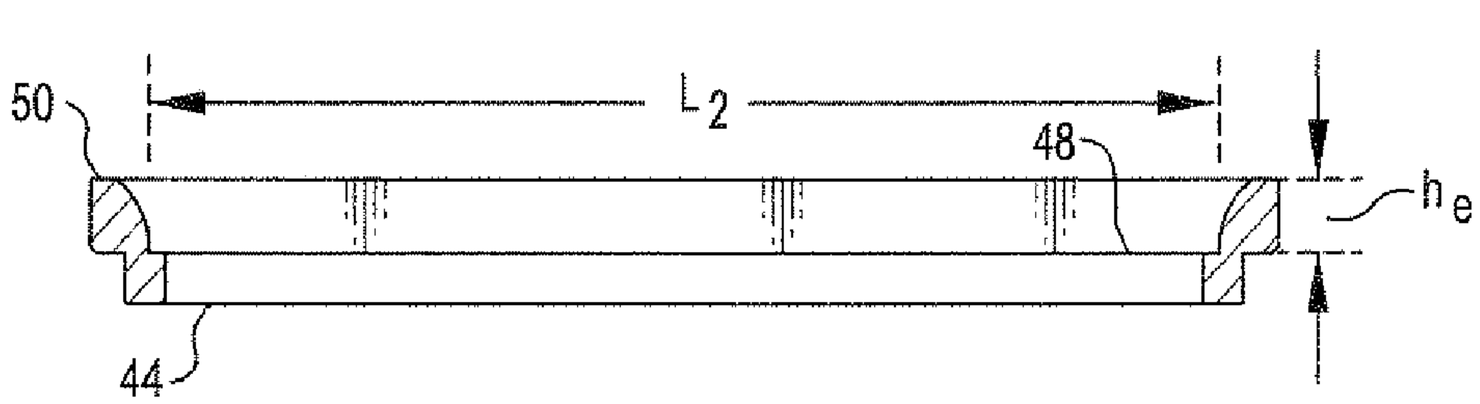


FIG. 7

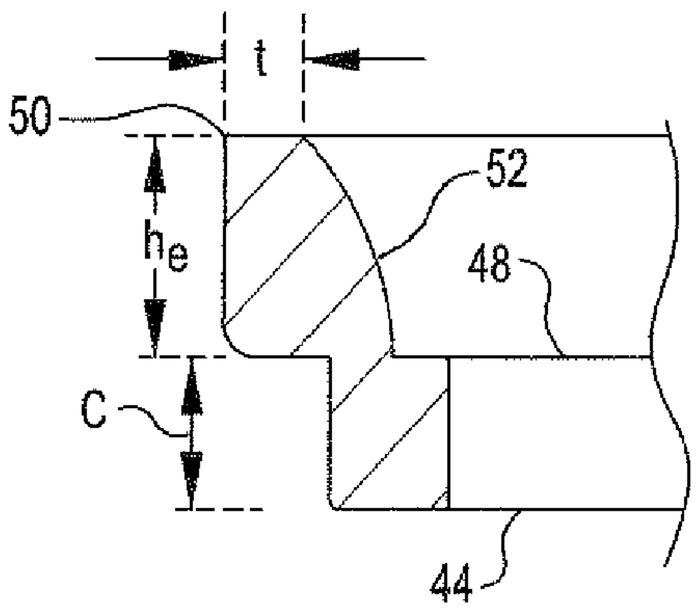


FIG. 8

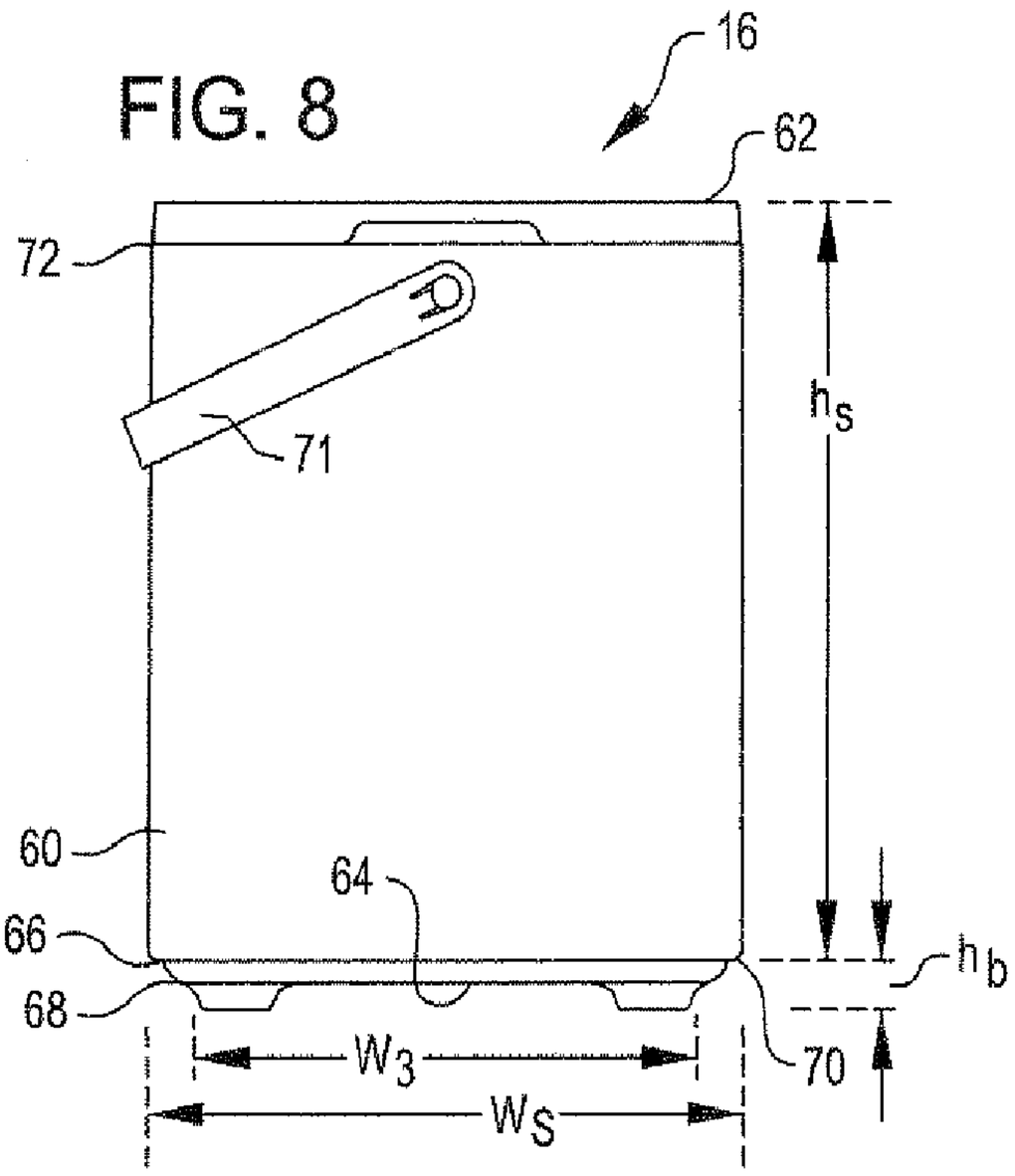


FIG. 9

