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(54) Title: FLOATING TOY

(57) Abstract: A floatable toy structure is disclosed herein, the floatable toy structure having a floatable base portion; a collapsible track section secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible track section capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible track section extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position; and a collapsible support secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible support capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible support extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position, the collapsible support engages and maintains the collapsible track section in the extended position when the collapsible support is in the extended position.



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FLOATING TOY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 61/173,105 filed April 27, 2009, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference thereto.

BACKGROUND

[0001] Various embodiments of the present invention are related to toys in particular, a floating structure for use with toy vehicles.

[0002] Toy vehicle track sets have been popular for many years and generally include one or more track sections arranged to form a path around which one or more toy vehicles can travel. Toy vehicles which may be used on such track sets may be either self-powered vehicles or may receive power from an external source. In order to increase play value of the track sets, it is desirable to add track amusement features to the track sets. Furthermore, you children enjoy playing with toys in the water whether it is a tub, pool, beach etc.

[0003] Accordingly, it is desirable to provide a toy structure that will provide variations in play and is capable of being used in a body of water.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In one embodiment, a floatable toy structure is provided, the floatable toy structure having a floatable base portion; a collapsible track section secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible track section capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible track section extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position; and a collapsible support secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible support capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible support extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position,

the collapsible support engages and maintains the collapsible track section in the extended position when the collapsible support is in the extended position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] FIGS. 1-4 are perspective views of a toy structure in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[0006] FIGS. 5 and 6 illustrate a pump of the toy structure illustrated in FIGS 1-4;

[0007] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the toy structure illustrating operation thereof;

[0008] FIG. 8 is a top perspective view of the toy structure;

[0009] FIG. 9 is a top view of the toy structure of exemplary embodiments of the present invention;

[0010] FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrates the toy structure in a collapsed or stowed configuration;

[0011] FIG. 12 illustrates an accessory for use with the toy structure; and

[0012] FIG. 13 is a bottom view of the toy structure of exemplary embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] In accordance with various embodiments of the present invention and referring now to FIGS. 1-13, a floatable toy structure 10 is illustrated. As illustrated, the floatable toy structure has a floatable base portion 12 and a collapsible track section 14 secured to the floatable base portion. The collapsible track section is generally curved to provide a spiral path for an object 16 such as a toy vehicle to travel down. As illustrated in the attached FIGS. the collapsible track section is capable of being

positioned in an extended position FIGS. 1-4 and 7-9 and a stowed position FIGS. 10 and 11. The collapsible track section extends upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position to provide a path for an object to travel down and splash into the water that the toy structure is floating in. Of course, any other releasable means for securing the collapsible support and the collapsible track section in their extended positions is contemplated.

[0014] In order to support the collapsible track section in the extended position, a collapsible support 18 is secured to the floatable base portion. The collapsible support being capable of being positioned in an extended position FIGS. 1-4 and 7-9 and a stowed position FIGS. 10 and 11. Similarly to the collapsible track section the collapsible support extends upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position. In order to maintain the collapsible track section in the extended position, the collapsible support engages and maintains the collapsible track section in the extended position when the collapsible support is in the extended position. For example, a hook member of the collapsible track section engages a catch of the collapsible support. Of course, any other suitable means for securement between the collapsible track section and the collapsible tower section is contemplated.

[0015] As illustrated, the collapsible support has at least a lower or first member 20 and an upper or second member 22 each being pivotally secured to each other by for example, a plurality of pins 23 of course, any other equivalent structure may be used to pivotally secure the members of the collapsible support. The first member is also pivotally secured to the floatable base portion and the second member is configured to engage and support a portion or platform 24 of the collapsible track section. In one embodiment a third or middle member 26 is disposed between the first and second members such that the first member is pivotally secured to the middle member at one end and the second member is pivotally secured to the middle member at another end. In addition and in one embodiment, the first member and the second member are configured such that pivotal movement of the first member with respect to the base portion and pivotal movement of the second member with respect to the first portion in the direction of arrow 28 is limited by for example surfaces and/or angular configurations of

the first member and the second member such that a downward force in the direction of arrow 30 by for example the collapsible track section will maintain the collapsible support in the upright or extended position.

[0016] In one non-limiting exemplary embodiment, the floatable toy structure is formed from an easily molded material such a plastic and the collapsible track section is formed from a material having resilient characteristics such that it can be extended from the stowed position to the extended position and the collapsible track section will have a tendency to apply a downward force in the direction of arrow 30 when in the extended position such that the collapsible track section and the collapsible support are maintained in the extended position when portion 24 engages the second member of the collapsible support.

[0017] In order to stow the floatable toy structure a user simply applies a force to the collapsible track section in a direction opposite to arrow 30 so as to disengage portion 24 from the collapsible support by moving the same slightly upward and away from the collapsible track section and then collapsible support and track section are free to collapse thereby allowing the floatable toy structure to be placed in the configuration of FIGS. 10-11.

[0018] As illustrated in FIGS. 1-3 and 7, a diverter section 32 is pivotally mounted to a portion of the collapsible track section for movement between a first position wherein the diverter section allows a car to travel down the collapsible track section and a second position wherein the diverter section is moved into the track in the direction of arrow 34 and an object (e.g., toy car) travelling down the collapsible track section will be diverted from the collapsible track section and into an opening 36 disposed in the floatable base portion of the floatable toy structure. In one embodiment, the diverter section has a curved configuration to divert the car off of the track and into the opening. In essence, diverter section 32 is a switch track for altering the path of an object (e.g., toy car or other item) travelling down the collapsible track section.

[0019] In one embodiment, the opening 36 is shaped to resemble a shark's or other creature's mouth. In still another embodiment, the opening 36 has a collapsible trap door 38 that opens when the object (e.g., toy car or other item) hits it.

[0020] As illustrated, the floatable toy structure also has another track section 40 pivotally secured to the collapsible track section for example platform 24 such that a downward path 42 from the platform 24 is provided when the collapsible track section is in the extended position. Track section 40 is also adjustably and removably secured to the floatable base portion at another location remote from the point of pivotal securement to the collapsible track section via an extendable support 44 to provide adjustable configurations of track section 40 as illustrated by the dashed lines in FIG. 7. Accordingly, an adjustable path or jump with adjustable heights for an object (e.g., toy car or other item) to travel down is provided.