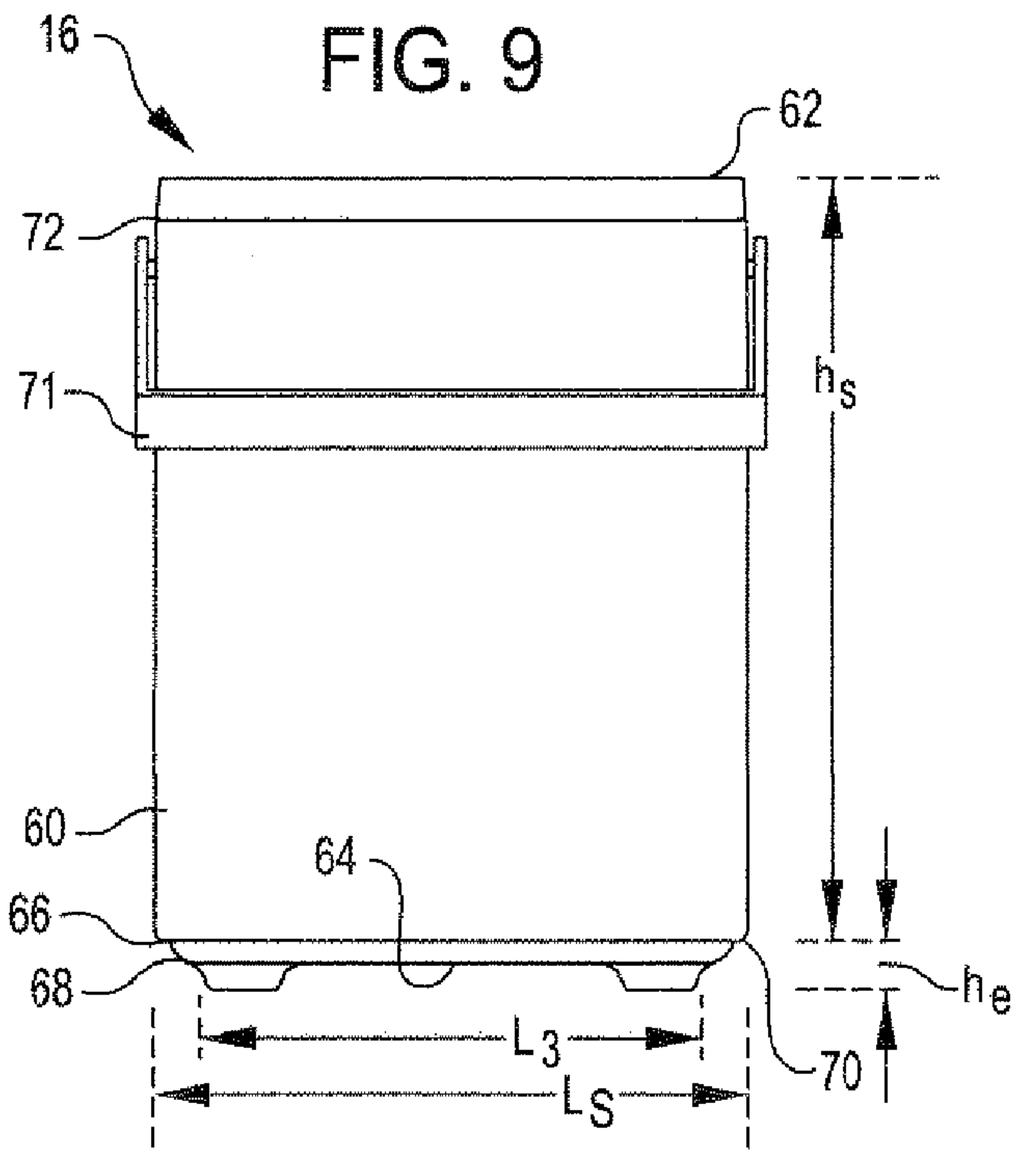


FIG. 10

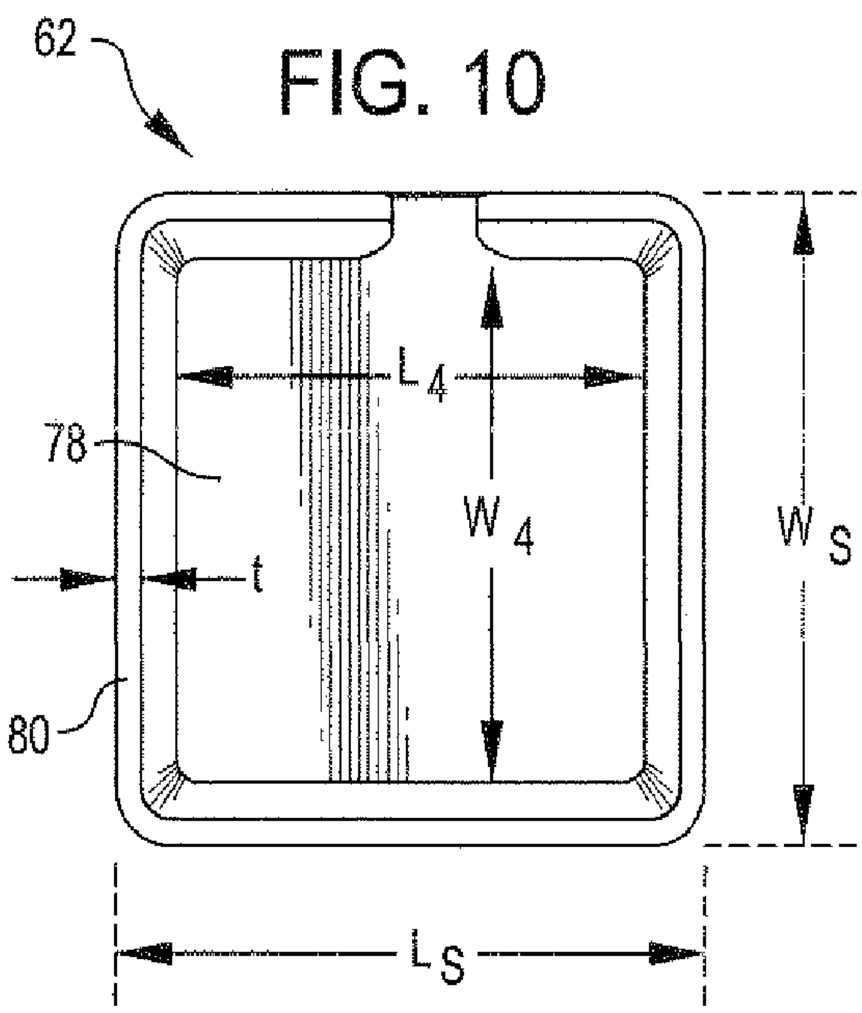


FIG. 11

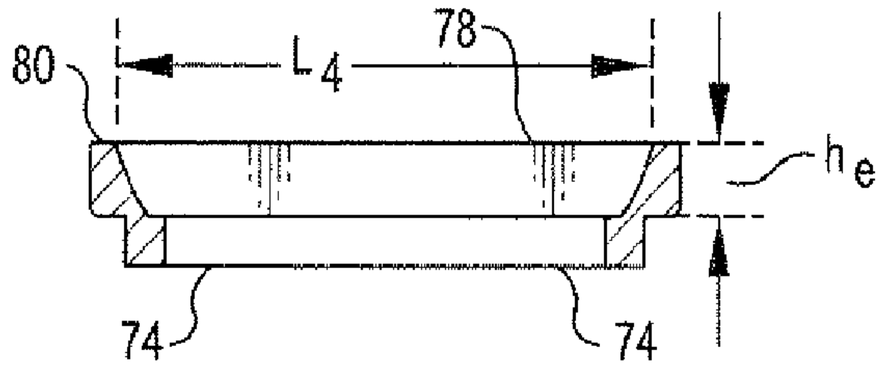
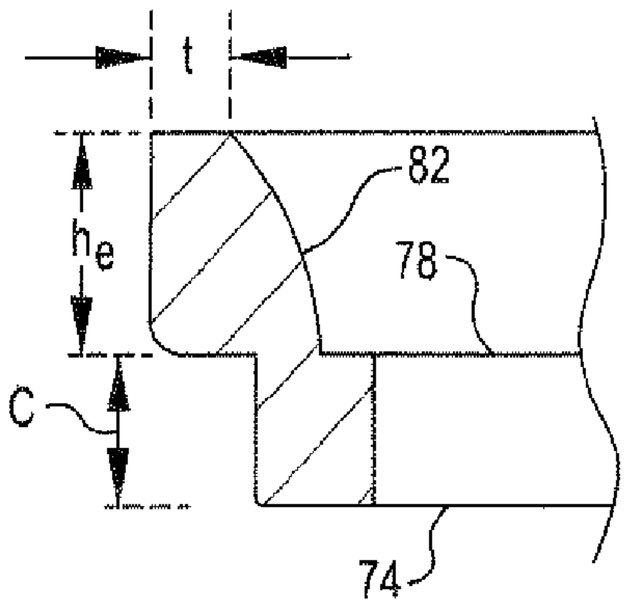


FIG. 12



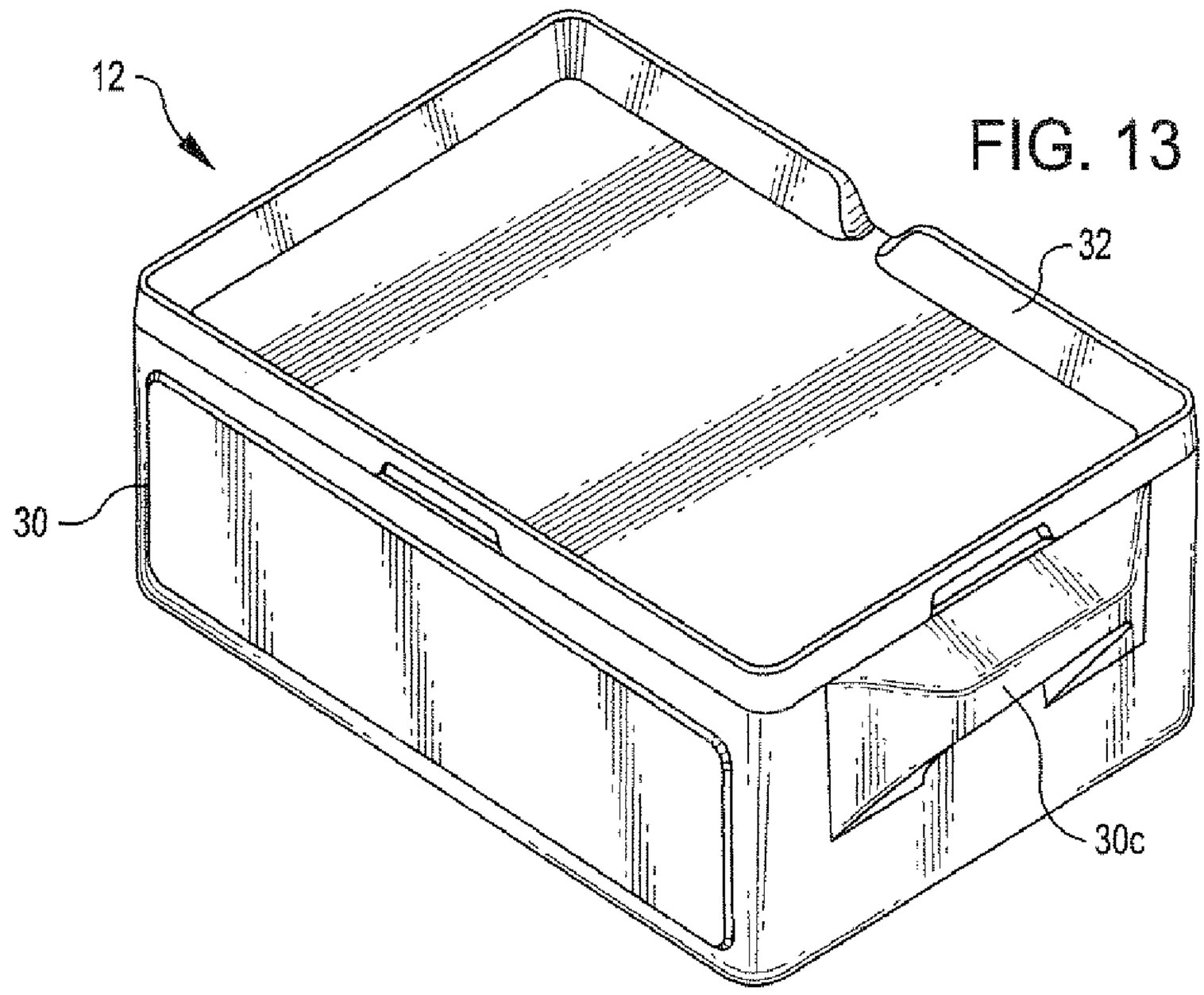


FIG. 13

FIG. 14

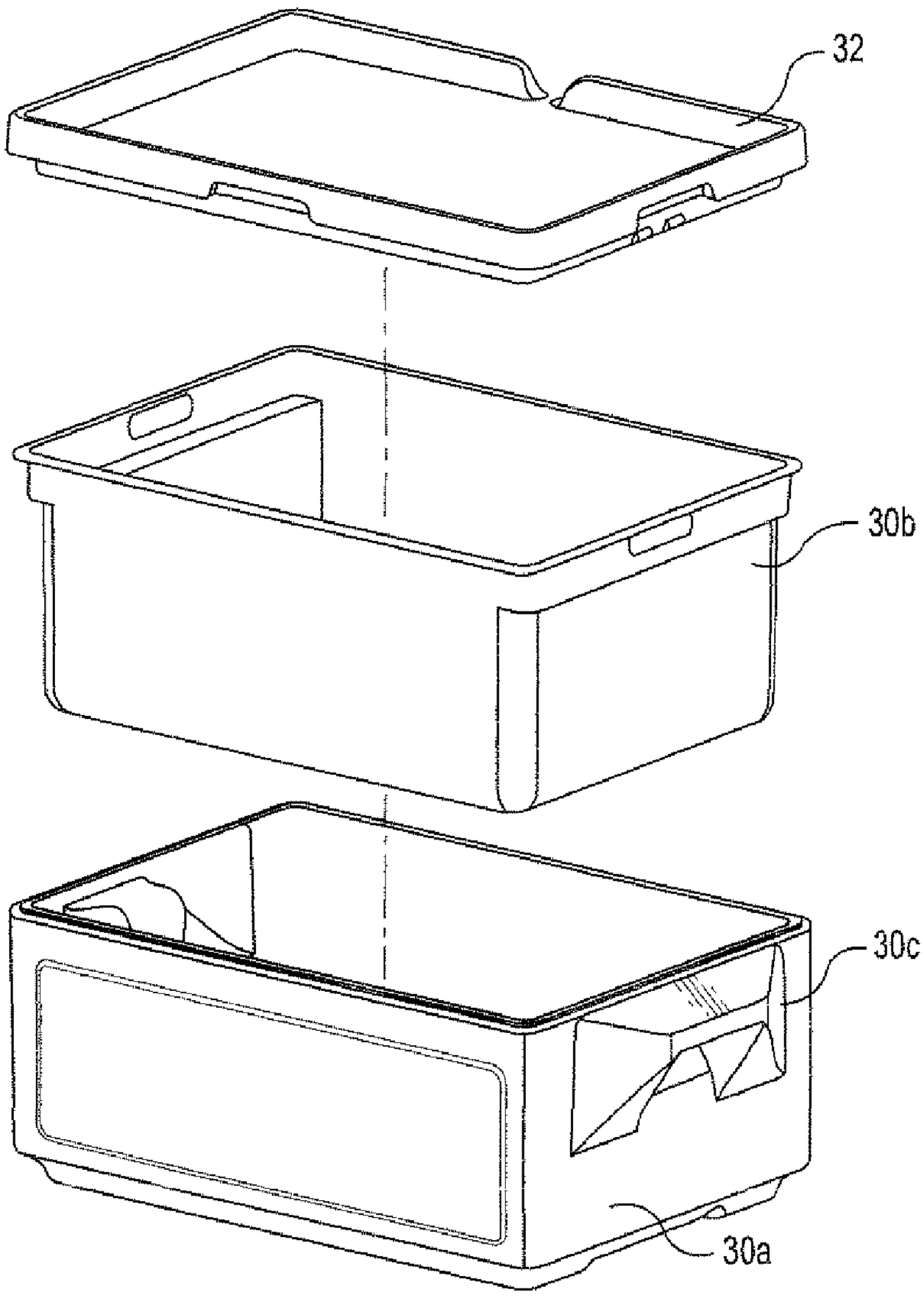


FIG. 15