[0021] Referring now to FIGS. 4, 7, 9 and 11 track section 40 has an upper portion 46 and a lower portion 48, the upper portion being pivotally secured to the collapsible track section at for example, the platform via mounting pins 49 or any other equivalent structure at one end and the lower portion being removably and adjustably secured to the floatable base portion via support 44 at another location remote from the pivotal securement to the collapsible track section. In addition, the lower portion is also pivotally secured to the upper portion via a mounting pin or equivalent structure such that the same may be pivoted away from the upper portion to allow for stowing of the floatable toy structure as illustrated in FIGS. 9 and 11. Moreover, the pivotal securement of the upper portion to the collapsible track section allows the same to be pivoted in the direction of arrow 50 away from its deployed position FIGS. 1-4, 7, 8 and 9 to the stowed position FIGS. 10 and 11.

[0022] Referring to at least FIGS. 1, 4-6, 8 and 9 and in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention and since the floatable toy structure is intended for use in a body of water, the floatable toy structure further comprises a pump 52 for spraying water from a spray nozzle 54 secured to the floatable toy structure. FIG. 1 illustrates a plume 55 of water being sprayed by spray nozzle 54. In one embodiment,

the pump is a compressible bellows 56 secured to the floatable base portion and the spray nozzle 54 is secured to an upper portion the collapsible track section and a flexible conduit 58 fluidly connects the pump to the spray nozzle.

[0023] As shown in FIG. 5, the bellows has an opening 57 configured to engage a conduit 59 disposed in a recessed area 61, wherein fluid in bellows 56 is pumped into conduits 59 and 58. Although, a bellows type pump is illustrated any other manual type pump may be employed to pump water into conduit 58 and spray it from nozzle 54.

[0024] Accordingly and as a user presses the bellows to a compressed state illustrated in FIG. 6, fluid in the bellows is pushed through the conduit and out nozzle 54. Thereafter and as the bellows expands a vacuum is created in the bellows and more fluid is drawn back into the bellows via a one way valve for expulsion back out of nozzle as the bellows is compressed once again. In one non-limiting exemplary embodiment, the one way valve is enclosed a housing 63 illustrated in at least FIG. 13, wherein the one way valve is in fluid communication with the body of water the floatable toy structure is placed in as well as the bellows to provide a means for pumping fluid to the nozzle from the pump.

[0025] As illustrated in the attached FIGS., the floatable base platform of the floatable toy structure comprises a base platform 60 and a plurality of floats 62 secured thereto in order to provide buoyancy to the floatable base platform. In one non-limiting embodiment, the floats are positioned to provide stability to the structure in both water and non-water play.

[0026] In addition, a toy boat 70 is also provided for use with the floatable toy structure. Toy boat 70 has a hull portion 72 with a see-through bottom so that a user may look in the body of water for vehicles that have travelled down the track paths of the floatable toy structure or passed into opening 36 via diverter 32. In addition, the boat provides an area into which vehicles travelling down track section 40 may received after they are launched into air thus providing a target for the user to aim their cars at which provides enhanced play. FIG. 12 shows boat 70 in an unassembled configuration. The

floatable toy structure also has a plurality of spaces 72 for placement of toy cars or vehicles of objects so that a user may retain them there during play in a body of water. The numerous amount of spaces allows for many objects to be placed on the floating structure for enhanced play.

[0027] In one non-limiting embodiment, the floatable toy structure is configured to resemble an island with palm trees 74 and other decorative attachments for enhanced play.

[0028] While the invention has been described with reference to an exemplary embodiment, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes may be made and equivalents may be substituted for elements thereof without departing from the scope of the invention. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the invention without departing from the essential scope thereof. Therefore, it is intended that the invention not be limited to the particular embodiment disclosed as the best mode contemplated for carrying out this invention, but that the invention will include all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A floatable toy structure, comprising:
a floatable base portion;
a collapsible track section secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible track section capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible track section extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position; and
a collapsible support secured to the floatable base portion, the collapsible support capable of being positioned in an extended position and a stowed position, the collapsible support extending upwardly from the floatable base portion when it is in the extended position, the collapsible support engages and maintains the collapsible track section in the extended position when the collapsible support is in the extended position.
2. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, wherein the collapsible track section has a diverter section pivotally mounted to a portion of the collapsible track section for movement between a first position and a second position, wherein an object travelling down the collapsible track section will be diverted from the collapsible track section and into an opening disposed in the floatable base portion of the floatable toy structure.
3. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, wherein the collapsible track section is configured for use with a toy vehicle.
4. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, further comprising another track section pivotally secured to the collapsible track section at one location and adjustably and removably secured to the floatable base portion at another location, the another track section providing a path for an object to travel down.

5. The floatable toy structure as in claim 4, wherein the another track section has an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion being pivotally secured to the collapsible track section and the lower portion being removably secured to the floatable base portion and wherein in the lower portion is also pivotally secured to the upper portion.