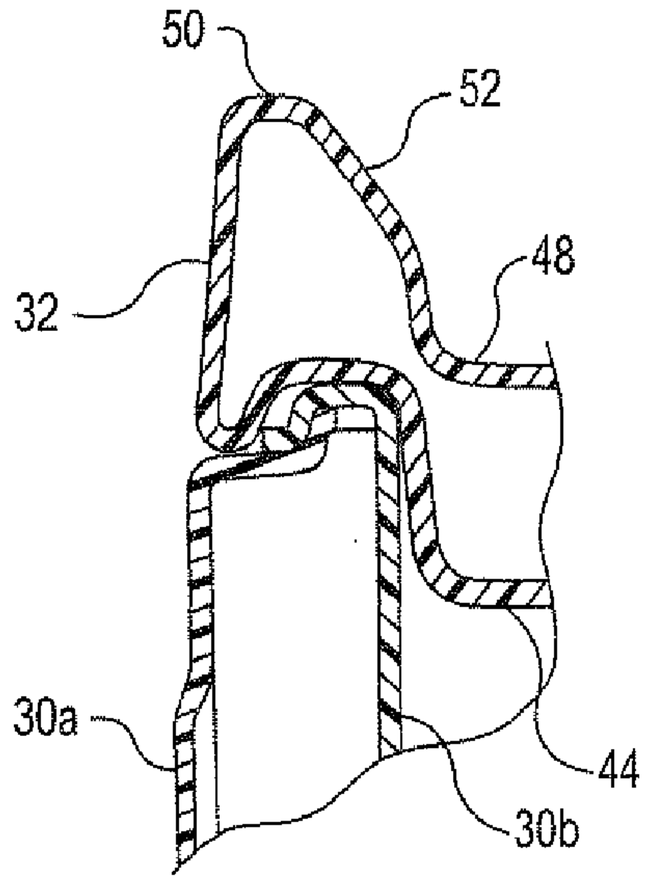


FIG. 16

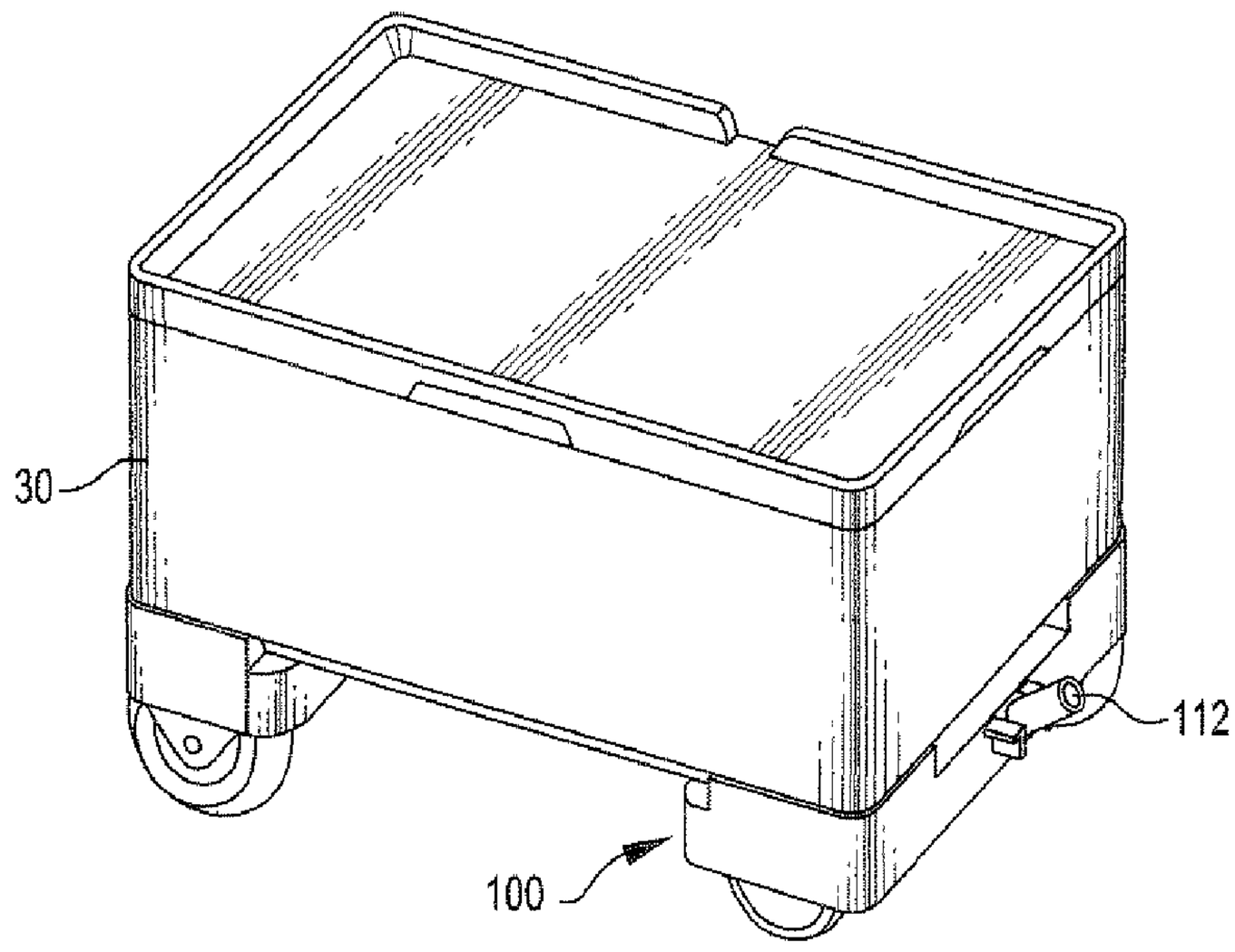
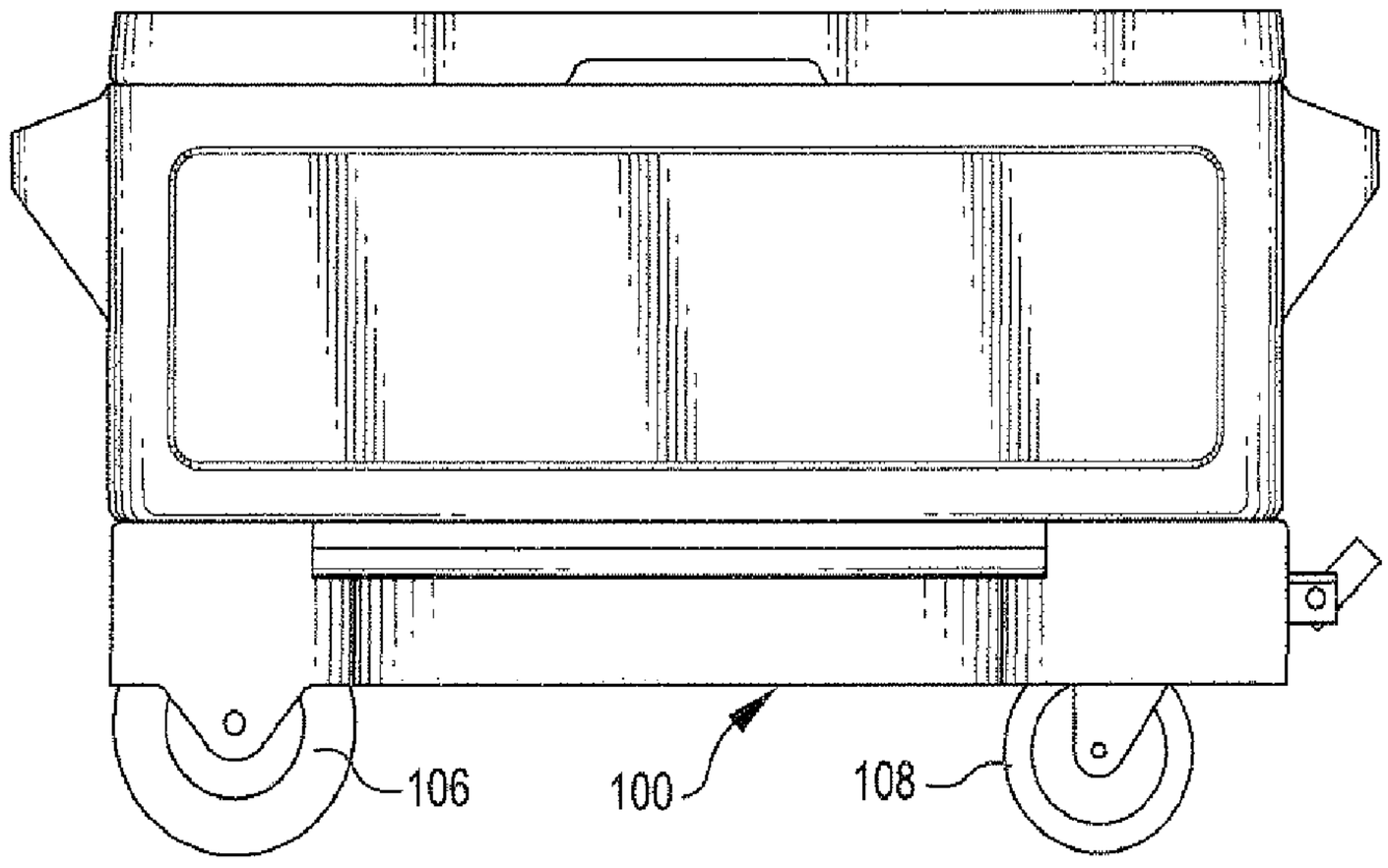


FIG. 17



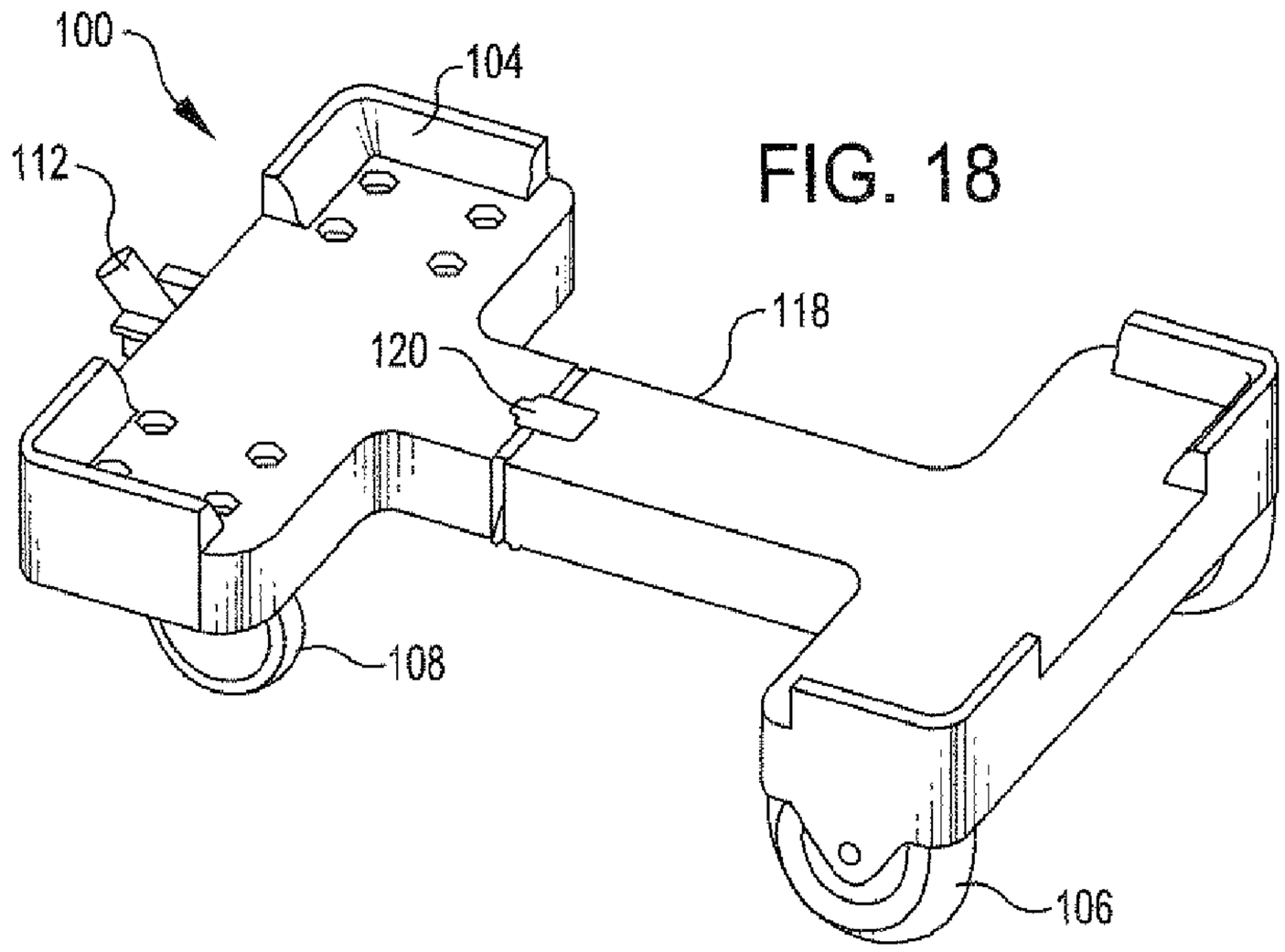


FIG. 18