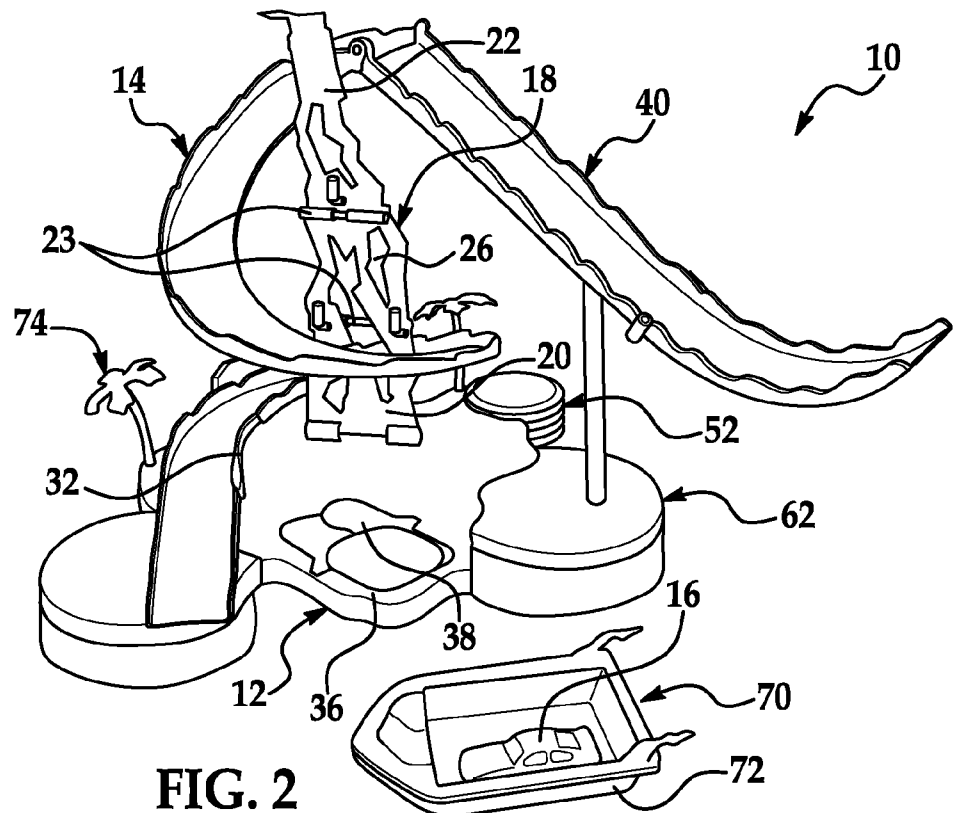
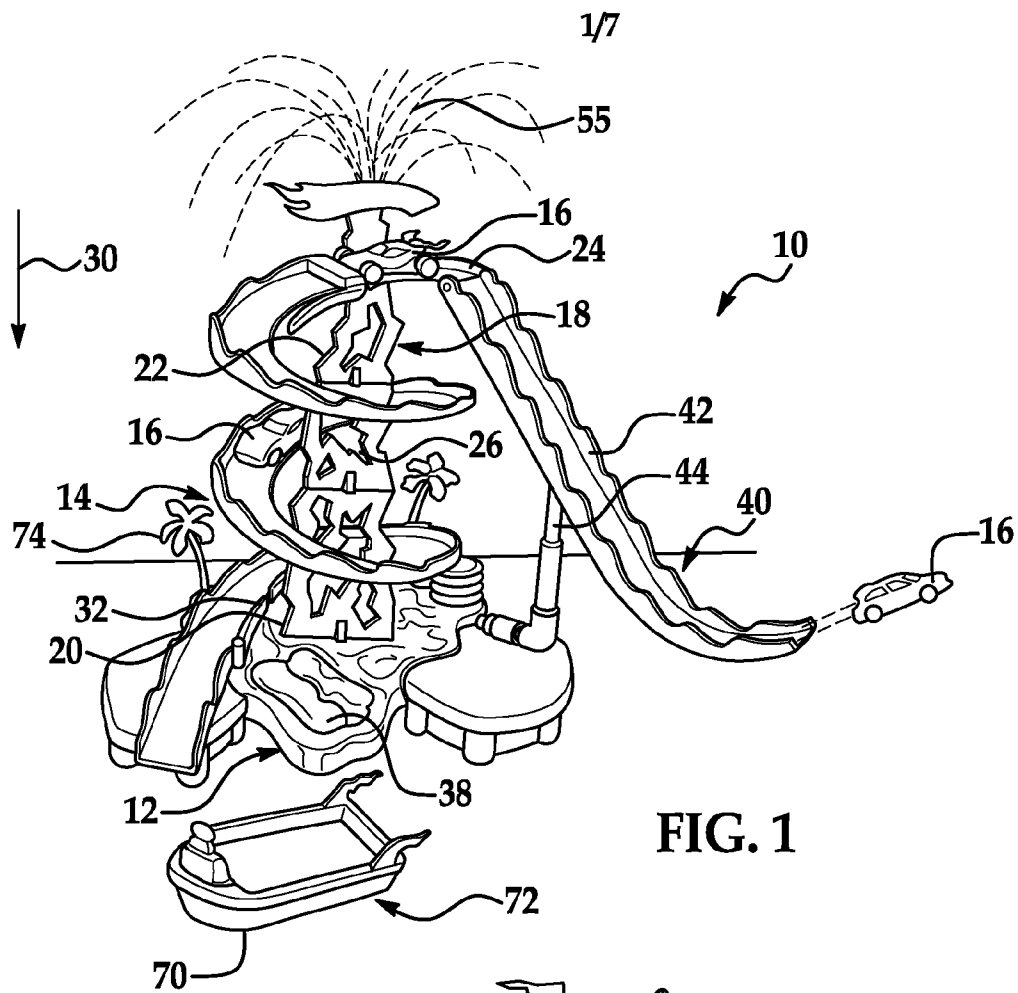
6. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, further comprising a pump for spraying water from a spray nozzle secured to the floatable toy structure.

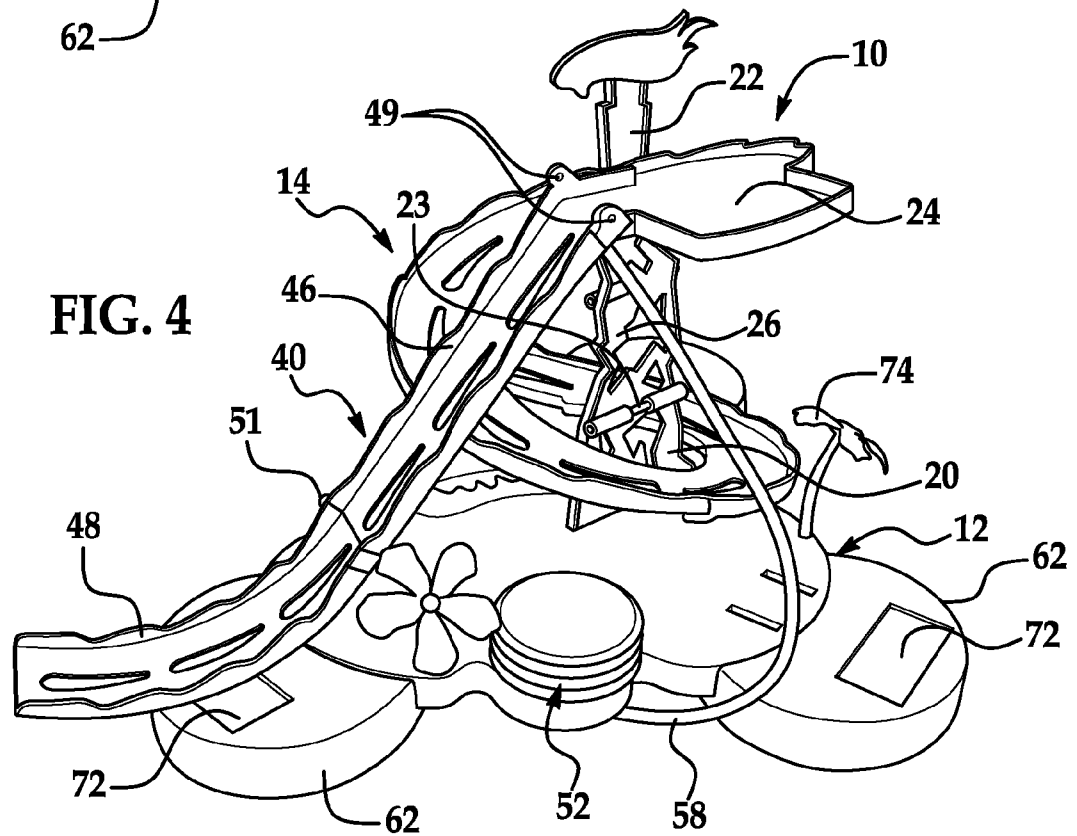
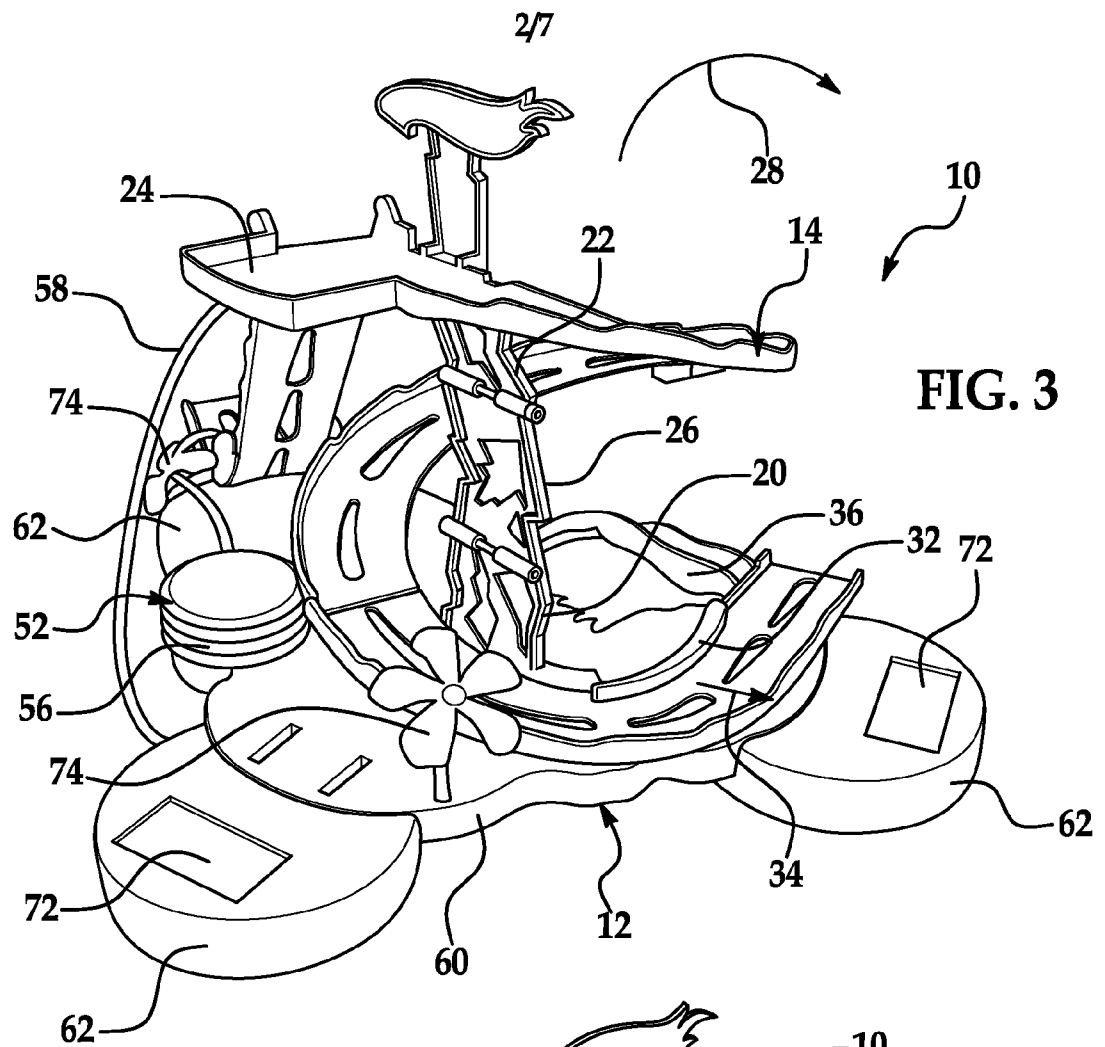
7. The floatable toy structure as in claim 6, wherein the pump is a compressible bellows secured to the floatable base portion and the spray nozzle is secured to the collapsible track section and a flexible conduit fluidly connects the pump to the spray nozzle.

8. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, wherein the floatable base portion comprises a base platform and a plurality of floats secured thereto.

9. The floatable toy structure as in claim 1, wherein the collapsible support comprises at least a first member and a second member each being pivotally secured to each other, wherein the first member is also pivotally secured to the floatable base portion and the second member is configured to engage and support a portion of the collapsible track section.