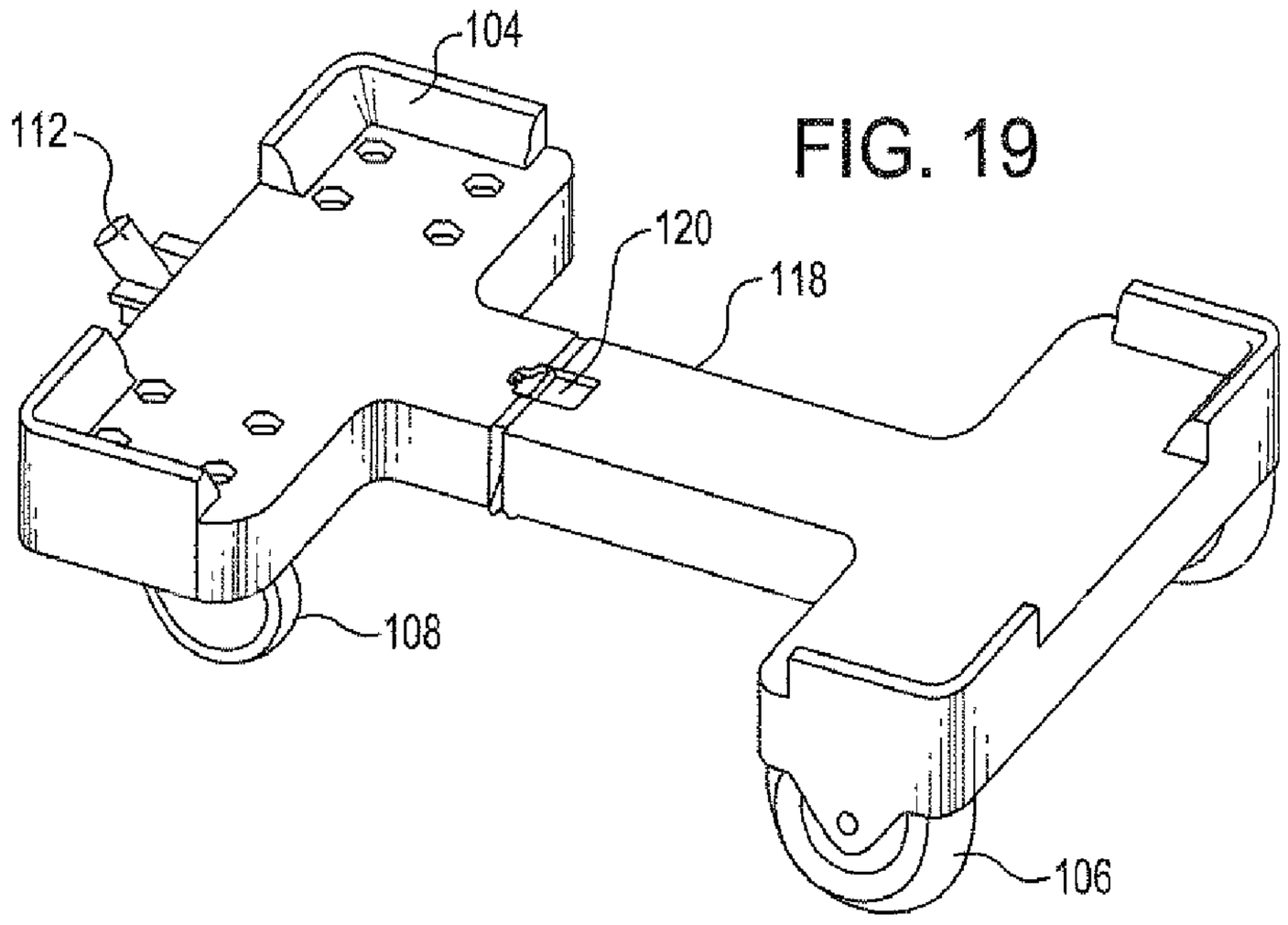
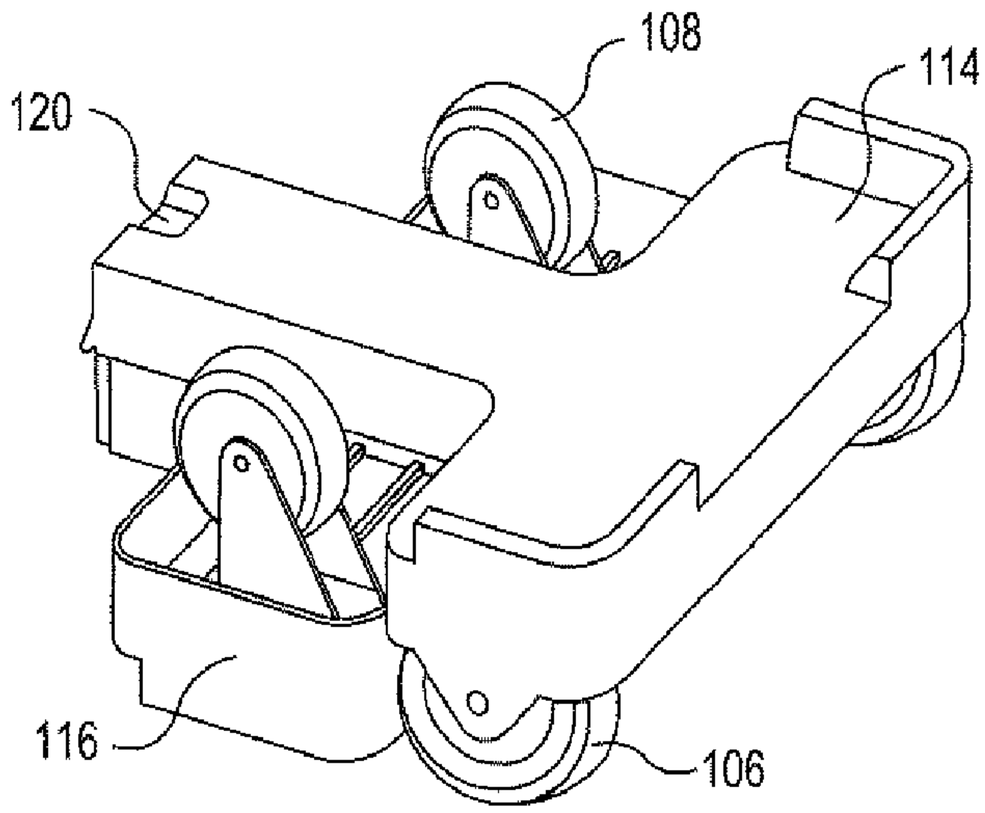