10. The floatable toy structure as in claim 9, wherein the collapsible track section is configured as a spiral path.





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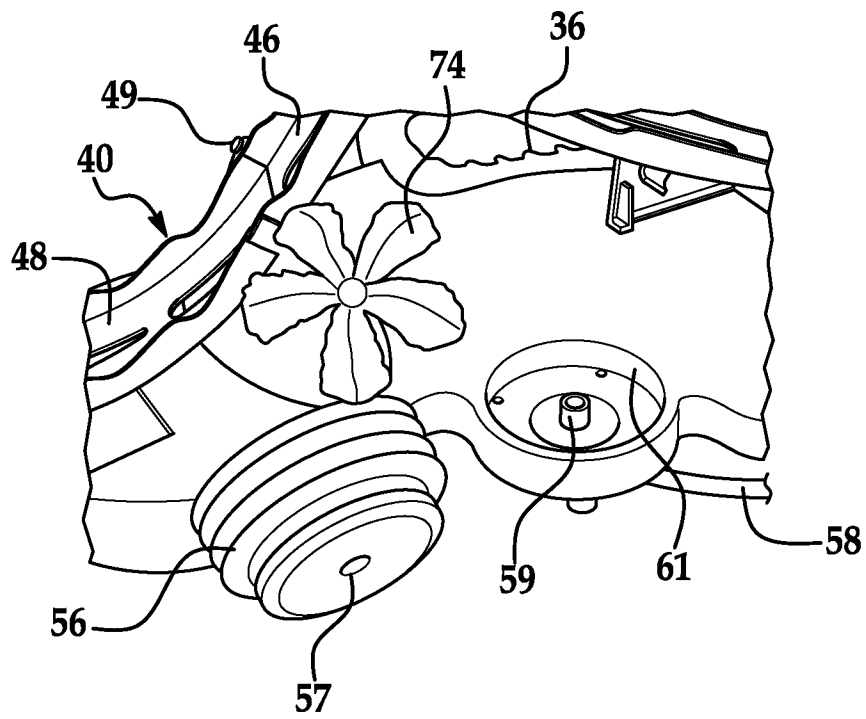


FIG. 5

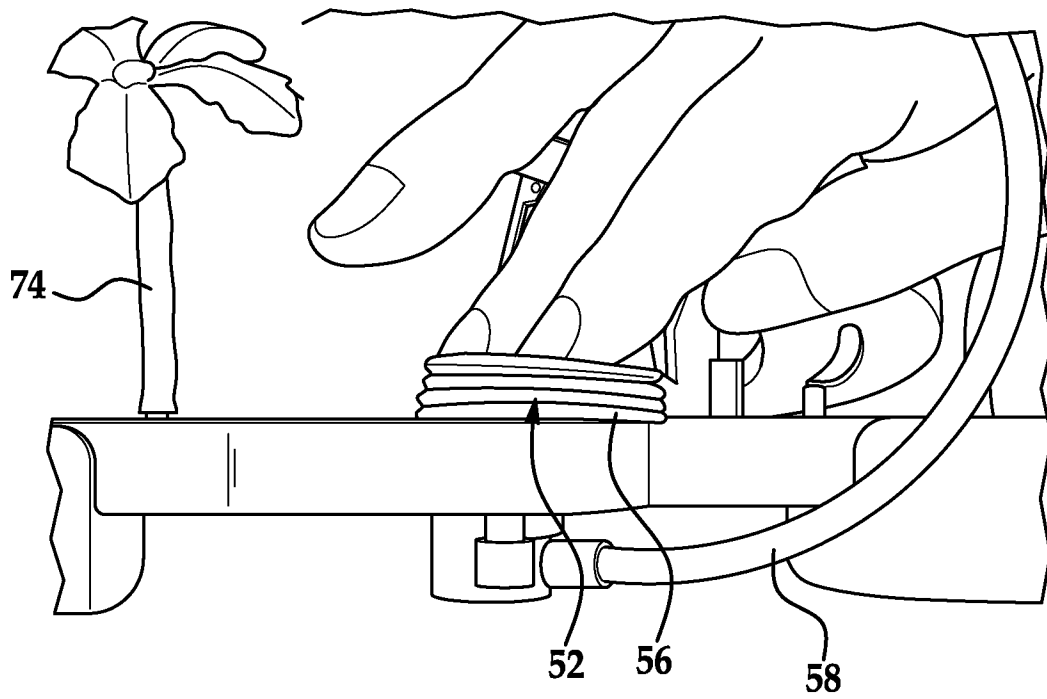


FIG. 6

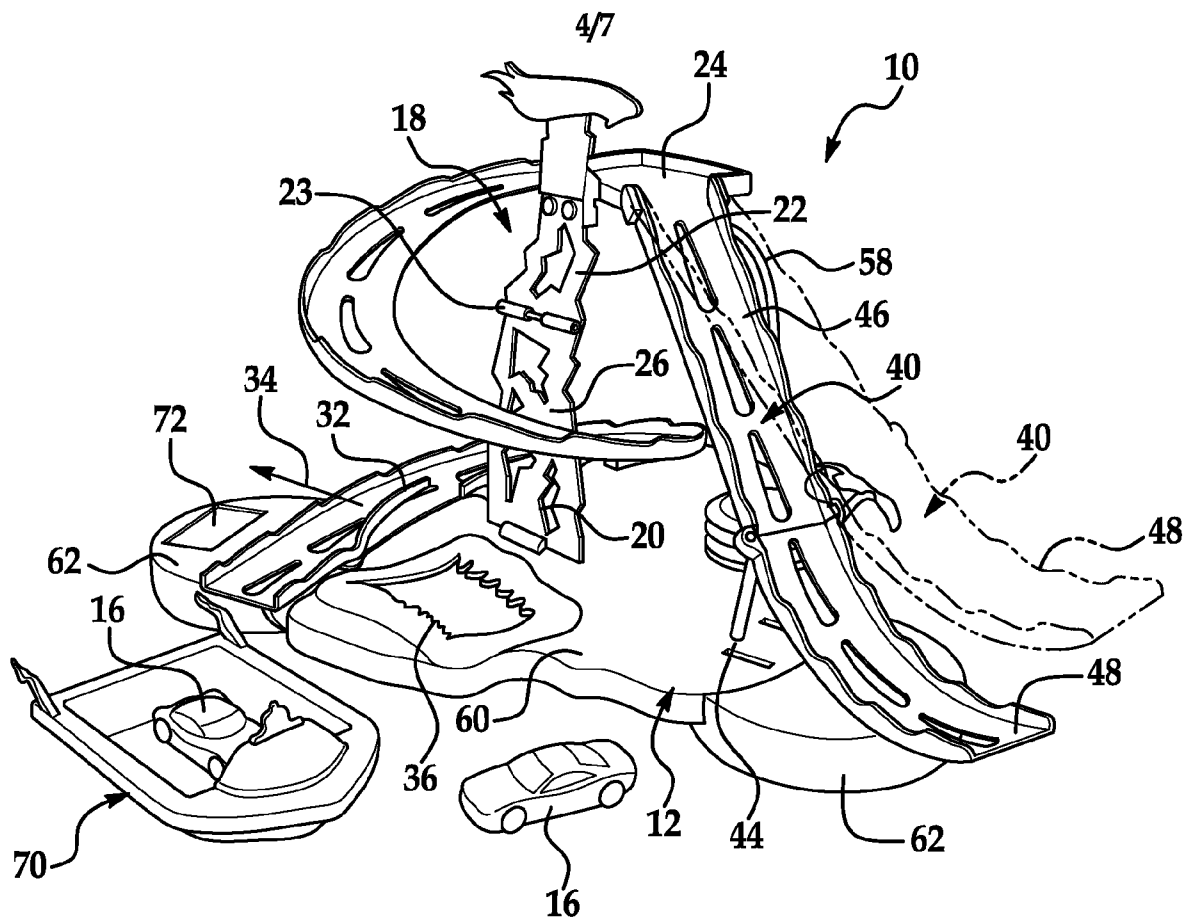


FIG. 7

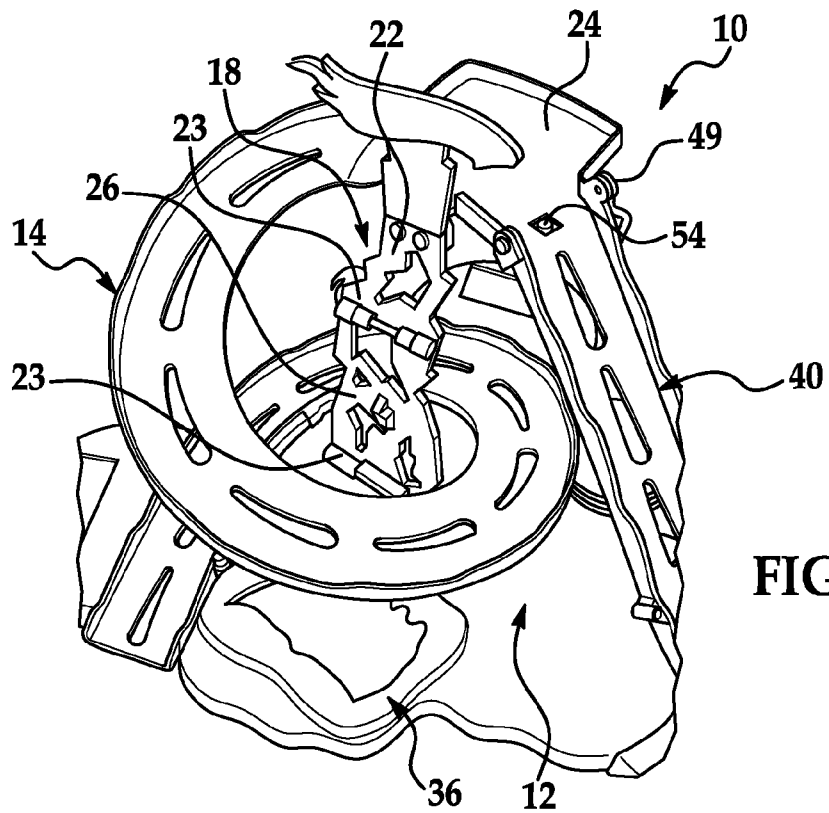


FIG. 8