FIG. 19

FIG. 20



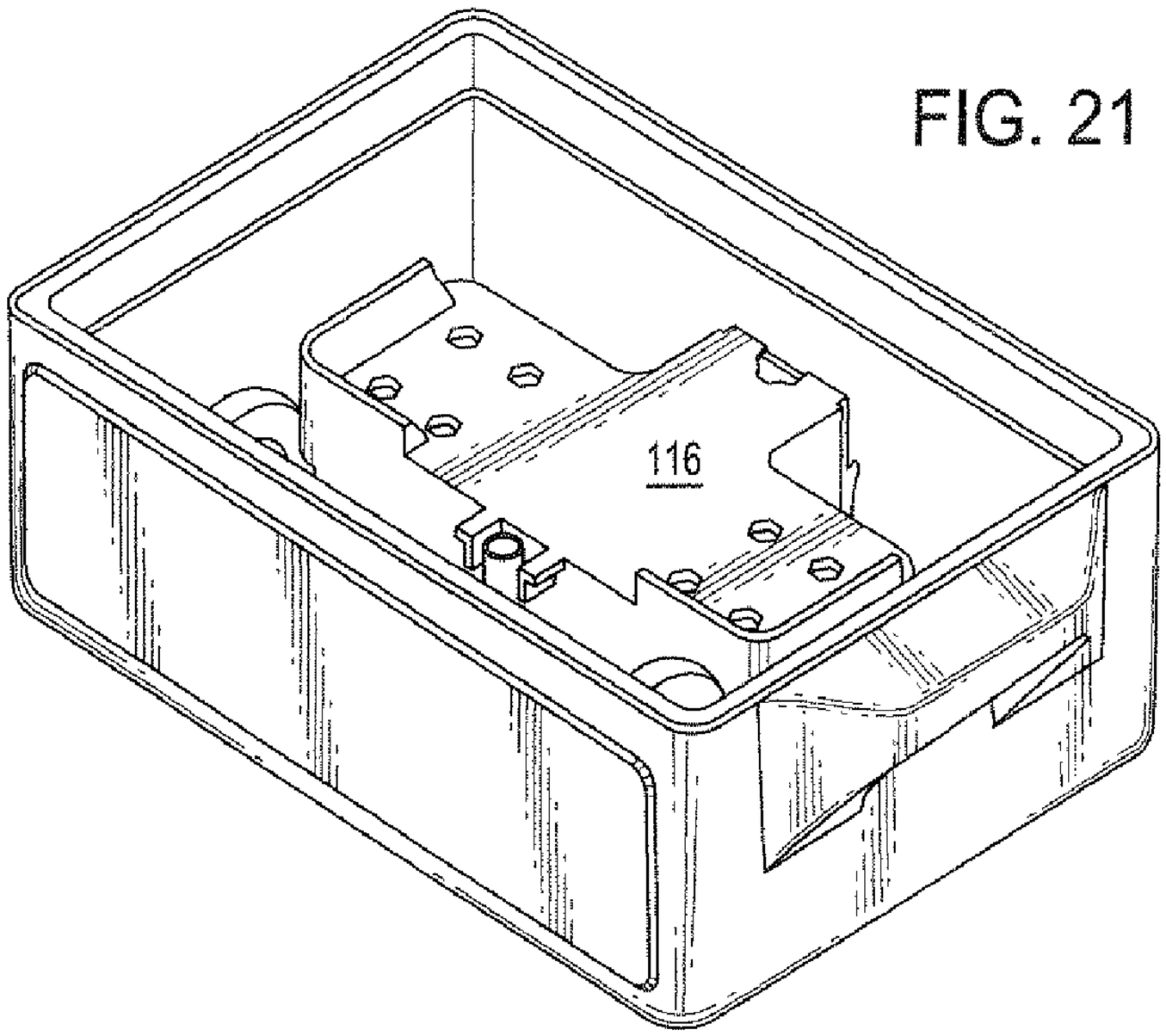


FIG. 21

FIG. 22

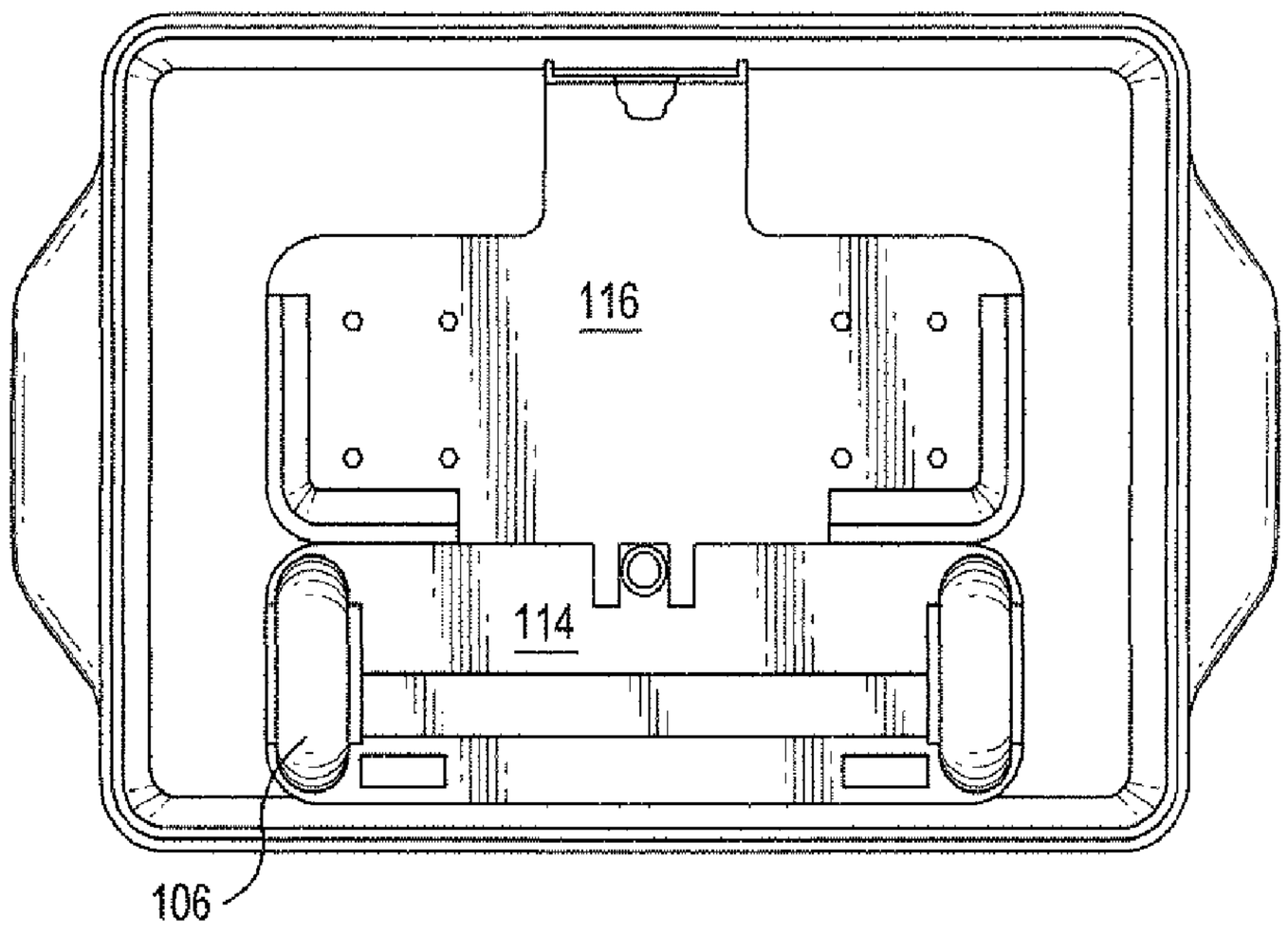