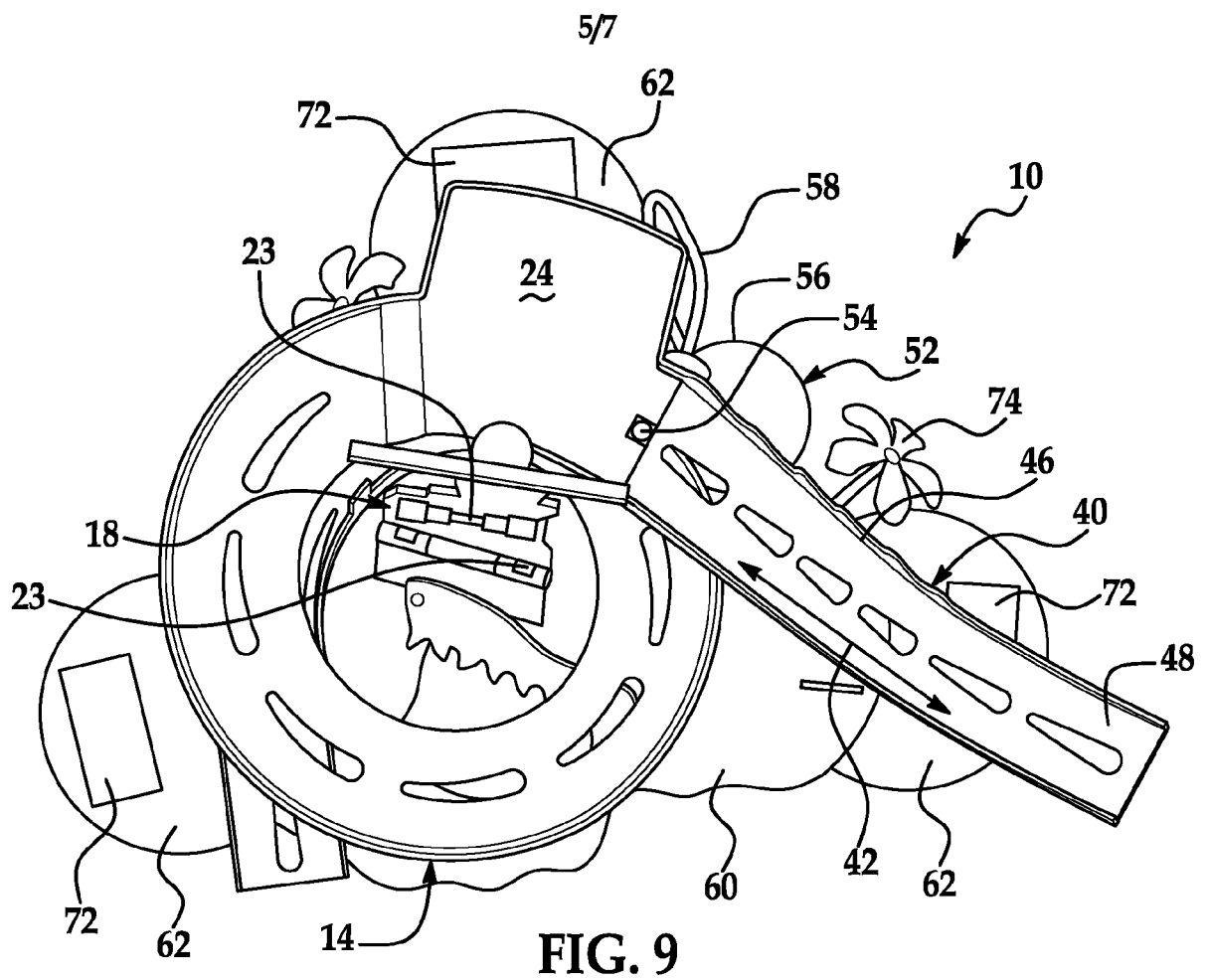


FIG. 9

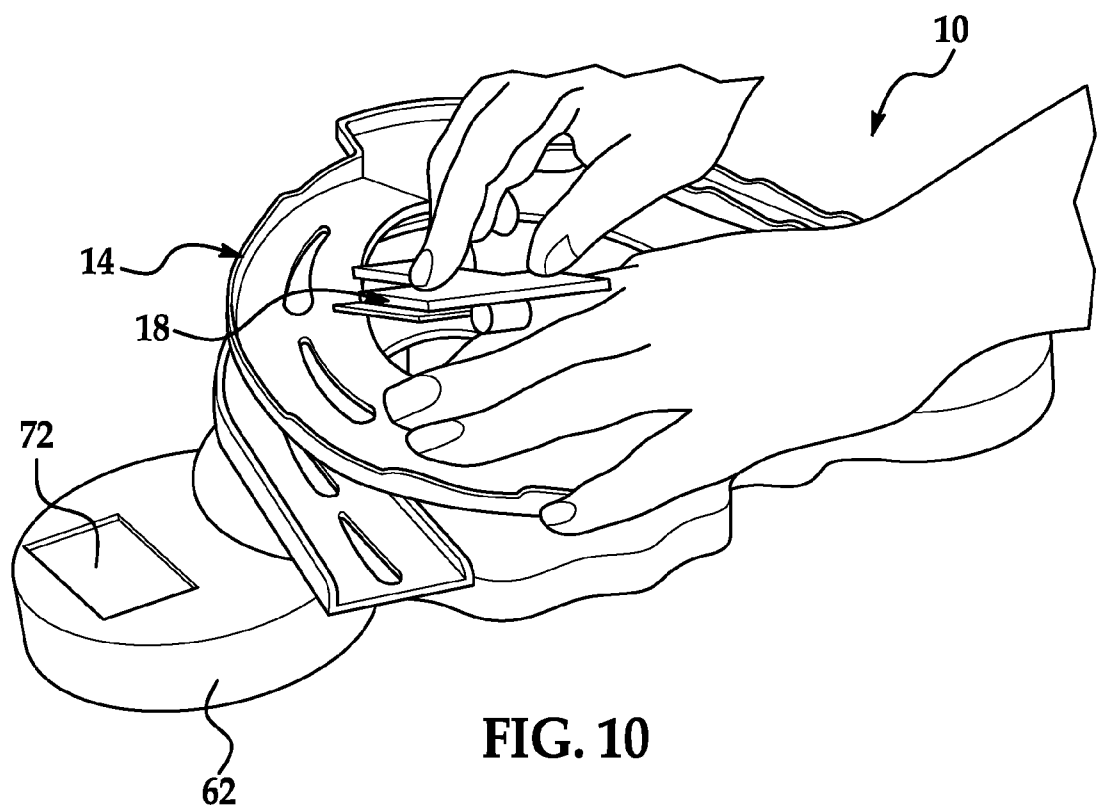


FIG. 10

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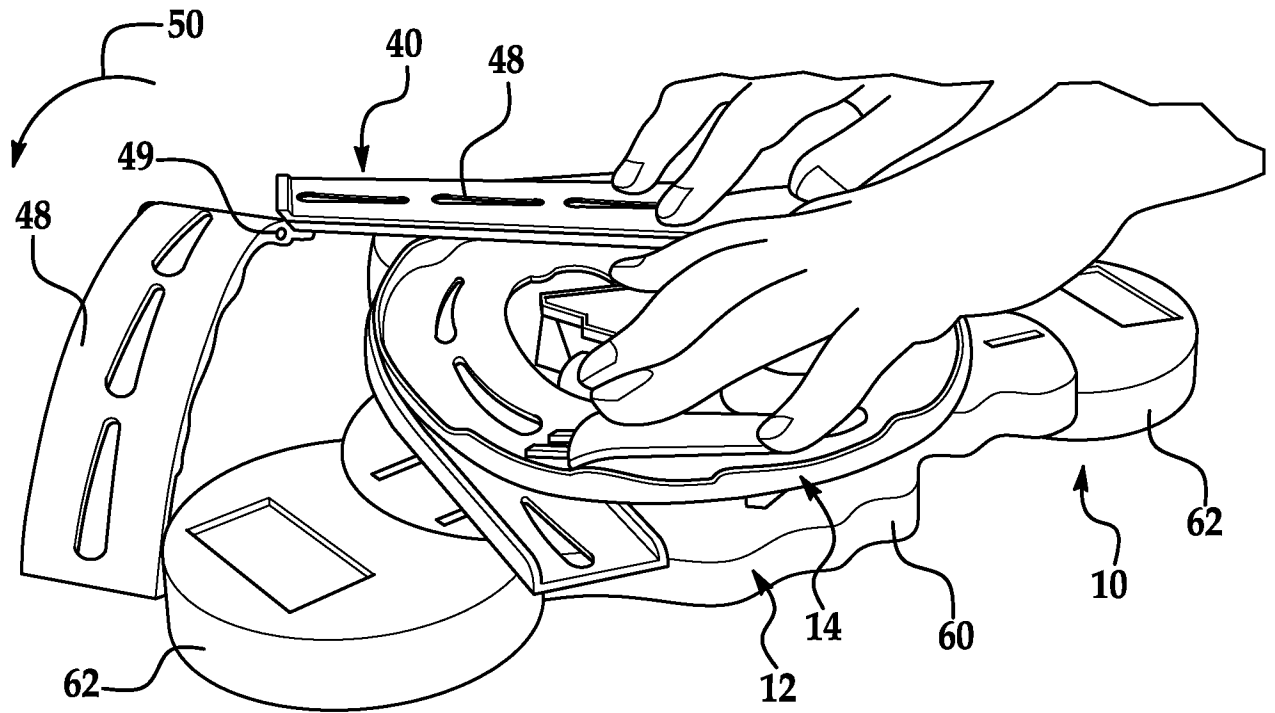