FIG. 23

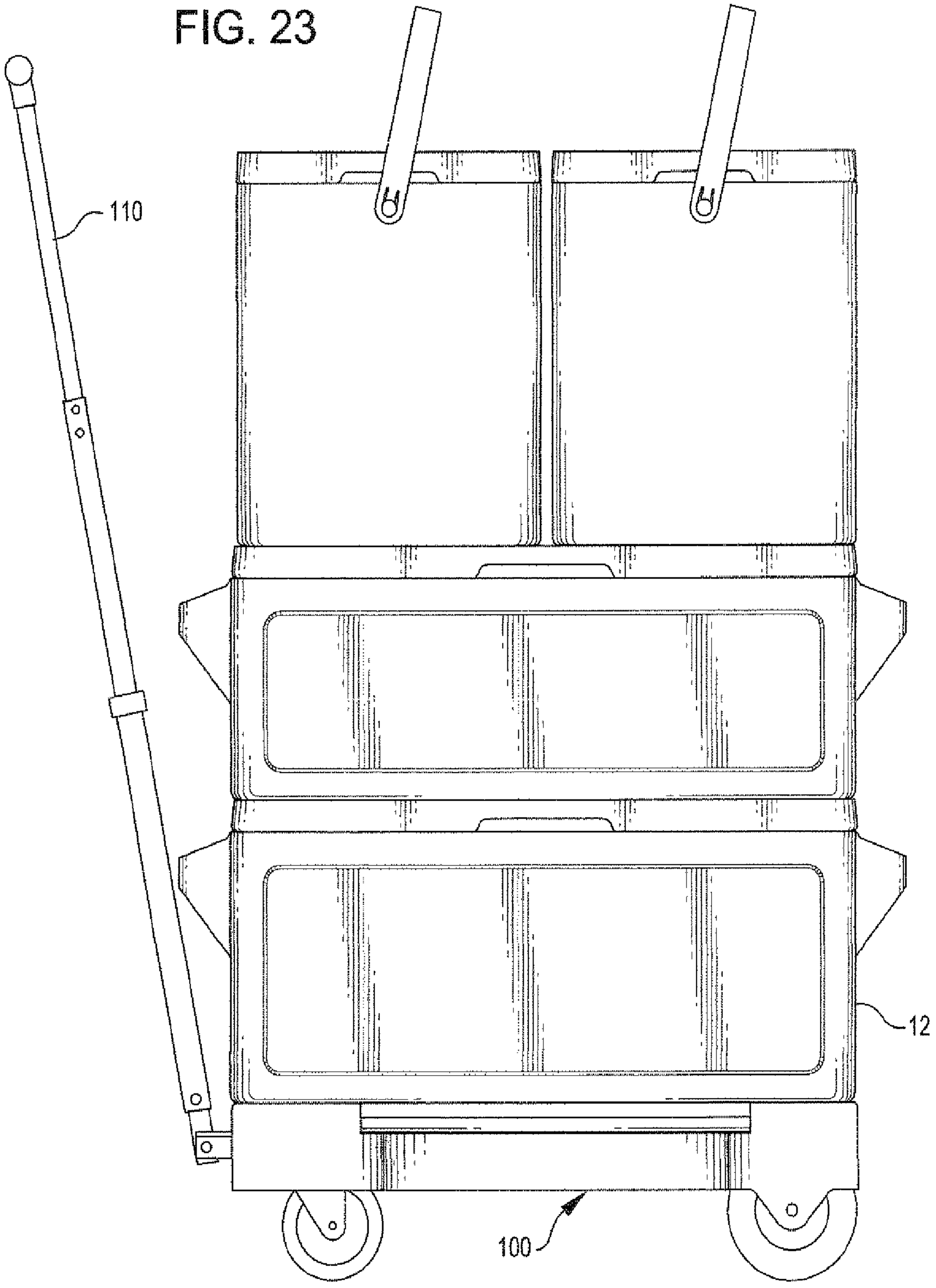


FIG. 24

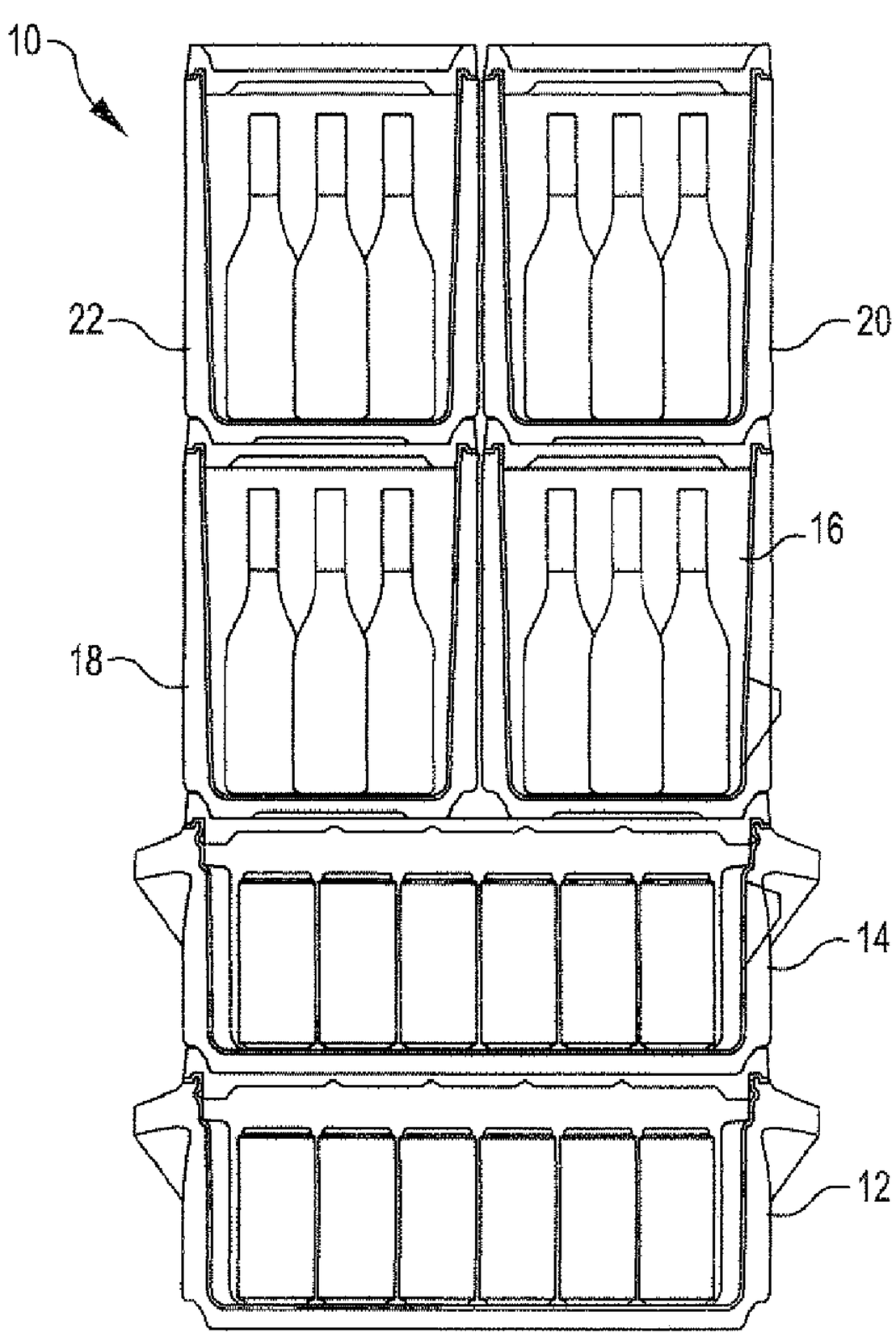


FIG. 1