FIG. 11

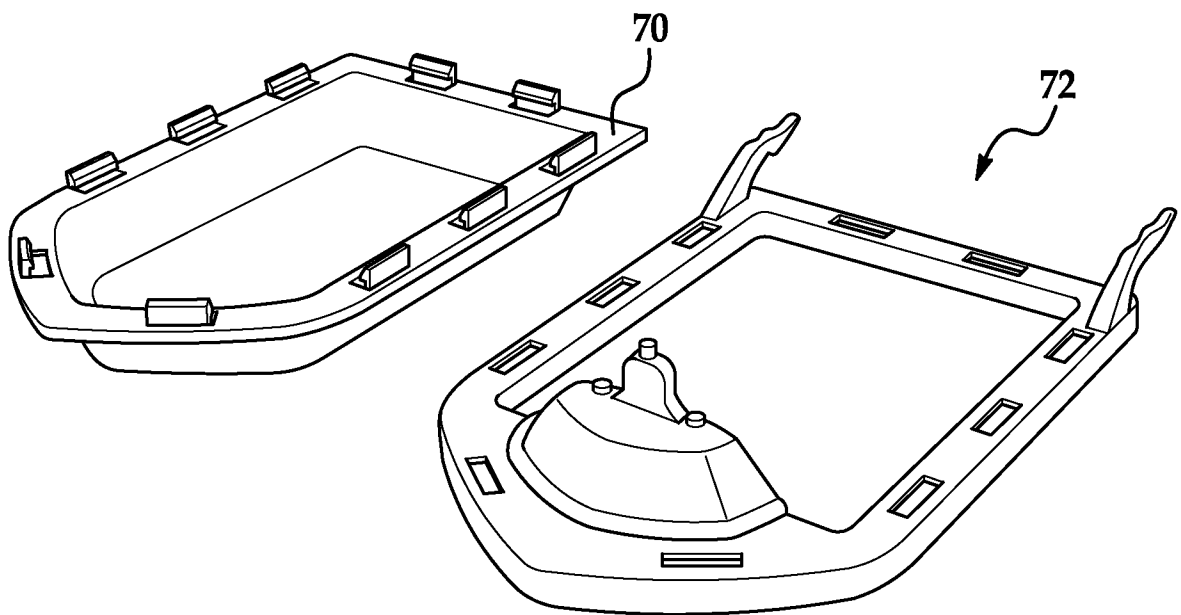


FIG. 12

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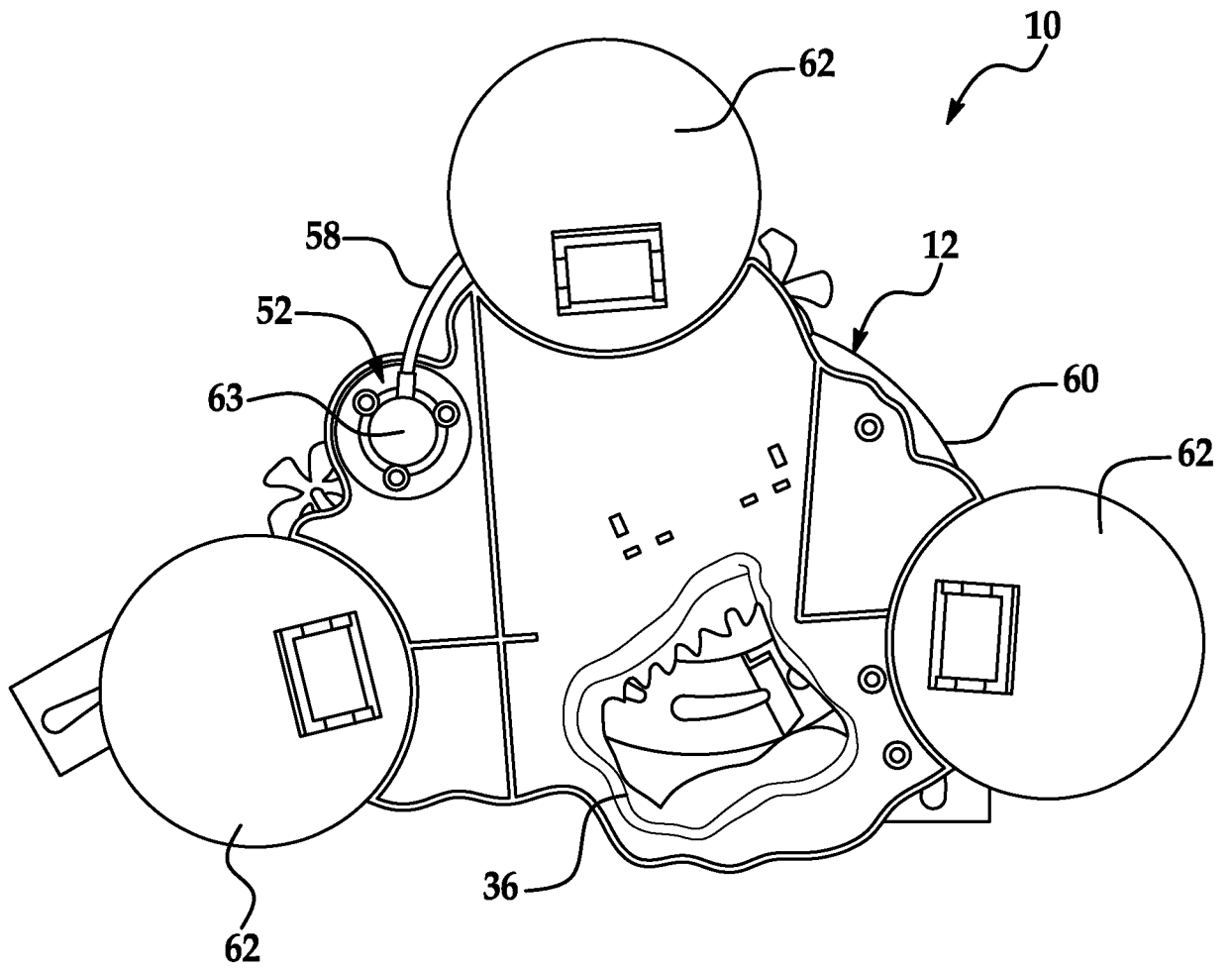


FIG. 13